

1. This is a lesson where after writing the whole thing, I realized I had to rewrite my introduction and change my title for this lesson. The introduction you are reading now was written after going through the whole lesson and seeing the big picture better.
 - a) It's my own fault. ☺ God told me before I started writing this lesson to work on the "verse by verse" commentary first and then come back to the introduction. I didn't take that "feeling" seriously and I had to delete one to two pages that I originally wrote.
2. My key word for this lesson, is the word "Who". That word "who" is my one word title for this lesson. This is a reminder to you and me that when we are confused about something in the bible, we are to remember "Who" we worship and remember our purpose for living.
 - a) Let me put it this way: Whenever one comes to a passage of the bible that is confusing, we should put Jesus in the middle of that passage and see if it fits. That is what I did for this lesson, and then this lesson made a lot more sense.
 - b) Jesus said in effect that one should study the entire bible as all of it speaks of Him.
 - i) Jesus said, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." (John 5:39 and 40, NIV).
 - c) I mention this, as the main topic of these two chapters is a mysterious character called the prince. Scholars have debated for centuries over who is this prince and why is he so prominent in the last few chapters of Ezekiel.
 - d) I was confused about the prince until I remembered the principal that the "all of Scripture" speaks of Jesus. What Jesus meant by that is He is the main topic of the bible.
 - e) Once I accepted the idea of Jesus as the "prince" this section of Ezekiel made a lot more sense and hopefully it will for you as well.
 - f) This leads back to my title of "Who". When one is reading the bible and one is confused, get back to "Who". The who is God and His Son who died for our sins. That key premise is all through the bible. We should focus on the key "Who" of the bible and that is God.
3. With that lofty introduction completed, ☺ it's time once again to remind all of us of what is going on in this section of Ezekiel:
 - a) We are in a section of Ezekiel that covers the last nine chapters. This section is describing a future 1,000-year time period that Christians call "The Millennium". As I've stated in the last lesson, in this millennium the "Christian era" is completed, and somehow we Christians rule and reign with Jesus at this time. I'll bring up these issues later in this lesson. We're going to talk about God's relationship with the Jewish people and the church during the millennium in this lesson.
 - b) This 1,000-year period of time begins after a time of world "upheaval" (to put it gently ☺) called the "tribulation". This tribulation is a period of time where a large percentage of the world's population will die. Whenever this period takes place, it is "not pleasant" (again, putting it gently). This period is future as nothing in history ever matched this description. I believe this tribulation is literal and future. It is the main topic of most of Revelation. This tribulation period lasts a total of seven years and ends with the return of Jesus to rule the world from Jerusalem. That begins the millennium.
 - c) There are many Christians especially from the Roman Catholic World that don't believe in a literal 1,000-year millennium. Such Christians "spiritualize" the sections of the bible that deal with this time period, including this section of Ezekiel. Those of us who take the millennium "literally" believe in a literal 1,000 year-millennium rule by Jesus. This is the most common view in the "Protestant" world of Christianity. Now that you understand my bias, I can get back to this section of Ezekiel. OK, time to get rolling with the verses.

4. Verse 1: "When you allot the land as an inheritance, you are to present to the LORD a portion of the land as a sacred district, 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits wide; the entire area will be holy.
 - a) In the final four chapters of Ezekiel (45 to 48) we are going to spend time dividing up the land of Israel, as it will stand when Jesus rules during the millennium. When we get to Chapter 48, that chapter discusses the land of Israel being divided by tribe. Here in Chapter 45, we are going to discuss a special section of land around the temple area.
 - b) This section of land is to be 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits wide. This is roughly six and two thirds miles wide by eight miles long. Do you have to remember this? No. I'm just trying to give you a visual picture. This seven-mile by eight-mile section of land (approximately) will be divided up in smaller pieces in the next set of verses. These next set of verses also explain the purpose of this section of land.
 - i) I thought you said in the last lesson we are done measuring. I said we are done measuring the temple. I never said I was putting away the measuring devices. ☺
5. Verse 2: Of this, a section 500 cubits square is to be for the sanctuary, with 50 cubits around it for open land. ³ In the sacred district, measure off a section 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide. In it will be the sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. ⁴ It will be the sacred portion of the land for the priests, who minister in the sanctuary and who draw near to minister before the LORD. It will be a place for their houses as well as a holy place for the sanctuary. ⁵ An area 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide will belong to the Levites, who serve in the temple, as their possession for towns to live in.
 - a) In Verse 1, we had a section of land that is 25,000 cubits by 20,000 cubits. (A cubit is roughly two feet). Of this section of land, a 500 by 500 section is where the temple itself is located and includes a little bit of open space around the temple area.
 - b) The land as described in Verse 1 also has a section for the priests (a subset of the Levites) to live and work. A separate section is for the rest of the Levites to live and work. In other words, the priests and Levites can have their homes in these areas. Remember that the "sons of Zadok" who are in charge of temple worship. The rest of the tribe of Levi also had jobs in the temple, but are a little lower in status than the priests themselves.
 - i) Let me explain the significance: First of all, remember that Ezekiel and all the surviving Israelites are now living in exile. God is promising the Israelites that they would return to the Promised Land one day and God would set up an eternal temple to worship Him as He desires.
