

SUNDAY SERMON

Willow, Alaska

Date: December 16, 2018

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 44:1-31

Text: Ezekiel 44:1-31

Subject: EZEKIEL SERIES – Gate for the Prince: Glory fills the house; The priests

In the previous 43rd chapter, we saw the glory of the Lord enter into the temple via the Eastern Gate. The glory of the LORD said, *"Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places."* **(43:7)**.

We also saw the measure of the altar of burnt offering before the temple and an explanation of the offerings and the cleansing of the altar.

Now we come to the 44th chapter, where we shall see:

- The gate for the prince of Israel (verses 1-3)
- The glory of the LORD fills the house (verses 4-8)
- The priests of the future temple (verses 9-31), with these divisions –
 - Verses 1-16 – Particulars about the priests.
 - Verses 17-19 – Clothing of the priests.
 - Verses 20-22 – Their Hair; drinking wine; their wives.
 - Verses 23-24 – Their teaching ministry; their judging ministry.
 - Verses 25-27 – Their defilement and cleansing.
 - Verses 28-31 – The LORD God is their inheritance.
- **The gate for the prince of Israel (verses 1-3)**

1 ¶ Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut.

Then -- when the altar was measured, and directions given for consecrating it at first, and for the perpetual use of it for future.

He brought me back the way of the gate -- from the inner court, where he had been viewing the altar back to the outer part of the same court, and to the east gate of it:

Of the outward sanctuary which looked toward the east; --
Outward sanctuary with respect of the holy of holies which was inward.

2 Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.

Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; -- Ezekiel hears the LORD's directions concerning this eastern gate; it shall be shut; it shall not be opened; and no man shall enter in by it. This is plain enough. Why these directions?

because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. – It shall be shut and not opened because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it – for that reason, it shall be shut.

3 It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.

It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; -- This gate is for the prince, who shall sit in that gate and eat bread before the LORD. Striking statement! There is a prince – who this preacher believes to be the resurrected David, who shall eat bread before the LORD who is in the temple.

he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same. – He (the prince) shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate – and go out the same way.

- ***The glory of the LORD fills the house (verses 4-8)***

4 ¶ Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face.

Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house,-- The north gate of the inward court, whither he was brought from the east gate, which was shut.

and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord; -- as he had seen at the eastern gate (Eze. 43:2).

and I fell upon my face; -- as Ezekiel had done before because of his overwhelming sense of the greatness and glory of the LORD God, and of his own vileness and unworthiness.

5 And the LORD said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary.

In this verse, the LORD charges Ezekiel to mark well (consider it strongly) and behold with your eyes – hear with yours ALL THAT I SAY UNTO THEE. About what?

- All the ordinances of the house of the LORD
- All the laws of the house of the LORD,
- The entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary. God will set forth his ordinances and laws about entering and leaving the sanctuary. These are the ordinances and laws of the house of the LORD.

6 And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations, 7 In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations.

Ezekiel's message from the LORD is a strong one with admonitions and rebukes:

- Let it suffice you of all your abominations (enough is enough).
- You have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, and to pollute it, even my house –

- When you offer my bread, the fat and blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations.

8 And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves.

- And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things;
- But ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. You have decided and done what seemed good in your own sight – you have disobeyed my word!

9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.

- Having told them their faults, now: He must tell them their duty: "*No stranger shall enter into my sanctuary till he has first submitted to the laws of it.*" The stranger must be like the believing Gentiles of the New Covenant who were *circumcised with the circumcision made without hands*, [Col 2:11](#).

Col 2:11 (KJV) *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:*

This is the circumcision of the heart, in the *spirit, not in the letter*. Too, because they were in the nation of Israel, they must also have the identifier in their flesh – circumcision which is the mark of their separation. Must like us of the church era. Before we can serve acceptably as new covenant priests, we must have

the circumcision of the heart and the sign of the covenant, scriptural, God-directed baptism.

10 ¶ And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity.

Verses 9-14 show that the Levites who, in the earlier time had turned from God to idols. At the great schism of the northern kingdom, some priests had remained true to the worship of Jehovah, but were forced out by Jeroboam.

