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## Genesis

### A River Flows

#### Chapter 2 (vs.10-14)

If you turn in your Bibles to Genesis 2, we'll be looking specifically at verses 10 through 14 tonight, as we look at the river of God. What a great picture this is. As we've been going through the seven days of creation, it's no doubt that God is declaring His ubiquitous grace. That is to say that His grace is everywhere in everything that He creates. As we've been looking at the seven days, we've seen God promising us purpose and fulfillment and giving us distinction and a hope and something to anticipate. It's just a miraculous thing as you begin to look at creation, because not only does He give us direction and enlightenment, but He gives us sufficiency and abundance for everything far beyond what we could even ask or think. I mean, really, if you think about the initial creation, just man and woman, and yet God gives all this abundance on the face of the earth. Beyond all of this, God is going to give man dominion to rule and in a measurable value, in the sense that you begin to see on the seventh day that God is declaring, "I'm going to do this for you." And God sets aside all of His pleasures that He might serve us. So, you have that picture of the seventh day which God rested from His things so that He might minister to us. That is really declared in the Book of Hebrews as you begin to see that God rested from His work and He's calling us to do the same in the sense that we need to rest from our ways and desire to serve Him. So, what a wonderful God we serve, and creation really is spelling that out in very distinct ways.

By the time we come to Chapter 2 and go beyond the seventh day as we pick up in verse 4, we begin to realize that God is preparing the ground for an encounter with man, and it's clear that God is personally invested. So, you have this sense of preparation. I oftentimes think at the very beginning of the Gospel of Mark, in which the declaration before the Messiah is "Prepare the way." But we rarely think of the fact that God was preparing the way for us as well.

We read in John 14 that God has prepared a place for us, and when you read in the Gospel of Luke, Christ coming together with His disciples, He says, "I've really longed to have this dinner with you." And the meal was prepared that He might sit with them. The whole show bread thing in the Tabernacle was a perfect picture of God wanting to have a relationship with us and really preparing a table; in many respects, as the psalmist would say, even before the presence

of our enemy, but God prepares. In many respects, as we begin to see this unfold, we are seeing the love of God being displayed and we should take it to heart that God is really displaying to us what love looks like. We know that God is love. How do we love? How do you love somebody? Well, the world has brought us into a way of thinking that really is counterproductive to what real love is. So, we begin to see that love is something that cares enough, think about this, to prepare for the other person. You hear that somebody is coming, and perhaps it was somebody that hadn't been home in a long time and somebody gets the house ready. They prepare things, and they prepared a great meal for you. What is that saying? That they love you. So, the very beginning, in which God is preparing the field and the earth and even bringing the water, is God preparing for this encounter with man.

The second thing that you see, in particular in verse 7, is not only has God personally invested, but the intimacy that's involved with the breathing in man and this intimacy into this relationship. Verse 7 talks about "the LORD God formed man," and of course, here again, very much a part of Him getting into it, so to speak, and investing Himself into this thing. All the other creation, He speaks, but here He's forming and that shows this Artist at work, but a sense of exclusivity. When we think about deep relationships, I think what makes a relationship deep is that sense of exclusivity. In other words, when we get married, we are actually giving ourselves to someone; no one else. So, it is that great picture of a love, you and you alone, and you hear that in the Epistle of James, in which he says God jealously desires you to love Him alone. So, the breath of God, the forming of God in his nostrils, you begin to realize that God is showing a very exclusive relationship here, and a very personal relationship.

It echoes in John 20:22, in which Jesus pulls His disciples together and He breathes on them, and He says, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Peace, I give you." I mean, He could have done so many things. He could have just said it, but it was that breath that just puts it in that realm of that personal relationship. You realize that that in order for you to really love, there has to be a kind of intimacy involved and you have to get close. I mean, James makes reference to that, in particular in James 4, as he begins to talk about the fact, "Draw near to God." And what will He do? He will draw near to you. So, you sense that intimacy.

Then, as you get into verse 8, you see, "The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden."