 - c) As we go through the final four chapters, we will discover there are some differences between worshipping God in this future era versus the way God wanted to be worshipped as described in the first five books of the bible. One difference is the Levites have a specific plot of ground near the temple. In the plan, the Levites were to be scattered through all of Israel. (Deuteronomy 18:1 is an example on that point.)
 - i) Why the difference? In the time of the Exodus, it was "God's idea for the Levites to assist all of Israel in the worship of God. In the time period of the future temple, all of Israel will "know God" and all of Israel will come to the Temple. Therefore, it will be "ok" for the priests to live and work near this temple.
 - d) Remember that my key word for this lesson is the word "who". God wants the tribe of the Levites in close proximity to the temple so they could be of service to God. Their focus is on the "who", which is God and they are to be near Him. The application to us? It is that those who draw the closest to God have the privilege of being near Him.
 - i) Let me put it another way: I have found the best way to draw close to God is to spend a lot of time with God. When I spend a lot of time studying my bible and being in prayer, it draws me closer to God whether I think about that fact or not.
 - ii) Am I saying we have to become priests (or pastors) to draw closer to God? No. I'm saying that symbolically, just as these Levites were in close proximity to God, so we can be in close proximity to God by making the effort to be close to Him.

6. Verse 6: `You are to give the city as its property an area 5,000 cubits wide and 25,000 cubits long, adjoining the sacred portion; it will belong to the whole house of Israel.
 - a) Remember that we are still describing the plot of land that was mentioned in Verse 1. That plot of land is divided into smaller sections. The "last section left" is an area that is 5,000 cubits by 25,000 cubits. This area belongs to all of Israel.
 - b) As best anyone can tell, this area is for Jewish "travelers" to the Temple. During this 1,000-year time period, there will still be a number of Jewish holidays. This area will be for Jewish travelers to "camp out" when they are coming to the temple. The area will still be used on non-holidays when visitors want to make an offering to God at this temple.
7. Verse 7: "The prince will have the land bordering each side of the area formed by the sacred district and the property of the city. It will extend westward from the west side and eastward from the east side, running lengthwise from the western to the eastern border parallel to one of the tribal portions.⁸ This land will be his possession in Israel. And my princes will no longer oppress my people but will allow the house of Israel to possess the land according to their tribes.
 - a) These verses come back to the question about who is this character called the prince.
 - i) I have read and listened to good bible commentators who are convinced the prince is another title for the Messiah (i.e., Jesus). I have read and listened to other good commentators who are equally convinced this prince is just the civic leader of Israel and does not refer to the Messiah.
 - ii) Remember that Ezekiel did have a few references to this prince prior to this final section of his book. The previous references to the prince called him "David" and therefore most see this prince as being either David himself or "a" descendant of David or "the" descendant of David, which is the Messiah (Jesus).
 - iii) Personally, I now hold the view the prince is another title for Jesus. Over the course of this lesson, I will lay out the argument that this is the Messiah.
 - iv) While thinking about this issue, I remembered the New Testament verse that says, "The volume of the book is written of me". (Hebrews 10:7, NKJV). That verse in Hebrews is saying in effect that the entire Bible speaks of Jesus. I take that as a sign that when one is in doubt, look at a passage of scripture and "see if Jesus fits".
 - b) The prince is the one who actually has the privilege of eating in the presence of God in the center part of the Temple (Ezekiel 44:3). Whoever the prince is, he is important enough that only he and not any of the Levites (or priests) can eat in God's presence.
 - c) Getting back to Ezekiel, the prince will have a section of land the same size as the sections that will be allotted to each tribe of Israel in Chapter 48. A question is, "If this is Jesus, why does He need a section of land for Himself?" That is discussed in a couple of verses and I'll bring up this issue again later in this lesson.
 - i) Later in the lesson, the text will say the prince can give gifts to his sons. I wonder if the gifts include homes within this section of land. That too, is speculation.
 - d) Verse 8 is a reference to past kings and princes of Israel. In the past, many of the kings of Israel had oppressed the people. The first example that popped in my head was King Ahab of the northern Kingdom of Israel who made a false accusation against a man named Naboth so the king (Ahab) could steal Naboth's land. (This is in 1st Kings 21.)
 - i) My point is Verse 8 does not refer to this prince of the New Temple, but to the fact that Jewish leaders in the past have not acted in a way God wanted for leaders.
 - e) Verse 8 further promises that this future prince will make sure the land of Israel is divided by tribe and everything will be done "fairly". That is a possible argument that the prince is the Messiah and, well, the debate continues.

8. Verse 9: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: You have gone far enough, O princes of Israel! Give up your violence and oppression and do what is just and right. Stop dispossessing my people, declares the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁰ You are to use accurate scales, an accurate ephah and an accurate bath. ¹¹ The ephah and the bath are to be the same size, the bath containing a tenth of a homer and the ephah a tenth of a homer; the homer is to be the standard measure for both. ¹² The shekel is to consist of twenty gerahs. Twenty shekels plus twenty-five shekels plus fifteen shekels equal one mina.