2Ch 11:13-14 (KJV) *And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him [Rehoboam] out of all their coasts.*

14 *For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the LORD:*

This also happened in the closing days of Judah with Ahaz and the latter kings. Remember, many (perhaps most) of these priests are not living at this time – but will face their judgment.

These will be made to feel their shame since it is the days of the earthly kingdom that are here referred to, and righteousness (not grace) governs. The concluding verses of this chapter show conclusively that they are dealing, not with the Lord's church, but with Israel again on the earth, and in covenant relations with God.

11 Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the

burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them.

This verse speaks of the descendants of those priests living at this time. They may minister about the gates and the house – and may slay the burnt offering and sacrifice for the people and minister to the people –

12 Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity.

The priests led the people into idolatry and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity – therefore...they shall bear their iniquity.

13 And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. 14 But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.

These priests may not come near to any of God's holy things, in the Holy of Holies – they shall bear their shame – they shall be keepers of the charge of house and all the service of it.

15 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall

stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD:

Remember that Solomon had thrust out the priests, who were the sons of Eli from the priesthood and gave it to Zadok. These sons of Zadok kept the charge of the LORD's sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray after Absalom and his cronies. These sons of Zadok shall come near to the LORD to minister to him, and they shall stand before the LORD to offer to him the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD.

16 They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.

That is, these priests, the sons of Zadok shall do this.

17 ¶ And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within. 18 They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird themselves with any thing that causeth sweat.

Here is God's orders for their clothing. When they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments. No wool shall come upon them while they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within (that is, in the sanctuary). They shall have linen bonnets on their heads and linen breeches upon their loins. They shall not gird themselves with any thing that causeth sweat.

Sweat came in with sin and was part of the curse. *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.* Clothes came in with sin, coats of skins did;

and therefore the priests must use as little and as light clothing as possible, and not such as caused sweat. Still, their nakedness must be covered.

19 And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.

When they shall have finished their ministry, they must put off their ministering garments and lay them in the holy chambers. They are to put on other garments – for they cannot sanctify the people with their ministering garments.

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

Law of haircuts for priest! They shall not shave their heads. They shall not allow their locks to grow long. They shall only poll their heads. What does poll mean? I think we know without looking it up – not bald and not long – but polled. Poll is from the Hebrew word כָּסַם *kacam kaw-sam'* which means to cut, clip, trim, shear. This preacher knows that intuitively.

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

God did not forbid the priests to drink wine, but they were forbidden to drink wine when they entered into the inner court.

22 Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.

The priests cannot marry a widow (one exception) – or a divorced woman. They are bound to marry maidens (virgins) of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow of a priest who had died.

23 And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.

Why is this so? Is it not much like ministers of the gospel whose job is to put the saints in remembrance? Remember, the Israelites have been born again – have a new heart, but are still in physical bodies. The priests are to teach them the difference between the holy and profane – and cause them to discern (perceive) between the unclean and the clean.

24 And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.

Whilst the LORD Jesus Christ is king over all the earth, and we, the saints reigning with him judging the world; the priest shall stand in judgment of the Israelites. They shall judge:

- According to God's judgment.
- Shall keep God's laws and statutes in all God's assemblies

- They shall hallow God’s sabbaths. (Remember, that God gave the seventh-day Sabbath as a sign between Him and Israel forever.)
 - **Ex 31:13-18 (KJV)** *Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. **14** Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. **15** Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. **16** Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. **17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever:** for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. **18** And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.*

25 And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves: but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves. 26 And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days. 27 And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering, saith the Lord GOD.

The priests cannot be defiled for a dead person except for father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or sister that hath had no husband. If he is defiled – he must be cleansed. After cleansing, he must reckon to himself seven days. Then in the day he goes into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering saith the Lord GOD.

This serves to remind us once again that the last enemy of man has not yet been destroyed. Death still comes to those who live in the millennium, but no person shall die under a hundred years of age.

Isa 65:20 (KJV) *There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: **for the child shall die an hundred years old;** but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.*

28 And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I am their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: I am their possession.

