

A Transforming Stream

Ezekiel 47:1-12

SS Lesson for 11/16/2014

Devotional Scripture: John 4:5-15

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson teaches how God's live-giving blessings are like cool refreshing water in **A Transforming Stream**. The approach was taken from the teaching of Alan Carr (see included commentary). The **study's aim** is to realize that like the refreshing water in Ezekiel's vision, God is our spiritual source of transforming and life-sustaining blessing. The **study's application** is to appropriate God's life-giving blessings to ourselves and channel it like water to others through our relationship with God. (Adapted from *the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary*).

Key Verse: Ezek 47:9

And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

One feature in the Millennium will be a life-giving river flowing from the temple. Many think this refers *only* symbolically to the blessings that flow from God's presence. But nothing in the passage suggests that Ezekiel had anything in mind other than a literal river. The inclusion of details such as the fishermen (v. 10) and the salty swamps and marshes (v. 11) lend a touch of realism to the passage. These details become meaningless if the passage is only symbolic of spiritual blessing. Joel had mentioned this river before Ezekiel's time (cf. Joel 3:18), and Zechariah spoke of it after Israel returned from the Babylonian Captivity (cf. Zech. 14:8). In the Millennium this river will be another visible reminder of God's presence and blessing. Ezekiel was led from the kitchens in the temple's outer court back into the inner court **to the entrance of the temple** proper. There he **saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east**. That stream of water, flowing out from God's presence, went eastward and passed **south of the altar**. Ezekiel left the temple complex by way of **the north gate** and **saw the water... flowing** out of the temple on **the south side** of the east gate into the Kidron Valley. Zechariah recorded that the water flowing from Jerusalem will divide, with half flowing east toward the Dead Sea and half flowing west toward the Mediterranean (Zech. 14:8). Ezekiel followed only the branch that went toward the east. The angelic being **led** Ezekiel toward the east along the riverbank. After 1,750 feet (**1000 cubits**) the **water... was ankle-deep**; in another 1,750 feet the river was **knee-deep**. The angel measured another 1,750 feet and the **water** reached Ezekiel's **waist**. A fourth measurement of 1,750 feet farther to the east revealed that **the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could** walk across. Perhaps this rise in depth will come from additional streams feeding into this river, though Ezekiel did not mention them.

Ezekiel went **back to the bank of the river** and **saw** many **trees on each side of the river**. These waters will produce beautiful vegetation along their banks. The millennial river will flow **toward the eastern region** and will **go down into the Arabah, where it** will enter **the Sea**. The "Arabah" is the Jordan Valley running south from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea and ultimately to the Gulf of Aqabah. The millennial river will merge with the Jordan River at the northern mouth of the Dead Sea. As this new river enters the Dead Sea, **the water there** will become **fresh**. The Dead Sea, now some six times saltier than the ocean, will become completely salt-free—truly a miracle of God! This now-lifeless body of water will then support life so that **where the river flows everything will live**. **Fishermen** will crowd the shores **from En Gedi to En Eglaim** (see the map "The Division of the Land during the Millennium") to catch **many kinds of fish** there. "En Gedi" is a settlement about midway down the western shore of the Dead Sea. The location of "En Eglaim" (lit., "Spring of the Two Calves") is uncertain. Suggested locations have included the southwestern shore of the Dead Sea near Zoar and an area on the northwestern shore south of Khirbet Qumran. Because of Ezekiel's focus on the water entering the Dead Sea at the northern end, the site near Qumran seems a possibility. While the Dead Sea itself will be made fresh, **the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt**. The lowlands near the Dead Sea will remain salt-crusted. Salt is essential to life, and the Dead Sea area is Israel's chief source of salt. God will provide for all of Israel's needs. Another way God will provide for Israel is by the **trees** on the riverbanks that will bear **fruit** year-round. The fruit **will** provide **food and their leaves** will provide **healing**. How healing will come from the leaves is not clear, but sickness will be virtually eliminated. God will use these trees to meet people's physical needs.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

