

Book of Ezekiel

Chapter 47

Theme: Millennial Temple

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Missler Introduction: This section of the Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 40 thru 48, is a unit. We have seen Ezekiel describe in great detail a Temple that was not historical, it differed from Solomon's and Nehemiah's. It is clearly future, and yet there are some strange things about it that we have already reviewed pretty heavily. Now we are going to get into some changes in the land and the division of land.

All of this leads to an issue we glibly talk about: the Millennium. The concept of an era on Planet Earth that is going to be strange and different and is one that we make 2 mistakes about. One is that we do not realize that it is coming on the one hand. On the other hand we go the other way and confuse it with Eternity, or the New Heaven and New Earth. The Millennium is neither; it is something in between.

Missler Forward: Let's turn to a passage in Luke that is so familiar to you, that you run the risk of missing some key points in it. Some of the most familiar passages sometimes hold things that we sort of do not notice because we have been through them so often.

Luke 1:30-33 ³⁰ *And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.* ³¹ *And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.* ³² *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:* ³³ *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

We are used to that phrase, but the Throne of David did not even exist in Mary's day. Herod, an Idumean, was on the throne, and it wasn't really a throne; it was subservient to Rome. It was not 'the throne of David'. You need to understand that.

"His father David" does not mean his immediate father, it means in the lineage of. There were no different words for father and grandfather. This throne of David was promised to Jesus Christ. Is that a heavenly throne? No, it is an earthly throne.

Luke 1:33 says, "*And he shall reign over the House of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*"

Wait a minute. Doesn't Revelation say there is to be a thousand year time? Yes, during which Satan will be bound; after which there are some bizarre things that happen. There is a New Heaven and a New Earth. But his reign does not end then; it goes on for how long? Forever.

Constable: God promised Abraham that He would give a particular piece of real estate to his descendants (Gen. 12:7). Later He reiterated this promise and became more specific about its boundaries (Gen. 15:7, 18-21; 17:8; Num. 34:1-12). He also told the Israelites that they would only be able to occupy the land to the extent that they followed Him faithfully (Deut. 7:12; 8:2). If they proved unfaithful, He would not only limit their possession of the land but even drive them out of it (Deut. 28). Ezekiel prophesied that God would bring the Israelites back into the land (36:24-30). He would give them a different attitude, and they would follow Him faithfully. Then they would finally, as never before, enjoy the full extent of the land He had promised their forefathers (cf. Deut. 30). He also promised that they would never lose possession of the land, because they would remain faithful to Him (ch. 39). The assurance of the fulfillment of these ancient promises, which date all the way back to Abraham, concludes Ezekiel. It is a fitting climax to this section assuring future blessings for Israel (chs. 33—48) following the

return of God's glory to the land (chs. 40—48).

This section has two main parts: the description of a river that would flow through and heal the land (47:1-12) and the description of Israel's boundaries and tribal allotments during the Millennium (47:13—48:35).

Ezekiel 47:1

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.

Missler: Now who is bringing whom here? The angel of the Lord, possibly none other than Jesus Christ Himself, but that's our speculation. Is bringing Ezekiel, in this tour in this vision of the city and of the Sanctuary. It does not sound like a symbol, does it? It sounds like there is a particular place there where the waters came forth.

Constable: Ezekiel's guide, who appears to have been his original guide in this vision (v. 3), brought him back to the main entrance to the temple proper. Ezekiel saw water flowing to the east from under the temple threshold. It apparently flowed to the south of the stairs on the right side of the temple as one faces east.

The Letter of Aristias, dated about 100 B.C., contains reference to a spring on the temple mount inside the enclosure of the temple area. There may already be a natural water source at this site.

"Behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward" -- that is, they came from the altar. That is where all blessings originate -- at the altar. Everything that comes to us by way of blessings comes through the death of Christ for you and me upon the cross. The water here is a type of the Holy Spirit, and many spiritual lessons may be drawn from this passage:

Dake: Afterward—after all other descriptions and specifications of the sanctuary and the giving of new eternal laws, the Lord showed the prophet the final thing about the sanctuary recorded in his book: the measurement of a river flowing from under the threshold of the temple eastward, from the front of the temple, the right side of the house, and the south side of the altar of sacrifice. It was flowing from the right side of the east gate (Ezekiel 47:1-2).

Clarke: Behold, waters issued out from under the threshold—Ezekiel, after having made the whole compass of the court of the people, is brought back by the north gate into the courts of the priests; and, having reached the gate of the temple, he saw waters which had their spring under the threshold of that gate, that looked towards the east; and which passing to the south of the altar of burnt-offerings on the right of the temple, ran from the west to the east, that they might fall into the brook Kidron, and thence be carried into the Dead Sea. Literally, no such waters were ever in the temple; and because there were none, Solomon had what is called the brazen sea made, which held water for the use of

the temple. It is true that the water which supplied this sea might have been brought by pipes to the place: but a fountain producing abundance of water was not there, and could not be there, on the top of such a hill; and consequently these waters, as well as those spoken of in Joel 3:18, and in Zechariah 14:8, are to be understood spiritually or typically; and indeed the whole complexion of the place here shows, that they are thus to be understood. Taken in this view, I shall proceed to apply the whole of this vision to the effusion of light and salvation by the outpouring of the Spirit of God under the Gospel dispensation, by which the knowledge of the true God was multiplied in the earth; and have only one previous remark to make, that the farther the waters flowed from the temple, the deeper they grew.

