

Ezekiel 44 - Millennial System of the Priesthood and Sacrifices; East Gate Closed; Foreigners Not Admitted; Duties and Privileges of the Zadokite Priests

III. Restoration of Israel (Ezek 33:1—48:45)

(7) Restored Temple (Ezek 40:1—48:35)

(B) Worship (Ezek 44:1—46:24)

(a) East gate closed (44:1-3)

(b) Foreigners not admitted (44:4-8)

(c) Temple priests (44:9—45:8)

(i) Duties (44:9-27)

(a) Levites (44:9-14)

(b) Priest of Zadok (44:15-27)

(ii) Privileges (44:28—45:8)

(a) Inheritance (44:28-31)

Ezek 44-46 discuss the various laws regulating the millennial priesthood and sacrificial system. Although the millennial sacrificial system will have some features similar to the Mosaic system, it will not reinstitute the Mosaic system: It will incorporate some things old and some things new for an entirely different purpose. For this reason, the millennial system of priesthood and sacrifices must not be viewed as a reinstitution of the Law of Moses, which ended permanently with the death of the Messiah. During the Messianic Kingdom, a whole new system of law, Kingdom Law, will be instituted. There will be no reinstitution of any previous code of law.

Ezekiel 44

(B) Worship (Ezek 44:1—46:24)

(a) East gate closed (44:1-3)

1 Then **He brought me back** by way of the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and **it was shut**.

1 Then He brought me back by the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces the east; and it was shut.

1 Then the Lord GOD brought me back through the east-facing outer gate of the sanctuary. But it was shut.

1 Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut.

- "...He brought me back" - another instance of prophetic transport; the angel brought Ezekiel to the East Gate in the Outer Wall, the beginning point of the angel's tour of the Temple for Ezekiel.

— In the previous passage, Ezekiel was standing in the Inner Court looking at the altar of sacrifice, listening to the voice of the *Shekinah* that came from the Most Holy Place.

- "...it was shut" - Ezekiel notices something different about the East Gate that he did not see before: the gate was closed.

2 And **the LORD said to me**, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.

2 The LORD said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.

2 The LORD told me, "This gate is to remain shut. It will not be opened. No man is to enter through it, because the LORD God of Israel entered through it, so it is to remain shut.

2 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.

- "...the LORD said to me" - *Yahweh*, not the angel, told Ezekiel that the East Gate will remain closed. Unlike the other gates, the East Gate will be permanently closed throughout the entirety of the Millennial Kingdom.

— The reason for the closure is clearly stated: because the Shekinah Glory entered the Temple complex through the East Gate (Cf. 43:1-5). It will now remain closed to maintain its sanctity.

- The fact that the East Gate will be permanently closed marks a difference between the Millennial Temple and Solomon's Temple, where the East Gate was always open.

3 As for **the prince**, he shall sit in it as prince to **eat bread before the LORD**; he shall enter by way of the porch of the gate and shall go out by the same way."

3 As for the prince, he shall sit in it as prince to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by way of the porch of the gate and shall go out by the same way."

3 The Regent Prince will be seated there, as Regent Prince, and will dine in the LORD's presence, entering through the portico of the gate and exiting through it also."

3 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.

- "...the prince" - *ha'nasi*, David. There are previous references to David as a "prince" (Cf. 34:23-24; 37:24-25). His duties are outlined in 45:9—46:18.

— Many interpreters see this "prince" as the Messiah, but there are three obvious reasons why this cannot be the case:

1. The prince is clearly differentiated from the priests. However, Ps 110:4; Zech 6:12-14 depict the Messiah as a priest. If the prince in this passage is distinct from the priesthood, he cannot be the Messiah.
2. The prince will make a sin offering (45:22), a requirement that does not apply to the sinless Messiah.
3. The prince has individual sons (46:16), which is not consistent with the Messiah's identity. Thus, the term *ha'nasi* is best interpreted in reference to the resurrected King David.

- "...eat bread before the LORD" - symbolizes an act of worship. This suggests that Prince David will worship the LORD on the porch of the Outer Eastern Gate. This space appears to be reserved exclusively for his use.

— Since this gate will be permanently closed, entry and exit into and out of the porch will have to be from and into the outer court.

