

Ezekiel 48:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Judah.

Analysis

And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Judah. Judah receives the seventh and final tribal allotment before the sacred central district (v. 8). This placement is highly significant: Judah borders the holy portion containing the sanctuary, reflecting Judah's royal and messianic destiny. Jacob's blessing declared Judah as the tribe of kingship (Genesis 49:10: "the scepter shall not depart from Judah"), and David's dynasty came from Judah.

The number seven carries symbolic weight—completion and perfection. **Judah's seventh position crowns the northern allotments and introduces the sacred center, bridging common tribal inheritance and the holy district.** This geographic arrangement embodies theological truth: the Davidic king (from Judah) mediates between God's dwelling place and the people, anticipating Christ who is both "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Revelation 5:5) and mediator of the New Covenant (1 Timothy 2:5).

Historically, "Judah" became the name for the southern kingdom, the only tribes to return from exile, and eventually all Jews. The name Yĕhûdâ (יהודה) means "praise"—Leah's thanksgiving at his birth (Genesis 29:35). Judah's proximity to the sanctuary reflects their calling to lead worship and praise, centered on God's presence. In the New Covenant, all believers are "Judah"—a kingdom of priests offering spiritual sacrifices of praise (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

Historical Context

After the exile, only Judah (with Benjamin and Levites) returned in significant numbers. The post-exilic community was called "Jews" (Yehudim), and the land was Judea. Ezekiel's vision looks beyond this limited restoration to a future when all twelve tribes would be gathered. The placement of Judah immediately north of the sacred district reflected their historical role as guardian of the temple and the Davidic monarchy.

Jesus Christ, the ultimate fulfillment of Davidic kingship, was "from Judah" (Hebrews 7:14). His ministry inaugurated the kingdom that Ezekiel's vision anticipated. The early church, predominantly Jewish at first, represented the nucleus of restored Israel, soon expanded to include Gentiles grafted into the olive tree (Romans 11:17-24). The tribal distinctions, while preserved symbolically (Revelation 7:4-8), find ultimate unity in Christ.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Judah's position bordering the sacred district illustrate Christ's mediatorial role between God and humanity?
2. What does it mean for Christians to be a "kingdom of priests" offering praise like Judah's calling?

Interlinear Text

וְעַל	גֹּב וְלִ	רְאוּבֵן	פָּאָת	קֵדִים	עַד	פָּאָת
H5921	And by the border	of Reuben	side	from the east	H5704	side
	H1366	H7205	H6285	H6921		H6285
לְמַה	יְהוּדָה	אֶת־				
unto the west	portion for Judah	a				
H3220	H3063	H259				

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 19:9 (Parallel theme): Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.