

Journey Through The Cities of Refuge

Lesson #15

God's Rivers Of Living Water

April 29, 2026

Rivers of Living Water: The River From Eden

The Bible describes Eden as a specific, physical region or land.

Based on Ezek. 28:13-14, 16 the Garden of Eden is described as a sanctuary located on the "Holy Mountain of God." Context: Fall of Lucifer

- You were in Eden, the garden of God.
- You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the Holy Mountain of God;
- Iniquity was found in you.
- Therefore, I cast you as a profane thing out of the Mountain of God;

Eden is the elevated, sacred space where God's presence dwelt. Eden is primarily a sacred space where God, humanity, and creation enjoyed unhindered fellowship.

Eden serves as the first in a series of "mountains" where God meets humanity.

The Mountain of God Pattern: The pattern of God's dwelling moves from the Mountain of Eden to Mount Sinai, to Mount Zion [the Millennial Temple; Ps. 2:6], and finally the high mountain of the New Jerusalem. This suggests a consistent motif of a high place of worship.

This understanding connects the beginning of the Bible (Genesis) to its end (Revelation), where the new heaven and new earth feature a "very high mountain" (Rev. 21:10), representing a return to the paradise-like fellowship of the Eden-mountain.

Prototype of the Temple: Eden is viewed as the original temple sanctuary, with a river flowing from it. It mirrors the river flowing from the Millennial Temple in Ezekiel 47.

God planted a garden for Adam and Eve in the land of Eden.

Gen. 2:8 And the LORD God planted a garden in the east, in Eden, and He put the man whom He had created there.

Genesis places Eden "in the east," watered by a river that parted into four headwaters.

Genesis 2:10-14: A single, unnamed river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, where it divided into four distinct branches: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris (Hiddekel), and Euphrates.

Source of Life & Order: The rivers illustrate that creation is not chaotic but ordered and purposeful. A single, unified river breaks into four, indicating that all life and sustenance originated from one divine source. Life-giving resources originate in God's presence.

Grace Before the Fall: Grace and divine supply were designed to be humanity's original experience.

These rivers symbolize divine provision and represent a lifegiving source connecting the paradise of Eden to the wider world.

- God's peace and flourishing were supposed to flow to all the earth.

Key Point: The land of Eden had the Holy Mountain of God, the Garden of God in Eden, a single river that originated from one Divine source and was a prototype of the Temple.

I Cor. 3:9 ...you are God's garden, field. [AMP]

John 7:38 Jesus said that if we believed in Him,

that out of our innermost being would flow rivers of living water

Do the rivers flowing out of God's original garden, Eden, have any kind of message relative to the rivers that are supposed to be flowing out of God's garden, our lives, today?

The First River - Pishon means increase or full-flowing.

Gen. 2:10-12 It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there"

Abundant natural riches around the Garden which was in Eden

Gold and Worship: The pure gold of Havilah anticipates later Biblical themes involving gold in the tabernacle and temple, signaling that the raw materials of worship were resident in creation from the beginning.

Havilah as a place of God-given abundance, emphasizing

- the richness of creation before sin marred it
- the Creator's generosity toward humanity.

The first river flowing out of the garden was *full-flowing*.

God wants us to experience a full flow of His Presence and power in our lives.

He doesn't want us to be drained, depleted, or deficient.

Eph. 3:19 and [that you may come] to know [practically, through personal experience] the love of Christ which far surpasses [mere] knowledge [without experience], that you may be filled up [throughout your being] to all the fullness of God [so that you may have the richest experience of God's presence in your lives, completely filled and flooded with God Himself]. AMP

The Second River - Gihon = bursting forth or gushing Gen. 2:13

It goes around the whole land of Cush. [Ethiopia]

This prediluvian note presents Cush as an established land even before human dispersion.

If we move beyond "fullness" and are "bursting forth" (experiencing an overflow), then the nature and character of God coming out of us is bound to influence and impact others also.

John 4:14 "Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst — not ever.

The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life."

The Third River - Hiddekel = swift or darting; a swift arrow in flight

Gen. 2:14 The name of the third river is Hiddekel; [Tigris]

it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria.

Before an arrow is ever released from a bow, it is aimed at a target; a goal is in sight.

The life of a believer—we are God's garden today—is not some ethereal experience whereby we merely sit around, mystically bubbling over with His Presence.

We are to be like swift arrows in flight. Paul said that he ran with purpose in every step.

