

suffer as much as we do when faced with extinction it is difficult to believe that God would require sacrifice of animals just to teach us spiritual lessons.

Theories of Creation

In conclusion, we will take a brief look at the impact of this theory (that there was no animal death before the fall) on the three models of Creation.

- 1 Most of those who believe that the whole universe was created in seven days about 6,000 years ago also believe that the extinct fossilised herbivorous animals were created before the fall and the carnivorous animals after the fall.

Extinct fossilised species are about twenty times more numerous than existing species. For example, there are only two species of elephant today, compared with 150 extinct elephant-like creatures in the fossil record; five surviving species of rhino compared with 200 extinct species; four living species of hyena compared with 70 extinct species; and there are no dinosaurs today, compared with

over 500 extinct herbivorous and carnivorous species. The fossil record reveals the same balance of herbivores and predators as exist today; so if all the living and extinct predators were created after the fall this would have necessitated a huge increase in the number of herbivores to feed the predators.

- 2 The re-creation theory postulates that there is a vast time gap between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis 1, and that Genesis 1 describes a recent creation on a very old and devastated earth. This theory regards the fossil record as a history of a previous creation that contained the same pattern of predation as is found in the living world today, so it accepts that animal death did not originate from the fall in Eden.
- 3 If we believe that the literal days of Genesis 1 are human time frames during which God revealed His creative work occurring over millions of years then we have harmony between the Genesis record and the fossil record viewed as a history of a very old earth. Death is seen as an integral part of God's creation from the beginning of the natural world.



Prophecy, History and Archaeology

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Ezekiel's visions of the Millennium

2. The holy oblation

Geoff Cave

HAVING LOOKED in the [first article](#) at the borders of the land of Israel in the age to come, attention is now focused on how the land will be divided up between the tribes, with special attention to the holy oblation in the midst of the land, and the city that is part of that oblation. The way in which the tribal strips are apportioned is relatively straightforward; the details are given in Ezekiel 48:1-8,23-28, with the verses in between describing the holy oblation. The details are shown in the map at [Figure 1](#).

The divisions of the holy oblation

The word 'oblation' simply means 'offering', being used for the sacrificial offerings in the Law.

The holy oblation is the portion of land that will be set apart for the Lord. It will contain the sanctuary, where the nation will worship and to which they will bring their offerings, and it will also contain the city, which will be called "The LORD is there".

The oblation is divided into three main sections, as [Figure 2](#) overleaf shows:

- A portion for the priests, the sons of Zadok, with the sanctuary in the centre (48:10-12)
- A portion for the Levites (vv. 13,14)
- The remainder for the city (vv. 15-19).

The portion for the sons of Zadok is described as "most holy" (v. 12), the portion for the Levites as "holy" (v. 14). The portion for the city is de-

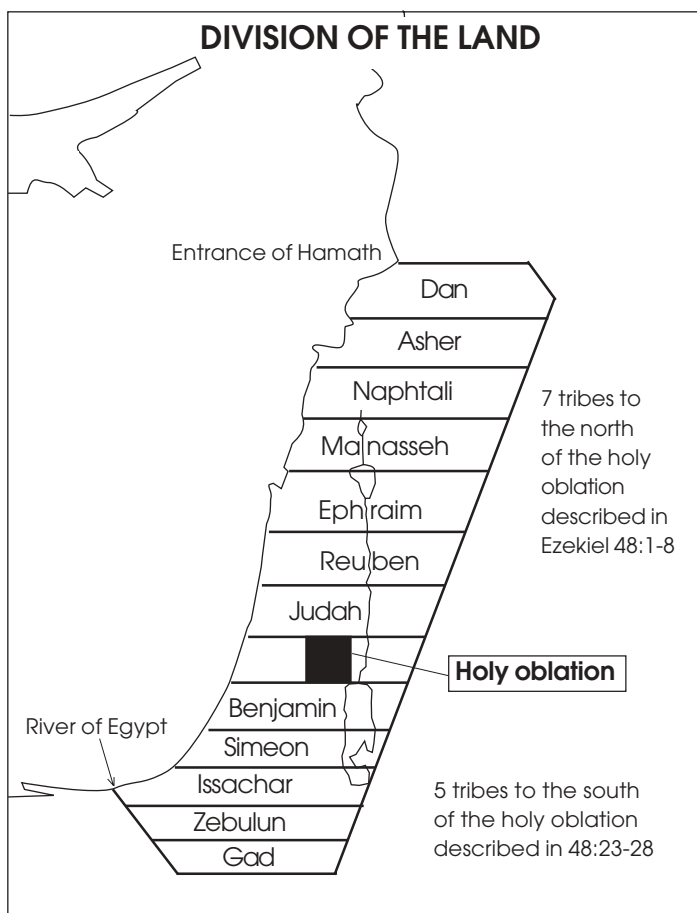


Figure 1. The division of the land

scribed as “profane” or common (v. 15), but it must be remembered that the city is still part of the holy oblation: “All the oblation shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city” (v. 20).

