

THE RIVER OF LIVING WATERS

BIBLE TEXT : Ezekiel 47:1-12; Revelation 22:1-5.

LESSON 409 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Ezekiel 47:1-12

1 Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house *stood toward* the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south *side* of the altar.

2 Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

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; the waters *were* to the ankles.

4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters *were* to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters *were* to the loins.

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.

6 And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen *this*? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

7 Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river

Bible References:

I Israel's Failure to Respond to the Call of God

1. They forsook God, the Fountain of Living Waters,

Jeremiah 2:12

12 Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 2:13

13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

2. They substituted cisterns,

Jeremiah 2:13

13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Jeremiah 2:26-28

26 As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets,

27 Saying to a stock, Thou *art* my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned *their* back unto me, and not *their* face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.

28 But where *are* thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for *according to* the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.

3. The results — their city was destroyed and Temple burned,

2 Chronicles 36:19

19 And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

II God's Plan for a Future City During the Millennium

1. Ezekiel sees a vision of a city,

Ezekiel 40:2

2 In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which *was* as the frame of a city on the south.

2. The Temple is described, Ezekiel 41-46.

3. Living Waters bring life and healing, Ezekiel 47:1-12.

III The Living Waters of the Gospel

1. Salvation is likened to "a well of water,"

John 4:14

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Isaiah 12:3

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

2. Sanctification cleanses from all sin,

1 John 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Ephesians 5:25-27

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the

were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

8 Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: *which being* brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

9 And it shall come to pass, *that* every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

10 And it shall come to pass, *that* the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a *place* to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

11 But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

12 And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

Revelation 22:1-5

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more

church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

3. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is likened to "rivers of living water,"

John 7:38-39

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Isaiah 44:3

3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

Isaiah 44:4

4 And they shall spring up *as* among the grass, as willows by the water courses.

4. Healing is provided in the Atonement,

Isaiah 53:5

5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Matthew 8:16

16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:

Matthew 8:17

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

IV The New Heavens and New Earth After the Millennium

1. John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, Revelation 21:1, 2.
2. The Living Waters were still flowing from the Throne of God, Revelation 22:1-5.

Notes:

The Temple

"In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city" (Ezekiel 40:2). "Declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel" were the instructions Ezekiel received. This was at a time when Jerusalem lay in ruins and the Temple of God had been burned with fire. God's people Israel were scattered in foreign lands among strangers.

God in His love must have given this message and vision to inspire hope in the hearts of His people in a day when there would be a rebuilding of the city and of the Temple of God. There was a restoration of the city, and another Temple built under Ezra and Nehemiah, but this Temple that Ezekiel saw was different from that Temple. It was also different from Herod's Temple; in fact, to this day no temple like it has ever been built. It should encourage the Jews even of our day with hope that even yet the Temple of Ezekiel's vision shall be built.

The Living Waters

After the vision of the Temple, God let Ezekiel see a pure stream of water flowing out from under the threshold. "These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, withersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be

curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh" (Ezekiel 47:8, 9).

The Gospel

Living waters! Healing waters! What a marvellous type of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Flowing forth from the Son of God by virtue of Calvary, the Gospel brings healing and salvation wherever it goes. Into lands made barren by sin, life and salvation have followed the preaching of the Gospel. Souls that were dead because of sin have felt the flow, and life has returned. Bodies weakened because of disease have been instantly restored through the power of the Gospel. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

How marvellous it is to think of a thief on a cross repenting of his sin and finding a place in paradise! A chief among the publicans willing to restore fourfold any ill-gotten gains! And a woman taken in adultery hearing the words, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). These Living Waters of the Gospel have continued to flow from the days of the Apostle until the present time. Men and women today are feeling that transforming power of the Gospel. Thieves, drunkards, adulterers, as well as moral men, are finding forgiveness and life by coming to Christ.

Healing

Healing, too, is found in the Gospel through the Atonement on Calvary. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Proof of healing in the Atonement is further attested to in Matthew 8:16, 17: "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

That life-giving Stream is still flowing and miracles of healing are constantly being wrought and testified to by God's people. All manner of disease have been healed in our day through prayer; many times cases that baffled physicians have found instant deliverance through Christ.

Broken Cisterns

"Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:12, 13). Just as Israel forsook the Lord and turned to idols, so people today have forsaken the Living Waters and have turned to their own material devices in the hope of satisfying their souls. The Gospel is a living Stream that brings peace and satisfaction to those who seek salvation. Yet amid the turmoil and strife of today's so-called civilisation, very few are turning to God. They have hewed themselves out broken cisterns that hold no water.

Millions are turning to liquor and tranquillisers to drown their sorrows instead of seeking the Comforter who is able to give them true relief. Others are seeking in other sins to find pleasure, not heeding the promise, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). Many there are who turn to riches, not knowing that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). Truly broken cisterns have all those who do not seek "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

The Vastness of the Living Waters

The Living Streams of the Gospel are deep and wide, just as the river, which Ezekiel saw. A thousand cubits -- 1,500 feet -- brought the prophet only ankle deep, but as he followed on, the waters deepened to the knees, to the loins, to waters to swim in, a great river which could not be passed over. Just so is the Gospel of Jesus Christ: as one goes forward, he sees more and more the depths, the vastness, the greatness of its flow.

Some people venture into the waters and receive salvation, but fail to look beyond and see the beauties of holiness. If they would follow the man with the measuring line out another thousand cubits, what blessings they would receive! "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). And why should one hesitate to follow on to the place where "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: . . .)" (John 7:38, 39). That Stream has never been crossed over; its depths are not known; and it is still flowing for those who will cut shore lines, and by faith venture forth into the fullness of God. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

The Future Realities

Just as Ezekiel saw a stream flowing from the Temple in Jerusalem, so John the Beloved saw "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Revelation 22:1). There was no more curse, and God dwelt among His people. Though the Gospel thrills and satisfies the soul, yet the Christian's hope reaches beyond this sin-cursed earth to the day when faith shall become a reality.

We know that Jerusalem will be the capital of the world during the Millennium when Christ reigns upon this earth. No doubt the Temple, which Ezekiel saw will be built, and the river of living waters will flow forth to give life to the present Dead Sea. What a glorious hope the overcoming Christian has of living and reigning with Christ for a thousand years upon this earth and then forever to be with the Lord in a new Heaven and a new earth! That Living Stream will continue to flow from the Throne of God and of the Lamb. On either side will be the Tree of life, which yields her fruit every month. "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). Truly great are the rewards for those who will press their way into the Kingdom of God!

QUESTIONS

1. What is the length of a cubit?
2. What is the minimum width possibility of this river Ezekiel saw?
3. What is the river typical of?
4. What effect did the river have wherever it ran?
5. Compare this scene given by Ezekiel with the vision of John in this lesson.
6. When will the vision of Ezekiel be fulfilled? Of John?
7. How many kinds of fruit are borne by the Tree of Life?
8. How often does the Tree of Life yield fruit?
9. For what are the leaves of the tree?
10. Name some of the changes in the new earth.