

THE LIFE-AWAKENING POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Ezekiel 37

May 18

"Then He said to me: 'Prophesy to the Wind [or Spirit]! Prophesy, son of man! And say to the Wind [or Spirit], 'Thus says the Lord God: 'Come from the four winds, O Breath [or Spirit], and breathe upon these slain ones, so that they may live!'''" So I prophesied, as He commanded me. Then the Breath [or Spirit] came into them; and they lived; and stood up, upon their feet -- an exceedingly great army.... Thus says the Lord God: 'Behold! ... They shall also walk in My Judgments, and observe My Statutes, and do them.... And I will place them and multiply them...for evermore.'"¹⁶⁸⁶

This passage of the Bible is very famous. Ezekiel compares the People of God here, to a valley full of the dry bones of folk who had long been 'dead.'

Nevertheless, Ezekiel declares the Word of the Lord to those dead bones -- even as God commanded him. For God had promised that those bones would ultimately revive or live again.¹⁶⁸⁷

When Ezekiel prophesied to them, there was a noise and a shaking. Then the bones came together, bone by bone. Subsequently, they were covered with sinews and flesh and skin.¹⁶⁸⁸

So too, when God's Word is preached believably, even today -- the final results are always beneficial. These results extend at least to the outward improvement of the hearers, clothing them with sinews and skin (as it were) -- and healing them to some extent. And, in the case of the elect, the results even prepare them for the later life-giving reception of the Holy Spirit.

But Ezekiel's initial preaching of the Word, however beneficial, did not bring **life** into the dead bones -- nor even into the sinews and flesh and skin. It was only when the Holy Spirit Himself was invoked -- only when He Himself came into the bodies of the dead men -- that they actually lived again.

"Then," related Ezekiel (concerning the Lord's next action), "He said to me: 'Prophesy to the Wind [or Spirit]! Prophesy, son of man, and say to the Wind [or Spirit], 'Thus says the Lord God: 'Come from the four winds, O Breath [or Spirit], and breathe upon these slain ones, so that they may live!'''"

Ezekiel was himself to invoke the Spirit. The Prophet was to pray for God the Holy Ghost to come from the four winds, from the four points of the compass -- and to enliven the dry bones of the dead men, until the latter had again been revived. Today too, men of God should similarly call upon Jehovah -- to cause His Spirit to blow from the four corners of the Earth, and to regenerate sinful men from West to East and from North to South.

Then Ezekiel obediently did this. As he himself explains: "So I prophesied, as He commanded me. Then the Breath [or Spirit] came into them; and they lived; and stood up, upon their feet -- an exceedingly great army."¹⁶⁹⁰

When God's Spirit moved enliveningly, all the dead men stood up -- myriads of them. And when God's Spirit is pleased to move again in our present day and age -- all of God's not-yet-regenerated elect, even though presently dead-in-sin, will be regenerated too. Myriads of them!

For the Church will more and more become -- "an exceedingly great army" of Christians. Thereafter -- promises God -- "they shall also walk in My Judgments"; and "I will...multiply them...for evermore."¹⁶⁸⁶

Let it then never be said that times have changed! Let it not be presumed that our present World, unlike Ezekiel's, is now practically beyond the possibility of any widespread revival -- if not even quite beyond redemption.

Ezekiel's People themselves -- though **God's** People -- then lay flat on their backs: smashed and stunned by the horror of the Babylonian captivity. Nevertheless, at the Word of the Lord being preached -- they would revive!

As God said to that Prophet: "Son of man, these bones are the whole House of Israel. Behold, **they** keep on saying, 'Our bones are dried out and our hope is lost; for our body-parts have been cut off!'

"Therefore, prophesy! And say to them -- 'This is what the Lord God says: "Behold, O My People, I will open your graves, and I will cause you to come up out of your graves.... You shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall place you in your own Land.... And the **Heathen** shall **know** that **I** the Lord sanctify Israel,""¹⁶⁹¹ so that the blessing of Jehovah shall reach the Gentiles.

Thus, through Ezekiel, God told the Israelites: "I will open your graves." But **when?** In Ezekiel's **own** time -- or only **after the Babylonian Captivity**, and presumably at and **after the Resurrection of Christ** as a result thereof?

The *Geneva Bible* suggests: "**When** I have brought you out of those places and towns where you are captives." Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry too opines: "**after** the Captivity."

Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke (and even the Scofieldian Rev. Dr. Arno C. Gaebelein) look for its fulfilment at the "General Future Resurrection" -- on the basis of **Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday**.

Yet **all** agree -- **not** during the lifetime of the Prophet Ezekiel. Indeed, Henry and Clarke and Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes and Rev. Professor Dr. G.H.A. Ewald and even Gaebelein all agree that this would occur **during the Gospel times of the Messianic Kingdom**.

Continues Ezekiel: "**Then** David My servant shall be King over them.... Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob...for ever."¹⁶⁹¹

That, comments the *Geneva Bible* -- has the "meaning that the elect, by Christ, shall dwell in the Heavenly Jerusalem" (alias the Christian Church). For the 'Greater David' is Jesus. Thus: Rev. Drs. Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, Clarke, Barnes and Rev. Professor Dr. Patrick Fairbairn.

Even Judaism's Rabbi Kimchi realized that this refers to the life and the times of the Messiah. For he too stated: "It is the **Son** of David, Who was also his **Lord**, That is here intended."

O Christian! Many today think that our present-day World is too far gone ever to get straightened out. However, when **God's** Spirit moves over even dead bones -- people live again, and stand up as an exceedingly great army.

May we then ever be true to our God! And may we live with this expectation of the World-wide revival and extension of His Church, at the time and place of His own sovereign good pleasure!