With respect to the phraseology of this chapter, it may be said that St. John had it particularly in view while he wrote his celebrated description of the paradise of God, Revelation 22. The prophet may therefore be referring to the same thing which the apostle describes, viz., the grace of the Gospel, and its effects in the world.

IVP: water flowing out of temple. The association between ancient Near Eastern temples and spring waters is well attested. In fact, some temples in Mesopotamia, Egypt and in the Ugaritic myth of Baal were considered to have been founded upon springs (likened to the primeval waters), which sometimes flowed from the building itself. Thus, the symbolic cosmic mountain (temple) stood upon the symbolic primeval waters (spring).

Ezekiel 47:2

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.

“Ran out” is really “trickled forth.” We are going to see here waters sort of trickling to begin with; but they become a huge, gushing, enormous amount of water. It starts very small.

Constable: The man then brought Ezekiel through the north gate to the outside of the outer wall of the temple enclosure. Just south of the east gate he saw water trickling to the east, a continuation of the stream that he had observed inside the temple enclosure.

Ezekiel 47:3

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.

Remember, the man with the Measuring line?

A thousand cubits is about 2000 feet, a half mile, roughly.

Constable 3-5: The "man" took his measuring line (cf. 40:3) and measured 1,000 cubits (about one-third of a mile) east from the wall along the watercourse. He led Ezekiel across the river (Heb. *nahal*), and it was ankle deep. Another 1,000 cubits farther east they crossed again, and this time the water was knee-deep. Another 1,000 cubits, and it was up to his waist. Another 1,000 cubits, and it was so deep that they could not cross it standing up. It was so deep they would have had to swim across.

This description suggests that some major topographical changes will have occurred east of present-day Jerusalem by this time. Other revelation supports this conclusion (cf. 34:26-30; 36:8-12, 30-36; 37:25-28; 45:1-8; 48:8-14; Joel 3:18; Zech. 13:1; 14:4-8). The water will follow the contours of the altered terrain, not the past or present landscape. Zechariah recorded that the water flowing from Jerusalem will divide with half of it going west to the Mediterranean Sea and half east to the Dead Sea (Zech. 14:8). Ezekiel described only the branch that flowed east.

"The waters were to the ankles." This may speak of the walk of the believer in the Spirit.

BKC: Zechariah recorded that the water flowing from Jerusalem will divide, with half flowing east toward the Dead Sea and half flowing west toward the Mediterranean (Zech. 14:8). Ezekiel followed only the branch that went toward the east. The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

Dake: [measured a thousand cubits] Measurements of the Millennial River:

1st 1,000 cubits	1750 feet (Ezekiel 47:3)
2nd 1,000 cubits	1750 feet (Ezekiel 47:4)
3rd 1,000 cubits	1750 feet (Ezekiel 47:4)
4th 1,000 cubits	1750 feet (Ezekiel 47:5)

Total	7000 feet
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This would indicate it was about 1.3 miles from the edge of the river in to a point where it could not be waded—to the deep waters to swim in. It being the same distance from the opposite side of the river to the deep waters would make a width of 2.6 miles, exclusive of the width of the waters to swim in which is not specifically stated.

Ezekiel 47:4

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.

In other words, every half mile it was getting deeper, to become a rushing torrent.

"The waters were to the knees" -- this speaks of prayer.

"The waters were to the loins." We are to gird up our loins for service. The walk and service of a believer rest upon the redemption we have in Christ.

Ezekiel 47:5

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.

"Waters to swim in" indicates the fullness of the Spirit. This looks forward to the day when God will pour out His Spirit upon these people; He is not doing that today.

Ezekiel 47:6

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.

Constable 6-7: The guide made sure Ezekiel saw this. Then he brought him back to the edge of the river. Many trees were growing on both sides of the riverbank. Rivers, by their nature, give life.

Ezekiel 47:7

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

"Many trees" -- this is the fruit that will be in our lives.

I have given you an application of this passage which we can make to our own lives. However, its interpretation for the people of Israel is that there will be an eternal spring of water coming out of that altar in that day which will bring blessing to that land. And, my friend, they need water in that land today.

