

## River of Life



David Wilkerson April 16, 1990

"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.

"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 could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this?

"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" (Ezekiel 47:1-12).

Ezekiel had been given a vision — and it was presented to him by the Lord Himself. Scripture says the hand of God carried Ezekiel to a very high mountain, where a Man appeared to him "whose appearance was like the appearance of brass" (Ezekiel 40:2-3). John, exiled on the island of Patmos, saw this same Man — "his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace" (Revelation 1:15).

The Man, in both passages, was none other than Christ. He brought Ezekiel to the door of the house of God, and there He gave the prophet and amazing vision of the future of the church. This vision revealed what the body of Christ would become as the final days of time on earth would draw to a close.

*The vision reveals Jesus Himself and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days.* It is so mighty, so overwhelming in scope, that at the time, Ezekiel could neither comprehend it nor comment on its meaning!

In fact halfway into this prophetic vision, the Lord stops, turns to Ezekiel and asks, "Have you seen this?" (Ezekiel 47:6). It is as though the Lord is saying to him, "Do you comprehend the magnitude of what you see? Are you able to grasp the prophetic power of this vision? Do you yet see what the rising of the waters speaks of — how it is going to end? Do you see His glory coming? It is so awesome, so mind-boggling, that I don't want you to miss the true meaning of this revelation!"

As I read this chapter, the Holy Spirit stopped me at this very same verse and would not let me go any further! The Spirit of God posed to me the same questions asked of Ezekiel: "Do you understand that this is a great prophecy from the very throne of God about the church of the last days? Do you understand the meaning of the rising of the river?"

This vision must have astonished Ezekiel and, though it is not recorded, I am convinced he did not understand it.

The Old Testament prophets had a limited vision of Christ. Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them...hear ye therefore" (Matthew 13:17).

"Hear ye therefore...." Make sure you see it! Don't miss it! Just what is it that the Lord reveals in this prophetic vision?

## **There Is an Ever-Increasing Outpouring of the Holy Spirit Coming!**

What Ezekiel is being shown is that the church of Jesus Christ in the very last days will be more glorious, more victorious, than in all of its history: the church will go out in a blaze of power and glory, enjoying the fullest revelation of Jesus man has ever known!

The true church of Jesus Christ is not going to weaken and sputter! It is not going to dwindle in numbers or decrease in power and spiritual authority! "The fish of the great sea [shall be] exceeding many" (Ezekiel 47:10). Coming forth is a body of believers who will be swimming in the rising waters of the Lord's presence! The knowledge and presence of Jesus will increase until the end!

There has been a tendency among Christians to limit their vision of God to their own little group and area. Often the attitude has been, "We are the new move of God. What God is going to do in these last days will begin right here and flow out of us. You'd better come join us, because we've got it! This is God's new thing on earth. He is networking out from us!"

This attitude actually limits God in much the same way denominations have done for centuries, giving the impression that they alone represent the move of God on earth! An old false doctrine is being resurrected today. It says, "God has only one church in any city or area and only one spiritual authority." Operating on this belief, the adherents of this doctrine appoint "apostles" to rule these areas. New York City itself has such self-appointed apostles and prophets who believe they alone rule the heavenly realm here.

Another way the church limits itself is through its tendency to look back to the early church and apostles as if those ancient believers had a better revelation of what the body of Christ should be! So they emphasize recapturing or imitating their methods.

The Lord does not want us to go back to the early church. He has planned something much better for these last days! Why go back to a trickle of water when you can have "waters to swim in"?

Beloved, the spring and fountainhead of this river is the Cross! "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:34).

This is exactly what Ezekiel saw as this vision opened — a trickle of water issuing "out from under the threshold of the house eastward...the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar...the waters came down...there ran out waters" (Ezekiel 47:1-2). This is the image of Pentecost, when the Spirit was given to the disciples — with a promise that it was to be a river of life, springing up to flow out into all the world.

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ...this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive" (John 7:38-39).

Let me ask you: Are you grasping this yet? If this river of living water is the Holy Spirit, then Pentecost — with all its glory and manifestation — was just the beginning trickle of the flow out of the house!

