

The Life Giving Stream

by C.I. Scofield

C.I. Scofield's sermon explores the profound spiritual implications of Ezekiel's river as a metaphor for the work of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives.

Scripture: Ezekiel 47:3

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Christian Walk"

Description

C.I. Scofield delves into the profound imagery of Ezekiel 47:1-12, exploring the significance of the river flowing from the temple in Jerusalem. He challenges the common interpretation of the river symbolizing the spread of the Gospel to the whole world, emphasizing instead its literal representation as a river that will flow from the restored temple in Jerusalem. Scofield draws parallels between the river's various depths and the Christian walk, prayer life, and service empowered by the Holy Spirit, highlighting the necessity of relying on the Spirit for fruitful service. He concludes with a poignant reflection on the healing power of the river, contrasting it with the miry places that remain unhealed despite the divine influence.

Transcript

(Ezek. xlvii:1-12.)

I. The Analysis.

1. The Source of the River (verses 1-2).--All blessing proceeds from the altar.
2. The Magnitude of the River (verses 3-5).
3. The Power of the River (verses 6-12).

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

Perhaps no passage of the prophetic Scriptures has been more tortured out of its right and true meaning than this. By most commentators it has been taken as a symbol of the spread of the Gospel in a stream ever wider and deeper till the whole world has been converted. But against this interpretation three objections lie. 1. The Scriptures do not teach the conversion of the whole world by the preaching of the Gospel, but rather that the present age is to witness the outcalling of a people for His name, who are to form the church which is His body. 2. Other Scriptures make it clear that the river is to be a literal river, issuing from the temple which will be built in Jerusalem after the restoration of the Jews (Zech. xiv:8; Rev.

xxii:1). 3. The seas into which it will flow will be the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean, though the former is most prominent. Such geographical indications are too much a vital part of the narrative to be set aside by the necessities of a fanciful interpretation. It will be remembered that in connection with the judgment of the nations and the return of the Lord, cataclysmic changes are predicted for the reign about Jerusalem; "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." "All the land shall be turned as a plain, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem (Zech. xiv:4, 10).

Strange that this should seem incredible to a generation which has seen the blowing into mere dust of the Krakatoa by an explosion from within, and of the desolation of a whole land by the eruption of Mount Pelee! Why should not a little hill like the Mount of Olives cleave in the midst thereof? Why should not the God who brought water out of a rock in the wilderness, bring a river out of Mount Moriah?

So much for interpretation. But application and interpretation are quite different things. The Sermon on the Mount is to be interpreted of the future kingdom, but it is always true that the meek are happy, and that the pure in heart see God.

So there may well be an application of Ezekiel's river to the work of the Holy Spirit now. Water is even a type of both the Spirit and the word, and Christ uses "rivers of living water" (John vii:49) to illustrate the work of the Spirit at and after Pentecost.

The ankles speak of the walk, and suggest "walking in the Spirit." The righteousness of the law is "fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii:6), and "if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. v:16).

Again, the knees suggest prayer, and we are reminded that it is peculiarly the Christian's privilege to "pray in the Spirit." Perhaps there is no greater need than this--that we cease to pray in the sphere of the will or of the desires, and learn to abandon ourselves to the Spirit that He may pray through us.

And so the loins speak of service. No truth for this dispensation stands out more clearly than that all fruitful and acceptable service must be in the power of the Spirit. The very apostles of our Lord, men who had been for three years under His personal training, and to whom, after His resurrection he had taught kingdom truth for forty days (Acts i:3), were forbidden to begin their great mission till they were endued with power from on high. How presumptuous, then, for us to presume to serve except in the power of the Spirit.

"Waters to swim in" speak of the divine fulness which is for us.

But perhaps the heart of this lesson is to be found in the one exception to the healing power of the waters. "But the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed."

The interpretation here is, of course, liberal, but the application is obvious. A miry place and a marsh are places where much water has already come in vain. The miry place has turned it into mud, and the marsh into an uncultivable bog--a place of miasma and malaria. Surely here is an apt picture of one upon whom the convictive and persuasive influences of the Spirit have come in vain. "For the earth that drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

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