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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Ezekiel 44.

(2014)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Ezekiel 44.

Topics.

- The prince will enter by way of the vestibule.
- The glory of the LORD fills the Temple.
- The LORD rebukes Israel.
- The LORD rebukes the Levitical priests.
- The sons of Zadok.
- The laws for sons of Zadok and for the Levitical priests.
- The Inheritance of the priests.
- The theme of the last nine chapters of Ezekiel.

Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel: Ezekiel, a prophet and priest, was exiled to Babylon in 597 B.C. His ministry extended over at least twenty-three years. The book opens with his first dramatic vision of the “likeness” of the LORD”. Ezekiel was keenly aware of God’s presence and power in human affairs. He addressed both the exiles and the people left in Judah with messages of warning and judgment, predicting the fall of Jerusalem.

After its fall (586), Ezekiel prophesied of hope and reassurance for the people of Judah, who had then lost the focus of God’s covenant and the temple in Jerusalem. His vision of the valley of dry bones (chapter 37) is a classic picture of God’s ability to breathe new life into those who are spiritually dead. Ezekiel is prophesying about the Jews that did not go into captivity to Babylon, but remained against the word of the LORD in Jerusalem.

NOTE.

Ezekiel’s message is primarily directed to the people in the land of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the two tribes), but often it is difficult to separate the message from Judah and Israel (the ten tribes) because much of what the LORD says can be applied to both Judah and Israel because the two are so intertwined and both nations were guilty of the same gross sins.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: “Map Locations and People of the Bible,” and the title: “Bible Dictionary” on Website Menu.

The previous chapter: the focus of chapter forty-three was cleanse the altar and prepare yourself for the glory of the LORD is coming to the Temple. The primary focus of this chapter is the ministry of the priests when the glory of the LORD fills the temple and the focus of the following four chapters continue with the rebuilding of the Temple with chapter forty-seven shining a brilliant light upon a river flowing out from the altar of the Temple of God and bringing life to everyone who enters its water.

The Prince will Enter by Way of the Vestibule (A small room).

Ezekiel 44:1-3 ----- ¹Then he (one speaking out of the Temple) (the LORD) (v6-7) brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east. And it was shut. ²And the LORD said to me, "This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the LORD,

the God of Israel, has entered by it. Therefore it shall remain shut. ³Only the prince may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD. He shall enter by way of the vestibule (small room) of the gate, and shall go out by the same way."

Vestibule: refers to a small room.

The LORD in the vision takes Ezekiel back to the outer gate of the Temple, which faces east.

The LORD tells Ezekiel: no-one is to enter this gate that faces east, because the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered by it, but the prince can sit in it to eat before the LORD, but he is to come and go through the gate of the vestibule not the gate facing east.

Prince: from Strong's Concordance means an exalted one, a king captain, chief, governor or ruler.

Princes: in this context refer to the priest in (Ezek. 45:8-12).

The Prince: in the context of these verses refers to the high priest (Ezek. 45:7-8) (Ezek. 45:16-17).

The Glory of the LORD fills the Temple.

Ezekiel 44:4-5 ----- ⁴Then he brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple, and I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple of the LORD. And I fell on my face. ⁵And the LORD said to me, "Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes, and hear with your ears all that I shall tell you concerning all the statutes of the temple of the LORD and all its laws. And mark well the entrance to the temple and all the exits from the sanctuary.

Visions: a vision can relate to a spectacle gazed at by the eyes or a movie played out in the mind. Sometimes the same biblical event or experience is spoken of as an actual and real event, while at other times the same event maybe recorded as a vision (an image or mental experience within the mind). A biblical vision communicates the God's will or future events and is always under God's control.

It can appear as a movie played out on the screen of the imagination of the mind (similar to a dream) or it may appear as a hologram appearing in the air that is actually seen by the eyes of whoever God chooses to give the vision to. Those who have had such a vision tell the vision to the people, sometimes in their own words and at other times in the exact words that God has spoken to them in the vision. Ezekiel in his vision is taken to the north gate at the front of the Temple and he sees the, glory of the LORD filling the Temple and the LORD tells Ezekiel to remember the following: -

- The statutes of the Temple.
- The Temple laws.
- The entrance to the Temple.
- The exits from the Sanctuary.

The LORD rebukes Israel.

Ezekiel 44:6-8 ----- ⁶And say to the rebellious house, to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: O house of Israel, enough of all your abominations, ⁷in admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary, profaning my temple, when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood. You have broken my covenant, in addition to all your abominations. ⁸And you have not kept charge of my holy things, but you have set others to keep my charge for you in my sanctuary.

Ezekiel is told to tell Israel that in addition to their rebellion and gross wickedness they also broke the LORD'S covenant by delegating the service of the Temple to Foreigners and strangers uncircumcised in heart.

The LORD rebukes the Levitical Priests.

Ezekiel 44:9-14 ----- ⁹Thus says the Lord GOD: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary. ¹⁰But the Levites who went far from me, going astray from me after their idols when Israel went astray, shall bear their punishment. ¹¹They shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the temple and ministering in the temple. They shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before the people, to minister to them. ¹²Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn concerning them, declares the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their punishment. ¹³They shall not come near to me, to serve me as priest, nor come near any of my holy things and the things that are most holy, but they shall bear their shame and the abominations that they have committed. ¹⁴Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the temple, to do all its service and all that is to be done in it.

No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh was to enter the LORD'S sanctuary.

Bear their punishment: means the Levites are not allowed to serve the LORD as priests or go near any of God's holy things, because prior to Israel's seventy year Babylonian captivity they ministered to the people of Israel before their idols and became a stumbling block to the entire nation. Thought the Levites could not go near any of God's holy things they were appointed to: -

- Do all the services of the Temple.
- Have oversight of the gates of the Temple.
- Minister in the Temple.
- Slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice.
- Stand before the people to minister to them.