David's Role in the Millennial Kingdom

Subsequent chapters of Ezekiel reveal several key details about his role in the millennial system:

1. He will serve as an intermediary between the people and the priests (46:10).
2. As a member of the tribe of Judah, he will not be allowed to enter the Inner Court (46:2), as this area is reserved exclusively for the Levites.
3. He will officiate during specific festival offerings and solemn assemblies of Israel (46:13-22), highlighting his unique ceremonial role.
4. He will be assigned a designated portion of the land and will thus be forbidden from appropriating the land belonging to the people (45:7-8; 46:18; 48:21-22).

East Gate

- The prince cannot enter through the East Gate but is permitted to eat the sacrificial meal in its vestibule (v3; Cf. Jer 30:21)
- The East Gate was the place where the *Shekinah* Glory left the Temple (Ezek 10)
- It is the same gate by which the *Shekinah* Glory entered the Temple (43:1-9). Shutting it demonstrates that the Spirit will never again leave Israel.
- The East Gate is special: it is used only by the Lord.
- It was an eastern tradition that one way to honor a king was to provide a gate for him that no one else used. So it is a point of honor.

There is a gate on the east of Old Jerusalem, toward the Mount of Olives, sometimes called the Golden Gate. It has been sealed (closed) since 1543 AD. Some interpreters find the prophecy of v2 fulfilled with the sealing of that gate, but this prophecy has nothing to do with that Temple gate. The context of this entire passage (Ezek 40-48) is yet future (Cf. 40:1).

We do not know for certain if the present-day Golden Gate is at the same place as the ancient Eastern Gate. However, the Eastern Gate of Ezekiel's prophecy is neither in the place of the present-day Golden Gate or ancient Eastern Gate, as Ezekiel's Temple Mount is elevated much higher (Is 2:2; Zech 14:10). Some Christians have been taught that the presently blocked condition of the Golden Gate is a fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy. But it must be remembered that, if taken literally, Ezekiel's description of this gate and its closing concerns a future temple, not the Temple Mount that exists today. [Randall Price, Rose Guide to the Temple, p135].

(b) Foreigners not admitted (44:4-8)

4 Then **He brought me by way of the north gate** to the front of the house; and I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD, and I fell on my face.

4 Then He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the house; and I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD, and I fell on my face.

4 Then he brought me through the north-facing gate to the front of the Temple. As I looked, the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's Temple, and I fell flat on my face!

4 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.

- "...He brought me by way of the north gate" - another instance where Ezekiel is prophetically transported, this time from the Outer Eastern Gate to the Inner Court through the North Inner Court Gate.

— This is likely because, according to 46:1, the Inner Eastern Gate will be closed on weekdays.

- Upon entering the Inner Court, Ezekiel received reaffirmation of his vision in 43:1-5 where the Shekinah Glory re-entered the Temple.

— It's likely that the LORD reaffirmed the Shekinah's presence in the Temple because Ezekiel last witnessed the East Gate being shut and may have thought the Shekinah left prior to the Gate being closed.

5 And the LORD said to me, "Son of man, **pay attention**, see with your eyes and hear with your ears everything that I say to you concerning all the statutes of the house of the LORD

and all its laws; and pay attention to the entrance of the house, with all the exits of the sanctuary.

5 The LORD said to me, "Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears all that I say to you concerning all the statutes of the house of the LORD and concerning all its laws; and mark well the entrance of the house, with all exits of the sanctuary.

5 Then the LORD told me, "Son of Man, watch carefully, listen closely, and remember everything I'm going to be telling you about all the statutes pertaining to the LORD's Temple and all of its laws. Pay careful attention to the entrance to the Temple, along with all of the exits to the sanctuary."

5 And the LORD said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary.

- "...pay attention" - basically the LORD is telling Ezekiel: "Pay very close attention to this. I want you to thoroughly understand all the ordinances connected with the Temple services."

— Ezekiel was told to look intently with his eyes, emphasizing the need for him to closely observe the visual aspects of what he witnessed.

— He was also told to listen closely, signifying the need to give utmost attention to the verbal instructions that he was about to receive regarding "the statutes of the house of the LORD and all its laws."

— God is holding Ezekiel responsible for recording all of these details accurately.

6 You shall say to the **rebellious** ones, to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: "**Enough of all your abominations**, house of Israel,

6 You shall say to the rebellious ones, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Enough of all your abominations, O house of Israel,

6 "You are to tell the Resistance—that is, the house of Israel, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: "I've had enough of all of your loathsome behavior, you house of Israel!

