

## the prince in Ezekiel 44–48

## Ezekiel 44:2-3

**44:2** Then said the LORD unto me; This [east] gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. **44:3** It is for **the prince**; **the prince**, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.

## Ezekiel 45:7-8

**45:7** And a portion shall be for **the prince** on the one side and on the other side of the oblation of the holy portion, and of the possession of the city, before the oblation of the holy portion, and before the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward: and the length shall be over against one of the portions, from the west border unto the east border. **45:8** In the land shall be his possession in Israel: and my princes shall no more oppress my people; and the rest of the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes.

## Ezekiel 45:16-22

**45:16** All the people of the land shall give this oblation [offering] for **the prince** in Israel. **45:17** And it shall be **the prince's** part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel. **45:18** Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the first month, in the first day of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary: **45:19** And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering, and put it upon the posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court. **45:20** And so thou shalt do the seventh day of the month for every one that erreth, and for him that is simple: so shall ye reconcile the house. **45:21** In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. **45:22** And upon that day shall **the prince** prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin offering.

## Ezekiel 46:2-12

**46:2** And **the prince** shall enter by the way of the porch of that [east] gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. **46:3** Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons. **46:4** And the burnt offering that **the prince** shall offer unto the LORD in the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish. . . . **46:6** And in the day of the new moon it shall be a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram: they shall be without blemish. **46:7** And he shall prepare a meat offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and for the lambs according as his hand shall attain unto, and an hin of oil to an ephah. **46:8** And when **the prince** shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of that gate, and he shall go forth by the way thereof. . . . **46:10** And **the prince** in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth. **46:11** And in the feasts and in the solemnities the meat offering shall be an ephah to a bullock, and an ephah to a ram, and to the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah. **46:12** Now when **the prince** shall prepare a voluntary burnt offering or peace offerings voluntarily unto the LORD, one shall then open him the gate that looketh toward the east, and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, as he did on the sabbath day: then he shall go forth; and after his going forth one shall shut the gate.

## Ezekiel 46:16-18

**46:16** Thus saith the Lord GOD; If **the prince** give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons'; it shall be their possession by inheritance. **46:17** But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to **the prince**: but his inheritance shall be his sons' for them. **46:18** Moreover **the prince** shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession; but he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.

## Ezekiel 48:21-22

**48:21** And the residue [remainder] shall be for **the prince**, on the one side and on the other of the holy oblation, and of the possession of the city, over against the five and twenty thousand of the oblation toward the east border, and westward over against the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, over against the portions for **the prince**: and it shall be the holy oblation; and the sanctuary of the house shall be in the midst thereof. **48:22** Moreover from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, being in the midst of that which is **the prince's**, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for **the prince**.

## a humble prince

*The prince—who will humbly serve as a leader during the future millennial kingdom (45:22)—may be the most overlooked person in the entire Bible. He is mentioned at least 18 times but is rarely studied and little understood.*

## negatives

Though little known in general, the prince in Ezekiel chapter 44-48 is also controversial. Jewish scholars claim that he is a future Jewish messiah and the same as the davidic prince in 34:24 and 37:25. Many evangelical scholars believe that the prince in 37:25 is the Messiah but that the prince in chapters 44-48 is not.

A rather ordinary—imperfect (45:22) and married with children (46:16)—messiah is no problem for these Jewish scholars. Rather, they assert that the down-to-earth prince is a big problem for evangelicals. This would be true if the prince in Ezekiel chapters 44-48 really were the Messiah, but he is not. Ezekiel focused on the kingdom but not the King in his final chapters.

Throughout the centuries, Jewish apologists have argued that Jesus was too weak and mild to be the true Messiah. (They were looking for someone to fight the Romans.) Yet, they are quick to claim the fairly weak future prince in Ezekiel as their messiah. Thus, they wish to have their cake and eat it too.

Who then is the prince in Ezekiel chapters 44-48? Some evangelicals think that he is David himself based on 37:25. This seems highly unlikely, however. Would the resurrected David marry and have additional children during the millenium (48:21)? Probably not. We simply do not know who “the prince” is, aside from the fact that he is not the Messiah.

*Mark the points below as correct (C), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).*

<b>A</b>	<b>( ) The prince is not the main focus in chapters 44-48.</b>
A-1	( ) Chapters 44-48 are mostly about the land, temple and worship.
A-2	( ) There is more about the city and temple than about the prince.
A-3	( ) There is more about the feasts than the prince in 45:18-25.
A-4	( ) There is a great lake in chapter 47, but the prince is missing.
A-5	( ) There are many changes (44:6, 45:8-9, 18-25, 47:1-12).
<b>B</b>	<b>( ) The prince in Ezekiel 44-48 will not be a strong ruler.</b>
B-1	( ) He will be one of several princes (45:7-9).
B-2	( ) His army will likely be either weak or nonexistent.
B-3	( ) He will need to make a sin offering for himself (45:22).
B-4	( ) He will not be allowed to do some things (46:2, 8, 16-18).
B-5	( ) He will be required to do other things (45:17, 22, 46:4).
B-6	( ) 48:24 and 32 show that he will be from a small tribe.
B-7	( ) It does not say how long he will be a ruler (37:25).
B-8	( ) He seems too weak to be the Messiah (34:24).

