

CHAPTER 47

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 47

This chapter gives an account of the vision of the holy waters, and of the borders of the holy land, and the division of it to Israelites and strangers. The waters are described by the original and spring of them, (^{<3570>}Ezekiel 47:1,2), by the progress and increase of them, (^{<3573>}Ezekiel 47:3-5), by the healing and quickening nature of them, and the places where they were so, and were not, (^{<3578>}Ezekiel 47:8-11), and by the trees which grew upon the banks of them, (^{<3576>}Ezekiel 47:6,7,12). The borders of the holy land are fixed, (^{<3573>}Ezekiel 47:13,14), the northern border, (^{<3575>}Ezekiel 47:15-17), the eastern border, (^{<3578>}Ezekiel 47:18), the southern, (^{<3579>}Ezekiel 47:19), and the western, (^{<3571>}Ezekiel 47:20), which is to be divided by lot to the tribes of Israel, and the strangers that sojourn among them, (^{<3572>}Ezekiel 47:21-23).

Ver. 1. *Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house, &c.]* The door of the temple, even of the holy of holies; hither the prophet is said to be brought again, or “brought back”^{f840}; for he was last in the corners of the outward court, viewing the kitchens or boiling places of the ministers; but now he was brought back into the inner court, and to the door that led into the holiest of all:

and, behold! for it was matter of admiration, as well as of observation and attention:

waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward; this is a new thing, to which there was nothing like it, either in the first or second temple. Ariateas^{f841} indeed relates what he himself saw,

“a never failing conflux of water, as of a large fountain, naturally flowing underneath, and wonderful receptacles under ground; to each of which were leaden pipes, through which the waters came in on every side, for about half a mile about the temple, and washed away the blood of the sacrifices;”

and so the Talmudists^{f842} say, there was an aqueduct from the fountain of Etam, and pipes laid from thence to supply the temple with water, for the washing and boiling of the sacrifices, and keeping the temple clean: but these waters are quite different; they are such as came out of the temple, and not what were carried by pipes into it; nor were they a common sewer to carry off the filth of it, but formed a delightful and useful river. The fountain of them is not declared, only where they were first seen to issue out,

under the threshold of the house eastward; the threshold of the door of the most holy place; so that they seem to take their rise from the holy of holies, the seat of the divine Majesty, and throne of God, with which agrees (~~421~~ Revelation 22:1), and so the Talmudists^{f843} say, that this fountain came first from the house of the holy of holies, under the threshold of the door of it, which looked to the east:

for the fore front of the house stood toward the east; the holy of holies was at the west end of the temple; but the front of it, and so the door into it, was to the east, and from hence these waters flowed:

and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house; they are said to “come down”, because the temple was high built upon the top of a mountain; and “from under”, that is, the threshold of the door of it; or rather in subterraneous passages, till they appeared from under that; and this was “on the right side of the house”; that is, on the south side: for, suppose a man standing with his face to the east, as the prophet did, when he turned himself to see which way the waters flowed, having his face to the west when he first saw them come out; the south then must be on his right hand, and so it follows:

at the south side of the altar; of the altar of burnt offerings, which stood before the house.

Ver. 2. *Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, &c.]* Out of the inward court where he was, by the way of the north gate, the eastern gate being shut:

and led me about the way without unto the utter gate, by the way that looketh eastward; and from thence he had him round to the outward eastern gate, where he was at first, (~~310~~ Ezekiel 40:6), to meet the flow of waters that came through the inward and outward courts eastward:

and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side; that is, on the south side of the gate, in a small quantity, and in a very still and easy way, like water out of the mouth of a vial, as the word^{f844} signifies. So Bartenora^{f845}, who understands this gate of the water gate, interprets the right side of the south; and observes, that the prophet first saw the waters come out very small, like the horns of a locust; but when they came to this gate, they became like water as it flows out of the mouth of a small pitcher: and from this whole account of the waters, it is plain they cannot be understood literally, but figuratively; and which confirm this to be the sense of the whole vision. They may be applied unto, and serve to illustrate, the love of God; the secret spring of which is in the heart and will of God; ran underground from all eternity; channelled in Christ; broke up and issued forth in the mission of him into the world, under the threshold of him, the door of the church; and in and by him, the altar, sacrifice, and propitiation; wherein the love of God in an especial manner is manifested; and which has its heights and depths, immeasurable and unfathomable, (~~4018~~ Ephesians 3:18,19 ~~3940~~ Psalm 46:4 ~~6211~~ Revelation 22:1), these waters also may be applied to the grace of the Spirit of God in regeneration and conversion; which is compared to water, for its cleansing, fructifying, and refreshing nature; to “waters”, for the abundance of it; and this flows from the God of all grace through Christ, and out of his fulness is gradually increased, and becomes a well, yea, rivers of living water, (~~4075~~ John 7:37-39), but it seems best to understand them of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; which, like water, cools those who are inflamed with the heat of the fiery law; extinguishes the thirst of sensible sinners, and refreshes them; cleanses and purifies their souls, which is instrumentally done with the washing of water by the word; and makes them fruitful and flourishing: this is not of men, but God; comes from heaven, the holy of holies; and out of the house and church of God; from Zion and Jerusalem, by Christ the door, and points to him the way; and is chiefly concerning him, the altar, his sacrifice and satisfaction, peace, atonement, and propitiation by him; (see ~~2118~~ Isaiah 2:3 ~~2918~~ Joel 3:18 ~~3848~~ Zechariah 14:8).

