EZEKIEL 44

The Shut Gate and the Faithful Priests

> *“And it shall be with regard to an inheritance for them, that I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no possession in Israel—I am their possession.”*
> EZEKIEL 44:28

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. The vision of the new temple continues (chapters 40–48), dated “in the twenty-fifth year of our exile” (40:1), about 573 BC.

2. The rest of the chapter answers one question: who may come near?

The Gate the LORD Entered

The east gate stays shut, and only the prince may sit in it to eat before the LORD.

EZEKIEL 44:1

Then He brought me back by the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces the east; and it was shut.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik says the gate is shut because it is 'a gate especially reserved for God Himself.' He passes on Vawter and Hoppe: 'Since God will never leave the temple again, the gate will remain closed.'

WHAT IT MEANS

The King came home through that gate, and no one else walks where He walked. The glory left by the east gate in chapters 10–11; now the gate is sealed behind Him, because He is never leaving again.

sagar (סָגַר)
SAGAR · "TO SHUT"

Sagar means to close, to shut up.

Who May Come Near? (Ezekiel 44)



The order of nearness in Ezekiel 44: the LORD alone through the east gate, the prince in its porch, the faithful sons of Zadok at God's table, the Levites who strayed at the gates, and foreigners to the covenant shut out.

Foreigners in God's House

Ezekiel falls before the glory, then hears the sin: outsiders were set to keep God's charge.

EZEKIEL 44:4

Then He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the house; and I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD, and I fell on my face.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik passes on two explanations of how this happened. Wright suggests laziness or bribery as the motive, and Alexander notes the old Near Eastern habit of using foreign captives as temple servants.

WHAT IT MEANS

Seeing the glory again, Ezekiel falls on his face (v4). Then God tells him to “mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears” (v5), because what comes next matters.

ʿarel (עָרֵל)

ʿAREL · “UNCIRCUMCISED”

ʿArel means uncircumcised, and figuratively closed off, unresponsive to God. Israel had brought into God's sanctuary foreigners (ben-nekar, H5236, sons of a foreign land) “uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh” (v7).

The Levites Who Went Astray

Forgiven enough to serve at the gates, but not trusted to stand at the altar.

EZEKIEL 44:10

"But the Levites who went far from Me when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me after their idols, shall bear the punishment for their iniquity.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik says this discipline shows the vision 'does not belong to the eternal realm, but to the millennial period.' Sin's consequences are still being lived out.

WHAT IT MEANS

Mercy and consequences stand side by side. These men led Israel into idolatry.

mikshol (מִכְשׁוֹל)

MIKSHOL · "A STUMBLING BLOCK"

Mikshol is a cause of stumbling, an offense. These Levites "ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel" (v12).

The Sons of Zadok

The priests who kept charge when Israel strayed come near to God's table.

EZEKIEL 44:15

"But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood," declares the Lord GOD.

DAVID GUZIK

Wright, in Guzik, notes: 'The new priesthood is confined to the line of Zadok.'

WHAT IT MEANS

The Zadokites stayed faithful when it wasn't popular, and God remembered it for generations. Notice what their reward is: not land, not wealth, but nearness.

mishmereth (מִשְׁמֶרֶת)
MISHMERETH · "A CHARGE, DUTY"

Mishmereth is a watch, a guard, a duty or obligation. It is the hinge of the chapter.

Holy Living for Holy Service

Linen, a change of clothes, sober minds, and a calling to teach the difference.

EZEKIEL 44:17

"It shall be that when they enter at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and wool shall not be on them while they are ministering in the gates of the inner court and in the house.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that the linen keeps the priests from sweating: nothing of human labor and strain in God's presence. The ban on wine before ministry recalls Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1–11).

WHAT IT MEANS

These rules are not random. They are about a life shaped to serve God and to teach others the difference between holy and common (v23; Lev 10:10–11; Mal 2:7).

chol (חֹל)

CHOL · "COMMON, UNHOLY"

Chol means common, unholy, ordinary. The heart of the priest's job is in verse 23: "they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."

The Priest's Rule of Life (Ezekiel 44:17–31)



The rules for the priests in verses 17–31, grouped by area of life, with the calling at the heart of them: to teach the difference between the holy and the profane.

I Am Their Inheritance

No land for the priests; God Himself is their portion, and the people's gifts feed them.

EZEKIEL 44:28

"And it shall be with regard to an inheritance for them, that I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no possession in Israel—I am their possession.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that this follows the Law given to Aaron and the Levites, who had no land because God Himself was their share (Num 18:20).

WHAT IT MEANS

The priests owned no land, but they had God. Many men walk out of prison with nothing: no house, no car, sometimes no family willing to take them.

nachalah (נַחֲלָה)
NACHALAH · "INHERITANCE"

Nachalah is a possession, heritage, portion. Every tribe would receive land, but not the priests: "I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no possession in Israel—I am their possession" (v28).

What to carry from this chapter

1

A gate for the King alone.

Guzik calls the east gate one especially reserved for God Himself; since He will never leave again, it stays shut (v2).

2

Not today's Golden Gate.

Guzik says the shut gate belongs to a temple compound yet to come, not the sealed gate in Jerusalem's wall now.

3

Uncircumcised in heart.

ʿArel means closed off to God; the issue was covenant, not ethnicity (vv7, 9).

4

You did not keep charge.

Israel handed God's holy things to outsiders instead of guarding them itself (v8).

More to carry

5

A stumbling block.

Mikshol: the Levites did not just sin, they made Israel fall, and they bear their shame (vv12–13).

6

Mercy with consequences.

The demoted Levites still serve at the gates and among the people (vv11, 14).

7

Faithful in the dark.

The sons of Zadok kept charge when Israel went astray, and they alone come near to God's table (vv15–16).

8

Tithe and be rich.

Guzik quotes Trapp on the firstfruits that cause a blessing to rest on the giver's house (v30).

Talk it through

1. The gate was shut because the LORD had entered by it. What does it mean to you that God has come to stay?

2. Israel let others keep charge of God's holy things. What has God given you to guard that you have handed off?

3. The Levites became a stumbling block to others. Who is watching your life, and how does that change how you live?

4. The sons of Zadok stayed faithful when everyone else drifted. What does faithfulness in a dark season look like for you right now?

5. God told the priests, “I am their inheritance.” If you lost everything else, would God be enough?

CLOSING

The King has come home, and the gate is shut behind Him. Those who keep faith in the dark seasons are brought near to His table, and they find what the sons of Zadok found: God Himself is the inheritance, and He is enough.

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

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