

**VISION OF THE NEW TEMPLE**

**EZEKIEL 40-48**

## Introductioun to chapters 40-48

The final section of the Ezekiel scroll, comprising chapters 40-48, is in the form of a vision. It invites comparison with an earlier vision (chapters 8-11). In the earlier vision the prophet saw the departure of YHWH from the sanctuary which had become polluted. Here he sees YHWH taking possession of a cleansed temple area that surrounds the sanctuary and protects it from contamination. We are reminded of the goal of the long journey from Egypt to the Promised Land:

You brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your own possession,  
the place, YHWH, that you made your abode,  
the sanctuary, YHWH, that your hands have established.

– Exodus 15:17

In the Priestly version of the Sinai narrative, Moses sees the divine glory and receives a detailed description of the tabernacle he is to construct, including its furnishings (see Exodus 24:15-18, 25-31). He is commanded to see that everything is made in accordance with the model that was revealed to him on the mountain (Exodus 25:9, 40).

Some of Ezekiel's stipulations did not win the day, as a comparison with the orthodox Priestly parts of the Pentateuch reveal. Ezekiel 45:18 attempts to establish a rule for the offering of the first month. Numbers 28:11 expresses a different rule. There are discrepancies also in the liturgical calendar (compare Ezekiel 45:18-25; 46:1-15 with Numbers 28-29). Similarly with Levitical territory (compare Ezekiel 45:5; 48:13-14 with Numbers 35:1-8), and laws of inheritance (compare Ezekiel 46:16-18 with Numbers 36). If the rules in Ezekiel were tried in post-exilic Judah, Numbers indicates that they needed to change in the light of experience. What little we know of the dimensions of the temple built by Zerubbabel and Jeshua do not fit with the dimensions described in the following chapters.

Blenkinsopp (page 197) offers the following advice:

There are enough allusions in chapters 40-48 of a mythic-symbolic and idealistic kind to rule out the suggestion that a literal program or blueprint for the future was intended.

These chapters are seen as the fulfilment of the promises made by YHWH and included in chapters 34-37. Among these promises a special place is held by Ezekiel 37:26-28. Relevant, too, is an earlier oracle:

For on my holy mountain, the mountain height of Israel, says the Lord YHWH, there all the house of Israel, all of them, shall serve me in the land; there I will accept them, and there I will require your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your sacred things. As a pleasing odour I will accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples, and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will manifest my holiness among you in the sight of the nations. You shall know that I am YHWH, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country that I swore to give to your ancestors.

– Ezekiel 20:40-42

As with the rest of the Ezekiel scroll, so here in chapters 40-48, there are signs of updating, explanations and clarifications added by the Ezekiel School to help later generations grasp the intended message of the vision granted to the prophet. This is clear in the first section (chapters 40-42) which describe the layout of the new temple.

The 'vision' is dated in 573, 25 years after the beginning of the exile (598), and 14 years after the destruction of Jerusalem (587). No month is mentioned, but the tenth day and the reference to the beginning of the year (calculated in some biblical texts as celebrated in autumn in the seventh month) suggests that the date is intended to recall the following:

You shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month—on the day of atonement—you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family.

– Leviticus 25:9-10

As we shall see the number 25 recurs throughout the text. Are we to see this as the turning point of the exile, the halfway point to the Jubilee Year that celebrates liberation (see Leviticus 25:10).

The 'very high mountain' of verse 2 is Jerusalem, with an allusion to Isaiah:

In days to come the mountain of YHWH's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills

– Isaiah 2:2

In his vision the prophet sees a man who is to be his guide and whose role is to give an exact measurement of the ground plan of the purified temple. The disarray of the older temple, described in chapter 8, is not going to be repeated. Ezekiel is to pay close attention and to proclaim what he sees.

**<sup>1</sup>In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was struck down, on that very day, the hand of YHWH was upon me, and he brought me there.**

**<sup>2</sup>He brought me, in visions of God, to the land of Israel, and set me down upon a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south.**

**<sup>3</sup>When he brought me there, a man was there, whose appearance shone like bronze, with a linen cord and a measuring reed in his hand; and he was standing in the gateway.**

**<sup>4</sup>The man said to me, "Son of man, look closely and listen attentively, and set your mind upon all that I shall show you, for you were brought here in order that I might show it to you; declare all that you see to the house of Israel."**

1. Surrounding wall (40:5)

**<sup>5</sup>Now there was a wall all around the outside of the temple area. The length of the measuring rod in the man's hand was six long cubits, each being a cubit and a handbreadth in length; so he measured the thickness of the wall, one measuring rod; and the height, one measuring rod.**

The 'long cubit' is defined in verse 5. In 2 Chronicles 3:3, in connection with Solomon's building the first temple, it is called a 'cubit of the old standard'. It is a sixth of a cubit longer than the ordinary cubit, 518mm as against 444mm. Remembering that the length of a cubit is imprecise, we might say that a cubit is about 50cms, and six long cubits is a little over 3 metres. This is the only time that height is measured. The rest of the measurements refer only to the ground plan.

2. Outer east gate (40:6-16)

The eastern gate is described first. It was through the east gate that the glory of YHWH left the temple (10:19), and it will come back in through the same gate (43:1ff). We are meant to envisage the steps as being on the outside of the gate structure. Archeology has revealed gates of similar measurements in 9th century cities of Megiddo and Hazor (and possibly Gezer).