Dake: [at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other] Something similar to the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, which has trees of life on the banks of the rivers of water of life flowing down the middle of the streets and out through the pearly gates into the new earth (Rev. 22:1-3). Here the trees were seen on both sides of the river.

trees—not merely *one* tree of life as in Paradise (Ge 3:22), but many: to supply immortal food and medicine to the people of God, who themselves also become “trees of righteousness” (Is 61:3) planted by the waters and (Ps 1:3) bearing fruit unto holiness.¹

¹Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 47:7-8). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Ezekiel 47:8

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.*

Missler: Which waters? The Dead Sea. Now one of the deepest valley rifts in the world is the Arabah in the Holy Land. The Dead Sea is 1300 feet below sea level, and is very salty. You can float in the Dead Sea in a bizarre fashion because it is 6 times saltier than the ocean. So the Dead Sea is called the 'Dead' Sea because with that saline content it cannot support life. Sodom and Gomorrah are located somewhere under it at the southern end. The water flowing from the House of the Lord, increasing in depth and intensity, and at least, not exclusively, so but at least it does flow to the Dead Sea. We know from other passages that it is also going to flow to the Mediterranean. It is going to flow both ways, if it is a spring. But it does something interesting to the Dead Sea, it heals it.

Constable 8-9: The man explained that the river continued east and emptied into the Arabah, the Jordan valley, and eventually into the Dead Sea. Presently this involves a drop in elevation of over 3,700 feet (from the temple mount at 2,430 feet above sea level to the Dead Sea at 1,290 feet below sea level). These waters purified the waters of the Dead Sea and made it a live sea. The Dead Sea presently contains 24-26 percent minerals compared with normal seawater that contains 4-6 percent. This is the reason no fish or other aquatic life live in it. The water of this river would give life to all the creatures that would gather in swarms along its banks and to the fish that would swim in it.

"The Dead Sea today is a symbol of barren desolation. This future change is a visible reminder that God can turn death to life. Our God specializes in changing the unchangeable!"

Dake:[waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea] The waters will go toward the east and into the desert, on to the Dead Sea, and heal the waters of that sea. Every place where the waters will go the land and other waters will be healed (Ezekiel 47:9). The Dead Sea, which is also called the Salt Sea (note, *Numbers 34:12), has an estimated mineral wealth of about \$1.19 trillion. It is said to have a content of potash amounting to 1.3 billion tons valued at \$68,040,000,000; bromide, 835 million tons valued at \$252,720,000,000; salt, 11.9 billion tons valued at \$46,170,000,000; gypsum, 81 million tons valued at \$116,640,000; and magnesium chloride, 22 billion tons valued at \$797,040,000,000. The sea is 340 sq. miles in area, and the surface is 1,292 feet below the Mediterranean sea level.

Dake: [the waters shall be healed] One of the purposes of the river will be to heal the waters of the Dead Sea so that it will be full of fish. The different depths of the river as given in the passage have no spiritual significance any more than the dry bones of Ezekiel 37, which are sometimes taken to symbolize spiritual drought among the churches. There is no point to be gained and no benefit to be derived from making the river symbolic or figurative in any sense. The best policy here, as always in dealing with Scripture, is to take a statement literally where it can at all be understood this way; and even when the language is figurative, accept the literal truths expressed thereby.

Life Application Notes: 8-9 The Arabah is the geological depression in which the Dead Sea lies. The sea that will become fresh refers to the Dead Sea, a body of water so salty that nothing can live in it. The river will freshen the Dead Sea's water so it can support life. This is another picture of the life-giving nature of the water that flows from God's temple. God's power can transform us no matter how lifeless or corrupt we may be. Even when we feel messed up and beyond hope, his power can heal us.

Believers Study Bible: Palestine, which flow into the sea via the Jordan River and a few other tributaries. When the water evaporates, the salt is concentrated, so that no life can survive except near the inlet. Certainly only a miracle can sweeten the bitter waters of the Dead Sea. This miracle will in fact be a part of millennial blessing. The Salt Sea shall be made habitable water and will swarm with fish.

the desert—or “plain,” *Hebrew, Arabah* (De 3:17; 4:49; Jos 3:16), which is the name still given to the valley of the Jordan and the plain south of the Dead Sea, and extending to the Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea.

the sea—the Dead Sea. “*The sea*” noted as covering with its waters the guilty cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah. In its bituminous waters no vegetable or animal life is said to be found. But now death is to give place to life in Judea, and throughout the world, as symbolized by the healing of these death-pervaded waters covering the doomed cities. Compare as to “the sea” in general, regarded as a symbol of the troubled powers of nature, disordered by the fall, henceforth to rage no more, [Rev 21:1](#).²

IVP: sea water becoming fresh. The seawater in the Dead Sea becoming fresh is a miraculous transformation. The Dead Sea is 1,296 feet below sea level, the lowest point on earth. The high mineral content of the Dead Sea is a result of the fact that it has no outlet. Waters flow in through a number of sources carrying their various minerals at a rate of seven million tons per day. Then the water evaporates, leaving the minerals behind. Total salinity is 26-35 percent (compared to 18 percent for the Great Salt Lake in Utah and 3.5 percent for the average ocean salinity).

Ezekiel 47:9

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.

