

Title:                   **EZEKIEL**  
                          **“Waters To Swim In”**

Text:               Ezekiel 47:1-5

Subject:       *Christ In Ezekiel*

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Introduction:

Ezekiel tells us in the opening verse of his prophecy—*“the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.”* He then proceeds to tell us how he saw visions of God and his glory. When he gets to the final section of his prophecy (chap. 43), a Man stood by him, whom he heard speaking out of the house of God, as the glory of God filled the house, the place of his throne. His voice was as the voice of many waters; and Ezekiel said, *“the visions were like the vision I that saw by the river Chebar, and I fell upon my face”* (43:3). Between the first vision and the last, he had seen visions of God in all his works. And when he comes to the end of his prophecy and beholds the glory awaiting us, looking back over all God’s wondrous works, he declares that the love of God for us in Christ is like *“waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.”* Let’s begin there. Then we will work our way through Ezekiel’s vision of God.

(Ezek 47:1-5) "Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the

forefront of the house *stood toward* the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south *side* of the altar. {2} Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. {3} And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters *were* to the ankles. {4} Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters *were* to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters *were* to the loins. {5} Afterward he measured a thousand; *and it was* a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over."

Hear me, my brother. Hear me, my sister.—God's elect shall never pass over the river of his immutable, everlasting love. It is as immutable as it is free. It is as unquenchable as it is unpurchasable.

- God's elect cannot perish.
- Redeemed sinners cannot be damned.
- Once called by omnipotent mercy, saved sinners they cannot be lost again.
- Every chosen, redeemed sinner, every sinner saved by God's almighty grace shall forever swim in the infinite length, infinite breadth, infinite depth and infinite height of the waters of his love!

Now, let's look at Ezekiel's vision of God.

## HIS SON (chap. 1)

Any vision we have of God begins with the vision of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We can never see the glory of God anywhere until we have seen the glory of God in the face of Christ. That is where John's vision in Revelation began. That is where Ezekiel's vision begins. And that is where our vision must begin.

We do not have to read far until we see this. First, the prophet tells us he saw "a great cloud and a fire infolding itself."

(Ezek 1:4) "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness *was* about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire."

Then he saw our Lord personified in four living creatures (vv. 5-14). I have shown you before that these living creatures (the same that Isaiah saw in Isaiah 6 and John saw in Revelation 4) are clearly representative of Gospel preachers. But there is in them a beautiful, instructive, clear picture of our Lord Jesus Christ, too.

Ezekiel saw the cherubim, who "*had the likeness of a man*" (v.5). Each had four faces: the face of a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle. Wherever cherubim are mentioned in the Bible, they are either guarding or

declaring the holiness of God. And where but in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is the holiness of God more fully displayed and declared?

**He is the lion**, the King who has the right to reign (Gen 49:10).

Like the beast of service, **the ox**, He is the Servant of Jehovah. He said that He did not come to be ministered to, but to serve, and to "*give His life a ransom for many*" (Mat 20:28).

**He is a Man, the Word made flesh**, dwelling among us (John 1:14). He is therefore, the perfect man.

**Beyond that, He soars higher than any other, and like the eagle**, He looks directly into the face of God with unblinking eye. This is because He is more than perfect man.—He is God manifest in the flesh. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*" (John 1:1).

**Ezekiel's vision of the Lord prepared him** for his ministry, as a living creature sent to proclaim God's Word to perishing sinners. Throughout the book, this phrase appears repeatedly: "*The word of the Lord came unto me.*" This was his authority, and its recurrence may form the divisions of the book. Another phrase that occurs frequently is: "*They shall know that I am Jehovah.*"

**Then, he saw Christ on his throne**, the exalted King of kings and Lord of lords, ruling over all things, just as Isaiah did before him and as John did after him. **The “Man” upon the throne (1:26) can be none other than the only-begotten Son, the representative of the invisible God.**

(Ezek 1:26) "And above the firmament that *was* over their heads *was* the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne *was* the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it."

