

## Ezekiel Chapter 44

**Ezekiel 44:1 "Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it [was] shut."**

The Lord has returned from the direction in which He departed (10:18-19). It is kept closed, in honor of the Lord's glory having returned through it for the millennial worship and indicating that the Lord will not depart again (as in chapters 8-11). This eastern gate of the temple should not be confused with the modern sealed eastern gate of the city.

This is the gate that Jesus will enter, when He comes back to the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. The Mount of Olives will cleave in two and Jesus will walk through this gate into Jerusalem.

**Ezekiel 44:2 "Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut."**

This gate is set aside for the purpose of God. The gate is holy, since the LORD, the God of Israel, entered in by it. This is the LORD's private gate.

**Ezekiel 44:3 "[It is] for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of [that] gate, and shall go out by the way of the same."**

"The prince, he shall sit in it": The designation "prince" is used at least 14 times (in chapters 44-47). He is not the Lord Jesus Christ, but someone distinct from Him. (Note: "he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord"); he has sins for which he offers sacrifice (45:22), and fathers sons (46:16-18).

He cannot enter by the East gate which the Lord used, but he is allowed to come in and go out by the gate's vestibule, and eat bread by the gateway. He cannot perform priestly duties (45:19), as Messiah will and he must worship the Lord (46:2).

Most likely "the prince" is not the king, but rather one who administrates the kingdom, representing the King who individually lead the 12 tribes. Possibly he will be a descendant of David.

**Ezekiel 44:4 "Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face."**

The north gate that Ezekiel was taken to was very near the Holy of Holies, so it had to be the north gate of the inner court. We see that Ezekiel was in the near presence of the glory of the LORD, and he was so overwhelmed, that he fell on his face before the LORD.

**Ezekiel 44:5 "And the LORD said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary."**

(In verses 5-9), we start with the phrase "mark well" referring to those who may enter. Since the Lord's glory fills the temple, it is sanctified (verse 4), and God is particular about what kind of people worship there. Sins of the past (as in chapters 8-11), must not be repeated and if they are, will exclude their perpetrators from the temple. Only the circumcised in heart may enter, whether of Israel or another nation.

Many other peoples than Jews will go into the kingdom in un-resurrected bodies, because they have believed in Jesus Christ and were ready for His coming. They will escape His deadly judgment and populate and reproduce in the 1,000 year kingdom.

Such circumcision pertains to a heart which is sincere about removing sin and being devoted to the Lord. In the Millennium, a Jew with an uncircumcised heart will be considered a foreigner (verse 9). "Uncircumcised in flesh" refers to sinners and "foreigner" identifies rejecters of the true God.

The LORD was cautioning Ezekiel to get all of the details solidly into his memory, so he would not forget. This is the most important thing in his life, so he must give it his full undivided attention. Each little detail had great spiritual significance. He must get it exact.

I am just sure that God gave Ezekiel the gift of comprehending what was here, and then remembering it. God does not ask us to do anything that He does not equip us to do. This is what I am saying about the Bible, as well. We should not read it with just our natural eyes. Our spirit of understanding must be quickened, to truly realize what it is saying.

**Ezekiel 44:6 "And thou shalt say to the rebellious, [even] to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations,"**

Some of the idolatries had taken place at this very gate in the past. God wants them to put all of that behind them.

**Ezekiel 44:7 "In that ye have brought [into my sanctuary] strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, [even] my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations."**

This is probably, speaking of those priests who brought the idolatries into the temple. Notice above, that uncircumcised in heart is mentioned, even before uncircumcised in flesh. Christians who truly belong to God are circumcised in the heart. The abominations ranged from committing spiritual adultery, to not keeping God's covenant.

**Ezekiel 44:8 "And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves."**

This reminds me very much of when the priesthood had sunk so low, they worshipped false gods themselves. God had set the Levitical tribe aside for working in the temple. They had brought in strangers to do the work of the sanctuary.

**Ezekiel 44:9 "Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that [is] among the children of Israel."**

The "stranger" is speaking of those who do not know God.