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

1686. Ezek. 37:37:9f,21,24-26. 1687. Ezek. 37:5. 1688. Ezek. 37:7f. 1689. Ezek. 37:9. 1690. Ezek. 37:10. 1691. Ezek. 37:11-14,24f. Cf. nn. 1602 & 1714. Observe that the dead "bones of Israel" in Ezek. 37:11-14 revive in the **Christian** Church. See Ezek. 36:35-37 & Rom. ch. 11 & Heb. chs. 8 to 13, and cf. n. 1700 with Hengstenberg's *Christology* III (at Ezek. 37:11-14). See too Jn. 3:8 & Acts ch. 2.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

HOW AND WHEN GOD OVERTHROWS GOG AND THE ROMAN MERCENARIES

Ezekiel 38 & 39

May 19

"Thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, I am against you, O Gog the Chief Prince of Meshech and Tubal! And I will turn you back, and put hooks into your jaws. And I will bring you forth and all your army, horses, and horsemen...; [and] Persia, Ethiopia and Libya with them...[and] Gomer and all his bands [and] the house of Torgarmah of the northern quarters.... [Israel,] be prepared! ... You shall be visited after many days. In the latter days you shall come into the Land...brought back from the sword.... Gog..., you shall come

up against My People Israel.... Behold, I am against you, O Gog.... I will turn you back and leave but the sixth part of you.... You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel -- you, and all your bands'.... Then I will change the captivity of Jacob and have mercy upon all the House of Israel...when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies' Lands, and am sanctified in them in the eyes of many Nations.... For I have poured out My Spirit upon the House of Israel.'"¹⁶⁹²

In this famous passage we see the description of a dire latter-day threat from the side of many Heathen Nations. It is the description of a big danger to the People of God in the latter days (commencing around the time of the launching of the Newer Testament) -- and of the Lord's counter to that peril, by pouring out His Spirit onto His People on Pentecost Sunday.

First. We should realize that this danger was to be translated into actuality -- "**in the latter days.**"¹⁶⁹³ This Biblical expression does **not** mean -- as is today frequently yet erroneously often alleged -- 'at the very end of World History.'

The expression rather means 'during the latter period of the Covenant of Grace.' It means during the "latter days" which followed all of the 'former days' of Ezekiel's Older Testament. And those "latter days" started **at the incarnation of the Lord Jesus** at the beginning of the Newer Testament.¹⁶⁹⁴

Second. We should understand the **scope** and **size** of the attack then to be mounted against God's Covenant People. The attack, as Ezekiel and (his contemporary) Daniel say -- as also the older or previous "Prophets of Israel" (such as Moses) foretold -- would come from "Gog"¹⁶⁹⁵ and his many allies.

This "**Gog**" is **not modern Russia**. It is apparently **Ancient Pagan Rome's Chief Leader or *Ro'sh*** of 'the territory of Magog' (in the far-flung Ancient Roman Empire which from the first century B.C. onward embraced most of the Heathen Nations previously known to Ancient Israel). Thus, apparently: the *Septuagint*, Rev. Professor Dr. John Calvin, the *Geneva Bible*, the *Dutch States Bible* commissioned by the Synod of Dort, Rev. Dr. Matthew Poole, Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry, Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke, Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes, Rev. Professor Dr. Patrick Fairbairn, and Rev. Professor Dr. O. Noordtzij.¹⁶⁹⁵

The predictions in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39, were all fulfilled either **before** the time of **Christ's incarnation** -- or **within the same generation** of the latter. Ezekiel 38:17 states that "the Prophets of Israel" **had** prophesied in their own days, about how after **many years** God would **later** bring Gog against Israel.

Clearly, Ezekiel was here thinking especially of the prophecies of Moses (in Numbers 24:24 and perhaps too in Deuteronomy 28:49-51) and Joel (in Joel 2:28f & 3:1f). He seems to have been thinking here also about the prophecies of Daniel (11:30-45), as Ezekiel's own contemporary

and fellow-exile -- predicting the coming of the ships of the **Ancient Romans** (alias the *Chittim*) against the Hebrews and Syria.

The B.C. 270 *Alexandrine Septuagint* translation of Daniel 11:30, there actually renders *Chittim*: "**the Romans**." Indeed, even Jerome's *Latin Vulgate* here has: "**Romani**."

During the first century (B.C.), the Romans would conquer: Egypt's "King of the South"; Syria's "King of the North"; the "glorious land" of Palestine; the Libyans; the Ethiopians; and also all of that great area "between the Seas" throughout the then-known World -- from the Western Mediterranean Sea in the West; to the Syrian Sea in the East; and to the Euxine (alias the Black Sea) in the North; and the Egyptian or Red Sea in the South. Daniel 11:40-45. The foes of the Church (then around Palestine), would thus come at her from all four points of the compass.

All of the peoples in these regions, were then 'Gog-ified' or Roman-ized. Their conscripted troops were then utilized against the 'glorious Holy Mount-ain' of Jerusalem City.

That occurred prior to the birth of Christ, and then again shortly after the birth of Christ -- but especially from A.D. 66 to 70. That latter was during the very century that Michael-Christ would appear and stand up for His true Hebrew-Christian People. See Daniel 11:45 to 12:1f and compare Matthew chapter 24.

Calvin, in his *Commentary on Daniel* (at 11:30 & 11:40-45), points out how Daniel's phrase 'ships of Chittim' refers to "all the Gentiles...from Macedon through the whole of Greece as far as Illyricum and **Italy**" (and means, specifically, "**the Romans**"). Consequently, the expression 'ships of *Chittim*' in Daniel 11:30, has the "meaning of **Italy**." Indeed, "the **Romans** carried on many wars in the east...while a part of **Libya** fell to them."

Then the Romans "soon afterwards began to extend their power first over **all Asia Minor**, and then over **Syria**. **Armenia** [alias 'Togarmah'] was next added to their sway, and **Egypt** after that. Meanwhile, this was but a moderate addition -- till at length they ruled over the **Persians**....

"He," continues Calvin on Daniel re the Romans, "says 'they would acquire dominion over...all the precious things of **Egypt**, **Libya**, and **Ethiopia**.'" So that Daniel "at length concludes with the settled sway of the **Romans** in **Asia Minor** and the **regions of the east** [such as **Arabia**] -- as well as in **Syria**, **Judea**, and **Persia**."

Ezekiel's contemporary Daniel predicted "the Romans 'would fix their tents of their palace between the seas'.... We know this to have been done when they held dominion between the **Euxine** [or the Black Sea on the edge of the Ukraine and Russia] and the **Persian Gulf**....

"They first passed over **Sicily**; and then they seized upon **the whole East**. On the **one** shore was **Asia Minor** and **many other Nations**; and on the other side was **the Syrian Sea**, including Judea, as far as the **Egyptian Sea**" alias the Red Sea in the south. Thus far John Calvin.

According to both Daniel and Calvin, then, right from the beginning of the first century A.D. until the end of the first century A.D., the Romans dominated and romanized **Asia Minor** and **Armenia** and the **Black Sea** area as far as the old **Ukraine** and **Southern Russia**, and also **Persia** and **Ethiopia** and **Libya** and **Egypt** and **Arabia** [and even **Spain**]. And, according to the B.C. 592-571 Ezekiel (38:2,5,6,13) -- Gog-Rome would dominate Gomer (or **Asia Minor**) and Togarmah (or **Armenia**) and **Persia** and **Ethiopia** and **Libya** (adjacent to **Egypt**) and Sheba and Dedan (in **Arabia**) and Tarshish (or **Spain**).

