

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### **Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious**

#### **Part LXXI: Israel's Tribal Allotments In The Kingdom: Lessons In Relationships (Ezekiel 48:1-35)**

##### **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 tribal allotments for Israel.
- B. Ezekiel 48:1-35 presents those tribal allotments, offering timeless lessons in relationships (as follows):

##### **II. Israel's Tribal Allotments In The Kingdom: Lessons In Relationships, Ezekiel 48:1-35.**

- A. Ezekiel 48:1-34 provided the layout of the tribal allotments of Israel's twelve tribes (as follows):
  - 1. The tribal allotments in the Millennial Kingdom will each run from the nation's eastern border to its western border, the Mediterranean Sea, so each tribe will have access to the ocean while also possessing lands that include a wide variety of geological features running east to west.
  - 2. Starting in the north and running south to the temple area will be the lands of Dan, then Asher, then Naphtali, then Manasseh, then Ephraim, then Reuben and then Judah, Ezekiel 48:1-7.
  - 3. Ezekiel 48:8-22 describes (again, cf. Ezek. 45:1-8) the sacred portion of the land that will run from the nation's eastern border to its western border on the Mediterranean Sea, including the sanctuary (Ezek. 48:8-9), the priests' portion (Ezek. 45:10-12), the Levites' portion (Ezek. 45:13-14), the city (Ezek. 48:15-20) and Prince David's portion (Ezek. 48:21-22); Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Ezekiel 48:8-22.
  - 4. Continuing south of the sacred portion will be the tribal allotments of Benjamin, then Simeon, then Issachar, then Zebulun and finally Gad, each tribe's border running from the nation's eastern border to its western border, the Mediterranean Sea, Ezekiel 48:23-29.
  - 5. There will be twelve gates for Jerusalem, three on each of its four sides, with each gate bearing the name of a tribe: on the north will the gates for Reuben, Judah and Levi, on the east the gates for Joseph's sons (Manasseh and Ephraim) and Dan, on the south the gates for Simeon, Issachar and Zebulun and on the west the gates for Gad, Asher and Naphtali, Ezek. 48:30-34. Each tribe will be able to use its own gate by either entering it directly from same side as its tribal allotment or at least to a side of the city without having to circle around to the opposite side of the city from which its tribal land allotment lies!
- B. Ezekiel 48:35 claims the city will be called, "The Lord is there," giving the city and nation its greatest fame!
- C. The lessons on relationships with this layout are as timeless as they are significant (as follows):
  - 1. First, God will give each tribe access to the ocean and to the geographical features running east-to-west in the Promised Land. Each tribe will be treated without favoritism, cf. Acts 10:34-35.
  - 2. Second, God's placing the tribal allotments and city gates so each tribe might enter the city without circling around the city exemplifies His honor of these tribes, showing we are to honor all men, cf. 1 Peter 2:17a.
  - 3. Third, the gates on the city's north side are named for tribes in prominent positions: Reuben, Jacob's eldest, Judah that produced the royalty and Levi that produced the priesthood. Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1316. God wants us to honor those in leadership, cf. 1 Timothy 5:17.
  - 4. Fourth, the gates on the east side represent Rachel's sons Joseph (and his sons Manasseh and Ephraim), Benjamin and Dan, the son of Rachel's handmaid, Bilhah, and the gates on the south side represent Leah's sons Simeon, Issachar and Zebulun, Ibid., p. 1316-1317. God exemplifies our need to honor our parents, not only our fathers (in a patristic society as in Israel's case), but also our mothers, cf. Exodus 20:12.
  - 5. Fifth, the gates on the west side honor the handmaids that Leah and Rachel used to bear children in their behalf: Gad and Asher were born to Leah's handmaid Zilpah and Naphtali was born to Rachel's handmaid Bilhah, Ibid., p. 1317. God exemplified the need to respect the mothers who were handmaids of a lower social status than Jacob's wives Rachel and Leah, pointing us again to 1 Peter 2:17a to honor all people.
  - 6. Sixth, the new name of Jerusalem displays our need to honor God above all other beings!

***Lesson:*** *Israel's tribal allotments in the Millennial Kingdom teach us to show no favoritism with people, but to honor all people, to honor in particular those in prominent positions and to honor women, be they of higher or lower social status. However, we are to honor the Lord above all other beings.*

***Application:*** *May we recall that God has exemplified how we are to treat every person as made in His image who thus deserves to be honored and respected without favoritism, and may we honor God above all other beings.*