

The Prince

Ezekiel 40-48 Part II

^{44:1} Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east. And it was shut. ² And the LORD said to me, “This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered by it. Therefore it shall remain shut. ³ Only the prince may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD. He shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out by the same way.”

Ezekiel 44:1-3

The Prince of Peace

In 1741, George Frideric Handel penned the greatest oratorio in history: *Messiah*. Part I describes the Messiah's birth with those ancient words of **Isaiah 9:6**: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, *Prince of Peace*.” With soaring majesty, Handel captured the hope of a coming **Prince** whose reign would bring true and lasting

peace — not the fragile peace of armies or treaties, but the deep God-sent *shalom* that only the Messiah can establish.

Just a few years earlier, in 1727, the same composer wrote another coronation anthem for the crowning of King George II. The piece is titled *Zadok the Priest*, and its text comes straight from Scripture: “Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon king” (1Kg 1:34). The anthem celebrates the moment a prince becomes king at the hands of a faithful priest whose line alone will continue the priesthood. For centuries, British monarchs have been crowned to these very words, connecting their rule to the biblical ideal of a Davidic king anointed by God’s representative—for better or *for worse*.

Indeed, we know that nearly 50 years later, that same royal line that inspired such majestic music would produce George III, the son of George II. It was under George III that the American colonies suffered a long train of abuses — taxation without representation, the suspension of legislatures, the quartering of troops, and the denial of basic liberties. The colonists did not lightly declare independence. In the Declaration of 1776 they laid out a detailed list of grievances against the king, arguing that like the old kings of Ju-

dah and Israel whom they so wanted to emulate, he had become a tyrant unfit to rule a free people. In place of monarchy by divine right, they proposed a bold experiment: a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal and that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, under a written constitution and the rule of law.

Two hundred and fifty years later, we celebrate that experiment with gratitude, even as we acknowledge how difficult it has proven. From a bloody Civil War that tested whether a nation so conceived could long endure, through the existential threats of the Cold War, to the deadly subtlety of infiltration from within, this republic has been tested again and again.

The American experiment in self-government under law has been a noble endeavor, yet it has never been able to deliver the perfect justice and peace for which our hearts ultimately long. Not even by a long shot. Yet, “America” itself was founded upon a kind of utopian ideal — a “city on a hill” vision of Puritans like John Winthrop of ordered liberty under just law under God — just as communism is a rival utopian project that seeks to bring heaven down to

earth without Him. Both are powerful opposite human attempts to realize an ideal society. While one has proven extraordinarily dangerous, claiming over 100 million lives in the twentieth century alone, neither can be fully realized in this fallen world.

It is into this longing that Ezekiel speaks with remarkable relevance in the final nine chapters of his book. He sees this vision of a renewed temple *and* a reordered society—the true and only biblical city on a hill (**Ezek 40:2; Matt 5:14**). In this vision, he also sees a remarkable yet confusing and **blurry leader**. Strikingly, he does not call him a “**king**” (*melek*). Instead, he repeatedly calls him “**prince**” (*nāśī*). In the temple vision, this prince is given honor and responsibility, yet his **power is deliberately limited**, as the old absolutism of kingship is depowered. The vision points us to a leader who is both **royal** and quite inexplicably **priestly** in function. Yet, he **serves** under Yahweh’s supreme rule.

I do not believe that the vision presents us with a future human prince who will one day appear side-by-side with Messiah. **There are too many contradictory things in the law that this man does**. This includes providing and directing burnt, grain, drink, sin, and peace offerings for the people

([Ezek 45:17](#); [46:2–7, 12–15](#)), actions the Mosaic law reserves for priests ([Num 18:1–7](#); [Lev 1-7](#)); sitting in the sacred east gate to eat bread before the Lord ([44:3](#); [46:2, 8](#); cf. [Num 18:7](#); [Ex 30:7-8](#); [2Chr 26:16-21](#)); administering land on both sides of the holy district while also overseeing aspects of cultic worship ([45:7–8](#); [48:21–22](#)); receiving land on both sides of the holy district when kings are not supposed to take the people’s inheritance ([1Sam 8:14](#); cf. [1Kgs 21](#) and Naboth’s vineyard), and the general blurring of royal and priestly roles that was a major source of corruption in Israel’s history (cf. Uzziah in [2 Chron 26](#)). There is also no clear mechanism for [replacing the prince](#) or addressing his ongoing need for sin offerings, which would create an unstable “holy” order if understood as a literal future human ruler.