## positives

Unnamed and relatively weak characters can still be important if they are part of something big, and what could be bigger than the literal thousand year reign of Christ upon the earth? This is the context in which the prince appears in Ezekiel chapters 44-48. He will be active during the millenium. (Cf. Revelation 20:1-10.)

Why is the prince mentioned 18 times in Ezekiel chapters 44-48 but never in other books and passages about the millennium? Probably it is because of his close connection with temple worship and the dividing up of the land. These two topics are covered far more by Ezekiel than by other authors. Even so this does make the prince great in his own right.

Perhaps the biggest change that will come to the land is related to the river from under the temple. Yet, nothing is said about the prince in chapter 47. This is probably because the river will involve fishermen (47:10) far more than the prince. He will be more at home in and near the temple than at distant En Gedi.

The lines about the role and position of the prince in the millennial kingdom, D-1 through D-5, are some of the most important. It is easy to see that the prince will work with the people and the priests (D-2) and where his land will be located (D-3), but these lines may be more important than they seem. Is there any significance in where the prince's land will be?

*Mark the points below as correct (C), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).*

<b>C</b>	( ) <b>Though not the King, the prince will be part of something great.</b>
C-1	( ) The glory of the Lord will return (44:1-2, 48:35).
C-2	( ) The great river will bring great blessings (47:1-12).
C-3	( ) The kingdom will last for 1,100 years (Rev. 20:1-10).
C-4	( ) The people will not be oppressed or cheated (45:8-12).
C-5	( ) All the people will cooperate with him (45:16, 22, 48:19).
C-6	( ) His land area will be great but will not be divide up (46:16-18).
C-7	( ) The temple area will be huge (45:1-4, 48:9-12, Zec. 14:16-19).
C-8	( ) The city itself will be huge during the millenium (48:15, 20, 30-35).
<b>D</b>	( ) <b>The prince will be needed.</b>
D-1	( ) He will be needed because the Messiah will not rule directly.
D-2	( ) He will be between the people and the priests (45:16-22).
D-3	( ) His land will be on both sides of the temple (48:21-22).
D-4	( ) He will judge all those who rebel (45:8-12, Rev. 20:9).
D-5	( ) He will lead by example (45:22, 46:10, 1 Pet. 5:3).

## conclusions

### worksheet answers

Most lines are correct, but there are a few obvious errors. First, there will be a great river of life-giving water from under the temple rather than a great lake (A-4). Even so, line A-4 is partly correct since the prince is never mentioned in chapter 47.

Second, we do not know which tribe the prince will be from (B-6). Some speculate that he will be a descendent of Joseph, while others believe he will be from the line of David. Perhaps it is significant that his land will be located between that of Judah and Benjamin (D-3).

Third, according to Revelation chapter 20, the millennial kingdom will be for 1,000 years rather than 1,100 (C-3). Perhaps the prince will be a leader for the entire period, but we do not know that for sure (B-7). At the end of the thousand years there will be a great rebellion against the Lord, which will be put down by God himself. So line D-4 is incorrect. (See Rev. 20:9.)

There are three mostly correct lines. The people will no longer be oppressed or cheated during the millennium, but the command in 45:9 implies that a few may still try to cheat others (C-4). Most will cooperate with the prince (45:16), but people will not be perfect (C-5). The prince's land will remain in his family, but since it is so large it will be divided up as well (C-6).

Finally, line C-8 is tricky. During the millennium, the city of Jerusalem itself will not be particularly large (48:30-35), but the temple district will be huge (C-7). People will come from all nations to worship the Lord in Jerusalem (Zec. 14:16-19).

### So what?

Rather than wasting time vainly trying to figure out who the prince will be, it is far more helpful to focus on what he will do. By focusing on his actions, we can better think about our own actions and rightly apply the passages to our lives.

Most of the prince's actions seem to be connected with worship. He will accept gifts from the people and provide offerings to the priests for the Sabbaths and the feasts (45:22, 46:4-6). In this sense, he will be between the people and the priests (D-2) and somewhat like a church treasurer.

The prince will also be a worship leader or prayer leader as he goes with the people to make his own offering and offer for them at the same time (45:22, 46:10). In this **he will lead by example (D-5, 1 Pet. 5:3) and demonstrate humility and concern for others**. He will be **with** the people and not just over them (46:10). Though a leader, he is not presented as a judge (D-4).

One of the greatest points about the prince is why he will be allotted two strips of land, about seven miles wide from the temple to the Jordan in the east and from the temple to the Mediterranean in the west (48:21-22). He will probably not need this much land, but his allotment will help show that the temple and the Lord will be at the center of everything (48:21).

The prince will probably need to delegate the use and upkeep of some of his land to his servants and sons, but it is to remain in his family as a permanent pointer to the centrality of the Lord whose glory will be in the temple in Jerusalem (48:16-17, 35).

### applications

*Apply the points which you believe are most important or seem most needful.*