Clearly, then, Daniel (11:30 to 12:1) and Ezekiel (38:1 to 39:29) -- are **both referring to the same broad events**. Those events are: (1) the attack by the Roman Gog and his Mediterranean Old-World Allies, on Jerusalem-Palestine from the middle of the first century (B.C.) till the middle of the first century (A.D) -- and (2) Jehovah-Michael-Christ's defence of His true People against that onslaught **during that very same time**.

Similarly, also the *Geneva Bible* comments on Ezekiel chapter 38*f* that Gog "was a people that came...from Greece and **Italy**"; and that Ezekiel "means the principal enemies of the Church. Revelation 20:8." Indeed, according to that same *Geneva Bible*, Ezekiel predicted: "All the people of the [Ancient Roman] World, would assembly themselves against the Church" -- around, and soon after, "the coming of Christ" at the time of His incarnation.

The 1637 A.D. *Dutch States' Bible* was commissioned by the Synod of Dordt. It comments on Revelation 20:8 that Ezekiel chapters 38 & 39 predicted the tribulation which would be experienced by the **Older** Testament's People of the Lord -- after their Babylonian Captivity, and at the hands of "the surrounding Heathen of Asia and Syria and Egypt called 'Gog and Magog' by Ezekiel," including "Scythian mercenaries" too. That would occur, however, "**before** Christ would be revealed in the flesh." It would be a very great tribulation, "from which God would wonderfully redeem them -- as can be read in the First and Second books of the *Maccabees*."

The great British Puritan Rev. Dr. Matthew Poole, in his comment on Revelation 20:8, states that by "Gog and Magog in Ezekiel's prophecy" -- most of "the best interpreters...think that Antiochus and the race of Seleucus (a king of Syria who in those quarters of the World succeeded Alexander of whom we read in the *Book of Maccabees*) is there intended. His ruin is there foretold as being a great enemy to the Jews after their return from Babylon."

Ezekiel 38:17 seems to be referring to the **older** "Prophets of Israel" -- such as those like Moses (*cf.* Genesis 10:1-4 & Number 24:24 & Deuteronomy 28:49-51 *cf.* First Chronicles 1:5-7). See too Daniel 2:33*f* & 2:41-44 & 7:17-23*f* & 9:24-27 & 11:30*f* & 11:41-45 & 12:1*f*,7,11*f*.

Dispensationalism's guru C.I. Scofield's strange notion (in his footnote at Ezekiel 38:2 within his *Reference Bible*) that "Gog" means the **modern** land of "Russia" -- rests on his misapplication of the Hebrew word *Ro'sh* (meaning 'Chief Prince') to 'Rosh-ia' (supposedly meaning "Russia"). Sadly, this weird idea is further perpetuated by **amateur** "Theologians" such as Hal Lindsey *etc.*

Now it is indeed just possible that this expression in Ezekiel 38:2 could conceivably refer to Ancient Southern *Russi(ans)* in the Taurus -- and/or to Ancient Scythians in Asia Minor -- **many centuries ago**. Thus, perhaps, the rendition "*achonta Roos*" in the *Septuagint* -- and indeed also Fairbairn in his *Commentary on Ezekiel*.

Rev. Professor Dr. O. Noordtzij's commentary *Ezechiel* seems correct to render the expression: "Gog the Great Prince...of the land of Magog." So too Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke's commentary, which puts the fulfilment at "about 400 years after" Ezekiel -- alias around the time of the expansion of the Ancient Roman Empire. Certainly, it is not referring to a **modern** land or time.

In support of our own claim -- that Gog Prince of Magog indeed means the Pagan Emperor of the Ancient Roman Empire especially from the beginning of the first century (B.C.) until the end of the first century (A.D.) -- simply compare Ezekiel 38:8 & 39:27f with 39:11f & 39:17-21 & 39:28f. Compare too: Matthew 23:39 to 24:28; and Revelation chapters 12 & 13 & 17:5-18 & 18:2 & 19:20f & 20:8 *etc.*¹⁶⁹⁷

Also Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry comments on Ezekiel 38:2f & 39:1f that "Gog seems to be the king, and Magog the kingdom"; and that "the **Roman Empire** was overrun by the Northern Nations." Similarly also Rev. Professor Dr. Noordtzij (at Ezekiel 38:2).

Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke's *Commentary on Ezekiel* (39:6) identifies "Magog" with the Syrians -- and "them that dwell carelessly in the isles" with "the **auxiliary** troops...from the borders of the Euxine Sea." Again, he explains that the verses Ezekiel 39:1-29 "contain a prediction of the great blessedness of the People of God in Gospel times and of the stability of the Kingdom of Christ."

For Clarke refers Ezekiel 39:29's 'I have poured out My Spirit upon the House of Israel' **back** to Ezekiel 34:26 & 36:25-38, and thus **forward** to Acts 2:1f. The latter, of course, records the birth of the Church of the Newer Testament -- during the **Ancient Roman** occupation of Palestine. Cf. Daniel 11:41 to 12:1f.

Similarly, Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes's *Commentary on Ezekiel* (39:29) insists that 'Gog of Magog' lay somewhere in the north, between the Cimmerians and the Medes. He adds: "Peter distinctly appropriates these prophecies (marginal references at Joel 2:28 & Zechariah 12:10) to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost -- and the inauguration of the Church of Christ by that miraculous event. This was the beginning of the fulfilment" (*cf.* Acts 2:9f).

Rev. Professor Dr. Patrick Fairbairn agrees. He comments: "Pointing, as all these prophetic descriptions do, and the one before us [Ezekiel chapters 38 to 39] in particular" does, "to the 'latter ages' of the World -- **to the times of the Messiah**" -- it is clear that "Ezekiel contemplates the great conflict in a more general light; as what was **certainly to be connected with the times of the Messiah.**"

All of the above then enables us to identify the "Gog" (of Ezekiel) as Pre-Christian Heathenism in general and Ancient Roman Paganism in particular. It is **not** modern Russia about to attack the Anti-Christian Country of modern Israel in the Middle East today.

Nor is it "Russia" more than yet a further millennium hence -- as a very fancifully-alleged destroyer of Christ's Church immediately before His Second Coming. For by that time, modern Israel and modern Russia will both have been christianized.

