EZEKIEL 48

The LORD Is There: Every Tribe a Gate

> *“The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and the name of the city from that day shall be, ‘The LORD is there.’”*
> EZEKIEL 48:35

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. This is the last chapter of the temple vision dated “in the twenty-fifth year of our exile” (40:1), about 573 BC — and the last chapter of the book.

2. Now the land is divided. Seven tribes lie north of a holy district and five south of it, in strips running from the Mediterranean to the Jordan.

Seven Tribes North

From Dan at the northern edge down to Judah, each tribe one portion

EZEKIEL 48:1

"Now these are the names of the tribes: from the northern extremity, beside the way of Hethlon to Lebo-hamath, as far as Hazar-enan at the border of Damascus, toward the north beside Hamath, running from east to west, Dan, one portion.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that Dan is missing from the tribal list in Revelation 7, and that many connect this with Dan's early idolatry, when the tribe set up a carved image and its own priesthood (Judg 18:30–31).

WHAT IT MEANS

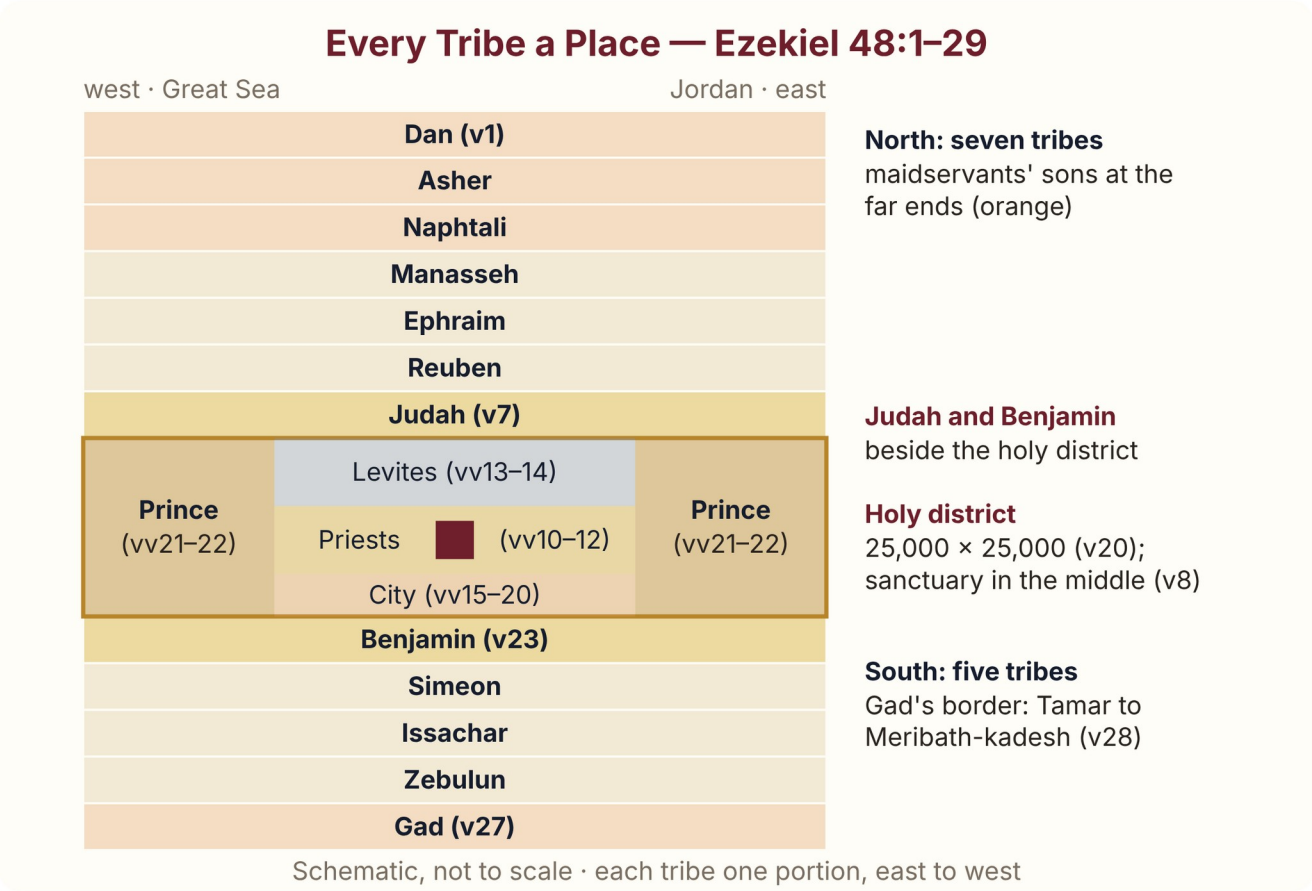
The land is cut into parallel strips running from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. Unlike Joshua's division, no tribe settles east of the Jordan.

