

Since chapter 40, Ezekiel has been describing a vision in which an angel has been guiding him on a tour of the future temple that will be built during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ as well as previewing the manner of worship in that day. The angel now shows Ezekiel a river originating from the temple that will bring life and healing wherever it flows, a foreshadowing of the river of life that will be present in heaven (Rev. 22:1-2).

¹ 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. ² 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.

“Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house...for the forefront of the house stood toward the east” - The angel takes Ezekiel to the front door of the temple which faced east. The description seems to be as Ezekiel stood on the threshold and faced east.

“and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward” - Water was flowing from under the door’s threshold in an easterly direction.

“and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar” - Apparently the waters do not flow from under the center of the door but are offset a bit to the right/south (if you are facing east) in order to miss the altar that is on the east side of the temple.

“Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward” - This is the outer gate on the north side. The angel is taking Ezekiel outside the outer court to see where the water is going but has to use the northern gate because the eastern gate has been permanently closed due to it being the gate through which the LORD arrived when He came to occupy the temple (Ezek. 44:1-2).

“and led me about the way without [outside] unto the utter [outermost] gate by the way that looketh eastward” - The angel takes Ezekiel around the northeast corner of the temple complex and then takes him south to see the eastern gate.

“and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side” - Once at the eastern gate, Ezekiel can see that the water is flowing out to the right side (when facing eastward) of the gate.

³ 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. ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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 when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward” - Ezekiel’s angelic guide still has the measuring line that he used earlier to measure the various features of the temple complex since chapter 40. The angel now goes eastward into the waters to show Ezekiel how quickly the waters increased in depth.

“he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles” - A thousand cubits is about a third of a mile and at this distance from the temple the waters are only ankle deep.

“Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees” - The angel continues another thousand cubits and shows Ezekiel that the waters were now up to the knees.

“Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins” - By the third thousand (about a mile from the temple) the waters were now up to the loins (about waist deep).

“Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over” - At a distance of 1-1/3 miles from the temple the waters had become a full-fledged river and the Ezekiel could no longer wade through the water.

“for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over” - At this point the river was so deep he could no longer stand on the bottom and had to swim to keep from drowning and he notes that it was too wide to swim across.

⁶ 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. 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.

“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” - The angel wants to make sure that Ezekiel notices the banks of the river and so directs his attention there.

“Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other” - Ezekiel now notices that there are a great number of trees growing on both sides of the river. The angel then explains the reason for this.

⁸ 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.

“Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert [desert; wilderness; plain]” - This river will continue flowing eastward through the countryside.

“and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed” - The river flowing east from Jerusalem will eventually flow into the Dead Sea. This sea is so full of salt that nothing can live in it, but during the millennial kingdom this river will displace the salt in the Dead Sea so that it will again be able to harbor life.

⁹ 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.

“And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live” - This river will bring life to the countryside everywhere it flows.

“and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither” - The Dead Sea will become filled with fish and other wild life. The river will be a blessing wherever it flows.

“for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh” - The river from the temple of the LORD will bring life to whatever it touches. Previously dead land will once again have life as will the bodies of water.

¹⁰ And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; 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. ¹¹ But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

“And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim” - The names En-gedi and En-eglaim represent locations on the west coast of the Dead Sea, En-gedi being at the mid-point of the sea and the location of En-eglaim uncertain. These locations seem to indicate that at least the northern half of the Dead Sea will become home to multitudes of fish.

Because the Dead Sea will no longer be dead, it will attract fishermen wanting to earn their livelihood off it's abundant supply of fish.

“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” - There will be a virtually inexhaustible supply of fish in the Dead Sea so that everyone will have opportunity to spread their nets and catch fish. There will be as many species of fish and other underwater life living in the Dead Sea as there are in the “great sea” (the Mediterranean Sea).

“But the miry places thereof and the marishes [marshes] thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt” - Likely these are marshy areas on the far side of the sea opposite where the river from the temple flows into it. Two possible reasons that these muddy and marshy areas will retain their salt: (1) since salt is such an important commodity, the LORD may leave these marshes “unhealed” to provide a source of salt; (2) the river flowing into the Dead Sea will displace the salt it contains, causing it to accumulate in the marshy areas.

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.

“And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat” - Fruit trees will grow on both sides of the river, providing another food source and a testimony of the life that comes from the river and from the LORD.

“whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed [completed; come to an end]” - These trees will not succumb to the fall and winter months but will bring fruit throughout the entire year. They will not be affected by weather or insects because they get their life from the river.

“it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary” - The life from the river coming out from the temple will cause these trees to bring forth fresh fruit every month without fail.

“and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine” - The fruit from these trees will be a food source and their leaves will be used for medicinal purposes. These verses describe how things will be during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ on this earth, but it seems to be a preview of heaven where there will be a river of life and a tree bearing fruit and medicinal leaves according to **Rev. 22:1-2** ¹ *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² 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.”*