

# EZEKIEL

## Chapter 45

### *The Holy District*

**“When you allot the land as an inheritance, you shall set apart for the LORD a portion of the land as a holy district, 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits broad. It shall be holy throughout its whole extent. 2 Of this a square plot of 500 by 500 cubits shall be for the sanctuary, with fifty cubits for an open space around it. 3 And from this measured district you shall measure off a section 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 broad, in which shall be the sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. 4 It shall be the holy portion of the land. It shall be for the priests, who minister in the sanctuary and approach the LORD to minister to him, and it shall be a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary. 5 Another section, 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits broad, shall be for the Levites who minister at the temple, as their possession for cities to live in. 6 “Alongside the portion set apart as the holy district you shall assign for the property of the city an area 5,000 cubits broad and 25,000 cubits long. It shall belong to the whole house of Israel.**

**45:1** *When you allot the land.*† Envisioned a new acquisition and redistribution of the land to assure acceptable worship of God. (CSB)

This allotment did not take place after exile, but envisioned how holy relationships should work among God’s people. (TLSB)

*present to the LORD.* The entire square area in the center of the land was to be set aside for the Lord. (CSB)

*20,000 cubits.* With the 5,000-cubit city area (v. 6) it was a perfect square. (CSB)

*entire area will be holy.* Set apart for the Lord and owned by no tribe. (CSB)

**45:2** *section 500 cubits square.* The temple area discussed in 42:16–20. (CSB)

In the center of the first zone stood the sanctuary, surrounded by the residences of the priests. (TLSB)

*open land.* An unoccupied strip of land that served as a buffer between the more holy and the less holy, though the whole area was holy (see 42:20). (CSB)

**45:3** *measure off a section.* The middle strip of the holy square was specifically for the temple. (CSB)

**45:4** *land for the priests.* Not to own (see 44:28) but to live on. (CSB)

**45:5** *area ... to the Levites.* A section of equal size just to the north was for the Levites to dwell on, even though it was in the holy area. The Levites, as opposed to the Zadokite priests, could hold land as a possession. (CSB)

The second zone of the square was reserved for the Levites. (TLSB)

**45:6** *city.* The former Jerusalem contained the temple area. The new holy city would not, but would be adjacent to the temple. (CSB)

*Alongside the portion.* The lower and smaller zone was to be city land. (TLSB)

*5,000 cubits wide.* The southernmost section of the city completed the perfectly square area. (CSB)

*it will belong to the whole house of Israel.* Not to any one tribe or person as in former days. (CSB)

Other Israelites could dwell in this area. (TLSB)

**45:1–6** God pronounces regulations designed to prevent future temple defilement. He zealously guards His house of worship but also allows means by which the people may approach Him and serve Him. Today, the Lord continues to consecrate a place for Himself—souls and bodies of believers, which He will raise to dwell in His eternal sanctuary of heaven. • Father, we ask that You guard and protect Your Church by the power of Your holy name. Amen.