"Eden," once again, "Ēden," probably pronounced that way, is making reference to the "place of pleasure." The best way to describe this is that God is giving us best. I mean, everything that He made was good. There's no doubt about it, that not one good thing has He withheld. That's very clear as you as you look at the passage, but that He gave the very best to man when He's putting him in this garden is a great picture. Now, you put alongside of that, not only does He give best, which is the very act of love; I mean, look, if you love somebody you don't give them

second best, you give them best every single time. It's an act of love, and that's what God did for us. Not only did He give best, but in the same context, He gave choice, and what that means is that He loved us enough to give us everything and made Himself vulnerable in that relationship. Now, you get to choose, "Do you love Me?" And that's an act of love. It's an act of love to let somebody go and say, "It's now your choice." And that's the whole scenario of the trees in the garden, right? In particular, the tree in which you have a choice, "You have a choice to believe Me, to trust Me, to put your hope in Me or to believe the opposite. You have a choice." And He literally places it right in the middle of the garden; which once again, is one of the greatest acts of love that you could display. Love doesn't delegate love to somebody else. It waits and is willing to wait there. Great picture of God's love.

So, when we come to this particular passage, it's going to be looking at verses 10 through 14. We see that God is doing something through the river. In many respects, what you're seeing within the passage is God encouraging growth. God really encouraging expansion, but in the midst of this, that He's ever longing to supply what you need, but in many respects ever calling you to come near. It's an interesting story as we come to this passage, and we begin to see this interesting description of the river from Eden breaking into four different parts. I do believe at this juncture that I need to make this statement that we're going to be looking at the garden, that is prediluvian; that is to say, before the flood. Things changed after the flood, but at this stage, this is the way things were. So, the descriptions that we're going to see are going to be somewhat different than what we would perceive now. Though, some of the rivers, we still clearly see exist; if not all, some. So, as we look at this, we're going to see, but God is as well telling a story with these rivers.

I go back to the text in Isaiah 46:10, where it says that God is the one that declares the end from the beginning. So, everything that is happening is not only that which was from the beginning, but literally is eschatological as well; that you're going to see the end times in the beginning, and God has so ordained. So, the wonderful pictures that are given to us in the description of these rivers.

As it starts off in Genesis 2:10,

"Now a river flowed out of Eden..."

So once again, "Eden" is in reference to the "place of pleasure." We go back to that fundamental point, as the psalmist says in Psalm 16:11,

"You will make known to me the path of life;  
In Your presence is fullness of joy;  
In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."

So, the picture is clear that a river is coming out of the pleasures of God; that God desires to give us good things. I mean, there's nothing that He gives us that's bad, but imagine not withholding anything; that He'll give us the path of life. Now, I want you to kind of remember that phrase in Psalm 16:11, because we're going to be going back to that as kind of a point of reference. There's this picture of God wanting us to enjoy His presence and to be in His presence and to sense the life that exists in His presence as we have this wonderful river that's coming out of Eden.

(Genesis 2:10) “Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers.”

Now, the watering the garden, once again, is an interesting picture of God encouraging a sense of growth. It's encouraging a sense of expansion as the rivers start going out. It's to be noted that oftentimes when you read in different passages, actually in the Book of Daniel, you'll see even the nations being referred to oftentimes in fours. It has a picture of going into all the world, but usually when God is speaking to whether it be Daniel or Ezekiel, they'll be by the river. Whether it's the river of Euphrates or Tigris, in some cases by Susa, which is tributary of the Euphrates, you'll see God wanting to bring them to the river. There's a reason for that, and we're going to be talking about that.

“Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers.

(Genesis 2:11) The name of the first is...”

Well, we actually have it up here, right? “Pishon.”

Pishon is actually the first river that's made reference to within the passage and the name itself gives a sense of great increase or an abundance. It's hard to nail exactly where this river is. There's been a lot of debate about it and I'm not going to get into all of the debates, the ends and outs of it. Some people have said it's in India, other people have said Greece, other people have put it in Egypt. So, the very fact that they're that divided is telling me that none of them are right. I think the real point of the passage begins to focus on the abundance and wealth because as the passage will go on, and will mention the river Euphrates, it will just mention the river of Euphrates. However, with this particular river, Pishon, He wants you to see the wealth that's there.

So, if you look with me, it reads this way in verse 11,

“The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

(Genesis 2:12) The gold of that land is good...”

