

## EZEKIEL Lesson 44

Ezekiel Chapter 44

*Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies*

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**Introduction:** Last week we covered how God's throne will be inside the temple in the millennial kingdom and also the vision of the return of the glory of God to the millennial Temple.

Several topics are touched upon in chapter 44. We will first cover the gate of the millennial Temple for the Prince and then the vision of the glory of God filling the Temple. Finally we will close studying about the Levites and priests of the millennial Temple.

### I. Ezekiel Brought Back to Eastern Gate

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 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.*

Ezekiel's heavenly guide then brought him back out of the area of the altar of sacrifice to the gate on the east side of the inner courtyard of the Temple. Upon arriving there, he found the eastern gate closed. The prophet was informed by the LORD that the eastern gate of the millennial Temple would be shut and off limits to mortal men.

Two reasons are given.

(1) The glory of God was about to enter through this gate, making it off limits thereafter for mortals to ever again pass thereby.

(2) The gate would be reserved for the exclusive use by the Prince (the Messiah).

Some have thought it might refer to David as a prince under the Messiah. The ancient middle-eastern use of the gate of a city or Temple established it a place from which official business was transacted. Muslims since the middle ages became aware of the prophecy that the Jewish Messiah would enter Jerusalem from the eastern gate. They have bricked up the eastern gate of the Old City of Jerusalem. What is in view here is the

millennial Temple. No brick, mortar or Muslim will stop or even slow the King of Kings when He comes to fulfill the scriptures.

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 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.*

Still in the Temple courtyard, Ezekiel's heavenly guide took him to the north side. There he witnessed (by way of his vision) the glory of God entering the Temple and the holy of holies proper. In witnessing this most high occasion, the prophet fell on his face in worship. God Himself directly instructed Ezekiel to pay close attention to the ordinances and laws of the millennial Temple.

He further was to take careful note of the entrance of the Temple and the ways in and out of the Temple. The following text will make clear, the concern of God will be the character of whom enters the millennial Temple. As a priest himself, these instructions must have been of special interest to Ezekiel.

*Eze 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,*

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 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.*

And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O ye house of Israel. God's message to Israel was that God had had enough of their abominations. Israel of Ezekiel's day was described as rebellious, which they were. They had long rebelled against God and gone after abominable idols—even in the Temple of God.

In the days of Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, rebellious Israel had allowed, even welcomed priests of pagan idols to enter the Temple of God and 'set up shop' there. Manasseh built images of Baal in the Temple courtyard.

*2Ki 21:3 For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.*

*2Ki 21:4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.*

*2Ki 21:5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.*

In so doing, wicked Jews had not only profaned the name of Jehovah their God, they had broken His covenant with them. In the final years of the Jerusalem of Ezekiel's time, rebellious Jews had allowed the truly sacred things of the Temple to be neglected. They allowed and even preferred pagan idolatrous practices to take place in the Temple courtyards. God in effect said, "Never again!" God never again would allow any form of blasphemy to happen in the millennial Temple.

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 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.*

When God establishes the millennial Temple, no ungodly or uncircumcised (unsaved) gentile will be allowed into it. In short, no rebel or pagan will ever again be allowed in the Temple of God.

In verse 10, we find that the Levites of Ezekiel's day had become corrupt, wicked, and idolaters themselves. For that, they would bear their own sin. In the day of the millennial Temple, Levites will be restored to Temple service in holiness and faithfulness to God.

Even as in the days of Aaron, the Levites will assist the priests in Temple service such as slaying various sacrificial animals and otherwise providing assistance to the priests. Because the Levites of old had desecrated their sacred trust by assisting in idol worship and leading Israel in that direction, God in turn judged them harshly when Jerusalem fell to Babylon.

As first stated in 44:10, God again vowed that these wicked Levites would bear the consequences of their sin. Indeed, unto whom much is given, much is required. God had given the Levites a high position of leadership. They had ignored that prerogative. They therefore would be dealt with severely and they were.

## **II. God Expected Levites to be Holy serving as Priests**

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 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.*

Plainly stated is that because of the blatant sins of the Levites in the waning years of the Jewish kingdom; in the Millennium, they will never be promoted to the office of priest and the highest level of service in the millennial Temple. Implicit is that if they had been faithful in the past, they might have been granted that privilege then. They will forever miss the highest blessing because of their sin. Sin will invariably reduce reward in heaven someday.

The Levites will be charged with the menial service of the Temple of God. They might have been promoted to higher service, yet because of their sins in the past, they missed God's greater blessing.

