

The River Of Life

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[0 : 00] I'll return for a short time now to the first passage in Ezekiel that we read in Ezekiel chapter 47. And looking at these verses 1 to 11 especially.

Sorry, 1 to 12. 1 to 12.

1 to 12.

1 to 12. Now it's important for us to know something of that historical background. Indeed to all the books of the Bible but particularly to the likes of Ezekiel.

Because it gives you something of an understanding or an insight into what this man's situation was. How God was using that situation in order to try and bring teaching not only to the people that Ezekiel lived amongst in the exile in Babylon.

[1 : 48] But also as we'll see how God used that whole situation and prophets like Ezekiel to reach forward. To see beyond the return from exile.

The return to Jerusalem. Well beyond that into the days of the New Testament age. And even on beyond that itself into the eternity of God's people.

Ezekiel would have been around about 26 years of age or so. Something like that when he was carried away and deported with the people to Babylon. But we know from his letter that he was a priest.

And priests were not called to service until they were 30 years of old of age in Israel in those days. So he was called to the priesthood while he was still in exile in Babylon.

And called upon them to prophesy for the Lord to the exiles particularly. Now we have to remember that there were false prophets not only before the exile began, before the captivity.

[2 : 56] There were false prophets carried into the captivity in Babylon. And they continued with their false prophecy. The fact that the true prophets like Elijah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah had indeed under God predicted and prophesied of this captivity.

Of this deportation. Of this being the judgment of God. That hadn't changed them from the kind of people they were. They still continued the false prophecy that assured or sought to assure the people.

This is not going to last long. Just give it a little bit of time. We'll soon be back home. That was the kind of message that of course Isaiah and Jeremiah denounced prior to the captivity itself beginning.

And so Ezekiel was building on the emphasis that Isaiah and Jeremiah gave to this captivity being a long stretch. It wasn't going to be over in a few months, even a few years.

It was going to be 70 years before the Lord opened the way for them to come back again to their own place. And so in that context, God gave Ezekiel remarkable insight into gospel blessings.

[4 : 10] Blessings of the New Testament age. Blessings associated with Christ, with his coming, with his death. So that in many ways chapters 33 to 37 particularly in Ezekiel are taken up with what you can call gospel blessings.

The way in which God's spirit comes to be in his people. The way that he's going to turn their hearts from a heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. All of that really is pretty much identical with our foresight into what the New Testament calls new birth.

To be born again. And when you come to these chapters here around 47, you see that it speaks about the temple and the sanctuary. And how that too is something that the Lord used as this vision was given to him.

To him to see into things that belong to an age to come. And here he is talking about the temple. The temple from which this river began to flow firstly as a trickle.

And then as he went along and measured it, he saw that it was actually coming deeper and deeper as he went out. And eventually it was so deep that he couldn't walk in it, couldn't even swim in it. [5 : 30] It was something that no man could pass through, he said. And then you have the vision of something that reminds you of a chapter we read there in Revelation. We'll come to that in a moment. Where you find an emphasis on the trees that were growing on each side of the river.

And how their leaves were not going to wither. And they shall bear fresh fruit every month. And there's really Ezekiel taken forward even beyond the days of Christ on earth. And the days of gospel blessing.

Into eternity itself. Into the final sanctuary or temple. The spiritual temple of heaven itself. Where God's people will forevermore be nourished by this water.

By this ample, ample water of this river. Which comes and keeps on flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. So look at first of all the source of the river.

And when you go back a bit. In Ezekiel you can see that the river was actually. The temple rather was actually situated on a mountaintop. He was taken up to a very high mountain he says.

[6 : 34] Back in chapter 8 indeed. But on that mountain. This is remember Isaiah being given to see this in a vision. So that God is teaching him through this.

And that mountain. As he calls it a very high mountain. It's where the temple was situated. The temple that he saw. And from that temple now. As you come to chapter 47.

You begin to see this emphasis on water flowing from the temple. In other words. The water from the temple is coming downwards. Down from the mountainside. There's always that emphasis in the Bible.

Where you find the source of blessing. It's up there. It's never down here. It's never with ourselves. It's never something devised merely by human beings. It's not something other than God's own provision.

It comes from his throne. To use the words of Revelation 22. That's where the river has its source. That's where the properties of the river are situated.

[7 : 32] That's why it's the kind of river that it is. That bears such plenitude and fullness of life. Because it has its source in God. Because it flows from the mountain.

It flows from the temple. It flows from God's residential palace. Where he himself has his abode. And notice also that a number of times here.

It mentions the east. The threshold of the temple towards the east. For the temple faced east. And then it mentions it again a little later on. He speaks of the outer gate that faces towards the east. And the water was trickling out the south side. Now it could take too much of that. But quite often in the Bible looking eastward. Which is of course where the sun. Where the daylight begins.

Where the sun rises as we call it. And that's in the Old Testament days. Before people really understood that it was the earth that was moving around the sun.

[8 : 34] And the earth revolving on its axis. That's why you've got the language. The sun rises in the east. And it sets in the opposite direction. Well you're looking east. For the source of the light.

You're looking eastwards. Towards where the light is going to come from. Very interestingly in Genesis chapter 3 verse 24. Where God set a seal or a barrier to the tree of life that was in the Garden of Eden.

Once man had been ejected by God. He set cherubim and a flaming sword on the east side of the Garden. As if there's a hint there at least.

That if you're going to see a renewed access to the tree of life. It's going to come from the east. It's going to come from the source that is the source of light. It's going to come from God himself.

And so he mentions here that this is where the mountain is. Where the river is set. It's set on the mountain. It comes from the mountain. From the temple on the mountain rather.

[9 : 35] Towards the east. And that's emphasizing the source being God. But you notice too that it's got an emphasis on an altar. And on the sanctuary. You can see the reference to that as you go through the passage.

The emphasis on altar and sanctuary. Of course both being part of the temple structure. Literally in the Old Testament days. And here in the vision.

What does that mean? It means that this water of life. This river that's bearing so much life for these trees. To keep on producing their fruit.

There's an emphasis that the blessing of God does not come. Without it coming via the altar and via the sanctuary. In other words there's a reference here to atonement.

To sacrifice. There's no water of life without the sacrifice. That God has provided. To initiate it. To fulfill it. To complete it. To keep it running.

[10:39] Isn't that the same? As you find emphasized by Jesus himself. In John's gospel especially. We looked a fair bit time back whenever it was.

At what John's description of the cross is. And of Jesus on the cross. And especially at that moment. When the soldier pierced the side of Jesus with a spear. And there came out blood and water.

And in John's very symbolic language as he uses it in his gospel. As we saw at that time. You can say that that's certainly a reference to. Or symbolic of both.

The blood of atonement. And the water of cleansing. Or the water that brings life. All proceeding from the side of God. From the side of Jesus. From the sacrifice of Christ and his death.

The death of Christ. The altar of the temple. Is the source. Or through that comes the river. That bears life.

[11:40] That carries life to us. In the gospel. In other words. This really is representative of gospel blessings. Initiated by God. Through the sacrifice of Christ.

And coming with all its fullness. So full. So deep. That you cannot measure it. And flowing towards human beings like ourselves.

To carry us upwards. Into its provisions of life. For us. And you go to. That wonderful passage in John. Where. Jesus met with.

The woman of Samaria. Sitting by the well side. Near Sychar. And as she came out to draw. You know the story so well for yourselves. But it's the words of Jesus to her.

Especially. After she had initiated. He had initiated the conversation. And where. She said. Well. As he said to her.

[12:36] First of all. Whoever drinks of this water. This ordinary water. The water you came to draw. Will thirst again. But the one. The water. That I shall give.

Whoever drinks of the water. That I shall give. Shall never thirst. Sir. Give me this water. So that I don't have to come. Any longer here.

To draw. Of course. He meant. Spiritual water. The water. That was in himself. Whoever drinks of the water. That I shall give. It shall be in him.