6 And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations,

- "...rebellious" - *meri*, recalls earlier prophecies by Ezekiel where Israel was repeatedly referred to as "a rebellious house" (Cf. 2:5,6,7,8; 3:26,27; 12:2,3,9,25; 17:12; 24:3).

- "...Enough of all your abominations" - basically, the LORD is telling them that they have committed enough abominations; time is up, let this be the end of it.

— It's a call for Israel to cease its rebellious and defiling practices that provoked the judgment of God in the past.

7 when you **brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh,** to **be in My sanctuary** to profane it, My house, **when you offered My food,** the fat, and the blood and **they broke My covenant—*this* in addition to all your abominations.**

7 when you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to profane it, *even* My house, when you offered My food, the fat and the blood; for they made My covenant void—*this* in addition to all your abominations.

7 You kept on bringing in foreigners, those who were uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to profane my sanctuary by being inside my Temple, and by doing so you've emptied my covenant, all the while offering my food—the fat and the blood—in addition to all of the other loathsome things you've done.

7 In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations.

- "...brought in foreigners" - the Jews had unlawfully brought Gentiles into the Temple compound, an act strictly forbidden under the Mosaic Law.

- "...uncircumcised in heart" - spiritually unregenerate and not converts/proselytes to the Mosaic Law

- "...uncircumcised in flesh" - they (males) were physically uncircumcised, illustrating their lack of conformity to the Mosaic Law

- "...be in My sanctuary" - Gentiles were not only permitted into the Temple compound, but were also invited into the Inner Court and the Holy Place, thus desecrating it.

- "...when you offered My food" - this occurred when the priests offered the sacrifices brought before God, which included "the fat" and "the blood".

— Such actions violated the sanctity of worship as prescribed in Lev 21:6. The unfaithful Levites bore direct responsibility for this sacrilege, as they had willfully permitted and enabled Gentiles to enter the sacred space.

- "...they broke My covenant" - the consequence of their sin. By allowing and participating in these practices, Israel had flagrantly violated the terms of the Mosaic Law, which restricted Temple worship and its ordinances to covenant-keeping Jews.

- "...*this* in addition to all your abominations" - God declared that this was not an isolated sin but was in addition to all their abominations, compounding the many previous transgressions that Ezekiel had already denounced.

8 And you have not taken responsibility for My holy things yourselves, but you have appointed *foreigners* to take responsibility for My sanctuary."

8 And you have not kept charge of My holy things yourselves, but you have set *foreigners* to keep charge of My sanctuary."

8 Furthermore, you haven't paid attention to the requirements for my holy things. Instead, you placed foreigners in charge of my sanctuary."

8 And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves.

- This indictment highlights the failure of the Jewish people to fulfill their sacred responsibility, as they had abdicated this duty by entrusting it to the Gentiles.

— Even when the Israelites adhered to some of their responsibilities, their actions were motivated by self-interest rather than a desire to honor God or seek His approval. Their focus was on personal convenience rather than obedience to divine command.

— However, these selfish motivations will not characterize worship in the Millennial Kingdom, the standards of which will define this time are described in Ps 15:1-5; 24:1-6.

(c) Temple priests (44:9—45:8)

(i) Duties (44:9-27)

Verses 9-14 outline the duties of the Levites and clarify their restricted role as caretakers of the Temple complex.

Because of their sinful practices before Israel's fall to Babylon, the Levites' position will be downgraded in the Millennial Temple from ministers to servants. While still important and necessary, their duties reflect a diminished status compared to their elevated role under the Mosaic Law. They will be allowed to serve as gatekeepers, slayers of the sacrifices, and to help the worshipers. However, they will not be allowed to serve the Lord as priests or come near any of His holy things or offerings. The tasks of the Levites in Solomon's temple were more extensive (1 Chr 15:16; 16:4; 23:28-31).

(a) Levites (44:9-14)

9 'This is what the Lord GOD says: "No **foreigner** uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the sons of Israel, shall enter My sanctuary.

9 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "No foreigner uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the sons of Israel, shall enter My sanctuary.

9 "This is what the Lord GOD says, 'No foreigner who is both uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the Israelis is to enter my sanctuary.

9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcited in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.

- Specifics on who is barred from the Temple complex: any foreigner who is uncircumcised in heart (spiritually unregenerate) or uncircumcised in flesh (in disobedience to the

covenant). These individuals cannot participate in the sanctuary.