Dake: [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

²Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 47:8-9). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

shall live whither the river cometh] This river from the sanctuary will divide at some point south of Jerusalem and become two great rivers. One half or one river will flow into the Dead Sea and the other will flow into the Mediterranean. Fish from the Mediterranean could migrate through these waters into the Dead Sea (Ezekiel 47:9-10; Zech. 14:8). Fishermen will cast nets into it and dry their gear on the shore as if there had always been fish in that sea (Ezekiel 47:10).

Clarke: Every thing—whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live—Life and salvation shall continually accompany the preaching of the Gospel; the death of sin being removed, the life of righteousness shall be brought in.

Clarke: There shall be a very great multitude of fish—On the above plan this must refer to genuine converts to the Christian faith; true believers, who have got life and salvation by the streams of God's grace. The apostles were fishers of men; converts were the fish caught. See below. As the waters flow into the DEAD Sea, where no fish, it is said, can live, its waters must be healed, that is, made capable of preserving life; and so its nature be thus far most surprisingly altered.

rivers—in *Hebrew*, “two rivers.” Hence Hebrew expositors think that the waters from the temple were divided into two branches, the one emptying itself into the eastern or Dead Sea, the other into the western or Mediterranean. So *Zec 14:8*. However, though this probably is covertly implied in the *Hebrew dual*, the flowing of the waters into the *Dead Sea only* is expressed. Compare *Ez 47:8*, “waters ... healed,” which can apply only to it, not to the Mediterranean: also *Ez 47:10*, “fish as the fish of the great sea”; the Dead Sea, when healed, containing fish, as the Mediterranean does.³

Ezekiel 47:10

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, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

Missler: We know that En Gedi is roughly in the middle of the west bank of the western side of the Dead Sea; and we are not sure, but we think Eneglaim might be roughly in the middle of the East bank. So from En Gedi to Engelaim would be like saying from California to Maine.

Constable 10-11: The Dead Sea would become so full of many varieties of fish that fishermen would fish for them from Engedi, on the west side of the sea about midway north to south, to Eneglaim, possibly on the northwest shore near Qumran or on the eastern side. The entire Dead Sea region would not become fresh, however; the swamps

³Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 47:9-10). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

and marshes would remain saline, perhaps to provide salt and or other minerals for the people.

Dake: [Engedi] En-gedi was located at about the middle section of the Dead Sea, on the western bank (1 Samuel 23:29).

En-gedi ... En-eglaim—En-gedi (meaning “fountain of the kid”), anciently, Hazazon-Tamar, now Ain-Jidy; west of the Dead Sea; David’s place of refuge from Saul. En-eglaim means “fountain of two calves,” on the confines of Moab, over against En-gedi, and near where Jordan enters the Dead Sea (Is 15:8). These two limits are fixed on, to comprise between them the whole Dead Sea.⁴

fish ... according to their kinds—JEROME quotes an ancient theory that “there are a hundred fifty-three kinds of fishes,” all of which were taken by the apostles (Jn 21:11), and not one remained uncaptured; signifying that both the noble and baseborn, the rich and the poor, and every class, are being drawn out of the sea of the world to salvation. Compare Mt 13:47, the gospel net; the apostles being fishermen, at first literally, afterwards spiritually (Mt 4:19).⁵

Ezekiel 47:11

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

Missler: Now if you want to know what that really means,, you will have to ask somebody else, because that is a mystery. Why, with all this positive water, healing, and things going to be really neat, are there Miry places and marshes not healed? I have no answer. Salt passages in the Old Testament suggest judgment (Deuteronomy 29:23; Judges 9:45; Psalm 107:34; Jeremiah 17:6; and Zephaniah 2:9). And that seems to sort of be the suggestion here, as if those areas do not quite make it. What does that mean? I am not sure. I found that greater scholars than I were also baffled by it. So I will tiptoe through that humbly and move on.

Dake: [miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt] The miry and marsh places will be left to produce salt for man. The Septuagint says that when the waters overflow their banks into these places they will turn into salt. Thus there will be a perpetual source of it in this area.

Clarke: The miry places—“Point out,” says Calmet, “the schismatics and heretics who do not live by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, but separate from his Church; and the evil

⁴Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 47:10). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁵Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 47:10-11). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Christians who dishonor that Church, of which they are corrupt members.” A description applicable to the Roman Catholic Church, that is both schismatic and heretic from the Church of Jesus Christ, which is built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; for the Church of Rome, leaving this foundation, is now built on the foundation of councils and traditions, and lying miracles; the popes in their succession being its only corner stones.

marshes—marshy places. The region is known to have such pits and marshes. The Arabs take the salt collected by evaporation in these pits for their own use, and that of their flocks.

not be healed—Those not reached by the healing waters of the Gospel, through their sloth and earthly-mindedness, are given over ([Rev 22:11](#)) to their own bitterness and barrenness (as “saltiness” is often employed to express, [De 29:23](#); [Ps 107:34](#); [Zep 2:9](#)); and awful example to others in the punishment they suffer ([2Pe 2:6](#)).⁶

Ezekiel 47:12

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.

