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# Ezekiel Sees a Life-Giving River

Ezekiel 47:1-12

## TOPIC:

## “Ezekiel Sees a Life-Giving River”

Ezekiel 47:1-12

VERSE DISCOVERY: Ezekiel 47:1-12 (KJV, Public Domain)

## Prepare

- **Water That Makes a Change:** The supplies needed for this opening object lesson is a white carnation(s), food dye, water, and something to place the flower and water mixture in, like a glass or a tube.

You will want to prepare this object lesson well in advance. What you are going to do is prepare your water first by putting food coloring dye in it (as much or as little as you want, depending on how vibrant you want the coloring to be). Then, take your carnation stem and make a fresh cut diagonally on the bottom. Lastly, place the stem in the water and wait for the water to affect the carnation with its color-changing power.

In our lesson, we are going to learn about a special river of water Ezekiel saw in a vision. This water flows out of the temple of God, and much like this carnation being affected by the color-changing power of this water, wherever that special water flows, it distributes its life-giving properties, bringing miraculous healing, restoration, and change to places that were once considered dead.

## Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 6-13

**Jesus' Healing Touch of Abundant Life**

Touch is powerful. And touch is personal. There are many stories in the Bible we read that tell the impact of Jesus' touch. Be it through a physical touch (Mt. 8:3; Mk. 8:23), a word spoken (Mt. 8:8-13), or a caring action (Mt. 14:14-21), whomever and whatever Jesus came into contact with was changed forever.

In today's lesson, we read of a vision Ezekiel had of waters that changed what they touched (You can explore the concept of touch using different textures, squishy things, something cold, sensory toys, and the like. Ask, *Do you like the way these things feel? Why, or why not?*)

When areas in his vision came into contact with the waters that flowed from the sanctuary, the result was they were totally healed and made whole.

Let us explore Ezekiel's vision a little closer. In it, he saw the temple. But the unusual picture that stood out to him in this vision was there was water that was flowing out from under the door of the temple. What would you think if you saw a heavy flow of water coming from under the door of your house? (Give space for answers. Some might be, perhaps it appears the pipes burst and filled the house with water to the point of exploding, as you may see in some funny cartoons.)

No matter what it appears to us, what Ezekiel witnessed was incredibly special. Those waters coming from the temple, were going to do something astonishing. And rightly so because our God works amazing things.

As the waters flowed, they increased, and the **"man"** who walked with Ezekiel through this vision measured the water. A **"thousand cubits"** out, and the waters came up to the **"ankles."** (A cubit was usually about eighteen inches long. Using a yard stick, demonstrate that this is about two cubits long. Now, if we want to reach 1,000 cubits, we will need to count these five hundred times. Wow! That is a lot of measuring.)

And the man measured another 1,000 cubits, and again, and again, until the waters were to the **"knees,"** the **"loins,"** and then they were so deep he could only cross by swimming in them. (Are there any good swimmers in this class?)

The waters increased and increased, and where they flowed, whatever they touched, life and growth began to happen.

Back at the **"brink of the river,"** Ezekiel saw **"very many trees"** on both sides. These trees are healthy, vibrant, alive, and abundant because they have been touched by the waters from the sanctuary.

Wherever God is working, things cannot remain the same as they were.

As the waters continued to flow **"down into the desert, and go into the sea,"** wherever they moved, things were **"healed,"** and life thrived. Even the Dead Sea, where **"fish"** could not live before, now they find in these healing waters a happy home.

This is God's specialty, restoration and wholeness beyond our wildest dreams. Listen to what Isaiah 61:3 says: "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

Friends, we may not be trees by that river, but the Bible tells us, "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God" (Psalm 92:13). These are the ones who are in a relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. In Him, they find spiritual restoration, wholeness, and newness of life (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4, 23; John 3:16).

