EZEKIEL 47

The River from the Sanctuary: Everything Will Live

> *"It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there and the others become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes."*
> EZEKIEL 47:9

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. The temple vision began “in the twenty-fifth year of our exile” (40:1), about 573 BC.

2. Picture where Ezekiel stands.

Deeper and Deeper

A trickle under the threshold becomes a river no man can ford

EZEKIEL 47:1

Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik stresses that the water comes from God's house, not from a palace or a marketplace. Taylor, in Guzik: 'Blessing, fertility and water are almost interchangeable ideas in the Old Testament.'

WHAT IT MEANS

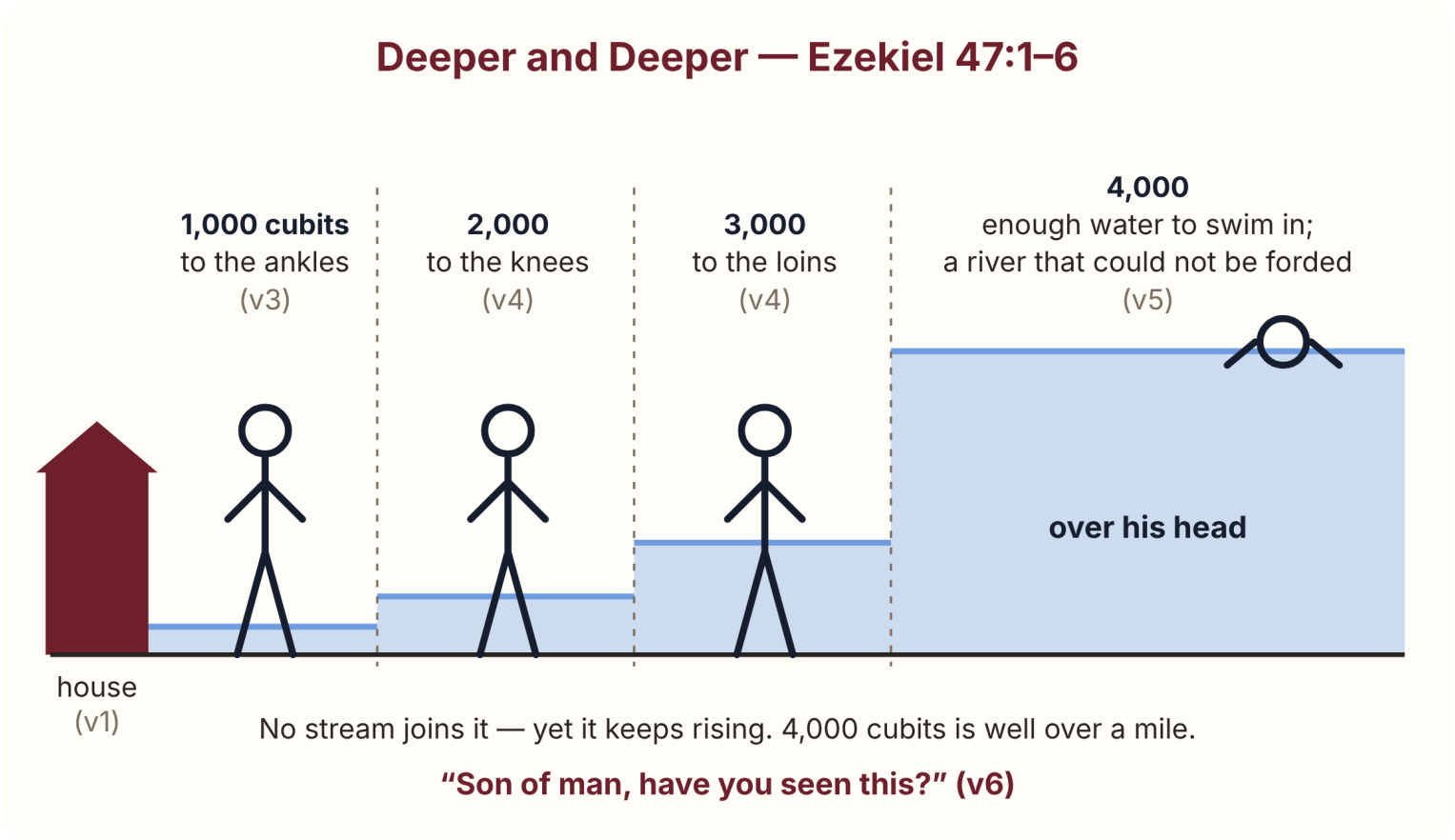
Every thousand cubits the man measures and leads Ezekiel through — ankles, knees, loins, and then "enough water to swim in." Four thousand cubits, well over a mile, and the prophet is over his head.

