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John's Sunday message -- EZEKIEL 47— “The River of God”

When I started to read Ezekiel I couldn't make head or tail of it, in fact I got rather depressed with all the severe judgments from God on nations and even His own people. There were strange things like wheels within wheels, thrones with animal faces staring out from them, valleys of bones, unusual complicated building plans with measurements in unfamiliar cubics & rods.

I was so tempted to turn over to Luke's Gospel where it was much more exciting; however I read on and I am so glad I didin prayer I said, "Holy Spirit to give me understanding or I'll forget all about Ezekiel." Amazingly it opened up, firstly with just a little insight that lead to more and more then it became exciting. Ezekiel's prophesies are remarkable many having been fulfilled, many being fulfilled in our time and many lining up to be fulfilled.

Firstly, let me tell you a little bit about Ezekiel:

His name means "God will strengthen", yes he needed God's strength to endure against major opposition from false prophets and rulers who prophesied that no harm would come to Israel or her rulers.

He was a Jewish exile taken with thousands of captives into Babylon in about BC597.

His wife died of a stroke as a sign to Israel..... this event no doubt brought great exercise of soul from here his ministry lasted for 23 years.

He was a contemporary of Daniel and Jeremiah. He is buried somewhere near Bagdad.

When Ezekiel prophesied it was a dark day in Israel's history 70 years captivity in Babylon.

Prophesies that have happened:

- That Jerusalem would be destroyedit was destroyed *BC600 aprox.*
- The fall of powerful nations: Ammonites, Moabites, Sidon, Tyre and Egypt. These nations seemed invincible at the time, especially the powerful city of Tyre, but God brought them down. Some would be destroyed forever; others restored.... this included Egypt (but as the lowest of nations). Then certainly Israel would come under God's severe judgment because of her backsliding .
- Over two thousand years later against incredible odds Israel became a nation again in 1948; see chapter 37 about the valley of dry bones coming together, flesh coming on them and breath that made them live. This speaks of Israel becoming a nation again.....Ezekiel's prophecies were accurate.Ezekiel 36:24 declares "*I will take you from among the nationstake away your heart of stone & give you a new heart & new spirit.*" God's present judgment will become their future glory.

Prophecies that are happening & are going to happen:

- Ezekiel 38 & 39 tells us the original names of the nations that now surround Israel and will soon join with Russia in a massive military operation intending to wipe Israel from the map. This event appears to be very close to happening....the signs are evident, but God will intervene directly and cause those nations to be crushed.
- Consequently the people of Israel will turn back to God and nations will wonder at his glory and power.
- Ezekiel now gives intricate plans for the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem. Of course with the hostile nations having been rendered powerless nothing can stop the existing Mosque being replaced by the temple being built. Even if that temple is never built literally it has great spiritual lessons to be learned from it.
- When I read the description and the many detailed measurements I found it hard to grasp what it would look like, but one part got my attention. **The outer court entry had seven steps; the inner court had eight steps.** Seven speaks of a completion; eight speaks of a new spiritual experience. (The numerical value of the letters in Jesus Name add up to 888, it is the number of the eternal).

There are '**outer-court**' Christians and '**inner-court**' Christians. Outer court ones may have a righteous perfect life, even attend church, but have no inner life with God....they are people of the 'seven steps'. Eight steps means there is an inner place where His glory is revealed. This is where God's wants us to come. He loves the outer court ones, but He wants to reveal His glory. The real joy is dwelling in the inner place.

Outer Court: 40: 17, 20, 22, 26.

Inner Court: 40: 28, 31, 34, 37, (Note: the Singers are in the inner court.... 40: 44.)

How does one become spiritual? By struggling up eight steps? Trying to become spiritual? No, the eight tells us that there is an **inner place with God**. We stand at the

foot of the eight steps in readiness and the Spirit of God takes us inside.... here it is:
"The Spirit lifted me up and carried me into the inner court and it was filled with the glory of the Lord." 43: 1-5. Have you ever been there? Do you want to go in?