Tribe (שֵׁבֶט)

SHEBET · "ROD, STAFF; TRIBE"

Shebet first means a rod or staff — the walking stick a father carried, the scepter a ruler held — and by extension the tribe that grew from one father's house. "Now these are the names of the tribes" (v1).

Every Tribe a Place



The tribal allotments of Ezekiel 48 from north to south, with the holy district — priests, Levites, sanctuary and city — framed by the prince's land at the center.

The Holy Allotment

The sanctuary in the middle, the faithful priests around it, and land that may never be sold

EZEKIEL 48:8

“And beside the border of Judah, from the east side to the west side, shall be the allotment which you shall set apart, 25,000 cubits in width, and in length like one of the portions, from the east side to the west side; and the sanctuary shall be in the middle of it.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik reads the whole division of the land literally, as the arrangement of the land in Messiah's millennial kingdom, and he cites Feinberg, who compares the detail of these chapters to the instructions for…

WHAT IT MEANS

At the center of the land is a square district, 25,000 cubits on each side, and “the sanctuary shall be in the middle of it.”

Choice portion (רֵאשִׁית)

RESHITH · “FIRST, BEST PART”

Reshith means the beginning, the first, the best part — the word for firstfruits. In v14 the Levites' land is called “this choice portion of land,” and “they shall not sell or exchange any of it,” “for it is holy to the LORD.”

The City and the Prince

A city for common use, worked by all the tribes, framed by the prince's land

EZEKIEL 48:15

"The remainder, 5,000 cubits in width and 25,000 in length, shall be for common use for the city, for dwellings and for open spaces; and the city shall be in its midst.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik takes the measurements literally.

WHAT IT MEANS

The city is a square of 4,500 cubits on each side with open land around it, and its farmland feeds the city's workers. Notice who works it: "The workers of the city, out of all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it."

Common (חֹל)

CHOL · "COMMON, NOT HOLY"

Chol means common, ordinary, not set apart as holy. The city's strip is "for common use" (v15) — for dwellings, open spaces and farmland.

Five Tribes South

Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun and Gad, down to the southern border

EZEKIEL 48:23

"As for the rest of the tribes: from the east side to the west side, Benjamin, one portion.

DAVID GUZIK

Feinberg, in Guzik, comments on the tribes placed on either side of the holy allotment: 'Judah and Benjamin, the tribes which remained faithful to the Davidic dynasty.'

WHAT IT MEANS

Benjamin lies just south of the holy district, then Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun and Gad, whose southern border runs from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, the brook of Egypt and the Great Sea.

Inheritance (נַחֲלָה)
NACHALAH · "INHERITED PORTION"

Nachalah is an inherited portion, a possession passed down. "This is the land which you shall divide by lot to the tribes of Israel for an inheritance" (v29).

Twelve Gates and a New Name

A city with three gates on every side, named "The LORD is there"

EZEKIEL 48:30

"These are the exits of the city: on the north side, 4,500 cubits by measurement,

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik cites Block that ancient city walls usually had only one gate, and Feinberg that the twelve gates symbolize unity.