Concerning their maintenance; the priests must live upon the altar at which they served. "You shall give them no possession in Israel, no lands or tenements, lest they should be entangled with the affairs of this life;" for God has said, *I am their inheritance*, and they need no other in reserve; *I am their possession*, and they need no other in hand. Some land was allowed them as we shall see in the 48th chapter.

Eze 48:10 (KJV) *And for them, even for the priests, shall be this holy oblation; toward the north five and twenty thousand in length, and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and*

toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length: and the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the midst thereof.

So their principal subsistence was by their office. What God appropriated to himself they were the receivers of, for their own proper use. They lived upon the holy things, and so God himself was the portion both of their inheritance and of their cup.

What a blessing to realize that those who have God for their inheritance and their possession may be content with a little, and ought not to covet a great deal of the possessions and inheritances of this present world. If we have God, we have *all*; and therefore we have enough!

***29 They shall eat the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs.
30 And the first of all the firstfruits of all things, and every oblation of all, of every sort of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house.***

In these two verses, the LORD continues to reiterate that the dedicated (holy) things in Israel belongs to the priests. Notice that a blessing is pronounced to the people who give unto the priest the first of their dough. Obedience to this commandment brings a blessing upon the giver's house.

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

Finally, in this chapter, nothing that dies of itself or is torn (wounded) shall be food for the priests, whether it be fowl or beast.

Ezekiel saw these things set before his eyes and ears of the Lord GOD. The last section gave us the instructions regarding the priests of Israel in the millennium.

I cannot help but notice the absence of the terms “forgive, forgiven, forgiveness, pardon, and cleanse, cleansed, or cleansing” as pertains to the people of Israel in these chapters regarding the millennial temple and the priesthood. We know the LORD gave Israel a new heart – put his Spirit in them – wrote his laws in their hearts – and He is their God and they his people. In the Old Covenant, especially in the book of Leviticus, the terms “forgive and forgiven – cleanse, cleansed, and cleansing” are used in connection with the Burnt Offering, the Meat Offering, the Peace Offering, the Sin Offering, and the Trespass Offering. Every one of these offerings shall be offered in connection with the millennial temple.

Application: In this present age, you and I, in the Lord’s churches are believer priests who are ordained (appointed) to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to the LORD. We are not of Israel to offer up blood sacrifices or meal offerings, but we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Our bloody sacrifice has already been offered once for all when our Lord Jesus Christ, the lamb of God, offered up himself on the tree for all of His people.

1Pe 2:1-5 (KJV) *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 **Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual***

house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

What are those sacrifices according to the scriptures?

Heb 13:13-16 (KJV) *Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. 15 **By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.** 16 **But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.***

See that? These are the sacrifices that we, each and every one of us, whether male or female, whether young or old, shall offer. First, there is –

- **The sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.** What a wonderful privilege we have as the saints of God in his churches! One part of our spiritual sacrifices is praising God continually and giving of thanks. It is called the fruit of our lips – therefore, words are sent forth out of our mouth is praise and thanksgiving. We are all believer priests, whether male or female – whether young or old – and every one of us ought to do this when we gather together to worship the LORD. We ought to come together with our sins confessed – forgiven and cleansed by the blood of Christ – so that we are ready to offer up praise and thanksgiving to our God. Secondly, we are to –
- **Do good. Remember when the LORD gave us the knowledge of our own personal salvation, he also ordained that we should walk in good works.**

- **Eph 2:10 (KJV)** *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Our Lord taught us that, as his disciples, we were to honor the LORD by walking in good works. O, beloved, we are to pray best privately in our closets when we have shut the door. And we are to be secret in our giving of alms to help the poor. But we are to let our light shine as members of the Lord's church that others may see our good works and glorify God.

Mt 5:14-16 (KJV) *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. **15** Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. **16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

- **And we are to not to forget to communicate for with such sacrifices, God is well pleased.**
 - **Php 4:15-18 (KJV)** *Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, **no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.** **16** For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. **17** Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. **18** But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus **the things which were sent from you, an odour of a***

sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

- Now, ye believer priests of this, the Lord's church, be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, inasmuch as ye know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain – be stedfast in praising God; in thanksgiving to God; in doing good works in his church that God may be glorified, and in communicating to the work of the Lord and the relief of the poor saints. God is well pleased when we do these things continually.