

EZEKIEL

Chapter 47

Water Flowing from the Temple

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. 2 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. 3 Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. 4 Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep. 5 Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. 6 And he said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this?” Then he led me back to the bank of the river. 7 As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. 8 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. 9 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. 10 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. 11 But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. 12 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.”

47:1 *he.* The angelic guide (40:3), who here appears for the last time, concluded Ezekiel’s visionary tour of the new temple. (CSB)

threshold of the temple. Ezekiel was standing in the inner court. (CSB)

water. The rest of this section (vv. 1–12) makes it clear that healing, life-nurturing water is meant. In the larger background was the river flowing from the Garden of Eden (Ge 2:10). (CSB)

water was issuing from below the threshold. Water is the symbol of life-giving blessings flowing in the channels of divine grace (cf Ps 65:9; Is 33:20–21; 43:20). When, as here, it emanates from the temple where the reconciled God resides, it prefigures the restoration to life in the new covenant (cf Jn 4:14; 7:37–38; Eph 2:1–10; Col 2:13–15; Rv 22:1–2). The flow of this water never stops. (TLSB)

47:2 *brought me out by the north gate.* Because the east gate was closed (44:2). (CSB)

47:3–6 In its course, it grew in depth and width. Yet it was not fed by tributaries. (TLSB)

47:5 *measured off another thousand.* For a total of four measuring’s. (CSB)

river that I could cross. Amazing, in that a stream fed by no tributaries does not increase as it flows. (CSB)

47:7 *very many trees*. Reminiscent of Eden (Ge 2:9). (CSB)

47:8 *Arabah*. Desert land including the area of the Salt Sea and extending southward from it. (TLSB)

the Sea. Usually means the Mediterranean Sea, but here obviously the Dead Sea is intended. (CSB)

The Salt Sea, rightly called because its salt kills vegetation and marine life. The sea could sustain life when the river flowed into it, overcoming its deadly properties. (TLSB)

becomes fresh. The Hebrew says, figuratively, “becomes healed.” That this lowest (1,300 feet below sea level) and saltiest (25 percent) body of water in the world should sustain such an abundance of life indicates the wonderful renewing power of this “river of the water of life” (Rev 22:1). (CSB)

47:10 *En Gedi*. Means “spring of the goat”; a strong spring midway along the western side of the Dead Sea. (CSB)

En Eglaim. Means “spring of the two calves.” It is possibly Ain Feshkha, at the northwestern corner of the Dead Sea, though some suggest a location on the east bank. (CSB)

47:11 *swamps and marshes*. Unchanged by the river. (TLSB)

they will be left for salt. Perhaps to provide the salt needed in the sacrifices (43:24). (CSB)

47:12 *Every month*. A marvelous extension of the promises in 34:27; 36:30 (see Am 9:13) (CSB)

fresh fruit. The miraculously increasing supply of water irrigated and fructified ever-widening banks, turning them into a paradise of trees bearing fruit every month. (TLSB)

leaves for healing. In ancient Israel, various leaves and plants had medicinal uses. Here, God provides a most beneficial cure. Cf Rv 22:14, 19. (TLSB)

47:1–12 Ezekiel’s guide takes him to the inner court, where a stream of water begins flowing, transforming the Salt Sea (cf Rv 22:1–2). God’s grace transforms what was dead to bring forth new life. How great is His power! How gentle His kindness toward you. • Precious Lord Jesus, transform me. I find myself dead in sin, but Your grace can make me alive again. Amen. (TLSB)

Division of the Land

13 Thus says the Lord GOD: “This is the boundary by which you shall divide the land for inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph shall have two portions. 14 And you shall divide equally what I swore to give to your fathers. This land shall fall to you as your inheritance. 15 “This shall be the boundary of the land: On the north side, from the Great Sea by way of Hethlon to Lebo-hamath, and on to Zedad, 16 Berothah, Sibram (which lies on the border between Damascus and Hamath), as far as Hazer-hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran. 17 So the boundary shall run from the sea to Hazer-enan, which is on the northern border of Damascus, with the border of Hamath to the north. This shall be the north side. 18 “On the east side, the boundary shall run between Hauran and Damascus; along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel; to the eastern sea and as far as Tamar. This shall be the east side. 19 “On the south side, it shall run from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribah-kadesh, from there along the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea. This shall be the south side.

20 “On the west side, the Great Sea shall be the boundary to a point opposite Lebo-hamath. This shall be the west side. 21 “So you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel. 22 You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the sojourners who reside among you and have had children among you. They shall be to you as native-born children of Israel. With you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. 23 In whatever tribe the sojourner resides, there you shall assign him his inheritance, declares the Lord GOD.