Missler: That is an interesting phrase, calling to mind Revelation 22:2 and how the leaves will be used for the healing of the nations. In my mind, and this is just Chuck Missler’s opinion, I see Ezekiel’s model as being built for the Millennium, and the Revelation 22 text as yet an idealization of it after the Millennium, like it is a 2 stage thing. I think it is useful not to get the 2 periods of time mixed up.

In Eternity there is no death; but there is death in the Millennium, although people live a very long time. If you are 100 years old, you are still a “child.” There will be sin in the Millennium; we know that because there will be sin offerings. So that is not to be confused with Eternity. As student of prophecy, I think we frequently talk glibly about the Millenium and Eternity, and get the two ideas a little muddled up. So that is worth being alerted to that.

Constable: Fruit trees would grow all around the Dead Sea. They do not do so now. They would remain continually healthy and productive. These trees would be so fruitful that they would bear fruit every month of the year. People would eat their fruit and use their leaves for medicinal purposes. This formerly desert region would blossom like a rose (cf. [36:35](#); [Isa. 35:1-2, 6-7](#); [Joel 3:18](#); [Rom. 8:19-22](#)).

This river is similar to two other rivers in the Bible: the river that flowed out of the

⁶Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 47:11-12). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:10) and the river that will flow in the New Jerusalem during the eternal state (Rev. 22:1-2; cf. Ps. 46:4; 65:9; Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:8). Like the river in Revelation the one in Ezekiel will flow from the throne of God; He is the source of both rivers. However, there will be a temple in the millennial earth, but there will not be one in the eternal state (Rev. 21:22). The river in Revelation also flowed down the street of the city, but Ezekiel mentioned no city to the east of the temple, just one to its south (45:6). It seems that Ezekiel and John saw two different rivers, but the purpose of both rivers was the same. God will be the source of fertility, blessing, and health in the Millennium and throughout eternity.

The river that Ezekiel saw was a real river with life-giving and healing properties. But like the rivers in Genesis 2 and Revelation 22 it also has symbolic significance. Many interpreters spiritualize the entire passage and see no literal fulfillment in the future.⁶⁰⁰ It represents the spiritual life and healing that flow to humanity from the throne of God (cf. John 4:14; 7:37-38).

"The river is like the blood of the Messiah from the cross of Calvary that began as a trickle (John 19:34). Finally, the blood, like the river, became a flood of redemption for all people (Rev. 1:5). So the flow from Calvary became a fountain of redemption for all people including Israel (see Zech 13:1-6; Rev 1:5-6). Just so, the water of life that the prophet saw coming from the threshold came forth gently, then began to flow, and finally became a mighty river of life healing all in its wake."

"All blessings, material and spiritual, will emanate from the presence of the Lord with His people."

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"

Dake: In this verse we have a more detailed picture of the trees which will grow on both sides of the river.

Fivefold Description of the Trees:

1. They shall be for meat (food).
2. The leaves will never fade. This means they will be evergreen fruit trees.
3. The fruit will never be fully used up for the trees will produce abundantly.
4. New fruit will be produced monthly instead of annually.
5. The leaves will be for medicine. There will be healing and preservation of life qualities about the very leaves which will cause human bodies to live on and on, without sickness and disease. The properties in the leaves will no doubt renew the cells of the body and cause longevity. The bodies of men will be perfectly healthy because of perfect nutrition—partaking of all the necessary minerals and vitamins.

Clarke: The leaf thereof for medicine—See Revelation 22:1-5. Even the leaves, the holy profession of the righteous, is a spiritual medicine. Righteousness is thus encouraged in the world. The profession points out the salvation, as it shows the nature and sufficiency of that salvation; for a just creed contains all the articles of the Christian faith.

Instead of the “vine of Sodom and grapes of Gomorrah” (De 32:32), nauseous and unwholesome, trees of life-giving and life-restoring virtue shall bloom similar in properties to, and exceeding in number, the tree of life in Eden (Rev 2:7).

leaf ... not fade—expressing not only the unfailing character of the heavenly medicine of the tree of life, but also that the graces of the believer (as a tree of righteousness), which are the *leaves*, and his deeds, which are the fruits that flow from those graces, are immortal (Ps 1:3; Je 17:8; Mt 10:42; 1Co 15:58).

new fruit—literally, “firstlings,” or first fruit. They are still, each month afresh, as it were, yielding their first-fruit [FAIRBAIRN]. The *first-born* of a thing, in *Hebrew* idiom, means *the chiefest*. As Job 18:13, “the first-born of death,” that is, *the most fatal* death.⁷

Ezekiel 47:13

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.

Missler: Now we come to the dividing up of the land. Numbers 34 is a pivotal reference to that regard, but we will not read through it. But I want you to be aware of the root source before we get into the issue of dividing of the land. Numbers 34:1-15. (One small point in verse 13 when they speak of the river of Egypt, they mean Wadi el Arish, and not the Nile.)

