

EZEKIEL

Hard to Heart

“Shammah-Wow”

48:1-35

There are many strange and peculiar names of cities in the United States:

- Knockemstiff, Ohio
- Slaughterville, Oklahoma
- Burns Down, South Carolina
- Frankenstein, Missouri
- Goblintown, Virginia
- Looneyville, Minnesota & New York
- Tightwad, Missouri

There are a bunch of towns with ‘Hell’ or ‘Devil’ in the name - e.g., Devil’s Den, CA, and Half Hell, North Carolina.

Some U.S. cities have changed names over time:

- San Francisco was once called Yerba Buena
- Austin, Texas, was once called Waterloo
- St. Paul, Minnesota, was once called Pig’s Eye

Ezekiel ends his remarkable prophecy by letting us know that in the future Millennial Kingdom, Jerusalem will have a new name. We’ll see it in the very last verse of the book - Jehovah-Shammah.

On the way there we see the final distribution of the Holy Land to the tribes of Israel.

We start with the inheritance of seven of the tribes in verses one through seven.

Ezekiel 48:1 "Now these are the names of the tribes: From the northern border along the road to Hethlon at the entrance of Hamath, to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus northward, in the direction of Hamath, there shall be one section for Dan from its east to its west side;

Ezekiel 48:2 by the border of Dan, from the east side to the west, one section for Asher;

Ezekiel 48:3 by the border of Asher, from the east side to the west, one section for Naphtali;

Ezekiel 48:4 by the border of Naphtali, from the east side to the west, one section for Manasseh;

Ezekiel 48:5 by the border of Manasseh, from the east side to the west, one section for Ephraim;

Ezekiel 48:6 by the border of Ephraim, from the east side to the west, one section for Reuben;

Ezekiel 48:7 by the border of Reuben, from the east side to the west, one section for Judah;

All the tribal portions extend across the breadth of the land from east to west making a series of parallel tracts. These seven tribes are listed in order from the northernmost and then going south.

The division of land is different from that in the time of Joshua. It takes into account the new geography created by the ravages of the Great Tribulation as well as the Lord's return to the Mount of Olives creating a new valley running east to west.

In verses eight through twelve tell us that the Temple will be in the tract just south of these seven tribes, in the very center of the Holy Land.

Ezekiel 48:8 by the border of Judah, from the east side to the west, shall be the district which you shall set apart, twenty-five thousand cubits in width, and in length the same as one of the other portions, from the east side to the west, with the sanctuary in the center.

Ezekiel 48:9 "The district that you shall set apart for the Lord shall be twenty-five thousand cubits in length and ten thousand in width.

It is noteworthy that the Millennial Temple will therefore be in a different location than the former Temples or the Tribulation Temple.

The priests will have their portion in this tract surrounding the Temple.

Ezekiel 48:10 To these - to the priests - the holy district shall belong: on the north twenty-five thousand cubits in length, on the west ten thousand in width, on the east ten thousand in width, and on the south twenty-five thousand in length. The sanctuary of the Lord shall be in the center.

Ezekiel 48:11 It shall be for the priests of the sons of Zadok, who are sanctified, who have kept My charge, who did not go astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.

Ezekiel 48:12 And this district of land that is set apart shall be to them a thing most holy by the border of the Levites.

The tract for the Levites seems to be north of the one for the priests and immediately south of the portion for the seven tribes, or in-between the portion of the priests and the tribes. Tribes, Levites, priests & Temple is the order.

Ezekiel 48:13 "Opposite the border of the priests, the Levites shall have an area twenty-five thousand cubits in length and ten thousand in width; its entire length shall be twenty-five thousand and its width ten thousand.

Ezekiel 48:14 And they shall not sell or exchange any of it; they may not alienate this best part of the land, for it is holy to the Lord.

In the Old Testament the Levites were scattered throughout the land. When they were not serving their course in the Temple they could be among the people as teachers and counselors. In the Millennium they will have their own tract and remain in proximity to the Temple.

The location of the city is next, in verses fifteen through twenty.

Ezekiel 48:15 "The five thousand cubits in width that remain, along the edge of the twenty-five thousand, shall be for general use by the city, for dwellings and common-land; and the city shall be in the center.

Ezekiel 48:16 These shall be its measurements: the north side four thousand five hundred cubits, the south side four thousand five hundred, the east side four thousand five hundred, and the west side four thousand five hundred.

Ezekiel 48:17 The common-land of the city shall be: to the north two hundred and fifty cubits, to the south two hundred and fifty, to the east two hundred and fifty, and to the west two hundred and fifty.

Ezekiel 48:18 The rest of the length, alongside the district of the holy section, shall be ten thousand cubits to the east and ten thousand to the west. It shall be adjacent to the district of the holy section, and its produce shall be food for the workers of the city.

Ezekiel 48:19 The workers of the city, from all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it.
Ezekiel 48:20 The entire district shall be twenty-five thousand cubits by twenty-five thousand cubits, foursquare. You shall set apart the holy district with the property of the city.