**<sup>6</sup>Then he entered the gateway facing east, going up its steps, and measured the threshold of the gate, one rod deep. There were <sup>7</sup>recesses, and each recess was one rod wide and one rod deep; and the space between the recesses, five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the vestibule of the gate at the inner end was one rod deep. <sup>8</sup>Then he measured the inner vestibule of the gateway, one cubit. <sup>9</sup>Then he measured the vestibule of the gateway, eight cubits; and its pilasters, two cubits; and the vestibule of the gate was at the inner end.**

**<sup>10</sup>There were three recesses on either side of the east gate; the three were of the same size; and the pilasters on either side were of the same size.**

**<sup>11</sup>Then he measured the width of the opening of the gateway, ten cubits; and the width of the gateway, thirteen cubits. <sup>12</sup>There was a barrier before the recesses, one cubit on either side; and the recesses were six cubits on either side. <sup>13</sup>Then he measured the gate from the back of the one recess to the back of the other, a width of twenty-five cubits, from wall to wall. <sup>14</sup>He measured also the vestibule, twenty cubits; and the gate next to the pilaster on every side of the court. <sup>15</sup>From the front of the gate at the entrance to the end of the inner vestibule of the gate was fifty cubits. <sup>16</sup>The recesses and their pilasters had windows, with shutters on the inside of the gateway all around, and the vestibules also had windows on the inside all around; and on the pilasters were palm trees.**

## 3. Outer court (40:17-18)

From Jeremiah 35-36 we learn that leading citizens had chambers in the temple precincts. They may have opened onto the courtyard (compare Ezra 8:29; 10:6). The outer court is described as ‘lower’. One had to climb 8 steps to reach the inner court (see verses 31, 34, 37).

<sup>17</sup>Then he brought me into the outer court; there were chambers there, and a pavement, all around the court; thirty chambers fronted on the pavement. <sup>8</sup>The pavement ran along the side of the gates, corresponding to the length of the gates; this was the lower pavement.

## 4. Distance between outer and inner gate (40:19)

<sup>19</sup>Then he measured the distance from the inner front of the lower gate to the outer front of the inner court, one hundred cubits.

## 5. Outer north gate (40:20-23)

<sup>20</sup>Then he measured the gate of the outer court that faced north—its depth and width. <sup>21</sup>Its recesses, three on either side, and its pilasters and its vestibule were of the same size as those of the first gate; its depth was fifty cubits, and its width twenty-five cubits. <sup>22</sup>Its windows, its vestibule, and its palm trees were of the same size as those of the gate that faced toward the east. Seven steps led up to it; and its vestibule was on the inside. <sup>23</sup>Opposite the gate on the north, as on the east, was a gate to the inner court; he measured from gate to gate, one hundred cubits.

## 6. Outer south gate (40:24-27)

<sup>24</sup>Then he led me toward the south, and there was a gate on the south; and he measured its pilasters and its vestibule; they had the same dimensions as the others. <sup>25</sup>There were windows all around in it and in its vestibule, like the windows of the others; its depth was fifty cubits, and its width twenty-five cubits. <sup>26</sup>There were seven steps leading up to it; its vestibule was on the inside. It had palm trees on its pilasters, one on either side. <sup>27</sup>There was a gate on the south of the inner court; and he measured from gate to gate toward the south, one hundred cubits.

## 7. Inner south gate (40:28-31)

<sup>28</sup>Then he brought me to the inner court by the south gate, and he measured the south gate; it was of the same dimensions as the others. <sup>29</sup>Its recesses, its pilasters, and its vestibule were of the same size as the others; and there were windows all around in it and in its vestibule; its depth was fifty cubits, and its width twenty-five cubits. <sup>30</sup>There were vestibules all around, twenty-five cubits deep and five cubits wide. <sup>31</sup>Its vestibule faced the outer court, and palm trees were on its pilasters, and its stairway had eight steps.

8. Inner east gate (40:32-34)

<sup>32</sup>Then he brought me to the inner court on the east side, and he measured the gate; it was of the same size as the others. <sup>33</sup>Its recesses, its pilasters, and its vestibule were of the same dimensions as the others; and there were windows all around in it and in its vestibule; its depth was fifty cubits, and its width twenty-five cubits. <sup>34</sup>Its vestibule faced the outer court, and it had palm trees on its pilasters, on either side; and its stairway had eight steps.

9. Inner north gate (40:35-37)

<sup>35</sup>Then he brought me to the north gate, and he measured it; it had the same dimensions as the others. <sup>36</sup>Its recesses, its pilasters, and its vestibule were of the same size as the others; and it had windows all around. Its depth was fifty cubits, and its width twenty-five cubits. <sup>37</sup>Its vestibule faced the outer court, and it had palm trees on its pilasters, on either side; and its stairway had eight steps.

Insert 1. The furnishings at the inner north gate for preparing sacrifices (40:38-43)

In the outside section of this chamber the cleaning of the offerings takes place (verse 38), after the animals have been slaughtered in the inside section (verse 39).

<sup>38</sup>There was a chamber with its door in the vestibule of the gate, where the burnt offering was to be washed. <sup>39</sup>And in the vestibule of the gate were two tables on either side, on which the burnt offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering were to be slaughtered. <sup>40</sup>On the outside of the vestibule at the entrance of the north gate were two tables; and on the other side of the vestibule of the gate were two tables. <sup>41</sup>Four tables were on the inside, and four tables on the outside of the side of the gate, eight tables, on which the sacrifices were to be slaughtered. <sup>42</sup>There were also four tables of hewn stone for the burnt offering, a cubit and a half long, and one cubit and a half wide, and one cubit high, on which the instruments were to be laid with which the burnt offerings and the sacrifices were slaughtered. <sup>43</sup>There were pegs, one handbreadth long, fastened all around the inside. And on the tables the flesh of the offering was to be laid.

Insert 2. The rooms for the priests (40:44-46)

<sup>44</sup>On the outside of the inner gateway there were chambers for the singers in the inner court, one at the side of the north gate facing south, the other at the side of the east gate facing north. <sup>45</sup>He said to me, "This chamber that faces south is for the priests who have charge of the temple, <sup>46</sup>and the chamber that faces north is for the priests who have charge of the altar; these are the descendants of Zadok, who alone among the descendants of Levi may come near to YHWH to minister to him."

## 10. Inner court and altar of sacrifice (40:47)

Everything is directed to the temple, hence the brief mention of the dimensions of the inner court, with special reference to the altar of sacrifice which is 'in front of the temple'.

**<sup>47</sup>He measured the court, one hundred cubits deep, and one hundred cubits wide, a square; and the altar was in front of the temple.**

## 11. Temple vestibule (40: 48-49)

Ten steps lead up to the temple. We know already that there are 7 steps leading up to the level of the outer (lower) court (see 40:22, 26), and 8 steps leading up from the lower court to the inner (upper) court. When we add 10 steps leading up from the inner court to the level of the temple, we have a total of 25 steps – a figure that keeps recurring in this chapter. As noted in relation to verse 1, the number highlights the mid-point of the 50 years of exile, looking forward to Jubilee and liberation. On the 'columns' see 1Kings 7:15-22; 2Chronicles 3:15-17, 4:12-13; 2Kings 25:13-17; Jeremiah 52:20-23.