Instead, I see the prince, like the temple itself, as [a forward-pointing type](#) — one that finds its perfect and only fulfillment in the Messiah, the true Prince of Peace who perfectly unites the offices of king and priest for the good of His people.

Utopian Literature

I mention this idea of utopias for a reason. In 1516 Thomas More coined the term as the title of his book to describe a fictional island society with a seemingly perfect political, social, and economic system, serving as a satirical critique of 16th-century European society. It literally means “nowhere” from the Greek: *ou* “not” and *topos* “place.” Utopia is literally “not a place.”

And yet, in some strange way, utopia *can* be a real place.¹ This week I stumbled upon a fascinating term used to describe the genre of Ezekiel 40-48 by some scholars. They call it “utopia literature.”² While it is still genuinely prophetic, it has a distinctive character: it paints an idealized, perfect vision of God’s restored temple, worship, land, and leadership — a kind of cosmic blueprint of divine order and blessing. This is different from many other prophetic oracles that focus on immediate judgment or near-term events. Both

¹ “On one level, Ezekiel’s vision is the building, is the cosmos ... The vision’s images, reported in words, form pillars and courtyards, and constitute a world; its images are real and have a reality ... One should not regard the vision as symbolic in a watery, nonvisceral sense. At the same time, such a vision by an Israelite prophet does not preclude the building of an actual temple.” Susan Niditch, “Ezekiel 40-48 in a Visionary Context,” *CBQ* 48.2 (April 1986): 213. 208-24. Indeed. Whether the Jews try to build a physical temple in Jerusalem, God is most certainly building a living temple.

² See especially Stephen L. Cook, “The God that the Temple Blueprint Creates,” *The God Ezekiel Creates*, ed. Paul M. Joyce and Dalit Rom-Shiloni, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 607, ed. Claudia V. Camp and Andrew Mein (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 146-48; also Cook, *Ezekiel 38-48: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ed. John J. Collins, vol. 22B, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2018), 203; Jon D. Levenson “The Temple and the World,” *The Journal of Religion* 64.3 (1984): 275-298.

kinds of prophecy point to the future, but utopia literature does so by giving us a powerful, hope-filled picture of what God ultimately intends for His people.

The idea is well known. Ancient cultures across the Near East and Mediterranean produced idealized descriptions of perfect cities, temples, and societies that served theological, political, and propagandistic purposes. [Atlantis](#) is the most famous. Plato describes it as an advanced, utopian island empire with concentric rings of land and water, magnificent temples, and a harmonious society that eventually fell into hubris and was destroyed. Many think it was real, yet it is clearly at the very least a utopia turned rotten. In [Egypt](#), the “[Book of the Temple](#)” is a detailed manual describing the ideal Egyptian temple — its layout, dimensions, rituals, personnel, and symbolic meaning — as a perfect microcosm of the cosmos. [It was never built exactly as described](#) but served as a utopian blueprint and instructional guide. In [Mesopotamia](#), the “[Cyrus Cylinder](#)” (539 BC) celebrates Cyrus the Great’s conquest of Babylon and his decree to restore temples and cities under divine favor (including allowing the Jews to return). It presents an idealized vision of harmonious restoration and just rule. It is royal propaganda that overlaps chronologically with Ezekiel’s ministry. It is “historical” in

the sense that Cyrus did issue restoration edicts, but the language is utopian and ideological. At [Ugarit](#), the Baal Cycle (a series of mythological tablets) describes the building of Baal's ideal palace/temple on Mount Zaphon with divine measurements, perfect craftsmanship by the god Kotharwa-Khasis, and cosmic order. The temples at Ugarit were real, but they never matched the ideals in the Epics.