Peter announced that this water was flowing, as promised by the Lord, at the beginning of the last days. And as it flows, it grows! It expands in width, depth, volume, power and restoration glory. You see, Peter and the 120 had water only to the ankles!

The church had been persecuted for hundreds of years. When the emperor Constantine came to power, Constantine opened the salt mines and released all the ministers who had been enslaved. In addition, he declared Christianity the religion of the empire! Yet it was during those years of persecution that the church grew greatly in

its knowledge and revelation of Jesus. Those persecuted saints enjoyed water to the knees!

Martin Luther was another who brought the body of Christ to a new realm of faith. The water during the Reformation rose to the loins as the church grew in a greater revelation of the Cross, leading to a deeper knowledge of His power! How wonderful it must have been, finally, to behold masses of people being baptized and coming into the revelation of salvation by faith! It must have been quite a sight as well to see multitudes of believers, filled with a zeal for the house of the Lord, rushing into cathedrals to tear down all the idols and graven images!

### **This River of Life Will Crest Just Prior to the Lord's Coming!**

This is foretold in the vision given to Ezekiel. God took the prophet on an amazing trip! With a measuring rod in His hand, the Lord walked off a 1,000 cubits — about one-third of a mile. At this distance Ezekiel and the Lord walked in the water, and the flow was ankle high. Ezekiel said, "He brought me through the waters" (Ezekiel 47:3). And the Lord kept urging him on, deeper, further! After another 1,000 cubits, the water came up to their knees — and was still rising!

Saints, Ezekiel was walking into the future — right into our time! Today we live in the last 1,000 cubits of this vision, the very last measurement of water! Ezekiel stepped to the edge of it but it was too deep for him, too overwhelming! He said, "I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in" (Ezekiel 47:5). In essence he was saying, "This is over my head!"

Can't you imagine the prophet's wonder, as he said to the Lord, "What is this sea that has risen? If this river is all about life and resurrection, who are the ones who will be so blessed that they can swim in such power and glory?"

Beloved, if you think we have experienced the presence of Jesus abundantly, if you have been thrilled by your present revelation of Jesus, I tell you that you have seen nothing in comparison to the increase that is coming for the righteous. Jesus is going to open our eyes and wonderfully appear in our midst! He will reveal Himself and pour upon us as much of His life as we can possibly stand without having glorified bodies!

The prophet Isaiah had a glimpse of this same prophetic river! But he saw something else also: In the last days the church will enjoy great protection against satanic attack!

"No galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby" (Isaiah 33:21). He is speaking of slave-driven warships. This is a picture of the enemy trying to launch an attack upon those who are swimming in great waters. And it is a picture of total confusion! Satan is barking commands: "Batten down the hatches...set sail...strengthen the mast!" But nothing works! They can't even spread the sail to launch the warship! All the demon-slave oarsmen sit there — the wicked sailors of hell — in the midst of confusion. The living waters are off-limits to Satan!

"Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt...let the angel of the Lord chase them...let the angel of the Lord persecute them" (Psalm 35:4-6).

### **A Time Is Coming When Unprecedented Numbers Will Be Revived from Spiritual Death.**

"So everything will live where the river goes" (Ezekiel 47:9). When Ezekiel returned to the bank of the river, he stood astonished. He looked back and saw "very many trees" on both sides of the river. These trees had been given life from the river! They had leaves that never faded and their fruit brought healing. Life had sprung up everywhere in these towering, fruitbearing trees!

Yet even though this river of God will bring life wherever it goes, the last days will also see a corresponding flood of death. AIDS is a sea of destruction — a modern-day Dead Sea! Multitudes are dying. The Bible warns that scoffers will come, mocking the message of Christ's imminent return, putting to death expectancy and hopeful love! Jesus said, "The love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12). "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13). Morals will die and sin will abound while false prophets spread doctrines of deaths!

Even now, spiritual death has spread throughout the apostate church! In the midst of the death and destruction of

these last days, I hear the Lord's prophecy thundering in my soul: The river will rise, and everything will live where the river goes!

