

Ezekiel 44:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me—in contrast to the demoted Levites (vv. 10-14), the faithful Zadokite priests receive full access. The phrase **come near to my table** (qarav el-shulchani, קָרָב אֶל־שְׁלַחֲנִי) refers to the table of showbread in the holy place (Exodus 25:23-30, Leviticus 24:5-9), representing intimate fellowship with God. Only consecrated priests could approach this sacred furniture.

And they shall keep my charge (shamru mishmarti, שָׁמַרוּ מִשְׁמָרָתִי)—the Hebrew emphasizes careful obedience to prescribed duties. The Zadokites maintained faithfulness during Israel's apostasy (v. 15), thus preserving their priestly prerogatives. This foreshadows Christ's exclusive high priesthood: only the perfectly faithful Son has ultimate access to God's presence (Hebrews 4:14-16, 7:23-28). Believers approach God through Christ's righteousness, not our own faithfulness (Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 10:19-22).

Historical Context

Zadok remained loyal to David during Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 15:24-29) and supported Solomon against Adonijah (1 Kings 1:8, 32-40), while Abiathar sided with the usurper and lost the priesthood (1 Kings 2:26-27), fulfilling the prophecy against Eli's house (1 Samuel 2:30-35). The Zadokite line served continuously in Solomon's temple until the exile. Ezekiel's vision honors this faithfulness with

exclusive priestly access in the eschatological temple. During the Second Temple period, the high priesthood became politicized, often purchased rather than based on Zadokite lineage—a corruption Jesus confronted (Matthew 21:12-13, John 2:13-17).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the contrast between faithful Zadokites and unfaithful Levites illustrate the principle that faithfulness in testing determines future privilege?
2. What does priestly access to God's table teach about the intimacy available to believers through Christ's mediation?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה מִלְבָד שִׁבְעַת יְמִינָה וְאַל יְבָד אֶת פְּנֵי
H1992 They shall enter H413 into my sanctuary H4720 H1992

וְשִׁמְרָה וְעַלְפָנִים אֶל לְשָׁרֶת נִי שְׁלַחֲנִים וְלִקְרָב וְ
and they shall come near H413 to my table H7979 to minister H8334 unto me and they shall keep H8104

מִשְׁמְרָתִי אֶת
H853 my charge H4931

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 41:22 (Parallel theme): The altar of wood was three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, were of wood: and he said unto me, This is the table that is before the LORD.

Malachi 1:7 (Parallel theme): Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.

Malachi 1:12 (Parallel theme): But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.

Numbers 18:5 (Temple): And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel.

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