In each case, these “[utopias](#)” [blend real places](#), practices, and aspirations with heightened, [symbolic](#), or entirely fictional elements to express theological truths about divine order, restoration, and ideal society. None were fully “realized” *exactly* as described — they served as aspirational visions.

This ancient literary context demonstrates how Ezekiel 40–48 participates in a well-known genre of the ancient world. However, Ezekiel's vision stands out dramatically from the others. While the pagan and royal utopias are ultimately centered on human kings, false gods, or political propaganda, Ezekiel's vision is [radically God and Glory centered](#). It is not built around a human ruler's glory or a pagan deity's palace, but around the return of Yahweh's own glory

to dwell in the midst of His people (**Ezek 43:1–5**). The temple is not a monument to imperial power, but the place where the holy God is present with His covenant people.

This vision is fulfilled ultimately not in a physical earthly building, but in the spiritual temple built by its Founder. That Founder will be the focus of the rest of this sermon, for **He is the Prince**. As Zechariah will put it just a little differently, “**Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and *he shall build the temple of the Lord***” (**Zech 6:12-13**).

The Prince

Our mysterious, **blurry figure** appears for the first time in **Ezekiel 44:3** when it says, “**Only *the prince* may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD. He shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out by the same way.**” He appears a total of 17 times through the end of the book. These appearances can be divided into four general categories. 1. He has access to the temple via the East Gate (**44:3; 46:2, 8, 10**). 2. He provides for and oversees sacrifices and worship in a priestly role (**45:17, 22; 46:4, 12**). 3. He allocates land and inheritance to his “sons” (**45:7-8; 46:16-18,**

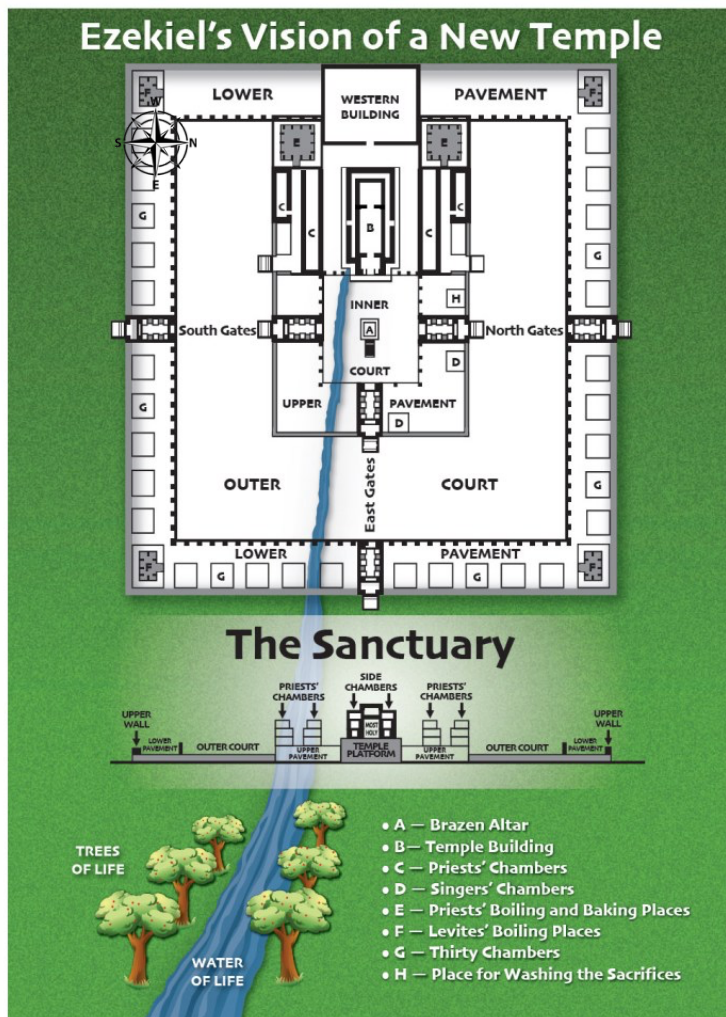
21-22). 4. He administers justice and rule over the people like royalty (45:9, 16).