It actually begins to talk about “*bdellium*,” which makes reference to just precious stones. So, there's gold, precious stones,

“and the onyx stone are there.”

which probably, they say it's about the color of your fingernails. Anyway, you oftentimes think of black Onyx, but that's just the color that they're thinking about. The wealth of these stones, what they're talking about is great wealth and a beautiful place. It's kind of decorated with all these wonderful stones. Now, there are two things that it's really focusing on. One is the appearance and the other is that it seems to go in a circle. Now, how far the circle is, it's hard to know, but what we know is that Pishon actually comes from the root word “*pûš*,” and probably the best way to describe it is someone dancing around in a circle. It's almost like the waters dancing around in this circle and it was oftentimes referred to as an act of love. It's probably kind of that picture of “In His presence is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore.”

The land itself, if you look in the passage, is probably best pronounced “*Havilah*,” implies a circle and a dancing around in a circle. Here again, the name itself, you can pull it out of Genesis 10, twice, I think. One is in reference to around Egypt, but it's really just a name that's given to somebody that probably was very joyful, but it's not referring to a particular land. So, people will try to identify it that way, but I think Scripture is just literally describing the river and the fact that it's encircling Eden. I mean, think of it this way, there's a river coming out of Eden, and this one just kind of encircles it and it's a picture of it dancing around. It's a sense of joy. So, I wouldn't go any further than that, because that's what it basically says, that's the focus of the river.

The next river in the passage, in verse 13,

(Genesis 2:13) “The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush.”

Now, we know where Cush is, that's Ethiopia or more specifically, Egypt. So, we would not be grasping at straws to say that this was the Nile. Most will agree that we're dealing with a river that's the Nile. Here again, let's go back to logistics so that we can clarify everything. I know that the Nile flows north. So, we're saying it's not coming from, but that's not the way it was originally and that's the point. In fact, all these rivers will have different sources now than they did originally. Originally, according to the text, they flowed out of Eden. Now, they flow down from mountains and some from southern mountains, some from northern mountains; the Euphrates coming down from more northern mountains. So, you have these interesting pictures, but at one time, they were all coming from the one source.

So, the passage then makes reference to the fact that you have the second river, it is Gihon, “it flows around the whole land.”

“Gihon” best described is “breaking out,” and can also be described as a word that would describe “drawn out” which is very interesting because the children of Israel, when they finally went to Egypt, it was a breaking away from God. Whether it was Abraham going down to Egypt at the time of famine, or whether it was Jacob later ending up in Egypt because of Joseph, the children of Israel would end up in Egypt. As it goes on, they were breaking out of where God had for them, that is in the promised land and going into a realm in which God had not had for them. Now, He kept them in the midst of it and would protect them through Joseph in the initial stages, but they would have to come out and break out, and Moses would have to be drawn out of the water in order to be rescued. All the way through Israel will keep going back to Egypt for their safety. One of the statements that the Book of Isaiah makes as he begins to deal with the fact that “You keep going back to Egypt. Stop. It.” Of course, by the time you come to the end of the Book of Jeremiah, the few people that are left after Babylon comes in, are wanting to go down to Egypt. So, what we're seeing is a very interesting progression of God dealing with His people. I believe personally that it started with God giving them an abundance. Then as man gets unsettled, he wants to, we'll call it breakout, and he goes his own way. Certainly, Israel does this. The question is, if this is a progression that we're watching, then it should progress with the other rivers, and the answer is it does.

If you look with me within the passage, it says,

“The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush.”

Once again, Ethiopia, or Egypt, more specifically. Ethiopia is at a different place now, or the name Ethiopia means something very different than it originally did. Cush actually made reference to the land of Egypt originally. The Cushites, of course, we know are of the lineage of Ham, and you'll see that in Genesis 10 as well. So just to clarify, because you're saying Ethiopia, it's over that way (referring to a map). It's a different Ethiopia, if I could put it that way.

As it goes on, it then says in verse 14,

“The name of the third river...”

