

### The Division of the Land in the Millennial Israel

#### Ezekiel 48

Ezekiel 48 - *“Now these are the names of the tribes: From the northern border along the road to Hethlon at the entrance of Hamath, to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus northward, in the direction of Hamath, there shall be one section for Dan from its east to its west side; <sup>2</sup> by the border of Dan, from the east side to the west, one section for Asher; <sup>3</sup> by the border of Asher, from the east side to the west, one section for Naphtali; <sup>4</sup> by the border of Naphtali, from the east side to the west, one section for Manasseh; <sup>5</sup> by the border of Manasseh, from the east side to the west, one section for Ephraim; <sup>6</sup> by the border of Ephraim, from the east side to the west, one section for Reuben; <sup>7</sup> by the border of Reuben, from the east side to the west, one section for Judah; <sup>8</sup> by the border of Judah, from the east side to the west, shall be the district which you shall set apart, twenty-five thousand cubits in width, and in length the same as one of the other portions, from the east side to the west, with the sanctuary in the center.*

<sup>9</sup> *“The district that you shall set apart for the Lord shall be twenty-five thousand cubits in length and ten thousand in width. <sup>10</sup> To these—to the priests—the holy district shall belong: on the north twenty-five thousand cubits in length, on the west ten thousand in width, on the east ten thousand in width, and on the south twenty-five thousand in length. The sanctuary of the Lord shall be in the center. <sup>11</sup> It shall be for the priests of the sons of Zadok, who are sanctified, who have kept My charge, who did not go astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray. <sup>12</sup> And this district of land that is set apart shall be to them a thing most holy by the border of the Levites.*

<sup>13</sup> *“Opposite the border of the priests, the Levites shall have an area twenty-five thousand cubits in length and ten thousand in width; its entire length shall be twenty-five thousand and its width ten thousand. <sup>14</sup> And they shall not sell or exchange any of it; they may not alienate this best part of the land, for it is holy to the Lord.*

<sup>15</sup> *“The five thousand cubits in width that remain, along the edge of the twenty-five thousand, shall be for general use by the city, for dwellings and common-land; and the city shall be in the center. <sup>16</sup> These shall be its measurements: the north side four thousand five hundred cubits, the south side four thousand five hundred, the east side four thousand five hundred, and the west side four thousand five hundred. <sup>17</sup> The common-land of the city shall be: to the north two hundred and fifty cubits, to the south two hundred and fifty, to the east two hundred and fifty, and to the west two hundred and fifty. <sup>18</sup> The rest of the length, alongside the district of the holy section, shall be ten thousand cubits to the east and ten thousand to the west. It shall be adjacent to the district of the holy section, and its produce shall be food for the workers of the city. <sup>19</sup> The workers of the city, from all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it. <sup>20</sup> The entire district shall be twenty-five thousand cubits by twenty-five thousand cubits, foursquare. You shall set apart the holy district with the property of the city.*

<sup>21</sup> *“The rest shall belong to the prince, on one side and on the other of the holy district and of the city’s property, next to the twenty-five thousand cubits of the holy district as far as the eastern border, and westward next to the twenty-five thousand as far as the western border, adjacent to the tribal portions; it shall belong to the prince. It shall be the holy*

district, and the sanctuary of the temple shall be in the center. <sup>22</sup> Moreover, apart from the possession of the Levites and the possession of the city which are in the midst of what belongs to the prince, the area between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin shall belong to the prince.

<sup>23</sup> “As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side to the west, Benjamin shall have one section; <sup>24</sup> by the border of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, Simeon shall have one section; <sup>25</sup> by the border of Simeon, from the east side to the west, Issachar shall have one section; <sup>26</sup> by the border of Issachar, from the east side to the west, Zebulun shall have one section; <sup>27</sup> by the border of Zebulun, from the east side to the west, Gad shall have one section; <sup>28</sup> by the border of Gad, on the south side, toward the South, the border shall be from Tamar to the waters of Meribah by Kadesh, along the brook to the Great Sea. <sup>29</sup> This is the land which you shall divide by lot as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, and these are their portions,” says the Lord God.

<sup>30</sup> “These are the exits of the city. On the north side, measuring four thousand five hundred cubits <sup>31</sup> (the gates of the city shall be named after the tribes of Israel), the three gates northward: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi; <sup>32</sup> on the east side, four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan; <sup>33</sup> on the south side, measuring four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun; <sup>34</sup> on the west side, four thousand five hundred cubits with their three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali. <sup>35</sup> All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE.”

## Background Notes

Ezekiel 48 is the concluding chapter of this major prophetic book of Scripture. The final chapters, Ezekiel 40-48, described in great detail the future Temple complex in Jerusalem and details of the future land of Israel when the Lord returns. We believe that all these details are to be interpreted in a *literal* way, and that they are not to be allegorized or spiritualized to apply to the Church today. There will be a *literal* return of our Lord to this earth. He will *literally* establish an earthly kingdom, where He will *literally* reign as King in the line of David for 1000 years (Revelation 20). There will be a *literal* Temple in the *literal* city of Jerusalem during this 1000-year kingdom, known as the Millennium.

