

Ezekiel 44:25 – 45:2, 15

The Haftarah relates to **Leviticus 21:1-6**, the prohibition of priests touching a dead body or participating in funerals.

Ezekiel 44:25 - "And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves: but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves."

But in case this happened inadvertently ;

Ezekiel 44:26 - "And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days.

Israelites who had touched a dead body were unclean for seven days and had to be cleansed by the sprinkling of the waters of separation, made from the ashes of the Red Heifer (**Numbers 19:1-10**).

Remember that spiritually, "touching a dead body" for us means returning to our own dead selves, which have been buried in baptism. All self-effort or self-regard requires that we repent and be cleansed through the waters and blood that Christ provides.

Ezekiel 44:27 - "And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering, saith the Lord GOD."

Rashi - This describes the procedure when a priest first is consecrated and enters the sanctuary and "he shall offer up his sin-offering, as it is stated (**Leviticus 6:13**)"

Ezekiel 44:28 - "And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I am their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: I am their possession."

Even in this future Temple, the priests and Levites have no inheritance in the Land but the office of the priesthood and God himself.

The chapter continues to outlines the right of the priests and Levites to eat the offerings brought to God by the people.

The dimensions of the ideal future Temple are different from those of the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple.

Ezekiel 45:2 - "Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred in length, with five hundred in breadth, square round about; and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof."

Rashi - From this offering, there shall be for the needs of the Sanctuary: five hundred rods for the Temple Mount and the rest shall be for houses for the priests, as is

delineated at the end of the Book.

After explaining the offerings of oil and grain that should be given for the upkeep and supply of the priests and Levites, the offering from the flock is described:

Ezekiel 45:15 - "And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord GOD."

This is to be provided for the upkeep of the Priests in this ideal future Temple - the rabbis say this is 1/60th, instead of the normal 1/10th tithe.

Rashi - And one lamb from the flocks: A special one of his flocks, and so too said Moses (**Deuteronomy 12:11**): "and all the choice of your pledges"

On the surface, this just means that everyone will choose out one lamb from at least 200 of his own flock. But this "special lamb" could represent Christ who - after his sacrifice - is the perfect sustenance for his kingdom of priests.

A Word About Ezekiel's Temple

It was in the 25th year of the Babylonian exile that Ezekiel prophesied that this ideal Holy Temple would be rebuilt. But the Jewish people never built a Temple in the dimensions specified by Ezekiel, and the Second Temple of Jesus' day did not have the Ark of the Covenant and had different dimensions.

Rashi - The second ascent to the Holy Land of Israel during the time of Ezra was meant to be like the first entry through Joshua — to come about by force and through a miracle. This building would have been fit for them then, when they emerged from exile, had there been an everlasting redemption. However, their sin caused this to not happen; for their repentance was not suitable. In other words, they did not resolve to stop sinning. Therefore, they were freed only through the sanction of Cyrus and his son.

That Temple was to be an everlasting edifice, as the verse states, "and I shall dwell among them forever." (**Ezekiel 43:9**) In other words, it is meant for the Days of Messiah.

When Ezekiel asked God what was the point of giving a description of a Temple that could not be built, God replied it was so "that they may be ashamed of their iniquities" that prevented them from building it:

However, "Learning in the Bible about the description of My House is as great as the building of it. Go and tell the Jewish people to occupy themselves in learning about the Temple, and in that merit I will consider it as if they are actually involved in building it." --Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav 14; Yalkut Shemoni on Ezekiel 43:10-11 (382).

The rabbis were greatly troubled by the fact that the Book of Ezekiel gives certain laws,

chiefly as to the Temple procedures, which actually contradict the laws given in the Book of Leviticus. The book almost didn't get into the canon of Jewish scripture.

In Ezekiel's Temple there is a door (or doorway) in place of the veil. The significance of this door is uncertain - but could it point to Jesus, who said He is the "Door" (John 10:9-16) into eternal life? Steps led up to the Altar, rather than a ramp. There is no High Priest mentioned in Ezekiel's temple, instead a "Prince" is referred to, who may be King David or the Messiah.

(See <http://www.yashanet.com/library/temple/temples2.htm>)

R. Johanan maintained that, in time to come, Elijah the prophet will explicate the meaning of these passages in Ezekiel. Since John the Baptist ministered in the spirit of Elijah, he fulfills this prediction, pointing to Jesus as Messiah, the true Temple.

The patterns of the Tabernacle, of Solomon's Temple and of Ezekiel's Temple are all shadows of "heavenly things" (**Hebrews 8:5**) and have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ Himself, who is the final atoning sacrifice and the eternal high priest of God's people.