Once again, He's clearly going first, second, third. So, we have some kind of order that God has given us. So, the name of the third river is what? Tigris River, or “Hiddekel” would be the name that is used; “rapid rising,” but it's making reference to the Tigers River. Now, in this particular passage it actually tells us that it's from Assyria. Doesn't it use the word Assyria there? “*Aššûr*.” So, Assyria is actually in the capital, which they ultimately made the capital Ninevah, and was on the river of Tigris. So, why would this be the third? Well, what happened after they were free from Egypt? They went to the promised land. Where was the next place that they would end up going? Assyria. Why? Because Assyria would come in, they would attack and they would take not everyone, not Judah, but they would take Israel into captivity. So, Israel would go into

captivity and follow the river of Tigris. What would be the last captivity? Babylon, which would be Euphrates.

So, the final river, if you look in the passage,

“The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.”

What you begin to see is God keeping His eye as well as His care upon man; as the tentacles, so to speak, of the rivers are part of His care of His people. You begin to realize that God has a plan for them, and He is keeping them under His care and going to bring them back. This is going to be once again, the focus of the Book of Genesis, that there's the beginning of His grace and His great abundance, and then ultimately His reconciliation, His bringing back. We're just literally going in a circle. We're coming back full circle. So, let me see if I can in some way convey this.

If you look with me in Psalm 137, you know that God would give us a choice is a magnificent thing. That in that choice, He will take care of us and supply our needs. As you begin to see the rivers going out from the one, and Him doing great things. His hope is that we would see the value of the garden; the closeness to God. You go through the different apostles and almost every time you see the list of the apostles, the 12 apostles, they're in a certain order, depending on who's the closest to Jesus at the time. Sometimes the list will begin with Peter, sometimes with John, but the list will never begin with Judas. Judas will always end at the end, and it's an interesting picture of the fact, do you want to be close to Him or not? John would say that you want to be really close. The closer you are to God, well, in His presence is fullness of joy, the closer you are to joy; the closer you are to the pleasures forevermore. So, I want to be close to Him, but man has a tendency, all we like sheep seem to go astray, and we go different ways. So, God and His Grace allows us to go down the river.

If you look with me in Psalm 137, the time comes, and this certainly is the hope, that man begins to realize, “I need to go home.” And where do you think he begins to dream about that? On the river. Now he's on the river Euphrates, but it's still tied in his mind in the respect of the garden. So, it reads this way in Psalm 137,

(Psalm 137:1) “By the rivers of Babylon,  
There we sat down and wept,  
When we remembered Zion.

(Psalm 137:2) Upon the willows in the midst of it  
We hung our harps.

(Psalm 137:3) For there our captors demanded of us songs,  
And our tormentors mirth, saying,  
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”

(Psalm 137:4) How can we sing the LORD’S song  
In a foreign land?

(Psalm 137:5) If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
May my right hand forget her skill.

(Psalm 137:6) May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth  
If I do not remember you,  
If I do not exalt Jerusalem  
Above my chief joy.”

Does this sound like they're getting homesick? I mean, that's where the process begins. If you look, this has been happening.

If you look in Jeremiah 2, God is fundamentally saying, “Why are you going that far away from Me?” Therefore, in verse 9, God is contending with His people, and He says basically, (Verse 11) “Why would you change gods for those that aren't gods at all?”

(Jeremiah 2:12) “Be appalled, O heavens, at this...”

You can almost see, “The heavens are a witness. Why would this happen?”

He says in verse 13,

“For My people have committed two evils:  
They have forsaken Me,  
The fountain of living waters,  
To hew for themselves cisterns,  
Broken cisterns  
That can hold no water.”

And then He goes on and He begins to say, “Why do you want to be enslaved by the world?” Kind of like what we've been talking about in Galatians.

(Jeremiah 2:14) “Is Israel a slave? ...”

“Did I raise you to be a slave?”

If you drop on down, he then uses the words that describe the capital of Egypt.

(Jeremiah 2:16) “Also the men of Memphis...”



See that? That's the capital of Egypt.

"...and Tahpanhes..."

Taphanes is where the Israelites went back in Jeremiah's time, and they wanted to live back in Egypt.

"... Have shaved the crown of your head."

(Jeremiah 2:18) "But now what are you doing on the road to Egypt,

To drink the waters of the Nile?

Or what are you doing on the road to Assyria,

To drink the waters of the Euphrates?"

"Why are you going there?" And of course, as He begins to describe the fact that man is going every place that he shouldn't.