**Ezekiel 44:10 "And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity."**

“Levites ... shall even bear their iniquity”: God makes distinctions. Levites in the line of those unfaithful in days before the judgment can minister in temple services but they can not make offerings or enter the Most Holy Place. Only Zadok’s line can fulfill these ministries (verses 15-16). The reason for this is the value which God attaches to the faithfulness of Zadok in the past.

**Ezekiel 44:11 "Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, [having] charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them."**

The Levites will now do the lesser jobs in the sanctuary as they have been demoted. There were different positions of work in the temple. Some saw to the servile duties, and others were called priests and the High Priest to work with the holy things.

**Ezekiel 44:12 "Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity."**

It appears these apostate priests had led them in the worship of false gods. They had not been good watchmen. God holds those in ministry more responsible for idolatry, than He does the people who are just following.

**Ezekiel 44:13 "And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy [place]: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed."**

It appears, those He is speaking to here, had been in near association with God. Perhaps, this is even speaking of the High Priest, as well as the priests. God will no longer allow them to handle the holy things in the temple. They will be reduced to servitude.

**Ezekiel 44:14 "But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein."**

They will not be released from their obligation to serve. They will just do the things preparing for the priests and High Priest.

**Ezekiel 44:15 "But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD:"**

There were some who had not committed spiritual adultery with these idols and false gods. They will now, take the offices of priest and High Priest. The fat and the blood were God's alone. They were burned for the sweet smelling savor.

**Ezekiel 44:16 "They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge."**

This group of priests and High Priest, that had not sinned, is welcomed into the sanctuary. They have clean hands and a pure heart. Notice that they minister to God.

This table is the altar of burnt offering.

**Ezekiel 44:17 "And it shall come to pass, [that] when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within."**

These linen garments speak of the righteousness they are clothed in. They wore very plain linen clothes, when they came before God. The fancy clothes were worn when the High Priest represented God to the people. The linen garment was worn, when the High Priest represented the people to God. We have nothing to offer God, but ourselves.

Verses 17-27: "It shall come to pass": Various standards govern priestly service, such as moderation (verse 20), and sobriety (verse 21). They will model holy behavior as they teach the people to live their lives set apart to God (verses 23-24).

Minutia about dress (such as forbidding the uncleanness of sweat resulting from wearing wool), marriage (Lev. 21:14), and contact with dead bodies, etc. point more naturally to a literal fulfillment than to a generalized blurring of details in a symbolical interpretation.

**Ezekiel 44:18 "They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird [themselves] with any thing that causeth sweat."**

The head has to do with the mind of man. The linen bonnet shows that man's mind offers nothing to God. The linen breeches covering the loins show extreme modesty. God did not want them wearing wool at all. The wool would cause them to sweat.

**Ezekiel 44:19 "And when they go forth into the outer court, [even] into the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments."**

These linen garments were to be worn only in the Most Holy Place. They were to be immediately taken off, after ministering in the Most Holy Place. This was the reason for having the chambers close to the Most Holy Place. They were to wear other garments, when they went out to the people.

**Ezekiel 44:20 "Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads."**

"Poll" means to shear. It is not alright to shave their heads, or to grow their hair long. Shear would mean to cut neatly.

**Ezekiel 44:21 "Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court."**

It does not say that he is to never drink a glass of wine. It says he must not come into the sanctuary, after drinking a glass of wine.

**Ezekiel 44:22 "Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before."**

The priests were not forbidden to marry. They were to be very careful who they married. We see this was forbidden in the Levitical law.

Leviticus 21:7 "They shall not take a wife [that is] a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he [is] holy unto his God."

Leviticus 21:13 "And he shall take a wife in her virginity."

There are more Scriptures on this, but I believe this is sufficient. The wife of a priest must live a holy life, as well as the priest.

**Ezekiel 44:23 "And they shall teach my people [the difference] between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."**

God is holy, and He wants His people to be holy. The priest, or High Priest, must live in such a way as to set an example for the people. The best way to teach holiness is to live holy before them.

**Ezekiel 44:24 "And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; [and] they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths."**

Controversy, in the verse above, means contest or pleading. The priests and the High Priest are to keep the people holy. The High Priest is to judge his people, and keep them straight.