We recognize in this vision the prophetic announcement of our Lord's Incarnation. The details of the vision seen by the captive on the banks of the Chebar correspond minutely with the details of the vision of the captive in the isle called Patmos.

**Over eighty points of similarity** may be found between the two books of Ezekiel and Revelation. As there is no doubt who is designated by John, we cannot but recognize in the vision of Ezekiel the glory of God in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ezekiel saw "*a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.*"

- They both saw the rainbow, the token of the covenant; they both saw "the terrible crystal" of the purity of God's presence, which nothing can evade. To Ezekiel it appeared as a firmament; to John as a sea of glass.

- They both had a vision of burning lamps of the fire of God’s Spirit, and of the four living creatures, whose sound was as the sound of many waters (1:24; Rev. 19:4-6).
- To both was given by the One encircled by the rainbow the roll of a book, which he was commanded to eat, and then go and prophesy (Ezek. 1:28; 2:1, 8-10, 3:1-4; Rev. 10:1, 2, 8-11).

*“This,”* said Ezekiel, *“was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD”* (1:28). When we read of the *“glory of the Lord”* in this book, we see in it the manifested presence of God as revealed in the Eternal Son, who, in the fullness of time, *“became flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.”*

The sight of Christ upon the cross, satisfying the justice of God as our Substitute, and Christ on the throne, as the sovereign Lord accepted in heaven, that brings us salvation. Then it was, Ezekiel says that the Spirit entered into him, and that then he heard him that spake unto him.

**Ezekiel himself portrayed and typified our Savior.** In chapter 4 the Lord God gave Ezekiel his message. He sent his prophet to the nation to warn them of wrath and impending judgment. But, in the midst of the warning, he gave a picture of hope.—Ezekiel was required to lay on his side, first on his left for 390 days and then on his right for 40 days. Each of the 390 days represent the 390

years of Israel's open rebellion and turning to idolatry in setting up the calves at Dan and Bethel. The 40 days on his right side represent the 40 years of idolatry under Manasseh's wicked, idolatrous reign in Judah.

But watch this (v. 4)—Ezekiel was required to lay on his side as one man bearing the sins of many, and bearing them to the full extent of their just punishment!

(2 Corinthians 5:21) "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

**In chapters 4, 5 and 6**, he declares this—God will punish sin. Sin must be punished, either in you, or in a Substitute, in a suitable man whom God himself shall send.

**When we get to the 8<sup>th</sup> verse of chapter six, the Lord, in wrath remembers mercy and promises that some shall indeed escape his wrath through the sacrifice of that Substitute.**

- V. 8—A remnant shall escape.
- V. 9—They shall remember me.
- V. 9—They shall acknowledge their sin.
- V. 9—They shall loathe themselves.
- V. 10—*"They shall know that I am the LORD!"*

**HIS PROVIDENCE** (chap. 1-10)

When Ezekiel saw the glory of God upon the mercy-seat (in the face of Christ—in his Sacrifice) **he saw that the God of Glory is a God of absolute, unalterable purpose.**

- vv. 15-25—The Wheels of Divine Providence, Moving in A Straight Line
- v. 26—A Throne—A Man Sitting on the Throne!
- v. 28—The Bow of God's Covenant

*“This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD! And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard the voice of one that spake ”* (v. 28). He was utterly withered before the glory of God and fell as one dead!

### **GOD'S GRACE** (chap. 2)

Here the prophet seems to be describing his own experience of grace. **He was raised as it were from the dead.**

(Ezekiel 2:1-2) "And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. 2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me."

**Then, the Lord God made him a prophet and sent him to a rebellious people** (vv. 3-10).

**He saw a hand** (v. 9), the same hand John saw (Rev. 5), the hand of the Lamb of God, the Man sitting on the throne.

- A Hand to Help Him!
- A Hand to Guide Him!
- A Hand to Protect Him!
- An Omnipotent Hand!
- A Pierced Hand!