- a) If you recall, the first half of the book of Ezekiel was pretty much one big indictment against all of Israel for not obeying God's laws. A lot of those accusations were specifically against the leaders of Israel. God held the leaders to a higher standard as they were in charge. Those accusations included oppression of the people.
 - i) The reason God is bringing this up here is to contrast the way things were in Israel as opposed to the way things are going to be when this future temple will exist.
 - b) These verses are not saying that the future prince will do this, but it is strictly an accusation based on how things were in the past. The reason Ezekiel is preaching this here is that life in this new temple is still a long time in the future (and still future to us). In the meantime, God wants whoever is in charge of Israel to be fair and honest in their dealings with the Israelites.
 - c) In Verses 11 and 12, Ezekiel gets into specific units of measurements. Some of these are liquid units of measurements and some were dry units of measurements. Without having to memorize what these words mean, the key point is God is stressing the idea of honesty when Israelites deal with one another, let alone strangers.
 - i) The best illustration to share would be a "butcher's scale". The idea is that if a butcher's scale is honest, then he is not cheating customers with dishonest scales.
 - ii) The underlying concept is Ezekiel is urging the Israelites to be honest in dealings.
 - iii) It is God saying in effect, "Don't wait around for this new Temple in order to be honest in one's dealings. I hold you (that's all of us) to be accountable in one's dealings and that includes the idea of not cheating."
9. Verse 13: This is the special gift you are to offer: a sixth of an ephah from each homer of wheat and a sixth of an ephah from each homer of barley. ¹⁴ The prescribed portion of oil, measured by the bath, is a tenth of a bath from each cor (which consists of ten baths or one homer, for ten baths are equivalent to a homer). ¹⁵ Also one sheep is to be taken from every flock of two hundred from the well-watered pastures of Israel. These will be used for the grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to make atonement for the people, declares the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁶ All the people of the land will participate in this special gift for the use of the prince in Israel.
- a) Now that God is done describing being honest in one's dealings, we now get back to life in the future whenever this temple is in existence.
 - b) One of the requirements for Jewish people living at this time is to give offerings to God. The exact units of measurement are described for these offerings.
 - c) The types of offerings are described in Verse 15. They are for "grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings". Let me go over this briefly and quickly:
 - i) Not every offering to God required an animal to be killed. Some offerings involved baking a "bread like" substance. The point is grain is offered to God.
 - ii) The idea of the grain offerings was to give the first of one's substance to God in order to show one's trust in God for future provisions.
 - iii) The burnt offering is to offer an animal to show one's complete trust in God.
 - iv) The fellowship offering is to show gratitude. It is to offer something to God to be "shared with God" in gratitude for one's life.
 - d) Notice in Verse 15 that the sheep to be offered is "1 sheep out of 200". In other words, God is promising life will be "fruitful" and not a major expense for these regular offerings.

10. Verse 17: It will be the duty of the prince to provide the burnt offerings, grain offerings and drink offerings at the festivals, the New Moons and the Sabbaths--at all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel. He will provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel.
- a) Now we are back to the prince. Whoever he is, he is the one actually provides the various offerings to make atonement for all of Israel. The idea of atonement is essentially to "make things right". The idea is offerings are made to show one's commitment to God, to ask forgiveness and just "be with" God. The people making the offerings don't actually go into the temple to make the offerings, but the prince is the one who sits before God and gives these offerings to God at the altar.
 - b) Verse 17 also gives us the "when" of these offerings: It says during the festivals (coming up in later verses), Sabbaths and New Moons.
 - i) In the Jewish calendar, a month is not the typical 30 or 31-day month. A Jewish month was based on a lunar cycle, which is about 28 days. When a new moon appeared, that was the beginning of a new month. When the new moon appears, it is a time of celebration and offerings were and are made to God.
 - ii) The Jewish calendar also had a regular seven-day week. The seventh day of the week (which we call Saturday) is also a time of offerings to God.
 - iii) What all of this means is that the average Israelite living during this time won't forget about God because offerings will be made every week, also once a month and when certain holidays were to take place.
11. Verse 18: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In the first month on the first day you are to take a young bull without defect and purify the sanctuary. ¹⁹ The priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, on the four corners of the upper ledge of the altar and on the gateposts of the inner court. ²⁰ You are to do the same on the seventh day of the month for anyone who sins unintentionally or through ignorance; so you are to make atonement for the temple.
- a) To summarize this ritual, a bull is offered on the first day of the first month to symbolically cleanse the temple. The blood is placed on the doorpost of the temple. The obvious point is to show that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. In the same way the Old Testament sacrifices pointed forward to Jesus, these sacrifices in the future point back to the cross as a key point in time.
 - b) So if Jesus paid the price for sins once and for all, why do we have these sacrifices in this future temple? The answer is to give a visual reminder of the price paid for sins. The blood is put on the doorposts of the temple and a few other spots as a visual reminder.
 - c) This ritual is repeated again six days later. Why? We are leading up to that in Verse 21, which is a key holiday. The point is God does not want any sin to occur prior to this holiday. In case anyone accidentally sins during the first ritual or "right after", the process is repeated on day seven. In a similar concept, Jews were required to clean their house of any leaven (yeast) prior to celebrating the Passover meal. (See Exodus 12:15.)