Isaiah 8 will kind of give you the contrast of this, in which God calls man back and He's saying, "Why would you reject Me?" And the way He describes it is very interesting, He describes the gentle flowing waters of Shiloah. You see the passage?

(Isaiah 8:5) "Again the LORD spoke to me further, saying,

(Isaiah 8:6) "Inasmuch as these people have rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah  
And rejoice in Rezin and the son of Remaliah;

(Isaiah 8:7) "Now therefore, behold, the Lord is about to bring on them the strong and  
abundant waters of the Euphrates..."

That's kind of what the river itself means, that "strong and abundant waters." In which will ultimately, I guess we could probably actually say it's kind of a back wash. God had great things, but man just continued to go further and further away from God and suffered greater losses as time went on. God has a wonderful place for us, and that's in His presence. What is it like? Well, there's living waters coming from it. You go, "Well, what is that like?" It's a peaceful place. It's a wonderful place. "Well, I don't know. I want to go where there's hustle and bustle." As Isaiah says, man just can't keep quiet. He's like the tossing sea. That's the way he is. So, it's the picture of going to these other nations and the extremity is almost as far away from God as you can be. It's a picture of restlessness and wanting more, but and when man gets there, he realizes, "I want to go back home." So, it's a picture of God's love, that He would not only give us the choice, but provide the venue by which we could make the choice. I mean, He didn't have to put those other rivers out there and give you options to go, and yet He does, all flowing from the garden. Think about that. That's the interesting picture.

Psalm 46, and I was thinking that Sonny might be singing a song tonight, but maybe we'll get him to sing it afterwards. Psalm 46, if you look there with me, it reads this way at the very beginning,

(Psalm 46:1) "God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.

(Psalm 46:2) Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change..."

And change it has. Remember when you read in Peter, and they say, "Well, nothing's changed." And he goes, "Oh, it has changed. We had a flood. Did you forget about the fact that we had a flood?"

"... And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea;

(Psalm 46:3) Though its waters roar and foam,  
Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride.

(Psalm 46:4) There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
The holy dwelling places of the Most High.

(Psalm 46:5) God is in the midst of her..."

In the midst of what? This glad city, where the river streams.

"God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved;  
God will help her when morning dawns."

Zechariah 13:1 says that in the last days, God will open up a fountain and the water will start pouring out. It will be as it were taking us back to the garden. So, what we're going to see is God's initial desire. I would say, I personally see in the text God's initial desire is that we just enjoy being around Him. I mean, the pleasure of just dancing around the presence of God. I can't think of anything greater. Why would you go any further from the presence of God?

You read in John 15, and it gives that wonderful picture of Christ calling out to us and saying, "Stay with Me." I mean, how many times does He say that in John 15? "Stay with Me. Stay with Me." "You mean, God would want me to stay with Him?" It is also to be noted within that particular passage where He says, "I am the vine, you are the branches." And it gives a clear picture of the vinedresser, that is to say God, doing the pruning. I've always felt like if there was going to be pruning, that I ought to be closer to the inside and not on the outside because that's where you get pruned off. So, you can hear Christ even in that going, "You stay close to Me, and you will be ok" because that's where the fruit's really going to be produced. So, a very present help at the time of trouble, and the fact that we know God is with us and there is this calming effect in this particular Psalm of this river flowing out of "the pleasure." We would have

to say if Eden were the pleasure spot, it would have to be where God is. We know that Adam walked with God in the cool of the day, so it would have to be the place where they met. Obviously, we know that when they did sin, I mean God was right there and talking to him. So, it's a place of relationship, and it would be a place that we would draw near to Him. The interesting thing is that this picture is given to us in the Book of Ezekiel.

So, I'm going to have you turn there in Ezekiel 47 in particular. The day is coming when everything's going to change. Even the contour of the land is going to change. It's going to change back to the way that it was. Once again, we have these rivers now, Tigris, Euphrates; they're being fed in by different places. The Nile coming from the South, but the day was that it was all being fed from the Garden of Eden. So, in Ezekiel 47 we have this great picture of on the east side of the gate, remember the east side of the gate with the sense of the Messiah coming from the east side? Of course, every time the sun rises, we're reminded of the fact that He's coming again, but we have this wonderful picture there that on that side is where the Messiah is going to come. Now, as it starts off from the east side, we have water flowing on that side in this particular passage.