Jesus said of Himself, quoting Isaiah 61:1, in Luke 4:18, 19, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the

brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Or, as He told a woman at a well in Samaria, He came to satisfy and offer complete healing through eternal life: “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

When the waters in Ezekiel’s vision touched the trees and rivers, something beautiful happened, and new life sprang forth. Even more beautiful is the life touched by Jesus, who said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

## Activities

- Life. Healing. Restoration. All beautiful words indeed, and they are all the blessings that flow from the healing waters from the sanctuary pictured in this lesson. Their impact and beauty in Ezekiel’s vision of our future gives us hope for today. Ponder what this promise means to you personally. Record your thoughts on the **Adult Journal Page** provided on site. Younger students can describe in their own words what they think the vision of that life-giving river looks like using the **Kid’s Journal Page**.
- Younger students can use the **Draw the Scene** printable found on-site to complete the picture, adding their own river with fish and trees on the side. There is also a **Simple Coloring Sheet** for those who would rather not draw.
- Younger students can make a simple **Leaf Lace-Up Craft** (activity found on-site).
- Alternate activity sheets such as **Word Search, Crossword, and more** are also available on-site.

## Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: ***“And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live... for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.”***  
**Ezekiel 47:9**
- **Game Idea for younger students:** To the tune of “*Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*” sing this modified version indicating the flow of the increasing, healing waters found in Ezekiel’s vision. Sing:  
“Ankles, knees, hips, and shoulders,

Hips and shoulders.

Ankles, knees, hips, and shoulders,

Hips and shoulders.

Healing the trees,

And fish,

And waters.

Ankles, knees, hips, and shoulders,

Hips and shoulders.” © Word for Life Says

- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 14)

## Life

Water is life-sustaining. There is no hiding the value it has for our physical health. But what about our spiritual health?

Jesus told the woman of Samaria, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:10, 14).

Copy, cut out, and attach/tape these verses to your water bottles (disposable or otherwise) throughout this week (a free printable of John 4:14 can be found on-site). These verses will not only serve as a reminder of what Christ offers us, but they can also be used as a witnessing tool to others.

## TOPIC:

## “Ezekiel Sees a Life-Giving River”

Ezekiel 47:1-12

**VERSE DISCOVERY: Ezekiel 47:1-12 (KJV, Public Domain)**

*One day, Jesus, walking with His disciples, felt compelled to go through Samaria (John 4:4). Resting on a well while His disciples proceeded into the city to buy food (v.8), He had an encounter with a woman from Samaria who came seeking water (v.7). Seeing her intent, Jesus asked, “Give me to drink.”*

*Her response was nothing unusual for the days they lived in. Knowing the animosity that was between the Jews and the Samaritans, she stated what was to her a normal fact: “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans” (v. 9).*

*Jesus, bypassing her hesitation to reach her heart, said to her, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and **he would have given thee living water**. But whosoever drinketh of **the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life**” (John 4:10, 14; emphasis added).*

*Water is life-sustaining. No matter what climate or environment one dwells in, water is a mandatory need that must be met to thrive physically. For Jesus, to identify what He has to offer as “water springing up into everlasting life” is triumphal. It meets the soul’s deepest need and satisfies all that is required spiritually for one to enter life everlasting.*

*Living water springing up into everlasting life is picturesque of this lesson. In this portion of Ezekiel’s visions (for he had many), there is a life-giving river that flows from the sanctuary of God, healing all it touches much like our Lord promised the woman at the well of Samaria.*

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## THE BEGINNING FLOW

**Ezekiel 47:1, 2** “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.”

When traveling through uncharted, unfamiliar territories, places where your feet have not stepped before, nor have your eyes seen, it is always wise to have someone along who can lead the way and show you things you may miss or not understand.

During this vision, Ezekiel has such a person to help him navigate and understand what he is witnessing. The one escorting him is simply referred to as “the man” (Ezekiel 40:1-4), or “**he**” here in verse 1.

The Bible does not clarify who “the man” is, but he has walked with Ezekiel through several visions, unfolding the truth of each one along the way.

Whoever “the man” was, he knew his way around and he knew what he was talking about. Therefore, Ezekiel, in faith, continued to follow his lead, learning what God wanted him to learn along the way. Truths for himself. Truths for the people of the day. And truth for us as well.

In this lesson, he is brought back to the door of the temple, or “**house.**” It was here that he saw something unusual and out of the ordinary. Water was flowing from under the threshold of the door of the temple. This was a sight to see for Ezekiel, but even more so for us being that other verses of the Bible speak of the same thing occurring.