Now the Pagan Roman Empire from the beginning of the first century B.C. through the end of the first century A.D., was not confined to Italy and her immediate neighbours. Oh, no!

Gog-Rome then consisted of a huge but motley iron-and-clay conglomeration. It comprised: elements from the Northern Nations Meshech (in the Caucasus?) and Tubal (in what is now Turkey and Southern Russia and the Ukraine adjacent to the Caucasus)¹⁷⁹⁵ -- and elements from the Eastern Nations of Persia and Arabia (or Sheba and Dedan).¹⁶⁹⁶

It consisted also of elements from the Western Nations of Gomer (*viz.* in Northwestern Europe earlier from Cimmeria and/or Galatia), and also Tarshish (or the Spaniards) in the Southwest.¹⁶⁹⁵ Indeed, it was further comprised of elements also from the Southern Nations Libya and Ethiopia (or Phut and Cush) in Africa.¹⁶⁹⁵

These Ancient Nations all circumscribed the 'holy land' of Judah. They represented the whole World around Israel -- known to Ezekiel in his day.

Later, military detachments from those same areas would come against God's Own People. And this occurred after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday,¹⁶⁹⁷ and especially during the first century A.D. when contingents from all of these Pagan Nations -- **under the leadership of Pagan Rome and as colonial legions in her Imperial Army** -- moved against **Christ's Church** as the true Israel of God brought forth out of the various Nations.¹⁶⁹⁷

Third. Those iron-and-clay Heathen Nations would be **disarmed** -- even by God turning them against one another. For the outcome of the conflict between the People of God and Gog's people, was never for a moment in any doubt -- on account of God's personal involvement on the side of the Members of the Church of Christ, as His Own True People.

Said God to Ezekiel: "Son of man, set your face against Gog -- the land of Magog, the Chief Prince of Meshech and Tubal. And prophesy against him, and say: 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog the Chief Prince of Meshech and Tubal!

"And I will turn you back and put hooks into your jaws. And I will bring you forth and all your army, horses, and horsemen...; [and] Persia, Ethiopia and Libya with them...[and] Gomer and all his bands [and] the house of Torgarmah of the northern quarters....

"Son of man, prophesy against Gog and say: 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against you.... I will call for a sword against him -- throughout all My mountains [alias all Congregations of My Church everywhere]," says the Lord God. Every man's sword shall be against his brother...."

"Therefore, you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say: 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog the Chief Prince of Meshech and Tubal! And I will turn you back, and leave but the sixth part of you...."

"I will smite your bow out of your left hand, and will cause your arrows to fall out of your right hand. You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel [alias in front of the true Congregations of the Church of Christ] -- you, and all your bands, and the people that is with you.

"I will give you [Pagan Rome] to the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured."¹⁶⁹⁸ Compare too all of the unclean birds of prey which would destroy the **Roman** 'Babylon the Great.'¹⁶⁹⁷

Said God of that Gog: "'You shall fall upon the open field. For I have spoken it,' says the Lord God."¹⁶⁹⁸

Fourth. The **rest** of those Heathen Nations not destroyed -- would apparently themselves then turn to the Lord.

Predicts Jehovah: "It shall be in the latter days...that **the Heathen may know Me** -- when I shall be **sanctified in you, O Gog**.... Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself, and **I will be known in the eyes of many nations**. And they shall know that I am the Lord....

"Thus will I make My Holy Name known in the midst of My People Israel [alias the Christian Church].... And the **Heathen** shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel [alias the Church of the Newer Testament].... And I will set My **glory** among the **Heathen**. And **all the Heathen** shall see My Judgment that I have executed."¹⁶⁹⁸

As the great commentators Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke and Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes and Rev. Professor Dr. Patrick Fairbairn *etc.* all point out, the fulfilment of this prophecy, having commenced on Pentecost Sunday (see two paragraphs below), continued to be fulfilled during the subsequent Christ-ian-ization and De-Gog-ification of the **Pagan Roman Empire**. Indeed, it is still being fulfilled progressively throughout the time of our own present Newer Testament's administration of the Covenant of Grace (also against the **Papal Roman Empire** as Gog's successor) -- by way of comprehensive and victorious Missionary Work, even today.¹⁶⁹⁷

The comment of the *Geneva Bible*, is full of light. "By virtue of God's Word, the enemy shall be destroyed wheresoever he attacks His Church.... After this destruction [of **Gog and his allies*** by God and His allies], the Church shall have great peace and tranquillity and burn all

their* weapons.... This is chiefly meant of the accomplishments of Christ's Kingdom -- when by their Head, Christ, all their enemies shall be overcome" by "the **compassion** that the **children** of God have even on their **enemies.**" For merciful missionary work wins converts.

Last. The Lord again exalts His Covenant People -- who triumph **in Him.** "Therefore, thus says the Lord God:¹⁶⁹⁸ "Then I will change the captivity of Jacob and have mercy upon all the House of Israel [or Christ's Church],¹⁶⁹⁷ and will be jealous for My Holy Name...when I have brought them back [or redeemed them] from the Peoples [*viz.* from the Heathen] and gathered them out of their enemies' Lands and am sanctified in them in the eyes of many Nations.... Neither will I hide My face any more from them. **For I have poured out My Spirit [on Pentecost Sunday] upon the House of Israel [alias the Christian Church],'** says the Lord God."¹⁶⁹²

As John B. Taylor points out, Ezekiel here uses the "prophetic perfect tense" in God's statement 'I have poured out My Spirit.' This the Prophet did, precisely because -- though to be fulfilled only **after** his own time -- its fulfilment was so certain, that this could in effect already be claimed to have occurred.

The *Dutch States' Bible* commissioned by the Synod of Dordt insists "Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17 show that those...gracious promises apply to the Universal Church of Jesus." Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke refers Ezekiel 39:29 **back** to Ezekiel 34:26 & 36:25-38 and thus **forward** to Acts 2:1f. Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes here insists that "Peter distinctly appropriates these prophecies...to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost." Also Rev. Professor Dr. Patrick Fairbairn.

O Christian! No matter how hard the forces of antichristian iniquity may press on us from all sides, and seek to harm the Christian Church during this Newer Testament's administration of the Covenant of Grace -- let the Church nevertheless patiently stand firm! For God will yet vindicate His Church in His Own good time. And He will again exalt His Chosen People -- everywhere!