Remember that at the Lord's Second Coming the Mount of Olives is cloven in two creating a valley that will run east to west.

Zechariah 14:4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.

The city will be situated in a magnificent position on the north side of this great valley. No wonder it is spoken of as "beautiful for situation."

There is mention of "the workers of the city." Laborers from each of the tribes will work the land.

There is nothing wrong with work. Adam was charged with keeping the Garden of Eden before the Fall.

David, the Lord's prince and co-regent, will have a section:

Ezekiel 48:21 "The rest shall belong to the prince, on one side and on the other of the holy district and of the city's property, next to the twenty-five thousand cubits of the holy district as far as the eastern border, and westward next to the twenty-five thousand as far as the western border, adjacent to the tribal portions; it shall belong to the prince. It shall be the holy district, and the sanctuary of the temple shall be in the center.

Ezekiel 48:22 Moreover, apart from the possession of the Levites and the possession of the city which are in the midst of what belongs to the prince, the area between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin shall belong to the prince.

The Prince's portion seems to be on either side of the city. According to one calculation the tracts for the Levites, the priests, the Prince and the city measure 60 miles square. The city itself will measure twelve miles in each direction, or 144,000 square miles.

Next comes the land allotted to five more tribes.

Ezekiel 48:23 "As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side to the west, Benjamin shall have one section;
Ezekiel 48:24 by the border of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, Simeon shall have one section;
Ezekiel 48:25 by the border of Simeon, from the east side to the west, Issachar shall have one section;
Ezekiel 48:26 by the border of Issachar, from the east side to the west, Zebulun shall have one section;
Ezekiel 48:27 by the border of Zebulun, from the east side to the west, Gad shall have one section;
Ezekiel 48:28 by the border of Gad, on the south side, toward the South, the border shall be from Tamar to the waters of Meribah by Kadesh, along the brook to the Great Sea.
Ezekiel 48:29 This is the land which you shall divide by lot as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, and these are their portions," says the Lord God.

Section by section and tribe by tribe. It will be very orderly, very equal.

Ingress and egress to the city will be through the gates described in the next set of verses.

Ezekiel 48:30 "These are the exits of the city. On the north side, measuring four thousand five hundred cubits
Ezekiel 48:31 (the gates of the city shall be named after the tribes of Israel), the three gates northward: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi;
Ezekiel 48:32 on the east side, four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan;
Ezekiel 48:33 on the south side, measuring four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun;
Ezekiel 48:34 on the west side, four thousand five hundred cubits with their three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali.

The gates are named after the twelve tribes but there are some differences between the tribes mentioned here and in the preceding passage. Here is one suggestion as to why that is.

In verses 1-29 the... tribe of Levi has a special inheritance area and Joseph's two sons (Ephraim and Manasseh) are both given tribes. In the new Holy City, however, the gates are named for people more than for regions, because everyone, whether of the priestly tribe or not, has access to the city, as symbolized by including all twelve of the original sons of Jacob in the naming of the gates. In other words, it is the tribes of Israel (v3131), not the tribal territories of Israel, that have occasioned the names of the gates. Joseph's name therefore appears where Ephraim and Manasseh would have if this

were a list of tribal territories. Levi's name appears where it would not be listed in a grouping of territories, since the Levites never had a strictly tribal allotment.

Finally we're told that the city will have a new name.

Ezekiel 48:35 All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE.

The Hebrew is *Jehovah Shammah*. In the *Believers Bible Commentary*, William MacDonald says this:

This name reminds us of what was always in the heart of God: He loves His creatures so much that He always planned to have them close to Himself. He is ever searching, asking, "Where are you?," calling to repentance and faith. As Son of God He even came down to earth to die for us. His wish will be fulfilled: man will be close to His heart. We can engage in and participate in His search for the lost even now, while living close to His heart here on earth. This is God's desire for us.

In his stand-alone commentary Charles Feinberg says:

This incomparable prophecy began with a vision of the glory of God and concludes with a description of the glory of the Lord in the glorified city of Jerusalem. Ezekiel concluded... with God dwelling with man in holiness and glory. Beyond this there is no greater goal of history and God's dealings with man.

God came searching for lost mankind in the Garden and He's been searching us out ever since!

Where will we be during the Millennium? Dr. J. Vernon McGee says,

I rather think that at the Rapture the church will be brought to [the New Jerusalem]. I believe this city is to be our permanent home. I think that during the Millennium it will be a matter of commuting back and forth from the earth to the New Jerusalem.

If that is indeed the case, the city whose builder and maker is God, and where Jesus is gone to prepare our heavenly mansions, will hover over the earth during the Millennium. Then, after the Millennium, when there are new heavens and a new earth, it will hover over the earth and remain our home.

From there we will commute to our ‘work’ on the Millennial earth.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

From the New Jerusalem we will commute to Jehovah Shammah and throughout the Millennial earth spreading the joy and justice of Jesus Christ!