**<sup>48</sup>Then he brought me to the vestibule of the temple and measured the pilasters of the vestibule, five cubits on either side; and the width of the gate was fourteen cubits; and the sidewalls of the gate were three cubits on either side. <sup>49</sup>The depth of the vestibule was twenty cubits, and the width twelve cubits; ten steps led up to it; and there were columns beside the pillars on either side.**

## 12. Temple (41:1-2)

**<sup>1</sup>Then he brought me into the temple, and measured the pilasters; on each side six cubits was the width of the pillars. <sup>2</sup>The width of the entrance was ten cubits; and the sidewalls of the entrance were five cubits on either side. He measured the length of the temple, forty cubits, and its width, twenty cubits.**

## 13. Inner sanctuary (41:3-4)

Note that the prophet is not taken into the most holy place. Note, too, that the silence is broken: 'And he said to me, This is the most holy place.'

**<sup>3</sup>Then he went into the inner room and measured the pilasters of the entrance, two cubits; and the width of the entrance, six cubits; and the sidewalls of the entrance, seven cubits. <sup>4</sup>He measured the depth of the room, twenty cubits, and its width, twenty cubits, beyond the nave. And he said to me, This is the most holy place.**

From the sparse information available to us of the temple of Solomon, it appears that Ezekiel's temple is based on the pre-exilic temple, but with the king's palace eliminated. Also the repetition of the number 25 indicates a symbolic reference to the ending of the exile and the liberation to which the exiles are looking forward. The post-exilic temple is one planned by YHWH alone. The number 7 is also implied: the six gates (3 outer and 3 inner) lead to the 7th structure: the temple. Is Ezekiel alluding to the 7th day of creation, culminating in the sanctified Sabbath (Genesis 2:3)?

14. Details of the temple and the area to the side and behind it (41:5-15)

Note that the sanctuary cannot be approached from behind. There are no gateways on the western side.

<sup>5</sup>Then he measured the wall of the temple, six cubits thick; and the width of the side chambers, four cubits, all around the temple. <sup>6</sup>The side chambers were in three stories, one over another, thirty in each story. There were offsets all around the wall of the temple to serve as supports for the side chambers, so that they should not be supported by the wall of the temple. <sup>7</sup>The passageway of the side chambers widened from story to story; for the structure was supplied with a stairway all around the temple. For this reason the structure became wider from story to story. One ascended from the bottom story to the uppermost story by way of the middle one. <sup>8</sup>I saw also that the temple had a raised platform all around; the foundations of the side chambers measured a full rod of six long cubits. <sup>9</sup>The thickness of the outer wall of the side chambers was five cubits; and the free space between the side chambers of the temple <sup>10</sup>and the chambers of the court was a width of twenty cubits all around the temple on every side. <sup>11</sup>The side chambers opened onto the area left free, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south; and the width of the part that was left free was five cubits all around. <sup>12</sup>The building that was facing the temple yard on the west side was seventy cubits wide; and the wall of the building was five cubits thick all around, and its depth ninety cubits. <sup>13</sup>Then he measured the temple, one hundred cubits deep; and the yard and the building with its walls, one hundred cubits deep; <sup>14</sup>also the width of the east front of the temple and the yard, one hundred cubits. <sup>15</sup>Then he measured the depth of the building facing the yard at the west, together with its galleries on either side, one hundred cubits.

Supplement 1. Wall decoration and interior furnishings (41:15-26)

This supplementary material invites comparison with the description of Solomon's temple in 1Kings 6. The post-exilic temple is considerably more modest. Neither cedar nor gold is mentioned

<sup>15</sup>The nave of the temple and the inner room and the outer vestibule <sup>16</sup>were paneled, and, all around, all three had windows with recessed frames. Facing the threshold the temple was paneled with wood all around, from the floor up to the windows (now the windows were covered), <sup>17</sup>to the space above the door, even to the inner room, and on the outside. And on all the walls all around in the inner room and the nave there was a pattern. <sup>18</sup>It was formed of cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. Each cherub had two faces: <sup>19</sup>a human face turned toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion turned toward the palm tree on the other side. They were carved on the whole temple all around; <sup>20</sup>from the floor to the area above the door, cherubim and palm trees were carved on the wall.

<sup>21</sup>The doorposts of the nave were square. In front of the holy place was something resembling <sup>22</sup>an altar of wood, three cubits high, two cubits long, and two cubits wide; its corners, its base, and its walls were of wood. He said to me, "This is the table that stands before YHWH." <sup>23</sup>The nave and the holy place had each a double door. <sup>24</sup>The doors had two leaves apiece, two swinging leaves for each door. <sup>25</sup>On the doors of the nave were carved cherubim and palm trees, such as were carved on the walls; and there was a canopy of wood in front of the vestibule outside. <sup>26</sup>And there were recessed windows and palm trees on either side, on the sidewalls of the vestibule.

Supplement 2. Priestly vestries (42:1-14)

<sup>1</sup>Then he led me out into the outer court, toward the north, and he brought me to the chambers that were opposite the temple yard and opposite the building on the north. <sup>2</sup>The length of the building that was on the north side was one hundred cubits, and the width fifty cubits. <sup>3</sup>Across the twenty cubits that belonged to the inner court, and facing the pavement that belonged to the outer court, the chambers rose gallery by gallery in three stories. <sup>4</sup>In front of the chambers was a passage on the inner side, ten cubits wide and one hundred cubits deep, and its entrances were on the north. <sup>5</sup>Now the upper chambers were narrower, for the galleries took more away from them than from the lower and middle chambers in the building. <sup>6</sup>For they were in three stories, and they had no pillars like the pillars of the outer court; for this reason the upper chambers were set back from the ground more than the lower and the middle ones. <sup>7</sup>There was a wall outside parallel to the chambers, toward the outer court, opposite the chambers, fifty cubits long. <sup>8</sup>For the chambers on the outer court were fifty cubits long, while those opposite the temple were one hundred cubits long. <sup>9</sup>At the foot of these chambers ran a passage that one entered from the east in order to enter them from the outer court. <sup>10</sup>The width of the passage is fixed by the wall of the court.