Ver. 3. *And when the man that had the line in his hand, &c.]* The same as in (~~2308~~ Ezekiel 40:3) and is no other than Christ, who appeared in a human form to the prophet; and who hitherto had only made use of the measuring reed in taking the dimensions of the house, and what appertained to it; but now he uses the line of flax he had in his hand, in measuring the waters as they ran; by which line is meant the Scriptures, the word of God, by which

all doctrines are to be measured: this is the rule that both preachers and hearers are to go by; and, as by the direction of this person the waters flowed where he would have them, so the doctrines of the Gospel are preached by the order of Christ where he pleases; (see ^{<1247>}Luke 24:47 ^{<4136>}Acts 13:46,46 16:6,7,10), and these move in a direct line, as those waters did; error is crooked, and has its windings and turnings; but truth is straight and even; all the words of Wisdom are right, and there is nothing froward, perverse, or crooked in them, (^{<2108>}Proverbs 8:8,9):

went forth eastward; which was the course the waters took by his direction; the Gospel was first spread in the eastern part of the world, in Asia, where many churches were planted by it; it has been since in the south, in Africa, particularly in the times of Austin, when these waters, the doctrines of grace, flowed largely; and they have been since in the north and west, in Europe, in our northern climes; all which perhaps may be signified by the right side, or south side, by which these waters flowed, and by the prophet's going to the north gate, and about, to see them; but in the latter day they will move eastward again, when the kings of the east and their kingdoms shall become Christ's; (see ^{<6162>}Revelation 16:12 ^{<3448>}Zechariah 14:8):

he measured a thousand cubits; or, “a thousand by the cubit^{f846}”; the Targum is,

“a thousand cubits by the cubit;”

with his line from the eastern gate of the house, at the right side of which the waters ran out; this was about half a mile:

and he brought me through the waters: not the thousand cubits he had measured; but when he came to the end of them, he made the prophet to cross the waters, to go through them across, that he might observe the depth of them:

and the waters were to the ankles; were ankle deep, a few inches: or, “to the soles”; for, as R. Jonah thinks, **a** may be additional; and **sp**, in the Syriac language, signifies a part of the hand, (^{<2115>}Daniel 5:5), and, applied to the feet, designs the soles of them; and then the sense is, the waters were so shallow, that they only covered the soles of the feet: this may signify the ministry of John the Baptist, who, though greater than the prophets, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he; and of the disciples of

Christ, before the effusion of the Spirit: or may design the more easy doctrines of the Gospel; those waters which Christ's lambs may wade in; that milk which new born babes desire, and are fed with; those plain truths of the word, which those of the weakest capacity are able to take in, receive, and embrace; in the knowledge of which, though fools, they err not; such as salvation by Christ alone; justification by his righteousness; peace and pardon by his blood; which are so plain, as to be understood by every truly gracious soul, though of ever so mean a capacity: or it may intimate the small spread of the Gospel at first in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee.

Ver. 4. *And again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees, &c.*] The man with his line measured another thousand cubits straight on from the first; and then bid the prophet cross and ford them again, and then they were knee deep:

again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins; a third time he measured a thousand cubits still onward, and ordered the prophet to wade through them, when they were risen so high as to reach his loins. The waters to the knees and loins may signify the greater knowledge of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it, the apostles had after the Spirit was poured forth; and the greater spread of it in the world, among Jews and Gentiles: or else may design those doctrines of the Gospel, and mysteries of grace, which are more sublime, and more difficult to understand; which require some pains to search into, and get the knowledge of; as concerning predestination, election, the covenant of grace, and the eternal transactions between the Father and the Son, &c. which are meat for strong men, who have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil.

