

<sup>7</sup> Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly. <sup>11</sup> “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

### Set Up

1. Ezekiel is given a vision of Israel’s glorious future in chs. 40-48.
  - a. He sees a new Jerusalem w/a new temple.
  - b. There’s a new altar & a new religious routine described.
  - c. We’ll dig into all that more in our MW study.
2. This morning, we’ll consider just 1 part of the vision; found in Ch. 47.
3. This is during the Millennium when Christ returns & rules the nations.
  - a. The curse that was placed on creation all the way back in Gen. 3 at the Fall is lifted & Earth is restored to a state of paradise.
  - b. We see a little piece of that here . . .

### Vs. 1-12

<sup>1</sup> 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, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. <sup>2</sup> He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side.

1. In the previous chs. Ezekiel describes in some detail the temple & its service.
2. Here he’s shown a river that flows **from** the temple toward the East.

<sup>3</sup> And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand,

3. This line is akin to a tape measure.

he measured one thousand cubits,

- a. 1500 ft. = 500 yards = 5 football fields = little over a quarter mile.

and he brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my* ankles. <sup>4</sup> Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my* knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water *came up to my* waist. <sup>5</sup> 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. As the river flowed east, it got deeper & deeper till Ezekiel couldn’t touch bottom.

<sup>6</sup> He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen *this*?” Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.

<sup>7</sup> When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, *were* very many trees on one side and the other. <sup>8</sup> Then he said to me: “This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. *When it* reaches the sea, *its* waters are healed.

4. The sea referred to here is the Dead Sea; the lowest spot on Earth at 1400 ft. below SL

- a. Because it's lowest, the surrounding hills shed their rain run off TO it but the water has nowhere to go except evaporate.
- b. The Jordan River also empties into it and has for thousands of years.
- c. When the water evaporates, it leaves behind everything in it and that means the Dead Sea is super salty - so much so **nothing** lives in it.
- d. One of the things tourists do when visiting the Dead Sea is to take a swim in it.
  - 1) The salt content is so high it pushes you out of the water.
  - 2) You can lie on your back and it looks like you're sitting on a floatie.
  - 3) We have to remind ladies who want to swim in the Dead Sea NOT to shave for a day prior to going in, because if they nick their skin – it burns!
- e. Because nothing can live in the water & the salt covers the ground all around, it's called the **DEAD** Sea.

5. But when Christ comes, a massive spring of fresh water opens under the temple and flows east into the valley and brings life where it's been dead for thousands of years.

<sup>9</sup> And it shall be *that* every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. 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. <sup>10</sup> 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, [Med] exceedingly many. <sup>11</sup> But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. <sup>12</sup> Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all *kinds of* trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.”

#### Flourish

- 1. When God 1sst created Earth, there was no sin, so there was no sickness, sorrow, nor death.
- 2. It was a global paradise.
- 3. He set Adam & Eve in a little partition of Creation He carved out for them called **Eden**.
  - a. They not only had everything they **needed**—because there was no sin, they had everything they **WANTED**.
  - b. Joy; no sorrow. // Pleasure unhindered by pain.
  - c. This is what God wanted, planned purpose for them An abundant, flourishing life.
- 4. Now – someone might assume such an existence would get **boring**. Not so.
  - a. Because they were in intimate fellowship w/God, Who's infinite—their knowledge of & experience with Him kept growing.
  - b. And the more they learned about Him, the more they discovered about themselves as His image-bearers.
  - c. Adam & Eve looked forward to their daily time with God mentioned in Gen. 3:8
  - d. Life was a continuous, glorious, exciting adventure of more and more life, love & joy.
- 5. Until they sinned. Then everything began to fall apart.
  - a. The vibrant colors of creation faded to grays.
  - b. The leaves withered & fell // Weeds grew // Nature turned against man Sorrow eclipsed joy.

6. Instead of the *flourishing life* God had planned: **Death** began to pull apart the fabric of creation like a cheap sweater.
  - a. Life became a daily battle of beating death off, pushing it back
  - b. Until eventually our strength gives out and death prevails.
  - c. Joy – which used to be the **norm**, became a fleeting & whimsical stranger that visits only now & then, if we're lucky.
7. The world as we know it now, as it has been for the last several thousand years, is NOT what God originally planned. His plan was **Eden; Paradise**.
8. Sin has ravaged our world & made it **Mohave**.
9. But throughout history, God has kept the door back to Him open.
  - a. He's spoken **thru** the Scriptures & by His Spirit to call people back.
  - b. From the very beginning when Adam & Eve turned from Him; from flourishing to floundering
  - c. He had a plan to one day turn it all around & bring us back.
    - 1) That plan began by **revealing His Word & Ways**.
    - 2) If people would trust in Him & follow His Ways, they could re-enter the flourishing life He'd always planned for them.
    - 3) This is why God loves to be called "Father." As a loving parent, He wants what's best for us.
      - a) I had this talk with my own kids as they grew up & have had it w/some of the teens here at Calvary when they get sideways w/their parents.
      - b) They don't want mom & dad telling them what to do but make choices for themselves their parents **know** are not so smart.
      - c) So they rebel, get surly, cop a 'tude > become a pain to be around.
      - d) After a little friendly banter, I ask, "Do your parents love you?"
        - 1) Be honest now: Who's probably wiser about life? Who has more experience at it- you or your folks?"
        - 2) Okay – so, when they make a rule or ask you to do something is it because they want to make life miserable for you or because they love you and want what's best?"
        - 3) "They love me & want what's best – but . . ."
        - 4) HOLD ON! Before you rush on to sweep away all of that w/your excuses – aren't they kinda' silly?
        - 5) Aren't they like saying, "I know gravity is real & a physical law I ought to obey, but I'm going to jump out this 30 story window because I want to fly"?
        - 6) You'll fly alright—straight down to the ground & go splat.
  - 4) It's precisely the same way w/us & God. He's the Father of a planet-full of teens.
  - 5) When He speaks, He ought to listen because He loves us & wants the very best for us.
  - 6) We are NOT smarter than He is.
  - 7) We need to knock off the 'tude that says, "I know God loves & wants the best for me, **BUT** . . ."
10. God revealed His will & ways in what's called the Law; the **core** of which is the 10 Commandments.
  - a. The law showed people **how to flourish**.

- b. But it **also** revealed to us that because we're broken by sin – we can't do perform the Law on our own. We need help.
- c. That help is precisely what Jesus came to bring.
- d. By trusting Him, we find the strength to live as God intends & to flourish!
- e. This is exactly what Jesus mean when He said in John 10 . . .

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

### Living It

1. As we trust in Christ & Obey His Word, Life works. We flourish
  - a. Physically, emotionally, relationally, & spiritually.
  - b. When we “do our own thing” & disregard God, **that's** when life dims, declines.
2. Life works when we follow God because He **made us** to live that way.
3. But, the world around us is still gripped by sin.
  - a. It has different values.
  - b. It's redefined life to be something else.
  - c. It calls sin, normal. It calls death – life.
4. So when we step **outside** the world's system to follow Jesus, the world reacts, often w/hostility.
  - a. When it sees us flourishing we'll get 1 or 2 reactions . . .

1) Some of the lost see us flourishing and long for it. They'll come to faith.

2) But those invested in the world & sin, will see us as a threat & will oppose us.

NOTE: That's a very imp msg I'll be giving soon; How to Follow Jesus In Today's World.

5. This morning, I want to make sure we all understand that **God wants us to flourish!**
  - a. That all of His Word, will, & commands are that we'd have **MORE** life.
  - b. **More** Joy, Delight, Pleasure Not less.
6. LOOK what happens when Jesus comes. A river flows From Where? The **temple**. The place of God's revelation.
7. All real life comes from God, not the world.
8. And as the river flows, **it gets deeper**.
  - a. No matter how much life you have, in Christ, there's always **more**.
9. When the river gets to the Dead Sea it heals it so that where there was **no** life, now life **explodes!**
10. There's no place in your life
  - a. No hope so dead, so beaten down by sin, that the God of Life can't restore it.
  - b. No dream so jacked up by years & years of spiritual evaporation that the power of Jesus' resurrection can't raise to life.

### Swamps

1. Why v. 11? Why in middle of this glorious promise of miraculous healing do we read  
But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt.

2. While nearly all of the Dead Sea valley will become a rich inland sea filled with life, a few little marshy bogs will be left.
3. They **remind** everyone what the Dead Sea valley **used** to be.
  - a. They're **memorials** to the goodness of God Who heals, forgives, restores & makes all things new.
4. Part of the glory of heaven is that all our physical infirmities will be healed.
  - a. There're no disabilities or special needs in heaven.
  - b. And while we'll have new, unmarked bodies, Jesus will bear the marks of His crucifixion.
  - c. Zech 13:6 says when Jesus comes again He bears the scars of the passion.
  - d. In Revelation, the Apostle John saw Jesus as a sacrificed Lamb.
5. Jesus will bear those marks so that you & I will **always remember** what He paid that we could flourish, both now & forever.