Who is this prince? Many think he is a future human who will somehow reign alongside or under Messiah. They think he can't be the Messiah for a few reasons. **First**, only the prince may sit in the east gate vestibule (44:3), but he does not enter the inner sanctuary like the priests. Yet Jesus has unrestricted access to the heavenly Holy of Holies. **Second**, earlier in Ezekiel, the coming ruler is called "David" or "king" (*melek*) (34:23-24; 37:24-25). But in Ezek 40-48, he is only called "prince," so they must be different. **Third**, the prince is repeatedly distinguished from the priests (44:3; 45:17; 46:2). Priests offer sacrifices on his behalf. Christ is both King and High Priest and a separate priesthood alongside the prince doesn't fit. **Fourth**, in 45:22 he provides a bull as a sin offering for himself and all the people of the land." Messiah is sinless, so he would never need to offer a sacrifice for his own sins. **Fifth**, he has sons (46:16-18). Jesus has no earthly descendants in that sense. So who is he? He's not Messiah, he's just some guy. So I'll call this the "**some guy**" view.

On the surface, these objections seem decisive. But there are serious problems with this view, because in fact, this

prince is associated with things that are both forbidden because of his title as prince and that only fit God-incarnate. Let's take a look at them.

The East Gate and Holy of Holies



Let's think about his first appearance in the context of vision. [Ezekiel describes this temple](#) with its gates and courts and furnishings and residences for priests. He describes is palm trees and pavement, its places for sacrifices and its priests. He does this for all of Chs. 40-42. This temple does not look like the tabernacle or Solomon's temple, and will not look like the Second Temple

built in a few decades from the vision. Rather, it is a giant square complex hundreds of feet larger than Solomon's. It is

missing many furnishings, has almost no height dimensions, and will later (ch. 47) have a river flowing out of its center.

This river happens to be the chiastic parallel to Ch. 43's vital description that the entire book has been looking forward to. Listen carefully. "Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east" (Ezek 43:1-2a). Now, the Glory of God simply is God. This we find in many places in the OT. It is his special presence depicted often as a cloud or fire in the midst of his people. In the NT, it is depicted as Jesus and the Holy Spirit. It is God's presence that makes the temple a true utopia. He really is here; he has returned.

Earlier in Ezekiel, the Glory had departed the temple, a profound picture that God was no longer dwelling in favor upon his people. That's why we then had nearly 30 chapters of pure judgment that followed. But now, the glory returns, and with it, God's holy presence. "The sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I fell on my face. As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the

inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple” (2a-5).

It is into this remarkable vision that Ch. 44 begins, “Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east. And it was shut” (44:1). It’s the same place, but with a huge difference. The gate that was open is now closed. Why? “And the LORD said to me, ‘This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered by it. Therefore it shall remain shut” (2).

The shutting of the East Gate has a visually striking parallel in today’s walled off city of old Jerusalem, as the East Gate (or Golden Gate) was walled up in 1541 by Suleiman the Magnificent, which



legends say were not purely for defensive reasons, but also because he was aware of Jewish beliefs that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem through this eastern gate. By sealing

it—and reportedly adding a Muslim cemetery in front to ritually defile the area, he sought to prevent that.

At any rate, the point of the vision is that **the gate must remain shut** so that no one can approach the temple where God is. East is the direction one always enters any Biblical temple (patterned itself on the sunrise heaven-earth temple). But suddenly we have **vs. 3**. “**Only the prince may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD. He shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out by the same way.**” There are two things to think about here. **First**, The text says the gate “shall remain shut” and “no one shall enter by it,” yet the prince is granted a form of entry and occupation. That leads to the second point. What kind of a man must this prince be? He can’t just be “some guy,” since no ordinary person can enter the very place God’s presence just came and resided in on their own. Yet, this Prince has the right not only to sit in that place, but to eat the holy bread before the Lord. This represents communion with God.