- I Cor. 9:26; Phil. 3:12-14

The Fourth River - Euphrates= sweet or fruitful

If we have the first three rivers flowing in our lives, fullness, overflow, and purpose, it will result in us experiencing sweetness and fruitfulness.

Ortberg: When we are in the flow of the Spirit, we become increasingly full of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Ezekiel: God strengthens: Born into priestly family; knew and taught the Law; a prophet
Ezekiel provides details of this very high Mountain of Jehovah's House.

Ezek. 40:1 In the five and twentieth year of our captivity [573 BC], in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me and brought me thither.

- 25th year of the 70 years of captivity in Babylon: 10th Day of Nisan
 - 1st Day of Passover Week: Remind them of Israel's deliverance from Egypt
 - Beginning of Israel's Religious Year Ex. 12:2

Key: The Lord chose that significant day to tell His servant about the glory that Israel would share when Messiah established His kingdom.

- It is a time of deep discouragement. This marks a crucial transition from judgment to hope.
- Ezekiel is guided to see a future that seems impossible given their current circumstances.
- The future New Temple represents a "meticulously planned," holy future.
God promises to dwell with his people, highlighting a future, perfect restoration.
- The "hand of the LORD." Signifies divine power, inspiration, and empowerment.
Brings encouragement that God is not done with Israel.

40:2-3 In the visions of God brought He me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south. [Millennial Jerusalem] And He brought me thither, and behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass,... with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate.

Before the "brass man" gives Ezekiel a guided tour of the temple precincts, the guide gave Ezekiel some solemn counsel.

Ezek. 40:4 And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and SET THINE HEART upon all that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that thou see to the house of Israel.

- He is to relate the vision to the Jews who are in captivity in Babylon.
- During the Babylonian siege they had lost their land, their Holy City, their Temple and many of their loved ones.

Ezekiel's Vision: Demonstrate to them by this FUTURE HOPE the unconditional love of God.

Ezekiel, the LORD'S watchman, has described the return of the Jewish people to their land,
➤ the cleansing of the nation, and the restoring of the land to productivity and security.
➤ Now he must give them assurance that their beloved temple and its ministries will be restored. The presence of God's glory in the temple set Israel apart from all the nations [Rom. 9:4].

God's message: His judgments are always redemptive.

His purpose is not to destroy them, but to restore them and reconcile them back to Him.

His judgment was to return them to righteousness.

Ps. 94:14-15 For the LORD will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance.

¹⁵ But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.

Ezek. 36:26-28 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

The Millennial Mountain of Jehovah's House

Woven throughout Old Testament prophecy is a constant theme of:

- spectacular topographical and geographical changes to occur when Christ returns.

Isa. 40:4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low:
and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

Zechariah 14 describes many features of this upheaval,

including a new river to flow from Jerusalem into the desert.

Zech. 14:4,8-10 And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley;
and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

⁸And in that day it shall be *that* living waters shall flow from Jerusalem,
Half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea;
In both summer and winter it shall occur.

⁹ And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—
"The Lord is one," And His name one.

¹⁰All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.
[Large plateau on top will be 50 miles in each direction. Outer court = 400,000 sq. ft.]

In Israel: The Millennial Temple will be the largest and most magnificent structure ever erected, and it will all be for the glory of God.

The River That Flows Out From The Millennial Temple

The Millennial River, described in Ezekiel 47, is a prophetic, miraculous, life-giving river that flows from the Temple in Jerusalem during the 1,000-year reign of Christ. It brings life-giving water, healing the Dead Sea and turning it into a thriving, fish-filled body of water, while producing abundant fruit trees on its banks. It represents the complete reversal of environmental decay and the establishment of divine life on earth, functioning as a "new Eden" during the Millennial age.
Literal Restoration: It is a literal, physical river that will alter the topography of Israel, transforming the region into a paradise.

Ezek. 47:1 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east,...

Its origin coincides with Christ's Second Coming on the Mt. of Olives, which will trigger a massive earthquake, thus creating a vast East-West valley running through Jerusalem and allowing for the water flow. When the earthquake occurs, everyone will know the King of kings has arrived. The nail-printed hands of our Lord will have been put on the map of the earth. He is claiming it for His own. [God the Father promised it to the Son in Psalm 2.]