Ver. 5. *Afterward he measured a thousand, &c.*] A fourth time a thousand cubits. Some think these four measurings respect the preaching of the Gospel in the four parts of the world; but rather they refer to four remarkable seasons of the ministry of it; as in the times of John the Baptist, and the disciples of Christ before his death; in the primitive churches of the three first centuries; at the time of the Reformation; and in the latter day glory, which is the fourth and last measuring:

and it was a river that I could not pass over; the prophet could not set his foot on the bottom, and wade through it, and cross over it, as he had done before:

for the waters were risen, waters to swim in; not to walk in:

a river that could not be passed over; by any man, on his feet; only by swimming, and perhaps not by that, at least not without difficulty: this may signify the large spread of the Gospel in the latter day, when the earth shall be filled with it, as the waters cover the sea; and the great light into it, and knowledge of it, that men shall then have, (²³¹⁰Isaiah 11:9 30:26), and yet that there are some doctrines exceeding deep, out of the reach and penetration of men, called the deep things of God, which human reason cannot attain, and where it cannot fix its foot, (⁴⁰¹⁰1 Corinthians 2:9,10,14), and which are only to be reached and embraced in the swimming arms of faith; and, though believed, cannot be accounted for, as to the modus of them, and are not to be dived into; such as the trinity of Persons in the Godhead, and the distinct manner of their subsisting in it; the generation of the Son; the procession of the Spirit; the incarnation of Christ; the union of the two natures in his person; the resurrection of the dead, &c.

Ver. 6. *And he said unto me, son of man, hast thou seen this?* &c]. That is, the man that measured the waters said to the prophet, hast thou carefully observed all this from whence the waters flowed? from what small beginnings they rose, and gradually increased? how they first issued forth, as out of a vial; and now, in the space of about two or three miles, are become a deep river, and impassable? it is right and profitable to observe the rise and progress of the Gospel; what a spread it has had in the world, and what it will have:

then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river; there to stand and observe the nature of the waters, and the course of them; the multitude of fish in them; and the trees which grew upon the banks of them; of all which some account is given in the following verses.

Ver. 7. *Now when I had returned,* &c.] To the brink of the river:

behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side, and on the other; here was a new wonder observed, which had not been before; and therefore this note of admiration, “behold!” is prefixed; on a sudden sprung up trees on each side of the river, of a perfect stature, and full of fruit; which the prophet had not seen when he went along with the man on the bank of it, as he measured the waters; but now being returned, sees this wonderful sight; an emblem of true Christians, believers, and regenerate

persons, who are trees of righteousness, planted by the river of divine love; watered with the grace of God, and doctrines of the Gospel; whereby they become fruitful in good works, and are to be seen wherever the Gospel comes with power and efficacy; (see ^{<300B>}Psalm 1:3 ^{<260B>}Isaiah 61:8), or, “an exceeding large tree”^{f847}; so John saw but one tree, which was on each side of the river, which he calls the tree of life, (^{<620D>}Revelation 22:2), but here it seems to be put for many, as appears from (^{<367D>}Ezekiel 47:12).

Ver. 8. *Then said he unto me, &c.*] The man that measured the waters spoke to the prophet again, and showed him the course of the waters; the quickening and healing virtue of them, and the multitude of fish in them:

these waters issue out toward the east country; the Gospel was first preached in the eastern parts of the world; (see Gill on “^{<267B>}Ezekiel 47:3”), or “towards the first, or east Galilee”^{f848}; in Galilee Christ began to preach, and wrought his first miracle; here he called his disciples, and chiefly conversed; and here he had the greatest followers, and some of the first Christian churches were formed here after his ascension, (^{<404D>}Matthew 4:12,18,23 ^{<408B>}Acts 9:31):

and go down into the desert; or wilderness, the wilderness of the people, the Gentiles; to whom the Gospel was carried when rejected by the Jews, and who before were like a desert, but now became as a fruitful field, (^{<238B>}Isaiah 35:1,2 42:1,11). The Jews^{f849} interpret this of the plain, or the sea of Galilee or Tiberius, at which Christ called his disciples; near to this he delivered his discourses concerning himself, the bread of life, and eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; here he met with his disciples after his resurrection, and enjoined Peter to feed his sheep and lambs; (see ^{<408B>}Matthew 4:18 ^{<600B>}John 6:1 21:1,15):

and go into the sea; the Dead sea, or sea of Sodom, the lake Asphaltites, where nothing is said to live; an emblem of dead sinners; and may represent the worst of sinners, as the Sodomites were; and to such the Gospel was sent, and became effectual to salvation: or it may rather design the great ocean, and may signify the whole world, and all the nations of it, to which the Gospel, by the commission of Christ, was to be preached; (see ^{<270D>}Daniel 7:2 ^{<416B>}Mark 16:15). The Targum is,