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

1692. Ezek. 38:2-8,14-16; 39:1f,4,25,27,29. 1693. Ezek. 38:8,16. 1694. Heb. 1:2 & 9:26f *cf.* n. 1112.

1695. Ezek. 38:2,5f,13 & esp. v. 17 -- seem to be referring to the older "Prophets of Israel" such as Moses (and perhaps too Daniel as Ezekiel's contemporary). See Gen. 10:1-4 & I Chr. 1:5-7 & esp. Dan. 2:33f,41-44 & 7:17,23f & 9:24-27 & 11:30f,41-45 & 12:1,7,11f.

1696. Ezek. 38:5,13.

1697. Ezek. 38:8 & 39:25-29. *Cf.* too Ezek. 39:1-5 with Rev. 17:5-18 & 18:2 & 19:20f & 20:8. *Cf.* too Ezek. 39:11f,17-21,28f with Mt. 23:29 to 24:28 & esp. with nn. 1602 & 1699 & 1714. See too: M. Henry's *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (at Ezek. 38:2f & 39:1f); P. Fairbairn's *Exposition of Ezekiel*, Sovereign Grace Publishers, Grand Rapids, 1971 rep., pp. 205 & 209; and O. Noordt's *Ezechiël*, Kok, Kampen, Netherlands, 1957, pp. 121f & 137.

1698. Ezek. 38:2-6,14,21; 39:1-5; 38:16,23; 39:7,21 -- *cf.* Acts 2:1-18f & 8:27f.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

THE PRE-INCARNATE CHRIST DISPLAYS HIS FUTURE TEMPLE

Ezekiel 40

May 20

"Behold, there was a Man Whose appearance was like that of brass -- with a line of flax in His hand, and a measuring-rod. And He stood at the gate. And the Man said to me: 'Son of man, behold with your ears -- and set your heart upon all that I shall show you'.... Then behold, a wall on the outside of the House [or Temple] round about; and in the Man's hand a measuring-rod of six cubits long by a cubit and a handbreadth. So He measured the breadth of the building, one rod."¹⁷⁰⁰

The Babylonians destroyed the Jerusalem Temple in B.C. 587. Then, some twenty-five years after the commencement of the Babylonian Captivity, the hand of the Lord suddenly again came upon the exiled Ezekiel. This brought him **in visions** back to the land of Israel; and to its 'Temple' upon a mountain.¹⁷⁰¹

The vision of the 'Temple' then seen by Ezekiel, atop this high mountain, was symbolic of the **earthly** Christian Church of the **present** and especially of the **future**¹⁷⁰⁰ -- according to the predictions of Isaiah¹⁷⁰² and Micah.¹⁷⁰³ Thus Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry, Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke, Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes, and Rev. Professor Dr. O. Noordtzijs.¹⁷⁰⁰ Indeed, Ezekiel's vision of this new 'Temple' was **also** symbolic ultimately of the **future** Church of the New Jerusalem on the **New Earth** yet-to-come -- according to the considerably-later descriptions of the Newer Testament's books of Hebrews¹⁷⁰⁴ and Revelation.¹⁷⁰⁵

Now the 'Temple' seen by Ezekiel in this vision, was not 'material' but prophetic. Indeed, just recently the **material** temple in Jerusalem -- had been demolished by the Babylonians. What Ezekiel now saw in a vision, was what the previous material temple had always pointed toward -- namely the dynamic Church of the Newer Testament in all of its past, present and future aspects.

The *Dutch States' Bible* of the Synod of Dordt, as well as Rev. Professor Dr. John Lightfoot, Rev. Drs. Matthew Henry, Umbreit, Fairbairn, Barnes, Hengstenberg, Fairbairn, Noordtzijs and Veldkamp -- all rightly argue that Ezekiel chapters 40f give us an **ideal** description of a 'Temple' as a type of Christ's Church to be established at and then to be constantly expanded as from the incarnation of Jesus onward. Indeed, the smooth transition from Ezekiel 39:29 to its very next verses Ezekiel 40:1-5f, makes this obvious.

Comments the *Dutch States' Bible*: "God here vividly depicts...His Universal Church of the New Testament from the Jews and from the Gentiles." Indeed -- God here depicts it "together with the Christian fellowship and incomprehensible bliss of the Church Militant and especially the Church Triumphant."

Ezekiel's visionary 'Temple' just cannot be literalistic -- or even material. As the great Westminster Assembly Theologian Rev. Professor Dr. John Lightfoot notes:¹⁷⁰¹ "If any one will take up the full circuit of the wall that encompassed the holy ground, according to our English measure it will amount to half a mile.... And whosoever likewise will measure the square of Ezekiel 42:40, he will find it six times as large as this. The whole amounts to three miles and a half and about 140 yards [alias about seven times the size of the former] -- a compass incomparably greater than Mount Moriah, divers times over...."

"By this very thing, is showed that this is spiritually and mystically to be understood.... As for a literal [cor]respondency of that city and temple (*viz.* those which were to be built after the return from Babylon) to all the particulars of this description -- it is so far from it, that Ezekiel's Temple is delineated larger than all the earthly Jerusalem; and his Jerusalem larger than all the land of Canaan! And thereby, the scope of the Holy Spirit in that ichnography [or ground plan] is clearly held out...to signify the great enlarging of the **spiritual** Jerusalem and Temple -- the Church under the Gospel; the spiritual beauty and glory of it -- as well to certify [to] captive Israel of hopes of an earthly city and temple to be rebuilt; which came to pass upon the return under Cyrus."

Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry comments that the 'Temple' of Ezekiel chapter 40*f* is "the New Testament Church -- especially in its happy latter days 'on **this** side of Heaven.'" Comments Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke: "It is **the New Testament Church**." For "it is not," comments Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes, a rebuilt temple -- but the [then-]future Kingdom of Christ; **first on Earth**, and finally in Heaven.... The vision is intended to depict the perpetual worship of the God of Heaven in the Kingdom of Christ."

Comments Rev. Professor Dr. Patrick Fairbairn:¹⁷⁰¹ "Manifest incongruities on the literal understanding of the passage, have led to alternations in the text -- some transcribers and ancient translators as well as modern commentators putting so many cubits instead of reeds for the boundaries of the temple and the city. But there is no foundation for the change. It is the easy, arbitrary way of getting rid of a difficulty by removing the occasion of it. We might [in **that** case just] as well adjust other parts to suit our own fancies, or expunge the vision altogether!"

Instead, continues Fairbairn, **the vision of the temple** in Ezekiel 40:2-5*f* & 40:18-20*f* -- is "a grand, complicated **symbol** of [what] the good God had in reserve for His Church especially under the coming **dispensation of the Gospel**. From the [Church] Fathers downward, this has been the prevailing view in the Christian Church. The great part have held it to the exclusion of every other; in particular, among the Reformers and their successors. Thus: Luther; Calvin; Capellus; Cocceius; Pfeiffer -- followed by the majority of evangelical divines...."