River (נַחַל)

NACHAL · "STREAM, TORRENT"

Nachal is a stream, a torrent, a wadi — the kind of streambed that runs only when water comes. Jerusalem never had one; its water came from the Gihon spring and cisterns.

Deeper and Deeper



Every thousand cubits the water rises — ankles, knees, loins, then a river too deep to cross — though no stream joins it (47:1–5).

Everything Will Live

The Dead Sea turns fresh, fish swarm, and trees bear fruit every month

EZEKIEL 47:7

Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river there were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik sees literal fulfillment in the coming age and also a picture of the gospel's present work, and he notes that God cares about His creation (Rom 8:19–22).

WHAT IT MEANS

The hardest case on the map — water so salty nothing can live in it — turns fresh. “Everything will live where the river goes.”

Become fresh (רָפָא)

RAPHA’ · “TO HEAL, MAKE WHOLE”

Rapha’ means to heal, to make whole, to repair. When NASB says “the waters of the sea become fresh” (v8), the Hebrew says the waters are healed.

The Land and Its Borders

Twelve tribes, equal shares, and the oath God swore to the fathers

EZEKIEL 47:13

Thus says the Lord GOD, "This shall be the boundary by which you shall divide the land for an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel; Joseph shall have two portions.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik takes these as literal borders for the millennial kingdom, largely matching Numbers 34:1–12. He says the exact locations can't be fixed now, because the geography will change before then.

