

The River of Life and the Healing of the Land

Ezekiel 47:1–12

Veritas Adult Community

College Church

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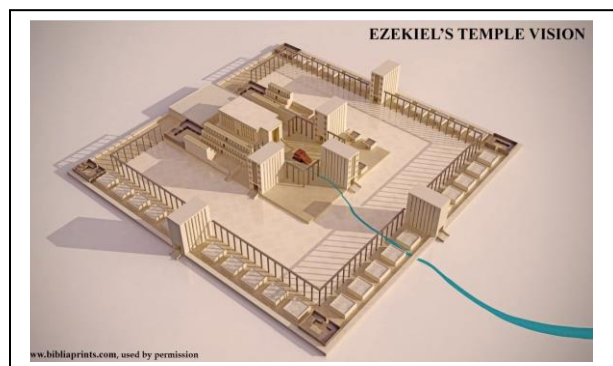
^{47:1} Then he brought me back to the entrance of the House. I was struck by the sight of water seeping from underneath the House threshold and flowing eastward—after all, the House faced east. The water flowed down below from the right side of the facade of the House on the south side of the altar. ² Then he led me out through the north gate and took me around the outside to the outer gate that faces eastward. I noticed the water trickling out from the south side. ³ Meanwhile the man continued eastward with the measuring line in his hand. He measured off 1000 cubits and led me through the water. It was ankle deep. ⁴ Then he measured off 1000 cubits and led me through the water. It was knee deep. Then he measured off 1000 cubits and led me through [it]. It was waist deep. ⁵ Then he measured off 1000 cubits. Now it was a stream, which I was unable to cross on account of the water level. The stream was deep enough to swim in, but impossible to wade across. ⁶ Then he said to me, “You have been staring, human!” Then he led me back to the bank of the stream. ⁷ When I got back, I was struck by the sight of a vast number of trees on both banks of the stream.

⁸ Then he explained to me, “This water flows out to the eastern region, descends to the Arabah, and enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters. Then the waters are healed, ⁹ and every living creature that swarms thrives wherever the stream flows. There are vast numbers of fish because these waters have arrived there, bringing healing and life wherever the stream flows. ¹⁰ And fishermen stand beside it, all the way from En-Gedi to En-Eglaim. It is a place where nets are spread out to dry. The variety and abundance of its fish are comparable to the fish found in the Mediterranean Sea. ¹¹ As for its swamps and marshes—they are not healed; they are reserved as sources of salt. ¹² All kinds of trees providing food grow up along the stream, on both banks. Their leaves never wither, nor does their fruit ever cease. Every month they produce fresh fruit because its [the stream’s] waters flow out from the sanctuary. Their fruit provides food and their leaves healing.

Exposition

Introduction

A. The Vision of the River of Life (vv. 1–7)



- The First Frame (v. 1)
- The Second Frame (v. 2).
- The Third Frame (vv. 3–5).
- The Fourth Frame (vv. 6–7).

B. The Interpretation of the River of Life (47:8–12)

- The Fifth Frame (v. 8a, b α)
- The Sixth Frame (vv. 8b β –10)
- The Seventh Frame (v. 11)
- The Eighth Frame (v. 12)

C. Reflections on the Vision of the River of Life from the Sanctuary

1. Apart from YHWH's direct inspiration of the prophet, from where did notions like these come to the sixth-century prophet in Babylon?

- Gen 2:10–14
- Psalm 46:4[5]; 36:8–9[9–10]
- Joel 3:17–18 [4:17–18]

2. How did Ezekiel's images inspire later biblical prophets and preachers?

- Zech 14:5b–11
- 3rd–2nd century BC Letter of Aristeas
- John 7:38
- John 21:11 ' + g + l + y + m = 'Eglayim
70 + 3 + 30 + 10 + 40 = 153
- Rev 22:1–3
- Bishop Theodoret of Antioch (A. D. 393–458)
- Jerome (A.D. 345–419)
- William Greenhill (17th-century Puritan)
- Robert W. Jensen (21st-century evangelical Protestant)
- Charles L. Feinberg

Responses:

- a. The prophecy of the life-giving river came to Ezekiel in visionary form, as part of the large revelation encompassing chapters 40–48.
 - b. Virtually every detail of the vision is unrealistic and caricatured.
- 3. What life-lessons do we learn from Ezekiel 47:1–12?**
- a. The prerequisite to renewal of the environment is the restoration of people's relationship with God.
 - b. Conversely, the renewal of the environment represents the natural and logical concomitant of spiritual renewal.
 - c. The renewal of God's people is from start to finish, a miraculous work of divine grace.
 - d. YHWH's concern for his holiness is matched by his desire to bless his people.