*The Portion for the Prince*

**7** “**And to the prince shall belong the land on both sides of the holy district and the property of the city, alongside the holy district and the property of the city, on the west and on the east, corresponding in length to one of the tribal portions, and extending from the western to the eastern boundary 8 of the land. It is to be his property in Israel. And my princes shall no more oppress my people, but they shall let the house of Israel have the land according to their tribes.** **9** “**Thus says the Lord GOD: Enough, O princes of Israel! Put away violence and oppression, and execute justice and righteousness. Cease your evictions of my people, declares the Lord GOD.** **10** “**You shall have just balances, a just ephah, and a just bath.** **11** **The ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure, the bath containing one tenth of a homer, and the ephah one tenth of a homer; the homer shall be the standard measure.** **12** **The shekel shall be twenty gerahs; twenty shekels plus twenty-five shekels plus fifteen shekels shall be your mina.** **13** “**This is the offering that you shall make: one sixth of an ephah from each homer of wheat, and one sixth of an ephah from each homer of barley,** **14** **and as the fixed portion of oil, measured in baths, one tenth of a bath from each cor the cor, like the homer, contains ten baths).** **15** **And one sheep from every flock of two hundred, from the watering places of Israel for grain offering, burnt offering, and peace offerings, to make atonement for them, declares the Lord GOD.** **16** **All the people of the land shall be obliged to give this offering to the prince in Israel.** **17** **It shall be the prince's duty to furnish the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, the new moons, and the Sabbaths, all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel: he shall provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to make atonement on behalf of the house of Israel.** **18** “**Thus says the Lord GOD: In the first month, on the first day of the month, you shall take a bull from the herd without blemish, and purify the sanctuary.** **19** **The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and the posts of the gate of the inner court.** **20** **You shall do the same on the seventh day of the month for anyone who has sinned through error or ignorance; so you shall make atonement for the temple.** **21** “**In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall celebrate the Feast of the Passover, and for seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten.** **22** **On that day the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a young bull for a sin offering.** **23** **And on the seven days of the festival he shall provide as a burnt offering to the LORD seven young bulls and seven rams without blemish, on each of the seven days; and a male goat daily for a sin offering.** **24** **And he shall provide as a grain offering an ephah for each bull, an ephah for each ram, and a hin of oil to each ephah.** **25** **In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month and for the seven days of the feast, he shall make the same provision for sin offerings, burnt offerings, and grain offerings, and for the oil.**

**45:7** *The prince will have the land.* A considerable portion of territory. In view of the next verse (cf. 46:18) the generous allotment should have kept the prince from greed like that of Ahab (see 1Ki 21). The prince was also responsible for sizable offerings (v. 17). (CSB)

*land on both sides.* On the sides of the sacred square were two rectangular territories that were assigned to the prince. One territory extended westward to the Great Sea, and the other extended eastward to the Jordan River. (TLSB)

**45:8** *no more oppress My people.* Cf 22:6. Luth: “The old, worldly, temporal government remains in all the world, and does not at all prevent the establishment upon earth of the new, spiritual, everlasting rule and kingdom of Christ under it and within it, a kingdom that has its own peculiar nature, as we clearly see. Especially is this the case where there are righteous kings and princes, who in their old government tolerate this new everlasting kingdom of Christ, or who themselves accept it, promote it, and desire as Christians to be in it” (AE 35:289). (TLSB)

**45:9** *O princes of Israel!* The language of this verse is reminiscent of the preaching Ezekiel did before 586 B.C. (see 22:6). (CSB)

*execute justice.* Worship was to go on without hindrance and hardships. (TLSB)

*Cease your evictions.* Cf Hos 5:10. (TLSB)

**45:10** *You are to use accurate scales.* Israel was not to repeat the economic injustices of the past. The OT often warns against cheating in weights and measures (see Lev 19:35–36; Dt 25:13–16; Mic 6:10–12). (CSB)

*You.* Plural, admonishing all the people. (TLSB)

**45:11** *same size.* A little more than half a bushel. (CSB)

*homer.* About six bushels. (CSB)

*Offerings and Holy Days*

<sup>13</sup>”**This is the special gift you are to offer: a sixth of an ephah from each homer of wheat and a sixth of an ephah from each homer of barley.** <sup>14</sup>**The prescribed portion of oil, measured by the bath, is a tenth of a bath from each cor (which consists of ten baths or one homer, for ten baths are equivalent to a homer).** <sup>15</sup>**Also one sheep is to be taken from every flock of two hundred from the well-watered pastures of Israel. These will be used for the grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to make atonement for the people, declares the Sovereign LORD.** <sup>16</sup>**All the people of the land will participate in this special gift for the use of the prince in Israel.** <sup>17</sup>**It will be the duty of the prince to provide the burnt offerings, grain offerings and drink offerings at the festivals, the New Moons and the Sabbaths—at all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel. He will provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel.** <sup>18</sup>”**This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In the first month on the first day you are to take a young bull without defect and purify the sanctuary.** <sup>19</sup>**The priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, on the four corners of the upper ledge of the altar and on the gateposts of the inner court.** <sup>20</sup>**You are to do the same on the seventh day of the month for anyone who sins unintentionally or through ignorance; so you are to make atonement for the temple.** <sup>21</sup>”**In the first month on the fourteenth day you are to**

