



THE RIVER OF LIFE

Reading Ezekiel 47.8-12

- We continue on with Old Testament passages which have a great significance for our New Testament times.
- Today I want to show you something from the depths of the scriptures
- It's buried within the book of Ezekiel (as we read) and we must mine it to bring out the treasures it has for you.
- It's a wonderful picture shown to that prophet in a vision.
 - It may seem obscure, but it has lasting relevance.. especially for you.
- Where does it take place?
 - The Temple
- What temple? Solomon's?
 - No, there was another....never built, but described.
 - It wasn't intended to be built because it is a symbol of the work of God in His Church.
- So what happens?

- Well in Ezek 43 the prophet is shown the east gate.

- And God's glory enters by this gate

Ezekiel 43.1-6

"Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house."

- This gate God enters is clearly significant.
- In the earlier symbolism of the tabernacle we are told the tabernacle only had one entrance.
- This clearly pictures how we are to approach God, and this symbol obviously teaches that there is only ONE WAY
- This is contrary to what some teach that "All paths lead to God. All religions are just different ways to reach the same God"
- NO God is telling us here.
There is only one entrance.
Only one way.
- And the way is by God Himself, not by our efforts, as all other religions teach.
- But, even though it is only God's 'one way', by the time we reach Ezekiel's vision, the picture has enlarged and more detail is shown.
- Now this temple has 3 entrances

D Here's a quick drawing

- This isn't to teach that there are now 3 different ways to God (God still only uses one way- the east gate).
- It is to show that the way involves the work of One that no one else can do.
- And yet His people can come in, to be converted, to worship there, and go out into the world blessed and changed.
- Crucially this east gate is one that "no man" must enter, except One. And He is called "the Prince" (He is royal like David, a shepherd king, but also a priestly person who sacrifices. Kings weren't really allowed to sacrifice- that's probably why he's called the Prince. Also because Jesus Christ was a priest like Melchizedek- King of Salem, not the Levite priests, He was of the tribe of Judah).
- The Prince's gate

Ezek 44. 1-3 "Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it (no one is righteous); because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the

prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.”



- Here's a picture of the east gate in Jerusalem now.
- The Jews (not seeing the spiritual significance of such things and taking it literally), have bricked this east gate shut.
- But, as I said, this is a vision of a temple never built.
- It does exist though.

“How Sir?”

- Because what it symbolises exists.

The work of God in His New Testament Church.

- So who is the Prince?

Well, I think you can guess.

- The Prince is clearly a man, but it says also “no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it (earlier), therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.”
- This is a Man who is equal to God
- The east gate is thought to be the gate that the Messiah would enter.
- And indeed the east gate of Jerusalem is thought to be the one entered by Christ when He rode into Jerusalem on the donkey.
- What did He do?
 - I scarcely need to remind you how He went to Calvary's cross and died a sacrificial death for all who would put their trust in Him, and was resurrected on the third day. Then He returned to heaven.
- Only Jesus Christ the God-Man could have done this for His people.
- So, only the Prince comes in the east gate and goes out again.
- But in a sense, He's always there in the Temple amongst His people.
- Because **they** can enter because of **His** work.
- They can't work their own salvation
 - they can't come that way (by the east gate),
 - but they can come into the sheepfold as it were because of Him.

Look at Ezekiel 46

- The Prince enters

[Ezek 46.1-10](#)

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened. And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. And the burnt offering that the prince shall offer unto the LORD in the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish...(more offerings- these all picture Christ's sacrifice on the cross).

But when the people of the land shall come before the LORD in the solemn feasts, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; **and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate: he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth over against it. And the prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth...**

- Christ is with them as their Prince of peace. He has to be otherwise they couldn't be there.
- You see, this is all those who come to God by Christ, trusting in His work for them on the cross.
- He takes the blame for them, so they can be forgiven (this is why the Prince also offers up sacrifice -45.22- “for Himself”. Some think this must prove the Prince isn't Christ. But It means in the Hebrew “for the sake of/on account of Himself”, not for Himself as a sinner because He personally needs a sacrifice. For the Messiah doesn't need to sacrifice for Himself- being perfect in every way. He does it for others on account of Himself).
- Christ offers up a perfect life, because they can't, so they may attain eternal life in heaven.
- The people enter the temple and don't turn to leave by the same way (if they come by the south they must leave by the north), because it is impossible to go back and lose your salvation if you're truly saved.
 - You pass through conversion because of Christ's sake.