- "...foreigner" - *nekar*, "alien" or "stranger"; throughout Scripture, this word refers to unbelievers and non-Jews.

— This verse does not contradict other passages that state that Gentiles will sacrifice and even serve as priests in the Millennial Temple (Cf. Is 56:1-8; 66:18-21). Ezekiel here simply limits the qualification for participation.

10 But the Levites who went far from Me when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me following their idols, shall suffer the punishment for their wrongdoing.

10 But the Levites who went far from Me when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me after their idols, shall bear the punishment for their iniquity.

10 But the descendants of Levi, who went far away from me when Israel abandoned me, who left me to follow their idols, are to bear the punishment of their iniquity.

10 And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity.

- Not only did the Levites follow Israel's other tribes into idolatry, but at times they even actively led them in this abominable behavior. Thus, they will face lasting consequences in the Messianic Kingdom.

11 Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, having **oversight at the gates** of the house and **ministering in the house**; they shall **slaughter the burnt offering** and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall **stand before them to minister to them**.

11 Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering in the house; they shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them.

11 Nevertheless, they are to serve in my sanctuary, overseeing the gates of the Temple, taking care of the Temple, slaughtering the burnt offerings and the sacrifices presented for the people, standing in the presence of the people, and ministering to them.

11 Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them.

- The Levites' diminished capacity will include four specific duties:

- "...oversight at the gates" - the Levites will be responsible for crowd control and maintaining order at the Temple gates.

- "...ministering in the house" - they will serve as caretakers and janitors, ensuring the sanctity and functionality of the Temple precincts.

- "...slaughter the burnt offering" - acting as butchers, they will prepare sacrificial animals and distribute sacrificial meat in the kitchens.

- "...stand before them to minister to them" - they will assist the people with their ritual obligations, including preparing sacrifices in the Outer Court.

12 Since they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of wrongdoing to the house of Israel, for that reason I have sworn against them," declares the Lord GOD, "that they shall suffer the punishment for their wrongdoing.

12 Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn against them," declares the Lord GOD, "that they shall bear *the punishment* for their iniquity.

12 Because they kept serving them in the presence of their idols, becoming a sin-filled stumbling block to the house of Israel,' declares the Lord GOD. "'I have sworn to them that they are to bear the consequences of their iniquity.

12 Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity.

- Revisits the past sins of the Levites, explaining who their role will be reduced in the Messianic Kingdom.

— The Levites had previously assisted the people in their idolatry, directly facilitating idol worship. By doing so, they became a stumbling block of iniquity unto the house of Israel—their actions encouraged and legitimized idolatry, leading the nation astray.

13 And they shall not approach Me to serve as priests for Me, nor approach any of My holy things, to the things that are most holy; but they will bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed.

13 And they shall not come near to Me to serve as a priest to Me, nor come near to any of My holy things, to the things that are most holy; but they will bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed.

13 They are not to come near me to serve me as a priest, nor approach any of my holy things, including the most holy things. Instead, they are to bear the shame of the loathsome things that they have done.

13 And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.

- As part of the consequence for their past sins (v12), the Levites will be excluded from performing priestly duties in the Inner Court, where the more sacred sacrificial duties take place.

— Also, they are barred from the LORD's holy things, meaning they will not be allowed to enter the Holy Place. They will have no function, and will not even be allowed to enter, the

Holy Place or Most Holy Place.

— Their responsibilities will be limited to the Outer Court, where they will serve the people rather than minister directly to God.

14 Nevertheless I will appoint them to take responsibility for the house, of all its service and of everything that shall be done in it.

14 Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the house, of all its service and of all that shall be done in it.

14 Nevertheless, I will appoint them to take care of my Temple, including all of its service and everything that is to be done inside of it."

14 But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.

- They will essentially be limited to being caretakers and custodians of the Temple, responsible for its upkeep and operation. They will support the Zadok priests, but will be limited to the Outer Court.

(b) Priest of Zadok (44:15-27)

15 "But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who took responsibility for My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall **come near to Me to serve Me**; and they shall **stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood**," declares the Lord GOD.

15 "But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood," declares the Lord GOD.

15 "The descendants of Zadok, Levitical priests who took care of my sanctuary when the Israelites wandered away from me, are to come near me to minister to me. They are to stand before me to offer the fat and the blood to me," declares the Lord GOD.

15 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD:

- In contrast to the disobedience of the Levites, the sons of Zadok remained faithful to the LORD. Their importance lies in their connection to prophecy.

