

Ezekiel 48:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures: and three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun.

Analysis

And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures: and three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun. The southern wall completes the city's perimeter with gates for Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun. Shimon (שִׁמְעוֹן, from shama, "to hear") represents the God who hears—Leah named him thus because "the LORD hath heard" her affliction (Genesis 29:33). Despite Simeon's curse for the Shechem massacre and subsequent absorption into Judah, grace provides a permanent gate.

Issachar ("there is reward") and **Zebulun** ("dwelling"), two full brothers from Leah, receive adjacent gates as they received adjacent territories (verses 25-26). The pattern throughout all four walls demonstrates complete access—north, south, east, west—twelve gates for twelve tribes. Revelation 21:12-13 explicitly identifies the New Jerusalem with these same twelve tribal gates, confirming that Ezekiel's vision points to the eternal city. The number twelve (three gates × four walls) symbolizes completeness: all God's people from every direction have access to the divine presence. This is the fulfillment of the city's name: YHWH Shammah, "The LORD is there" (48:35).

Historical Context

These three tribes (Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun) were all sons of Leah, Jacob's first wife. Simeon and Zebulun represent the extremes of Leah's childbearing—her

second and sixth sons. Their inclusion together on the southern wall may symbolize that all of Leah's children have equal access, from first to last. Historically, the southern approach to Jerusalem was the primary route from Hebron, Beersheba, and Egypt—the direction from which Abraham, the patriarchs, and the exodus generation approached the land. The southern gates welcome those coming from the historical roots of Israel's faith.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the twelve-gate structure (three per wall) demonstrate that access to God is complete and available from every direction?
2. What does Simeon's gate—despite his curse—teach about the triumph of grace over generational consequences?

Interlinear Text

וּפְאַת	וְגַם	שְׁמֵנִים	אֶלָּפִים	מִדֵּה
side	And at the south	and five	hundred	thousand
H6285	H5045	H2568	H3967	H505
gate	and three	gate	of Simeon	gate
H8179	H7969	H8179	H8095	H8179
gate	of Zebulun	one		
H8179	H2074	H259		