

Ezekiel 47 - The Millennial River

III. Restoration of Israel (Ezek 33:1—48:45)

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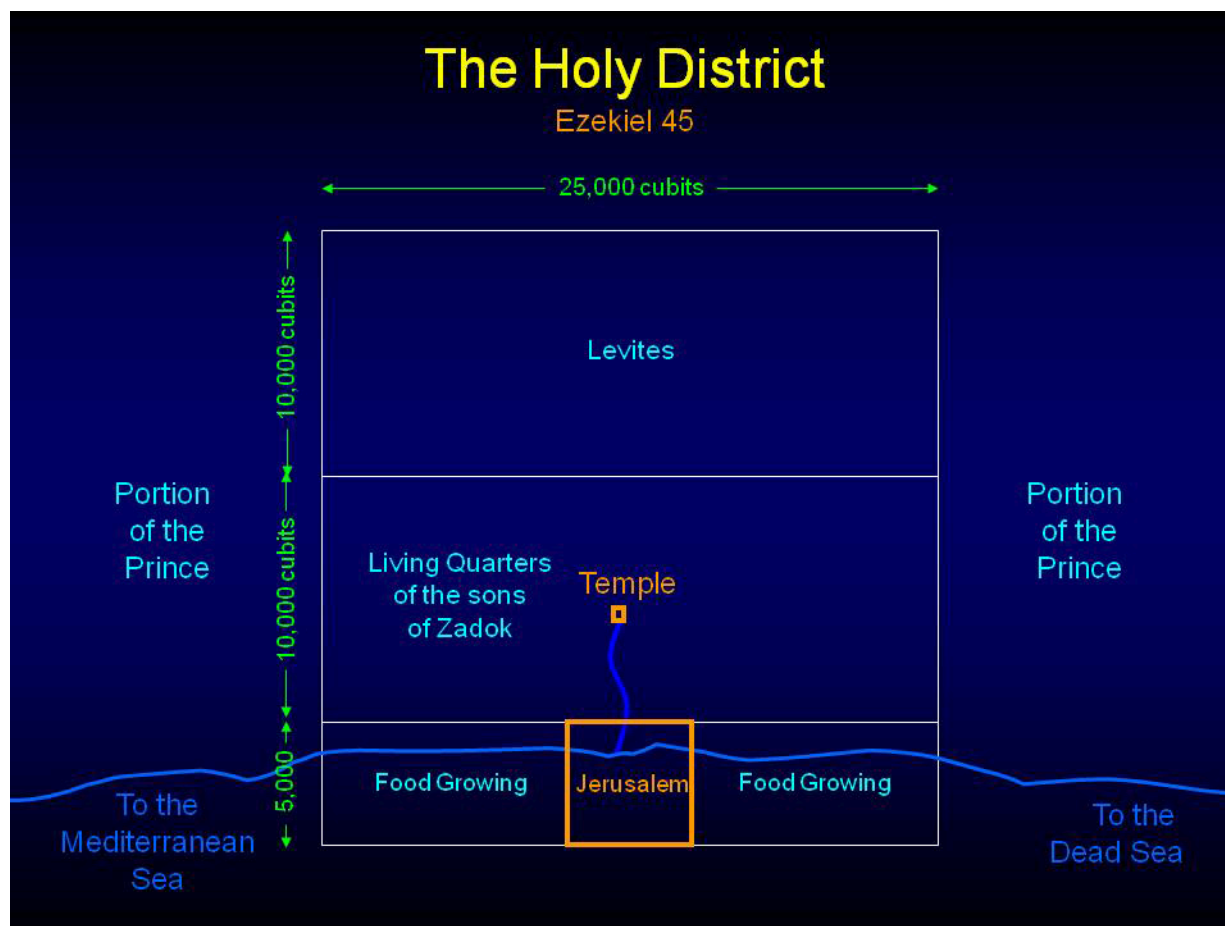
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The River from the Temple

A literal life-giving river with the inclusion of details such as the fishermen (v10) and the salty swamps and marshes (v11). Joel had mentioned this river before Ezekiel's time (Joel 3:18); Zechariah spoke of it after Israel returned from the Babylonian Captivity (Zech 14:8).



Ezek 47:1-12 is one of three passages (Joel 3:18; Zech 14:8) that speak about the Millennial River. It depicts the river as beginning in the Temple area and eventually flowing south to the Dead Sea. According to Ezekiel, the Millennial River will gush out from the front part of the Temple, by the threshold of the door and the right side of the altar which will stand in front of the Temple. It will first head east until the eastern gate before going south to the Dead Sea. Zech 14:8 says that it will divide into two branches at Jerusalem. The west branch will flow into the Mediterranean Sea, while the eastern branch will flow to the Dead Sea. They will water the fields to Jerusalem's east and west. The eastern branch will also transform the Dead Sea, which will swarm with life (Ezek 47:8-10).