— In 1 Sam 2:31-36, God declared that the house of Eli would be deposed from the priesthood and replaced by a faithful priest. This prophecy set the stage for the emergence of the Zadokite line as the legitimate custodians of the priesthood.

— The prophecy was fulfilled in 1 Kings 2:26-27 when the last priest from the house of Eli, Abiathar, was removed from his position. Zadok, a descendant of a different branch of Levi, became the priest under King David (2 Sam 8:17).

- Zadok's loyalty to David was demonstrated during Absalom's revolt (2 Sam 15:24-29) and again after the rebellion was quelled (2 Sam 20:25). Zadok also showed steadfast support for Solomon during Adonijah's attempted coup (1 Kings 1:8,32-39). Following Abiathar's removal, Zadok was appointed high priest by Solomon (1 Kings 2:26-27,35).
- The Zadokite lineage is traced in 1 Chr 6:1-13,50-53, but subsequent history shows that the Zadokites were removed from the priesthood by Antiochus IV Epiphanes during the Hellenistic period. The Greeks gave the priesthood to Menelaus, a Benjamite, breaking the Levitical lineage. Later, during the Hasmonean and Sadducean periods, the priesthood was controlled by Levites but not Zadokites.
- The Zadokites priests will have four primary privileged duties in the Millennial Temple:
 - "...come near to Me to serve Me" - unlike the Mosaic Law where access to the Holy of Holies was restricted to only the high priest once a year, all Zadokites will have the privilege to enter the Holy of Holies during the millennium.
 - "...stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood" - this indicates their duties in the Inner Court, where will oversee and handle sacrificial offerings presented on the altar.

History of the Priesthood

The priesthood, at an institution, was entrusted to Aaron and his sons (Ex 27:20,21; 28:1-4; 29:9,44; Num 3:10; 16:40; 18:7; 25:13). Upon Aaron's death, the high priesthood passed into the hands of Eleazar, his eldest (living) son (Num 20:26-28). After Eleazar's death, it passed to Phinehas, his eldest son (Num 25:11-13). In the last days of the judges the high priesthood belonged to Eli, of the line of Ithamar (Cf. 1 Sam 14:3; 22:20; 1 Chr 24:3). It continued until the reign of David, when it was held jointly by Abiathar of the line of Ithamar and Zadok of the line of Eleazar (2 Sam 8:17; 20:25; 1 Kings 4:4). Solomon eventually overturned this arrangement by deposing Abiathar for espousing Adonijah's pretensions to the throne (1 Kings 1:7; 2:26-27). From that time forward, until the exile, the high priesthood remained with Zadok and his sons (1 Kings 2:35; 1 Chr 29:22). In Ezekiel, Zadok and his sons are mentioned a total of 4x (43:19; 44:15; 48:11) but there is no high priest mentioned. This is consistent with Zech 6:12-13.

16 "They shall **enter My sanctuary**; they shall **come near to My table** to serve Me and assume the responsibility I give them.

16 "They shall enter My sanctuary; they shall come near to My table to minister to Me and keep My charge.

16 "They are to enter my sanctuary, approach my table to minister to me, and carry out my requirements.

16 They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.

- "...enter My sanctuary" - third, they will enter into and serve in the Holy Place ("sanctuary"). There they will perform priestly functions.
- "...come near to My table" - they will come near to the altar ("table," Cf. 40:47; 41:22; 43:13-29), meaning they will partake in the sacrificial meat and fulfilling their service.
- Unlike the Levites, who are relegated to less significant tasks, the Zadokites will be entrusted with the full spectrum of priestly responsibilities, including serving at the altar of sacrifice in the Inner Court and performing rituals in the Holy Place. Furthermore, they will have access to the Holy of Holies, where the *Shekinah* resides.

In summary, there are five key contrasts between the Levites and the Zadokites:

1. Access to God: Levites are barred from approaching YHWH directly, while Zadokites can freely do so.
2. Representation: Levites serve the people, whereas Zadokites stand before YHWH, presenting offerings of fat and blood.
3. Temple access: Levites are restricted to guard duty at the Temple gates, while Zadokites may enter the sanctuary.
4. Sacrificial role: Levites handle the slaughter of animals for the people, but Zadokites bring offerings directly to the altar.
5. Guardianship: Levites are custodians of the Temple compound, while Zadokites are entrusted as guardians of YHWH Himself.