**He saw a Book** (v. 10), the same one John saw, the Book of God's eternal purpose! But God is not done teaching him yet. Look at chapter 3. **God required him to eat the Book** (vv. 1-3). God demands reconciliation, he demands that we bow to his purpose. But we never will. So he did not just tell Ezekiel to eat the book—He made him eat it (v. 2). And when he had eaten it, it was as sweet as honey (v. 3).—Here's a prophet!—O God, make me such a man!

- v. 8—He is a man made strong by God.
- v. 10—He is a man who receives all God's Word into his heart.
- v. 12—He is a man moved, motivated by and consumed with the glory of God.
- vv. 14-15—He is a man with a burdened, broken heart.

(Ezekiel 3:14-15) "So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me. 15 Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days."

- v. 16—He is a man God has made to be a watchman over the souls of men.
- Vv. 22-27—He is a man shut up to the will and glory of the Lord his God.

This same grace is portrayed in the pictures drawn of the deserted, castaway, polluted infant in chapter 16 and the valley of dry bones in chapter 37.

(Ezek 16:1-14) "Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, {2} Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, {3} And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity *is* of the land of Canaan; thy father *was* an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. {4} And *as for* thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple *thee*; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. {5} None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. {6} And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy

blood, Live. {7} I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: *thy* breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou *wast* naked and bare. {8} Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. {9} Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. {10} I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. {11} I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. {12} And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. {13} Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment *was of* fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. {14} And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it *was* perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD."

(Ezek 37:1-14) "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which *was* full of bones, {2} And caused me to pass by them round about: and,

behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and, lo, *they were* very dry. {3} And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. {4} Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. {5} Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: {6} And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. {7} So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. {8} And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but *there was* no breath in them. {9} Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. {10} So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. {11} Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. {12} Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. {13} And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your

graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, {14} And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken *it*, and performed *it*, saith the LORD."

## GOD'S JUDGMENT (chap. 7-10)

In chapters 7 and 8, the Lord God showed his prophet the end of the matter—The judgment that must come. That which is here spoken to Israel and Judah reaches beyond those rebellious people. It reaches to all the world. The judgment here described speaks of the end of all things, the end of the world. Read the chapters (7-10) carefully, and that will become obvious as you read.

(Ezekiel 7:1-3) "Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2 Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. 3 Now *is* the end *come* upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations."

Now, let me tell you some things about God's judgment.

### 1. The judgment of God is always just.

God swore to pour out his wrath upon this people because they went awhoring after other gods—worshipped Tammuz and the sun in the house of God!

(Ezekiel 8:17-18) "Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. 18 **THEREFORE** will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, *yet* will I not hear them."

You won't go to hell for what Adam did in the garden. "**The soul that sinneth, it shall die**" (Ezek. 18). You will go to hell because you have earned the everlasting wrath of God by your own treasonous rebellion against the King of Glory! Eternal damnation, the judgment of God is that which men and women have willfully brought upon themselves.—This will be the very hell of hell. You will know that you fully deserve all that you suffer. You will never be reconciled to it. But you will know that you deserve it.

2. **Judgment is preceded by a great separation of grace** (vv. 3-6).

A man clothed with white Lenin (Christ), with an inkhorn in his hand was sent to put a mark upon the foreheads of God's chosen remnant.—Hurt not the earth until the 144,000 have been sealed in their foreheads (Rev. 7; 2 Pet. 3:9).

- Noah must be in the ark before the rain falls.
- Lot must be in Zoar before Sodom is burned.
- God's elect must be called before judgment falls upon the earth.

3. **Judgment will begin at the house of God.**—“*Begin at my sanctuary*” (9:6).—“*Judgment must begin at the house of God!*”

4. **Judgment shall be executed by the hands of the Mediator so obstinately despised** (vv. 4-7).

(Ezekiel 10:4-7) "Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, *and stood* over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD'S glory. 5 And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard *even* to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh. 6 And it came to pass, *that* when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels. 7 And *one* cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that *was* between the cherubims, and took *thereof*, and put *it* into the hands of *him that was* clothed with linen: who took *it*, and went out."