<sup>10</sup>On the south also, opposite the vacant area and opposite the building, there were chambers <sup>11</sup>with a passage in front of them; they were similar to the chambers on the north, of the same length and width, with the same exits and arrangements and doors. <sup>12</sup>So the entrances of the chambers to the south were entered through the entrance at the head of the corresponding passage, from the east, along the matching wall.

<sup>13</sup>Then he said to me, "The north chambers and the south chambers opposite the vacant area are the holy chambers, where the priests who approach YHWH shall eat the most holy offerings; there they shall deposit the most holy offerings—the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering, for the place is holy. <sup>14</sup>When the priests enter the holy place, they shall not go out of it into the outer court without laying there the vestments in which they minister, for these are holy; they shall put on other garments before they go near to the area open to the people."

## Conclusion

### 15. Conclusion of the measuring (42:15-20)

Note that the 'wall' in verse 20 performs the function of separating the sacred and the profane.

<sup>15</sup>When he had finished measuring the interior of the temple area, he led me out by the gate that faces east, and measured the temple area all around. <sup>16</sup>He measured the east side with the measuring reed, five hundred cubits by the measuring rod. <sup>17</sup>Then he turned and measured the north side, five hundred cubits by the measuring rod. <sup>18</sup>Then he turned and measured the south side, five hundred cubits by the measuring reed. <sup>20</sup>He measured it on the four sides. It had a wall around it, five hundred cubits long and five hundred cubits wide, to make a separation between the holy and the common.

In chapters 40-42 Ezekiel has been preparing us for this theophany. The glory of God returns to the purified sanctuary. Here we find the essence of his 'vision'. He refers back to two earlier visions: one where YHWH 'came to destroy the city'(8-11); the other 'by the river Chebar'(1:1 - 3:15).

The guide fades from the scene. In verse 7 it is YHWH who speaks from the inner sanctuary which is made 'holy' by the presence of the Holy One, who promises to 'reside among the people of Israel forever'(verse 7). We recall the prayer:

Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool.

– Psalm 132:7

No longer will the palace and the temple be separated by only a wall, with the sins of the kings, sins remembered after their death, polluting God's dwelling (verses 8-9).

In chapters 40-42, Ezekiel has already been carrying out the instructions given him in verses 10-11.

One of the chief duties of a priest was to declare God's will ('law, 'Torah'). Here YHWH reveals 'the law (תּוֹרָה) of the temple'(verse 12) to his priest, Ezekiel. It consists primarily in clearly separating the holy from the profane.

**<sup>1</sup>Then he brought me to the gate, the gate facing east. <sup>2</sup>And there, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east; the sound was like the sound of mighty waters; and the earth shone with his glory. <sup>3</sup>The vision I saw was like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the vision that I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. <sup>4</sup>As the glory of YHWH entered the temple by the gate facing east, <sup>5</sup>the spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and the glory of YHWH filled the temple. <sup>6</sup>While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me out of the temple.**

**<sup>7</sup>He said to me: Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet, where I will reside among the people of Israel forever. The house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their whoring, and by the corpses of their kings at their death. <sup>8</sup>When they placed their threshold by my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them, they were defiling my holy name by their abominations that they committed; therefore I have consumed them in my anger. <sup>9</sup>Now let them put away their idolatry and the corpses of their kings far from me, and I will reside among them forever.**

**<sup>10</sup>As for you, son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, and let them measure the pattern; and let them be ashamed of their iniquities. <sup>11</sup>When they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the plan of the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, and its whole form—all its ordinances and its entire plan and all its laws; and write it down in their sight, so that they may observe and follow the entire plan and all its ordinances. <sup>12</sup>This is the law of the temple: the whole territory on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. This is the law of the temple.**

## Altar for the burnt offering

### Altar for the burnt offering (43:13-17)

Note that the steps of the altar are on the eastern side (verse 17). This means that the altar faces to the west, that is, towards the sanctuary.

<sup>13</sup>These are the dimensions of the altar by cubits (the cubit being one cubit and a handbreadth): its base shall be one cubit high, and one cubit wide, with a rim of one span around its edge. This shall be the height of the altar: <sup>14</sup>From the base on the ground to the lower ledge, two cubits, with a width of one cubit; and from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge, four cubits, with a width of one cubit; <sup>15</sup>and the altar hearth, four cubits; and from the altar hearth projecting upward, four horns. <sup>16</sup>The altar hearth shall be square, twelve cubits long by twelve wide. <sup>17</sup>The ledge also shall be square, fourteen cubits long by fourteen wide, with a rim around it half a cubit wide, and its surrounding base, one cubit. Its steps shall face east.

### Dedication of the altar (43:18-27)

This exilic ritual regulation is from the priestly (Zadokite) Ezekiel School. In relation to a 'purification offering' (that is a sacrifice for sin), on the sacrifice of a bull see Leviticus 4:3-12 and 16:18; for 'salt' see Leviticus 2:13; for the offering of a goat see Leviticus 4:23-26 and 16:15; for the sacrifice of a ram, see Leviticus 5:15-19; and for the seven days see Leviticus 8:33-35.

<sup>18</sup>Then he said to me: Son of man, thus says the Lord YHWH: These are the ordinances for the altar: On the day when it is erected for offering burnt offerings upon it and for dashing blood against it, <sup>19</sup>you shall give to the levitical priests of the family of Zadok, who draw near to me to minister to me, says the Lord YHWH, a bull for a purification offering. <sup>20</sup>And you shall take some of its blood, and put it on the four horns of the altar, and on the four corners of the ledge, and upon the rim all around; thus you shall purify it and make atonement for it. <sup>21</sup>You shall also take the bull of the purification offering, and it shall be burnt in the appointed place belonging to the temple, outside the sacred area.

