

# CHAPTER 46

In this chapter we have,

- I.** Some further rules given both to the priests and to the people, relating to their worship (v. 1-15).
- II.** A law concerning the prince's disposal of his inheritance (v. 16-18).
- III.** A description of the places provided for the boiling of the sacrifices and the baking of the meat-offerings (v. 19-24).

## ~~341~~ EZEKIEL 46:1-15

### RULES RELATING TO WORSHIP

Whether the rules for public worship here laid down were designed to be observed, even in those things wherein they differed from the law of Moses, and were so observed under the second temple, is not certain; we find not in the history of that latter part of the Jewish church that they governed themselves in their worship by these ordinances, as one would think they should have done, but only by law of Moses, looking upon this *then* in the next age after as mystical, and not literal. We may observe, in these verses,

- I.** That the place of worship was fixed, and rules were given concerning that, both to prince and people.
- 1.** The east gate, which was kept shut at other times, was to be opened on the sabbath days, on the moons (v. 1), and whenever the prince offered a voluntary offering, v. 12. Of the keeping of this gate ordinarily shut we read before (~~341~~ Ezekiel 44:2); whereas the other gates of the court were opened every day, this was opened only on high days and on special occasions, when it was opened for the prince, who was to *go in by the way of the porch of that gate*, v. 2, 8. Some think he went in with the priests and Levites into the *inner court* (for into that court this gate was the entrance), and they observe that magistrates and ministers should join forces, and go the same way, hand in hand, in promoting the service of

God. But it should rather seem that he did not go *through* the gate (as the glory of the Lord had done), though it was open, but he went *by the way of the porch of the gate*, stood *at the post of the gate*, and *worshipped at the threshold of the gate* (v. 2), where he had a full view of the priests' performances at the altar, and signified his concurrence in them, for himself and for the people of the land, that stood behind him *at the door of that gate*, v. 3. Thus must every prince show himself to be of David's mind, who would very willingly be a *door-keeper in the house of his God*, and, as the word there is, *lie at the threshold*, <sup><384></sup>Psalm 84:10. Note, The greatest of men are less than the least of the ordinances of God. Even princes themselves, when they draw near to God, must worship *with reverence and godly fear*, owning that even they are unworthy to approach to him. But Christ is *our prince*, whom God causes to *draw near* and *approach to him*, <sup><385></sup>Jeremiah 30:21.

**2.** As to the north gate and south gate, by which they entered into the *court of the people* (not into the inner court), there was this rule given, that whoever came in at the *north gate* should go out at the *south gate*, and whoever came in at the *south gate* should go out at the *north gate*, v. 9. Some think this was to prevent thrusting and jostling one another; for God is *the God of order, and not of confusion*. We may suppose that they came in at the gate that was next their own houses, but, when they went away, God would have them go out at that gate which would lead them *the furthest way about*, that they might have time for meditation; being thereby obliged to go a great way round the sanctuary, they might have an opportunity *to consider the palaces* of it, and, if they improved their time well in fetching this circuit, they would call it the nearest way home. Some observe that this may remind us, in the service of God, to be still pressing forward (<sup><386></sup>Philippians 3:13) and not to *look back*, and, in our attendance upon ordinances, not to go back as we came, but more holy, and heavenly, and spiritual.

**3.** It is appointed that *the people shall worship at the door of the east gate*, where the prince does, he at the head and they attending him, both *on the sabbath and on the new moons* (v. 3), and that, when they come in and go out, the prince shall be *in the midst of them*, v. 10. Note, Great men should, by their constant and reverent attendance on God in public worship, give a good example to their inferiors, both engaging them and encouraging them to do likewise. It is a very graceful becoming thing for persons of quality to go to church with their servants, and tenants, and

poor neighbours about them, and to behave themselves there with an air of seriousness and devotion; and those who thus honour God with their honour he will delight to honour.

**II.** That the ordinances of worship were fixed. Though the prince is supposed himself to be a very hearty zealous friend to the sanctuary, yet it is not left to him, no, not in concert with the priests, to appoint what sacrifices shall be offered, but God himself appoints them; for it is his prerogative to institute the rites and ceremonies of religious worship.

**1.** Every morning, as duly as the morning came, they must offer *a lamb* for a *burnt-offering*, v. 13. It is strange that no mention is made of the evening sacrifice; but Christ having come, and having offered himself now *in the end of the world* (<sup><30B></sup>Hebrews 9:26), we are to look upon him as the evening sacrifice, about the time of the offering up of which he died.

**2.** On the sabbath days, whereas by the law of Moses four lambs were to be offered (<sup><4B></sup>Numbers 28:9), it is here appointed that (at the prince's charge) there shall be *six lambs* offered, *and a ram* besides (v. 4), to intimate how much we should abound in sabbath work, now in gospel-time, and what plenty of the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise we should offer up to God on that day; and, if *with such sacrifice God is well-pleased*, surely we have a great deal of reason to be so.

**3.** On the new moons, in the beginning of their months, there was over and above the usual sabbath-sacrifices the additional offering of a young bullock, v. 6. Those who do much for God and their souls, stately and constantly, must yet, upon some occasions, do still more.