47:13–23 God reestablishes the borders of the Promised Land, within which His people will dwell securely (38:11), unhampered in their desire to worship their Redeemer and uncontaminated by foreign influence. The northern limits extended from the Great Sea near Tyre to the vicinity of Damascus, once the capital of Syria. The Jordan and the Salt Sea formed the eastern border (cf Nu 34:3). The latter was also the point marking the southern extremity, which cut across westward to the Brook of Egypt, a stream emptying into the Great Sea, which was the western border. These borders differ somewhat from Israel’s earlier borders. (TLSB)

47:13 *Joseph shall have two portions.* Since the tribe of Levi received none (44:28), Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph’s two sons adopted by Jacob (Ge 48:17–20), each received an allotment (see 48:4–5). (CSB)

Because Levi’s inheritance is in the temple area (45:5), the number of the 12 tribes is maintained by allotting a portion to Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph blessed by Jacob (Gn 48:20). (TLSB)

47:14 *what I swore.* A reference to the covenant made with Abram (Ge 15:9–21; see Eze 20:5; 36:28). (CSB)

47:15 *This shall be the boundary.*† Approximates Israel’s borders at the time of David and Solomon, except that Transjordan is not included (see v. 18)—which, in any event, was never within the boundaries of the promised land proper. The following specified boundaries resemble those in Nu 34:1–12. However, these borders are not geographical lines of demarcation for an actual, physical, new homeland of Israel. The idealized promised land, which they define, is the prophetic symbol of a place and time in which the worship described in the previous chapters will be possible. (CSB)

Hethlon road. Probably situated on the Mediterranean coast, somewhere in present-day Lebanon. (CSB)

This place, as well as others in this section, remains unidentified. For the entrance of Hamath, (TLSB)

Lebo Hamath. See NIV text note. Lebo, however, probably does not mean “entrance,” but should be identified with modern Lebweh, about 15 miles northeast of Baalbek and 20 miles southwest of Kadesh on the Orontes River, near Riblah. At one time Lebo must have served as a fortress guarding the southern route to Hamath. Perhaps the phrase should be translated “Lebo of Hamath.” It is often referred to in Scripture as the northern limit of Israel (see v. 20; 48:1; Nu 13:21; 34:8; Jos 13:5; 1Ki 8:65; 2Ki 14:25; Am 6:14). (CSB)

Zedad. Mentioned in Nu 34:8 but otherwise unknown. (CSB)

47:16 *Berothah.* Probably to be identified with the Berothai of 2Sa 8:8, but otherwise unknown. (CSB)

Sibraim. Location unknown; probably the Sepharvaim of 2Ki 17:24; 18:34. (CSB)

Damascus. Capital of Aram (Syria); according to v. 17 it was included in Israel. (CSB)

Hamath. A city about 120 miles north of Damascus on the Orontes River. (CSB)

Hazer Hatticon. Means “the middle enclosure.” Its location is unknown, but it is possibly the same as Hazar Enan in v. 17. (CSB)

47:18 *eastern sea.* The Dead Sea (see Joel 2:20; Zec 14:8). (CSB)

the land of Israel. The land beyond the Jordan, where two and a half tribes had been located, was no longer to be a part of restored Israel. The place-names here may indicate Babylonian divisions. (TLSB)

Tamar. Means “(place of) palms” (see v. 19; 48:28); mentioned in Ge 14:7 (Hazon Tamar) and 1Ki 9:18 and identified with En Gedi. (CSB)

47:19 *Meribah Kadesh.* A district about 50 miles south of Beersheba, identified with Kadesh Barnea in Nu 34:4. (CSB)

Tamar. Possibly the Edomite fortress (Mezad Hazeva) in the northern Arabah, near an important crossroad. (TLSB)

Brook of Egypt. The Wadi el-Arish, a deeply cut riverbed with seasonal flow that runs from the Sinai north-northwest until it enters the Mediterranean, 50 miles south of Gaza. It marked the southernmost extremity of Solomon’s kingdom (1Ki 8:65). (CSB)

47:22 *sojourners.* Peoples of heathen ancestry were to have an inheritance among the descendants of Abraham (Lv 19:33–34; Gal 3:7–9). (TLSB)

they shall be to you as native-born children of Israel. A gracious inclusiveness that went beyond the provision of 14:7. It reflects the same universalism that is found in such prophecies as Isa 56:3–8. (CSB)

Naturally part of the holy nation. Luth: “According to the second part of the prophecy and the new covenant, the Jews are no longer Israel, for all things are to be new, and Israel too must become new. Those alone are the true Israel who have accepted the new covenant which was established and begun at Jerusalem. For according to the old covenant I am no Israelite, or Jew. But I claim now that I am the son of St. Paul, and an Israelite or Benjamite. For Paul is my father, not the old Paul but the new Paul. He is still the old Paul, but out of the old Paul there has arisen a new Paul in Christ; and he has begotten me in Christ by the gospel [I Cor. 4:15], so that I am in his likeness according to the new covenant. Thus all the Gentiles who are Christians are the true Israelites and new Jews, born of Christ, the noblest Jew. Everything, therefore, depends upon the new covenant, which the Messiah was to found, making all things new, as he has done” (AE 35:287–88). (TLSB)