You see, it may be a spiritual song that suddenly touches your heart and carries you into **the inner place where the glory of the Lord surrounds you**. It may be you're reading your Word and a verse just touches you and you are carried into His presence. Then you are in the inner court. A young man who was going through a period of suffering was praying, then suddenly the Lord spoke these simple words to him, "*You are highly favoured.*" He began to weep with joy....his tears kept flowing....he was swept into the place of God's glory.

This is to become your experience, your habit pattern of life. It's what makes you different too others in the world, there is a glow about you. You'll be able to say, "**I have seen the Glory.**"

- **Now out of this place of God's glory flows the river of life. Ezekiel 47: 1-12.**
- **Out of the inner court temple of your being a stream of life will flow.**
- **Out of a church that's brimming with the presence of God a river will flow.**

This river increases in dept and flow the further it goes. Firstly, you plunge in ankle deep, then to the waste, and then you swim in it. The fish life is abundant, the trees that grow on the side are flourishing, and when it flows into the Dead Sea the waters are healed. Notice that it has banks; it would cease to be a river if there were no banks. It's not a wild river it's a directed and contained river. There are twelve seasons, abundant fruit yielding seasons. This is the river of God.

Note: it has marshy swamps or lagoons off to the side. We were once in one of those swamps, yes it has some of what was the river water, but it becomes stagnant and sour; life no longer flourishes. The swamps (cultish places) usually start with some leader who wants recognition (like Joseph Smith, or Ellen White) who says come on follow me, I don't want to flow in this river, lets form a stream or pool of our own. It soon becomes isolated and sour. These places are like independent isolated denominations that started because they didn't want to be held within the banks of God's truth.

We came out of our Exclusive Brethren lagoon at the time of the Charismatic revival that was flowing all over the world, tens of thousands of people from many denominations got sweep into the soul cleansing current. We poked our little boat out toward the river flowing by our salted swamp; we liked what we saw, but thru' fear pulled back for a time. Then we poked the boat out far enough to be carried away by the refreshing current of God's glorious river. We've never been the same since.

Remember Satan also has a river the river of Babylon (Confusion) Psa. 137 says of the captives, "*There we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion, we hung our harps on the willows, we couldn't sing the songs of Zion in a foreign land*". There is a

flow of evil streaming out of his temple of evil.

I become inspired when meditating about this life giving river in Ezekiel 47 and the awesome river flowing from God and the Lamb in Revelation 22. These river are not only future but now!

Songs were flowing out from the inner court singers, (Eze. 40: 44) the place of His glory.....here is one song:

**There came a sound from Heaven,
As a rushing mighty wind;
It filled their hearts with singing,
And gave them peace within.**

*Yes, there is a river that flows from God above,
There is a fountain that is filled with His great love;
Come to the water, there is a vast supply;
There is a river that never shall run dry.*

**A prophet gave this promise,
The Spirit will descend;
And from your inner being,
A river with no end.**

**And there is a river that flows from deep within,
There is a fountain that frees the soul from sin;
Come to the water, there is a vast supply,
There is a river that never shall run dry.**

**There was a thirsty woman,
Who was drawing from a well;
Her life it was ruined and wasted,
And her soul it was bound for Hell.**

**But then she met the Master,
Who told her of her great sin;
And He told her if you'll just drink this water,
You will never thirst again.**

Here is an inspiring song by Andy Park that comes from the Irish revival:

Down the mountain the river flows
And it brings refreshing wherever it goes
Through the valleys and over the fields
The river is rushing and the river is here

*The river of God sets our feet a-dancing
The river of God fills our hearts with cheer
The river of God fills our mouths with laughter
And we rejoice for the river is here*

The river of God is teeming with life
And all who touch it can be revived
And those who linger on this river's shore
Will come back thirsting for more of the Lord

Up to the mountain we love to go
To find the presence of the Lord
Along the banks of the river we run
We dance with laughter giving praise to the Son

(I can send you the sheet music for this last song)

These songs are among the thousands universal songs that flow out of the temple of God's glory. They touch our spirits and take us into His presence.

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