In Ezekiel 40, the hand of the Lord came upon the prophet, and he received many visions. A vision is an image that a person sees while he is awake. A dream is a vision that he is given while he is asleep. It is important to remember that dreams and visions can be both literal and symbolic. Joseph, the dreamer, had a dream of his brothers' sheaves of wheat bowing down to his sheaves of wheat (Gen. 37:7). This is an example of a dream being symbolic but still pointing to tangible reality. While no sheaves of wheat literally bowed down to Joseph's wheat, we do know that his brothers did bend their knees to Joseph when he was second only to Pharaoh. The wheat symbolized the brothers. Ezekiel had a vision of the temple of God. In this vision, he was escorted by a man whose appearance was like bronze. The man had a linen cord and a measuring rod (Ezek, 40:3). Ezekiel was taken to all parts of the temple. Water was trickling from the east side, just to the south of the gate (47:2). Soon, the water was ankle-deep. Then, it was knee-deep. As the prophet was led through the water, it grew to waist-deep. Finally, it was over his head (vss. 3-5). The temple was where the presence of God dwelled. The water flowed from the temple, not to the temple. The water healed, made fresh, and restored whatever it touched. It eventually found its way to the Dead Sea and was able to make even the salt water fresh! Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). Jesus was speaking of the effects of the Spirit in us and through us when we find eternal life in Jesus (cf. 7:37-39). We are the living temple of God. As Paul proclaimed, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" (I Cor. 6:19). The living waters flow out of us as Jesus declared. Just as the water that Ezekiel saw increased in volume and depth the more he progressed in its flow, so the volume and power of the living water flowing from our lives increases as we grow in our knowledge and understanding of God. As we progress in this Christian life, we find that we are healed of our brininess, just as the sea was made fresh. Salt water is not good for human consumption. For it to be drinkable, the salt needs to be removed. What constitutes salt water in the Christian life? Bitterness. Unforgiveness. Jealousy. Malice. Anger. Depression. The list could go on. As we allow the living waters to rise within us and heal us of those issues, we become conduits for the healing of others. When we get rid of our brininess, we find that others are more attracted to us. The prophet saw many fish of various kinds swimming in the river and a great number of fishermen spreading their nets. We are to be fishers of men, but first we have to allow the living, healing waters of God to flow through us.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Some years ago, the church building where I worship experienced water damage. A leak occurred in the baptistry, which was located behind the stage in the sanctuary and directly above the kitchen in the fellowship hall below. By the time anyone noticed what was happening, water had poured through the ceiling panels in the kitchen and had spread out into the fellowship hall. What a mess! As part of his temple vision, the prophet Ezekiel saw water flowing from under the threshold of the temple. This water, however, did not do any dam-age—quite the opposite! This water became the source of life and productivity in the places where it flowed. The imagery of life-giving water is frequent in the Bible. Water is necessary to all life on this planet, of course. That is one reason the Bible uses it so often to portray spiritual life and abundance. Jesus spoke this way of the Holy Spirit, who was to come following Jesus' ascension into Heaven (John 7:37-39). Unlike some figurative language in Scripture, this one is not at all difficult to grasp.

Today's lesson text takes us into another part of the prophet Ezekiel's temple vision. Beginning with chapter 40 and extending through chapter 48, the end of the book, Ezekiel presents the future in the context of worship from the glorious, perfect temple of God. This description of the new temple constitutes about 20 percent of the entire book of Ezekiel. Therefore, understanding the meaning and significance of the vision is crucial if we are to appreciate this great book fully. Between Ezekiel 43:21 (where last week's lesson ended) and 47:1 (where this week's begins), Ezekiel received details concerning (1) the officials to serve in the temple, (2) allotment of land, and instructions regarding offering procedures for the Passover and other special days. As chapter 47 opens, we see Ezekiel having been brought back to the entrance of the idealized temple.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Source and Expansion of the Stream (Ezek 47:1-5)

1 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar.

2 He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side.

3 And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles.

4 Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist.

5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed.

