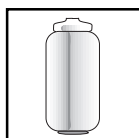


to be possible. It was the will of God that they should be slain as a solemn religious rite with an elaborate ceremonial which the priests had to learn. The fact of death was thus brought before the people and they learned some lessons, even

though they “could not steadfastly look to the end of [beyond] that which is abolished” (2 Cor. 3:13). The offerings under the Law were brought to an end, not only by Divine decree, but by the harsh facts of history.



## Prophecy, History and Archaeology

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# Ezekiel's visions of the Millennium

## 6. The prince

Geoff Cave

**T**HE PURPOSE of this article is to look at what Ezekiel records about the prince, the one who will play a key role within the sanctuary in the age to come. The prince is mentioned by the prophet on no less than nineteen occasions; this in itself is a measure of the important role of this person.

to these offerings, individuals will also bring their own offerings to the Lord. Even with servants to help, this will be a significant part of the work of the prince, but it will be a very important work; it makes reconciliation for the mortals of the house of Israel.

### To make reconciliation for the house of Israel

“And it shall be the prince’s part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel” (Ezek. 45:17). The prince will make reconciliation for Israel by giving and preparing offerings on a regular basis. The details given by Ezekiel indicate that a large number of offerings are involved; Figure 1 shows the extent of this work.

It may be argued that the prince has servants to help in this work, which is possibly true, but the prince himself will be regularly involved, as will be shown later. These offerings are presented by the prince on behalf of the nation. In addition

### Worshipping at the east gate

Ezekiel 46:1-3 reveals that, along with the people of the land, the prince worships on the sabbaths

Feast	Offerings	Yearly total
Passover (45:22,23)	50 bullocks 49 rams 7 kids	106
Feast of seven days (Tabernacles?) (45:25)	49 bullocks 49 rams 7 kids	105
Every sabbath (46:4)	6 lambs 1 ram	306 51
Every new moon (46:6)	1 bullock 6 lambs 1 ram	12 72 12
Daily (46:13)	1 lamb	360
	<b>Number of offerings each year</b>	<b>1,024</b>

and the new moons at the eastern gate. He will bring his offering to the outer porch of the inner eastern gate of the sanctuary. He will give his offering to the priest, who will prepare and bring the offering to the altar. The prince meanwhile stands at the threshold of the gate, with the people of the land, to worship.

When the prince enters or leaves the sanctuary, he will do this with the people of the land. If they enter by the north gate they must leave by the south gate, and if they enter by the south gate they must leave by the north gate (vv. 9,10).

### The prince and the eastern outer gate

Concerning the eastern outer gate, Ezekiel records: "Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same" (44:1-3).

Figure 2 shows that the prince does not enter the sanctuary by the east gate; as 46:9,10 shows, he enters and leaves the sanctuary with the people of the land using the north and south gates. He enters into the porch of the east gate to eat bread and then leaves the same way; he does not go through the gate.

This raises the question, Why does the prince eat bread in that gate? It is possible that the prince is the only person to *work* in the sanctuary

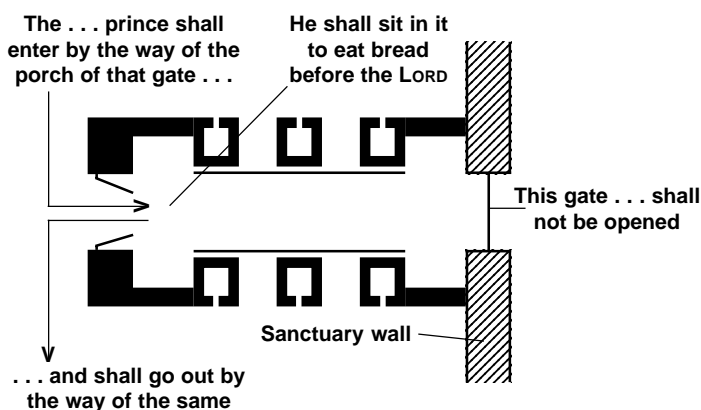


Figure 2 The east outer gate

who is not a part of the priesthood. The priests have chambers in which to eat when they work in the sanctuary, but not the prince. It is in fact another indication of how much time the prince spends in the sanctuary. The east outer gate will not be used as a gate once the glory of the Lord has entered. As the prince brings some, if not all, of his offerings to the east inner gate to give to the priests, the east outer gate is near this location.

### The inheritance of the prince

The inheritance of the prince consists of the strip of land on either side of the holy oblation. He will give sections of this land to his servants and to his sons. Land given to his servants is theirs only to the year of liberty; afterwards it reverts to the possession of the prince. If, however, the prince gives land to his sons, it remains their inheritance and does not revert back to the prince (46:16,17). Regarding the giving of land to his sons, the following injunction is laid on the prince: "Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession; but he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession: that My people be not scattered every man from his possession" (v. 18).

A similar injunction appears in chapter 45. Having described the portion of the prince, Ezekiel continues with the following statement: "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. Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from My people, saith the Lord GOD" (vv. 8,9). This passage speaks of princes, plural, in relation to the prince's portion either side of the oblation. The prince possibly has subordinate princes, and together they will divide the land according to the tribal portions, but they are all warned that this must be done fairly.

### The offerings of the prince

Ezekiel states in 45:22: "And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin offer-

ing". This verse reveals that the prince is a mortal individual. He is in need of a sin offering, along with all the other mortal people in the land. The situation is exactly the same as described in Leviticus 16:6: "And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house".

It has been suggested that the prince is the Lord Jesus Christ. This idea is very difficult to accept, as it was said of him: "so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). When Jesus Christ appears again, it will be "without sin"; why then does he need to offer a sin offering *for himself*?