12. Verse 21: "In the first month on the fourteenth day you are to observe the Passover, a feast lasting seven days, during which you shall eat bread made without yeast. ²² On that day the prince is to provide a bull as a sin offering for himself and for all the people of the land. ²³ Every day during the seven days of the Feast he is to provide seven bulls and seven rams without defect as a burnt offering to the LORD, and a male goat for a sin offering. ²⁴ He is to provide as a grain offering an ephah for each bull and an ephah for each ram, along with a hin of oil for each ephah.
- a) If one recalls the story of the Passover in Exodus, the Israelites were to remember this event every year with a holiday called "Passover". The main purpose of the Passover holiday is to remember how God had separated the Israelites from the world for the purpose of redemption and to be a witness for His existence.
 - b) The original Passover is a one-day event. The "new" Passover event will last seven days.

- c) Note that there are some differences between the future Passover ritual and the one given to Moses back in Exodus. The reason for the holiday is the same: It is to remember that one is saved by God's grace and from God's perspective, He "chose us" to be His people.
 - d) So, why don't Christians celebrate Passover? Aren't Christians singled out for salvation? The short answer is that this celebration was specifically for the Jews. Many Christians of Jewish decent still celebrate Passover based on the idea that they are part of the Jewish race singled out for God's use. I would also add that if one ever gets an opportunity to join a Jewish family for a Passover meal, take that opportunity.
 - i) To answer the question, "Why don't Christians celebrate Passover?" The answer is when we get together for "church", we remember the key event of history, which is Jesus dying for our sins. The "Passover celebration" was designed specifically for the Jewish people to focus on their own redemption as a nation.
 - e) Jesus himself celebrated Passover with his disciples. Jesus implied he would celebrate it again one day, which would tie to life during this millennial period. (See Luke 22:18.)
 - f) Getting back the future Passover, there are offerings of bulls, rams and a male goat for sin offering. There are also grain offerings as well.
 - g) Now we get into the "strange part": The prince himself is to offer a bull for his sins and the sins of his people. Those that argue the prince is not the Messiah point to this verse and say in effect "The prince can't be the Messiah because he makes offerings for his sins".
 - h) Those who argue the prince "is" the Messiah, point out that Jesus was sinless and was still baptized. Jesus was symbolically baptized not for His own sins, but for the fact He took the sins of the world upon Himself. Those that argue the prince is the Messiah use a similar line of argument that the prince's bull offering is for Him taking "sins" on Himself.
13. Verse 25: "During the seven days of the Feast, which begins in the seventh month on the fifteenth day, he is to make the same provision for sin offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings and oil.
- a) In the final verse of Chapter 45, we are still describing the duties of the prince. Note that the various animals offered listed in Verses 22-24 along with grain offerings are to be offered by the prince on behalf of the Israelites. These offerings were for sin offerings (forgiveness of sins), burnt offerings (symbolic of commitment) and grain offerings that is symbolic of "fellowship" meaning the desire to spend time with God.
 - i) One can see how these various offerings match up with how Christians are supposed to live before God. In other words, Christians don't do these sacrifices, but we do commit our lives to God, we are to pray and seek Him and ask Him to be a part of our lives. In this way our commitments are similar to these rituals.
 - b) In order for the Israelites living at this time to keep their focus on God, there was a seven-day period where these rituals were repeated. The idea of seven days is to show a "complete" commitment to God on behalf of His people.
 - c) Does this mean God has one set of rules for "saved Israelites" and another set of rules for "saved Christians"? To answer that, first notice that the intentions of the offerings match up with what God wants Christians to do with their lives. This gets back to the idea that the offerings were to indicate giving one's life to God, to show our regular commitment and to show our gratitude to God.
 - i) Next, remember that these Israelites lived in an agricultural based society where raising animals were part of their lifestyle. The rituals tied into that culture, just as Christian forgiveness and fellowship styles tie into our culture. My point is one should see this as cultural distinctions.
 - ii) With all of that said, there are specifics for "Jewish people only" including certain holidays and special days set aside to worship God. It does not mean Christianity is the wrong way to worship God. It means that God set aside certain rituals and certain days specifically for Jewish people to worship God in a certain way.

14. Chapter 46, Verse 1: `This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The gate of the inner court facing east is to be shut on the six working days, but on the Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon it is to be opened.
- a) If one recalls from a few chapters back, the "outer gate" facing east is to remain shut after the presence of God entered through that gate. The "inner gate" leads from an outer courtyard into the inner sanctuary of this temple. This inner gate is to remain shut during the week, but to be open on the Sabbath and the monthly "New Moon" feasts.
 - b) In other words, one sets aside one day a week to worship God over and above other holidays and the "new moon" holiday". God wants the Israelites living at this time to still live a life. People will have jobs as well as raising animals. Even with that system in place, one day a week is taken off to focus on God. It is fulfilling the 10th commandment of "keeping the Sabbath". (See Exodus 20:8-10.) The idea of other holidays and a once a month holiday is to regularly remind those living at this time to keep their focus on God.