Curiously, I think it is noteworthy that several church fathers who took a symbolic view of this temple said that the closed east gate is a picture of **the Virgin Mary** through whom Christ entered the world of men and he alone eats

bread before the Lord.³ Why would they do this? Because no ordinary human can enter the place where God's glory has entered. This Prince has access that belongs only to God Himself. Perhaps even more to the point, while the prince in this vision has limited access that no one else is permitted, in the NT, **Christ is the one through whom God's glory returns**. Recall John's Gospel. He is at the same time the gate/door (**John 10:9**), the glory of God (**John 1:14**), and the one who alone opens access for all sinners through faith: "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus" (**Heb 10:19**). The limitation of the prince in the vision is part of the old-covenant shadow that has been brought to an end by the fullness of the coming of Jesus.

King or Prince?

What about this **distinction between the king and the prince**? Are they really two different people? Well, of course, every king *was once* a prince, prior to his coronation. So there's that. Now, it is true that in **Ezek 37:24** it says,

³ Origen, *Homilies on Ezekiel* 14.3; Jerome *Commentary on Ezekiel* 13.44.1-3, Letter 48.21; John of Damascus, *Barlaam and Joseph* 7; Rufinus of Aqueleia, *Commentary on the Apostle's Creed* 9; etc.

“My servant David shall be *king* over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes.” Likewise 34:23 said, “And I will set up over them one shepherd, my *servant David*, and he shall feed them,” and clearly David is the king. However, vs. 24 adds, “And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be *prince* among them.” That’s the same word used for the prince in 44:3ff. The same thing is repeated in 37:25, “David my servant shall be *their prince forever*.” Those were both deeply messianic prophecies that we saw were fulfilled in the First Coming of Jesus. Ezekiel is writing a book, not a series of unrelated prophecies. So it makes perfect sense that Ch. 44 simply continues to speak of the same prince by telling us more about him.

Prince and Priests?

Next, let’s think about how this *prince* is distinct from the *priests* and yet does priestly things. Earlier in the vision, we learned about specific places that are for “the sons of Zadok, who alone among the sons of Levi may come near to the LORD to minister to him” (40:46). Who is *Zadok*? He

was a faithful high priest during the time of David and Solomon (2 Samuel 8:17; 15:24–29; 1 Kings 1–2). He remained loyal to David during Absalom’s rebellion and supported Solomon’s coronation, hence, Handel’s lyrics. Because of his faithfulness, Solomon made Zadok’s line the official high-priestly line (1Kgs 2:35). This was in partial response to the prophecy that the line of Ithamar would come to an end (1Sam 2:27–35). Zadok, according to 1 Chronicles 6:4–8, comes through the line of Phinehas and his father Eleazar.

But some have questioned precisely who Zadok actually was. His name is simply a shortened form of Melchizedek (note: *z-d-k* in both) it means “righteous.” Melchizedek was this strange blurry priest (I believe the Angel of the LORD) in Gen 14:18 who served the Most High (El Elyon; God the Father) in Salem. Salem is the name of Jerusalem in ancient times. David took Salem from the Jebusites, who have some connection to the giant Rephaim, and it is only at that moment that Zadok appears seemingly out of nowhere in the Bible. For this and several other reasons, some have proposed that Zadok was actually a Jebusite whom David made priest.⁴

⁴ The classic study of this is Christian E. Hauer, Jr., “Who Was Zadok,” *JBL* 82.1 (Mar 1963): 89–94.

While that proposal seems to insist that Chronicles is simply wrong about Zadok being from the line of Aaron, it has some very interesting points which may be harmonized if his paternal line comes from Aaron and his maternal line comes from a faithful Jebusite remnant that goes all the way back to Melchizedek. This would have been acceptable under Levitical law.