“and go through the sea into the great sea;”

it may be rendered, “and go toward the west”^{f850}; the Mediterranean sea being to the west of Judea, it is often put for the west; and so the sense

may be, that these waters should flow east and west, as the living waters in (^{<394B>}Zechariah 14:8), the same with those, are said to do; and all the Jewish writers think there is such a division of the waters intended, and that they had two streams or rivers; which may receive some confirmation from the next verse, where the word for rivers is of the dual number, and signifies two rivers. The sense of the whole is, that the Gospel should be first preached in Judea and Galilee; then among the Gentiles throughout the Roman empire; and in the latter day especially throughout the world, when it shall be covered with it as the waters cover the sea, (^{<2310>}Isaiah 11:9):

which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed; that is, which waters of the river being directed and brought into, either the Dead sea, or the great ocean, the waters of the one, or of the other, were healed; and of bituminous and bitter waters were made clear, sweet, and wholesome; and signify the change made in sinful men by means of the Gospel, who are thereby quickened, made partakers of the grace of God, and have their sins pardoned, which is often meant by healing in Scripture, (^{<194D>}Psalms 103:2 ^{<304D>}Malachi 4:2), pardon of sin flows from the love and grace of God; is the great doctrine of the Gospel, and by which the Lord speaks peace and pardon, and communicates healing of all spiritual diseases to sinners sensible of them; (see ^{<1947D>}Psalms 107:20).

Ver. 9. *And it shall come to pass that everything that liveth, which moveth, &c.]* That is, every living man; everyone that lives naturally or corporeally, that lives, moves, and has his being in God, as all men have, (^{<417B>}Acts 17:28),

whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live; or, “the two rivers”^{f851}; the waters divided as before, east and west; not the two Testaments, Old and New; nor the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper; but the Gospel, which, wherever it shall come with power, and to whomsoever it so comes, they shall live spiritually; not to whomsoever it is preached, for to some it is not profitable; (see ^{<2671B>}Ezekiel 47:11), but is the savour of death unto death; but to all to whom it is accompanied by the Spirit of God it is the savour of life unto life; the Spirit that gives life, and is the means of it: indeed, the love of God is the river of water of life, (^{<620B>}Revelation 21:1), it is the spring of spiritual life to dead sinners, and what revives drooping saints, quickens their graces, faith, hope, and love; enlivens and cheers their spirits, and greatly influences true religion and godliness, and very much promotes the life and power of it: and so the grace of the Spirit

is living water, by which dead sinners are quickened; the work of grace in saints is revived, and which always continues and issues in eternal life, (^{<4040>}John 4:10,14), but the Gospel, and its doctrines, are rather intended; which are the means of quickening those who are dead in trespasses and sins; serve greatly to invigorate the graces of the Spirit in the hearts of God's people; to influence their lives and conversations; to support them under afflictions, and to nourish them up to everlasting life; and point out the way to eternal life, and give a true account of it.

And there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither; that is, a multitude of fish in the Dead sea, where none lived before, and owing to those waters coming thither: it signifies the great number of living Christians, true believers, who shall appear wherever the Gospel is truly, purely, and powerfully preached; of these see more in the next verse:

for they shall be healed; (See Gill on "^{<26708>}Ezekiel 47:8"):

and everything shall live whither the river cometh; not only shall live as before, but continue to live, shall never die; their graces shall not die, nor shall they themselves die the second death, but shall have eternal life; because of the purpose of God, who has ordained them to it; and the promise of God, who is faithful to it; and because of the security of their life in Christ, to whom they are united; and because of the indwelling of the Spirit of life in them. So the Targum,

“they shall remain in every place where the waters of the river come.”

