

Restoration and Humanity

Turn with me to **Ezekiel 47**... The prophet Ezekiel saw (in a vision) a river flowing from the door of the temple passed the altar through the wall south of the east Gate, and down to the Dead Sea. Then the waters of the sea were **healed** and fish were abounding in it. Water always symbolised “life” because in OT times the barren desert areas needed water for life to be possible.

The divine stream which Ezekiel sees is making its way toward the dry regions of Arabah, and as it goes, it gets deeper and deeper – bringing life, health and abundant fruit to whatever it touches. This is one remedy that’s truly needed for mankind today. Jesus Himself took the same illustration as a basis for his discussion with the woman at the well (John 4:7-15). The river *bringing life wherever it flows*, is a vivid picture of the life-giving ministry of the Holy Spirit. If you are **filled** with the Holy Spirit, then the same river of life should be flowing out of you and touching the lives of others.

During restoration, and while God’s people are being continually led by the Holy Spirit, this **stream** (a striking figure of blessing), will flow freely out of the church. And as God’s presence accelerates (in and through His people), an ever increasing stream of divine benefits will flood into the barren lives of humanity.

Ezekiel 47:1. Ezekiel is **brought back** to the **door** of the temple.

All of us must be willing to be *brought back* to the **door** (Jesus), and step into the **river of life** (the Holy Spirit), as He flows out from under the threshold.

Ezekiel 47:2, “Then **He brought me** out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looks eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.” Ezekiel was taken out of the outer court via the north gate – which speaks of ‘tests’ and ‘battles’. Many of you are probably thinking, “*I’ve never had challenges like this before. It used to be ‘plain sailing’ until God brought me to the Threshold.*” But notice, this ‘son of man’ was then taken to the gate on the east side where the waters were flowing freely into the world. The only way out for you is through the ‘gate of ministry’.

Ezekiel 47:3, “And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and **He brought me** through the waters; and the waters were to my **ankles**.” In OT symbolism ‘1000’ speaks of the **Glory** of the Lord – seen whenever He manifests His presence. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 declares that as we allow the Holy Spirit (in us) to take control, He will then *change us from **glory to glory** into His Image*. Like Ezekiel - a 1000 cubits at a time!

In times of restoration the *water of life* starts by touching the *ankles*. Note, your new-found ‘walk’ is immersed in divine water, and the progress you make is pleasing to God. Step by step, His glory will be revealed to you in an ever-increasing measure. So don’t stop walking!

Ezekiel 47:4, “Again He measured a thousand, and **brought me** through the waters; the waters were to my **knees**.” Specific points of progress and maturing are being laid out for you by the Lord. The mere fact that He measures your course again shows that He is interested in your progress. Therefore, be thankful for what He has done and get familiar with His divine presence (His glory). This is how you will mature. It’s now impossible to keep dry! Walking in these waters up to your knees speaks of submission and also relationship

via prayer. This 'knee-drill' is essential to receiving the strength needed to walk into the torrent of the Holy Spirit. But remember, deeper is slower!

"Again he measured a thousand, and **brought me** through; the waters were to the **waist**." If you thought that it was tough walking through water to the knees, it is now even harder with water that comes up to your waist. The 'waist' speaks of 'reproduction'. Those who are waist high in the strong current will find that they are beginning to reproduce the Life of Christ in others. Progress may be slower but it's also more fruitful. So, it's now time to **let go and let God!** Let go of whatever you are clinging to and start to swim - but 'don't swim with one foot on the bottom.

Ezekiel 47:5, "Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to **swim** in, a river that could not be passed over." Swimming on your own means that your natural thinking is now '**out of its depth**'. Your feet are away from the security of land, and you are being upheld by the "living waters" that have increased to become a **river of life**.

At this point you cannot cross the river by simply walking and staying in touch with the 'natural realm'. Therefore, you must fully surrender to His leading - to the supernatural! The divine waters surrounding you are forcing you to swim. Any apprehension is quickly dissolved. You are submersed in a Holy substance, and anything is possible. What's more, you are experiencing a liberty (a free flow) that you've never had before. As you swim, the current of this river takes you only where it flows. This is called 'entering into His rest.' A place where there's no stress, striving or effort. In such a strong current, you are given up to His will. Your will ceases to have any power, but it feels really good!

Ezekiel 47:6, "And he said to me, son of man, have you seen this? Then **he brought me** and caused me to return to the brink of the river." Again we are taken to the next aspect of this 'maturing through Glory', and there is a completely new setting revealed to us. The vantage point is higher. Before, you were in the river but now you have been brought to its bank — this is higher ground. Here you see clearly and understand that 'self-effort' will produce nothing in God's great plan.

Notice, the deeper you walk with Christ (God's Glory), the bigger everything is. More testimony, wider horizons and more overwhelming challenges.

Ezekiel 47:7, "Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many **trees** on the one side and on the other." It takes time for trees to grow, so this shows that others have been on this path before you. Just as they have been established, so will you! There are many trees on both of its banks, confirming that restoration and reconciliation has taken place in the river of life.

Ezekiel 47:8, "Then He said to me, These waters flow out toward the east **country**, they go down into the **valley**, and enter the **sea**. When the river reaches the sea, its waters shall be **healed**." The purpose of this river was first to deal with those who are called to be a part of **the corporate** temple in this hour. But then they must be restored (healed) in order to meet the needs of the world.

These waters are perfect expressions of God's heart. for they are meant to reach the **desert**. The desert is a very dry place where no life grows. There are many lives 'out there' which have no spiritual life at all. The Sea referred to here is so salty it has no life in it, and so it needs healing. Therefore, the *living waters* that

make up this river are the only guarantee that the ‘**sea of humanity**’ will be healed and brought into the kingdom.

Ezekiel 47:9, “And it shall come to pass, that **every thing that lives**, which moves, wherever the rivers shall come, **shall live**: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there: for they shall be healed; and **every thing** will live.”

Wherever the river goes, there will be **abundant life**! Oh how we long to see the healing power of God (in miracles) released to the needy! This is a scene of miraculous **restoration** and **new life**, and it is all caused by the rivers of life flowing to mankind.

Ezekiel 47:10, “And it shall come to pass, that the **fishermen** will stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; there shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea (The Mediterranean Sea), exceeding many.” The waters are healed and abundant life can again come to those dead regions.

Ezekiel 47:11, “But its swamps and **marshes** will not be healed; they shall be given over to salt.” Even with such a mighty display of God’s **restoration power**, there will still be some who will not flow with what’s happening. Marshes are stagnant or unmoving waters. Those who acknowledge that they are dry, but desire change, will fare better than those who are like a motionless swamp. The word for ‘marsh’ also means *pool* or *cistern* where the water just ‘sits’!

Ezekiel 47:12 “And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all kinds of trees for **food**, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit every month, because their water flows out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for food (meat), and their leaves used for **medicine**.” *We are the trees planted by the Lord, and our leaves shall not wither*. So our fruit is inexhaustible! What’s more, every ailment can be healed by its Divine qualities.

To recap:

There is, [1] the river that flows out of one’s *innermost being* (John 7:38); [2] the river pouring out of the corporate temple of God (Ezekiel 47), and [3] there is the river gushing out from the throne of God (Revelation 22). Notice the progressive pattern; from individual **filling** by the Holy Spirit; to the corporate Church pouring forth life; to the highest expression of that life.

All three Rivers must increase in depth and strength as God restores His Bride to Her intended glory and majesty. And these rivers should flow from both inside the temple (you and me) and outside the temple (from the church). **So are you ready to get wet?**