This amazing life-giving river originates from the house of the LORD [Joel 3:18]. Joel envisions a fountain coming out of the temple and watering the valley of Shittim in which the Dead Sea is located. Joel mentioned this ~250 yrs. Before Ezekiel. Zechariah mentioned it after the Babylonian exile. Half of this amazing river will empty into the Dead Sea which will be turned into fresh water teeming with fish. The Living Sea! [Ezek. 47:10; only one described] Half of the river will empty into the Mediterranean Sea. [Zech. 14:8]

Ezek. 47: When Ezekiel is shown the river that flows out from the Temple, the bronze man uses the linen cord for measurement. [measureless measure]

Ezek. 47:1 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east,...

A. The River Is A Symbol of Divine Provision: Originating from the Temple altar, it represents life and healing stemming directly from God's presence & sanctuary.

At the eastern front of the temple Ezekiel sees a spring emerging. The waters begin at the immediate dwelling place of Christ who is the source of all spiritual and physical life. The miraculous waters "trickled forth" at first, and yet, without any tributaries, increased in depth and the river becomes too deep for man.

47:2-5 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 looks eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

³ And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured 1000 cubits, [~4.1 football fields] and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

⁴ Again he measured a thousand and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water *came up to my waist*.

⁵ Again he measured one thousand, *and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, Water In Which One Must Swim, a river that could not be crossed.*

B. Abundance & Fruitfulness: The banks of the river will sustain trees that bear fruit monthly and leaves that provide healing, illustrating total restoration of life.

47:6-7 And he said unto me, Son of man, have you seen this? Then he brought me and caused me to return to the bank of the river. 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.

These marvelous trees shall be "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 food, and the leaf thereof for medicine" [v. 12].

These trees will have an inexhaustible quantity of fruit all year long.

The leaves of the tree will provide healing, apparently for those who were redeemed in the Tribulation and entered the Millennium in their physical bodies, and for their offspring.

Its issue from the temple, its immense size, the beneficial qualities of its fruit, its perennial flow "in summer and in winter" [Zech. 14:8] emphasize the supernatural nature of the stream.

47:8-9a 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 everything that lives, which moves, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live:

Picture of the Gospel: It brings life: Col. 1:6. This same Good News, Gospel, that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.

Woman at the Well: 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 [#242. Hallomai] into everlasting life.

Gift of the Spirit: The inward "springing up" depicts the indwelling Spirit, guaranteeing eternal life. Lively surge of living water.

Jesus promises a perpetual spring, encouraging believers to cultivate communion with the Spirit so that spiritual energy continually "springs up" for service and holiness.

John 7:37-39 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

C. The River Is The Source Of Supernatural Healing: The river flows into the Dead Sea, curing its high salinity and enabling abundant fish and life.

Ezek. 47:9b-10 There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. ¹⁰ It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many.

Question: Son of Man, do You See This? HOPE

The River Is Vital To Bring The People Back Into Their Restored Inheritance!

This river brings life and nourishment to a barren and accursed land -
the Judean Wilderness east of Jerusalem.

The river is used by God to cleanse the people in the land and bring nourishment and healing.

Great River that brings food, nourishment and sustenance - Garden of Eden.

Ezekiel's vision is like a ray of light piercing the darkness.

A small trickle that becomes a flood. Joy pierces through despair for the 1st time.

There is a new or perfect temple where God will once again dwell with His people.

Consider: This earth, since the sin of Adam and Eve, has never seen what God can do with it because it has been held in the grips of an usurper.

One of the specific parts of the whole curse was that the ground thereafter would bring forth thorns and thistles. It was more than 2,000 years ago that the Lord Jesus went to Calvary, wearing upon his head a crown of thorns - the very symbol of the earth's curse.

As the Lord of all the earth, He purchased redemption for the earth as well as fallen mankind.

All creation is waiting for the Lord to come to earth, so that the curse upon the earth will be lifted.

The Lord is coming personally, visibly and physically in His glorified body to possess it and redeem this world from Satan's grasp.

He will then transform and remake it into an instrument that can be used for His glory.

Hab. 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
as the waters cover the sea.

Rev. 21:10 an angel carried John in the Spirit to a "great and high mountain" to show him the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

Ezekiel 47 and Revelation 22 both describe a lifegiving river flowing from God's presence, symbolizing divine restoration and divine healing.

Ezekiel 47:1-12 envisions a river flowing from under the altar from a future physical Temple in Jerusalem to bring life to everything it touches.

Rev. 22:1-3 depicts a heavenly river flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the New Jerusalem. It represents a restoration of Eden where a river also flowed. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

Ezekiel describes a river that starts as a trickle and becomes too deep to cross.

- John describes it as a bright, clear river of the water of life.