(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."

Now, where we are in time is what we believe to be the time of the Millennium. Why do we say that? Well, God makes a promise to His children in Israel. The promise is that "All the promises that I make you, I'm going to fulfill." And as you read the Old Testament, there are a lot of promises that He makes Israel that haven't been fulfilled yet. One of them being, you can relate to this, especially today, that all the nations are going to come and kiss their feet. So, you can kind of relate to that, but the day's going to come. Now, what's going to make the nations want to do that? Well, keep your finger here because we're going to come back. This is a crucial passage. If you look with me in Zechariah, Zechariah will synopsise the coming of the Lord in the sense of Him coming to Earth. We as believers are going to be raptured into heaven, but there is a promise to the nation of Israel that God is going to make good on all His promises to them. I'm so thankful that He's going to do that.

The Book of Romans tells us that He has called us, that is the Gentile nations, that He might display His mercies to us. He has called the Israelites, that He might display His faithfulness and His promises. So clearly a distinction, but yet God is saving both.

If you look with me in Zechariah 13:1,

"In that day..."

Talking about the day that's coming, what will happen? Ok, "a fountain will be opened." So, I'm looking forward to that day. Now, we're going to see the things that bring us to that point. You could parallel this to perhaps Matthew 24 as it begins to talk about the final days, and Christ makes reference to this.

If you look with me in Zechariah 14, very few passages are this clear about how this is all going to unfold.

(Zechariah 14:1) "Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you.

(Zechariah 14:2) For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem..."

All the nations, just think about that. I mean, we see a few gathering against them, but

"... all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.

(Zechariah 14:3) Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.

(Zechariah 14:4) In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives..."

Let me just emphasize, it's on the east side.

"...will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east..."

Right. Ok. So, that wasn't just me.

"... and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north..."

So, we're actually moving the contour of the land right now.

"... and the other half toward the south.

(Zechariah 14:5) You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!"

Just to fill you in, this hasn't happened yet.

(Zechariah 14:6) "In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle."

You kind of feel that Matthew 24 text kicking in.

(Zechariah 14:7) “For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.”

(Zechariah 14:8) And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea...”

Now, if we take this literally, one half will go to the Pacific Ocean, the other half will go to the Atlantic Ocean. When you look at the rivers that are mentioned, Tigris and Euphrates flowing into the Persian Gulf, which flows into the Indian Ocean, which flows into the Pacific Ocean, which the Nile will come up and flows into the Mediterranean, which Mediterranean flows into the Atlantic Ocean. So, the connection to both oceans from those rivers that have been mentioned.

(Zechariah 14:9) “And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.”

The people will live in Jerusalem. They'll live securely. There will be no more curse. (Verse 11) I'm skipping around here. Obviously, the nations don't want to rebel; if they do, their eyes will rot in their sockets, which isn't a good thing. So, the point that I want to take us to is that God will celebrate, and the one feast that hasn't been fulfilled up to this point, because we know that the Passover has been fulfilled and Christ became our Passover, as Paul says, and we know that the other feast has actually come into play, the feast of the initial first fruits and the Pentecost, in which God began to call the church and that's been fulfilled; what hasn't been fulfilled is the feast of the Tabernacles. Specifically, “Tabernacle” means dwelling, and specifically that means “God dwelling with man.” That has not been fulfilled. So, when is that going to be fulfilled? Here, because He's coming down to Earth, changing the contour of the land, a stream is coming out of Jerusalem, and He's going to take His throne in Jerusalem. Go to Revelation and you'll see this in verses, 19, 20, 21 and then 22, the ultimate.

(Zechariah 14:16) “Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.”

The feast of the Tabernacles; the celebration of the Tabernacling of God among men is the picture.

(Zechariah 14:18) “If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.”

Now, what's interesting about this, if you go with me in the Gospel of John, as you have your finger still in Ezekiel, and go in Chapter 7; John 7, Jesus is walking on the earth and of course His

own brothers are really not even believing Him. Wouldn't you guess it, it happens to be the Feast of the Tabernacles. So, what do you think His brothers are thinking if they had read Zechariah 14? Ok, so this is the time. Once again, as you go into Matthew 24, when Jesus stands in the Mount of Olives, this is why the disciples ask, "Tell us the time of the end times." And He goes, "Ok, so He's on the Mount of Olives." Because they're thinking, "Your feet are on the Mount of Olives. This is the time."

(John 7:1) "After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.

(John 7:2) Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near."

Now the question is, why isn't He there? The answer is it can't be fulfilled now. If Christ comes in to take in, nobody's been saved. Yeah, we're all doomed. So, his brothers are egging him on, and they're going, "You need to go." And He goes, "It's not time for Me to go." See, that's what this dialogue about within the passage.

(John 7:3) "Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing.

(John 7:4) "For no one does anything in secret..."

"You need to go out and make Yourself public." Of course, Jesus goes on and says, "It's not going to happen right now. Now, He eventually then goes into the feast, and while He's in the feast, He makes this declaration, and I want you to see it in verse 37,

(John 7:37) "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.

(John 7:38) "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

Why would He say that at the Feast of the Booths? The answer is clear, because this is the day when things are going back to the way they were; where the waters are going to come from the midst of the communion with God.

Now, I'm going to say something, I know it's going to sound highly speculative, and I guess in a way it probably is, but the more I study Scripture, the more I'm convinced that the place of communion originally was Jerusalem. I'm going to give you reasons for this, but the thought oftentimes was that the heart of the garden was obviously the Tigris and Euphrates. We know where that is and all those things. But the passage starts off this way, that there was a river flowing and it broke into four heads. Now, the four heads then extend beyond, but it's not at the hub. What seems to be the hub is right in this particular area. Once again, there's a reason

why I'm saying this, because as we go back to this being fulfilled, ultimately back the way it was, we're going to find ourselves in Jerusalem; with the waters coming out of Jerusalem.

So, we go back to Ezekiel 47. Ezekiel 47, if you turn there with me. We come to the east side, we're by the east side of the gate. Then, it's a great picture,

(Ezekiel 47:2) "He brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate by way of the gate that faces east. And behold, water was trickling..."

Now you're going to get a kick out of this, because you have this sense that you're before the throne of the Prince. It's actually going to tell us this is the Prince of God. So, water starts trickling, and as it's flowing from the throne.

(Ezekiel 47:3) "When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water reaching the ankles."

(Ezekiel 47:4) Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the loins."

(Ezekiel 47:5) Again he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be forded."

(Ezekiel 47:6) He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me back to the bank of the river."

Now, he's not finished because he then describes what happens with this river, because everything this river touches becomes alive.

So, it reads this way in verse 6,

"He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me back to the bank of the river."

(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."

(Ezekiel 47:8) Then he said to me, "These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go toward the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters of the sea become fresh."

(Ezekiel 47:9) "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 47:10) "And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi..."

which is actually the western shore of the Dead Sea. Then, they'll catch fish. You can't catch any fish in the Dead Sea. Why? Cause it's dead.

(Ezekiel 47:12) “By the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing.””

Remember that phrase.

If you go on down, verse 18 begins to describe, I'm just going to touch base on some of this,

“The east side, from between Hauran, Damascus, Gilead and the land of Israel, shall be the Jordan; from the north border to the eastern sea you shall measure. This is the east side.

(Ezekiel 47:19) The south side toward the south shall extend from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribath-kadesh, to the brook of Egypt...”

It would be the Nile.

“... and to the Great Sea...”

Which would be the Mediterranean Sea.

(Ezekiel 47:20) “The west side shall be the Great Sea...”

The Atlantic. In other words, all the waters will be fed by the water coming from the throne. You're going, “Wow. It must be gushing out.” And God goes, “Just trickling.” But the further away you get, the more you realize, “How's He doing this?” To me, the great picture is the gentle flowing rivers, waters of Shiloah. Why would you leave? To imagine that we're going to be in the presence of a powerful God, and yet we're going to be in perfect peace is an interesting dichotomy. That rivers of life will be flowing through Him, but we'll be calm and at peace. As Psalm 23 says that He'll lead us beside the still waters. It's a great picture to me. You have to see the fulfillment of this, because in the final day, this is going to happen in the eternal state. So, we will talk about the Millennium, which I personally don't believe we're going to be a part of, because to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord; we're going to be in our Father's house. Scripture tells us He's going to prepare a place for us. We're going to be in our Father's house, but the Millennium is a place in which God has made promises to Israel. He's going to fulfill it. He's going to redo the earth so that He can fulfill His promise. In fact, you read in Ezekiel, they're actually going to be going through the sacrifices that God taught them to use, and they're going to use those sacrifices to proclaim the message to the world the way they should have done at the very beginning. Nevertheless, we're going to be in our Father's house. What is our Father's house? We realize by the time you come to Revelation 21 that