 - c) Let me quickly talk about "Sabbath's and Christianity". This is a complicated topic with lots of views within Christianity. Paul said, "Some Christians observe one day a week as special and others treat all seven days as special." (Paraphrase of Romans 14:5-6).
 - i) The essential idea of a Sabbath is to take some time off to not think about the things one normally focuses on during the week. That could be school, work, dealing with family issues, etc. The idea is a special time where people can focus on God and not on their own problems. It's a time to remember that there is a God who rules over everything including our problems and issues.
 - ii) Christians don't make animal offerings as the price for sin has been paid. However, our "Sabbaths" should be a time to stop and thank God for making provision for us for our sins. It is a time to think about how God can and will work in our lives for His glory.
 - iii) OK, enough New Testament theology. Let's get back to Ezekiel. ☺
15. Verse 2: The prince is to enter from the outside through the portico of the gateway and stand by the gatepost. The priests are to sacrifice his burnt offering and his fellowship offerings. He is to worship at the threshold of the gateway and then go out, but the gate will not be shut until evening.
- a) The prince has the unique privilege of entering through the inner east gate. Remember that the outside east gate is closed, but the entrance to the interior east gate is open. The point is no one but the prince can use this gate. It is a sign of some sort of unique relationship between the prince and God Himself.
 - b) The priests are to offer the burnt offering and fellowship offerings on the prince's behalf.
 - c) OK, back to the issue of who is the prince. If he is the Messiah, why is it necessary for him to offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings? Remember that a burnt offering is a sign of one's total commitment to God. A fellowship offering is a sign that one wants to spend time with God. The theory goes that if it is the Messiah, then it is Him showing His complete commitment to God the Father and the fact He wants to be with Him.
 - i) So, if this is the Messiah, why doesn't He make the offerings Himself as opposed to the priests doing it? This is why some think the prince is just the civic leader of Israel and has his duties separated from the priestly duties of the offerings.
 - ii) Those who argue this is the Messiah, is showing that He is leading by example of how people are to worship God by performing the same type of commitment.
 - d) Why should I care about this stuff? Good question. A point is those are who leading the way should be a good example for everyone else. In "Christian speak", we who are saved should be good examples for the unsaved. In practical terms, it means that one never knows who is watching our actions of going to church or some other type of Christian activity. People are paying attention to us in such activities whether we realize it or not.
 - i) The prince led the people to offer themselves up to God so others could follow.

16. Verse 3: On the Sabbaths and New Moons the people of the land are to worship in the presence of the LORD at the entrance to that gateway. ⁴ The burnt offering the prince brings to the LORD on the Sabbath day is to be six male lambs and a ram, all without defect. ⁵ The grain offering given with the ram is to be an ephah, and the grain offering with the lambs is to be as much as he pleases, along with a hin of oil for each ephah. ⁶ On the day of the New Moon he is to offer a young bull, six lambs and a ram, all without defect. ⁷ He is to provide as a grain offering one ephah with the bull, one ephah with the ram, and with the lambs as much as he wants to give, along with a hin of oil with each ephah.
- a) Notice in Verse 3 that these rituals are not seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The rituals are to take place one day a week (The Sabbaths) and on special occasions (New Moons). The underlying point is God does not expect us to be in church round the clock every day.
 - i) God does expect us to live a "life" for Him and at the same time, take out regular time to worship Him. I've learned to look at "church time" as a time of spiritual refreshment. Our service for God is the "non-church times" and then we come together as believers to "rest and recover" spiritually so we can go back out again.
 - ii) That is why the term "Sabbath" means rest. It does not mean we sleep all day instead of going to work (or whatever). It means we make regular time for God in order to spiritually refresh ourselves in order to be of service to Him.
 - b) Verses 4 through 6 list specific animal offerings and grain offerings to be given by the prince. A young bull is offered on the new moon. Scholars speculate as the meaning of the number of animals, but it is just that: speculation. Know that the specific number of animal offerings is different from previous Jewish requirements as stated in Exodus. The point for us to remember is the "prince" leads the worship by offering a bunch of animals and "grain offerings" to show commitment.
17. Verse 8: When the prince enters, he is to go in through the portico of the gateway, and he is to come out the same way. ⁹ "When the people of the land come before the LORD at the appointed feasts, whoever enters by the north gate to worship is to go out the south gate; and whoever enters by the south gate is to go out the north gate. No one is to return through the gate by which he entered, but each is to go out the opposite gate. ¹⁰ The prince is to be among them, going in when they go in and going out when they go out.
- a) Verse 8 makes the point that the prince enters and leaves by the same route. Everyone but the prince is to leave by the opposite entrance by which they came in. When the people come to worship before God, if they enter by the north gate, they leave by the south gate and vice-versa. Only the prince is the exception to this rule.
 - b) Some argue that these verses are to give a sense of order to things. I think the point is to show the unique stature and privilege of the prince. Whoever this prince is, the point is he is to be special among the Israelites. It is an argument that the prince is the Messiah.
 - c) Let's pause for a moment and talk about the title "prince". Ezekiel uses that word earlier in the book to refer to kings and leaders. The idea of a prince is that one is next in line to be king. Ezekiel never uses the title "Messiah" in this book. Based on Ezekiel's language, it is very possible that "the" prince is the same as the Messiah.