Joel 3:18 speaks about “a fountain shall come forth out of the house of the LORD.” And Zechariah 14:8 tells us, “living waters shall go out from Jerusalem.”

Traveling to the end of the Bible, there is a very vivid picture of this life-giving river and its source which was “Proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1).

Ezekiel became an eyewitness to a phenomenon of God. A miracle was unfolding before his eyes, reminding us of what the prophet Isaiah once wrote: “Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters...” (55:1).

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There is a miracle unfolding in the house of God for all who will come to Him.

The man had taken Ezekiel out of the north gate and brought him around to the gate that **“looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side”** (v. 2).

Some may ask why they traveled this path? Why not just go directly out the east gate to witness this phenomenon?

Let us travel back in history a bit to find out.

First, let’s talk about Ezekiel and why he was having these visions in the first place. He was a prophet/priest who was ministering God’s word to the captives in Babylon, and unfortunately, they were noted as being rebellious people (Ezekiel 2:3,7).

Through many demonstrations and illustrations, God relayed His message through Ezekiel to the people. Then, we reach Ezekiel 8, where in another vision, Ezekiel is shown the following: **“Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary?...”** (Ez. 8:6).

Reaching Ezekiel 10, he then saw God’s glory depart from the temple because of the wickedness of the people.

By the time we reach Ezekiel 43, and after much goings on in between the two references, the Bible tells us, **“And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east”** (Ez. 43:4).

Because of this, Ezekiel 44:2 says, **“Then said the Lord unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.”** So, no man can tread through there.

## THE INCREASING FLOW

**Ezekiel 47:3-5 “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**

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could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.”

After coming out of the gate and witnessing the “**waters on the right side**” (v. 2), our focus is then brought back to “**the man**” who was leading Ezekiel through this vision, and who now has a measuring “**line in his hand.**”

Moving “**eastward,**” in the same direction as the water flow, the man began to take measurements. Marking out “**a thousand cubits**” following the water flow, they found the waters to be to the “**ankles.**”

Measuring in “**cubits**” was the normal practice of the day. It was usually the length of a man’s elbow to the top of his middle finger, or approximately 18 inches long.

The man repeats his measurements of “**a thousand cubits**” three more times. Going through the waters till we see the measurements and the depth of the water reach the “**knees,**” the “**loins,**” and lastly, until the waters are too deep for wading and the only choice left was to “**swim**” in it.

Although we are not given specifics for the growing depth and spreading of the waters, we fully appreciate all they touch and the effects they produce.

### THE HEALING FLOW

**Ezekiel 47:6-10** “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.

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.

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

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

The man, addressing Ezekiel asked, **“Son of man, hast thou seen this?”**

In previous visions, when he witnessed the wickedness of the people and their abominations of worship, he probably wished he could unsee and forget that horrible sight. But now, what he sees is so wonderful and so refreshing, because what he is witnessing is a testament to what God wants to do through His mercy and restoration power.

The Bible says, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). Yet, God allowed Ezekiel this illustrative preview of the glorious.

God has stuff in store that will blow your mind, and you want to be very attentive to see every bit of it.

**“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.”** Where the water flowed, vegetation appeared in abundance. Both sides of the river were thick with **“trees.”**

Trees that are planted by water tend to do great in their growth. All they absorb from the river gives them the nutrients to not only develop and increase, but to thrive (compare Psalm 1:3). One may assume that’s why there are **“very many”** of them present in the vision.

**“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.”** No wonder there are so many trees. **“These waters”** are healing waters. This is the result of flowing from the sanctuary. Anything that flows from where God resides must be healed or made whole.

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That little trickle that started at the threshold impacted everything it touched, and what follows is abundance. They are experiencing an outpouring of the bounty of God's power in action. God has the cure for everything that needs to be restored!

**“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.”** Don't you love it when you see the word **“shall”** attached to the promises and blessings of God? It speaks of the authority of the author of the words to make happen what was said to happen. It is essentially a command word, and here the command is to **“live.”**

Wherever **“these waters”** flow, life flows with it. Whatever the river touches, it will be penetrated by the power of God. Wherever the currents move - life, restoration, and healing will be stirred in the ripples of it.