It must be concluded from these statements that there are differing degrees of holiness being described here. The most holy portion within the oblation is for the sons of Zadok, with the sanctuary in the midst. The portion for the Levites is holy within the oblation. The city, whilst being part of the oblation, is profane or common; and finally, the whole land and nation of Israel will be separate in comparison with the other nations: “And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (37:28).

Cubits or reeds?

Ezekiel 48:20 records: “All the oblation shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city”. The AV, remaining true to the original text, does not say what the unit of measurement is. Much discussion has taken place over the correct unit to use.

In Ezekiel 40:5 two units of measurement are mentioned, the reed and the cubit: “And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man’s hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth”. This verse highlights the difference between the two measurements; the reed is equal to six cubits, and the cubit is described as a “cubit and an hand breadth”. The standard cubit was approximately eighteen inches long, this being the distance from the elbow to the tip of the forefinger. The unit Ezekiel described was the large or royal cubit, for which a hand breadth was added to the standard cubit, making it approximately twenty-one inches long. The reed would be six times this length, that is, ten foot six inches. The overall dimension of the oblation, therefore, is either approximately fifty miles square if the reed is the correct

unit of measurement, or approximately 8.3 miles square if the correct unit is the cubit.

The map at Figure 1 assumes that the oblation is measured in cubits. With the sanctuary at Jerusalem and the borders described by Ezekiel as shown on the map, it can be seen that the proportions are correct to fit seven tribes above the oblation and five tribes below. If the oblation is measured in reeds, as shown in Figure 3 overleaf, the following problems arise:

- 1 There is very little space left for the tribal portions, particularly below the oblation.
- 2 The space left on either side of the oblation is for the prince (48:21), but this space is almost nonexistent.
- 3 In 47:9,10 Ezekiel speaks of fishermen spreading their nets from En-gedi to En-eglaim as a result of the healing of the waters of the Dead Sea. Part of this region would fall with the

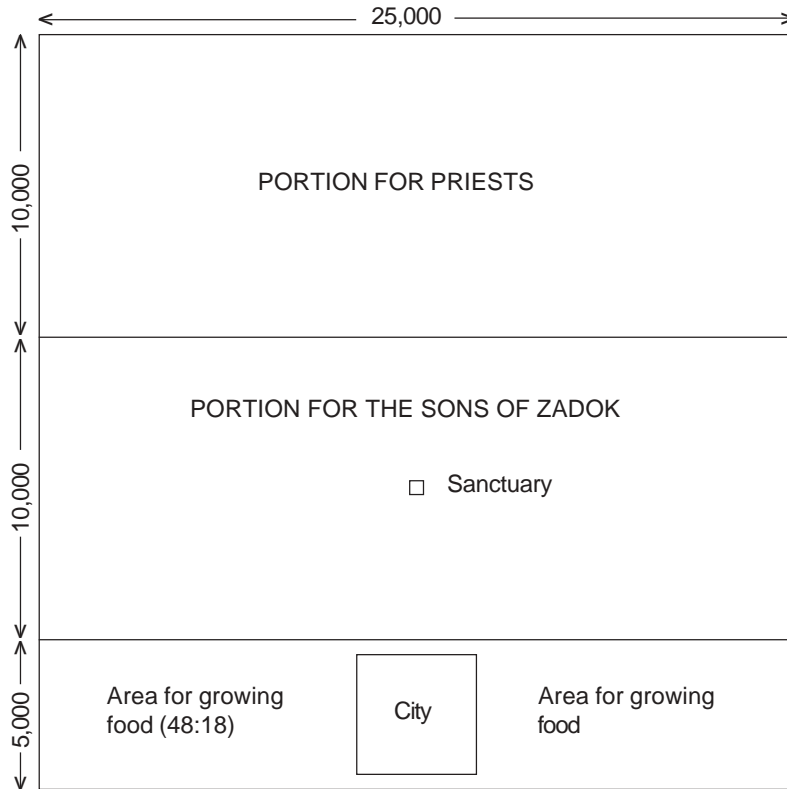


Figure 2. The divisions of the holy oblation

holy oblation. It is questionable whether such activities would take place in the holy oblation.

