

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 *tērūmā* (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 הַבָּיִת, 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 | גָּבְּרַل | הַיּוֹדֵךְ | פָּאַת | קָדֵם | עַד | פָּאַת |
| H5921 | And by the border | H1366 | of Judah | H3063 | side | from the east |
| | H1366 | | H6285 | H6921 | H5704 | H6285 |
| עַל | מִזְמָה | תְּהִלִּה | הַתְּרָוֵת | אֲשֶׁר | תְּפִירֵי | מִשְׁמָה |
| | unto the west | H1961 | shall be the offering | H834 | which ye shall offer | of five |
| | H3220 | | H8641 | | H7311 | H2568 |
| וְעַשְׂרֵה | לֹא | רְבָבָה | וְאֶתְגָּרָה | כְּאֶחָד | כָּלָקִים | |
| and twenty | thousand | reed in breadth | and in length | as one | of the other parts | |
| H6242 | H505 | H7341 | H753 | H259 | H2506 | |
| פָּאַת | קָדֵם | פָּאַת | מִזְמָה | וְעַל | פָּמָקֵד | |
| side | from the east | side | unto the west | and the sanctuary | | |
| H6285 | H6921 | H6285 | H3220 | H1961 | H4720 | |
| בְּתוּךָ | | | | | | |
| shall be in the midst | | | | | | |
| | H8432 | | | | | |

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.