Ver. 10. *And it shall come to pass*, &c.] In Gospel times: what follows had a fulfilment in the first times of the Gospel, and will have a greater in the latter times of it:

that the fishers shall stand upon it; upon the brink of the river, or the shore of the sea, whose waters will be healed by this river running into them. These “fishers” are the apostles of Christ, who, of fishermen, were made fishers of men by him; to whom he gave a call, and a commission, and gifts qualifying them to preach the Gospel; whereby they caught men, and brought them to Christ; and so were the instruments of saving them, even of great numbers, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world; of which some instances of their fishing, after their call to the ministry, were emblematical; (^{<4048>}Matthew 4:18,19 ^{<41704>}Luke 5:4-10 ^{<43208>}John 21:3-11), likewise all other

ministers of the Gospel are here meant, especially those that will be in the latter day; compared to fishers for the meanness and contemptibleness of their employment in the eyes of the world; for their labouriousness in it, and for their patient waiting for success therein; and for the bad weather, storms, and tempests, they are exposed unto, the reproach and persecution of men; and their being the happy means of drawing souls out of the abyss of sin and misery unto Christ, for life and salvation: and their “standing” upon the brink of the waters to catch fish may denote their constancy their work; their strict attachment to the doctrines of the Gospel, and their waiting for success in it.

From Engedi even unto Eneglaim; two places, which, according to Jerom, lay, the latter one at the entrance of the Dead sea, and the former at the end of it; but Reland^{f852} observes that this could not be, if Josephus is to be credited, who makes Engedi to be about forty miles from Jerusalem^{f853}; therefore could not be far from the beginning of the Dead sea, and not where it ended; since the Dead sea, or the lake of Asphaltites, was in length seventy three miles, and, consequently, Engedi must be more than seventy five or ninety miles from Jerusalem; but that it was at the beginning of it is still further manifest from the same writer making the lake to be just such a number of miles from Jerusalem^{f854} as he does Engedi; and whereas Engedi was on the western shore of the lake, as appears from Pliny^{f855}, it is probable there was another city on the eastern shore, opposite to it, called Eneglaim; and there was a city on that side, the name of which was Agallim, which, according to Eusebius, was eight miles from Areopolis: and so it may signify the extent of the Gospel ministry, which, in the latter day, will be from one end of the earth to the other; and which took a large circuit in the times of the apostles, and particularly by the Apostle Paul, (~~f859~~ Romans 15:19).

They shall be a place to spread forth nets; that is, the above said places shall be made use of for that purpose; which design the Gospel, and the ministry of it, compared to a net, for its meanness in the esteem of the world; and yet is a piece of curious artifice and wisdom, even the manifold wisdom of God, and is contrived for the gathering in of sinners to Christ; and, though it may be like a net “per accidens”, the means of troubling the world, and drawing out the corruptions of the men of it; yet its principal design, and the use that is made of it, is to draw souls out of the depths of sin unto the grace of Christ; (see ~~4034~~ Matthew 13:47,48), the spreading and casting of nets design the preaching of the Gospel, and the opening and

explaining the doctrines of it, which are shut up and hidden to men; and to do which requires wisdom and skill, strength, diligence, and patience, and is done at a venture; and sometimes is cast where fish are, and sometimes not; but here, and at this time, with great success.

For their fish shall be according to their kind, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many: that is, there shall be fish of all sorts, small and great, and in large numbers, as in the great ocean, or as in the Mediterranean sea. These signify regenerated persons, who are born of water and the Spirit by the word of God, which is their element; they cannot live but in these waters of the sanctuary, and where the doctrines of grace are preached. Now many of all nations, and men of all ranks, will be called; kings, princes, nobles, as well as peasants; men high and low, rich and poor, and multitudes of them, like the fishes of the sea; which will be the case when the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in.

Ver. 11. *But the miry places thereof, and the marshes thereof, &c.]* That is, of the sea; the waters of which were healed, by the waters of the sanctuary coming into them: but the ditches and lakes, the miry and marsh ground, separate from the sea, which lay near it, and upon the borders of it,

shall not be healed; these design the reprobate part of the world, obstinate and perverse sinners, that abandon themselves to their filthy lusts, and sensual pleasures; that wallow like swine in the mire and dirt of sin; are wholly immersed in the things of this world, mind nothing but earth and earthly things, and load themselves with thick clay; whose god is their belly, and who glory in their shame: also hypocrites and apostates may be here meant, who, despising the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, put it away from them, and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life, and so receive no benefit by it; but, on the contrary, it is the savour of death unto death unto them; (see ^{<2069>} Isaiah 6:9,10):

they shall be given to salt; left to the hardness of their hearts; given up to the lusts of them; devoted to ruin and destruction and remain barren and unfruitful, as places demolished and sown with salt are; (see ^{<1623>} Deuteronomy 29:23 ^{<1095>} Judges 9:45), or made an example of, as Lot's wife was; that others may learn wisdom, and shun those things that have been the cause of their ruin. The Targum is,

“its pools and lakes shall not be healed; they shall be for salt pits.”