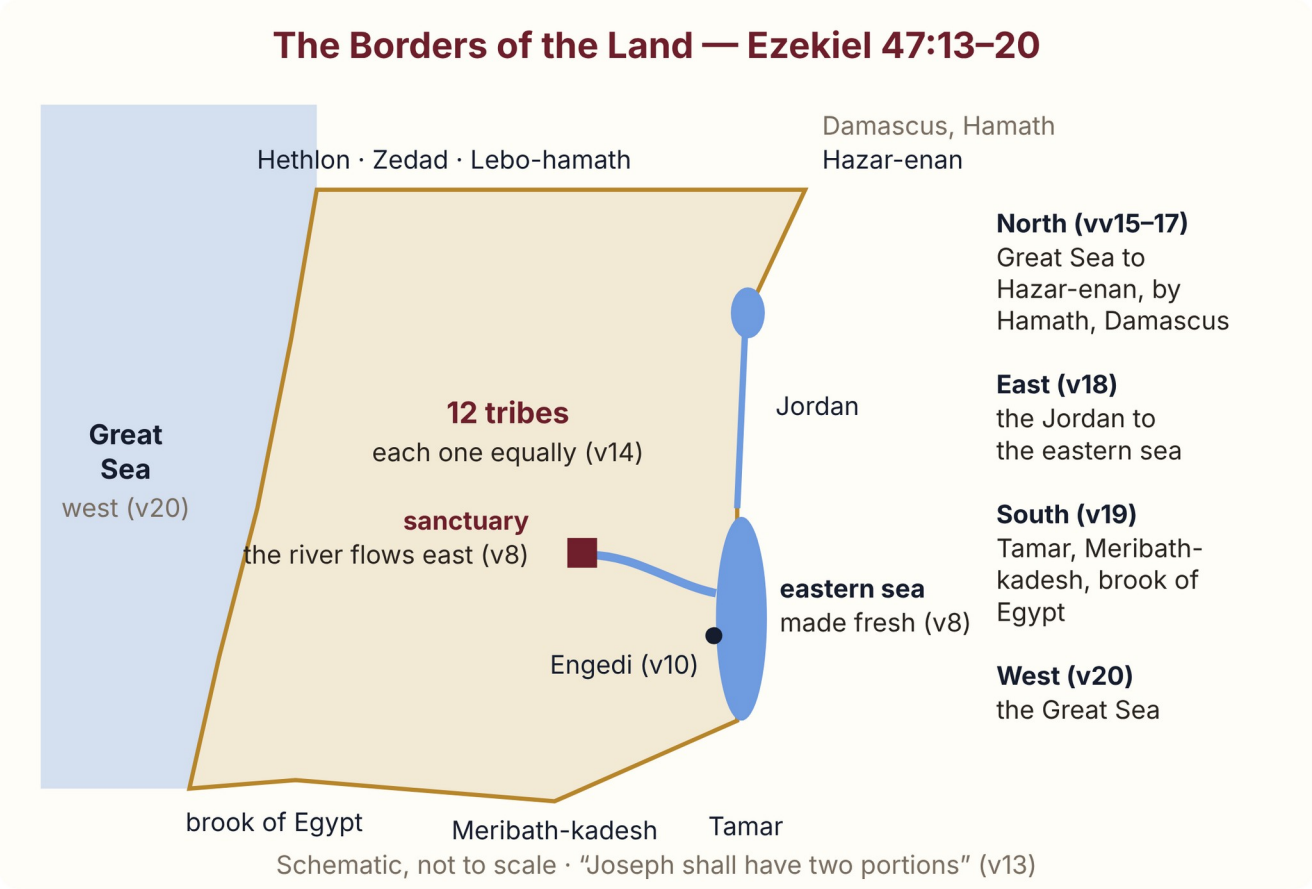
WHAT IT MEANS

God marks real borders: north from the Great Sea toward Hamath and Damascus, east along the Jordan to the eastern sea, south from Tamar to Meribath-kadesh and the brook of Egypt, west along the Great Sea.

Inheritance (נַחֲלָה)
NACHALAH · "INHERITED PORTION"

Nachalah is an inherited portion, a possession passed down. It comes again and again in these verses (vv13, 14, 22, 23).

The Borders of the Land



A schematic, not-to-scale map of the borders in 47:13–20, with the river running from the sanctuary down to the Dead Sea.

Room for the Outsider

The alien who settles and raises a family inherits like the native-born

EZEKIEL 47:21

"So you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik cites Vawter and Hoppe, who note that 'Ezekiel goes far beyond the Torah's legislation' here: the Law protected the stranger, but it did not give him a share of the tribal land.

WHAT IT MEANS

The chapter that began with a river ends with a welcome. Whatever tribe the alien lives among, "there you shall give him his inheritance."

Alien (גֵּר)

GER · "SOJOURNER, FOREIGNER"

Ger is a sojourner, a resident foreigner — a man living among a people who are not his own. Beside it stands ʾezrach (H249), the native-born, one born in the land.

What to carry from this chapter

1

A river where none ran.

Jerusalem never had a river; here water flows “from under the threshold of the house” (v1).

2

Water means blessing.

Taylor, in Guzik: blessing, fertility and water are almost interchangeable ideas in the Old Testament.

3

It rises on its own.

Guzik calls the increase miraculous — no stream joins it, yet it keeps rising (vv3–5).

4

Fresh means healed.

Rapha, the word behind “become fresh,” means to heal and make whole (v8).

More to carry

5

The Dead Sea teems.

“There will be very many fish,” with nets spread from Engedi to Eneglaim (vv9–10).

6

Some places stay salt.

The swamps and marshes “will be left for salt” — near the river, never changed (v11).

7

Leaves for healing.

Trees fed from the sanctuary bear every month, and their leaves are for healing (v12; Rev 22:2).

8

The outsider inherits.

Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: here Ezekiel goes far beyond the Torah's legislation (v22).

Talk it through

1. Where does the river come from, and why does that matter?

2. Which depth best describes your walk with God right now — ankles, knees, loins, or swimming?

3. What does the healing of the Dead Sea say to the man who thinks he is too far gone?

4. Why do you think some marshes stay salt even though the river is right there?

5. Who is the outsider in your world that God is asking you to treat as family?

CLOSING

From God's house flows a river that deepens, heals and gives life, all the way into the Dead Sea. Step in past your depth, don't stay salt beside the water, and make room in your circle for the outsider — because God made room for you.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides and reflection journal: see the Ezekiel study page.