Living water from the Temple and Altar (1-2)

Living water as described by Jesus (John 4:10-14)

10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." 11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" 13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Living water of the Holy Spirit that washes and renews (Titus 3:4-7)

4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Flowing from the throne of Jesus (Rev 22:1)

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

Flowing from the throne of grace (Heb 4:16)

16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Its course - from the altar of sacrifice (Rev 21:5-6)

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

Expansion of the Waters (3-5)

Ankle deep - the step of faith that saves (Luke 7:50)

50 Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Knee deep - the prayer of dependence on God (John 16:23-24)

23 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Loin Deep - spiritual power (Eph 3:16-21)

16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Too deep - Holy Spirit controlled (Gal 5:16-18)

16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

Blessings of the Stream (Ezek 47:6-12)

6 He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.
7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other.
8 Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed.
9 And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.
10 It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many.
11 But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt.
12 Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine."

Blessing of healing waters (6-10)

Healing waters that God stirs (John 5:2-4)

2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.[]

Healing waters based on obedience to God's directions (2 Kings 5:10)

10 Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

Healing waters that are part of God's promises (Zech 13:1)

"On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

Reason blessings withheld (11)

Blessings withheld because of people turning away from God (Amos 4:7-8)

7 "I also withheld rain from you when the harvest was still three months away. I sent rain on one town, but withheld it from another. One field had rain; another had none and dried up. 8 People staggered from town to town for water but did not get enough to drink, yet you have not returned to me," declares the Lord.

Blessings withheld because of sin against God (1 Kings 8:35)

35 "When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and confess your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them,

Blessings withheld because of unrighteousness (Isa 5:5-7)

5 Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. 6 I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briars and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it." 7 The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

Blessings withheld because of stubbornness and rebellion (Jer 5:23-25)

23 But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts; they have turned aside and gone away. 24 They do not say to themselves, 'Let us fear the Lord our God, who gives autumn and spring rains in season, who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.' 25 Your wrongdoings have kept these away; your sins have deprived you of good.

Blessing of Trees of Life (12)

Trees bearing twelve crops of fruit (Rev 22:2)

2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Overcoming the world brings the right to eat from the tree of life (Rev 2:7)

7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

To those who wash their robes, God gives the right to the tree of life (Rev 22:14)

14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

What Trees Do (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

A careful study of trees reveals some amazing facts. For one, trees are a perfect counterpart to human life in that they take in carbon dioxide, which we breathe out as a waste product, and turn it into oxygen, which we need to live. In one sea-son, a mature leafy tree can produce as much oxygen as 10 people will inhale for the entire year! That's one reason why tropical rain forests are so important to the world's ecosystem. Trees also interact with water in surprisingly beneficial ways, such as slowing storm water run-off so it can be absorbed into the ground. One source estimates that a single, fully grown Colorado blue spruce can intercept more than 1,000 gallons of water annually in this way. This helps replenish underground aquifers. Ezekiel, of course, was not aware of modern scientific facts such as these. But he knew life when he saw it. And the trees lining the river in his vision not only represented life, they also witnessed to the blessings of food and medicinal applications.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Alan Carr

Eze. 47:1-12 **GETTING IN OVER YOUR HEAD**

Intro: This is a millennial vision. Ezekiel is envisioning a time when the Lord will bring about absolute healing in the nation of Israel. A time when the river of God's grace and blessing will flow from His throne and will refresh the promised land. While this prophecy is for the nation of Israel and will be literally fulfilled one day, there is application here for us tonight. By way of introduction, allow me to share the following personal illustration with you. Many years ago, when I was just a small child, I went with my family to a certain place to swim. I was about 6 or 7 at the time and had taken 2 or 3 years of swimming lessons and I was pretty confident that I could swim in the deeper water. So, if my memory serves me correctly, I ran to the area where the deeper water was and plunged in. Things went well for a time, but after a few minutes, I was tired from swimming. Too tired, in fact, to get myself back to shore. I remember struggling in the water and I remember going under. I also remember the distinct feeling that I was going to die. However, a much older and far more experienced swimmer came to my rescue and pulled me out. What I learned as a young child was that one should be careful about getting in over one's head. I would like to ask you a question. How many of you can honestly raise your hands this evening and tell me that beyond any shadow of a doubt, you know that you are exactly in the center of God's will and that you are right where God wants you to be in your spiritual growth? Any takers? I didn't think so! The truth of the matter is, we all have plenty of room for improvement! That's what this sermon is all about this evening. It's about becoming more of what the Lord God wants each of us to be. It's about leaving the shore of stagnant, disappointed Christianity and wading out into the deep spiritual waters of the born again life. You see, what has happened in the modern church is that many have become far too cautious about giving their all to Jesus Christ. I really believe that there are many in the church tonight who are afraid of getting in over their heads. Let's take a few minutes this evening to look at Ezekiel's prophecy. I want you to notice three aspects of this prophecy that apply to you and me this evening. What I would like to do tonight is to help you learn to wade out a little bit deeper for Jesus. I truth, I would like to see you get in over your head tonight!