**Ezekiel 44:25 "And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves: but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves."**

The priesthood was to be held above defilement. The priest and High Priest were to proclaim life, and not death. The only time it was permissible for a priest to touch a dead body, was when it was a near member of his family. They would be unclean to serve in the temple for a period of 7 days. They were to have no close contact with any corpse other than the closest of relatives. The wife is not mentioned as a close relative, because she and her husband are one.

**Ezekiel 44:26 "And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days."**

He was cleansed by a blood sacrifice.

**Ezekiel 44:27 "And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering, saith the Lord GOD."**

The High Priest first should offer for himself, and then offer for the people. He had to carry the blood for sprinkling. It is the blood that does away with sin.

**Ezekiel 44:28 "And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I [am] their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: I [am] their possession."**

When the land was divided among the children of Israel, the Levitical tribe received no land. They were to live of the gifts of the sanctuary. They shared with the altar. In that sense, God provided for their day to day needs. They were not to get caught up in worldly commerce.

As the priests had no possession in the Land when it was originally apportioned, so in the future God will be their portion.

**Ezekiel 44:29 "They shall eat the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering: and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs."**

This is an explanation in detail of where their food came from. The meat offering was actually bread, symbolizing the Lord Jesus, the Bread of life.

The sin offering: for a High Priest or an entire community, the sacrifice was to be of a young bullock; for a king or a prince the offering had to be a young male goat; for other individuals the offering had to be either a young female goat, or a female lamb; for poor individuals unable to

afford these, a turtle dove sufficed. Like the other types of sacrifice, the sacrificial animal had to be completely unblemished.

The trespass offering: This may be rendered “guilt offering,” and it symbolized satisfaction or restitution. It may be regarded as a particular kind of sin offering, or even as an offering for a particular kind of sin. I related to invading or disregarding the property rights of another person. In every case and for all people, the offering was in the form of a ram.

The burnt offering is omitted, because it was all burned up. The skin was the only thing saved. This symbolizes the robe of righteousness that Jesus clothes all the believers in.

**Ezekiel 44:30 "And the first of all the firstfruits of all [things], and every oblation of all, of every [sort] of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house."**

All of the offerings made unto God, except the things that were burned for the sweet savor (the inward parts and the fat), were to be shared by the priests and the High Priest. This teaches more than tithe. Christians give before they receive and that is what firstfruits teach.

**Ezekiel 44:31 "The priests shall not eat of any thing that is dead of itself, or torn, whether it be fowl or beast."**

Something dead of itself could be diseased, and you can see why that would not be eaten. It was, also, a dead carcass. This particular ordinance was for all the people, including the priests and high priest.

## **Ezekiel Chapter 44 Questions**

1. What unusual thing had happened to the eastern gate?
2. What is another name for the eastern gate?
3. What do you see today in Jerusalem, if you look at this gate?
4. Which gate will Jesus enter Jerusalem by, when He comes back as King?
5. What will open the gate?
6. Why was this gate to be shut?
7. Who is the gate reserved for?
8. Who is the "Prince" in verse 3?
9. When Ezekiel was taken to the north gate, what did he see?

10. Ezekiel was so overwhelmed, he did what?
11. What did the LORD caution Ezekiel about?
12. How could Ezekiel do what God wanted him to do?
13. What had happened at this same gate, before Jerusalem fell?
14. Who is verse 7 speaking of?
15. Who had they allowed to work in the temple?
16. Who are the "strangers"?
17. What happened to the priests who had sinned?
18. What had they caused the house of Israel to do?
19. What were the apostate priest forbidden to do again?
20. Which priests did God elevate to work in the Holy Place, and in the Most Holy Place?
21. These priests and High Priest, who have not sinned, have \_\_\_\_\_ hands and \_\_\_\_\_ hearts.
22. When they went into the Most Holy Place, what did they wear?
23. What was meant about them not sweating?
24. They shall not shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.
25. When were they forbidden to drink wine?
26. Who could they marry?
27. What were they to teach the people?
28. They should come near no dead person, but whom?
29. If he came near the dead persons not forbidden to him, how many days was he unclean?
30. When the High Priest carried blood into the most holy place, who did he sacrifice for?
31. What was the priest's inheritance?
32. What did they eat of?
33. What was forbidden them to eat?
34. Who, besides the priests, were forbidden to eat this same thing?