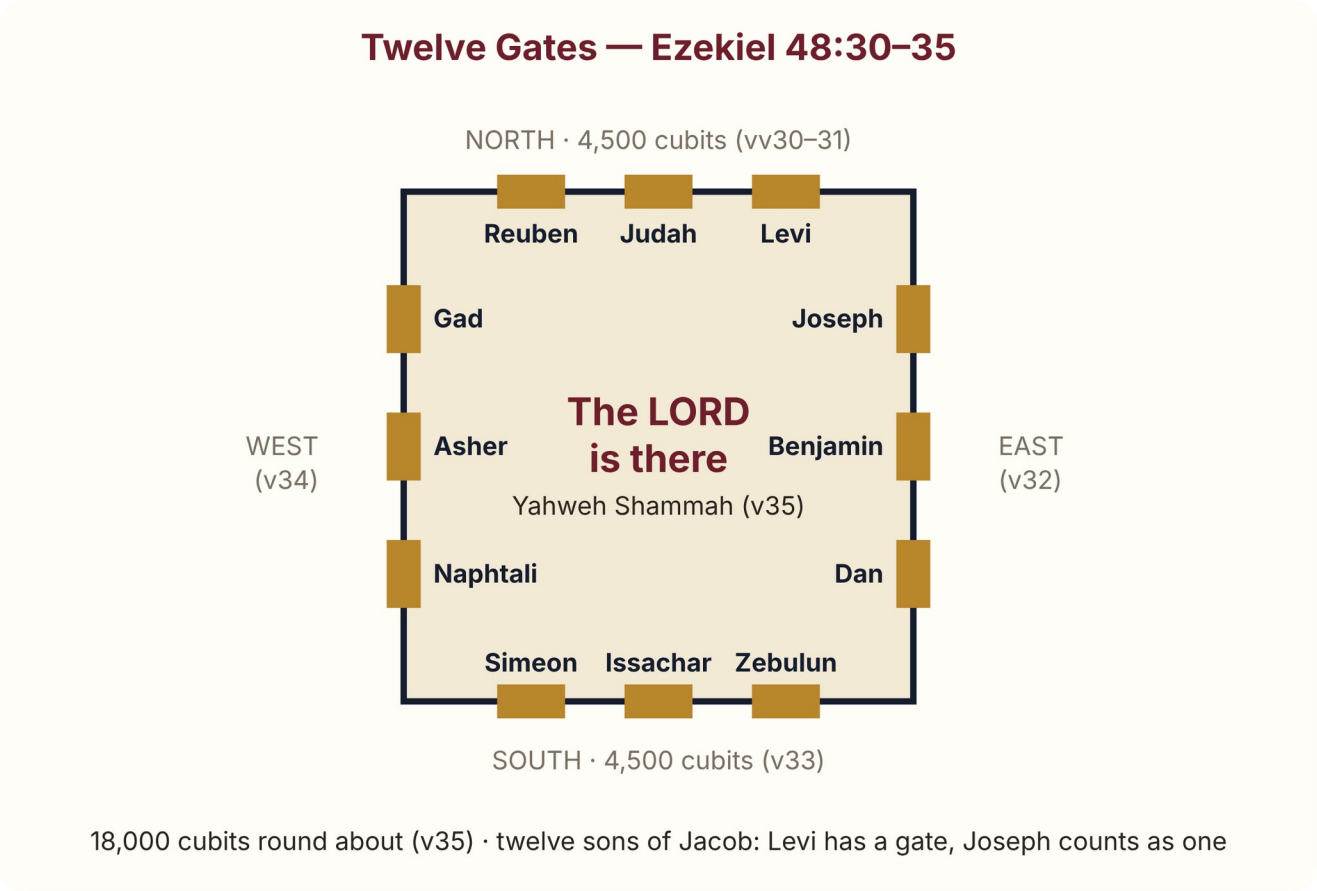
WHAT IT MEANS

Twelve gates, three on each side, each named for a son of Jacob. Levi has its own gate here, and Joseph's two tribes count as one.

There (שָׁמָּה)
SHAMMAH · "THERE, THITHER"

Shammah simply means there, to that place. Joined to the divine name it becomes Yahweh Shammah, "The LORD is there" (v35).

Twelve Gates: The LORD Is There



The city of 48:30–35 — 4,500 cubits on each side, three gates on every side named for the tribes of Israel, and the name "The LORD is there."

What to carry from this chapter

1

Dan comes first.

Guzik sees Dan, first to fall into idolatry, named first here as a demonstration of God's grace (v1).

2

A tribe is a staff.

Shebet means a rod or staff, and by extension the family that grew from one father's house.

3

God at the center.

Between seven tribes north and five south, “the sanctuary shall be in the middle of it” (v8).

4

Faithfulness remembered.

The sons of Zadok “did not go astray when the sons of Israel went astray” (v11).

More to carry

5

Not for sale.

Reshith marks the land as the first and best, “holy to the LORD” — never sold or exchanged (v14).

6

A city for every tribe.

Its workers come “out of all the tribes of Israel” (v19).

7

Built for entering.

Guzik cites Block: ancient walls usually had one gate; this city has twelve (vv31–34).

8

The last word is presence.

Guzik links “The LORD is there” to the glory's return (ch 43) and to Revelation 21:3.

Talk it through

1. What does it tell you about God that Dan, with its history of idolatry, is named first and given a gate?

2. What did the sons of Zadok do differently from those around them, and what came of it?

3. What in your life is “holy to the LORD” and must never be sold or traded?

4. Why do you think the city's workers come from all the tribes instead of one?

5. How does the name “The LORD is there” answer the whole story of Ezekiel?

CLOSING

Ezekiel began with exiles far from home and the glory leaving the city; it ends with every tribe in its place, twelve gates open, and a city named "The LORD is there." Put God at the center of your life, keep what is holy off the market, and walk through the gate He has opened for you — because in Jesus, He is already with you.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides and reflection journal: see the Ezekiel study page.