Verses 1-2, 6-12 **EZEKIEL'S VISION**

A. **He Saw A River** - this river is type of the Holy Spirit, John 14:16-18. There are three ways in which this river represents the Spirit and His work in the life of the believer.

1. In Its Source - The throne of God. The Holy Spirit, like this river, came directly from the Father's throne.
2. In Its Course - From the altar. Notice that this river came from the altar, or the place where sacrifice was made. The Water of Life, the precious Holy Spirit comes directly from the altar of Christ's sacrifice, the cross - Matt. 20:28. The Holy Spirit came only after the death of Christ on the cross, John 16:7.
3. In Its Force - Notice four great things about this river that made it very special. These four things make the Holy Spirit special as well.
 - A. *It had no Feeder Streams* - There was no need for anything to flow into this river to give it force, size and power. When at left the throne, it possessed all that it needed. (The Mississippi is less than 3 feet wide where it begins, but after all the feed streams flow into it, it becomes a mighty river. God's river needs no feeder streams. What I mean is this, God doesn't need the world, anything that is in it, and He certainly doesn't need me and you to get His work done here in this world. God supersedes us! He supersedes this world and He will get the job done in spite of you and me. His river needs no feeder streams!)
 - B. *V. 8 It could Heal* - This river made the sea water pure when it flowed into it. (The deadly effect of drinking sea water. It will kill you!) I am talking about a river that has the power to heal this evening. I am talking about the power of the Holy Spirit in your life and mine. He can heal broken hearts. He can heal broken lives. He can heal broken dreams. He is a Spirit who flows with healing power tonight. I challenge you to bring that which is broken to the lord Jesus and watch Him heal it by His power! (Matt. 11:28; Luke 4:18

Jesus can take a life broken by sin and through the working of His Spirit, bring healing to that soul and glory into the heart of that life that was the slave of sin!).

C. V. 9 *It could Revive* - Everything this river touched was transform with its life giving power. Notice that verse 9 tells us twice that everything the river touches will live! (When the Spirit of God moves into a life, there will be a renewal. When God moves in, He will change things! He can take that which was dead and make it live, Eph. 2:1-4. He can and will give a drink of the water of life that will produce everlasting life and eternal satisfaction in the life of the believer.) By the way, the Holy Spirit is what our churches need if we are going to see revival and the power of God in our midst. We need to learn to welcome Him and not be afraid of His power in our midst.)

D. V. 12 *It could bring forth Fruit and Freshness* - Everywhere this great river flowed, fruit sprang up. So it is with the presence of the Holy Spirit. When He moves in, His presence will be manifested by fruit and freshness in the life of the believer, John 7:38-39; Gal. 5:22-23. (Contrast this fruit with that of the flesh!) All of these things picture the work of the Holy Spirit in saving and using the believer for the glory of the Lord. When our eyes are open, it is easy to see where the Spirit is moving and working.)

B. **He Saw** - Sadly, many hear the Gospel call, John 1:29, and they see what the Spirit can and is doing in the lives of others, yet that is as far as they get! However, that isn't far enough to save them Many, many see the river flowing by, but they never get wet! For this river to do you any good, you have to get into it, John 3:7. (The Ethiopian Eunuch - Acts 8:36-37).

Verses 3-4 **EZEKIEL'S VENTURE**

As the man in Ezekiel's vision measured the river, he carried Ezekiel along with him. As a result, the prophet was led into every deepening waters. God wants to do this same thing in your life tonight! Notice how Ezekiel's venture speaks to us as believers this evening.)

