

Ezekiel 48:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the offering which ye shall offer of five and twenty thousand reeds in breadth, and in length as one of the other parts, from the east side unto the west side: and the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it.

Analysis

And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the offering which ye shall offer of five and twenty thousand reeds in breadth, and in length as one of the other parts, from the east side unto the west side: and the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it. This verse introduces the central sacred district, distinct from tribal territories. The Hebrew *těrûmâ* (תְּרוּמָה, "offering") indicates a holy portion lifted up/set apart for God, used in Exodus for tabernacle offerings (Exodus 25:2-3).

The dimensions—25,000 reeds wide (approximately 50 miles if a reed equals 10 feet)—create a massive sacred zone at the land's center. **"The sanctuary shall be in the midst of it"** (*habbayit* בַּיִת, literally "the house") positions God's dwelling at Israel's geographic and spiritual center. This fulfills the tabernacle theology: God dwelling among His people (Exodus 25:8, "let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them").

The central sanctuary between northern tribes (Dan-Judah) and southern tribes (Benjamin-Gad, described later) unifies the people around God's presence. Unlike the divided kingdom where northern tribes were separated from Jerusalem's temple, this arrangement ensures equal access for all. It anticipates Revelation

21:3: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them"—the ultimate fulfillment where God's presence isn't confined to one district but permeates the entire new creation.

Historical Context

Solomon's temple stood in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, within Benjamite/Judahite territory. This southern location contributed to northern alienation after the kingdom divided. Jeroboam established rival worship centers at Dan and Bethel to prevent northern tribes from traveling to Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:26-33), leading to apostasy.

Ezekiel's centralized sacred district addresses this historical problem. A geographically central sanctuary accessible to all tribes removes the excuse for schismatic worship. The massive size (approximately 50x50 miles) emphasizes the sanctuary's importance and God's magnificence. While these literal dimensions were never physically realized, they symbolize the theological truth that God's presence must be central to covenant community—not peripheral or partisan.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the central placement of the sanctuary challenge modern tendencies to marginalize God in our lives and communities?
2. What does the enormous size of the sacred district teach about proportional priority—how much space does God occupy in your schedule, finances, and relationships?

Interlinear Text

וְעַל H5921	גֹּב וּלְ H1366	פְּאֶת יְהוּדָה H3063	צֶדֶד H6285	מִן הָרֶגֶל H6921	עַד H5704	פְּאֶת H6285
And by the border	of Judah	side	from the east	side		
וְעַל H3220	יְמִינָהּ H1961	תְּהִי הָהָרָה H8641	אֲשֶׁר H834	תִּתְּנוּ יָמֶיךָ H7311	חֲמִשָּׁה H2568	
unto the west	shall be the offering	which ye shall offer	of five			
וְעֶשְׂרִים H6242	אֶלֶף H505	רֹחַב H7341	וְאֵלֶּיךָ H753	כְּאֶחָד H259	הַחֲלָקִים H2506	
and twenty	thousand	reeds in breadth	and in length	as one	of the other parts	
פְּאֶת H6285	מִן הָרֶגֶל H6921	עַד H5704	פְּאֶת H6285	יְמִינָהּ H3220	וְהִיא H1961	הַמִּקְדָּשׁ H4720
side	from the east	side	unto the west	and the sanctuary		
בְּתוֹכָהּ: H8432	shall be in the midst					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 12:6 (Parallel theme): Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.