I bring this up because of this whole idea of the prince both **doing priestly things** (as we will see in a minute), but also being **distinct from the priests** as a prince. For some people, this is too much and so they think he can't be Christ. But I actually think the whole Zadok thing could be a key to understanding exactly why it *is* Christ.

You have to recall a couple of things about Messiah. First, he is the LORD's **servant**, both in Ezekiel and Isaiah. As such, he isn't coming for purely political purposes—save those of his own kingdom. And because he becomes a human, he empties himself of certain divine prerogatives that were his in eternity precisely so he might serve God and his church. This can explain some of the reasons why **he is and isn't** doing certain things in the vision.

At the same time, he seems to have a certain kind of **priestly charge** that the other Zadokites do not. He alone sits

in the east gate to eat the bread, the priest's normal duty. He supplies and ensures that proper offerings are brought and made at the right time. And in one instance, he even provides a sacrifice for the people (45:22). In 45:16 “all the people of the land” are “obliged to give” their offering, likely a tithe, to the prince of Israel. All the people, according to Moses (Num 18:25–28) would also include the priests. So he seems like a priest at one moment and a prince at another, but the whole time he appears to be superior in status to the priests.

The prince, however, is *not a Zadokite*. He is functioning outside the normal boundaries of the Zadokite priesthood while still performing actions that belong exclusively *to the* Zadokites at this time. This is precisely what Melchizedek embodied a thousand years earlier — a king who was also a priest of the Most High God. The prince in Ezekiel's vision functions in the same blurred space: he is clearly a royal figure, yet he performs priestly actions and holds a position of authority over the offerings of the whole land, including the priests. This is why the connection to Zadok is so striking. Zadok appears in Scripture right at the moment David conquers Salem (ancient Jerusalem), bears a name that echoes Melchizedek, and becomes the head of the priestly

line that will serve in the ideal temple vision of **Ezekiel 40–48**. The prophecy of **1 Samuel 2:35** that God would raise up “a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind” finds its ultimate fulfillment not in the Aaronic line alone, but in Jesus Christ — the true Prince-Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. If the Zadokite priesthood in Ezekiel carries echoes of that older, superior priesthood, then the prince’s priestly actions are not a problem to be explained away. They are instead a deliberate signal that this figure points beyond the old covenant distinctions to the One who can legitimately unite the offices of king and priest in Himself.

His Sons

This leads to the two remaining points. Let’s address the idea of **his sons**, since that seems related to Zadok and his priests. What are we supposed to make of the fact that this prince has sons? Well, if we take it as a physical prophecy of the future, that would seem to be the end of everything we’re talking about. But we’ve seen that there are many reasons not to do this. That’s why I brought up the utopia idea. If Ezekiel is seeing a kind of utopian picture of the future,

then he could easily use OT types and shadows to describe it.

This would easily accommodate sons. **The NT has sons language, doesn't it?** You are all sons of God *through faith* (**Gal 3:26**). The sons of the NT are not biological, they are *spiritual*. These are the people who are born again by the Holy Spirit when as they believe the Gospel we are even now describing—this amazing temple come down to earth, built by the Prince himself. “**All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God**” (**Rom 8:14**). If you believe that Jesus is Lord and confess with your mouth that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Saved to what? Saved **into the family of God**. Sons and daughters.

In Ezekiel 40-48, the prince bequeaths an inheritance to his sons. “**The prince shall not take any of the inheritance of the people, thrusting them out of their property. He shall give his sons their inheritance out of his own property, so that none of my people shall be scattered from his property**” (**Ezek 46:18**). The same is true in the NT. If we are children then we are *heirs* (**Rom 8:17**). If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and *heirs according to the promise* (**Gal 3:29**). **What promise?** This promise, here in Ezekiel. What

do we inherit? The world (**Rom 4:13**), the kingdom (**Matt 25:34**), and the Spirit (**2Cor 1:22**).