This would suggest, therefore, that the correct unit is the cubit.

The city

The remainder of this article considers the city described by Ezekiel in chapter 48. The first point to note is the dimensions of the city (vv. 30-34). It is square, 4,500 by 4,500 “measures”. If the oblation is measured in cubits then the city must also be in cubits. The prophet states that the city has “suburbs” around it on all sides for a depth of 250 cubits (v. 17).

It is important to note the relative sizes of the city and the sanctuary, as shown in Figure 4. The area of the city is in fact more than eighty times that of the sanctuary. It goes without saying that many more people will be able to enter the city than the sanctuary at any given time (see below).

The city will have twelve gates, as shown in Figure 5. It is interesting to note the comment of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:28: “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”. The place of judgment was in the gate; it is possible therefore that the apostles will sit on thrones in these gates judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

“The LORD is there”

Ezekiel concludes his prophecy with the statement, “the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there”. The Hebrew is ‘Yahweh Shammah’, and it has been suggested that *shammah* can also mean ‘thither’ or

‘yonder’. The idea is that this name refers to the fact that the Lord Jesus will reign from the sanctuary, which is ‘yonder’ in relation to the city. This idea raises the following difficulties:

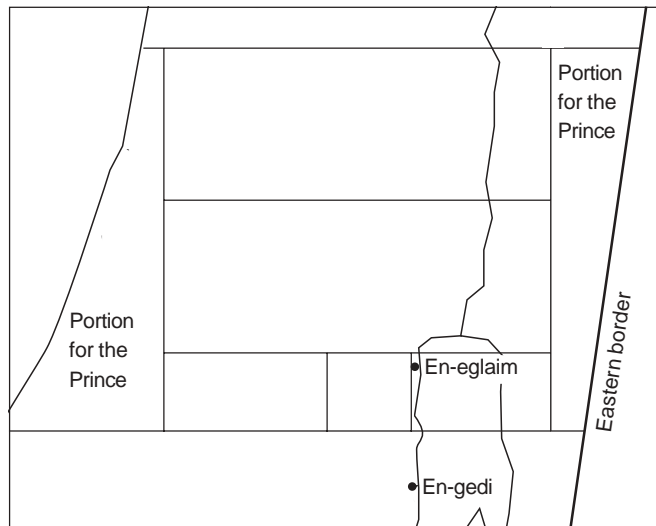


Figure 3. The holy oblation measured in reeds (25,000 x 25,000 reeds; 50 x 50 miles)

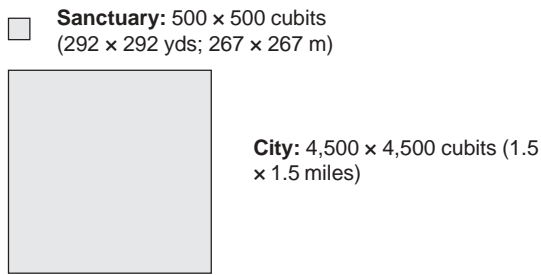


Figure 4. The relative sizes of the city and the sanctuary

- 1 This means in effect that the name of the city is 'The LORD is not there', because he is in the sanctuary. This is a rather strange name for a city to be called. There is no other example in Scripture of a city being given such a name.
- 2 If, as suggested, the Lord reigns from the holy of holies in the sanctuary, this will be inaccessible to almost the whole population of the world. How would people worship the King if it is not possible to approach his throne?
- 3 The Gesenius Hebrew lexicon states that the Hebrew word *shammah* means 'thither' when it is used after verbs of motion, giving an example from 1 Samuel 2:14: "So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that *came* thither". In this example it is obvious that the people of Israel were *coming to* Shiloh. However, in Ezekiel 48:35 there is no verb of motion, and there is no place other than 'the city' mentioned.