Why? **“For they shall be healed.”** Since we've already discussed the healing of the waters in the previous section, let's focus on what occurred after the waters moved through these rivers.

One thing we noticed is that now, as opposed to its previous condition, **“there shall be a very great multitude of fish.”**

A significant note indeed, considering the body of waters being referenced is none other than the Dead Sea, whose extremely high salt content makes it impossible for life to exist there.

But when the waters that flow from the sanctuary touch that which was dead, life springs forth anew. Fish are not only able to inhabit that which was considered uninhabitable, but they thrive **“because these waters shall come thither.”**

**“Fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim”** and cast out their nets with guaranteed results of a good catch.

Today, there are myriad ways for people to catch fish. Some launch out in boats. Some have waterproof bibbed overalls that equip them to walk deeper in the water where the fish are. Visiting beach areas you may find some positioning themselves on a pier or a bridge to let down their lines into the waters.

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Depending on the type of fishing and fish one is looking for, methods such as airboats, sonar, different baits and bobbers are used to guarantee a good catch. But none of those tricks and tactics would be needed in this river. Put away your new-fangled gadgets and gizmos, because all they had to do was stand on the side, and fish.

A fisherman's paradise, if you will, because of the abundance.

So. Many. Fish. This wasn't a man-made, pre-stocked pond that made catching easy. Nor was it a catch-and-release program. The abundance experienced here was because of the miracle flowing from the sanctuary.

Not only was there abundance in numbers, but there was abundance in "**kinds**," or species of fish: "**Their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.**"

Science has tried to put a number on the many species of fish that may swim in this planet's waters. But they are only what is known to us. It seems the more we explore, the more we find out. I don't know how many different species of fish swimming in these waters in this lesson are, but it was so much that it was noted here: "**exceeding many.**"

**Ezekiel 47:11 "But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt."**

God, on purpose, let an area remain unaffected by the flow of healing waters. There are many speculations about why it goes untouched, but none substantiated by the Word. For His reasons, God commanded it to remain as is. This really exemplifies the sovereignty of God at work in all areas of life. If He commands healing, then it shall be healed. If He commands a condition to stay in the state that it is, then we can rest knowing that it is still a part of His perfect plan and that there must be a divine purpose at work even if we don't know why. Romans reminds us, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (8:28).

**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."**

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We see nearly the exact thing written by John in Revelation 22:2 where it says, “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.”

In both instances, there are the trees with fruit every month, and leaves adorned for healing or “**medicine**.” All because of those life-giving waters that support them.

The culmination of all that God is doing and touching is with the end result of healing and restoration; to bring new life.

Is this not what Jesus promised the woman at the well? “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

Everlasting life. Does that not speak of being wholly restored and healed for all eternity? Does that not reverse the curse of sin and bring life to the place that was dead?

Let us take heed to the call of Isaiah: “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,” (55:1). There is life, the power of His Spirit, waiting to touch and heal all that come. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,” (Romans 6:23).

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**TOPIC:**

## “Ezekiel Sees a Life-Giving River”

**Ezekiel 47:1-12**

**Please Answer the Review Questions Below**

1. **T or F.** Ezekiel saw waters flow from the west side of the house. (Ez. 47:1)
2. The man guiding Ezekiel through the vision measured a \_\_\_\_\_ cubits at each increasing interval. (Ez. 47:3-5)  
**A. 18            B. 36            C. 1,000            D. 100**
3. Describe the event of the increasing waters found in Ezekiel 47:3-5.

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4. What result do the healing waters have on the vegetation at the bank of the river? (Ez. 47:6-7)

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5. The trees in verse 12 shall bring forth new \_\_\_\_\_ according to his months.  
**A. Leaves            B. Fruit            C. Life            D. Trees**

6. **T or F.** Outside, they saw waters flow from the left side. (Ez. 47:2)
7. What was the result of the waters reaching the Dead Sea (Ez. 47:8-10)? Considering that miracle, what hope does that give you for your future?

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