A well. Or a spring. Of water. Welling up. Into everlasting life. If you have ever seen. A well. Or a fountain. Just so gushing. Full. That is overflowing.

That is what the picture is. It is not the kind of well. Where you have got to look down. And wonder if there is any water in it. Where you have got to drop a stone. And it. Carries.

[13:33] A long time. In silence. Till it has a plop. At the bottom of the well. This is. A well of water. Springing up. Out of itself.

As he says. Into. Everlasting. Life. Gospel blessings. Gospel blessings. Through Christ. Gospel blessings. Through. The death of Christ.

Gospel blessings. Coming down. From above. Coming down. From the mountain. Where God is situated. In his temple. And reaching. With its fullness.

Of life. People like you and I. To bring us. Eternal life. That's the source of the river. And that's. Where it comes from. It comes from God.

And all of that is represented there. In the language used. But look at. Secondly. The life giving water. Of the river. Now. You've probably seen.

[14:27] Documentaries. David Attenborough. Some of these. Fellows who. Are experts in. In. At least in this part of. This aspect. Of. Of. Of nature. Where you find.

A. Film. That's been. Taken. Or video. Been taken over. A very long period of time. And then it's speeded up. And you find a desert. And desert conditions.

And dryness. And there's. Absolutely nothing. Seems to be growing there. And then. The water that comes. From wherever it sources. Comes over. Into that dryness. Covers it up.

And then. As you feel. As you know. The film is speeded up. You see all of these plants. Suddenly appearing. And the greenness. And fish. And animals. Coming to feed.

Upon that verbiage. Wonderful transformation. That's what. Isaiah of course. Saw in his prophecy. The desert shall rejoice. And blossom.

[15:21] Like the rose. That's what the river. Of blessing brings. That's what comes. From God's throne. That's what changes. Deserts. Into pasture lands.

That's what he's got here. As well. Where you find. An emphasis on the river. Increasing in its depth. But then you see. As he goes on. And sees it. The water flows.

Verse 8. The water flows. Towards the eastern region. And goes down. Into the araba. And enters the sea. And when the water. Flows into the sea.

The water will become fresh. That's the water of the sea. Will become fresh. Now what's remarkable. About that. Is not just. That the fact.

The fact that he's talking about. The sea. Which as you know. Is salty. But this. Araba. And the area. That. And then enters the sea.

[16:15] That's the dead sea. The dead sea. Where nothing grows. The dead sea. That is. So toxic. That as it is at present.

It's a dead sea. Nothing grows there. It doesn't have. Anything there. That will. Enable. Grows. Far from it. It hinders it. But what it's saying here.

Is that. This river. Will enter that sea. And the water. Of that sea. Will become fresh. Wherever the river goes. Every living creature.

That swarms. Will live. And there will be. Very many fish. For this water. Goes there. That the waters. Of the sea. That's the dead sea. Again. May become fresh.

So everything. Will live. Where the river. Goes. And then. Verse. 10. There it's fish. Will be many kinds. Like the fish. Of the great sea. That's the Mediterranean sea.

[17:12] That's how they used to refer to it. In those days. The great sea. Is the Mediterranean sea. The sea. Is the dead sea. And what. Ezekiel is given. In this vision.

Is that he. He sees this water. This river. That's. Come from. From the. Temple. From. The sanctuary. From the place. Where the. Where the.

Where the. The. Altar is situated. And now. It's come. To be so. Full of life. That everything. It touches.

Is marked. By life. Even the dead sea. Has come to life. What is that indicative of? You who are dead. In trespasses. And sins. Has he.

Quickened. It's the quickening. It's. The power. Of Christ. In the gospel. Or through the gospel. Coming to change. People's lives. Radically.

[18:06] From what we were. Into what we become. When this river. Of life. Touches. And flows. Into our souls. You see. It's not just. A few fish. That come. And talks here.

About a river. And a sea. That's now. Teeming. With fish. And what does that. Remind you of? Reminds you of the description. Of the creation. Way back in Genesis.

Chapter 1. Verses 20. To 22. Before the curse of God. Fell upon the creation. As it's described. In chapter 3. Of Genesis. You have swarms.

