

THE RIVER OF LIFE IN THE NEW LAND: A REMINDER, GOD IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE EZEKIEL 47:01–12

Introduction

One of the major features of the Messiah's kingdom will be a *new land*. Right before Jesus Christ sets up God's kingdom on earth, catastrophic disasters will strike the earth. There will be unparalleled earthquakes and volcanic eruptions and huge meteors will fall to earth. Apparently these disasters will radically change the topographical and geographical features of the earth. Note a few references that point to the catastrophic events that will take place on earth (see note, Eze 42:15-20):

Mat 24:7 "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places."

Mat 24:29 "Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

Acts 2:19-20 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

Rev 6:12-14 I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Rev 8:7-12 The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water — the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter. The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.

Rev 16:18-21 Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been

on earth, so tremendous was the quake. The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, fell on people. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

Joel 2:30-31 *I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.*

Joel 3:15-16 *The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the LORD will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.*

These passages are but a few of many that predict a restructuring of the earth's surface. God will change the face of the earth so that it will resemble the Garden of Eden. After all natural and man-made disasters — polluted air, contaminated water, tornadoes and hurricanes, volcanoes and earthquakes — cease, both the heavens and earth will be at peace. Both will operate without disturbance or disaster during the reign of Christ. All nature, including the surface of the earth, will be radically changed.

It should be noted that these changes do not refer to the new heavens and earth that God will create after the Messiah's millennial reign. These particular changes will take place *right before* Christ returns to earth. This fact has great significance for the true believers of Israel. When Christ returns and gives Israel the promised land, the land will be completely different from what it is today.

As Ezekiel closes his great book, he describes the amazing fertility of the promised land of God. Keep in mind that God Himself showed Ezekiel this land in a vision. The prophet is describing what the LORD actually showed him. In addition, the LORD showed Ezekiel how the land of Israel will be divided among the twelve tribes. God will fulfill His wonderful promise to Abraham and to all the descendants of faith that they will inherit the promised land. And it will be a new land. This is, *The New Land in the Messiah's Kingdom: A Picture of the Believer's Inheritance in the Promised Land (Heaven)*, Ezekiel 47:1-48:35.

- I. The river of life in the new land: a reminder that God is the Source of life (vv. 47:1-12).
- II. The boundaries and division of the new land: a reminder that the promised land is the believer's inheritance (vv. 47:13-48:29)
- III. The capital city (Jerusalem) in the new land: a reminder of the eternal city of salvation (vv. 48:30-35).

***Ezekiel 47:01–12 The River of Life in the New Land:
A Reminder that God is the Source of Life***

There will be a unique river in the new land of the Messiah's kingdom. Water is an absolute essential to all life and human activity. Without it, there is no life. This river has life-giving qualities that will cause all life and activity — vegetation, commerce, businesses, economy and recreation — to flourish in the promised land. The most prominent feature of the *new land* will be this river of life. Scripture gives a detailed description of the river:

1. When God's angelic messenger brought Ezekiel back to the entrance of the temple, the prophet saw the source of the river (vv. 1-2). Standing at the entrance of the temple, he saw water trickling out from under the threshold of the temple. This small stream of water flowed toward the east and passed by the south side of the altar. God's messenger led Ezekiel through the north gate around to the outside of the east gate so the prophet could continue to watch the stream flow (v. 2). There he saw the stream of water flowing out of the temple area by the south side of the eastern gate. The stream continued to flow south and southeast.
2. In just the short distance of 6,000 feet, the small trickle of water became a torrential river. After the two men had walked 1750 feet (1,000 cubits) along the riverbank, the messenger took a measuring tape and made a mark. At that mark, the river was ankle-deep (v. 3). After they followed the river another 1750 feet, it was knee deep (v. 4). They continued to follow the flowing water, which soon became a river. After another 1750 feet, the river was waist deep (v. 4). At the fourth measurement of 1750 feet, the river was so deep that Ezekiel could not cross it without swimming (v. 5). At last, the land promised by God would have enough water to cause all life and activity to flourish.
3. The purpose of the river is to transform the land (vv. 6-12). It will nourish a great number of trees, bring life to the barren, desert land of the Arabah, and even heal the salty water of the Dead Sea (vv. 7-8). The *river of life* will bring new life wherever it flows (vv. 9-12). Ezekiel described ten effects of the river's life-giving waters:
 - Animals will multiply (v. 9).
 - Fish will abound in the Dead Sea (v. 9).
 - Everything will live (v. 9).
 - Fishermen will spread their nets in every seaside community stretching from En Gedi to En Eglaim (v. 10).
 - Fish of every kind will flourish and be caught (v. 10).
 - Swamps and marshes will be left untouched in order to provide salt for people (v. 11).

- Fruit trees of all kinds will grow abundantly (v. 12).
- Leaves of the trees will never wither (v. 12).
- Trees will bear fruit every month (v. 12).
- Trees will produce fruit for food and leaves for healing (v. 12).

Based on this description, there has obviously never been a river like this on the surface of the earth. Other Scriptures describe how the new land of the Messiah's kingdom will flow with numerous rivers of water (Joel 4:18; Zec13:1; 14:8- 9; the tree of life mentioned in the book of Revelation should be studied along with the tree of life mentioned here in Ezekiel: see note, pts. 1-2, Rev 22:1-5).

Thought 1. The river of life is a reminder that God is the source of abundant and eternal life. There is no life apart from the Lord. Jesus Christ is the water who...

- gives us life,
- quenches our thirst for life,
- completes our life.

John 4:10 *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

John 7:37-39 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

Eph 5:26 *To make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.*

Rev 7:17 *"For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

Rev 21:6 *He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life."*

Rev 22:1-2 *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

Thought 2. The river of life began as a trickle flowing from the presence of God Himself and became a great river with life-giving, healing qualities in its flowing waters. This paints a clear picture of the blood of Christ, which began as a trickle of blood that flowed from the cross to the world. Every human being in the world can be forgiven their sins and redeemed through the flowing blood of the LORD Jesus Christ.

Mat 26:28 *“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”*

Acts 20:28 *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

Rom 5:9 *Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!*

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.*

Heb 9:14 *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

1 Pet 1:18-19 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

Rev 1:5 *To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. ■*