"The same effect as here, is aimed at in the measurements and proportions of St. John's City, Revelation 21 -- the numbers employed being all symbolical of perfection and of immense greatness. The walls are represented as being a perfect square, and on each side twelve thousand stadia -- or twelve hundred miles. This as far surpasses the dimension of Ezekiel's city, as his did those of ancient Jerusalem!"

Rev. Professor Dr. O. Noordtjij¹⁷⁰¹ comments: "There is no doubt that the community of Israel described here [in Ezekiel chapters 40-48], belongs to the **this-worldly** [or '*diesseitige*'] World.... In all of the Prophets, the return of the Nation [of Israel from exile] -- is followed by [a description of] the outpouring of the Spirit, **which is separated therefrom by centuries**, and which is itself followed by [a description of] the revelation of the full glory of God."

So Ezekiel is here describing the Church of the Newer Testament. He is here also predicting its later expansion here on this Earth.

Now when the Lord brought the Prophet in a vision to that high mountain, Ezekiel beheld a very unusual 'Man' standing there. His appearance was like that of brass,¹⁷⁰⁶ the colour and metal of judgment.¹⁷⁰⁷

This 'Man' represents the divine presence. For the four living creatures from which the glory of the Lord proceeded¹⁷⁰⁸ -- the creatures which Ezekiel previously saw -- themselves sparkled like the colour of burnished brass.¹⁷⁰⁹ And the Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁷¹⁰ in the description given about Him in the *Book of Revelation*, is also described in a similar manner. "And His feet [were] like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. And His voice [was] like the sound of many waters."¹⁷¹¹

For these reasons, we feel justified in concluding that the 'Man' Who revealed Himself to Ezekiel in a vision during the Babylonian Captivity, was in fact none other than the Divine Mediator Himself. We mean our only Lord and Saviour Jehovah-Jesus, the promised God-man and Messiah.

This 'Man' -- we are told -- had a line of flax in His hand; and also a measuring-rod.¹⁷¹² This symbolizes that Jesus fully comprehends and measures out the dimensions of the Church and of the World -- and also controls all things, in the hollow of His hand.

With this measuring-rod, He later measured out all the dimensions of the rebuilt temple¹⁷¹³ - - the symbol not of a yet-future religious edifice to be erected in Jerusalem by modern Israelis, but the symbol of the Christian Church throughout the World ever since Christ's Ascension (both here and now and also later).¹⁷¹⁴ For Jehovah-Jesus knows exactly what the ultimate size of His Church will be, and exactly who will enter into it.

Moreover, in Ezekiel's vision, Jehovah-Jesus stood in the Gate of the City.¹⁷¹⁵ This indicates that He is Himself the Door of His Church, the City of God -- and that nobody can enter into His Kingdom unless He Himself graciously opens it.¹⁷¹⁶

As we elsewhere read in the *Book of Revelation*, Jesus Himself declares: "These things says He Who is holy; He Who is true; He Who has the key of David; He Who opens and nobody shuts; and [He Who] shuts and nobody opens.... Him who overcomes, I will make a pillar in the Temple of My God [alias the Christian Church]. And he shall no more go out [of it]. And I will write upon him the Name of My God [in Triune Baptism], and the Name of the City of My God [or the Church of Jesus Christ], which is the New Jerusalem that comes down out of Heaven from My God."¹⁷¹⁷

Christian friend! This Lord Jesus knows all things. Even now He is gathering together His Church, and building it up as a perfect Temple in the Lord.¹⁷¹⁸ And this Jesus is **our** Saviour.

Let us then love Him; watch Him; listen to Him; and follow Him! For in perfect justice and mercy, He measures the Universe and His constantly-expanding Church to His own blessed glory.

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

1700. Ezek. 40:2-5.

1701. Ezek. 40:1f,5. See too: J. Lightfoot's *Description of the Temple*, 1650 ed., pp. 5f; P. Fairbairn's *op. cit.*, p. 213 & its n. 6; O. Noordtjij's *op. cit.*, p. 142; and Wilmot's *Inspired Principles of Prophetic Interpretation*, Reiner Publishers, Swengel, Pa., 1971, p. 103.

In the latter work, Wilmot observes: "It must be borne in mind also that Ezekiel's prophecy, as also those of Haggai and Zechariah, had in view the return from the Babylonian captivity, the restoration of the temple and city, and the repossession of the land. The returned and new builders were [to be] encouraged by glorious visions of God. Hence, it has been pointed out that the dimensions given are prodigious....

"A comment by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown confirms this: 'The *Septuagint* substitutes cubits for reeds (at Ezek. 42:40), to escape the immense compass given to the whole. Fairbairn rightly supports the English Version, which agrees with the Hebrew.' The 'accommodation was indulged in, to surmount what appeared to be a literal difficulty.' Moreover, as some particulars are identical with the New Testament description of the heavenly Jerusalem, it may be understood that while God meant what He said, and the temple and City and Nation were re-established after the exile, He did not say what He fully meant until New Testament writers were inspired by the same Spirit of Christ to set Him forth in spiritual and heavenly and eternal realities.... The spiritual meaning of God's ordinances under Moses is given in the New Testament (Hebrews *etc.*). Should not the explanation of Ezekiel's prophetic ceremonialism be sought in the same evangelical truth? The argument for spiritualized fulfilment, in which God says what He means, is weighty indeed." See too n. 1714.

1702. Isa. ch. 2. 1703. Mic. ch. 4. 1704. Heb. chs. 8 to 10 & 12. 1705. Rev. ch. 21.

1706. Ezek. 40:3.

1707. Ex. ch. 33. 1708. Ezek. 1:28. 1709. Ezek. 1:7. 1710. Rev. 1:18f. 1711. Rev.

1:15.

1712. Ezek. 40:3. 1713. Ezek. 42:16-19.

1714. Rev. chs. 21 & 22. See too F.N. Lee's *The Certainty of the Rebuilding of God's Temple. A Refutation of Dispensationalism*, Jesus Lives, Tallahassee, 1978.

