

Forward Series Revisited

Prophetic Word for 2018 was the word “Forward”

Forward

- Moving your Faith Forward
- Moving beyond your Flesh
- Moving your Family Forward
- Moving your Finances Forward

Text: Ezekiel 47

Introduction to Ezekiel

The book of Ezekiel is written from a prophet’s perspective in captivity in Babylon. Ezekiel, whose name means, “God strengthens” is commissioned in chapters 1-3 to preach to the captive Jews. In this we see God’s desire to keep fresh in the Israelites mind who he is and what they are to do.

It would have been easy for the Israelites to blend into the Babylonian society.

In Chapters 40-48 an angelic messenger shows him some things that are to come. They are both literal and figurative. He sees:

- A New Jerusalem - the Millennial City
- A New Temple and an Expressions of Worship
- A LIFE- GIVING River Flowing Out of the Temple, through the city and all the way to the Dead Sea.

Look at the topo graphical map of the Holy Land.

- Jerusalem is located thirty-four miles inland east of the Mediterranean coast nestled in an outcropping known as the Ophel-Moriah ridge.
- The elevation of this ridge averages 2,500 feet above sea level.
- The city is located twenty-four miles west of the northern end of the Dead Sea, which is the lowest depression on the earth, 1,300 feet below sea level.

The Dead Sea has a salt content of around 33%. Typical ocean water is approximately 3.5%.

- The salt and other mineral deposits are so strong that you have to be careful not to get the water on your lips or in your eyes. Not fun.
- The high mineral and salt content of the Dead Sea makes the water uninhabitable for fish and plants.
- The lowest road in the world is Route 90 which is 1,300 ft. below sea level and passes by the Dead Sea.
- Water flows into the Dead Sea from streams and rivers... but does nothing flow out.

Ezekiel 47:1-12 NIV The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. **2** He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side. **3** As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. **4** He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. **5** He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. **6** He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?” Then he led me back to the bank of the river. **7** When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. **8** He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern

region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. **9** Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; **so where the river flows everything will live. 10** Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. **11** But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. **12** Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, **because the water from the sanctuary flows** to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”

This Life-Giving River is literal and symbolic. In Millennial Period of 1000 years God is going to transform the earth from the toxic sin infected world we see, to a glorious creation that glorifies God and represents his heart.

The Spiritual Parallels of scripture. What God does in the natural, he establishes in the spiritual. And sometimes the spiritual represents what he will do in the future.

Example: The Kingdom of God is the rule of King Jesus has manifested in the spirit realm first.

Luke 17:20 NLT One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, “When will the Kingdom of God come?” Jesus replied, “The Kingdom of God can’t be detected by visible signs.

Luke 17:20b-21 NKJV “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; **21** nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

The River of God

1) A flowing river in the scripture is always associated with new life.

a) It is a source of spiritual life

The woman at the well - John 4:13,14 NLT Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. **14** But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

b) It is associated with the Life-giving work of the Holy Spirit.

John 7:37-39 ESV On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. **38** Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ **39** Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

2) The River of God is a transforming power.

Eze. 47:9 “... everything lives where the river flows”

a) Toxic Waters are healed. (KJV says when the river flows into the sea the waters will be healed)

b) Barren Land produces fruit and the Dead Sea comes alive.

c) What once produced disappointment and now gives life to everything it touches.

The Four Depths of your Spiritual Life

- 1) Ankle Deep represents the Shallows
- 2) Knee Deep represents Intimacy with God
- 3) Waist Deep represents Fellowship with Others
- 4) The Deep represents Total Surrender to God's Plan... Here you are all in!

Ankle Deep:

You are In the water, but just barely.

You are In the water, but you are still in control.

You are In the water, but you are still controlled by your old life on the bank.

Take Another Step Forward

Knee Deep: the knees speak of worship, prayer, humility.

The Life-Giving Flow of Your Intimacy with God.

- 1) Here is where you make your move toward God.
 - a) Say good bye to your old life.
 - b) This is what Water Baptism is all about.
- 2) In the knee-deep level, the current of God's river is being felt.

3 Steps

Ezekiel saw where the river started. It began to flow out of the Altar and through the sanctuary.

- a) **Prayer:** Develop a Personal Prayer.
- b) **Worship:** Become a Lover of God.
- c) **Word:** You have got to Hear from God.

Waist Deep: as I was praying about this passage for us, I saw people in the sea enjoying fellowship. They have waded out into the cool refreshing water and are able to visit, laugh, enjoy the water with one another.

The Life-Giving Flow of Healthy Relationships with Other Believers.

Your Relationship Choices are Critical to Moving Forward with God

3 Questions to ask yourself:

- 1) Am I nurturing important relationships?

(Galatians 5:13-15) Serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

The most important relationships are Life-Giving

2) Am I severing harmful relationships?

(1 Corinthians 15:33) Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character.

(Proverbs 12:26) A righteous man is cautious in friendships.

(2 Corinthians 6:14) Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

3) Am I initiating meaningful relationships?

The most important relationships are Life-Giving

(Proverbs 18:24) A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Join a C – Group this Fall

Serve on an Impact Team

The Deep: This is the place of full surrender. Now you are swimming in the current and the direction of God's will and His Purposes.

The Life-Giving Flow of Living as Life-Giving Servant of God.

1 John 5:11,12 NLT And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **12** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.

1) The Dead Sea is life-less because everything comes in, but nothing flows out of it.

2) God wants us to let the river flow.

The River produces life... and out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water.

3) Become a life-giving servant of God... wade into the water, stop standing around in ankle deep shallows@

- a) Speak life-giving Words
- b) Live with life-giving Actions
- c) Love with life-giving love.