you're dealing with this cube city called the bride. A 1500-mile cubed city that comes out of the heavens. However, that doesn't mean that there's not an earth.

So, if you look with me in Revelation 21, it starts off this way,

(Revelation 21:1) “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.”

Another way of putting that would be there's no longer any separation because the sea was a picture of separation.

(Revelation 21:2) “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride...”

So, great picture. Of course, we see the glory of the city coming down within the passage.

As you as you read on,

(Revelation 21:23) “And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

(Revelation 21:24) The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.”

Into the city. Look, I'm guessing at this point. The city's going to be hovering over the Earth? I don't know. What is amazing is that the New Jerusalem, which the city is called the New Jerusalem, is going to have water coming from it.

(Revelation 22:1) “Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal...”

Where is it coming from? The throne of God, which is in the New Jerusalem. Every single time where the water is flowing from the presence of God, it is from Jerusalem. When God is bringing His people back to Jerusalem, He's bringing him back to a promise; that He wants them to taste of the tree of life. In fact, where is that tree of life?

(Revelation 22:2) “in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit...”

Are we going back to the Garden or what? Didn't Ezekiel use this particular phrase, “and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations?” Not that the nations would need healing from diseases, but the emphasis is that they would bring great refreshment to the nations, to the peoples. The passage is giving us this wonderful picture, and obviously, heaven is a wonderful place and what God has in store for us; that He's bringing us back. Here again, when something's not in Scripture, it's not in Scripture, but I do think it's interesting when you read history, when you know of perhaps, tradition. History and tradition, they're not always wrong.

Many of the times we'll quote Josephus, when he agrees with Scripture. When history agrees with Scripture, and more specifically, when history agrees with the spirit of Scripture, I adopt it because it's Scripture that weighs out whether or not it's true to me.

One of the stories, even today, there is a chapel in Jerusalem, called the Chapel of Adam, and it is believed that Adam, his bones were buried there in Jerusalem. Now, people say, "Well, yeah, but Adam was put out of the garden." I would say you're absolutely right. However, there was a flood, and his bones were not buried, it seems, at that time, because according to the story, the bones, more specifically, the skull of Adam was handed over to Shem, as the Jews believe was Melchizedek. Now, if you remember in Genesis 14, Melchizedek, where did he live? Jerusalem, and they say that Melchizedek buried the skull in Jerusalem. Where do you think he buried the skull? Golgotha, "the place of a skull." That's why it's called that. So, you have all these wonderful pictures that begin to keep and take us back to. Wouldn't it be interesting, if in fact Adam was buried at the place where Jesus died, and that Romans 5 would say that in Adam all sinned, but in Christ all were redeemed? On the same place, on Moriah, where Isaac was offered; the same place it's all brought together. You see that God is orchestrating all these things and there is a river that makes us glad, and it's the river that comes from Him. Let me just say this, that there is no greater picture of that river flowing from the throne than on the cross when His side was hit, and the water pours out. John will be careful to make mention, "and the water and the blood came." There was a fountain that came, and Titus will make it clear that we were literally washed at that time by the fountain that came from Him. Someday, we're going to be reminded of that eternally, and we're going to be right next to the healing waters of life as we stand before the throne of God. I can hardly wait to go there because it's paradise. As Paul will say, he was caught up into the third heaven, and what does he call it, but paradise?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we give You thanks for Your word as You bring us back to the river. In Your presence is fullness of joy. You will teach us the path of life. Well, the path of life is being next to You, and we realize that there is no better place to be. No need to wander any further. This is where we belong. We give You thanks in Jesus' name. Amen.