Notably, certain Mosaic elements such as the Ark of the Covenant, the Table of Shewbread, and the Menorah (lampstand) are absent in this system, emphasizing that the Millennial Temple reflects a unique structure and practice, distinct from the Mosaic Tabernacle and Temple.

17 And it shall be that when they enter at the gates of the inner courtyard, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and wool shall not be worn by them while they are ministering in the gates of the inner courtyard or in the house.

17 It shall be that when they enter at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and wool shall not be on them while they are ministering in the gates of the inner court and in the house.

17 Whenever they enter at the gates of the inner court, they are to be clothed with linen garments. They are not to wear wool when they are ministering within the gates of the inner courtyard or in the Temple.

17 And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, while they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within.

- When the Zadokite priests enter the Inner Court, they must wear linen garments.
- This instruction echoes similar regulations under the Mosaic Law (Ex 39:27-29; Lev 6:10; 16:4). Linen is a light material that is clean in appearance and minimizes perspiration. The prohibition against wearing wool supports this meaning of linen. Wool tends to cause more sweating, which was considered defiling and therefore inappropriate for priestly duties (Cf. Deut 23:11-13).

18 Linen turbans shall be on their heads and linen undergarments shall be around their waists; they shall not put on *anything that makes them sweat*.

18 Linen turbans shall be on their heads and linen undergarments shall be on their loins; they shall not gird themselves with *anything which makes them sweat*.

18 Linen turbans are to be on their heads, and they are to wear linen undergarments. Also, they are not to clothe themselves with anything that makes them perspire.

18 They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird themselves with any thing that causeth sweat.

- They will also be required to wear linen head coverings and undergarments. They are not to be clothed with anything that causes sweat, reinforcing the importance of ritual purity.

19 And when they go out into the outer courtyard, into the outer courtyard to the people, they shall take off their garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers; then they shall put on other garments, so that they will not transfer holiness to the people with their garments.

19 When they go out into the outer court, into the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers; then they shall put on other garments so that they will not transmit holiness to the people with their garments.

19 "When they enter the outer courtyard, that is, the outer courtyard where the people are, they are to take off their garments in which they were ministering, lay them in the consecrated chambers, and put on different garments so they will not transfer holiness to the people through their garments.

19 And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.

- When the Zadokite priests transitioned from the Inner Court to the Outer Court, where non-Levites were permitted, they are required to remove their linen clothing and place them in the holy chambers surrounding the Inner Court before they may proceed to the Outer Court.

- This procedure for changing clothes ensures that they do not sanctify the people with their garments. This highlights the separation between the sacred and the secular (common).
- The principle behind this comes from Ex 29:37, however Haggai 2:12 clarifies that this principle did not extend to the priest's clothing. Basically, while the Mosaic Law prohibited lay contact with the sanctuary and its objects, it did not specifically address the sanctity of the priestly garments.
- In contrast, the Millennial Law, as described by Ezekiel, introduces a stricter standard. It recognizes that even contact with the priests' garments can confer holiness. Consequently, these garments are reserved exclusively for the Zadokite priests and must be removed before entering secular areas.

Priestly Conduct

20 Also they shall **not shave their heads**, yet they shall **not let their locks grow long**; they shall only trim *the hair of* their heads.

20 Also they shall not shave their heads, yet they shall not let their locks grow long; they shall only trim *the hair of* their heads.

20 Also, they are not to shave their heads nor let their hair grow long. Instead, they are certainly to trim the hair on their heads.

20 Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads.

- The grooming standards for the Zadokite priests prohibit two extremes:

- "...not shave their heads" - on the one hand, shaving their heads entirely is forbidden, as it was under the Mosaic Law (Lev 21:5,10).

- "...not let their locks grow long" - on the other hand, the Zadokite priests are not to let their hair grow long. Instead, they are required to only cut off the hair of their heads, meaning they must maintain a balanced, medium length.

21 Nor shall any of the priests drink wine when they enter the inner courtyard.

21 Nor shall any of the priests drink wine when they enter the inner court.

21 None of the priests are to drink wine after entering the inner courtyard.

21 Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court.

- This regulation does not prohibit wine consumption entirely, but it specifically requires priests to abstain while performing their priestly duties in the Inner Court. This ensures that they maintain full control of their senses during their service.