Ezekiel 47

(C) Land (Ezek 47:1—48:35)

(a) Millennial river (47:1-12)

1 Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from **under the threshold of the house** toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar.

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

1 After this, he brought me back to the doorway to the Temple. To my amazement, there was water flowing out toward the east from beneath the threshold of the Temple! (The Temple faced eastward.) The water flowed down from beneath the right side of the Temple, that is, from the south-facing side where the altar was located.

1 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.

- "...under the threshold of the house" - the origination of the River, at the threshold of the temple

2 And he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate, by the way **facing east**. And behold, water was spurting out from the south side.

2 He brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate by way of *the gate* that faces east. And behold, water was trickling from the south side.

2 Then he brought me out through the north gateway and around to the one outside that faces toward the east. To my amazement, water was trickling out from that part of the south side, too!

2 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.

- "...facing east" - Zechariah recorded that the water will flow to the City of Jerusalem, then divide, with half flowing E toward the Dead Sea and half flowing W toward the Mediterranean (Zech 14:8)

— Ezekiel followed only the branch that went toward the east

— The branching of these waters toward east and west of Jerusalem will provide the necessary water for the growing crops

3 When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water *reaching* the ankles.

3 When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water *reaching* the ankles.

3 As the man went out toward the east, he carried a measuring line in his hand. He measured out 1,000 cubits as he led me through water that was ankle-deep.

3 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.

4 Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water *reaching* the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through *the water*, water *reaching* the hips.

4 Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water *reaching* the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through *the water*, water *reaching* the loins.

4 Then he measured out another 1,000 cubits, where he led me through water that was knee-deep. And then he measured out another 1,000 cubits, where the water was waist-deep.

4 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.

5 Again he measured a thousand; *and it was* a river that I could not wade across, because the water had risen, *enough* water to swim in, a river that could not be crossed *by wading*.

5 Again he measured a thousand; *and it was* a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, *enough* water to swim in, a river that could not be forded.

5 When he had measured out another 1,000 cubits, the water had become deep enough that I wasn't able to ford it. Instead, I would have had to swim through it.

5 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.

The Temple River

Ezekiel is brought from the outer court (Ezek 46:21) to the vestibule of the Temple (Ezek 40:48-49). There he sees a stream issuing from below the threshold of the Temple, eastward, passing south of the altar (v1) and south of the outer east gate (v2). At 1,000 cubits from the gate, the waters are ankle deep (v3), but within 4,000 cubits they have become a river (*nahal*), deep enough to swim in (v4-5).

6 And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen *this*?" Then he brought me back to the bank of the river.

6 He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen *this*?" Then he brought me back to the bank of the river.

6 Then, as he was bringing me back along the river bank, he asked me, "Son of Man, did you see all of this?"

6 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.

7 Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river *there were* very many trees on the one side and on the other.

7 Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river *there were* very many trees on the one side and on the other.

7 As we were coming back, I was amazed to see that there were many, many trees lining both banks of the river.

7 Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

8 Then he said to me, "These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go toward the **sea**, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters *of the sea* become fresh.

8 Then he said to me, "These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go toward the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters *of the sea* become fresh.

8 He told me, "This river flows toward the eastern territories all the way down into the Arabah, and from there its water flows toward the Dead Sea, where the sea water turns fresh.

8 Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

- "...sea" - the Dead Sea; the water goes down into the Arabah, the depression of the Jordan Valley reaching to the Gulf of Akabah, transforming it, making the waters of the (Dead) Sea fresh (v8) and teeming with life (v9) like the Mediterranean Sea (v10).

9 And it will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there and *the others* become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes.

9 It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there and *the others* become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes.

9 It will support all kinds of living creatures that will thrive abundantly wherever the river flows. There will be a great many fish, because this water will flow there and turn the salt water fresh. As a result, everything will live wherever the river flows.

9 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, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

- The Dead Sea, now some 6x saltier than the ocean, will become completely salt-free

10 And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi to **Eneglaim** there will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish will be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many.

10 And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi to Eneglaim there will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish will be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many.

10 A day will come when fishermen will line its banks—from En-gedi to En-eglaim there will be plenty of room to spread out nets. There will be all sorts of species of fish, as abundant as the fish that live in the Mediterranean Sea. There will be lots of them!

10 And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En Gedi even unto En Eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

- "...Eneglaim" - "Spring of the Two Calves"; location is uncertain

— Suggestions have included the SW shore of the Dead Sea near Zoar and an area on the NW shore S of Khirbet Qumran

11 But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt.

11 But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt.

11 "The river delta will consist of swamps and marshes that will remain a salt water wetland preserve.

