

## Ezekiel Chapters 45-46 - John Karmelich

Title: What happens on earth after Jesus returns?

The one thing the Bible is pretty quiet on is the topic of life after Jesus returns! I always argue the main purpose of the bible is to teach us how to live this life. Still, it's natural to be curious after what life will be like after Jesus returns! Makes us wonder what do we do then, and what will Jesus do then? In this section we see how life's going to work for those who survived "Revelation" when Jesus returns to rule and say in effect, "I'm here, so let Me explain what 's next on the agenda!" What I'm pondering is what will happen then? Realize in this section of Ezekiel, it has nothing to do with the destiny of those of us who are part of the church! It's just those who survived the great tribulation and what Jesus does expect of worship of Him for those who survived all that! Realize Jesus keeps His word about ruling over the world from Israel. If we can trust in His unconditional eternal promises to Israel, then we can trust His promises about our salvation! I realize most of us already accept that, so why study all these details if it doesn't affect us now? Since the Bible is full of ways God wants us to honor Him for what He did, plus He will do for them and us, doesn't it mean that He wants people to worship Him for eternity? Eternity isn't saying relax on a couch playing harps! We are separated from nonbelievers to honor and focus on Him for eternity. These chapters give clues on our own eternal fate, so bear with me while I continue!

To be more specific, these chapters focus on the land around the temple area once Jesus returns as their long-promised Messiah then! In short, we'll read of land allocated for priests near the temple area, plus some of the priest rituals similar (but not exactly the same) as described in Leviticus. I admit, I ponder why things are included and excluded? Don't always have answers, but that never prevents me from all of my speculation. Speaking of speculation, there's a lot of debate over a character in this section called "The Prince". Some bible experts argue it is Jesus, but after carefully study (and even disagreeing with what I wrote 20 years ago) I think he's more of the "#2 guy" directing all the work and people who will go in and out of the temple area. If Jesus is worshipped as king, think of "#2" as the one deciding what is to be done next. I accept that I could be wrong, but just giving you my opinion after a lot of study on this topic. OK then, time for details and hopefully we'll get clues about our own eternal destiny from a careful study of this section.

One of the things to keep in mind is the Israelites desperately needed hope at that moment. Jerusalem was in ruins. The surviving Israelites were hundreds of miles away in captivity. That is why this final section of the book is saying in effect, "Despite the horrible ways you've messed up, My unconditional promises, are well, unconditional!" The next time we're feeling down or like our world is falling apart all around us, remember God's still guiding the world for His glory and Christians have a destiny that's far greater than anything we can imagine in this lifetime! Anyway, these chapters focus on ways God desires to be worshipped after all the Revelation "bad stuff". The point is life will go on after that, and with Jesus ruling the world from Israel, again people don't just "kick back on a couch" forever! What's done at that time focuses on those who survive through that, spending time honoring God to appreciate all He's done to make it possible for them to live as God intends us to live.

To make it simple, life then is called the "millennium". This is a 1,000-year period where Satan is not on the scene. One reason for this period of time is to show how sinful people can be without the devil there to cause damage! Anyway, in the last lesson Jesus (the Messiah) made His big entrance. Now it's time to describe how life works then. In short, many things are the same as before all "that"! Realize there's a multitude of people who survived the Revelation period, and they need to learn how it is God desires to be worshipped so this section teaches us about life then! Part of it was to show the

Israelites who survived through their captivity God still has a future for them. Part of it is to show us life will be similar but not the same as life before Jesus starts ruling! What will we Christians do then? I'd argue it is our job to enforce His rule as if God is saying, "Here is how I desire people on earth to live! You've got to deal with it, or else you'll suffer the consequences like the multitudes who died for failing to live as He desires!"

These chapters open up with describing the land around the temple. Based on other scripture there will be a big earthquake (Ezekiel 38). The point being the new temple will be at the same spot, but it'll look different than the last one built. Realize geography is a big part of these chapters. There is a section of land (then, not now) of about 8 miles square (bigger than the old city of Jerusalem) that includes where the Temple will be used by those people living at time. The last spot the temple mount was, is smaller, so Jerusalem will grow mightily then. This land will be designed for the priests to work the temple. To state the obvious, they need places to live, raise their families, and places for their animals. Remember animal sacrifices will be part of that culture. The measurements we get in this text are very specific as well as all the measurements given in Ezekiel.

We then get more comments regarding the buying and selling of products. The obvious reason for this is to make sure people are honest in their dealings. This is "God's area" so teaching about honesty (and reminding those Israelites why they were kicked out of there) is important. It also teaches us commerce will exist then! The comments here also tie to sacrifices that will be made then to remember what Jesus did to preserve them as a nation for eternity!

Speaking of ways to remember, the "Passover" will still be in effect. For those who don't know, it was also the day Jesus died for our sins, as well as remembering how God preserved the Israelites after they came out of Egypt. Both symbolize God's preservation and calling of His people. The text states much about the ritual offerings. We also get more texts about a character called the prince. Although there's a lot of debate on him, best estimate is he's the "Prime minister" (i.e., #2 behind Jesus) who is in charge of making sure everything is done correctly. Anyway, at that time there are priests whose job it will be to make sacrifices for what Jesus did. Let's just say some of the Jewish holidays are mentioned as time for locals to focus on God. We also get mentions that the temple is open on the Sabbath, which tells us there will still be a calendar as well as a lunar cycle as the Jewish month is based on that cycle. We get references to the prince's sons and his servants. Bottom line, life will continue the way God intended to it to be lived with Him being the center of attention. Realize today Israel is mostly secular! The land is not the only thing that will change, but also people's hearts! The prince's main job is to make sure all is done as God ordained and even that visitors go in and out in an orderly manner. All those priests are to cook, clean and offer sacrifices in manners described here.

OK John, all of this would be interesting if I was Jewish living in that day. Why should we care? First it reminds us life continues again even after Jesus returns to reign there! I suspect we'll be there to help enforce His rule! Remember Paul stated the church was a mystery in the Old Testament, so there's not any references to the church in this narrative. (See Ephesian 5:32). My point is God designed ways to keep the Israelites focused on Him even in that day! Therefore, I'm positive He will have ways to keep us busy then as well! I'm aware there's not even a hint of what's our destiny in this text but by "reading between the lines" we get clues of our own destiny after Jesus is back to "set up shop" then!

With that said, hope you liked this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on one of the two links below. It's a joy to study and write this and I'm grateful for you reading it. The rest of this email is links to questions you may have. If you're new here, you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again for reading this!