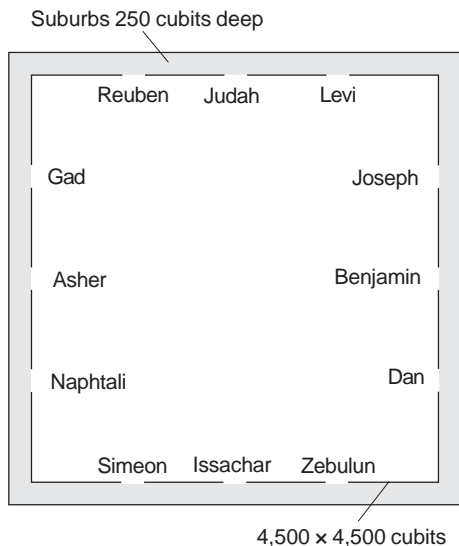
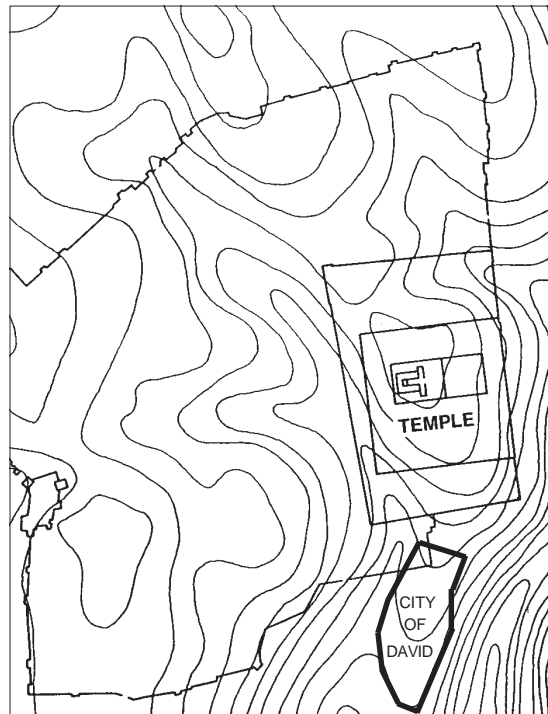


Figure 5. The details of the city



"Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah"
 (2 Chron. 3:1)

Figure 6. The city and the sanctuary

The sanctuary and the city

When the Old Testament kingdom of Israel was established with its capital at Jerusalem, the city and the sanctuary were two different places. The city from which David ruled was located on Mount Zion. Just to the north was Mount Moriah, the place of sacrifice, where Abraham offered Isaac and where Solomon built the temple (see [Figure 6](#)). In the age to come, the sanctuary, which will surely be the place of sacrifice, will also be to the north of the city where Jesus Christ will reign ([Figure 2](#)).

It should also be noted that Jerusalem encompassed both Zion and Moriah from the time of Solomon and onwards. In accordance with this Isaiah 2 says: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and

we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (vv. 2,3). The prophet is speaking here of both Zion and Moriah. People from all nations will go to Zion to hear the word of the Lord. A relatively small number will go to the sanctuary to offer sacrifices. This idea will be expanded in a later article.

Zion, the city of the great King

Scripture is clear as to where the Lord Jesus Christ will have his throne:

“Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is *mount Zion*, on the sides of the north, *the city of the great King*” (Ps. 48:2);

“Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of *Zion* (2:6);

“The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of *Zion*: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies” (110:2);

“Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in *mount Zion*, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously” (Isa. 24:23).

These passages confirm that the city called by Ezekiel Yahweh Shammah will be the city from which the Lord Jesus will reign. Yahweh will be there in the person of His Son, Emmanuel.

It may be argued that this city is only given scant attention by Ezekiel in comparison with

the details of the sanctuary, and can therefore be of little importance. The main purpose of this section of Ezekiel’s prophecy is given in the following verses:

“And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest *to the house of Israel*” (40:4);

“Thou son of man, shew the house *to the house of Israel*, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern” (43:10).

The sanctuary will be primarily for the house of Israel, and so Ezekiel was shown all the details thereof. The city is for all nations to come and worship the King and to learn of his laws, but this is not the main focus of this prophecy.

It will be remembered that the city is described as being profane or common in comparison with the sanctuary and its environs. The reason for this becomes clear when it is understood that the city is for people of all nations but the sanctuary is only for the nation of Israel and those who join themselves to it from the other nations. The relative sizes of the sanctuary and the city are also in harmony with these principles. In the next article we will begin to consider the sanctuary.

[\(To be continued\)](#)

We shall be changed

We must be changed!
This body substance, flesh and blood,
That now is vile, but once was good,
Restored by Him Who said it would,
In time He has arranged.

We must be changed!
The thinking of this fleshly mind
Be redirected, well refined
With higher thoughts of nobler kind,
Just now would seem quite strange.

We shall be changed!
Bestowed upon with richer Spirit,
Based on our faith, not on our merit.
A kingdom place we shall inherit,
With others faithful ranged.

Bill Guy