Missler: Now that’s neat for Joseph. But if you are one of the other 11 brothers, you are going to wonder what is going on here. Why does Joseph get 2 portions? (Genesis 48:5-6, 22; 49:22-26). Well, all this gets answered in the Book of Genesis. Reuben was the firstborn and so entitled to a double portion, but he forfeited that advantage and lost it because he defiled his father’s bed (Genesis 35:22, 49:1; 1 Chronicles 5:1; Leviticus 20:11; Deuteronomy 22:30).

So just who did get the double-portion of the firstborn position? Joseph. Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and when Jacob came down to Egypt, he blessed those two sons and adopted them as his own (Genesis 48:1-6). After doing that, Jacob had not just 12 sons, but 14. Jacob adopted these two grandchildren as his own.

All the way through Scripture, you will read about the 12 tribes. Every once in a while they will drop one out and there is still 12. Levi was given the special role to take care of the Tabernacle, so they were generally not included. But notice how Dan is missing in Revelation 7. Also not listed there is Ephraim. Why? Ephraim and Dan both got judged. In the opinion of most scholars, they were the means by which idolatry had entered the land.

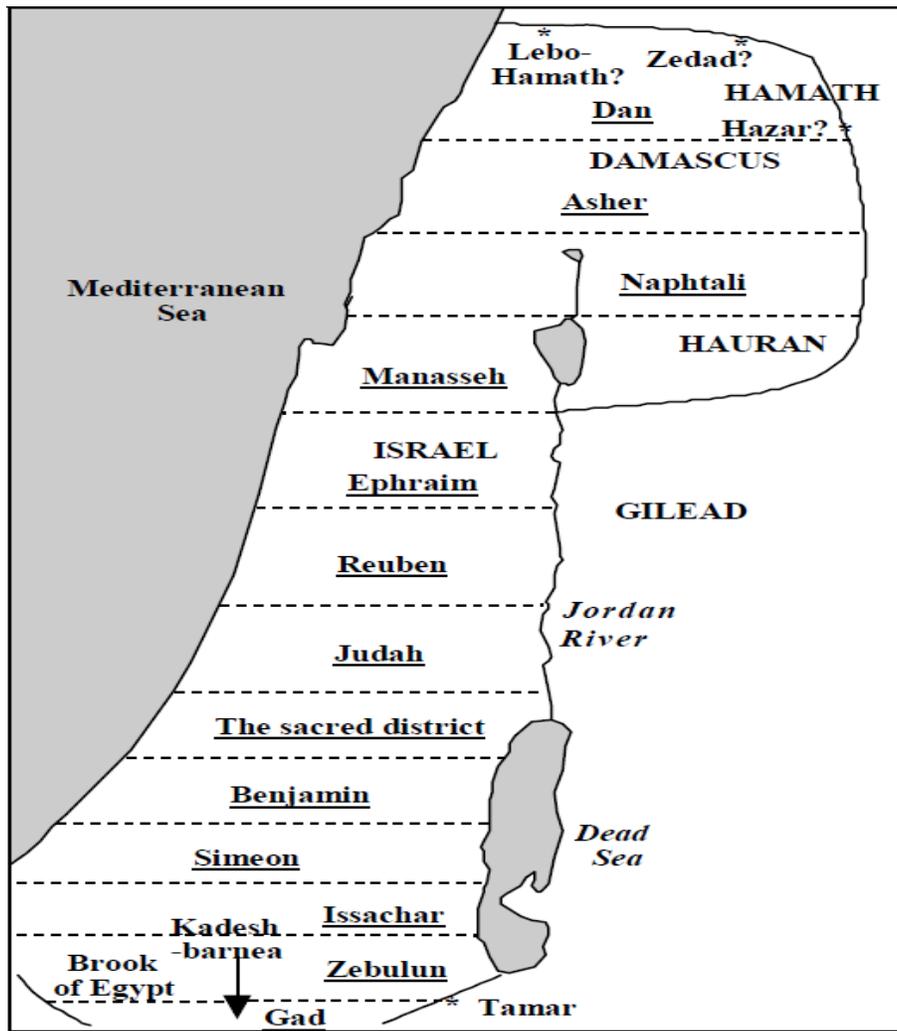
All through the Bible, Dan especially has been given the slight of hand, so to speak. In places where genealogies are given showing many members in each tribe, when it gets to Dan, very few words are used. It is almost like saying, ‘Dan, and his guys,’ rather than listing his descendants. Each place where the list of 12 appears, Dan seems to be given short shrift. In the marching orders, who do you think was last? Dan.