Ezekiel's vision relates to the restoration of the land of Israel.

- Revelation's vision relates to the final, eternal state of the new heaven and earth.

The Millennial City will feature a grand and glorious Millennial Temple.

Rev 21:22 "I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple."

Ezek. 40:3 He took me there, and behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass. He had a line of flax & a measuring rod in his hand, & he stood in the gate.

Two Instruments Of Measurement:

A. The Rod Of Measurement - Measure the details of the House of God.

Belief: This is a pre-incarnate appearance of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

His bronze-like glow signifies strength, purity, divine judgment, and a heavenly origin, tasked with measuring the new temple to symbolize God's order and holiness.

Believer: God's Temple: Jesus Christ will judge our lives, our walk, our works.

His standard is The Word of God, Jesus Christ.

My Accountability to God: I will have my character, my words, my motives, my behavior, my life weighed and measured by Christ in light of His standards as preserved in His righteous Word.

Col. 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

¹⁰ and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Col. 1:27b which is Christ in you, the Hope Of Glory.

The Linen Cord Of Measurement - Line Of Flax - The Measureless Measure

1. No measurement is given: Linen Cord was used for the greater measurements.
2. Bronze Man with the Line of Flax shows us there is great fullness of Christ. He is God's standard of measure. God measures everything by Jesus Christ. We all will be measured by His Fullness and whether we have attained it!

Consider: We are to be filled with the FULLNESS of JESUS CHRIST.

This supernatural life can only be lived because we are indwelt by a supernatural Person whose indwelling Presence is to make the life of Christ a living reality within us. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is the standard for every Christian.

Spiritual Growth: The increasing depth (ankle, knee, waist, deep water)

mirrors a believer's deepening experience with God's grace & the Holy Spirit.

My Spiritual Growth: Ezek. 47:3-5: ankle deep, knee, waist, deep river.

Key: It takes faith & obedience to experience more of God's presence.

The more the Lord as the man of bronze measures us, the more the level of the river of water of life increases in our being, and the more this flow of life is deepened in us. The more we allow the Lord to examine, test, and judge us to possess us, the deeper the flow becomes.

The more the flow of life increases in us and the deeper we are in the flow, the more we are limited. When the river is up to the ankles, up to the knees, or up to the chest, we still have some liberty to move in the water.

But when the level of water is so increased that it becomes a river, it sweeps us off our feet, and we are carried along by the flow.

In a sense, we are fully limited, but in another sense, we are fully free, for we don't have to do any effort or struggling - the flow of life carries us on and brings us to where God wants to be.

Heb. 6:1 Therefore, having left [once and for all] the elementary *principles* [ABC'S] of the teaching of Christ, Let Us Go On To Perfection.

Press on = #5342 = phero = be borne along like a ship by the wind [passive voice]

Emphasizes the exertion of power on the individual from an outside source.

Conveys the thought of the need of the recipient to willingly surrender to this outside influence

The present tense emphasizes the continual need for this activity.

The writer lumps himself in this group needing to be continually borne along.

The idea is "Let us be carried along by God's Spirit."

Discipleship means learning to be carried along by God's Spirit.

For believers, the trickle of God's Spirit and understanding is shallow at first. Instead of running out of energy God's Spirit gets deeper and wider as it flows from the Word into our hearts! Its ultimate destination is to sanctify the most desolate wastelands of our heart, full of the poisonous water of our carnal old nature like the Dead Sea.

As you go deeper in the river, you see less of the flesh!

This is the beautiful reality of receiving Christ and drinking the living water from His Word that so richly flows from His throne.

Isa. 43:2 When you go through deep waters, I will be with you.

Experiencing the fullness of Christ

"The tragedy of many believers: they are sitting and paddling on the edge of the shore.

They have never gone in and known the blessings of the Spirit of God.

There is a whole ocean out there to enjoy. But they are satisfied with just dabbling!"

In your spiritual growth and life, you can go as deep, as mature and developed as you want to.

➤ May you not linger in the shallows when there are depths for you to enjoy.

The river is the Spirit of God that brings healing to what was dry and life to what was dead.

Barren lands are transformed into fruitful gardens.

Ps. 1:2-3 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.

³ He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

In this river, ankle deep is not enough.

Knee deep is not your destiny. God is calling you to go deeper immersed in His Spirit.

Eph. 3:19-21 And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge,

that ye might be Filled With All The Fullness Of God.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,

according to the power that worketh in us,

²¹ Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.

Amen.