- Once their duties are completed for the day, they are permitted to consume alcohol. This principle is consistent with the Mosaic Law as seen in Lev 10:9, which similarly restricted alcohol consumption during priestly service.

22 And they shall not marry a widow or a divorced woman, but shall take virgins from the descendants of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest.

22 And they shall not marry a widow or a divorced woman but shall take virgins from the offspring of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest.

22 They are not to marry a widow or a divorced woman. Instead, they are to marry virgins from the descendants of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest."

22 Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.

- Zadokite priests are forbidden from marrying certain categories of women: widows or divorced women, with the exception of if the widow was the wife of a priest to allow for the continuity of priestly lineage.

— Otherwise, they are only allowed to marry Jewish virgins to ensure their spouses are of Jewish heritage.

— Under the Mosaic Law, these regulations applied only to the high priest. Under Millennial Law, they extend to all Zadokite priests, demonstrating the elevated standard of holiness required in the Millennial Kingdom.

Priestly Responsibilities

23 Moreover, they shall teach My people *the difference* between the holy and the common, and teach them to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.

23 Moreover, they shall teach My people *the difference* between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.

23 "They are to teach my people how to discern what is holy in contrast to what is common, showing them how to discern between what is unclean and clean.

23 And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.

- The Zadokite priests will be tasked with serving as the spiritual educators of Israel. Their teaching will focus on helping God's people distinguish between the holy and the common, as well as discerning between clean and unclean.

— This will be similar to the teaching role of the Levites under the Mosaic Law (Cf. Lev 10:10; Deut 33:8-10; Mal 2:7).

24 In a dispute they shall take their stand to judge; they shall judge it according to My ordinances. They shall also keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed feasts, and sanctify My Sabbaths.

24 In a dispute they shall take their stand to judge; they shall judge it according to My ordinances. They shall also keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed feasts and

sanctify My sabbaths.

24 When disputes arise, they are to serve as a judge, adjudicating matters according to my ordinances. They are to enforce my laws, my statutes, all of my appointed festivals, and they are to sanctify my Sabbaths.

24 And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.

- The priests will also serve as judges in disputes, standing to render judgments based on God's ordinances. This judicial role corresponds to the responsibilities assigned to Mosaic priests (Cf. Deut 17:8-13; 19:15-20; 21:5).

- Their third responsibility will be to ensure adherence to God's laws and statutes during all appointed feasts and with sanctifying the sabbaths. This reflects their broader duty to oversee all Temple rituals, ensuring that worship adheres to divine standards.

Priestly Separation

25 They shall not go to a dead person to defile *themselves*; however, for father, for mother, for son, for daughter, for brother, or for a sister who has not had a husband, they may defile themselves.

25 They shall not go to a dead person to defile *themselves*; however, for father, for mother, for son, for daughter, for brother, or for a sister who has not had a husband, they may defile themselves.

25 They are not to come in contact with a dead body, so they don't defile themselves, except in the case of their father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or for an unmarried sister, on whose behalf they may defile themselves.

25 And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves: but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves.

- Millennial Law prohibits Zadokite priests from touching dead bodies, with specific exceptions for close family members.

- These exceptions are similar to those found in the Mosaic Law for common priests (Lev 21:1-3). However, under the Mosaic system, the high priest was not permitted any exceptions (Lev 21:11). This distinction highlights a difference between the Mosaic and millennial systems.

- These rules indicate that there will be death during the Messianic Kingdom. According to Is 65:20, however, death will occur only for unbelievers.

26 And after he is cleansed, seven days shall elapse for him.

26 After he is cleansed, seven days shall elapse for him.

26 After he is cleansed from that contact, he is to not to minister for seven days.

26 And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days.

- If a Zadokite priest becomes defiled by contact with a dead body, he must undergo a ritual cleansing process lasting seven days before he can resume his priestly duties.

27 On the day that he goes into the sanctuary, to the inner courtyard to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering," declares the Lord GOD.

27 On the day that he goes into the sanctuary, into the inner court to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering," declares the Lord GOD.

27 On the day that he returns to the sanctuary's inner court to minister, he is to offer his own sin offering," declares the Lord GOD.

27 And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering, saith the Lord GOD.

- After completing the seven-day cleansing period, the priest may return to the sanctuary and the inner court to perform his duties.

— On the day he resumes his service, he is required to present a sin-offering. This requirement is unique to the Millennial Law and underscores the heightened standards of ritual purity during the Messianic Kingdom.