- Glorious good news!

-This is the Gospel.

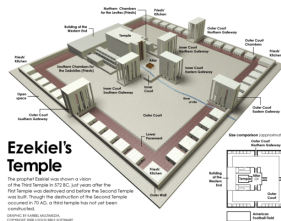
- And its work flows, like a river, from Christ's work.
 - First the disciples
 - Then the converts at Peter's preaching the Gospel at the feast of Pentecost.
 - Then it spreads because of the scattering of persecution
 - Then the churches set up by Paul and the others.
 - Then it goes wider to Europe
 - Finally it reaches England's dark superstitious land- probably first by Roman soldiers
 - Later there is a great revival during the Reformation
 - Then pilgrims travel to America, and missionary movements take this Gospel message of hope for lost souls to the whole world.
- It is even preached in London at Elephant and Castle to a small group of College class boys.

- Will some of them live by these Gospel waters that flow from the work of Christ?
- “But Sir, surely that's a bit of a stretch. Can this be so? Is there a picture of that spreading Gospel in Ezekiel?”

Well, yes, we read it in our reading.

Let's read Ezekiel 47

The River



Ezekiel 47.1-12

“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. 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. (This is the Gospel river of life) 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. 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. 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. (See how this water has spread and gives life) 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. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other (Trees of life, the fruit of the Gospel, the fruit that Christians bare in service) Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea (this is the Dead sea, the place of salt and sulphur. All die that enter it - this is thought to be the place of the city of Sodom destroyed. Old Spurgeon likened London to it, calling it a “graveyard city”. He also likens the heart of Men to it- saying “Man only needs to be placed under certain circumstances, and he will develop into a very fiendish-devilish person”): But **which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed** (all that was dead before in the unconverted life. All harm of sin and death that happens to those who are dead in trespasses and sins shall be healed after they become Christians. The putrid waters of lust flow now clean and pure, the bitter waters of hatred now are refreshing and clear). **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** (Christ told us to be fishers of Men), **because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. 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 (every type of person, with different gifts and qualities), as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt (What is this? This is people who say they're Christians but aren't really saved. These waters cannot heal anything. They are nominal Christianity- in name only. Beware of these. You must experience the true healing of God, don't just like the idea of being religious but never find God through Christ within). 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 (they come from the place where the blood of the sacrifice is taken - the holy of holies where the ark was, which pictured the work of Christ): and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."

- This same picture is picked up in the last book- Revelation 500yrs later!
- A glorious river of life flowing from the throne of God

Rev 22

"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. 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. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him"

- See how this wonderful picture is taught by God throughout the Bible.
- A book that spans 1600yrs, and yet contains the same message, in the same symbols, from beginning to end.
- A message about salvation of the soul.
- The real meaning of life.
- Surely it is God's Word.
- God's revealed truth to you.
- Do you see it?
- The question for you from this is whether you have found those waters of life?
- This world is a dead place for souls.
 - Don't swim down the Jordan river of youth only to plunge into the poisonous Dead sea of the results of sin. Nothing lives there.
- Do you want life within? You need the life giving waters.
- Are you fed up with the dry dusty desert entertainments and ideas of people who don't know God?
- May the waters of Christ's river of life touch you.
- Are you hurt and wounded by the world and its sinful ways?
- Is your heart diseased and broken?
 - You need those healing Gospel waters.

- Those leaves from the trees, like Gospels sermons spouting from the preacher's study, they will heal you.
- Come to the house of God.
 - Listen to the sermons.
 - Read His Word.
 - Pray to Him for that salvation which only comes through that 'Prince of peace'- Jesus Christ.
- We can only tell you the way.
 - You must all come on your own.
 - You **can** enter the Temple, but only through Christ who is the door.
- You can't do what He did- that's why that work was only for Him and the east gate is now shut.
- Nevertheless, you can pass through the temple, from one old life to a new one.
- There is no other way by which men can be saved.
 - God bids you to come and be healed.
 - He says:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"

"And (the good Samaritan) went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him"

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

Let's pray.