The Sons of Zadok.

Ezekiel 44:15 ----- ¹⁵But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me, shall come near to me to minister to me. And they shall stand before me to offer me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord GOD.

The Levitical priests from the family of Zadok are appointed to minister to the LORD, because they kept the charge of the God's sanctuary when the Levitical priests served the idols of the people of Israel.

The Laws for Sons of Zadok.

Ezekiel 44:17-20 ----- ¹⁶They shall enter my sanctuary, and they shall approach my table, to minister to me, and they shall keep my charge. ¹⁷When they (the sons of Zadok) enter the gates of the inner court, they shall wear linen garments. They shall have nothing of wool on them, while they minister at the gates of the inner court, and within. ¹⁸They shall have linen turbans on their heads, and linen undergarments around their waists. They shall not bind themselves with anything that causes sweat. ¹⁹And when they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall put off the garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers. And they shall put on other garments, lest they communicate holiness to the people with their garments. ²⁰They shall not shave their heads or let their locks grow long; they shall surely trim the hair of their heads.

The sons of Zadok will enter the LORD'S sanctuary and minister at the LORD'S Table and minister to the LORD. When the sons of Zadok enter the inner court they are to: -

- Wear linen garments.
- Have nothing of wool on them.

- Have linen turbans on their heads.
- Wear linen undergarments around their waists.
- Not wear anything so tight that it causes sweat.
- Trim the hair of their heads and not let it grow long or shave it bald.

When the sons of Zadok go out into the outer court to the people they are to: -

- Take off the linen garments and lay them in the holy chambers.
- Put on other garments, lest they communicate holiness to the people with their garments.

Lest they communicate holiness to the people could mean the following three things or a combination of them all: -

1. The common people might esteem the priests and exalt them as being holier than they are (i.e., without sin) rather than men with sins that are common all mankind.
2. The common people may begin to believe that they must also be holy if the priests go wandering amongst them in their holy garments.
3. The common folk may feel intimidated and unclean should the priests go wandering amongst them in their holy garments.

The Laws for all the Priests.

Ezekiel 44:21-27 ----- ²¹No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court. ²²They shall not marry a widow or a divorced woman, but only virgins of the offspring of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest. ²³They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean. ²⁴In a dispute, they shall act as judges, and they shall judge it according to my judgments. They shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my appointed feasts, and they shall keep my Sabbaths holy. ²⁵They shall not defile themselves by going near to a dead person. However, for father or mother, for son or daughter, for brother or unmarried sister they may defile themselves. ²⁶After he has become clean, they shall count seven days for him. ²⁷And on the day that he goes into the Holy Place, into the inner court, to minister in the Holy Place, he shall offer his sin offering, declares the Lord GOD.

No Priest was to: -

- Drink wine when he enters the inner court.
- Marry a widow or a divorced woman, but they could marry a virgin of Israel or a widow of a priest.
- Defile themselves by going near to a dead person, unless it is a family member.

Priests were to: -

- Teach God's people the difference between the holy and the common.
- Show the people how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.
- Act as judges in a dispute and judge it according to God's judgments.
- Maintain God's laws and His statutes in all His appointed feasts.
- Keep God's Sabbaths holy.

The Inheritance of the Priests.

Ezekiel 44:28-30 ----- ²⁸This shall be their inheritance: I am their (the priests) inheritance: and you shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession. ²⁹They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering, and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. ³⁰And the first of all the firstfruits of all kinds, and every offering of all kinds from all your offerings, shall belong to the priests. You (the people of Israel) shall also give to the priests the first of your dough, that a blessing may rest on your house.

The inheritance of the Priests: -

- Is the LORD.
- The grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering.
- Every devoted thing in Israel.
- The first of all the firstfruits of all kinds.
- Every offering of all kinds from all the offerings.
- The first of the people's dough.

If the priest did right by the people and the people did right by the priest God would bless the nation.

God is their possession: means everything belonging to the Temple, the courts, the living quarters the kitchens and the sanctuary belongs to the priests and all the food offerings offered to the LORD belong to the priests for food and any gift offered to the LORD belongs to the priests. The priests are in a very limited sense the LORD on earth.

Laws for all the Priests.

Ezekiel 44:31 ----- ³¹The priests shall not eat of anything, whether bird or beast, that has died of itself or is torn by wild animals.

No Priest was to eat any bird or animal that had naturally died or that had been torn by wild animals.

The theme of the Last Nine Chapters of Ezekiel.

1. The theme of chapter forty is the rebuilding of the Temple of God starting from the wall of the outer court.
2. The theme of chapter forty-one is the rebuilding of central part of the Temple of God.
3. The theme of chapter forty-two is the rebuilding of the priest quarters in the outer court of the Temple of God.
4. The theme of chapter forty-three is cleansing the altar and preparing yourself for the glory of the LORD is coming to the Temple.
5. The theme of chapter forty-four is the ministry of the priests when the glory of the LORD fills the temple.
6. The theme of chapter forty-five is the land allotted to the LORD and the land allotted to the Sanctuary, the Prince of Israel and the priests.
7. The theme of chapter forty-six is the Prince entering the Most Holy Place and the people of the land bowing down in peace and entering the Temple with the Prince from their freewill and upon the prince providing a freewill offering and giving an everlasting inheritance to his sons forever.

8. The theme of chapter forty-seven is a river flowing from the threshold of the Temple of the LORD that begins as a trickle then becomes ankle-deep, then waist-deep, then deep enough to swim in. The river has trees on both sides and as it flows into the sea it turns the salt water to fresh water and brings life to every living creature that comes to its water.
9. The theme of chapter forty-eight is the land being divided up between the twelve tribes of Israel.

End.