<sup>22</sup>On the second day you shall offer a male goat without blemish for a purification offering; and the altar shall be purified, as it was purified with the bull. <sup>23</sup>When you have finished purifying it, you shall offer a bull without blemish and a ram from the flock without blemish. <sup>24</sup>You shall present them before YHWH, and the priests shall throw salt on them and offer them up as a burnt offering to YHWH.

<sup>25</sup>For seven days you shall provide daily a goat for a purification offering; also a bull and a ram from the flock, without blemish, shall be provided.

<sup>26</sup>Seven days shall they make atonement for the altar and cleanse it, and so consecrate it. <sup>27</sup>When these days are over, then from the eighth day onward the priests shall offer upon the altar your burnt offerings and your offerings of well-being; and I will accept you, says the Lord YHWH.

## The closed outer eastern gate (44:1-3)

The fact that the east gate is closed reinforces YHWH's promise that he will stay for ever (see 43:9). Concerning the special prerogative given to 'the prince' (verse 3) see 46:8.

**<sup>1</sup>Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and it was shut. <sup>2</sup>YHWH said to me: This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it; for YHWH, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut.**

**<sup>3</sup>Only the prince, because he is a prince, may sit in it to eat food before YHWH; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out by the same way.**

## Renewed encounter with God and a commission (44:4-5)

These verses function as an introduction to the following material concerning Levites and Priests. Beyond that they introduce the material that runs to 46:18. There are echoes of phrases from 43:1-6. He is led via the north gate, for the east gate is shut. On the instruction to attend carefully to what he sees and hears see 40:4.

**<sup>4</sup>Then he brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple; and I looked, and lo! the glory of YHWH filled the temple of YHWH; and I fell upon my face. <sup>5</sup>YHWH said to me: Son of man, mark well, look closely, and listen attentively to all that I shall tell you concerning all the ordinances of the temple of YHWH and all its laws; and mark well those who may be admitted to the temple and all those who are to be excluded from the sanctuary.**

## Levites and Priests

YHWH condemns ‘the house of Israel’ for allowing foreigners into the sanctuary to offer sacrifices. To speak of foreigners as ‘uncircumcised in heart and flesh’ is to declare them unclean, that is to say, unable to enter into communion with the Holy One (see Jeremiah 4:4, 9:25; Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6; Leviticus 26:41). The law is repeated in verse 9. It is clear from Isaiah 56:3, 6-8 that the disciples of the Isaiah School were in disagreement with the Ezekiel School in this matter.

**<sup>6</sup>Say to the rebellious house, to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord YHWH: O house of Israel, let there be an end to all your abominations <sup>7</sup>in 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 with all your abominations. <sup>8</sup>And you have not kept charge of my sacred offerings; but you have appointed foreigners to act for you in keeping my charge in my sanctuary. <sup>9</sup>Thus says the Lord YHWH: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary.**

The punishment meted out to the Levites (verses 10-14) saw them restricted to menial Temple service. Some of the following did not prevail in the post-exilic temple, but this passage does witness to the victory of the Zadokite priests who came out on top in the struggle for priestly supremacy. It is significant that there is only one passing reference to Levites in the Priestly Book of Leviticus (Leviticus 25:32-33).

**<sup>10</sup>But the Levites who went far from me, going astray from me after their idols when Israel went astray, shall bear their punishment. <sup>11</sup>They shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the temple, and serving in the temple; they shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall attend on them and serve them. <sup>12</sup>Because they ministered to them before their idols and made the house of Israel stumble into iniquity, therefore I have sworn concerning them, says the Lord YHWH, that they shall bear their punishment. <sup>13</sup>They shall not come near to me, to serve me as priest, nor come near any of my sacred offerings, the things that are most sacred; but they shall bear their shame, and the consequences of the abominations that they have committed. <sup>14</sup>Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the temple, to do all its chores, all that is to be done in it.**

One group of ‘levitical priests’ is praised – the Zadokite group (see 40:46). Their fidelity wins them the right to serve as priests in the new temple.

**<sup>15</sup>But the levitical priests, the descendants 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 attend me to offer me the fat and the blood, says the Lord YHWH. <sup>16</sup>It is they who shall enter my sanctuary, it is they who shall approach my table, to minister to me, and they shall keep my charge.**

## Instructions for priests ministering before YHWH (44:17-31)

Priestly vestments (compare Exodus 28)

**<sup>17</sup>When they enter the gates of the inner court, they shall wear linen vestments; they shall have nothing of wool on them, while they minister at the gates of the inner court, and within. <sup>18</sup>They shall have linen turbans on their heads, and linen undergarments on their loins; they shall not bind themselves with anything that causes sweat. <sup>19</sup>When they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall remove the vestments in which they have been ministering, and lay them in the holy chambers; and they shall put on other garments, so that they may not communicate holiness to the people with their vestments.**

Re cutting of hair compare Leviticus 21:5. Re drinking compare Leviticus 10:9. Re marriage compare Leviticus 21:14. These are all taboos in relation to the need for a clean break between the profane and the sacred, the 'holy and the common' (verse 23). The same can be said of the instructions in verses 25-27 (compare Leviticus 21:1-3,11).

**<sup>20</sup>They shall not shave their heads or let their locks grow long; they shall only trim the hair of their heads. <sup>21</sup>No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court. <sup>22</sup>They shall not marry a widow, or a divorced woman, but only a virgin of the stock of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest. <sup>23</sup>They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean. <sup>24</sup>In a controversy they shall act as judges, and they shall decide it according to my judgments. They shall keep my laws and my statutes regarding all my appointed festivals, and they shall keep my sabbaths holy. <sup>25</sup>They shall not defile themselves by going near to a dead person; for father or mother, however, and for son or daughter, and for brother or unmarried sister they may defile themselves. <sup>26</sup>After he has become clean, they shall count seven days for him. <sup>27</sup>On the day that he goes into the holy place, into the inner court, to minister in the holy place, he shall offer his purification offering, says the Lord YHWH.**

Re verse 28 compare Deuteronomy 18:2 (see Psalm 16:15). Re verses 29-30 compare Leviticus 2:3,10; 6:16-18, 32-35; 7:6. Re verse 31 compare Leviticus 22:8.