(ii) Privileges (44:28—45:8)

(a) Inheritance (44:28-31)

28 "And it shall be regarding an inheritance for them, *that I am their inheritance*; and you shall give them no property in Israel—I am their property.

28 "And it shall be with regard to an inheritance for them, *that I am their inheritance*; and you shall give them no possession in Israel—I am their possession.

28 "Now with respect to the priests' inheritances, I am to be their inheritance, and you are to give them no possession in Israel, since I am their possession.

28 And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I am their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: I am their possession.

- "...I am their inheritance" - the inheritance of the Zadok priest is their service to God. God Himself is their only inheritance.

— Unlike other tribes in Israel, the Zadokites will receive no land or material possession. Instead, their priesthood and relationship with God are their inheritance. This principle mirrors the arrangement for the Levites under the Mosaic Law (Cf. Num 18:20; Deut 10:8-9; 18:1).

29 They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering; and everything banned from secular use in Israel shall be theirs.

29 They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs.

29 They are to eat the grain offerings, sin offering, and guilt offering. Everything consecrated in Israel is to belong to them.

29 They shall eat the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs.

- This verse details the portions of the sacrifices allocated to the priests. The Zadokites are entitled to partake of the meal-offering, as prescribed under Moses (Lev 2:1-3), the sin-offering (Lev 6:24-30), and the trespass-offering (Lev 7:1-7).

— Additionally, every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. The Hebrew term for “banned from secular use,” *cherem*, refers to items consecrated to God, such as the firstborn of animals and dedicated fields (Ex 22:30; Lev 27:21; Num 18:14).

30 And the first of all the first fruits of every kind and every contribution of every kind, from all your contributions, shall be for the priests; you shall also give to the priest the first of your dough, **to make a blessing rest on your house**.

30 The first of all the first fruits of every kind and every contribution of every kind, from all your contributions, shall be for the priests; you shall also give to the priest the first of your dough to cause a blessing to rest on your house.

30 The first portion of all the first fruits of every kind and every offering of any kind is to be for the priests. You are to give the priest the first portion of your grain. As a result a blessing will rest on your household.

30 And the first of all the firstfruits of all things, and every oblation of all, of every sort of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house.

- The people of Israel are commanded to offer the first-fruits of their harvest to the priests as a donation, a practice also outlined in the Mosaic Law (Cf. Ex 23:19; 34:26; Num 18:13; Deut 18:4).

— There is also a specific directive: "you shall also give to the priest the first of your dough," which was also mandated under Moses (Cf. Num 15:19-21).

- "...to make a blessing rest on your house" - the result of obedience to these commands is a promise: to cause a blessing to rest on your house. By giving their first-fruits to the priests, the people could expect blessings from God, a principle reinforced in Prov 3:9-10; Mal 3:10.

31 The priests shall not eat any bird or animal that has died a natural death or has been **torn to pieces** by animals.

31 The priests shall not eat any bird or beast that has died a natural death or has been torn to pieces.

31 However, the priests are not to eat any bird or animal that has died a natural death or that has been torn apart."

31 The priests shall not eat of any thing that is dead of itself, or torn, whether it be fowl or beast.

- "...torn to pieces" - refers to animals attacked and killed by wild beasts. This ensures that the priests maintain ritual purity and correlates to similar commands in the Mosaic Law (Cf. Lev 7:24; 17:15; 22:8; Deut 14:21).

The following is a summary of the laws governing the Zadokite priests:

1. Priestly garments: Garments must be made of linen to minimize sweat. These garments are to be worn only during priestly functions.
2. Priestly hair: Hair must not be shaved completely nor grown excessively long. It should be maintained at a medium length.
3. Priestly alcohol consumption: Total abstention is not required; however, priests must abstain from alcohol while performing priestly duties.
4. Priestly marriage: The Zadokites are not permitted to marry widows, divorcees, or Gentiles but must marry either Jewish virgins or the widows of other priests.
5. Priestly public roles: The priests are to teach and educate the people on the distinctions between the holy, the profane, and the unclean. They are to serve as administrators of justice and to model obedience to God's will and the laws of the Messianic Kingdom.
6. Priestly responsibility concerning the dead: Priests may assist with funeral arrangements for immediate family members. Contact with the dead is prohibited for all others.
7. Priestly food regulations: Consumption of carrion (animals that die of natural causes or are killed by other animals) is strictly prohibited.