A. **Ankle Deep** - This represents the step of faith that saves the soul, Acts 16:31, Psa. 34:8. It is truly great to be saved, but it isn't the end! Yes, He brought us out, but He also wants to lead us on. Many stop right here and never go one step farther with God. There is much more to being saved than just getting saved! This is where the waders stay! Those who get saved and refuse to grow in the Lord are just dabblers. They spend all of their time in the shallow end of the pool afraid to wade out deeper. They miss the blessings of the deeper life. These people are in total, absolute control of their lives.) Have you ever watched the children in the kiddie pool? They remind me of a lot of church members this evening. Always yelling and screaming, wanting somebody else's pool toy. Doing their best to splash someone and push someone else under. Sounds just like many of the folk in our churches, doesn't it?)

B. **Knee Deep** - The knees speak of prayer. This represents a life that is learning dependence upon the Lord. This is the person who prays and trying to live their life in faith before the Lord, Heb. 10:38. Many never reach even this shallow level of maturity in the Lord. You need to remember, however, that no person will ever stand taller than he does on his knees! Those who are at this level know something of the power of the river. They can feel its power as it rushes past, but they aren't really affected by it. They are still standing on their own 2 feet. They are in control of their lives and aren't being supported by the river.)

C. **Loin Deep** - The loins are emblematic of strength. This speaks of spiritual power in our lives. When one has waded out waist deep into the river, more of the river and less of the man is seen, John 3:30. When we have waded out this far, we can feel the power of the river, and others can see its effect on us, Eph. 6:10. This level of maturity is rarely reached, but when it is, you can't hide its effects in your life! It will tell on you! As deep as this level of spiritual growth is, it is still not as deep as we can go! The few who are at this level of spiritual maturity, have lost some control over themselves. They are often picked up by the river and moved a few feet at a time, but still, they are close enough to the shore to be able to stand if they need to. They are in control.)

Verse 5 **EZEKIEL'S VICTORY**

At this point, Ezekiel has reached a place where the river is in control. It takes him where it will. He has no power over his destination. He is at the mercy of the river!

A. This represents the highest spiritual level that any believer can reach in this life. (Couldn't pass over! It just doesn't get any deeper than this!)

B. There are three reasons why I can say that this is the deepest you can ever get as a Christian.

1. When you are this deep, you have gone beyond your own ability - (Ezekiel was at the total mercy of the river. Far too many like the safety of the shore.) The person who has reached this level of spiritual maturity has moved beyond himself and has placed himself under that control and command of God. This is what true spiritual maturity is all about! It is about coming to the end of ourselves and realizing just how big this thing really is, and that there is no way that we could ever do it on our own. We must come to the place where we realize who is in control! Phil. 4:13.)

2. When you are this deep, you have ceased to support yourself - (Ezekiel was no longer wading, he was just resting. He wasn't in charge, he gave himself over to the power of the river!) This is where God wants to bring you and me to. He wants us to reach the place where we learn to rest in Him and allow Him to support us and carry us through this life. It will no longer be you trying to run around and get things done, it will be you resting in the power of the Holy Spirit watching the Lord conduct His business as He carries you along with Him.

3. When you are this deep, you have given yourself up to the will of the river - (Ezekiel was going to go where the river took him) This is how the Lord wants us to be. He wants us to loose sight of ourselves, our goals, our ambitions, our dreams and He wants us to be totally, 100% surrendered to Him and His will for our lives. God is looking for surrender from you and me, Rom. 12:1-2.

4. When you are this deep, you are just happy to be carried by the river - The will of the river becomes your will also. This is where we are all commanded to be - Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:25; 1 John 2:6. (Basically, Ezekiel was all wet! He was into something that was way over his head. That, my friends is where God wants to get you!)

Conclusion: Do you know what the secret to real revival is? It is nothing more than for God's people to get to the place where they are as deep in Him as they can get! That's what it is! It isn't for that ankle deep crowd! Those knee deep folks will get a ripple every now and then. Even those who are out there to the loins won't feel the force of God's power like they should. It is only when we throw ourselves on the mercy of the river and allow the Spirit of God to have the absolute right of way in our lives that we can experience true and genuine revival. Now, I want you to notice 2 things that are so deep and profound that you may have missed them during this message.