Some similarities can be seen in the description of the city in Ezekiel 48 and the description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22. Is this the same city? Probably not, because there are some significant differences as well as similarities. The city described in Ezekiel 48 is the millennial city of Jerusalem, whereas the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22 is the Jerusalem of the New Earth in the Eternal State. Many students of Bible prophecy believe that the New Jerusalem may possibly hover over the earth as a satellite city during the Millennium, and then descend to the earth for the Eternal State. In any case, it is not the same city as earthly millennial Jerusalem described in Ezekiel 48.

Notice some significant differences between these two Jerusalems. The New Jerusalem of Revelation has no Temple (Revelation 21:22), but the millennial Jerusalem of Ezekiel will be the city of the Temple. The New Jerusalem of

Revelation is much larger, about fifteen miles on the side. The city and surrounding of Ezekiel's millennial Jerusalem will be about eight miles on the side. The New Jerusalem of Revelation will have golden streets, and the foundations, walls and gates will be made of precious stones. The millennial Jerusalem of Ezekiel will not have golden streets, and no precious stones were mentioned in association with the gates. The river of the New Jerusalem of Revelation will flow in the middle of the main street. The river of the millennial Jerusalem of Ezekiel will flow down to the Dead Sea. The New Jerusalem of Revelation will descend to the earth. The millennial Jerusalem of Ezekiel will be built on this earth.

So while there are some similarities in the descriptions of these two Jerusalems, there are some significant differences. They are not the same. The New Jerusalem of Revelation is for the Eternal State. The Jerusalem of Ezekiel 48 is for the millennial kingdom of Christ.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. During the Millennium, Israel will have a new layout.

Ezekiel 47 described the overall boundaries of the land of Israel during the millennial kingdom of Christ on this earth, and Ezekiel 48 described the division of the land between the twelve tribes of Israel. It will be divided into horizontal strips of land running from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the Jordan River on the east, and further east strips of land north of the Sea of Galilee. There will be seven strips of land to the north of the strip containing Jerusalem, and five strips of land south of the strip containing Jerusalem.

The seven strips of land north of Jerusalem will be for the tribes of Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, and Judah respectively, going from the north of Israel south to Jerusalem (v1-8). The five strips of land south of Jerusalem will be for the tribes of Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad respectively, going from Jerusalem south toward Egypt (v23-29). These strips of land will obviously vary in thickness because Ezekiel 47:14 says that each of the tribe will have an equal amount of land, and the widths of the strips differ. The strips in the far north are much longer than the strips between Jerusalem and the Sea of Galilee.

In verses 9-22 described the horizontal strip of land that will contain the Temple complex, and the areas for the priests, the Levites, the City of Jerusalem, and the land for the prince. A few more details were given, adding to the details mentioned in 45:1-8.

So the division of the land during the Millennium will be totally different from the divisions at the time of Joshua. During the Millennium, Israel will have a new layout.

## **2. During the Millennium, Jerusalem will have a new name.**

Verses 30-35 predict that during the Millennium, Jerusalem will have twelve gates, three to a side. The gates will be named for the twelve tribes of Israel. The millennial city of Jerusalem will be between five and six miles in circumference.

The city will have a new name: *Jehovah Shammah*, meaning “THE LORD IS THERE” (v35). The city will still be called Jerusalem, based on the millennial passage of Zechariah 14 where the city is called Jerusalem several times. But the holy city of Jerusalem will also be known as “THE LORD IS THERE” because the Lord literally will be there. Jerusalem will be His headquarters for the millennial kingdom, and **all** believers will be part of that kingdom! What a great day that will be! During the millennium, Jerusalem will have a new name.

### **Practical Application**

#### **Remember, DNA is not the only way.**

When we think of the twelve tribes of Israel being restored for the millennial kingdom of Christ, the question invariably arises: How will the Jewish people be divided into the twelve tribes? The majority of Jewish people today have no idea what tribe they descended from.

All twelve tribes are represented in the Jewish people living today. There are no so-called “ten lost tribes of Israel.” The incorrect idea of “ten lost tribes” began when Assyria conquered the ten northern tribes, took many people away as captives, and intermarried the rest with re-settled captives from other nations. However, prior to the defeat by Assyria, many godly Jews from the northern ten tribes had migrated south to live in Judah, especially during the revivals of Kings Hezekiah and Josiah, because the Temple was located in Judah. So representatives of all twelve tribes were taken into the captivity in Babylon after the defeat of the southern kingdom, and members of all twelve tribes returned from the Babylonian captivity. Thus representatives of all twelve tribes exist within the Jewish population around the world today.

How are will the Jewish people be identified and separated into the twelve tribes when the Lord returns? In fact, this division may take place even before the Lord returns, since Revelation predicts that there will be 144,000 Jewish evangelists during the Tribulation period, with 12,000 evangelists from each tribe.

Will DNA analysis be used? Maybe. But don't limit God to DNA analysis! The Lord is omniscient! He knows who belongs where, and He will surely have ways to identify the Jewish people and separate them into their respective tribes. DNA is not the only way!