⁷Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 47:12-13). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

When Jacob was leaning on his staff in Genesis 49, he gave a cryptic riddle about each of his 12 sons. See Genesis 49:1, 10, 16-18. The riddle on Dan is the basis for the rabbinical traditions that say that the antichrist will come out of Dan, the false messiah. That is also why, we find that Dan is not one of the tribes from which 12,000 are sealed. Judges chapter 5 implies that he was a coward. You will find him listed in Leviticus 24:11; Deuteronomy 29:18-21; Judges 18. He was the leader in the apostasy under Jereboam in 1 Kings 12 and 100 years later in 2 Kings 10. Before we count Dan out, we will find that he does inherit land in the Millennium.

There are two special areas of attention in this passage: (1) the concern that God's people occupy their full boundaries, and (2) the concern that Gentiles will have an inheritance."

Note the similarities between Ezekiel and Moses in this section that describes the division of the Promised Land. This is another part of the new constitution for the reconstituted nation of Israel that Ezekiel revealed.



Constable: The Lord instructed the future Israelites (cf. v. 21) to divide the Promised Land for their inheritance. He first described the boundary around the entire land. The tribes of Joseph, namely, Ephraim and Manasseh, were to have two portions (cf. Gen. 48:5-6, 22). This was important to clarify at the outset because the tribe of Levi would receive another portion of the land (45:1-8; 48:8-14). Thus the number of tribal allotments would be 12 plus the Levitical portions. Each tribe was to have as much land as all the others; the portions were to be equal in size. This was not the case when Joshua divided the land among the tribes; some tribes received more land than others. Thus the Lord would fulfill His promise to give the Israelites the land as an inheritance. The overall boundaries described here are almost identical to the ones in Numbers 34:3-12 (cf. 1 Kings 8:65).

Dake: [the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions] The promised land will be divided into 13 parts for the 13 tribes. A partial and general description of the borders is here given (Ezekiel 47:13). The east border is not fully given, and what is stated here about it is not the same as promised in Genesis 15:18-21. There will be two portions for Joseph-Manasseh and Ephraim. The land will be divided by lot and some will fall to the strangers living in Israel (Ezekiel 47:13-14,21-23).

Clarke: Joseph shall have two portions—That is, In Ephraim and Manasseh, his two sons, who each had a separate inheritance.

The redivision of the land: the boundaries. The latter are substantially the same as those given by Moses in Nu 34:1–29; they here begin with the north, but in Numbers they begin with the south (Nu 34:3). It is only Canaan proper, exclusive of the possession of the two and a half tribes beyond Jordan, that is here divided.

Joseph ... two portions—according to the original promise of Jacob (Ge 48:5, 22). Joseph's sons were given the birthright forfeited by Reuben, the first-born (1Ch 5:1). Therefore the former is here put first. His *two* sons having distinct portions make up the whole number *twelve* portions, as he had just before specified “*twelve* tribes of Israel”; for Levi had no separate inheritance, so that he is not reckoned in the twelve.⁸

Ezekiel 47:14

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.

Missler: This division of the land is very specific, specific cities and borders and distances. So I do not think that it makes sense to take the book of Ezekiel, particularly these last 9 chapters, allegorically nor symbolically. Despite the problems it leaves us

⁸Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 47:13-15). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

when we try to take it literally. There are all kinds of problems. But I believe that it is the Holy Spirit's intent.

Nelson: Equality of inheritance is stressed. **raised My hand in an oath:** This phrase recalls 20:5; 36:28 (see Gen. 12:7; 15:7, 18–21; 17:8). The unilateral and unconditional nature of the Abrahamic covenant is suggested; this inheritance is a free gift of God's grace which God's people did and could do nothing to deserve.

Ezekiel 47:15

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;

Missler: We are not sure where Hethlon is, but we are talking roughly a 100 miles north of Damascus to 1000 miles south of Jerusalem. A pretty big chunk of ground.

“Zedad” we are not sure but it might be equivalent to Sadad which is southeast of between Riblah and Palmirah.

Constable 15-17: The Lord specified the boundaries by listing place names that the Israelites of Ezekiel's day would have known. Not all of them are identifiable today. The northern boundary would run from the Great (Mediterranean) Sea east, following the road to Hethlon, to the entrance of the town of Zedad, and through the region of Hamath (cf. 1 Kings 8:65) near Berothah to Sibram. It then ran through Hazar-hatticon (lit. the middle Hazar) on the border of the territory of Hauran. Hazar-enan (perhaps the same as Hazarhatticon) seems to have been the easternmost town in this string. It apparently stood between the borders of the territories controlled by Damascus and Hamath. Some of these sites apparently stood within or adjacent to the region described, not just along its border.

Dake: [border of the land] Four borders of the land:

1. The north border from the great sea (the Mediterranean) to Hethlon to Hamath, Berothah, and Sibram between Hamath and Damascus (Ezekiel 47:15-17)
2. The east side, from Hauran and Damascus through Gilead and from the Jordan to the east sea (Ezekiel 47:18)
3. The south side, from Tamar to the waters of Kadesh to the Mediterranean (Ezekiel 47:19). This does not include the whole south of the promised land, which will take in all the Arabian peninsula, when Genesis 15:18-21; Isaiah 11:13-16; Isaiah 19:17-25 are fulfilled.
4. The west border—the Mediterranean Sea (Ezekiel 47:20)

Clarke: The way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad—Probably Hethlon is the same as Cuthlon, a city of Syria, between Antioch and Laodicea, according to Antoninus. Some of these places are not known; but see the same kind of division, Numbers 34:7-12.