*Eze 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:*

*Eze 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.*

It is clear is that there was a strain of priests in the waning days of the Jewish kingdom which did not go along with the abominations of other priests Levites. These are identified as the sons of Zadok (i.e., the righteous). Though not specifically identified as such, Ezekiel, as a priest, may have been of that lineage. He certainly was a righteous priest in the midst of the apostasy and corruption even in the priesthood.

In the day of the millennial Temple, only the descendants of those righteous priests of Ezekiel's time will be allowed to perform the official service of the Temple. That righteous lineage of priests, the descendants of Zadok, will be those whom God will choose to serve Him in the millennial Temple.

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 44:19 And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter 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.*

Come the Millennium and the services of the millennial Temple, the priests thereof will only wear linen garments. Though Old Testament priests wore both linen and wool, in that day, they will only wear linen robes when in the inner courtyard of the Temple and the holy place itself. The priests in the millennial Temple will wear linen turbans (i.e., headgear) along with linen undergarments. Evidently, the linen prescribed will be so woven that it breathes and will prevent the priests from inordinate perspiring while performing their duties.

When leaving the inner courtyard or holy place of the Temple, the priests will then be directed to remove their sacred linen garments of service. When they return to the outer courts where the congregation of people assembled, they will be directed to wear other garments. Anyone coming in contact with those more common garments will not be considered set apart thereby as was the case of Old Testament priests.

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

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

*Eze 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 of the Temple in that day will not be allowed to shave their heads nor to allow their hair to grow long. They will be required to have trimmed and relatively short haircuts. The priests were not allowed to drink fruit of the vine of any kind in excess. When they were on duty, they were to abstain.

The priests in that day will not be allowed to marry either widows or divorced women. Rather, they will be required to marry only virgin women who are Israelites. The only exception thereto was that a priest could marry a widow who once had been married to a priest.

### **III. Priests Commanded to be Holy with Discernment**

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 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.*

The primary purpose in these rules is that the priests are to be an example to God's people of holiness and purity. By their very lifestyles, they are to be an example of that which is right and fitting. Also implied is that they are to so teach the people of God directly, training them in holiness and righteousness.

In the Millennium, at least for the nation of Israel, the priests of God will also function as magistrates and judges in disputes between citizens of Israel. The priests will be ordered to be exemplary in keeping all the laws and ordinances of God, especially in observing the Sabbath Day.

*Eze 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.*

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

*Eze 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 priests of God in that day are not to have physical contact with dead bodies. The exception will be the allowance of handling the dead body of their immediate family. Again, the greater point is that the priests are to be exemplary of holiness and purity in that day. The thought parallels that of I Timothy 4:12.

*1Ti 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

If a priest is defiled by a dead body, he must undergo the prescribed rites for cleansing and then be quarantined from Temple service for seven days. After the prescribed cleansing and period of waiting is accomplished, the priest can then reenter the sacred precincts of the Temple and offer a sin offering to the Lord.

*Eze 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.*

In restoring themselves to service, the priest will effectually restore his divine inheritance. That inheritance is the Lord Himself. He has promised to take care of His servants. Accordingly, the priests of God in that day will own no property. The Lord will be their inheritance and investment. He will take care of His servants. Also implied is that unresolved sin will reduce divine inheritance and reward. That remains true to this day.

*Eze 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.*

*Eze 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.*

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

The priests in that day will be allowed to freely eat of the various sacrifices offered at the Temple. It will be part of God's way of taking care of them. The non-burnt offerings will become the domain of the priests after they are offered, such as the produce of the first-fruit offerings, grain offerings, and even dough. In so doing, the priests will be able to pray and ask for God's blessing upon the homes of the supplicants, God's people.

The priests in that day will be forbidden to eat any meat of an animal which died on its own or was killed by another animal. Here, we are able to see some of the duties and responsibilities of the priests of the millennial Temple as described in this chapter.

*John Gill had this to say about verse 31.*

**The priests shall not eat of anything that is dead of itself, or torn,....** They shall have no need to eat of such things, being plentifully provided for with better; nor will it become them so to do through avarice, not allowing themselves to enjoy what is liberally given them. Here the Jewish doctors (t) observe that it is said, the priests shall not eat of these things, suggesting that Israelites might; this puzzles them, therefore they say, Elijah will explain this verse; and the gloss says, till Elijah comes, and explains it to us, we know not how to explain it. In the mystic sense it may signify, that the priests of the Lord should have no communication with such as are dead in sin, or are given to rapine and violence, and should abstain from everything of this kind themselves.

**Whether it be fowl or beast;** whether Pharisees and high flown professors of religion, or earthly and worldly persons, and such that are immersed in carnal pleasures, in sensual and brutish lusts. The allusion is to the law in [Lev\\_17:15](#), which was common to all Israelites, priests and people.

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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