observe the Passover, a feast lasting seven days, during which you shall eat bread made without yeast. <sup>22</sup> On that day the prince is to provide a bull as a sin offering for himself and for all the people of the land. <sup>23</sup> Every day during the seven days of the Feast he is to provide seven bulls and seven rams without defect as a burnt offering to the LORD, and a male goat for a sin offering. <sup>24</sup> He is to provide as a grain offering an ephah for each bull and an ephah for each ram, along with a hin of oil for each ephah. <sup>25</sup>” “During the seven days of the Feast, which begins in the seventh month on the fifteenth day, he is to make the same provision for sin offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings and oil.

**45:13-17** After describing the location of the new sanctuary, God now gave Ezekiel a series of ordinances for regulating the worship there. The offerings for the worship were to be provided by the people. The amount was to be based on their income – about 2% of the grain; 1% of the olive oil; ½ of % of their flocks. For a discussion of the various types of offerings see chapter 43:18-27. In the New Jerusalem the prince was to be the provider of the items of worship. The people would give him portions of their income, and he would use these offerings in providing the sacrificial animals. The drink offering was the wine poured out over the sacrifice in token of the worshiper’s gratitude to God. (PBC)

**45:13** *special gift.* Given to the prince as distinct from the gifts given to the priests (44:30). The prince is to use these gifts in part for the offerings to the Lord (see v. 16). (CSB)

*you.* Singular, yet contributions from all the people are envisioned (v 16). (TLSB)

**45:15** *make atonement for them.* Though reconciled to God and admitted into fellowship with Him, the redeemed community must plead guilty of committing sins and depend on God’s mercy (cf Dt 21:8; Ps 51; Is 44:22; Ac 3:19). (TLSB)

**45:16** *offering to the prince.* After providing the temple with a peaceful setting, ordinances were issued to regulate the worship services within the holy precincts. The offerings found here do not appear in the Law of Moses. The Lord is commanding something new. (TLSB)

**45:17** *prince’s duty to furnish ... offerings.* The people were to give an offering for the prince, who in turn was to provide everything needed for the sacrifices. This is not mere taxation; the prince is acting as a mediator for the people. (TLSB)

*drink offerings.* Usually wine is meant (see Nu 15:5; Hos 9:4); but wine is not mentioned here, though oil is (vv. 14, 24). (CSB)

**45:18–46:24**† This entire section involves so many variations from Pentateuchal law that the rabbis spent a great deal of effort trying to reconcile them. For example, the provision in 45:18 for an annual purification of the temple does not mention the Day of Atonement ritual of Lev 16. The mediating function of a high priest is no longer necessary, since reconciliation with God has been achieved for the worshipers of the new covenant through the atoning “death of his Son” (Ro 5:10–11). (CSB)

**45:18–20** “The difference between the holy and the common” (44:23) was to be marked by dedicatory rites that would make atonement for the profane nature of a building and render it a sacred dwelling place (cf Lv 14:53). (TLSB)

**45:19** *priest.* High priest. (CSB)

**45:21–25** Three annual festivals were to be observed. The second of these is identified by name as “the Passover” (v 21). The other two are known in Mosaic legislation as New Year’s Day (vv 18–20) and the Feast of Booths (v 25). (TLSB)

**45:25** *the Feast, which begins in the seventh month.* In some respects the most important of the festivals—called the Feast of Ingathering (Ex 23:16; 34:22) and the Feast of Tabernacles (Dt 16:16). (CSB)

**45:7–25** God gives the Israelites a prince, not a king; the heavenly Father is Israel’s King. The Israelites must present their offerings to the prince (vv 13–16). In the OT, God ordained days and times of worship with ceremonies pointing to the coming Messiah. As NT believers, we have more freedom by God’s grace through Christ (Col 2:16–17). In fact, the Lord makes us a living temple (Eph 2:21). • Father, send Your Holy Spirit to work in us a faithful zeal for Your Holy Word and Sacraments. Amen. (TLSB)