

NOVEMBER 23

Ezekiel 45:13-46:24

Ezekiel 45:13-25

As you read this section and make observations, keep in mind that you are learning something about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit here. We tend to think that because we know Jesus, everything is over regarding the plan of salvation, and that after the time of the church comes one big party. After the Lord returns to earthy reality, there will be a thousand years of Israel serving God, and there will be a world trying to grasp worshiping a very visible God. In a way, it will be just like everyone is always saying they wish it was: God will visibly be here, ruling; we will know answers right away. Criminals will be caught immediately; the poor will be fed, etc. And to boot, Satan will be gone. But is that really what everyone wants? Without accepting the visible Christ by faith, the sin nature will still be unbroken and people will still be condemned. Ask any of the chief priests, scribes or Pharisees who persecuted and condemned Jesus; seeing is not believing.

Knowing God, all of what is being played out during the Millennium is necessary. Some of these sacrifices might seem crazy to us, especially to those with western sensitivities, but they will be visual aids and memorial reminders of what Jesus did for the human race. It will be so easy for everyone to love and revere Jesus, right?

Vs. 13-17 Notice that David will provide the offerings and notice too that the Sabbath will still be practiced in Israel.

Vs. 18-20 This is the Passover and notice that the blood is put on the doorposts of the temple. It seems that this will be the only place where blood will be used on doorposts. In other words, this will be a symbolic sacrificing of the Passover lamb for the entire nation, showing that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

Vs. 21-25 Notice that the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Tabernacles are mentioned as required. These will be celebration feasts and are all very visual reminders of spiritual truth. What is missing from this list is the Day of Atonement with the scapegoat. That won't be required because atonement has already been accomplished.

Ezekiel 46

Vs. 1-12 A couple of things stand out to me here. First, at least in Israel, the Sabbath will be kept. Second, the prince, who we know is David, will be leading part of the worship. The fact that David will be leading worship is a very fitting thing. No other king was so passionate about being in the temple and singing to the Lord, than David. It is also interesting that David could enter the east gate of the inner court, but he couldn't go into the inner court. He remained in the east gate and left that way. Reading this description of him going in and out before the people, I wrote a note in the margin of my Bible that he was leading the people like a shepherd, going in and out before the sheep.

Vs. 13-15 In Israel under the law there were morning and evening offerings like this. Here it will only be in the morning. Again, it will be a memorial reminder to the world (actually, it had always been a reminder) for people to get their hearts right with God every day. The morning is a good time to do this.

Vs. 16-18 The part here about the prince and his sons is confusing. So far, the prince has been identified as the resurrected David. I don't think he'll have any more kids. But there will be rulers under him who probably will be identified as princes. If so, this would apply to those who are in leadership with David, ruling the peoples. I think this will only apply to the thousand years of this time on earth.

One interesting note here: In Isaiah 55 it says of David, *Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples*. The next verse talks about foreign nations. David never really ruled any other nations, but apparently in the Millennial Kingdom, he will be a leader and commander for them.

Vs. 19-24 The outer court will be so big, with so many kitchens, that people will meet and eat right in the temple area. I guess this will be like a millennial food court. It is interesting to me that God is not a vegetarian and that those who are involved in these sacrifices are required to partake of them. I suppose this symbolizes that after forgiveness, there is blessing and bounty.

1 Peter 1:13-2:10

1 Peter 1:13-25

Peter is encouraging these people to remain strong and close to the Lord in hardship. Knowing this, you should be able to think your way down through these verses and find principles for strengthening yourself in trials.

V. 13 There is a lot in this verse. What do you see? Do you sense the tense atmosphere of being under stress? Just the thought of being ready *for action* protects us from being passive and defeated.

Vs. 14-16 The emphasis here isn't just being holy (set apart). The real point here seems to be living fully alert, obedient and God-honoring in our conduct at all times, particularly in hard times.

Vs. 17-21 This has to do with having a Father to call on during this time of exile, knowing we have a future inheritance. This sounds pretty strengthening and encouraging, particularly for people going through hard times. Do you think it encouraged them to know they were exiles and that this place isn't home? Does it encourage you?

Vs. 22-25 It seems like the Word is the point in this section, being mentioned twice in the last verse. Verse 22 looks like the effect the truth in the Word has on us. Verse 23 reminds me of the parable of the sower. *The sower sows the word*. (Mark 4:14) How does this aid a disciple going through trials?

Vs. 24-25 See Isaiah 40:6-8.

Isn't it interesting that we are also reading Psalm 119 where David is constantly strengthening himself in the Word?

1 Peter 2:1-10

Vs. 1-3 I think this is still connected to talking about the Word. This is one of the only ways we are to remain like babies. We are to be constantly desiring and needing the Word. This is not only a good thing; it is a vital thing. Notice too that it is a command to long for the Word. That takes cultivation. It is not automatic. You hear people say that they "love" reading the Bible, but do they need it so badly and long for it so deeply that even when they don't "love" reading the Bible, they are still irresistibly drawn to it? That's why we're doing this together.

Vs. 4-8 After being grounded in the Word, we grow into Christ *as a spiritual house*. We are reading about the temple in Ezekiel. Here the temple is figurative, but even more fantastic. We are built into Christ. It is the Word through the Spirit that matures us in our Lord.

V. 9 is one of the shortest and clearest declarations of our blessing and joy in salvation and our mission on this planet. We are a priesthood. How? Notice the privilege that is being spoken of here. Can you see how this is connected to the harvest and our mission following Christ? Isn't it amazing how Peter is encouraging these people, in their trials of faith, to keep following Christ? This is what we are supposed to do for others as we make disciples, who make disciples, who

make disciples. Through the Word, Peter was obeying Jesus' command to him to feed the lambs, tend the sheep and feed the sheep. (John 21:16-17)

V. 10 And we should never forget this.

You have to admit that Peter had a knack for encouragement. Everything Peter is saying is focusing these people on Christ. Following Christ in the harvest is all about our salvation and our Savior. We have an amazing privilege and task before us on this earth. It is interesting to me that the two apostles, Peter and Paul, who are shown in Acts as having the largest ministries of reaching people, are also the two who fell the deepest and were later restored. Peter denied Jesus, and Paul persecuted and killed Jesus' disciples.

Psalm 119:33-48

Notice the different words David uses to refer to the Word.

Vs. 33-40 Notice in the first six verses how David asks God to make the Word known to him. Verse 40 shows that if you are passionate about something, you keep asking and God keeps answering.

Vs. 41-48 Notice how vs. 41-42 hang together. If you only had v. 41, that would be great; but v. 42 gives you the context and lets you see how the Word strengthened David in his trials. In this section it is God's *steadfast love* that holds David's heart so that he can be strong to follow and be a witness to others.

Notice the mentions of bearing witness, distress, seeking and worship. David understood as a shepherd, that the Word was to be spoken of to help and guide others. We saw in Ezekiel 34:23 that David's future role in Israel will be as a witness and leader to his people and the nations, going in and out before them, worshipping God. The Word is what God used to make David this kind of shepherd.

Proverbs 28:11

Comfort and money make you seem wise, but the better perspective comes from being needy and dependent on God. Blessed are those who hunger now. (Luke 6:21)