

# Ezekiel 48:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward; one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi.

## Analysis

The gate naming—"the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward; one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi"—commemorates all twelve tribes. Each tribe receives recognition through named gates, preventing tribal hierarchy or favorites. The Hebrew שָׁעַרִים (she'arim, 'gates') serve both functional (access) and symbolic (identity) purposes. The equal gate distribution (three per side, four sides, twelve total) ensures comprehensive representation. Reformed theology sees this as picturing the church: built on twelve apostles (Ephesians 2:20), twelve tribes spiritually constituting spiritual Israel (James 1:1, Revelation 7:4-8), and New Jerusalem having twelve gates named for twelve tribes (Revelation 21:12-13). All God's people receive honor and access.

## Historical Context

The twelve-tribe system structured Israelite identity despite historical complexities (Joseph split into Ephraim and Manasseh, Levi landless). The exile scattered tribes, raising questions about future restoration. Ezekiel's vision promises comprehensive restoration—all tribes represented. The gate names ensured memorial perpetuity—future generations would remember tribal heritage. Nehemiah's rebuilt gates had functional names (Sheep Gate, Fish Gate) versus tribal names, but the principle remains: gates memorialize and provide access. Revelation's New Jerusalem combines tribal gates (Revelation 21:12) with

apostolic foundations (Revelation 21:14), uniting Old and New Testament saints. The equal representation prevents sectarian divisions—all God's people equally honored.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. Do you honor all God's people (various gifts, backgrounds, denominations) or favor your particular group?
2. What does equal gate distribution teach about preventing hierarchies and favorites in God's kingdom?
3. How do you maintain identity (tribal gates) while pursuing unity (single city)?

## Interlinear Text

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וְשַׁבְּתִי לְשַׁבְּתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שַׁעַר בַּעַיר עַל שְׁמוֹת  
And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel  
H8179 H5892 H5921 H8034 H7626 H3478

אֶחָד: רְאוּבֵן | שַׁעַר שְׁלֹשׁ הַשְׁעָר אֶפְרַיִם  
And the gates three northward And the gates of Reuben one  
H8179 H7969 H6828 H8179 H7205 H259

אֶחָד: לְבָנָה | שַׁעַר אֶחָד: יְהוּדָה  
And the gates of Judah one And the gates of Levi one  
H8179 H3063 H259 H8179 H3878 H259