In China it looked as though the church might be dying! The enemy had driven believers underground, and for years there was no word coming out of that country. Western Christians had no idea whether the church there was surviving. But thank God — the river could not be stopped! It was rising all the time and we know that millions of Chinese are swimming in the river of life! "Everything will live where the river goes."

Consider New York City, a wicked city of death. Many thousands are dying from AIDS, overdoses, murder and assaults. It all seems to be out of control.

I know that many people want to move out — but the Holy Ghost has dug a well on Broadway! The Spirit has begun to plow deeply, and the river is rising! Jesus is now appearing on Broadway! He is revealing His holiness!

The theater district can't keep the river out of their territory. Wall Street can't keep out the river of life! Nor can city hall stop the river from flowing. Homosexuals can't keep it out of Greenwich Village. Pro-abortionists can't keep it out of the clinics. Nor can orthodox rabbis keep this river out of their synagogues! The river is rising, and *everything will live where the river goes!*

The river is now flowing at flood tide throughout Romania, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Russia! Life in Christ is springing up all over the world! As Martin Luther once said, "If you want to get rid of an ant hill, turn the river on it!"

What about your household? Has it seemed hopeless to you? Are you watching rampant death among your loved ones? Believe these prophetic words of our blessed Lord: "For they shall be healed, and every thing shall live whither the river cometh."

I don't know how the Lord will do all this. But if He says the river will rise and bring life to all it touches, I believe it! If God can wipe out Communism in one year, can He not do this as well?

### **In the Midst of All This Healing and Reviving, Some Are Going To Be Left Out! They Will Be "Given to Salt!"**

"But the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt" (Ezekiel 47:11). These are mud puddles, full of dirt and mire. The river flows over them — yet they are not healed! Eventually the river passes by and leaves them so dry they turn to salt (a symbol of rebellion and barrenness).

Salt marshes represent those who feel deeply but do not change. They cry but do not obey. They make promises and resolutions but do not follow through. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isaiah 57:20).

These people profess Christianity and have been inundated with gospel reproof. They have had the Holy Spirit plumb the depths of their souls and woo them, but they remain unchanged! They have been in the river — but they haven't allowed its life to enter their innermost selves. The life of Jesus does not spring forth out of them!

Instead, out of their bellies flows a stream of filthy gossip, insincere flatteries, lies and distortions. They are not life-givers. All about them are strife and bitterness! They wallow in self-pity, they continually complain and question authority. They are phonies, mired in dirt! They spread death to all they touch!

But a sentence of doom has been passed on them: "They shall be given to salt." This is the curse of barrenness: a lifetime bearing no fruit — total uselessness. Yet they still stand in their rebellion, full of pride!

Believe me, God will bend the river and flow by these people! They will become blind and insensitive to their danger. As the Holy Ghost withdraws, they will be left crying, "Peace, peace," while sudden destruction falls!

Ezekiel must have been amazed by such pockets of death. Life was springing up on all sides, but these pockets of death remained barren and white with dryness. Peter called them "wells without water" (2 Peter 2:17).

How did they get this way — so empty, dry and cut off from the life-giving river? Because, said Peter, "They walk after the flesh...they are presumptuous...self-willed...they speak against God-ordained authority...they speak evil of the things they know nothing about...they are entangled with the world and have been overcome...they have turned from the holy commandments once delivered to them" (2 Peter 2:10-21, paraphrased).

The real tragedy is that most of these dry wells were once fountains of living water! Whereas they once issued forth life, healing and blessing, they now spew out bitterness, hatred and death!

Saints, don't be caught up in stubborn bitterness while the river is flowing. Let God fill your belly instead with His living water — the river of life! A flood of revelation of Jesus Christ is on its way, and it will not stop to cater to any flesh.

Do you comprehend the magnitude of the vision given to Ezekiel? The Old Testament prophets couldn't see it. But through His Holy Spirit, God has given us eyes to behold His exceeding greatness.

Hear ye therefore — *a river of life is coming!*

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