Ver. 12. *And by the river on the banks thereof, on this side and on that side, &c.]* On each side of the river, on the banks of it:

shall grow all trees for meat; such as bear fruit, that may be eaten, and is good for food: by these “trees” are meant truly gracious souls, converted persons, real Christians, true believers in Christ; who like trees have a root, are rooted in the love of God, in the person and grace of Christ, and have the root of the matter in them, the grace of the blessed Spirit; and who also is their sap, of which they are full, and so grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ; grow up in him, and grow upwards and heavenwards in their affections and desires, and in the exercise of faith and hope: they are the trees of the Lord, trees of righteousness, good trees, that bring forth good fruit; and are often in Scripture compared to trees the most excellent, as palm trees, cedars, olives, myrtles, &c. and wherever the Gospel comes, these trees arise, and are watered and made fruitful by it; sometimes in lesser, and sometimes in greater numbers, as in the first times of the Gospel, and as they will in the latter day; (see ^{<39212>}Psalm 92:12 ^{<23608>}Isaiah 61:3):

whose leaf shall not fade; as the leaves of trees in autumn do, and drop off and fall; to which some professors of religion are compared, who bear no fruit, only have the leaves of a profession, and this they drop when any trouble or difficulty arises, (^{<60112>}Jude 1:12 ^{<401321>}Matthew 13:21), but true believers, as they take up a profession on principles of grace, they hold it fast without wavering; their root, seed, and sap, remain, and so never wither and die in their profession; (see ^{<49003>}Psalm 1:3 ^{<24078>}Jeremiah 17:8):

neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed; which are the graces of the Spirit, and good works flowing from them: the graces of the Spirit are abiding ones, as faith, hope, and love; these never die, are an incorruptible seed, a well of water springing up unto everlasting life; and good works, which are fruits meet for repentance, and evidences of faith, and by which trees are known to be good, always continue to be wrought by believers, in the strength and grace of Christ, from whom they have all their fruits of every kind, (^{<28448>}Hosea 14:8 ^{<30011>}Philippians 1:11):

it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months; or, “first fruits”,^{f856}; that is, everyone of these trees, or every true believer, shall be continually in the exercise of grace, and the performance of duty; they shall be constant and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; they shall never

cease from yielding fruit, or doing good; they shall still bring it even in old age; (see ^{<4924>}Psalm 92:14 ^{<2478>}Jeremiah 17:8):

because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; because the waters, which issued out of the sanctuary, ran by these trees, and watered them, and made them fruitful, and therefore called their waters: the fruitfulness of these trees, true believers, is not owing to themselves, to their free will and power; to their own industry, diligence, and cultivation; but to the supplies of grace they receive by means of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; which bring forth, or cause to bring forth fruit, wherever they come with power, (^{<5006>}Colossians 1:6):

and the fruit thereof shall be for meat; not for saints themselves, who live not, neither on their graces, nor their works; though indeed they do eat the fruits of their doings, (^{<2180>}Isaiah 3:10), that is, enjoy good things, consequent on their works, through the free favour and good will of God; but for meat for others; for their fruit, which appears in their words and actions, are very beneficent to others; their fruit is a tree of life, (^{<2113>}Proverbs 11:30) and their lips feed many, (^{<2021>}Proverbs 10:21), with knowledge and understanding; with the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; and with the comfortable experience they have of its truths and promises: yea, their fruit are meat and food for Christ himself; who comes into his garden, and eats his pleasant fruits, feeds and feasts, and delights himself with his own grace in his people, and the exercise of it, (^{<2009>}Song of Solomon 4:9,10,16 5:1):

and the leaf thereof for medicine; or, “for bruises”^{f857}; for the healing of them, which is only done by the blood of Christ; who is the only physician, the sun of righteousness, that rises with healing or pardon in his wings; and the whole language of this passage is borrowed from hence by John, and applied to Christ the tree of life, (^{<6212>}Revelation 22:2) and the Gospel professed by true believers directs to him for healing, or for the remission of sin, and is the means of applying it, (^{<4972>}Psalm 107:20) and a cheerful constant profession of Christ and his Gospel, which is the Christian’s leaf, does good like a medicine, both to the Christian himself, and to others; who are animated and encouraged thereby to go on with pleasure in the ways of God.