The New Testament is emphatic that the Lord Jesus Christ does not need to offer sacrifice on an ongoing basis: "but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself" (7:24-27).

#### The unchangeable priesthood of Christ

The priesthood described by Ezekiel is obviously modelled on the Aaronic order. It will have mortal priests offering sacrifices for mortal people, and it will sanctify the nation of Israel amongst the nations, which was God's purpose with Israel from the beginning (Ex. 19:5,6; Deut. 4:5-8). At the end of the Millennium this priesthood will change; it will in fact not be needed, for there will be no mortals left on the earth.

The priesthood of Christ is both unchangeable and everlasting, and it required one perfect sacrifice, which was completely acceptable to the Father. The sacrifice was acceptable in every way because our Lord knew exactly what was required: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:11). In contrast to this, the prince is commanded to offer for himself and the people a sin offering. The sin offering was for sins of ignorance (Lev. 4:1-3).

#### Who will the prince be?

The prince as described by Ezekiel will be a mortal ruler within the nation of Israel. There is other evidence to show that mortal rulers will exist during the Millennium: "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little" (Ps. 2:10-12).

The Hebrew word used by Ezekiel is *nasiy*, meaning a captain or leader. It is used extensively to refer to mortal leaders among the people; for example: "And thou, profane wicked *prince* of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end . . ." (Ezek. 21:25); and: "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief *prince* of Meshech and Tubal" (38:3). When Daniel speaks of Messiah the prince he uses a different Hebrew word, *nagiyd*; this word is used extensively of the ruler or king of Israel, and means 'a commander'.

The following is a summary of the reasons which suggest the prince will be a mortal leader within the nation of Israel:

- 1 He has sons to whom he will give land (46:16);
- 2 He must not take land "by oppression" (46:18);
- 3 He worships at the east gate of the sanctuary with the people of the land (46:2,3);
- 4 Much of his time is taken giving and preparing offerings (45:17);
- 5 He offers a sin offering for himself (45:22).

#### Is there a throne in the sanctuary?

When Ezekiel was in the temple during his guided tour, he was told the following in relation to the most holy place: "Son of man, the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and My holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places" (43:7).

It has been suggested that the Lord Jesus Christ will reign over the world from this throne. This idea raises the following difficulties:

- 1 The most holy place in the temple will be inaccessible to the whole mortal population of the world, with the exception of the priests who "come near" to the Lord (44:15). How would all nations come to worship the King (Zech. 14:16)?

- 2 A literal throne is not necessarily meant; the phrase is “the place of My throne”.
- 3 The sanctuary is for the nation of Israel, not the rest of the nations (Ezek. 37:28).

What, then, does the phrase mean? In Exodus 40:34 it is recorded: “Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle”. Similarly in the days of Solomon: “And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’S house” (2 Chronicles 7:2).

Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord enter the sanctuary, and he describes it thus: “Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory

of the LORD filled the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face” (44:4). He tells us that the vision of the glory was the same as the vision he had seen earlier (43:1-3). This was the vision of the cherubim. The prophet describes that earlier vision in these words: “Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne” (10:1).

Putting these ideas together, it may be concluded that the glory of Yahweh will occupy the most holy place in the form of the cherubim of glory “as the likeness of a throne”; there will not be a literal throne there.

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

## Discoveries at Gezer

Dennis M. Elliott

**D**AVID DOWN, in his magazine *Archaeological Diggings*, says of the Biblical city of Gezer: “It occupied a tell 650m in length, 250m in width and covering some 30 acres, a very large city for those days—twice the size of Megiddo. It is about 30km northwest of Jerusalem on the way to Joppa. As seen from the Jerusalem to Tel Aviv highway the low and undistinguished hill of Tell Gezer gives no hint of its importance. It is only as you stand on top of the tell that you realise that Gezer had a commanding position—there is an unimpeded view in all directions. The whole coastal plain of Israel is spread out below like a map. Lookouts in Gezer would have seen the whole coastal plain of Israel from Ashkelon in the south to the Mediterranean Sea north of Tel Aviv”.

Gezer is situated at the junction of two trade routes. One was known as ‘The Way of the Sea’ and traversed the plain west of Gezer, linking Egypt with Mesopotamia. A little to the north of Gezer was the main road between Jerusalem and the coast, which the modern highway follows. The strategic importance of Gezer was such that a local ruler or attacking army would be fully aware of its commanding position, for whoever held the city had trade and communications in western Israel firmly under his control.

### The discovery of Gezer

The first identification of Gezer was made by a young French scholar, C. Clermont-Ganneau, in

1864. His address to the French Academy of Science outlining his identification of Gezer was challenged with the request to back his claim with inscriptional evidence. The request was hardly appropriate, for, as Down points out, no inscriptional evidence had to that time been found regarding any Biblical site in Israel. It is interesting to note that it transpired that Gezer turned out to be the first site to be identified by inscriptional evidence—and Clermont-Ganneau was the one who had the good fortune to find it!

The story is that in 1874 an Arab peasant of Abu Ghosh (a village on the site of Kirjath-jearim, the place where the ark was located after being returned by the Philistines) informed him that stones had been found at Gezer with what appeared to be writing on them. Clermont-Ganneau lost no time in hurrying to the place, about two kilometres east of the tell, and was excited by what he saw: a flat stone with inscriptions in both Hebrew and Greek.

The inscription in Greek bore the word *alkiou*, which meant ‘belonging to Alkios’, but it has not been discovered to date who this person was or how he featured in the picture. The Hebrew said *t’hum Gezer*, which was translated as ‘belonging to Gezer’. The significance was obvious. This was clearly a boundary marker, and without doubt identified the adjacent tell of Gezer.

Clermont-Ganneau correctly surmised that if this was a boundary stone then there should be several others, and, after a search, came upon