 - i) I checked several versions of the New Testament to see if Jesus is ever referred to as "The Prince". Some English Bible versions refer to Jesus as the "Prince of Life" in Acts 3:15, while other versions say the "author of life". Most versions of the bible refer to Jesus as both "Prince and Savior" in Acts 5:31. Then there is Isaiah's title in the Old Testament for the Messiah as "The Prince of Peace". (See Isaiah 9:6).
 - ii) My point here is that it is possible to give Jesus the title "Prince". The idea is not one who is next line to be king, but to indicate one who is "only" second in power. The idea is Jesus is second in stature only to God the Father.

- d) Now that I've stated an argument for the prince being the Messiah, I want to go back to something else in these four verses. The verses say that whenever people enter this inner temple area, the prince is there. Whoever enters by the north gate, "encounters the prince" and they must leave by the south gate. Whoever enters by the south gate "encounters" the prince and must leave by the north gate. Here is my point:
- i) Whenever we have an encounter with God, we never leave the situation the same way as when we first started. In other words, whenever God works in our life, it changes us for the better. This can be as simple as going to church and watching a choir or a band on stage. A great performance that is "God inspired" can change us for the better.
 - ii) This encounter can be any event in our life where God is working. Once we have an encounter with God, we are never exactly the same. We "leave" a different way than before we encountered God in a particular situation. That can be a symbolic way of saying we leave through a different entrance of when we first came in.
 - iii) The more I study these chapters, the more I become convinced that the "prince" is the Messiah. It is verses like this that fit the pattern well. I still want to keep an open mind in case I am wrong, but the verses make a lot more sense with that assumption. The point of these verses is that people leave a different way from when they come in and the only difference in the verses is the people "encounter" the prince within the temple.
18. Verse 11: "At the festivals and the appointed feasts, the grain offering is to be an ephah with a bull, an ephah with a ram, and with the lambs as much as one pleases, along with a hin of oil for each ephah. ¹² When the prince provides a freewill offering to the LORD--whether a burnt offering or fellowship offerings--the gate facing east is to be opened for him. He shall offer his burnt offering or his fellowship offerings as he does on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he has gone out, the gate will be shut.
- a) We are still reading about the offerings of the prince. The offerings given are specified. The amount of the grain offerings is to be a specific amount associated with each animal.
 - b) The exception to this rule is a lamb offering. When prince offers a lamb, the prince can offer as much grain as the prince wants, no matter what the purpose of the offering is for.
 - c) I can have a "field day" playing with this one. Bull offerings are specific and are usually associated with one's complete commitment to God. Bulls are the largest animals offered and are symbolic of a complete commitment due to their size.
 - i) Ram offerings are symbolic of a "substitute" just as God provided a ram for Abraham to offer up instead of Isaac. The point in these offerings is that whenever a bull or ram is offered, the amount of grain is to be a specific amount along with a specific amount of oil. The idea here is the prince is to offer a specific amount that is associated with "Him".
 - ii) As to the lambs, there is no specific amount of offering stated. Jesus has always been associated with the "lamb of God". Many multiple lambs were also sacrificed on Passover as an association with the "blood of the lamb" protecting the Israelites from God's judgment over the first born of Egypt.
 - d) The idea here is that when these offerings are done on the Sabbath day, people are to make the connection between the prince and what God has performed on their behalf. The price for sin has been paid. The animal sacrifices are reminders of that fact.
 - e) Why is this only done on the Sabbath day? We are back to the concept to taking regular time out of our lives to remember what God has done for us. It is not an "around the clock and every day" requirement to be in church. The idea is to for us to take out regular time to remember the price for sin has been paid and it was paid in blood. That is why God wants everyone to have a "regular Sabbath" (i.e., time off from life to think about what God has done for us) and focus on God.

- f) This surprisingly leads us back to Ezekiel. The last point of these verses is that once the prince leaves the temple, the temple is to be shut to the public. Again, this associates the key fact of the temple being associated not only with God, but also with the "prince" Himself. The prince has a key role as people come to the temple to offer up sacrifices on "God's behalf". Without the prince present as stated in Verse 12, the Temple is shut.
 - i) To put this in "New Testament" terms, we can't do an "end run" around Jesus to approach God the Father. We must have an encounter with Jesus (which ties to the prince here in Ezekiel) in order to approach God the Father. It is a way of saying we cannot be saved without the "blood of Jesus" upon us.
 - ii) To put it another way, Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." The "me" is Jesus. (John 14:6, NIV).
19. Verse 13: "Every day you are to provide a year-old lamb without defect for a burnt offering to the LORD; morning by morning you shall provide it. ¹⁴ You are also to provide with it morning by morning a grain offering, consisting of a sixth of an ephah with a third of a hin of oil to moisten the flour. The presenting of this grain offering to the LORD is a lasting ordinance. ¹⁵ So the lamb and the grain offering and the oil shall be provided morning by morning for a regular burnt offering.
- a) What fascinated me about these verses (13-15) is the word "you". Who is the "you"? If one reads the previous set of verses, it is a little confusing as to who God is talking to (through Ezekiel). As best I can tell, it refers to all of Israel working through the priests.
