

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### **Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious Part LXX: Israel's Boundaries In The Kingdom: Lessons On Possessions (Ezekiel 47:13-23)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. The Millennial Kingdom that God will provide for His people will display His great grace and goodness, and one particular illustration of that provision is described in His directions for the national boundaries of Israel.
- B. Ezekiel 47:13-23 provides that description, and we view it for our insight and edification (as follows):

#### **II. Israel's Boundaries In The Kingdom: Lessons On Possessions, Ezekiel 47:13-23.**

- A. God has planned for Israel to have very specific land boundaries in the Millennial Kingdom, Ezekiel 47:13-23:
  - 1. When God had promised Israel's patriarch Abraham the land of Palestine to him and his descendants forever, that promise was intended to be a lasting one, Ezekiel 47:13-14.
  - 2. In Genesis 15:18, God had promised Abraham the land from the Euphrates River down to the Nile River in Egypt. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Genesis 15:18-21) Israel never obtained all that land, and the closest they came to obtaining it all occurred in Solomon's reign when he controlled but did not inhabit all the land from the Euphrates to Wadi el-Arish just south of modern-day Gaza, Ibid., fn. to 1 Kings 8:65.
  - 3. Significantly, Israel's boundaries in the Millennial Kingdom given in Ezekiel 47:13-23, as in the case of Israel in Solomon's day, do not reach the full length promised to Abraham (Ibid., fn. to Ezekiel 47:13-20), so the boundaries supplied in Ezekiel 47:13-23 likely present the area allotted to Israel for her residences though she will control the land all the way from the Nile River in Egypt up to the Euphrates River, Ibid.
  - 4. Accordingly, for her residences, Israel's northern boundary will run from the Mediterranean Sea north of Tyre to a point near Damascus (Ezekiel 47:15-17), her eastern border will be formed by the Jordan River and the Dead Sea with no tribes settling east of those bodies of water (Ezekiel 47:18), her southern border will run from a little below the Dead Sea to the Wadi el-Arish, the "river of Egypt" in the KJV (Ezekiel 47:19; Ibid., fn. to Isaiah 27:12) that empties into the Mediterranean Sea. (Ibid., fn. to Ezekiel 47:13-20).
  - 5. This land west of the Jordan and Dead Sea will be divided up for the twelve tribes by lot, Ezekiel 47:22a.
  - 6. In addition, aliens who want to associate with Israel will be "considered native-born Israelites" who will "be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel," Ezekiel 47:22b. Wherever the alien decides to make his home in Israel, there he is will be allotted an inheritance with God's blessing, Ezekiel 47:23.
- B. God's setting of these boundaries in view of Israel's history offer significant lessons for us on our possessions:
  - 1. There is a great lesson on possessions we can learn from God's setting of Israel's future eastern boundary:
    - a. God did not initially plan for any of Israel's tribes to settle east of the Jordan River, explaining Moses' expression of anger when he heard of the desire of two-and-a-half tribes to inherit that land, Numbers 32:2-15. However, the great abundance of livestock owned by the two-and-a-half tribes and their belief that the land east of the Jordan was well-suited for their livestock led them to desire that land, Num. 32:1.
    - b. Moses had permitted the two-and-a-half tribes to inherit the land east of the Jordan River if their warriors first helped the other tribes conquer their lands that were west of the Jordan, Numbers 32:16-42.
    - c. However, because the Jordan River was a natural barrier between the two-and-a-half tribes and the rest of Israel, a lack of communication between them and the rest of Israel over an issue almost led to a civil war, Joshua 22:10-34. Also, the two-and-a-half tribes east of the Jordan later suffered great affliction from invading Gentiles due to their lack of rapid help from the other tribes west of the Jordan, cf. Amos 1:3.
    - d. All these problems will be avoided in the Millennial Kingdom when all 12 tribes dwell together west of the Jordan. We thus learn not to aim to have many possessions, what led to the various problems the two-and-a-half tribes faced east of the Jordan because of the abundance of their livestock (1 Timothy 6:10)!
  - 2. There is a great lesson on possessions in the inheritance of Gentiles in Israel: God in grace will let Gentiles who will be believers upon entering the Millennial Kingdom inherit land in Israel opposite the case in the Old Testament. Gentiles in the Old Testament were pagans whose presence in the land threatened Israel's holiness. Once Gentiles are saved, there will then be no need to restrict them from owning land in Israel!

**Lesson: Israel's boundaries and the right of inheritance for resident aliens in the Millennial Kingdom instruct us today on the value of our rightly relating to God for salvation and accepting His will regarding what we are to own.**

**Application: May we not aim to be rich as a goal in life, but rightly relate to God and be content with His supplies.**