1. Notice this statement in verses 3 - 4, "He brought me through the waters." Some of you are holding back on total commitment to the Lord this evening because you are afraid that if you fully sell out to Him that you will drown. God will never let you down! Some of this saints have walked through some mighty deep waters over the centuries and God brought them all out!

A. Job, Job 1-2

B. 3 Hebrews, Dan. 3

C. Daniel, Dan. 6

D. The Disciples - John 6 (Feeding the 5,000 and the storm!)

My friend, what the Lord did for them, He will also do for you! (Isa. 43:2; Isa. 45:7)

2. The deeper you go, the harder it is to jump out - When you are in the kiddie pool, you can jump in and out whenever you feel like it. Even when you are knee deep and loin deep, it is just a short hike back to the safety of the bank. However, when you have placed yourself at the mercy of the river, it's a whole lot harder to get back out again. What I am saying is that an ever deepening spiritual life is a hedge against failure. Get in as deep as you can!

Just how deep are you this evening? Are you still in the shallows? If so, wade on out, because the water is fine! Besides, you can't do the backstroke in the kiddie pool! You've got to get out there pretty deep to get where your feet no longer

touch the bottom. What are you going to do? Some of you have never even gotten into the water. Make tonight your night to give it all up to Jesus. Will you do it?

(Adapted from URL: http://www.sermonnotebook.org/old%20testament/Eze%2047_1-5.htm)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The most significant of the word pictures found in today's passage is water. The Old Testament uses water imagery to convey the message that God's "water of life" is never stagnant, but always available, active, and life-giving (Psalms 1:3; 36:8; 84:5, 6; Isaiah 12:3; 41:18; 43:19; 66:12; Jeremiah 31:9). Jesus used the imagery of water on various occasions to depict the abundant life he came to bring. When he attended the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, he declared, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them" (John 7:37, 38; compare 4:10, 14). Jesus was not quoting a single, particular Old Testament passage, but the general message derived from several passages, including our text for today. Interestingly, the climax of the Feast of Tabernacles featured the pouring out of water as part of the symbolism. It was in such a setting—perhaps during the pouring-out ceremony itself—that Jesus made his promise of living water. Christopher Wright notes that the water-pouring ceremony at this feast in Jesus' day "was already interpreted in various Jewish traditions as a symbolic anticipation of the messianic outpouring of the Spirit in fulfillment of various Scriptures, including Ezekiel 47:1-9." The apostle John goes on to explain, "By this [Jesus] meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive" (John 7:39). This means that we can enjoy right now the benefits of the spiritual refreshment that come from the Holy Spirit.

We see Ezekiel's vision reaching its clearest and ultimate fulfillment in the book of Revelation. There the apostle John was shown "the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:1, 2). John saw a certain river as the source of life, just as Ezekiel saw. Trees on either side of John's river were fruitful, just like Ezekiel's. And the leaves of the trees that John saw were a source of healing, again just like Ezekiel's. Such parallels indicate how Ezekiel's great temple vision should be understood. It does not appear that the temple layout shown to that prophet was ever intended to be followed by the exiles who returned from Babylon or by any other group of God's people. Since the vision portrays something unique and miraculous in nature, we must allow God himself to declare how its fulfillment is to be understood. That is what the New Testament does for us. It points to a fulfillment that is initiated by Jesus' first coming and climaxed by his second coming. At Jesus' return, his holy city will become inhabited for eternity by his people. It is a city "whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. Not only spiritual blessings but also physical blessings flow from God's dwelling place (Ezek. 47:1)
2. God always supplies in abundance the resources His people need (vss. 3-5)
3. The Lord can—and will—make that which is barren rich and fruitful (vss. 6-8)
4. Labor that is productive ultimately comes from God and is truly satisfying (vss. 9-10)
5. In God's plan, even barren land has a purpose (vs. 11)
6. The coming kingdom demonstrates that the believer's future blessings are good, abundant, and pleasing (vs. 12)