Ver. 13. *Thus saith the Lord God, this shall be the border*, &c.] Of the land of Israel, as described in the following verses; which being different from, and much larger, and more extensive, than it was in the times of

Moses or Joshua, or than it was either before or after the captivity in Babylon, shows that this must be understood either of the land of Canaan, as it will be when possessed and inhabited by the Jews, upon their conversion in the latter day; or rather of the church of Christ, which is far greater than it was under the former dispensation; and especially it will be still more extensive hereafter, when Christ's kingdom will be from sea to sea, and his dominion from the river to the ends of the earth; and from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles. This subject is reassumed from (^{<3561>}Ezekiel 45:1-8) after the insertion of various things of moment and importance there, a reserve upon the division of the land is made of a holy portion of it, for the sanctuary; for the priests, the ministers of it; for the Levites, the ministers of the house; and for a possession of the city, and of the prince; and the rest to be given to the house of Israel, the boundaries of which, are here fixed:

whereby ye shall inherit the land, according to the twelve tribes of Israel; by which are meant, not literal Israel, or according to the flesh, these being not all Israel, or the children of God, and so not heirs, and shall not inherit; but spiritual Israel, or the special people of God, that shall dwell in the church, and enjoy all the privileges of it; these are the sealed ones of all the tribes of Israel, an equal number out of each tribe; (see ^{<6004>}Revelation 7:4-8). Joseph shall have two "portions" for his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and in virtue of the birthright which fell to him on the forfeiture of it by Reuben; he was an eminent type of Christ, with whom the saints are joint heirs; and who has two portions, one for himself as Mediator, and another for them.

Ver. 14. *And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another,* &c.] That is, the twelve tribes shall equally inherit it; one tribe shall not have more, and another less, but each alike: this was not the case, at the division of the land, in the times of Moses and Joshua; for to such tribes as were very numerous a greater inheritance was given; and to those that were fewer in number a lesser inheritance, (^{<0454>}Numbers 26:54 33:54), and upon the return from the Babylonish captivity, as the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were the largest, and indeed the only tribes that returned as such, they had the share of the land; but as this respects the dispensation, it signifies, that those who are true Israelites indeed shall share in the same Gospel church state, the privileges and immunities of it alike, with all the blessings of grace and eternal glory; they being all one in Christ Jesus, (^{<4828>}Galatians 3:28):

concerning the which I lifted up my hand to give it unto your fathers; that is, swore that he would give unto them the land of Canaan; typical of the Gospel church state and the heavenly glory; which are as sure to all the seed, by the word and oath of God, as that was:

and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance; by lot, by the appointment of God, and a goodly one it is, (³⁹¹⁶Psalm 16:6 47:4).

Ver. 15. *And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side,* &c.] The description of the borders of the land begins on the north side; because the Gospel, and the interest of Christ, would be, as they now are, chiefly in the northern part of the world, before the latter day glory takes place, and from thence spread into the other parts of it:

from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad; the line of this border shall begin at the Mediterranean sea, commonly called the great sea, and so proceed to Hethlon, a city in Syria Damascene, and from thence to Zedad; of which (see ⁹⁶⁴⁸Numbers 34:8), the description is taken all along from the places which were on the border of Canaan, or in countries adjacent to it, which plainly point out the enlargement of it.

Ver. 16. *Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim, &c.]* The line of the northern border should be drawn on by Hamath, the same with Antiochia in Syria, since called Epiphania, as Jerom observes, from Antiochus Epiphanies; and go on by Berothah, a city of Hadadezer king of Zobah, (⁴⁰⁸⁸2 Samuel 8:8), the same with the Barothena of Ptolemy^{f858}, placed by him in Syria; and from thence the line would be carried on to Sibraim, a city in Arabia Deserta:

which is between the border of Damascus; the chief city in Syria: and the border of Hamath; before mentioned. Calmet^{f859} imagines it to be that which Ishmael Abulfeda calls Hovvarin; which he says is a village of the country of Ems or Hamath, to the southeast of the city.

Hazarhatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran; this seems to be explanative of Sibraim, which lay between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; and therefore is called the middle town or village, as “Hazarhatticon” signifies; and lay by the coast of Hauran, which Jerom calls a town of Damascus, with which it is mentioned, (³⁴⁷⁸Ezekiel 47:18), from whence the country adjacent is called Auranitis, as this place is here by the Septuagint. The Targum calls Hazar the fish pool of the Agbeans; but for what reason, and what is meant by it, I know not.

Ver. 17. *And the border from the sea shall be Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, &c.*] Which was the furthestmost part and end of the northern border, as fixed by Moses, (^{<3476>}Numbers 34:9):

and the north northward, and the border of Hamath; if this is carrying on the border further, it seems to be another Hamath, distinct from the former, (^{<3476>}Ezekiel 47:16),

and this is the north side: of the land, and the description of the northern border of it, from the Mediterranean sea to Hazarenan.

