

Ezekiel 45:1-8, 14-15 and Joshua 20:1-9 + 21:3

The Haftarah for **Numbers 34-35**, which describes the distribution of the inheritance in the Promised Land and the allotment of the Levite cities, is paired with Ezekiel's prophetic vision of an idealized Promised Land, with descriptions surprisingly much different from those in the Torah.

Ezekiel 45:1 - "Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land: the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds, and the breadth shall be ten thousand. This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about."

Rashi - For they are destined to divide the land of Israel into twelve strips, not like the original division, in which the large [tribe] had [land] according to its number and the small [tribe] according to its number, and there were two or three tribes on one strip. Now the portions are equal and they are like rows in a vineyard, from the western side to the eastern side, as delineated at the end of the Book.

"an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land" - i.e. land on which to build the ideal Temple, described in the rest of the chapter

The measurements recorded here make the Promised land nearly three times larger than in the Torah. Ezekiel is seeing not a literal land of Israel but the church, the kingdom of God, the spiritual reign of Christ.

Ezekiel 45:6 - "And ye shall appoint the possession of the city five thousand broad, and five and twenty thousand long, over against the oblation of the holy portion: it shall be for the whole house of Israel."

Strangely, the holy portion allotted for the Temple is said by Ezekiel to be "over against" the city of Jerusalem, and not in the city itself.

Similarly, John in **Revelation 21:22** in viewing the New Jerusalem said he "saw no temple therein"

The church and the world shall be no more mixed together; Christ's kingdom is not of this world, nor to be fixed on a civil establishment - *Gill's Exposition*

Who is the "The Prince" mentioned in this chapter?

Rashi - I say that this "prince" as well as every [mention of] "the prince" in this section means the High Priest; but I heard in the name of Rabbi Menahem that it means the king.

But some of the Jewish writers interpret this of the King Messiah, to whom they suppose is here allotted the thirteenth part of the land: so says Rabbi David Kimchi (1160-1235),

"to Israel belong twelve parts or portions, and to the prince the thirteenth part; the portion of the prince is as the portion of one of the tribes in length and in breadth, excepting that within the inheritance of the prince should be an oblation"

Maimonides (Hilchot Melachim, c. 4. sect, 8.) - "The King Messiah takes out of all lands, subdued by the Israelites, one part out of thirteen; and this thing is a statute for him and his sons for ever"

Ezekiel 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."

"possession" = *'achuzzah* - possession by inheritance

- **Psalm 2:7-8** - "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession."

- **1 Peter 2:9** - "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people (His own special people), that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"

i.e. "a people of his own, a people for God's own possession"

- **Galatians 3:29** - "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."

Tithing?

Ezekiel 45:14-15 - "Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil, ye shall offer the tenth part of a bath out of the cor, which is an homer of ten baths; for ten baths are an homer: 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."

Only the sixtieth part of wheat and barley, the hundredth part of oil, and but one lamb out of two hundred is required in this new dispensation. Totally different from Torah requirements.

Why?

The Messiah was expected to provide a new Law for Israel.

R.Shimon Ben Eleazar, who was active from ca. 170-200 A.D., declares that, "This is how it will be in the days of the Messiah; there will be no 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not' commandments.

Rambam - The King annointed as Messiah will "sit on his kingly throne and write for himself a Book of the Law in addition to the Law given to our Fathers" and "He will compel Israel to obey these commandments"

Christ fulfilled the Torah in Himself, and has given us a new law of liberty, a law of love.

Joshua 20:1-9 + 21:3

This is simply a restatement of God's directions in setting up the Cities of Refuge described previously in **Numbers 35**, and their fulfillment:

Joshua 21:3 - "And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their suburbs."