11 But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

12 And by the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all *kinds of* trees 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, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing."

12 By the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all *kinds of* trees for food. Their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing."

12 Lining each side of the river banks, all sorts of species of fruit trees will be growing. Their leaves will never wither and their fruit will never fail. They will bear fruit every month, because the water that nourishes them will be flowing from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food and their leaves will contain substances that promote healing."

12 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: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

- Cf. Joel 3:18; Zech 13:1; 14:8; John 4:14; 7:37-38; Rev 22:1-2.

Millennial Israel (Ezek 47:13—48:29)

For the first time in Israel's history, the Jews will possess and settle in all of the Promised Land, and it will again be subdivided into the twelve tribal divisions. But these tribal divisions will be different than those described in the Book of Joshua. Ezekiel states that the division of the entire Promised Land will be the final fulfillment of God's covenant promises (v13-14). The northern boundary will extend from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (v15-17), incorporating much of modern Lebanon and Syria. The eastern border will move south from the Euphrates River, incorporating the Golan Heights and portions of Syria almost up to Damascus, and continue south to where the Jordan River leaves the Sea of Galilee. The river will be the eastern border to the Dead Sea's southern end (v18). From there the southern border will go westward, incorporating the Negev and parts of Sinai all the way along the Brook of Egypt (the modern Wadi-el-Arish) to the point where it reaches the Mediterranean Sea (v19), the western border (v20).

(b) Boundaries (47:13-20)

(i) Introduction (47:13-14)

13 This is what the Lord GOD says: "This *shall be* the boundary by which you shall divide the land for an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel; Joseph *shall have* two portions.

13 Thus says the Lord GOD, "This *shall be* the boundary by which you shall divide the land for an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel; Joseph *shall have* two portions.

13 This is what the Lord GOD says: "This is to be the territorial border by which you apportion the land for an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel, with Joseph double-portioned.

13 Thus saith the Lord GOD; This shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions.

- The north to south boundaries span about 280 miles (Cf. Num 34:1-12), according to the original promise of Jacob (Gen 48:5,22)

- Joseph's sons were given the birthright forfeited by Reuben, the first-born (1 Chr 5:1)

14 And you shall divide it for an inheritance, each one equally with the other; for I swore to give it to your forefathers, and this land shall fall to you as an inheritance.

14 You shall divide it for an inheritance, each one equally with the other; for I swore to give it to your forefathers, and this land shall fall to you as an inheritance.

14 Apportion it for their inheritances, distributing everything equally as if you were distributing things to your own brother, which is how I promised to give it to your ancestors. This way, the land will fall to you as an inheritance.

14 And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another: concerning the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance.

The Land Covenant

God promised Abraham and his descendants the land of Palestine (Gen 13:14-17; 15:17-21) and that promise has never been rescinded. Whether Israel experienced blessing in the land was conditioned on her obedience (Deut 28), but her right to possess the land has never been revoked. When God inaugurates His New Covenant with Israel in the future, she will be restored to her place of blessing in the land (Ezek 36-37). To prepare the people for this new occupation, God defined the boundaries of the country. Israel's borders during the Millennium will be similar to those promised during the time of Moses (Num 34:1-12).

The Northern Boundaries

- From the great (Mediterranean) sea by way of Hethlon (Heitela, 6 mi N of Tripoli, or Adlun, between Zarephath and Tyre)
- To the entrance of Hamath on the Orontes (115 miles N of Damascus) (Amos 6:2)
- To Zedad (Sadad, SE of Homs), Berothah (belonging to Zobah (2 Sam 8:8); or Beraitan near Baalbek), Sibraim (Ziphron, between Hamath and Homs) (Num 34:9)
- To Hazer-hatticon on the border of Hauran (E of the Jordan, S of Damascus)

(ii) Northern border (47:15-17)

15 "And this *shall be* the boundary of the land: on the north side, from the Great Sea *by* the way of Hethlon, to the entrance of **Zedad**;

15 "This *shall be* the boundary of the land: on the north side, from the Great Sea *by* the way of Hethlon, to the entrance of Zedad;

15 "This is to be the border for the land: on the north side, from the Mediterranean Sea by the Hethlon Road to the entrance of Zedad,

15 And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad;

- "...Zedad" - on the north boundary of Canaan
- This area extends from the Mediterranean Sea east to include much of modern day Lebanon and Syria over to the Euphrates River

16 Hamath, **Berothah**, Sibram, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; **Hazer-hatticon**, which is by the border of **Hauran**.

16 Hamath, Berothah, Sibram, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazer-hatticon, which is by the border of Hauran.