Of fish. In the seas. As God has. Created them. And commanded them. To multiply. Well. Here is. Something that's taking us back. To. That sort of. Imagery. That sort of. Reality. Except here. It's the river. Of life. In Christ. The gospel.

[19:01] Blessings. That God. Has initiated. And has come. To flow. Toward us. In Christ. And he's saying. This is. The effect of it. Wherever it goes.

Everywhere. We'll live. Everything. We'll live. Where. The river. Goes. And the picture. Of abundance. The fishermen. Standing there. And. Coming to take.

Their fish. From. This renewed. Sea. As it were. Well. That of course. Again. Is. A spiritual. Picture. But. It's a picture. Of plenty. Of abundance.

Of abundant. Life. You know. Sometimes. We might lose. That vision. Of the gospel. We don't live. In days. When the gospel. Is very evident.

By its power. In many people's lives. There are multitudes. Tonight. That don't know. The power. Of the gospel. In their own lives. That will come. To end. This year.

[19:57] If they're spared. To see it. Without gospel. Life. Without anything. Other than what we're born with. Dead. In trespasses. And sins. Dead seas. All around us. But let's never lose.

Our view. Of the gospel. As you find it. In the bible. Because. Even in times. When. And we heard prayers. Tonight. For God's blessing.

To come. To multiply. Blessing. And bring people. To life. And change. The deadness. Around us. And indeed. The deadness. To extent. That we find. In ourselves. The deadness. But the gospel.

Is the gospel. Christ. Is Christ. Eternal life. Is eternal life. Never lose. Your vision. Of the gospel. Your view. Of the gospel. Your conviction.

That the gospel. Is God's power. Unto salvation. To everyone. Who believes. It's not that the gospel. Has changed. It's not that God. Has changed.

[20 : 54] It's not that. Anything in Christ. Has changed. It's just. It's just. People don't want it. We need to pray. That. The spirit of God. Will bring them. To see their need of it.

And so. That. Imagery of. John. As we mentioned. John 4. And then. It's just. John 7. As well. Where. You remember. John 7. Where.

Jesus. Where. John. Says. That. Jesus. While not yet. Glow. Because not yet. Glorified. The spirit of God. Had not yet come.

In the way that he was to come. At Pentecost. Jesus. On that last day of the feast. Said. If anyone thirsts. Let him come to me. And drink. See. There's the imagery there. Again. Of plenty of water. A river of life. Whoever believes in me. As the scripture has said. Out of his heart. Out of his inner parts. Will flow. Rivers of living water.

[21 : 49] Now this. He said. About the spirit. Whom those who believed in him. Were to receive. For as yet. The spirit had not been given. Because Jesus. Was not yet glorified.

But you will notice there. That. It talks about this. Great river. Proceeding. From. Believers. Not just. Into them. Whoever believes.

From. His inner parts. Will flow. These rivers of living water. In other words. When God. Gives you to know. This life. It's life. That you then. Communicate.

People notice it. You talk about it. You witness to it. As something people. Can avoid seeing. And God uses. Such people as we are. Poor though we see ourselves.

Spiritually. He uses such as we are. To be the channels. From which living water. Reaches others. And through which.

[22 : 46] They're blessed. That's our great. Privilege. And you could also say that. There are other matters of that. That we don't need to go into. But you will notice. There's an exception. There is an exception.

To. This abundant life. That comes from these waters. That are teeming with life. Because it says in verse 11. But it's swamps and marshes. Will not become fresh.

They are to be left. For salt. It's not the kind of salt. You put on your food. It's salt. That's just. Very arid. Salt. That's toxic.

The kind of place. Where nothing really can grow. And that's very obvious. In the passage. As a distinct difference. To what's said elsewhere.

About the life. The abundant life. The blessings. That come from this water. Because you see. There are people. Who are touched.

[23 : 44] With the gospel. But who hold on. To their barrenness. Who don't want to be changed. From salty marshes. Into pleasant pastures. The waters reach their lives.

But they choose death. Instead of. The offer of life. That the gospel. Brings to them. So they're left for salt. They don't have.

A life that produces fruit. Like the others. That are mentioned. In the passage. Psalm 68. For example. Mentions. That we sometimes sing it.

But maybe not these verses. As often as the other verses. In Psalm 68. But verses. In verse 6. Particularly. You find God. Settles the solitary.

In a home. He leads out the prisoners. To prosperity. But the rebellious. Dwell. In a parched land. See the contrast.

[24 : 43] There are those. That God. Through his blessing. Those who receive. The offer of life. In Christ. He settles them. In a home. He settles them. With others.

In a community. But the rebellious. Dwell. In a parched land. Their life. Remains a desert. A place that's arid.

And fruitless. John Owen. Wrote on this very verse. Actually. Verse 11. Of. Of Sam. Of Ezekiel 47. This is what he said. Let not men boast themselves. In the outward enjoyment. Of the word. Nor rest themselves in it. It were well indeed.

If all were believers. To whom the word is preached. If all the land were healed. Where the waters of the sanctuary come. But the Holy Spirit tells us.

[25 : 39] They are not so. Hebrews chapter 4. Verse 2. The word preached. Did not profit them. Capernaum. Was exalted to heaven.

In the use of means. But brought down to hell. For the neglect of them. That's a very solemn. Point to make.

But it reminds us. That those. Who reject the gospel. Do it willingly. They're choosing death. Rather than life. That's why we have to. Keep on. Praying for them.

And witnessing to them. That they will come to know. That freshness of life. Through the invigorating. River of the gospel. The river of life.

And Christ especially. But then. There's also. I think. Satisfaction. Where you go on to. Read near the end of this passage. On the banks.

[26 : 32] On both sides of the river. There will flow all kinds of trees. For food. Their leaves will not wither. Nor their fruit fail. But they will bear fresh fruit. Every month. Because the water.

For them. Flows. From the sanctuary. That's the secret. That's the key. To their ongoing.

Fruitfulness. And really. This is really bringing into heaven itself.

Because these words are. Virtually the same. As you find in Revelation chapter 22. That we read.

Where you find. The description there. The water flowing from the throne of God.

And of the Lamb. Through the middle of the street of the city. On either side. Of the river. The tree of life. With its twelve kinds of fruit. Yielding its fruit. Each month.

The leaves of the tree. Where for the healing. Of the nations. No longer will there be anything. A cursed death. Doesn't appear there. There's no place for death. That's all to do with life.

[27 : 28] Their leaves will not wither. Nor their fruit fail. But they will bear fresh fruit. Every month. Because. The water comes from the sanctuary.

Flows from God. From his throne. In. It's life. Because he. Has initiated. And created it for us. Just like.

You find in Revelation 7. Those that were seen. Clothed with white robes. And palms in their hands. And then you find that. In that chapter. Jesus himself.

Is said to pastor them. The Lamb. Who is in the midst of the throne. Shall pastor them. There is sheep. They are the ones. Now glorified with them. The final state of the redeemed.

What's he going to be doing. All eternity. For them. And with them. He's going to be their pastor shepherd. The Lamb. The shepherd. Who is in the midst of the throne.

[28 : 31] The source of their life. He shall pastor them. And lead them. To living. Fountains of water. And God shall wipe away.

All tears from their eyes. No death. No mourning. No sorrow. No crying. For the former things. Have passed away. May God bless.

These thoughts on his word to us. Let's pray. To have a miracle.

Here. Here. Therefore, if you are seeing the Mal buses, make sure you have the mainland to it.

When the Mal galaxy built, you'd be able to download it. You would want to enter a house near üzere. You want to close the ladder on theplape. You should visit what you ■■■z'd, you know. You should enter anything.

[29 : 37] You ■■■ Archives hands to be your people, soenezium, sinnes. He may also offend, or some need.

If we don't for age ever, to celebrate joy ever else. Even now somebody deserves any idea to go to the world Thank You I will never forget him Unless that happens to see us And it gives us a smile without miss■■ Yet peace commence Jonathan■■■■■...

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