 - b) In other words, when Verse 13 says, "You are to provide a year old lamb", the idea is that the priests working the temple are to provide a year-old lamb without defect daily. Does this mean the priests have an endless supply of sheep? Given the fact the priests will be dependant upon all of Israel for their supplies and substance, I believe the lambs come from the Jewish people and every day, a single lamb is to be picked out that is a year old and has no blemishes. The idea of blemishes is that the lamb has no spots or "faults".
 - c) OK, why must a year old lamb be offered daily? I thought the temple was only open on Sabbaths and nothing happens unless the prince was there. The idea of the daily sacrifice is different from the Sabbath worship. It is kind of an exception to everything else being talked about so far. The idea for the moment here is that we are done talking about people "encountering the prince" and now we are back to the topic of what the priests must do every day as part of their daily ritual.
 - d) With that long introduction completed, I can now talk about the verses themselves. What is the point of offering a year old lamb every day along with a specified amount of grain offering and a specified amount of oil to go with it? For the priests to offer a "lamb daily" is for the priests to constantly focus on the fact a lamb is to be sacrificed (that is "the blood of the lamb is to be shed") for the forgiveness of sins. The idea of the grain and the oil in a specified amount is to show the priests daily commitment to God.
 - i) In other words, the weekly Sabbath (and other Jewish holidays) are to be a special time for the priests to help other people have an encounter with God. As to the priests themselves, their duty is greater. They must remember every day that their duty involves the reminder of the lamb being offered up for their sins!
 - ii) Does this mean "priests or pastors" have to worship God daily? I think of it this way: We should spend time daily with God (say some prayer time or bible reading time) to remind us of our commitment to God. Over and above that, one should take a regular "Sabbath" to have an encounter with God with other people.
 - iii) In other words, one concept speaks of our daily commitment (i.e., the daily offering of this lamb) and another concept speaks of our regular time gathered with other believers to remember what God has done for us.
 - e) The final part of these verses says that it is to be done every morning. The symbolic idea is we are to be grateful every day at the start of the day for what God is doing for us.

20. Verse 16: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: If the prince makes a gift from his inheritance to one of his sons, it will also belong to his descendants; it is to be their property by inheritance.¹⁷ If, however, he makes a gift from his inheritance to one of his servants, the servant may keep it until the year of freedom; then it will revert to the prince. His inheritance belongs to his sons only; it is theirs.¹⁸ The prince must not take any of the inheritance of the people, driving them off their property. He is to give his sons their inheritance out of his own property, so that none of my people will be separated from his property.' "
- a) If there is one thing I have learned by now from all these lessons on Ezekiel is "Just when you think things can't get any stranger, they always do." ☺ In Verse 16, the prince can give a gift to one of his sons. That gift then belongs to his sons.
 - b) In the Hebrew text, the word "sons" is there, but the word "descendants" is an assumption on behalf of the translators. In other words, the text is saying the prince can give gifts to his sons, but the text does not actually say the sons are the prince's literal descendants.
 - c) The point is the prince can also give gifts to one of his servants, but in the "year of freedom" those gifts given to servants must be returned to the prince.
 - i) First, let me explain the term "year of freedom". Going back to Leviticus, there was a term introduced called the "year of jubilee". (See Leviticus Chapters 25 and 27.) The idea is every 70 years whatever land or slaves were sold must be given back to the original owner or "set free" in the case of slaves. The idea is to prevent any one person or family from accumulating a lot of wealth. If one person or one family acquires a lot of land, that land goes back to the original family whenever "Year 70" rolls around on the calendar.
 - d) OK, back to the "strange" part. The prince has sons and has servants. The reason a lot of people can't accept the idea of the prince being the Messiah is these verses here. The idea is the Messiah is to rule forever, and the Messiah's only wife is the "bride of Christ" or the church collectively. (See Revelation 19:7 on this point.) If the prince is the Messiah, how can He have sons, let alone servants in this millennial age?
 - i) Those who see the Prince as the Messiah respond this way. When Christians become saved, we become "new creatures". We become "direct creations of God". The idea is that only Adam and Eve were "direct creations of God" and we as humans are their descendants. When we become saved, we become a "new person" and that type of person is also considered a direct creation of God. This is the idea as taught in Romans 8:14 and Galatians 3:26.
 - ii) With that in mind, all Christians (male and female) can have the title of "sons of God" as direct creations of God. If the prince is the Messiah then the prince is also God. Since we are the "Sons of God", we can also be called the Sons of the Messiah since our Messiah is also God. The idea is that when Christians are saved, we become "sons of God like Jesus", but in a technical sense Jesus can call us "sons" as we become Sons of God, which is the idea of being a direct creation of God.
 - iii) What I am saying is that these verses are the only hint here of what happens to Christians during this 1,000-year millennium. We (male and female Christians) are the "sons" who can receive gifts from God during period of time.
 - a) So what are these gifts? The text does not say. My personal speculation is the gifts have something to do with the land that is allocated for the prince. In other words, with all the time the "prince" is spending with the Israelites, the prince does not forget to spend time with those who are the "Sons of God" which refers to the church.