IVP: north border. Although the north border is described in great detail, none of the place names can be identified with any certainty. Thus, it is not possible to draw any boundary lines for Israel's northern frontier. There are, however, some affinities with the

list in Numbers 34:7-9, a border that coincided with the northern limits of the land of Canaan, which was the name of the Egyptian controlled area of Syro-Palestine. Ezekiel uses general terms here to describe a territory rather than a boundary line.

Ezekiel 47:16

Hamath, Berothah, Sibram, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazarhatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran.

Ezekiel 47:17

And the border from the sea shall be Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And *this is* the north side.

Ezekiel 47:18

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.

Constable: The eastern border would run between the territories of Hauran and Damascus and then along the Jordan River between the land of Israel on the west and Gilead to the east. This boundary would continue south through the eastern (Dead) sea to the town of Tamar.

The east sea—The same as the Dead Sea.

IVP: east border. Like Numbers 34:10-12 Ezekiel excludes in his description of the east border the Transjordanian regions that had been occupied by Gad, Reuben, and one-half of Manasseh. Thus, the main border was the Jordan River running south from the Sea of Galilee until the Dead Sea.

Ezekiel 47:19

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.

Missler: “Kadesh” we believe is the same as Kadesh Barnea in Numbers 34:4 and Numbers 20:3-14. The brook of Egypt again is Wadi el Arish, and not the Nile.

Constable: The south border would run west from Tamar to the waters of Meribathkadesh (Kadesh-barnea), to the Brook of Egypt (Wadi el-Arish), and along this stream to the Mediterranean Sea.

IVP: south border. The southern border begins at Tamar, the final point of the eastern boundary, to Mount Halak to Meribah Kadesh, or Kadesh Barnea (modern ‘Ain el-Qudeirat), a fertile oasis on the southern border of the desert of Zin. From there, the

border line follows the Wadi of Egypt (not the Nile), which drained the northern Sinai Desert and formed a natural boundary between Egypt and Palestine.

Ezekiel 47:20

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

Constable: The west border would be the Mediterranean Sea from the south border, the Brook of Egypt, to a point west of Lebo-hamath in the north.

west border. The western border, as in Numbers 34:6, is the Mediterranean Sea.

The great sea—The Mediterranean.

From the border—The southern border, mentioned verse 19.

Ezekiel 47:21

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

Constable: The Israelites were to divide the land in this way for the tribes of Israel by lot (cf. 45:1). It was not to be for Israelites alone, however. Aliens who permanently lived among them could dwell in this region too. Under the Mosaic economy, resident aliens were non-Israelites who had adopted the religion and laws of the Hebrews; they had become converts to Yahweh worship. The Israelites were to regard these alien peoples as equals with themselves concerning their rights within the land. The reference to these aliens bearing children marks them as having mortal bodies in contrast to believers with immortal (resurrected) bodies who will also have access to the millennial earth (cf. Matt. 22:30; Rev. 20:4). These aliens were to inherit portions of land in the tribal allotments just like the Israelites who lived there (cf. 14:7; 22:7; Lev. 19:34; 24:22; Num. 15:29; Isa. 56:3-8).

Ezekiel 47:22

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.

Clarke: **And to the strangers that sojourn**—In former divisions of the land, no place was given to strangers; but in this division, (which seems to have no other reference than to the Gospel, for literally such a division never took place), the strangers are to have an inheritance; intimating the calling of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ, to an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Glory be to God for his unspeakable gift! Amen. Amen.

to the strangers—It is altogether unprecedented under the old covenant, that “strangers” should have “inheritance” among the tribes. There would not be room locally within Canaan for more than the tribes. The literal sense must therefore be modified, as expressing that Gentiles are not to be excluded from settling among the covenant-people, and that spiritually their privileges are not to be less than those of Israel ([Ro 10:12](#); [Ga 3:28](#); [Eph 3:6](#); [Col 3:11](#); [Rev 7:9, 10](#)). Still, “sojourneth,” in [Ez 47:23](#), implies that in Canaan, the covenant people are regarded as *at home*, the strangers as *settlers*.⁹

Ezekiel 47:23

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

That is incidentally an interesting reflection back on Leviticus 19:34.

Missler: Dr. Chuck Missler, www.KHouse.org, Commentary notes on the Book of Ezekiel.

Constable: Dr. Thomas L. Comstable, Notes on Ezekiel, 2010 Edition, Professor, Dallas Theological Seminary,

Dake: Notes from Dake’s Study Bible, Finis Jennings Dake.

IVP, IVP Bible Background Commentary, Old Testament

JSB; Jewish Study Bible Footnotes

⁹Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 47:22-48:1). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.