

THE RIVER OF LIVING WATERS

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

LESSON 409 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground" (Isaiah 44:3).

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 *were* very many trees on the one

Bible References:

Notes:

Altars for Worship

Since the beginning of time people have built altars at which to worship God. Noah built an altar where he worshiped and thanked God for deliverance from the great Flood. Abraham built an altar when he came into the Land of Canaan. Jacob used stones for an altar, which he had gathered for a pillow.

The Tabernacle

When the Israelites came out of Egypt and encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, God gave Moses a detailed pattern for a place of worship, called a Tabernacle. We know the dimensions of this Tabernacle. We have read of the outer court and of the curtains that surrounded it and of the brazen altar to which the sinner came to offer his sacrifice that he might be forgiven. In the Holy Place was the golden altar, a type of sanctification, and here the incense of praise to God arose continually. Beyond the Holy Place there was the Holiest of All where the Ark of the Covenant rested, overshadowed by cherubims looking down upon the Mercy Seat. Here in the Holiest of All shone the glory of the presence of God, a type of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The Temple

When the Land of Canaan was well settled, King Solomon built a house for the Lord after the same pattern as the portable Tabernacle, only bigger and grander. It was at this house of worship, called the Temple, built on a hill in Jerusalem, that Ezekiel worshiped as a boy. Each Jewish boy looked forward with keen anticipation to the time when he could go with his father to the Temple at Jerusalem.

Ezekiel's father was a priest and had no doubt taught Ezekiel carefully in the Law of Moses; and as God had commanded, he talked with him about the Law of God when they walked by the way, when they sat in the house, when they went to bed and when they arose in the morning. Ezekiel had heard the voice of God beyond the spoken words of the Law, and he knew that somehow the sacrifices of lambs and goats and turtledoves pointed to a Great Sacrifice that was yet to be made.

The Spirit of God had lead Ezekiel step by step until that eventual year when he was old enough to go to the Temple with his father at the time of the feast of the Passover. Cannot you imagine Ezekiel watching his father choose a perfect lamb a year old, just as the Law had commanded? After the lamb was selected, it was carefully watched and fed for 14 days until it was time to take it to the Temple to be offered at the time of the evening sacrifice. How his heart must have beat fast and a thrill must have gone through him as his father laid his hands on the head of the lamb in acknowledgement of his sins and those of his household. When he slew the lamb and the priest sprinkled the blood upon the altar, it may have been that just then Ezekiel felt God had truly forgiven him and he purposed in his heart to be true to God all his life.

Ezekiel read from the Law day after day and prayed and kept

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 curse: but the throne of God and

close to God. When he was 20 years old he began serving with the priests in the Temple.

Captivity

When Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came to besiege Jerusalem the second time, Ezekiel was taken captive along with 10,000 other Jews. In Babylon they joined the first group of Babylonian captives from Judaea, among whom were Daniel and his three friends. The Jews took copies of the Law with them and some continued to read God's Word and pray and keep close to God even in the heathen country of Babylon. But many were rebellious and disobedient.

Ezekiel as Prophet

God gave Ezekiel many solemn warnings to preach to the captive Jews, telling them that if they did not give up their sins and rebellion against God, the sure judgements of God would come upon them, but if they would repent, God would have mercy and receive them. God revealed to Ezekiel many of the things that would come in the end of time, even as He did to Daniel and other prophets of God.

God is always the same. The message He gave to Ezekiel agrees with the message he gave to Daniel and others whose prophecies we read in the Bible. In the last Book of the Bible we see that the revelation God gave to John the Beloved agrees with the revelation He gave to Ezekiel and Daniel.

Vision of the Temple

One of the visions God gave to Ezekiel was of a great Temple. A man with a measuring line appeared to Ezekiel to show him the measurements, the furnishings and service of this Temple that was very much like Solomon's Temple.

When the man with the measuring line brought Ezekiel to the front entrance of the Temple, Ezekiel saw water coming out from under the threshold. In our imagination, let us follow the man as he measured by cubits. A cubit is about 18 inches, or the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. A thousand cubits brought Ezekiel through the water to the ankles. When the man measured another thousand cubits the river became deeper and wider and he brought Ezekiel through the water to the knees. Again he measured a thousand cubits and the waters were to the loins. Then he measured a thousand, and it was a river that could not be passed over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in.

The Spirit of God

This river is a type or symbol of the Spirit of God. Jesus spoke of rivers of living waters. "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive" (John 7:39). The sweet Spirit of God has been close to you in all the days of your life. He spoke to you when you were first conscious of doing something wrong. He told you that you should say, "I am sorry," when you had disobeyed Mother, or been unkind to a brother or sister. He wanted you to pray and ask Jesus to forgive you. He made you know you would have to stand before God some day, and you would go to hell if you were not saved. At last you became very unhappy and fearful of God's judgement, and if you prayed and gave your heart to the Lord, He saved you and made you a real Christian.

After a person is saved the Holy Spirit causes the heart of the Christian to be hungry for sanctification. It is even greater than a hunger for food. He wants so very much for the Lord to sanctify his heart and make him holy. Then the Holy Spirit leads him on to seek earnestly for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and when the seeker says "Yes" to everything God asks him to do, the Holy Ghost comes to baptize, or immerse him in the glory of God.

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.

Rivers of living water flow from his life, a river that cannot be passed over. Everything he does for the Lord takes on new life. Opportunities and privileges for service multiply until time seems not sufficient to permit him to take advantage of them all. He has power for service.

Fishers of Men

Do you ask, "What kind of service?" To win souls for Jesus. The Christian boy or girl is a fisher of men. He may speak of Jesus to a friend or schoolmate, invite someone to church, send a tract or church paper to a relative, pray for those who are not saved.

No doubt the Temple which Ezekiel saw will be built some day right here upon earth in Jerusalem, and the living stream that flowed from under the threshold will flow into the Dead Sea, bringing life even there. Because of the heavy salt and other minerals in the Dead Sea today, not even a fish can live there, but during the Millennium, the thousand years when Jesus will be King, the living waters will flow down from the Temple in Jerusalem and all manner of fish and water animals will thrive in the Dead Sea. Fishermen will stand on the banks of the river, catching many fish with line and tackle. They will also spread nets across the stream, catching many more fish in their nets.

You who are saved today may, as the fishermen along the banks of the river of Ezekiel's vision, bring "exceeding many" people to the Lord even now.

River of Water of Life

Turning to the 22nd chapter of Revelation and comparing it with the last verse of our Ezekiel text, we see that God gave John the Beloved the same kind of revelation about the river of living water. A man with a measuring reed shows John the heavenly City, very much as the man with a measuring line showed Ezekiel the holy Temple, and to each prophet was shown the river of living water flowing from God's dwelling place. Wherever this river flows, there grows the Tree of Life whose leaf of protection does not fade, whose fruit of nourishment is always fresh, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

The Throne of God and of the Lamb

Where did the river that Ezekiel saw start? Where did the river that John saw begin? From God's dwelling place! Keep close to Him, love Him, obey Him, for He is your life.

QUESTIONS

1. What do we call the building that God instructed Moses to build?
2. What do we call the building that King Solomon built for the house of God?
3. Where did Ezekiel worship God as a boy?
4. Where was Ezekiel when he preached his sermons, which we read in the Bible?
5. Whom did Ezekiel probably meet when he first went to Babylon?
6. What did Ezekiel see when he was taken in a vision to the front entrance of the great Temple?
7. Of whom is the river of water of life a type or symbol?
8. At what place did the river of Ezekiel's vision originate?
9. Where did the river of John's revelation come from?