 - e) I said these verses were confusing. Let me throw out my next point, which arguably is just as strange as the last one. The verse also mentions the prince has servants. Who are the servants and how are they different from the sons and from the Levites and the Israelites?

- i) To answer that question, one has to have a "pre-tribulation" view of the end times. This view (as in "not the only view") is that the Christian church is a separate group from those who are saved during the final "tribulation". Remember the tribulation occurs prior to the millennium period beginning. In this view, there are two groups of saved people. One is the church itself and the other is those who are saved during the tribulation. Those who are saved during the tribulation have the role of "serving God" for all of eternity (See Revelation 7:15). Those who are saved prior to the tribulation (i.e., the Christian church) rule and reign with Jesus. (See Revelation on 5:10 on the issue of Christians reigning with Jesus.)
 - ii) My point is there are two groups of saved people prior to when this 1,000-year millennium occurs. One group is the collection of all believers called "The church" and the other is people who are saved (Jews and non-Jews) during the 7-year period called the tribulation. The church is the "Sons of God" and those who are saved during the seven-year period are the "Servants of God".
 - iii) This actually leads us back to Ezekiel. ☺ The prince can give gifts to His servants, but in the "year of the jubilee" (every 70th year) those gifts go back to the prince.
- f) OK John, suppose your theories on the prince and "pre-tribulation saved people" and the "post tribulation save people" are wrong. Suppose the prince is not the Messiah. What if you are wrong on this point? If that is true, I'll just shrug my shoulders, praise God and watch how He actually works out this situation. One's view on the rapture or on the prince does not affect one's salvation.
 - i) I am giving here one possible way the verses fit the rest of the bible. Those scholars who don't see the prince as the Messiah tend to be even more confused about who is the prince, or simply state they are confused on the issue. What I have here is a possible solution that fits with the rest of the bible.
- g) I usually like to wrap it up when I'm on a roll like this, but there are still 6 more verses. ☺
- 21. Verse 19: Then the man brought me through the entrance at the side of the gate to the sacred rooms facing north, which belonged to the priests, and showed me a place at the western end.²⁰ He said to me, "This is the place where the priests will cook the guilt offering and the sin offering and bake the grain offering, to avoid bringing them into the outer court and consecrating the people."
 - a) We now interrupt this wonderful speech about the prince to get a tour of the kitchen. ☺ The text goes back to Ezekiel getting a tour of the Temple. The emphasis here is to show the place where the offerings are prepared prior to being sacrificed.
 - b) OK John why the jump from prince's gifts to a tour of the kitchen? I can't give a great answer, other than to show that while the prince cares about his sons and servants, there are still the Jewish priests in the millennium and these verses show one of their functions.
 - c) The main focus of the last nine chapters of Ezekiel is on life during the millennium for the Jewish people. While the prince is "busy" with gifts for his "servants" and his "sons", the Jewish priests are to be busy doing the work that God requires them to do.
 - d) A point here is the grain and animals are to be prepared in these kitchens and they are not be brought to the outer courts where the "people" are worshiping God. The sacrifices are set apart as special to God and are not to be back among the "non-set-apart" priests.
- 22. Verse 21: He then brought me to the outer court and led me around to its four corners, and I saw in each corner another court.²² In the four corners of the outer court were enclosed courts, forty cubits long and thirty cubits wide; each of the courts in the four corners was the same size.²³ Around the inside of each of the four courts was a ledge of stone, with places for fire built all around under the ledge.²⁴ He said to me, "These are the kitchens where those who minister at the temple will cook the sacrifices of the people."
 - a) Here Ezekiel finishes up his "kitchen tour". The outer court of the temple leads to four other courts. Each had a kitchen type room for the priests to prepare the sacrifices.

- b) The point here is that there are so many sacrifices to be made to God, that "four separate kitchens" are necessary to prepare all of these offerings.
 - c) OK, so why have four kitchens as opposed to one big kitchen? I suspect it so more priests can be "close to God" with their offerings. It is to show the importance of the offerings themselves and that each of the "four corners" leads to a place where offerings are made.
 - d) OK John, and what do I do with this information? You remember that the people closest to God (the priests) are to spend most of their time focusing on worshipping God and the animal and grain sacrifices all point to the sacrifice that God did for us.
 - i) Think of it this way: God asks Christians to regularly spend time focusing on Him and remember what He has done for us. That time we spend focusing on God gives us the spiritual strength to daily go out and be a good witness for Him.
 - ii) In other words, our Christian strength does not come from physical rest (although that is important as well) as much as it does to take regular time to be with God so He can "strengthen us" to go out and be a good witness for Him.
23. Since I'm getting on a role again, and this lesson is getting long, ☺ I'll wrap it up here and go on to my closing prayer.
24. Father help us to stay close to You. Help us to take out regular time to be with You and let You strengthen us so that we can be good witnesses for You in for whatever ministry role You have for our lives. Help us to remember that it is You that gives us the power, the ability and the resources we need not only to live out our lives, but to be good witnesses for You. Help us to live out our lives as You desire for us. We ask this in Jesus name we pray, Amen.