16 Hamath, Berothah, Sibram (which lies between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath), and Hazer-hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran.

16 Hamath, Berothah, Sibram, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazar-hatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran.

- The eastern border will move south from the Euphrates River, incorporating the Golan Heights and portions of Syria almost up to Damascus, and continue south to the Jordan River where it exits from the Sea of Galilee.

- Berothah: a city in Syria conquered by David; meaning "wells"

- Hazar-hatticon: meaning "the middle village"

- Hauran: a tract in Syria, south of Damascus; Auranitis

17 The boundary shall extend from the sea *to* **Hazar-enan** *at* the border of Damascus, and on the north toward the north is the border of Hamath. This is the north side.

17 The boundary shall extend from the sea *to* Hazar-enan *at* the border of Damascus, and on the north toward the north is the border of Hamath. This is the north side.

17 The border is to proceed from the Mediterranean Sea to Hazer-enan (a border of Damascus), and on the north facing north is to be the border of Hamath. This is to be the north side.

17 And the border from the sea shall be Hazar-Enan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And this is the north side.

- "...Hazar-enan" - a town in the north of Canaan, meaning "village of fountains"

- The northern border will stretch E from the Mediterranean Sea N of the modern city of Tripoli and will include what was then the northern border of Syria; 115 mi N of Damascus

(iii) Eastern border (47:18)

18 "The east side, from between Hauran, Damascus, Gilead, and the land of Israel, *shall be* the Jordan; from the *north* border to the eastern sea you shall measure. This is the east side.

18 "The east side, from between Hauran, Damascus, Gilead and the land of Israel, *shall be* the Jordan; from the *north* border to the eastern sea you shall measure. This is the east

side.

18 "The eastern extremity is to proceed from between Hauran and Damascus, then between Gilead, and then through the land of Israel—the Jordan River. You are to measure from the northern border to the Dead Sea. This is to be the eastern perimeter.

18 And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And this is the east side.

- The eastern border will be the Jordan River and 25 mi SE of the Dead Sea
- Gilead and the Trans-jordan area to the east of the Jordan will not be included in Israel's future inheritance

(iv) Southern border (47:19)

19 "The south side toward the south *shall extend* from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribath-kadesh, to the brook of *Egypt and* to the Great Sea. This is the south side toward the south.

19 "The south side toward the south *shall extend* from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribath-kadesh, to the brook of *Egypt and* to the Great Sea. This is the south side toward the south.

19 "You are to determine the southern extremity running from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribath-kadesh, then from there proceeding to the Wadi, and then to the Mediterranean Sea. This is to be the southern perimeter.

19 And the south side southward, from Tamar even to the waters of strife in Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And this is the south side southward.

- The southern border will move from the southern end of the Dead Sea, incorporating the Negev and parts of Sinai all the way along the Brook of Egypt, the modern *Wadi el Arish*, to the point where it reaches the Mediterranean Sea
- The southern boundary is 50 mi S of Beersheba. The country E of Jordan is excluded.

(v) Western border (47:20)

20 "And the west side *shall be* the Great Sea, from the *south* border to a point opposite Lebo-hamath. This is the west side.

20 "The west side *shall be* the Great Sea, from the *south* border to a point opposite Lebo-hamath. This is the west side.

20 "The western perimeter is to be the Mediterranean Sea, from the southernmost border to a location opposite the entrance to Hamath. This is to be the western perimeter.

20 The west side also shall be the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath. This is the west side.

- The Mediterranean Sea is the western border

(c) Division of the land (47:21—48:29)

(i) Inheritance of the alien (47:21-23)

21 "So you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel.

21 "So you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel.

21 "You are to apportion this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel,

21 So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel.

22 You shall divide it by lot for an inheritance among yourselves and among the strangers who stay in your midst, who bring forth sons in your midst. And they shall be to you as the native-born among the sons of Israel; they shall be allotted an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.

22 You shall divide it by lot for an inheritance among yourselves and among the aliens who stay in your midst, who bring forth sons in your midst. And they shall be to you as the native-born among the sons of Israel; they shall be allotted an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.

22 dividing it by lottery among yourselves and among the foreigners who live among you and bear children among you. You are to treat them like native-born Israelis. Among you they, too, are to be allotted an inheritance with the tribes of Israel.

22 And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.

23 And in the tribe with which the stranger resides, there you shall give *him* his inheritance," declares the Lord GOD.

23 And in the tribe with which the alien stays, there you shall give *him* his inheritance," declares the Lord GOD.

23 Furthermore, you are to provide the foreigner's inheritance there in the tribe within which he remains," declares the Lord GOD.

23 And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD.