

The presence of water in the future temple must not be overlooked. Unlike the other previous temples running water rather than collected water is to be a major feature of the new temple. This is to be a living temple literally as large amounts of green vegetation will be used to decorate, enhance and provide restful settings amidst stone and wood features. Palm trees are mentioned and even though these are not literal and refer instead to actual pillars, the mention of them does introduce the concept of the presence of plant life therein. Twelve times they are cited in Ezekiel as well as four times mentioned in the previous temple. The Hebrew word used is *timmorah* (Young has artificial palm trees) which is different from the Hebrew word *tamar* which is an actual palm tree.

The aspect of a river approach is also specified in the scripture which enhances the locality of the temple as an approachable place of mass transit, although the ships themselves will not be able to approach all the way, Isaiah 33v21 *"But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams wherein shall go no galley with oars nor shall gallant ship pass thereby"*. A magnificent picture is thereby painted of this scene, truly the House of Prayer for All People, Isaiah 56v7.

Other passages of scripture which focus on this aquatic element are

Joel 3v18 *"And a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD and shall water the valley of Shittim"*. Shittim is to the east of Jordan in ancient Moab, modern Jordan.

Psalms 46v4 *"There is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High"*. Many streams merge to form a river.

Zechariah 14v8 *"Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half towards the former sea and half towards the hinder sea, in summer and winter it shall be."* Non-seasonal constant water flow, with a split egress of water in different directions.

Isaiah 49v10 *"even by the springs of water shall he guide them"*. A blessed land indeed which God will bring the prisoners unto in an acceptable time.

The illusion of people flowing unto it is seen in these verses

Micah 4v1 *"And people shall flow unto it"*.

Isaiah 2v2 *"And all nations shall flow unto it"*.

In Ezekiel 47v1 the water is twice said to come from *"under"* various temple features. This suggests not only gradient in the temple itself but also that the water was conveyed in some way, especially in conjunction with the phrases *"issued out from"* and *"came down from"*. Gravity provides water pressure to produce a flow, there seems to be a system to direct the water channels, perhaps pipes under the temple construction? These pipes could be used to water the abundance of vegetation which Sulley suggests will populate the decorative arbours and trestles of the outer temple range of buildings. Sometimes conveyed in open channels these might represent the streams feeding the two rivers one on the northern side and one on the southern side of the outer temple.

The distance given for the river should be noted. Ezekiel 47v2 *"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."*

If we try to envisage this by walking the route we leave the temple through the north gate (there are many of these perhaps 15). Then there is a way without or outside (Hebrew a derek) which they walked eastward until they came to the utter (last) gate that looked east, so round the corner tower to have a change in direction. All that time there were waters running out on the right side which is from under the northern wall.

Whilst walking the instructor was measuring four times 1000 cubits. They also went through the waters until the depth prevented this. Picture an accumulation of water so that the further east they walked the deeper the waters became.

First 1000 cubits	ankle depth
Second 1000 cubits	knee depth
Third 1000 cubits	to the loins
Last 1000 cubits	a river that I could not pass over!

"The waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over"!

The previous verse has a similar construction which marks the direction of the water course.

"Afterwards he brought me again to 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 the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar." 47v1.

The information we can glean here is that the direction of the water flow is eastward. This time the water is said to come from the south side of the altar, not the north. If the east is the face of the house (face is Hebrew panim here translated forefront), then the right side of the house is the south side. This ties in with the concept which we have already seen that the river provides half its water in two different directions. Rivers do not usually diverge into different branches; they usually converge from many to one.

Henry Sulley points out in his Book on the Temple of Ezekiel's prophecy that the Hebrew language has a dual word form not just singular and plural but additionally dual as well. Here in 47v9 the word river is dual, so it is two rivers not just one. If we picture the waters emerging from under the temple on both the north and south sides but both flowing east the detail matches the description we have already expounded and provides for an explanation of the two halves of the water volume feeding different directions in Zechariah.

The prophet then was brought to the brink of the river. At its bank were very many trees, which are not in evidence today. It is dry and parched around Jerusalem. The return of Christ and the physical changes that massive acts of God will bring to the area will transform the topography.

The fresh waters will also bring life to the Dead Sea itself and *“they shall be healed”*. These are healing waters – *“every thing shall live wither the river cometh”* v9. Fishers shall stand upon it, something never before seen as its mineral saturated waters are death to fish of any kind. En-gedi and En-eglaim are known places which shall be transformed by the arrival of cleansing waters. Long dead, they represent the emergence of fresh vibrant life in places where before it was impossible to behold! A fitting symbolism for the work of Christ, first the natural then the spiritual, 1 Corinthians 15v46. A future connection with the Great Sea (The Mediterranean) is implied because of the population of the fish to be found there in future.

Not all will be healed – *the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt*. Christ will transform only the willing, many will choose to resist, they will remain alienated from the life of the lamb because to them sacrifice is unnecessary and unimportant.

The trees will heal. All the trees will be for meat (food) and for medicine. God In creation has put so much into the variety of vegetation which provides vitality to his creatures. *“And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that, 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 the their waters they issued out of the sanctuary, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.”* An echo of this is found in Revelation 22v2 where in a glimpse of the far future post millennium, a similar picture is seen.

A Voice from the Altar