### Ezekiel

## Chapter 44

1Then he took me back to the outer gate of the Holies (the one facing east). However, it was locked.  
  
2So the Lord said to me:  
  
 ‘After this gate has been locked  
 It may not be opened and no one may enter…  
 Only IsraEl’s God, Jehovah, may enter,  
 And until He does, it must remain locked.  
  
 3‘And only those guiding may sit here  
 To eat their bread before God.  
 They must enter by way of the columned-porch gate,  
 And that’s the way they must leave.’  
  
4Then he took me in the direction of the north gate, over against the Temple, and I looked and saw that the Temple of Jehovah had become filled with His glory… So I fell to my face!  
  
5And the Lord said to me:  
  
 ‘O son of man,  
  
 ‘Now, prepare your heart and your eyes,  
 And ready your ears, so you’ll hear  
 All the things that I will now say  
 Concerning the instructions that I’ll give you  
 For the Temple of Jehovah and all of its laws.  
  
 ‘Arrange your heart [so you’ll understand]  
 The ways they must enter and leave  
 From this Most Holy Place!  
  
 6‘Then, speak to those who’ve rebelled  
 Yes, to those of the house of IsraEl,  
 And say that the Lord Jehovah said this:  
  
 ‘O house of IsraEl,  
  
 ‘You must bring an end to your lawless ways!  
 7For, into My Most Holy Place  
 You have brought foreigner’s sons…  
 Those with uncircumcised hearts  
 And flesh that is uncircumcised.  
  
 ‘And you have even profaned  
 Your offerings of bread, fat, and blood.  
 Yes, you’ve broken [your] Sacred Agreement with Me  
 By all the lawless things that you’ve done.  
  
 8‘You’ve not followed the rules of My Temple,  
 And you’ve put other people in charge.  
 9So, no more may foreigner’s sons  
 Whose hearts and flesh are uncircumcised  
 Be allowed to enter My Most Holy Place.  
 For, foreign peoples may never become  
 Part of the house of IsraEl…  
 10And only My faithful Levites may enter!  
  
 ‘Now, IsraEl has strayed far from Me  
 And followed their own [thoughts and] ideas.  
 So, they will now [pay for] their unrighteous ways.  
  
 11‘But the Levites are [to be treated] as holy,  
 For they serve as the keepers of My [Temple’s] gates,  
 And that is the place where they’ll work.  
 There the whole burnt-offerings will be slaughtered,  
 And they’ll offer the things that the people will bring…  
 For, before the people, they’ll stand.  
  
 12‘But, because they have served before faces of idols  
 [On behalf of] the house of IsraEl,  
 They’ll be punished for their unrighteous ways…  
 That’s why I’ve raised My hand against them,’  
 Says Jehovah, the Lord.  
  
 13‘Yes, they’ll bear the blame for their lawless ways,  
 And they can no longer serve as My Priests,  
 Or [touch] the holy things inside of the Holies.  
  
 ‘Indeed, they must bear their dishonor  
 For the delusions in which they have strayed.  
 14But I’ll order them to be watchmen,  
 And to perform other tasks.  
  
 15‘The Priests of the Levites, the sons of ZaDok,  
 Were the only ones who truly kept watch  
 As IsraEl was straying from Me.  
 So, only they may approach Me,  
 And only they can serve before Me…  
 Before My face they will stand  
 To offer the blood and the fat,’  
 Says Jehovah, the Lord.  
  
 16‘Only these may enter My Most Holy Place  
 Or approach My table to serve Me,  
 And stand guard in My Temple watches.  
  
 17‘So, when entering the gates of the inner courtyard,  
 They must wear their [official] linen clothes…  
 They may not wear wool when they enter these gates.  
 18On their heads, they must wear linen turbans,  
 And beltless linen pants on their loins.  
  
 19‘And when they enter the people’s outer courtyard,  
 They can’t wear the clothes in which they must serve…  
 They must leave them inside the Holy’s inner chambers  
 And wear other clothes when they go there.  
 But no way can they make people holy  
 When they are wearing such clothes.  
  
 20‘They may not shave the hair from their heads,  
 Nor may they leave their heads bare…  
 All of their heads must be covered.  
 21And no way may the Priests drink any wine  
 Before entering the [Temple’s] inner courtyard.  
  
 22‘They may not marry a divorcee or a widow…  
 Only a virgin from the house of IsraEl…  
 However, they may wed the widow of a Priest.  
  
 23‘Then they must teach all My people  
 The difference between the holy and profane,  
 And the difference between what’s clean and unclean.  
  
 24‘They must handle the cases of judgments of blood,  
 And attend to decide righteous matters.  
 They must be fair when judging for Me  
 According to My Laws and My orders.  
 They must also observe My holiday feasts,  
 And My Sabbaths, they must always keep holy.  
  
 25‘They may not approach a dead person  
 So that they will not be unclean.  
 But they may approach their fathers, mothers, or sons,  
 Or their daughters, brothers, sisters, or wives,  
 Without becoming defiled.  
 26But even then, they must count 7 days  
 Before they’ll be clean once again.  
  
 27‘On the day that they enter the inner courtyard  
 To serve in My Most Holy Place;  
 They must bring an atonement [for sins],’  
 Says Jehovah, [your] God.  
  
 28‘And since I am what they’ll inherit;  
 They will be given no land  
 As their possession among IsraEl’s sons…  
 For, I am to be their posession!  
  
 29‘The sacrifices are what they’ll eat…  
 The offerings for sins and for errors,  
 And the separation offerings will also be theirs.  
 30All the first-fruits are theirs,  
 As well as the first-born [of cattle].  
  
 ‘Then, for the Priests, they must set aside  
 Some of the first-fruits [they’re given].  
 For, if they give part of the first-fruits  
 Of all that is brought, to the Priests,  
 This will bring [God’s] blessings upon all their homes.  
  
 31‘And the Priests may not eat rotting flesh,  
 Or cattle that are taken by wild beasts or birds.’