

## The Land of Living Waters – Ezk 47-48

The last two chapters of the book of Ezekiel describe changes in the land which will occur in the Millennium, under Messiah's reign. Why should we care about this? Not simply for the geographic details, but for what they teach us about the impact of God's presence in our lives, whether in the millennial age, or today in the age of grace. This is still part of the vision God gave to Ezekiel, which started in chapter 40. In verse 2 there, we read, "In visions of God he brought me to the land of Israel, and set me down on a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south." Something is stated there which connects with our text this morning, though we could easily miss it. He mentions a very high mountain, and then describes the temple sitting on the southern slopes of it.

The current Temple Mount site, known as Mount Moriah, is at 2441 ft above sea level. Mount Zion, the main part of the old city west of the Temple, is 2534 ft. The Mount of Olives, directly east across the Kidron Valley, is 2632 ft. Though they comprise some of the heights of Judah, none of those are "very high" mountains. Here's an aerial view of Jerusalem looking towards the Mount of Olives in 1931. In fact, the topography would be rather comparable to our own Potlatch Ridge and the Palouse region. Where does this very high mountain come from? The prophecies dealing with the last days indicate there will be very many earthquakes, so we would expect changes in topography from them. One in particular is Zech 14:4, which says when Messiah comes in glory, He will stand on the Mount of Olives, and it will be split in two, creating a wide valley. Down in v. 8 it says "On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter." We'll talk more about these waters in a minute. Then we see in v. 10, "The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site..." There are other passages which indicate Jerusalem will be lifted up, even as the other hills in Israel are flattened out. This results in the description we find in Ezekiel's vision, of Jerusalem sitting on a singularly high mountain.

Now let's get back to Ezekiel 47 and this water flowing from Jerusalem. "Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side." It is noteworthy that the source of this water is the temple. Right now, the area known as the Temple Mount has many underground cisterns which were used in the past to store water, but there is no known freshwater spring there. This is one of the changes that God will bring about during the last days. Zechariah called it "living waters," which usually refers to an artesian well, but the Bible also uses that phrase in other significant ways, which we should take heed of.

Of course, we think of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4, where Jesus said that He would give living water, and then in John 7:38 "whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Jesus quoted from Pr 18:4 in this case. Jeremiah 2:13 and 17:13 warn about forsaking "the Lord, the fountain of living water." Then in Rev 7:17 "For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Ezekiel wrote of a literal spring, but it is also a picture of a spiritual reality, showing the results of God's presence in our lives and our world. When He dwells within us, His

Spirit flows through us, bestowing blessing and life, as a kind of first installment of the greater blessings to come.

Our text then describes (v. 2-6) how this trickling spring grows and becomes a mighty river, deep enough to swim in. It flows through the valley created through the Mount of Olives, and flows down to the Dead Sea. Currently the Brook Kidron, just east of the city, flows south and into the Dead Sea. Look at verses 7-12. "As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. And he said to me, 'This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. And 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 may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow 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. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.'" Notice the miraculous nature of this water. The Dead Sea becomes living, filled with fish. Everywhere the river goes, living creatures will thrive. Trees will grow along its banks, producing monthly fruit and healing leaves. This is the impact of God's presence and blessing, and it all comes from the Temple because He is dwelling there.

What is the lesson for us in this? Of course, we see the blessing of God that will come on the land when Jesus is reigning as Messiah, but it also vividly pictures for us the promises God has given, even in the current age, of His blessing and healing that comes when we allow Him to rule our lives. We saw Jesus' promise in John 7:38, "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." This he said about the Spirit, who has been given to all who believe in Him. These blessings were also foretold in Psalms. Look with me at Psalm 1:1-3, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers." This describes some of the evidence of a life ruled by God, and the blessings that follow. Also Psalm 92:12-15, "The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."