1715. Ezek. 40:2-3b. 1716. Jn. ch. 10. 1717. Rev. 3:7,12. 1718. I Pet. 2:4-6.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLS HIS PEOPLE AS THE TEMPLE OF GOD

Ezekiel 43

May 21

"Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East. And His voice was like a noise of many waters. And the Earth shone with His glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw -- even according to the vision which I saw when I came to destroy the city [or to prophesy that the city should be destroyed]. And the visions were like the vision which I saw by the River Chebar. And I fell on my face. And the glory of the Lord came into the House [of God] by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the East. So the Spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court. And look, the glory of the Lord filled the House!"¹⁷¹⁹

In this passage, the Prophet relates what he saw in a vision -- when the Lord brought him to the gate of the temple which faces toward the East. As previously stated, Ezekiel's visions of the rebuilt temple prefigure the New Testament Church Universal of Jesus Christ our Lord.¹⁷¹⁴

First. Ezekiel envisioned the glory of the God of Israel coming from the way of the East.¹⁷²⁰ This would indeed be fulfilled centuries later, when the Lord Jesus Christ or the Lord of glory (before the sun which rises in the East) rose from the dead as the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings.¹⁷²¹ And that glorious coming of the Divine Saviour inaugurated a whole new economy in God's dealings with the World.

Second. Ezekiel remarked that the voice of the Lord was like a noise of many waters.¹⁷²² This reminds us of the statement in Jeremiah that when God "utters His voice, there is a multitude of waters in the sky -- and He causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the Earth. He makes lightnings with rain, and brings forth the wind out of His treasure-chambers."¹⁷²³

For the Lord is the cosmos-controlling God Who plans and well operates all things according to His Own good pleasure. Indeed, this is the God Whom John (in the *Book of Revelation*) declares spoke with "a great voice" like "a trumpet."¹⁷²⁴ And He Whose voice was there" as the sound of many waters,¹⁷²⁵ is None Other than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Third. Ezekiel records that at the sight of this wonderful vision, he fell down upon his face.¹⁷²⁶ This indicates that he realized he was in the presence of the Sovereign Lord and Ruler of the Universe, before Whom he could only prostrate himself in utter adoration. May we too do exactly the same -- at the feet of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Fourth. Ezekiel related how the glory of the Lord came into the House of the Lord alias the Christian Church Universal -- through the eastern gate, facing the rising sun.¹⁷²⁷ This indicates that God would manifest Himself in the resurrected Saviour¹⁷²¹ -- as the Sun of righteousness Who would rise with healing in His wings,¹⁷²¹ and as the Lord Himself in all His glory.¹⁷²⁸ For in Jesus Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead -- bodily.¹⁷²⁹ Indeed, it also indicates how Christ would indwell and illumine His Temple or His Christian Church -- so that His body of believers too would reflect something of His Own glory.

Last. Ezekiel noted it was the Holy Spirit Who took him up and brought him into the inner court, where the glory of the Lord filled the House.¹⁷³⁰ This again suggests the indwelling presence of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. For as Paul remarked to the Ephesians, this is how the Lord lives within the Church" which is His body -- the fullness of Him Who keeps on filling all things in all people."¹⁷³¹

So the Lord Jesus Christ is the glorious God Who speaks with the Cosmos-filling and majestic voice of many waters, and Who fills His Church with His glory. O Christian, may you and I ever be conscious of this great Resource! And may we seek to radiate the reflected glory of the Lord at all times -- both unto the salvation of the Church Universal, and even unto the very ends of the Earth!

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

1719. Ezek. 43:2-5. 1720. Ezek. 43:2a.

1721. Mal. 4:2 *cf.* I Cor. 2:8. Romanism and Eastern-Orthodoxy go further, and attempt to identify Jesus also as the "prince" in Ezek. 44:1-3 and to read into that passage their early-mediaeval theories of the 'ever-virginity' and the 'uniparturiency' of Christ's mother Mary. For a refutation of that eisegesis, see our A.D. 2000 article *Ezekiel 44:1f and the birth of the God-man Jesus Christ*.

1722. Ezek. 43:2b. 1723. Jer. 10:13. 1724. Rev. 1:10. 1725. Rev. 1:15. 1726. Ezek. 43:3c.

1727. Ezek. 43:4. 1728. I Cor. 2:8. 1729. Col. 2:9. 1730. Ezek. 43:5. 1731. Eph. 1:23.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

THE EVER-INCREASING FLOW OF THE LIFE-GIVING GOSPEL RIVER

Ezekiel 47 & 48

May 22

"Behold, waters issue out from under the threshold of the House [of God] eastward.... Then He brought me away from the road to the gate northward, and led me around the road outside, unto the outermost gate.... And behold -- there, waters ran out on the right side! And when the Man Who had the line in His hand went forth eastward, He measured a thousand cubits and He brought me through the waters. The waters were up to the ankles.... Then He brought me through the waters...up to the loins.... Afterward, He measured a thousand. Then, it was a river that I could not cross. For the waters were risen -- waters to swim in; a river that I could not cross.... And they that serve the City, shall keep on serving it -- from out of all the Tribes of Israel.... And the name of the City from that day shall be, 'The Lord is there!'"¹⁷³²

Here in the last recorded vision of Ezekiel, we are told that the Lord brought the Prophet unto the door of the future House of the Lord [alias the Newer Testament's Christian Church]. And then the Lord showed Ezekiel how the life-giving waters of the Gospel were destined to flow forth from the Church with ever-increasing strength -- until the whole barren outside World would become irrigated.

First. Ezekiel was shown by the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ how **the Gospel waters** would start flowing forth from under the threshold of His Own Newer Testament Church.¹⁷³³ This indicates how Christ's Holy Spirit, here symbolized by water,¹⁷³⁴ flows forth through the testifying outreach of His Church as the witnessing body of Christian believers¹⁷³⁵ -- and thus gushes out into the dry World beyond, in order to irrigate it.

As Jesus remarked, "he who believes in Me -- as the Scripture has said -- from within him, rivers of living water shall flow forth!" Yet "this He spoke about the Spirit Whom those that believe in Him would receive. For the Holy Spirit had not yet been given -- because Jesus had not yet been glorified."¹⁷³⁶

Calvin rightly observed:¹⁷³⁷ "The Name of God was applied to 'Jerusalem' [alias Christ's Church]...to testify the Divine presence [there]. For thus the Prophet speaks, 'The name of the City [of God] from that day, shall be 'The Lord is there!' (Ezekiel 48:35).... Christ is the true Jehovah.... The Church would be made so aware of this, as to be able to glory in...His very Name [Jehovah-Jesus].... A very large extent was assigned.... Ezekiel 48:21. In that passage, indeed, he is depicting the spiritual Kingdom of Christ."