**<sup>28</sup>This shall be their inheritance: I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no holding in Israel; I am their holding. <sup>29</sup>They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. <sup>30</sup>The first of all the first fruits of all kinds, and every offering of all kinds from all your offerings, shall belong to the priests; you shall also give to the priests the first of your dough, in order that a blessing may rest on your house. <sup>31</sup>The priests shall not eat of anything, whether bird or animal, that died of itself or was torn by animals.**

Property rights including Levites and Priests (45:1-8)

This section draws on 47:13 - 48:29. There priests are allocated land. However in 44:28 we were told that priests do not possess land. This section attempts to harmonise these two positions by stating that while the priests do not own land, they have the right to have use of a house and to enjoy the fruits of the land. This is yet another indication of the success of the Zadokite priests in reducing other groups of priests to being Levites.

**<sup>1</sup>When you allot the land as an inheritance, you shall set aside for YHWH a portion of the land as a holy district, twenty-five thousand cubits long and twenty thousand cubits wide; it shall be holy throughout its entire extent. <sup>2</sup>Of this, a square plot of five hundred by five hundred cubits shall be for the sanctuary, with fifty cubits for an open space around it. <sup>3</sup>In the holy district you shall measure off a section twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand wide, in which shall be the sanctuary, the most holy place. <sup>4</sup>It shall be a holy portion of the land; it shall be for the priests, who minister in the sanctuary and approach YHWH to minister to him; and it shall be both a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary. <sup>5</sup>Another section, twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand cubits wide, shall be for the Levites who minister at the temple, as their holding for cities to live in. <sup>6</sup>Alongside the portion set apart as the holy district you shall assign as a holding for the city an area five thousand cubits wide, and twenty-five thousand cubits long; it shall belong to the whole house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>And to the prince shall belong the land on both sides of the holy district and the holding of the city, alongside the holy district and the holding of the city, on the west and on the east, corresponding in length to one of the tribal portions, and extending from the western to the eastern boundary <sup>8</sup>of the land. It is to be his property in Israel. And my princes shall no longer oppress my people; but they shall let the house of Israel have the land according to their tribes.**

The political leaders are admonished (45:9)

The injustice of the 'princes of Israel' was significant in bringing about the catastrophe of 598 and 587. It must not be repeated.

**<sup>9</sup>Thus says the Lord YHWH: Enough, O princes of Israel! Put away violence and oppression, and do what is just and right. Cease your evictions of my people, says the Lord YHWH.**

Right measures (45:10-12)

Deuteronomy 25:13-16 and Leviticus 19:35-36 insist on justice in measures. The prophets Amos 8:5, Hosea 12:8 and Micah 6:10-11 speak out against injustice in this area. The ephah measures grain volume; the bath measures liquid volume. Both are just under 40 litres. The homer originally referred to the burden carried by a donkey. The shekel, gerah and mina measure weight.

<sup>10</sup>You shall have honest balances, an honest ephah, and an honest bath. <sup>11</sup>The ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure, the bath containing one-tenth of a homer, and the ephah one-tenth of a homer; the homer shall be the standard measure. <sup>12</sup>The shekel shall be twenty gerahs. Twenty shekels, twenty-five shekels, and fifteen shekels shall make a mina for you.

Right offerings (45:13-17)

<sup>13</sup>This is the offering that you shall make: one-sixth of an ephah from each homer of wheat, and one-sixth of an ephah from each homer of barley, <sup>14</sup>and as the fixed portion of oil, one-tenth of a bath from each cor (the cor, like the homer, contains ten baths); <sup>15</sup>and one sheep from every flock of two hundred, from the pastures of Israel. This is the offering for cereal offerings, burnt offerings, and communion offerings, to make atonement for them, says the Lord YHWH.

<sup>16</sup>All the people of the land shall join with the prince in Israel in making this offering. <sup>18</sup>But this shall be the obligation of the prince regarding the burnt offerings, cereal offerings, and drink offerings, at the festivals, the new moons, and the sabbaths, all the appointed festivals of the house of Israel: he shall provide the purification offerings, cereal offerings, the burnt offerings, and the communion offerings, to make atonement for the house of Israel.

The great festivals and the prince's offering (45:18-25)

The following represents an attempt to reform the pilgrimage festivals, notably by omitting pentecost and by highlighting atonement. Numbers 28-29 demonstrate that the older customs prevailed in post-exilic Judah.

<sup>18</sup>Thus says the Lord YHWH: In the first month, on the first day of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish, and purify the sanctuary.

<sup>19</sup>The priest shall take some of the blood of the purification offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and the posts of the gate of the inner court. <sup>20</sup>You shall do the same on the seventh day of the month for anyone who has sinned through error or ignorance; so you shall make atonement for the temple.

<sup>21</sup>In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall celebrate the pilgrimage festival of the passover, and for seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten. <sup>22</sup>On that day the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a young bull for a sin offering. <sup>23</sup>And during the seven days of the festival he shall provide as a burnt offering to YHWH seven young bulls and seven rams without blemish, on each of the seven days; and a male goat daily for a sin offering. <sup>24</sup>He shall provide as a grain offering an ephah for each bull, an ephah for each ram, and a hin of oil to each ephah. <sup>25</sup>In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month and for the seven days of the pilgrimage festival, he shall make the same provision for purification offerings, burnt offerings, and cereal offerings, and for the oil.

Instructions related to the gates and to sabbath and new moon offerings (46:1-15)

<sup>1</sup>Thus says the Lord YHWH: The gate of the inner court that faces east shall remain closed on the six working days; but on the sabbath day it shall be opened and on the day of the new moon it shall be opened. <sup>2</sup>The prince shall enter by the vestibule of the gate from outside, and shall take his stand by the post of the gate. The priests shall offer his burnt offering and his communion offerings, and he shall bow down at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be closed until evening. <sup>3</sup>The people of the land shall bow down at the entrance of that gate before YHWH on the sabbaths and on the new moons. <sup>4</sup>The burnt offering that the prince offers to YHWH on the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish and a ram without blemish; <sup>5</sup>and the cereal offering with the ram shall be an ephah, and the cereal offering with the lambs shall be as much as he wishes to give, together with a hin of oil to each ephah. <sup>6</sup>On the day of the new moon he shall offer a young bull without blemish, and six lambs and a ram, which shall be without blemish; <sup>7</sup>as a cereal offering he shall provide an ephah with the bull and an ephah with the ram, and with the lambs as much as he wishes, together with a hin of oil to each ephah. <sup>8</sup>When the prince enters, he shall come in by the vestibule of the gate, and he shall go out by the same way.

<sup>9</sup>When the people of the land come before YHWH at the appointed festivals, whoever enters by the north gate to worship shall go out by the south gate; and whoever enters by the south gate shall go out by the north gate: they shall not return by way of the gate by which they entered, but shall go out straight ahead. <sup>10</sup>When they come in, the prince shall come in with them; and when they go out, he shall go out. <sup>11</sup>At the festivals and the appointed seasons the cereal offering with a young bull shall be an ephah, and with a ram an ephah, and with the lambs as much as one wishes to give, together with a hin of oil to an ephah. <sup>12</sup>When the prince provides a freewill offering, either a burnt offering or communion offerings as a freewill offering to YHWH, the gate facing east shall be opened for him; and he shall offer his burnt offering or his communion offerings as he does on the sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he has gone out the gate shall be closed.

<sup>13</sup>He shall provide a lamb, a yearling, without blemish, for a burnt offering to YHWH daily; morning by morning he shall provide it. <sup>14</sup>And he shall provide a cereal offering with it morning by morning regularly, one-sixth of an ephah, and one-third of a hin of oil to moisten the choice flour, as a cereal offering to YHWH; this is the ordinance for all time. <sup>15</sup>Thus the lamb and the cereal offering and the oil shall be provided, morning by morning, as a regular burnt offering.

## Regularising royal giving and acquiring of property (46:16-18)

<sup>16</sup>Thus says the Lord YHWH: If the prince makes a gift to any of his sons out of his inheritance, it shall belong to his sons, it is their holding by inheritance. <sup>17</sup>But if he makes a gift out of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his to the year of liberty; then it shall revert to the prince; only his sons may keep a gift from his inheritance. <sup>18</sup>The prince shall not take any of the inheritance of the people, thrusting them out of their holding; he shall give his sons their inheritance out of his own holding, so that none of my people shall be dispossessed of their holding.

## The royal chambers and the sacrificial kitchens (46:19-24)

Note the return of the supernatural guide, who was last mentioned in 44:1-4. The regulations from 44:5 to 46:18 have been attributed directly to YHWH.

<sup>19</sup>Then he brought me through the entrance, which was at the side of the gate, to the north row of the holy chambers for the priests; and there I saw a place at the extreme western end of them. <sup>20</sup>He said to me, "This is the place where the priests shall boil the reparation offering and the purification offering, and where they shall bake the cereal offering, in order not to bring them out into the outer court and so communicate holiness to the people."

<sup>21</sup>Then he brought me out to the outer court, and led me past the four corners of the court; and in each corner of the court there was a court — <sup>22</sup>in the four corners of the court were small courts, forty cubits long and thirty wide; the four were of the same size. <sup>23</sup>On the inside, around each of the four courts was a row of masonry, with hearths made at the bottom of the rows all around. <sup>24</sup>Then he said to me, "These are the kitchens where those who serve at the temple shall boil the sacrifices of the people."

Healing from the sanctuary (47:1-12)

The land has been ravaged by the disasters of 598 and 587. From YHWH present in the sanctuary, healing will spread out to all the surrounding countryside. The number 4 symbolises the totality of the healing. The water flowing from the temple does not describe a physical river, but a symbolic river of healing (see the description of paradise in Genesis 2:10-14). The 'Arabah'(verse 8) is the Jordan valley (Deuteronomy 4:49; Joshua 12:8). The 'Sea'(verse 8) is the Dead Sea, the water surface of which is nearly 400 metres below sea level, and so salty that fish cannot live there. En-Gedi (verse 10) is on the western side of the Dead Sea. En-eglaim is on the opposite, eastern, side.

**<sup>1</sup>Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple; there, water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. <sup>2</sup>Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and the water was coming out on the south side. <sup>3</sup>Going on eastward with a cord in his hand, the man measured one thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. <sup>4</sup>Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the waist. <sup>5</sup>Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be crossed. <sup>6</sup>He said to me, "Mortal, have you seen this?"**

**Then he led me back along the bank of the river. <sup>7</sup>As I came back, I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on the one side and on the other.**

**<sup>8</sup>He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the Sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water will become fresh. <sup>9</sup>Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes.**

**<sup>10</sup>People will stand fishing beside the sea from En-gedi to En-eglaim; it will be a place for the spreading of nets; its fish will be of a great many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. <sup>11</sup>But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. <sup>12</sup>On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."**

This passage is behind the Book of Revelation chapter 22. John 7:38, too, may draw from it.

## Allocation of Tribal Lands (47:13 - 48:29)

Just as the new exodus will surpass the first one, and just as the new sanctuary will be holier than the first one, so the allocation of land will take place in a new and exemplary way. YHWH will allocate the land (not a new Joshua).

**<sup>13</sup>Thus says the Lord YHWH: These are the boundaries by which you shall divide the land for inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph shall have two portions. <sup>14</sup>You shall divide it equally; I swore to give it to your ancestors, and this land shall fall to you as your inheritance.**

The ideal boundaries of the restored Israel

Note the close relationship with Numbers 34. Note also that the area east of the Jordan is not included in Ezekiel's list. To the west, the Philistine area is counted as being part of Israel. The actual size of post-exilic Judah was about 45ks by 60ks.

**<sup>15</sup>This shall be the boundary of the land: On the north side, from the Great Sea by way of Hethlon to Lebo-hamath, and on to Zedad, <sup>16</sup>Berothah, Sibraim (which lies between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath), as far as Hazer-hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran. <sup>17</sup>So the boundary shall run from the sea to Hazar-enon, which is north of the border of Damascus, with the border of Hamath to the north. This shall be the north side. <sup>18</sup>On the east side, between Hauran and Damascus; along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel; to the eastern sea and as far as Tamar. This shall be the east side. <sup>19</sup>On the south side, it shall run from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribath-kadesh, from there along the Wadi of Egypt to the Great Sea. This shall be the south side. <sup>20</sup>On the west side, the Great Sea shall be the boundary to a point opposite Lebo-hamath. This shall be the west side.**

Note the inclusion of 'the aliens who reside among you'.

**<sup>21</sup>So you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel. <sup>22</sup>You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who reside among you and have begotten children among you. They shall be to you as citizens of Israel; with you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. <sup>23</sup>In whatever tribe aliens reside, there you shall assign them their inheritance, says the Lord YHWH.**

Allocation of land to tribes Part 1 (48:1-7)

<sup>1</sup>These are the names of the tribes: Beginning at the northern border, on the Hethlon road, from Lebo-hamath, as far as Hazar-enon (which is on the border of Damascus, with Hamath to the north), and extending from the east side to the west, Dan, one portion.

<sup>2</sup>Adjoining the territory of Dan, from the east side to the west, Asher, one portion.

<sup>3</sup>Adjoining the territory of Asher, from the east side to the west, Naphtali, one portion.

<sup>4</sup>Adjoining the territory of Naphtali, from the east side to the west, Manasseh, one portion.

<sup>5</sup>Adjoining the territory of Manasseh, from the east side to the west, Ephraim, one portion.

<sup>6</sup>Adjoining the territory of Ephraim, from the east side to the west, Reuben, one portion.

<sup>7</sup>Adjoining the territory of Reuben, from the east side to the west, Judah, one portion.

Consecrated land set aside for YHWH (Priests and Levites) (48:8-22)

<sup>8</sup>Adjoining the territory of Judah, from the east side to the west, shall be the portion that you shall set apart, twenty-five thousand cubits in width, and in length equal to one of the tribal portions, from the east side to the west, with the sanctuary in the middle of it. <sup>9</sup>The portion that you shall set apart for YHWH shall be twenty-five thousand cubits in length, and twenty thousand in width. <sup>10</sup>These shall be the allotments of the holy portion: the priests shall have an allotment measuring twenty-five thousand cubits on the northern side, ten thousand cubits in width on the western side, ten thousand in width on the eastern side, and twenty-five thousand in length on the southern side, with the sanctuary of YHWH in the middle of it. <sup>11</sup>This shall be for the consecrated priests, the descendants of Zadok, who kept my charge, who did not go astray when the people of Israel went astray, as the Levites did. <sup>12</sup>It shall belong to them as a special portion from the holy portion of the land, a most holy place, adjoining the territory of the Levites. <sup>13</sup>Alongside the territory of the priests, the Levites shall have an allotment twenty-five thousand cubits in length and ten thousand in width. The whole length shall be twenty-five thousand cubits and the width twenty thousand. <sup>14</sup>They shall not sell or exchange any of it; they shall not transfer this choice portion of the land, for it is holy to YHWH.

<sup>15</sup>The remainder, five thousand cubits in width and twenty-five thousand in length, shall be for ordinary use for the city, for dwellings and for open country. In the middle of it shall be the city; <sup>16</sup>and these shall be its dimensions: the north side four thousand five hundred cubits, the south side four thousand five hundred, the east side four thousand five hundred, and the west side four thousand and five hundred. <sup>17</sup>The city shall have open land: on the north two hundred fifty cubits, on the south two hundred fifty, on the east two hundred fifty, on the west two hundred fifty. <sup>18</sup>The remainder of the length alongside the holy portion shall be ten thousand cubits to the east, and ten thousand to the west, and it shall be alongside the holy portion. Its produce shall be food for the workers of the city. <sup>19</sup>The workers of the city, from all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it. <sup>20</sup>The whole portion that you shall set apart shall be twenty-five thousand cubits square, that is, the holy portion together with the property of the city.

<sup>21</sup>What remains on both sides of the holy portion and of the property of the city shall belong to the prince. Extending from the twenty-five thousand cubits of the holy portion to the east border, and westward from the twenty-five thousand cubits to the west border, parallel to the tribal portions, it shall belong to the prince. The holy portion with the sanctuary of the temple in the middle of it, <sup>22</sup>and the property of the Levites and of the city, shall be in the middle of that which belongs to the prince. The portion of the prince shall lie between the territory of Judah and the territory of Benjamin.

Allocation of land to tribes Part 2 (48:23-29)

<sup>23</sup>As for the rest of the tribes: from the east side to the west, Benjamin, one portion. <sup>24</sup>Adjoining the territory of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, Simeon, one portion. <sup>25</sup>Adjoining the territory of Simeon, from the east side to the west, Issachar, one portion. <sup>26</sup>Adjoining the territory of Issachar, from the east side to the west, Zebulun, one portion. <sup>27</sup>Adjoining the territory of Zebulun, from the east side to the west, Gad, one portion. <sup>28</sup>And adjoining the territory of Gad to the south, the boundary shall run from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, from there along the Wadi of Egypt to the Great Sea.

<sup>29</sup>This is the land that you shall allot as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, and these are their portions, says the Lord YHWH.

There are no indications in what we know of post-exilic Judah that the allocations outlined here in the Ezekiel scroll were ever followed. No one returned to the northern kingdom. There is no mention of tribes in the lists of those returning from exile (see Ezra 2/ Nehemiah 7). Those of the Ezekiel School responsible for these final chapters of the scroll were expecting a miraculous restoration.

The city and its gates (48:30-35)

<sup>30</sup>These shall be the exits of the city: On the north side, which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits by measure, <sup>31</sup>three gates, the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah, and the gate of Levi, the gates of the city being named after the tribes of Israel. <sup>32</sup>On the east side, which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates, the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin, and the gate of Dan. <sup>33</sup>On the south side, which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits by measure, three gates, the gate of Simeon, the gate of Issachar, and the gate of Zebulun. <sup>34</sup>On the west side, which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates, the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher, and the gate of Naphtali. <sup>35</sup>The circumference of the city shall be eighteen thousand cubits.

And the name of the city from that time on shall be, YHWH is There.

Psalms 46, 48 and 76 echo the claim that Jerusalem is YHWH's dwelling.