This seems to be precisely what is going on in the land divisions at the end of Ezekiel. The last chapter is highly idealized. The land is **divided into perfectly equal strips** running east to west for each tribe (**Ezek 48:1-7, 23-29**), with the holy portion in the center. It's mathematical. There's nothing irregular like the historical tribal inheritances. The symmetry is utopian, like Atlantis. The district is divisible by 50—that Jubilee year idea we spoke about last time (25,000 x 10,000 cubits). Christ ushered in the year of the Lord's Favor and a Sabbath Rest for the people of God. Even the name of the city is not Jerusalem, but YHWH Shammah—The LORD is There, a title directly reflecting the name of the Messiah.

A Sin Offering for Himself

Finally, we have perhaps the most difficult problem. The prince offers a sacrifice **for his own sin**. “**On that day the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a young bull for a sin offering**” (**45:22**). But people don't stop to think about something. On a purely physical

future reading of this vision, this means that the temple system itself is being reinstituted, including animal sacrifices for sin. And that, of course, destroys the whole point of Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice. So something's got to give.

If the vision is utopian, then this is easily read into the NT's many passages that talk about the work of Christ as both sacrifice and priest. The prince's sin offering is part of the vision's portrayal of **comprehensive atonement for the whole community** in the restored order. The text does not present the prince as a sinner in the ordinary sense, but as the representative head who provides for the people's cleansing. "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" (45:17). This should be read in light of earlier prophecies such as where God himself promised, "that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, *when I atone* for you for all that you have done, declares the Lord GOD" (16:63). The Prince is doing what God himself would do. This representative role is consistent with how

the Davidic figure functions earlier in 34:23–24; 37:24–25 as the one through whom God brings restoration and peace.

The vision does not say the prince must offer this sacrifice because of personal guilt. The phrasing is “for himself and for all the people of the land,” which echoes the representative function of the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:6, 11, 17), where the high priest offers for himself and the people. The prince is thus functioning in a priestly-representative capacity that the old system separated but the Messiah unites.

The New Testament tells us clearly that Jesus is the one who perfectly fulfills what the prince does in Ezekiel. First of all, you should remember that Paul says, though he himself knew no sin, God “made him to be sin” for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2Cor 5:21). So that pretty much could explain the problem all by itself. Nevertheless, he is the Davidic Prince who provides the definitive atonement for His people, not needing any offering for Himself but offering up His own body once for all (Heb 7:27; 9:26; 10:10–14; 2Cor 5:21). He alone sits in the true heavenly sanctuary to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (Heb 9:24; 4:14–16), fulfilling the prince’s unique place in the east gate to eat bread before the Lord.

Jesus supplies and oversees the true worship of God as the fragrant offering and sacrifice (**Eph 5:2**), and He rules with perfect justice while giving His people the full inheritance of the kingdom and the renewed creation as co-heirs with Him (**Rom 8:17; Gal 3:29; Rev 21:7; Matt 25:34**). In every way the prince points forward, Jesus is the reality.

Chief Prince: Jesus

As we celebrated this milestone birthday of this noble, yet imperfect **American experiment** — this “**city on a hill**” vision that has inspired the world even while falling short of its own ideals — let us nevertheless **put it into a biblical perspective**. Remember that the true utopia is not a place we build by human effort, but a kingdom we receive by grace. A kingdom not of this world. A kingdom ruled alone by The Prince of Peace whose coming Handel so majestically announced has already arrived.

“**Prince of peace**” in the LXX is *archōn eirēnēs*. *Archōn* is precisely how the LXX renders “prince” in Ezekiel as well. The prince is the *archōn*. But the NT takes this concept and shows you just how Jesus is greater than any other *archōn*, something hinted at in the prince in Ezekiel’s temple. For it

doesn't call Jesus a mere *archōn*. Rather, it uses a related but distinct word: *archēgos*, meaning “pioneer,” “captain,” “author” “leader” “founder” or “prince” from the root *arch*, meaning beginning, rule, or first. Jesus is the *Archēgos* of life (Acts 3:15). He is the *Archēgos* and Savior (5:31). He is the *Archēgos* of our salvation (Heb 2:10). He is the *Archēgos* and perfecter of our faith (12:2).

