

Ezekiel 44:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

The prince's unique privilege—eating bread before the LORD in the gate—suggests a royal figure with special access yet distinct from priesthood. The Hebrew נָשִׂיא (nasi, 'prince') differs from מֶלֶךְ (melek, 'king'), possibly indicating subordinate authority. The prince enters 'by the way of the porch' not through the sealed eastern gate proper, maintaining the gate's sanctity. Reformed eschatology debates whether this prince represents Christ (Messiah-King), David resurrected (Ezekiel 34:23-24, 37:24), or a human administrator under Messiah's reign. The meal 'before the LORD' suggests communion fellowship, echoing messianic banquet imagery (Isaiah 25:6, Matthew 8:11, Revelation 19:9). Eating in God's presence signifies intimate covenant fellowship—what was lost in Eden (Genesis 3:8) is restored in the kingdom.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kings often ate ritual meals in temple precincts, but Israel's kings were excluded from priestly functions (2 Chronicles 26:16-21 recounts Uzziah's punishment for priestly presumption). The prince's limited access—eating in the gate but not entering the sanctuary proper—maintains the priest-king distinction. David's dynasty received eternal covenant promises (2 Samuel 7:12-16, Psalm 89:3-4), and Ezekiel prophesied a future 'David' ruling under God's kingship (Ezekiel 34:23-24, 37:24-25). Whether this describes literal millennial kingdom or symbolic representation of Christ's mediatorial reign, the principle remains: God

provides righteous leadership for His people. The prince eating before the LORD fulfills the covenant meal imagery where God fellowships with His people (Exodus 24:9-11).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the prince's unique yet limited access illustrate the balance between privilege and boundary in approaching God?
2. What does eating bread 'before the LORD' teach about communion as covenant meal and intimate fellowship?
3. In what ways does Christ fulfill both princely (ruling) and priestly (mediating) roles without the limitations here?

Interlinear Text

אֶת	בֶּן שִׂיָּא	בֶּן שִׂיָּא	ה וָא	יֹשֵׁב	ב ו	לֶאֱכֹל
H853	It is for the prince	It is for the prince	H1931	he shall sit	H0	in it to eat
	H5387	H5387		H3427		H398
חֶם	לִפְנֵי י	יְהוָה	וּמִדֶּרֶךְ ו	אֹלָם	הַשַּׁעַר	יָב וָא
bread	before	the LORD	by the way	of the porch	of that gate	he shall enter
H3899	H6440	H3068	H1870	H197	H8179	H935
וּמִדֶּרֶךְ ו	יֵצֵא:					
by the way	and shall go out					
H1870	H3318					

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 46:2 (Parallel theme): And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening.

Genesis 31:54 (Parallel theme): Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.

Ezekiel 34:24 (References Lord): And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.

Ezekiel 37:25 (Parallel theme): And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

Ezekiel 40:9 (Parallel theme): Then measured he the porch of the gate, eight cubits; and the posts thereof, two cubits; and the porch of the gate was inward.

2 Chronicles 34:31 (References Lord): And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.