Up to this point Christ is seen upon the mercy-seat. He is the mercy-seat. But now, he is taken up from between the cherubs. In that great and terrible day, when God no

longer deals with sinners in mercy, there will be no mercy!—Hope is gone forever.—“*The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son!*”—Then shall men cry, “*Hide us from the face of the Lamb!*”

### **GOD’S COVENANT** (chap. 20 and 36)

All God’s works, both in the judgment passed upon the nations and in the grace bestowed upon his, elect is but the outworking of his covenant of grace made for us with Christ our Surety before the world began.

**In saving us, in bringing us to Christ in faith, he brings us into the bond of the covenant.**

(Ezek 20:33-34) "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: {34} And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out."

When his work is completely finished, he will have saved us from all our uncleanness, exactly as he swore in covenant love before the world began, for the glory of his own great name (Ezek. 36:23-38).

(Ezek 36:23-38) "And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have

profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I *am* the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. {24} For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. {25} Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. {26} A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. {27} And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*. {28} And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. {29} I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. {30} And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. {31} Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that *were* not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. {32} Not for your sakes do I *this*, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. {33} Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause *you* to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. {34} And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all

that passed by. {35} And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities *are become* fenced, *and* are inhabited. {36} Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined *places, and* plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken *it*, and I will do *it*. {37} Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet *for* this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do *it* for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. {38} As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD."

### GOD'S PRESENCE (chap. 40-48)

When the Lord God has finished his work, when his house is complete, when all the tribes of the Israel of God are saved, when resurrection glory has commenced, then we will swim in the waters of his everlasting love, in his glorious presence forever. That is the scene in chapters 40-48.

The river flows out of the sanctuary. It was from the south side of the altar – pointing to the place of sacrifice as the source of blessing. “A *pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,*” “A *Lamb as it had been slain.*” The river rises to the ankles, to the knees, and to the loins here. There it becomes “*waters to swim in, a river that I could not pass over.*” Our Savior came that we might

**have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. Here it is!**

Wherever the river came the fish lived, the banks grew green, clothed with trees, bearing fruit for meat and leaves for medicine. God wants to use us wherever we go to bring life to dead souls, and blessing and healing to all around us. The only places that were not healed were the marshes. They were given up to salt.

### **CHRIST THE GIVER OF LIFE**

Throughout the Book of Ezekiel we see Christ as the Giver of Life.

- The cherubim, in the vision of the first chapter, were illustrations of the abundant life of his redeemed.
- The Man clothed in linen, who is the Angel of the covenant, our Great High Priest, set the mark of life upon God's faithful ones, that their lives should be spared in the destruction of the city (chap. 9:2).
- His first word to the out-cast babe – which represented you and me, and became “*perfect through his comeliness,*” which he had put upon it – was Live (chap. 16:6).
- His word through the watchman was: “*I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked...turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel?*” (33:11).
- His care as a Shepherd is over the life of his sheep (34). He answered his own question, “*Can these dry bones live?*” with the words, “*Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live*” (37:3, 5).

Finally, as we have seen, his promise was, “*Everything shall live whither the river cometh.*”

### **“SON OF MAN”**

Throughout the book God addresses Ezekiel as the “*Son of man.*” It is part of his wondrous grace that he has chosen man to be his messenger to his fellowmen, instead of choosing angels. The greatest exhibition of this grace is the fact that the Son of God became the son of Man to fit him to be God’s messenger to us. “*For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seen of Abraham,*” in all things made like unto his brethren, that he might be able to succour and to save us.

The book closes with the promise of God’s continual presence. “*The name of the city from that day shall be Jehovah-shammah, The Lord is there*” (48:35). When God is with us and we are with him forever in that New Temple in the New Jerusalem, walking in the light of the City Foursquare, then God’s work is done and both he and we shall enjoy his glory forever!