The same composer who gave us *Zadok the Priest* for earthly coronations also gave us *Messiah*, and in that glorious work he pointed us to the greater reality. The Prince who sits in the shut East Gate, who provides the perfect sacrifice, who gives his sons an inheritance that cannot be taken away, who unites king and priest in his own person — that Prince is Jesus.

Because he has come, the kingdom Ezekiel saw in vision is here now by faith. The temple is no longer a building of stone, but a living people indwelt by the glory of God, his Holy Spirit who came to us in a new way at Pentecost, just as the prophecies had foretold. The land division is no longer a strip in the Middle East, but the entire renewed creation that belongs to every believer as co-heir with Christ. The river of life is already flowing from the true sanctuary. The Glory has returned. The Lord is There. The shut gate has

been opened by the One who is himself the Door. The Prince has provided the once-for-all sacrifice. The sons have received their inheritance. And the faithful priesthood of all believers — Jew and Gentile together — now serves in the presence of the King.

My friends, **this is not a distant hope**. It is right before your eyes, to any who will grab hold of it by faith alone. No works can bring this temple to be, save the work of the Prince. This is the present reality of the gospel. In Christ, the utopian vision of Ezekiel has broken into our world. The Prince of Peace reigns. His kingdom is advancing. His Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance. And one day soon, faith will become sight, and we will behold with our own eyes what Ezekiel could only see in vision: the Prince of Peace reigning in perfect justice and *shalom* forever, with every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Until that day, let us live as citizens of that kingdom. For the Prince is also the one who teaches the requirements of the temple and the rules of God. Let us offer our lives as living sacrifices. Let us proclaim with Handel and with all the redeemed across the ages: “**Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!**” He reigns in his temple. He reigns

through his Son. And let us say with confidence and joy:
The Prince has come. The kingdom is here. Now to his temple draw near in glad adoration.

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All the Prince verses in Ezekiel 34-48: Read for The Gospel (July 5, 2026)

Ezekiel 34:23-24 “And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.”

Ezekiel 37:24-25 “My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever.”

Ezekiel 44:3 “Only the prince may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD. He shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out by the same way.”

Ezekiel 46:2 “The prince shall enter by the vestibule of the gate from outside, and shall take his stand by the post of the gate. The priests shall offer his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be shut until evening.”

Ezekiel 46:8 “When the prince enters, he shall enter by the vestibule of the gate, and he shall go out by the same way.”

Ezekiel 46:10 “When they enter, the prince shall enter with them, and when they go out, he shall go out.”

Ezekiel 45:17 “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.”

Ezekiel 45:22 “On that day the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a young bull for a sin offering.”

Ezekiel 46:4 “The burnt offering that the prince offers to the LORD on the Sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish and a ram without blemish.”

Ezekiel 46:12 “When the prince provides a freewill offering, either a burnt offering or peace offerings as a freewill offering to the LORD, the gate facing east shall be opened for him. And he shall offer his burnt offering or his peace offerings as he does on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he has gone out the gate shall be shut.”

Ezekiel 45:7-8 “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 border of the land. It shall be his land 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.”

Ezekiel 46:16-18 “Thus says the Lord GOD: If the prince makes a gift to any of his sons as his inheritance, it shall belong to his sons. It is their property by inheritance. But if he makes a gift out of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his until the year of liberty. Then it shall revert to the prince; surely it is his inheritance—it shall belong to his sons. The prince shall not take any of the inheritance of the people, thrusting them out of their property. He shall give his sons their inheritance out of his own property, so that none of my people shall be scattered from his property.”

Ezekiel 46:21-22 “Then he brought me out to the outer court and led me past the four corners of the court. And behold, in each corner of the court there was another court—in the four corners of the court were small courts, forty cubits long and thirty cubits wide; the four were of the same size.”

Ezekiel 45:9 “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.”

Ezekiel 45:16 “All the people of the land shall be obliged to give this offering to the prince in Israel.”