Also the *Geneva Bible* here makes a correct comment. It suggests that by the waters gushing forth from under the threshold, "are meant the spiritual graces that would be given to the Church under the Kingdom of Christ."¹⁷³³

Second. Ezekiel saw that the waters would **issue forth** from the threshold of the House of the Lord. They would **gush up**, and then **run out** also beyond the outside gate of the Temple.

So the mighty pre-incarnate Christ then brought Ezekiel "away from the road to the gate northward" and led him "around the road outside, unto the outermost gate.... And behold -- there, waters ran out on the right side!"¹⁷³⁸

This means that the influence of the Gospel is **not to be confined** to the House of God in institutionalized religion, but must flow out from it for the benefit of the outside World as well. It flows out "eastward" -- down from "Jerusalem" alias the Christian Church, especially toward the parched oriental "deserts" of the World, in order to irrigate them and their peoples.

Too, it issues forth with the Church's avowed intention to fructify and to christianize and then to bring the outside World into the Church, so that the large elect part of the World can become part of the Church. Indeed, by way of obedience to the Great Commission -- Christ's Church herself is henceforth enjoined to be fruitful and to multiply and to fill the Earth.

Third. The **further** the waters flow out into the World, from the House of God (in Ezekiel's vision) -- the **deeper** they become. "When the Man Who had the line in His hand went forth eastward, "He measured a thousand cubits. Then He brought me through the waters.... The waters were up to the loins.

"Afterward, He measured -- a thousand.... The waters were up to the **ankles**. Again, He measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters. The waters were up to the **knees**.

"Again He measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters. The waters were up to the **loins**. Afterward, He measured a thousand -- and it was a river that I could not cross. For the waters were risen -- waters to swim in; a river that I could not cross."¹⁷³⁸

This is like the influence of the Christian Gospel. Beginning as an inconspicuous **issue** barely trickling along, right after Calvary -- it fairly **ran** after Christ's Resurrection, as it were. Then it reached to the **ankles**, after His Ascension into Heaven.

Next, it rose to the **knees**, on Pentecost Sunday. Subsequently, it reached the height of the **loins**, at the conversion of the first Gentile Christians (as stated in Acts chapters eight to ten and again from chapter fifteen onward).

Later still, it **rose** to yet further heights -- at the time of the Protestant Reformation and beyond -- so that it has now become a mighty **river** that cannot be crossed. For, as the *Geneva Bible* again comments, this signifies "that **the graces of God would never de-crease -- but ever abound in His Church**."¹⁷³⁸

Fourth. The ever-increasing influence of the Gospel -- as it spreads out into all the World -- is not limited to reclaiming **sinners**. It heals also **nature**, and thus has Cosmos-embracing implications too.

Indeed, it even heals and enlivens the barren desert as well as the saline and sterile waters of the Dead Sea. "These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea." Moreover, the river waters, after "being brought forth into the sea," shall enliven it -- so that its "waters shall be healed."¹⁷³⁹

However, this does not mean that the entire Universe -- including the Devil and his wicked Angels and the reprobate sinners and all their evil works -- shall be healed. For "its miry places and its marshes shall **not** be healed. They shall be given over to salt" (like Lot's wife).¹⁷⁴⁰

Yet it does mean that the entire elect Universe, the Universe as a whole, shall be reclaimed. For as the great *Geneva Bible* again comments, this shows "**that the abundance of these graces would be so great -- that all the World would be full thereof**."¹⁷³⁹

Again, "it shall come to pass that everything that lives and which moves -- wheresoever the rivers shall come -- shall live. And there shall be a very great multitude of fish -- because these waters shall come there. For they shall be healed. And everything shall live, where the river comes. And it shall come to pass that the fishers...shall...spread forth nets. Their fish shall be...as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many."¹⁷⁴¹

All kinds of creatures were to be sanctified by the cosmos-embracing course of the outflow of Christ's 'Gospel River.' "When God bestows His mercies in such abundance," comments the *Geneva Bible*, the 'fishers' or "**the Ministers shall by their preaching win many**."¹⁷⁴¹

Last. This implies that even botanical life is yet to be promoted by the Gospel. For "by the river upon its bank, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for food, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall its fruit be consumed.

"It shall bring forth new fruit according to its months -- because their waters issued out from the sanctuary. And its fruit shall be for food, and its leaf for medicine."¹⁷⁴²

Now according to the last chapters of the *Book of Revelation*,¹⁷⁴³ this will be fulfilled in the Christian Church right here on Earth. This means both in our present Gospel period before Christ's Second Coming¹⁷⁴⁴ -- as well as in the never-ending future period thereafter.¹⁷⁴⁵

"And it shall come to pass that you shall divide it [the Land and indeed ultimately even the Earth] by lot, as an inheritance for you -- and for the strangers that sojourn among you, who shall beget children among you. And they shall be unto you as those born in the Country among the Children of Israel. They shall have inheritance with you, among the Tribes of Israel."¹⁷⁴²

This means, as the *Geneva Bible* rightly comments, "that in this spiritual kingdom there would be no difference between Jew and Gentile.... All would be partakers of this inheritance in their Head, Christ."¹⁷⁴²

Moreover, "they who serve the City, shall keep on serving it -- from out of **all** the Tribes of Israel."¹⁷³² At the fulfilment and consummation of our Lord's Great Commission, there shall be not a single Tribe of Israel nor even one of the Nations of them which are saved in the Church Universal throughout the World, which shall **not** serve the City of God. "And the name of the City from that day shall be, 'The Lord is there!'"¹⁷³²

Christian, may the Spirit of the Lord Jesus flow through our lives like living water! May He become stronger and stronger in our lives, every day! And may He keep on gushing forth from us -- until this barren World of ours has been watered back to life; until the deserts shall everywhere blossom like a rose; and until Christ's whole World has become the City of God called 'The Lord is there!'"

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

1732. Ezek. 47:1-6 *cf.* 48:19,35 & Rev. 21:24. 1733. Ezek. 47:1. 1734. Jn. 3:3-8 & Tit. 3:5.
1735. Eph. 1:22*f.* 1736. Jn. 7:38*f.* 1737. Calvin's *Inst.* I:13:9 & IV:20:14. 1738. Ezek. 47:2-5.
1739. Ezek. 47:8. 1740. Ezek. 47:11 *cf.* Gen. 19:28*f.* 1741. Ezek. 47:9*f.* 1742. Ezek. 47:12,22.
1743. Rev. 22:1*f.* & 22:1*f.* 1744. Rev. 21:9*f.*,26. 1745. Rev. 21:22-24 & 22:5.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX