
EZEKIEL 47: 1 He brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward; (for the forefront of the house was toward the east;) and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, on the south of the altar.

The vision of the holy waters issuing out of the temple, and their virtue; an emblem of the power of God's grace under the Gospel, capable of healing all but the incorrigibly impenitent, represented by the marshy ground that cannot be healed, Eze 47:1-12. Also a description of the several divisions of the Holy Land indiscriminately shared betwixt Jews and proselytes; to denote that in after times the privileges now enjoyed by the Jews should be also extended to the Gentiles, Eze 47:13-23.

Verse 1

Behold, waters issued out from under the threshold - Ezekiel, after having made the whole compass of the court of the people, is brought back by the north gate into the courts of the priests; and, having reached the gate of the temple, he saw waters which had their spring under the threshold of that gate, that looked towards the east; and which passing to the south of the altar of burnt-offerings on the right of the temple, ran from the west to the east, that they might fall into the brook Kidron, and thence be carried into the Dead Sea. Literally, no such waters were ever in the temple; and because there were none, Solomon had what is called the brazen sea made, which held water for the use of the temple. It is true that the water which supplied this sea might have been brought by pipes to the place: but a fountain producing abundance of water was not there, and could not be there, on the top of such a hill; and consequently these waters, as well as those spoken of in Joe 3:18, and in Zac 14:8, are to be understood spiritually or typically; and indeed the whole complexion of the place here shows, that they are thus to be understood. Taken in this view, I shall proceed to apply the whole of this vision to the effusion of light and salvation by the outpouring of the Spirit of God under the Gospel dispensation, by which the knowledge of the true God was multiplied in the earth; and have only one previous remark to make, that the farther the waters flowed from the temple, the deeper they grew.

With respect to the phraseology of this chapter, it may be said that St. John had it particularly in view while he wrote his celebrated description of the paradise of God, Revelation 22. The prophet may therefore be referring to the same thing which the apostle describes, viz., the grace of the Gospel, and its effects in the world.

EZEKIEL 47: 2 Then he brought me out by the way of the gate northward, and led me round by the way outside to the outer gate, by the way of the gate that looks toward the east; and behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

Verse 2

There ran out waters - מַיִם מִפְּכִים mayim mephaccim, the waters seem to have been at first in small quantity; for the words imply that they oozed or dropped out. They were at first so small that they came guttatim, drop by drop; but they increased so, that they became a river in which one could swim.

EZEKIEL 47: 3 When the man went out eastward with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he caused me to pass through the waters, waters that were to the ankles.

Verse 3

He measured a thousand cubits - the waters were to the Ankles; a thousand more, - the waters were to the Knees; a thousand more, - they became a River that could not be forded. The waters were risen, and they were waters to Swim in.

I. This may be applied to the gradual discoveries of the plan of salvation, -

1. In the patriarchal ages.
2. In the giving of the law.
3. In the ministry of John the Baptist. And,
4. In the full manifestation of Christ by the communication of the Holy Ghost.

II. This vision may be applied also to the growth of a believer in the grace and knowledge of God. There is -

1. The seed of the kingdom.
2. The blade from that seed.
3. The ear out of that blade. And,
4. The full corn in that ear.

III. It may be applied to the discoveries a penitent believer receives of the mercy of God in his salvation. He is -

1. A little child, born of God, born from above, and begins to taste the bread of life, and live on the heavenly food.
2. He grows up and increases in stature and strength, and becomes a young man.
3. He becomes matured in the Divine life, and has his spiritual senses exercised so as to become a father in Christ. In other words, the grace of God appears to come drop by drop; it is given as it can be used; it is a seed of light, and multiplies itself. The penitent at first can scarcely believe the infinite goodness of his Maker; he however ventures to follow on with the conducting angel, the minister of the Gospel, in his descriptions of the plenitude of that salvation, provided in that living Temple in which alone the well-spring of life is to be found.
4. In thus following on to know the Lord he finds a continual increase of light and life, till at last he is carried by the streams of grace to the ocean of eternal mercy; then "Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea, And lost in his immensity."

IV. These waters may be considered as a type of the progress which Christianity shall make in the world.

1. There were only a few poor fishermen.

2. Afterwards many Jews.
3. Then the Gentiles of Asia Minor and Greece.
4. The continent and isles of Europe. And,
5. Now spreading through Africa, Asia, and America, at present these waters are no longer a river, but an immense sea; and the Gospel fishers are daily bringing multitudes of souls to Christ.

EZEKIEL 47: 4 Again he measured one thousand, and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that were to the knees. Again he measured one thousand, and caused me to pass through waters that were to the waist.

EZEKIEL 47: 5 Afterward he measured one thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass through; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through.

EZEKIEL 47: 6 He said to me, Son of man, have you seen? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the bank of the river.

EZEKIEL 47: 7 Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

EZEKIEL 47: 8 Then he said to me, These waters flow out toward the eastern region, and will go down into the Arabah; and they will go toward the sea; and flow into the sea which will be made to flow out; and the waters will be healed.

EZEKIEL 47: 9 It shall happen, that every living creature which swarms, in every place where the rivers come, shall live; and there shall be a very great multitude of fish; for these waters have come there, and the waters of the sea shall be healed, and everything shall live wherever the river comes.

Verse 9

Every thing - whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live - Life and salvation shall continually accompany the preaching of the Gospel; the death of sin being removed, the life of righteousness shall be brought in.

There shall be a very great multitude of fish - On the above plan this must refer to genuine converts to the Christian faith; true believers, who have got life and salvation by the streams of God's grace. The apostles were fishers of men; converts were the fish caught. See below. As the waters flow into the Dead Sea, where no fish, it is said, can live, its waters must be healed, that is, made capable of preserving life; and so its nature be thus far most surprisingly altered.

EZEKIEL 47: 10 It shall happen, that fishermen shall stand by it: from En Gedi even to En Eglaim shall be a place for the spreading of nets; their fish shall be after their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

Verse 10

The fishers shall stand upon it - On the above plan of interpretation these must mean -

1. The apostles of our Lord Jesus.
2. The preachers of the everlasting Gospel. See Mat 4:19.

From En-gedi - At the southern extremity of the Dead Sea.

Unto En-eglaim - At the northern extremity of the same.

Their fish shall be according to their kinds - Every kind of fish, and the fish all excellent of their kinds. All nations, and kindreds, and people shall be called by the Gospel; it shall not be an excluding system like that of Judaism, for its Author tasted death for every man.

EZEKIEL 47: 11 But the miry places of it, and its marshes, shall not be healed; they shall be given up to salt.

Verse 11

The miry places - "Point out," says Calmet, "the schismatics and heretics who do not live by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, but separate from his Church; and the evil Christians who dishonor that Church, of which they are corrupt members." A description applicable to the Roman Catholic Church, that is both schismatic and heretic from the Church of Jesus Christ, which is built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; for the Church of Rome, leaving this foundation, is now built on the foundation of councils and traditions, and lying miracles; the popes in their succession being its only corner stones.

EZEKIEL 47: 12 By the river on its bank, on this side and on that side, shall grow every tree for food, whose leaf shall not wither, neither shall its fruit fail: it shall produce new fruit every month, because its waters issue out of the sanctuary; and its fruit shall be for food, and its leaf for healing.

Verse 12

Shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade - A description that suits the righteous, who are still producing -

1. The fruits of faith.
2. The fruits of the Spirit.
3. The fruits of love to God, obedience to his holy will, and love to all men. Benevolence, mercy, charity, kindness, etc.

The leaf thereof for medicine - See Rev 22:1-5. Even the leaves, the holy profession of the righteous, is a spiritual medicine. Righteousness is thus encouraged in the world. The profession points out the salvation, as it shows the nature and sufficiency of that salvation; for a just creed contains all the articles of the Christian faith.

EZEKIEL 47: 13 Thus says the Lord GOD: This shall be the border, by which you shall divide the land for inheritance according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions.

Verse 13

Joseph shall have two portions - That is, In Ephraim and Manasseh, his two sons, who each had a separate inheritance.

EZEKIEL 47: 14 You shall inherit it, one as well as another; for I swore to give it to your fathers: and this land shall fall to you for inheritance.

EZEKIEL 47: 15 This shall be the border of the land: On the north side, from the great sea, by the way of Hethlon, to the entrance of Zedad;

Verse 15

The way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad - Probably Hethlon is the same as Cuthlon, a city of Syria, between Antioch and Laodicea, according to Antoninus. Some of these places are not known; but see the same kind of division, Num 34:7-12.

EZEKIEL 47: 16 Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazer Hatticon, which is by the border of Hauran.

Verse 16

Hamath - Emesa or Amesa, in Syria. - Calmet.

Berothah - Berytus, now Baruth or Beeroth, which David took from Hadarezer, king of Syria, 2Sam 8:8; but these things are very uncertain.

Sibraim - Sabarim or Sepharvaim, according to the Syriac, between Hamath and Damascus.

Hazar-hatticon - The middle Hazar; or middle village, as the margin.

Hauran - The city Aurana, and the district Auranitis, are in the north-east limit of the Holy Land.

EZEKIEL 47: 17 The border from the sea, shall be Hazar Enon at the border of Damascus; and on the north northward is the border of Hamath. This is the north side.

Verse 17

The border from the sea - The north border eastward is ascertained Eze 47:15, Eze 47:16; here it is shown how far it extends itself northward.

Hazar-enan - The village of Enan, Num 34:9, placed to the north of Caesarea Philippi. Ziphron, see Num 34:9, called Zaphion by the Syriac.

EZEKIEL 47: 18 The east side, between Hauran and Damascus and Gilead, and the land of Israel, shall be the Jordan; from the north border to the east sea you shall measure. This is the east side.

Verse 18

The east sea - The same as the Dead Sea.

EZEKIEL 47: 19 The south side southward shall be from Tamar as far as the waters of Meriboth Kadesh, to the brook, to the great sea. This is the south side southward.

Verse 19

Tamar - Called Hazazon Tamar, or Engedi, 2Chr 20:2.

The river - Besor, which runs into the sea near Gaza.

EZEKIEL 47: 20 The west side shall be the great sea, from the south border as far as over against the entrance of Hamath. This is the west side.

Verse 20

The great sea - The Mediterranean.

From the border - The southern border, mentioned Eze 47:19.

EZEKIEL 47: 21 So you shall divide this land to you according to the tribes of Israel.

EZEKIEL 47: 22 It shall happen, that you shall divide it by lot for an inheritance to you and to the aliens who live among you, who shall father children among you; and they shall be to you as the native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.

Verse 22

And to the strangers that sojourn - In former divisions of the land, no place was given to strangers; but in this division, (which seems to have no other reference than to the Gospel, for literally such a division never took place), the strangers are to have an inheritance; intimating the calling of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ, to an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Glory be to God for his unspeakable gift! Amen. Amen.

EZEKIEL 47: 23 It shall happen, that in what tribe the stranger lives, there you shall give him his inheritance, says the Lord GOD.