**4.** All the sacrifices were to be *without blemish*; so Christ, the great sacrifice, was (<sup><10B></sup>1 Peter 1:19), and so Christians, who are to present themselves to God as living sacrifices, should aim and endeavour to be — *blameless, and harmless, and without rebuke*.

**5.** All the sacrifices were to have their meat-offerings annexed to them, for so the law of Moses had appointed, to show what a good table God keeps in his house and that we ought to honour him with the fruit of our ground as well as with the fruit of our cattle, because in both he has blessed us, (<sup><5B></sup>Dueteronomy 28:4. In the beginning, Cain offered the one and Abel the other. Some observe that the meat-offerings here are much larger in proportion than they were by the law of Moses. Then the proportion was

three tenth-deals to a bullock, and two to a ram (so many tenth parts of an ephah) and half a hin of oil at the most (<sup><del>415</del></sup>Numbers 15:6-9); but here, for every bullock and every ram, a whole ephah and a whole hin of oil (p. 7), which intimates that under the gospel, the great atoning sacrifice having been offered, these unbloody sacrifices shall be more abounded in; or, in general, it intimates that as now, under the gospel, God abounds in the gifts of his grace to us, more than under the law, so we should abound in the returns of praise and duty to him. But it is observable that in the meat-offering *for the lambs* the prince is allowed to offer *as he shall be able to give* (v. 5, 7, 11), *as his hand shall attain unto*. Note, Princess themselves must spend as they can afford; and even in that which is laid out in works of piety God expects and requires but that we should do according to our ability, every man *as God has prepared him*, <sup><del>416</del></sup>1 Corinthians 16:2. God has not *made us to serve with an offering* (<sup><del>236</del></sup>Isaiah 43:23), but considers our frame and state. Yet this will not countenance those who pretend a disability that is not real, or those who by their extravagances in other things disable themselves to do the good they should. And we find those praised who, in an extraordinary case of charity, went not *only to their power*, but *beyond their power*.

## <sup><del>266</del></sup>EZEKIEL 46:16-18

### LAW CONCERNING THE PRINCE'S INHERITANCE

We have here a law for the limiting of the power of the prince in the disposing of the crown-lands.

1. If he have a *son* that is a favourite, or has merited well, he may, if he please, as a token of his favour and in recompence for his services, settle some parts of his lands upon him and his heirs for ever (v. 16), provided it do not go out of the family. There may be a cause for parents, when their children have grown up, to be more kind to one than to another, as Jacob gave to Joseph one portion *above his brethren*, <sup><del>482</del></sup>Genesis 48:22.
2. Yet, if he have a servant that is a favourite, he may not in like manner settle lands upon him, v. 17. The servant might have the rents, issues, and profits, for such a term, but the inheritance, the *jus proprietarium* — *the right of proprietorship*, shall remain in the prince and his heirs. It was fit

that a difference should be put between a child and a servant, like that ~~485~~ John 8:35. *The servant abides not in the house for ever, as the son does.*

**3.** What estates he gives his children must be of his own (v. 18): He *shall not take of the people's inheritance*, under pretence of having many children to provide for; he shall not find ways to make them forfeit their estates, or to force them to sell them and so *thrust his subjects out of their possession*; but let him and his sons be content with their own. It is far from being a prince's honour to increase the wealth of his family and crown by encroaching upon the rights and properties of his subjects; nor will he himself be a gainer by it at last, for he will be but a poor prince when the people are *scattered every man from his possession*, when they quit their native country, being forced out of it by oppression, choosing rather to live among strangers that are free people, and where what they have they can call their own, be it ever so little. It is the interest of princes to rule in the hearts of their subjects, and then all they have is, in the best manner, at their service. It is better for themselves to gain their affections by protecting their rights than to gain their estates by invading them.

## ~~486~~ EZEKIEL 46:19-24

### RULES RELATING TO OFFERINGS

We have here a further discovery of buildings about the temple, which we did not observe before, and those were places to boil the flesh of the offerings in, v. 20. He that kept such a plentiful table at his altar needed large kitchens; and a wise builder will provide conveniences of that kind. Observe,

**1.** Where those boiling-places were situated. There were some at the entry into the inner court (v. 19) and others under the rows, in the four corners of the outer court, v. 21-23. These were the places where, it is likely, there was most room to spare for this purpose; and this purpose was found for the spare room, that none might be lost. It is a pity that holy ground should be waste ground.

**2.** What use they were put to. In those places they were to *boil the trespass-offering and the sin-offering*, those parts of them which were allotted to the priests and which were more sacred than the flesh of the

peace-offerings, of which the offerer also had a share. There also they were to *bake the meat-offering*, their share of it, which they had from the altar for their own tables, v. 20. Care was taken that they should not *bear them out into the outer court, to sanctify the people*. Let them not pretend to sanctify the people with this holy flesh, and so impose upon them; or let not the people imagine that by touching those sacred things they were sanctified, and made any the better or more acceptable to God. It should seem (from <sup><300></sup>Haggai 2:12) that there were those who had such a conceit; and therefore the priests must not carry any of the holy flesh away with them, lest they should encourage that conceit. Ministers must take heed of doing any thing to bolster up ignorant people in their superstitious vanities.