

Ezekiel 48:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the suburbs of the city shall be toward the north two hundred and fifty, and toward the south two hundred and fifty, and toward the east two hundred and fifty, and toward the west two hundred and fifty.

Analysis

The suburbs of the city (מִגְרָשׁ, migrash)—open lands surrounding the city, measuring 250 cubits on each side, provided pasture and agricultural space. Levitical cities similarly had migrash zones (Numbers 35:2-5), blending urban and agrarian life while preventing overcrowding.

The four-directional description—**toward the north...south...east...west**—repeats the comprehensive spatial pattern, ensuring balanced development without privileging one direction. This egalitarian design prevents the economic stratification where one city quarter becomes elite while others decay, reflecting God's justice extending to urban planning itself. The 250-cubit buffer (approximately 375 feet) creates breathing room between sacred center and productive periphery.

Historical Context

Ancient cities often lacked planned green space, leading to unsanitary conditions. The Levitical cities' migrash provision (Numbers 35) established precedent for open lands supporting urban populations. Archaeological evidence from Iron Age Israelite cities shows some preserved open areas, though economic pressure often

led to encroachment—a problem Ezekiel's vision prevents through fixed measurements.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's concern for sustainable city planning challenge modern urban sprawl and environmental exploitation?
2. What does the balanced four-directional development teach about equity and justice in community design?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה הַ	מִגְרָשׁ	לְעִיר	צָפֹן וְנֹכַח	חֲמִשָּׁה יָם
H1961	And the suburbs	of the city	shall be toward the north	and fifty
	H4054	H5892	H6828	H2572
וּמֵאֵתָּיִם:	וְנֹכַח גִּבְעָה	חֲמִשָּׁה יָם	וּמֵאֵתָּיִם:	וְנֹכַח יָמָה
two hundred	and toward the south	and fifty	two hundred	and toward the east
H3967	H5045	H2572	H3967	H6921
חֲמִשָּׁה יָם	וּמֵאֵתָּיִם:	וְנֹכַח מֶה	חֲמִשָּׁה יָם	וּמֵאֵתָּיִם:
and fifty	two hundred	and toward the west	and fifty	two hundred
H2572	H3967	H3220	H2572	H3967