Ver. 18. *And the east side ye shall measure Hauran, &c.*] The line of the eastern border of the land shall begin at Hauran or Auranitis; (see ^{<3476>}Ezekiel 47:16), which lay to the south ^{f860} of Damascus: and it follows,

and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea; and so from Damascus, the metropolis of Syria; and likewise from Gilead, a mountain and country beyond Jordan; and also from that part of the land of Israel near to Jordan; and so from the northern border to the east sea, or sea of Galilee or Tiberias:

and this is the east side: of the land, or the eastern border of it, reaching from Hauran to the lake of Gennesaret, or to the Salt sea, the sea of Sodom; (see ^{<0610>}Numbers 34:10-12).

Ver. 19. *And the south side southward from Tamar, &c.*] Not Jericho, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, called by this name from the palm trees which grew near it; according to Jerom, this is Palmyra, so called for the same reason; but it is rather Engedi, called Hazazontamar, (^{<4102>}2 Chronicles 20:2), the line of the southern border began here, and went on,

even to the waters of strife in Kadesh; to the waters of Meribah in Kadesh; so called, from the strivings of the children of Israel with the Lord there, (^{<0610>}Numbers 20:1,13):

the river to the great sea; it proceeded by the river of Egypt, the river Sihor, the Nile, which is before Egypt, (^{<4638>}Joshua 13:3 15:47) and so on to the Mediterranean sea:

and this is the south side southward; the south side of the land, and the southern border of it.

Ver. 20. *The west side also shall be the great sea from the border, &c.*] From the border of Egypt, and the river of it, to the Mediterranean sea, is the west side of the land, and the western border of it; hence the western point is often expressed in Scripture by the sea:

till a man come over against Hamath; Antioch in Syria; see (³⁵⁷¹⁶Ezekiel 47:16)

this is the west side; of the land, and of the western border of it.

Ver. 21. *So shall ye divide this land unto you, &c.*] As thus bounded, east, west, north, and south:

according to the tribes of Israel; (See Gill on "³⁵⁷¹³Ezekiel 47:13").

Ver. 22. *And it shall come to pass, &c.*] In the last days, under the Gospel dispensation:

that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you; who were Israelites, both by natural descent, and by the Spirit and grace of God: the Gospel was first preached to Israel after the flesh, and made effectual to the conversion of many of them; and the first churches were made up of them, and they shared all the blessings and privileges thereof; as they also will in the latter day, when converted:

and to the strangers that sojourn among them; not such as were strangers to spiritual and divine things; for this would contradict the rule in (³⁵⁴¹⁹Ezekiel 44:9), but converted Gentiles, so called because of their natural descent and civil state, being, with respect to both, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; yet were to be, as they have been, and will be, taken into the same Gospel church state with the believing Jews:

which shall beget children among you; not only in a natural, but in a spiritual sense; be the means of begetting many souls again to the lively hope of a glorious inheritance:

and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; that is, the children begotten by the Gentiles shall be considered all one as those of the children of Israel, being born again of the same Spirit and grace; and so have an equal right to the same privileges, and to which they shall be admitted:

they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel; this is a new thing, and what in a literal sense was never granted; for though in the times of Moses and onward, and by his direction from the Lord, such as have been called proselytes of the gate, and proselytes of righteousness, have been admitted to various privileges, by conforming to certain rules, rites, and ceremonies, yet never were allowed to have any inheritance in the land; and, after the captivity, Ezra and Nehemiah drove out the strangers, who by affinity with some had got among them: but this respects Gospel times, and the coalition of Jews and Gentiles in the same church state; where there is no difference, but Christ is all in all; where they are admitted to the same ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper; partake of the same blessings of grace, and promises of the word, and have an equal right to the heavenly inheritance: (~~4006~~Ephesians 3:6), is the best commentary on this passage; which contains the same mystery the Apostle Paul was acquainted with,

that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel; (see Gill on "~~4006~~Ephesians 3:6"). (see ~~4022~~Ephesians 2:12-20 ~~5081~~Colossians 3:11 ~~4023~~1 Corinthians 12:13).

Ver. 23. *And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth*, &c.] Whatsoever particular congregation or church these strangers and sojourners (as all the Lord's people are in this world, and even in their church state), or those Gentiles before described, shall be nearest unto, and to which they shall propose themselves for communion, they shall be readily admitted:

there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord God; allow him a name and a place; put him in the possession of all church privileges and immunities; look upon him as a member, a brother, a fellow citizen, as an heir together of the grace of life, and as equally entitled to the inheritance of the saints in light; and for this they have the authority and order of Jehovah himself.