

A NEW BEGINNING / Sunday, November 23, 2014

Unifying Topic: TRANSFORMATION CONTINUED

Lesson Text

I. **God's Instruction For Distributing** (Ezekiel 47:13-14)

II. **Division Of The Land Among The Tribes** (Ezekiel 47:15-20)

III. **Additional Guidelines For Distributing** (Ezekiel 47:21-23)

Lesson Text: Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Sometimes life leaves people needing a new beginning. What is available to everyone to make that happen? Ezekiel tells the people that God restored the Israelites and the aliens among them with an inheritance of new land, signifying a new start. Peter says that God through Jesus Christ can redeem and give those who believe in God a new beginning, with the temple as a place in which people can gather and support one another.

Lesson Aim: To affirm one another as children of God who have made new beginnings together.

Life Aim: To embrace new beginnings as gifts from God to be enjoyed with others.

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- 47:13 Thus saith the Lord God; This shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions.
- 47:14 And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another: concerning the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance.
- 47:15 And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad;
- 47:16 Hamath, Berothah, Sibram, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazarhatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran.
- 47:17 And the border from the sea shall be Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And this is the north side.
- 47:18 And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And this is the east side.
- 47:19 And the south side southward, from Tamar even to the waters of strife in Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And this is the south side southward.
- 47:20 The west side also shall be the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath. This is the west side.
- 47:21 So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel.
- 47:22 And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.
- 47:23 And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord God.

HISTORY:

Ezekiel 47:1-12 ¹As the vision continues, the prophet sees a stream of water which flows from beneath the south side of the threshold or platform on which the temple is built. The stream of water flows in an easterly direction, south of the altar, and passes under the outside wall of the inner court. The flow of water emerges from beneath the wall, just south of the eastern gate of the outer court. The prophet and his guide now take a walk along the river bank for a little more than a mile. As the water flows away from the temple spring, it gets deeper, but without the aid of joining tributaries; the river is a miraculous stream of water. Retracing his steps along the river bank towards the temple, Ezekiel notices for the first time the trees that flourish beside the river. This river is similar to the one mentioned in Revelation 22:1-2. It symbolizes *life* from God and the blessings that flow from His throne. It is a gentle, safe, deep river, expanding as it flows. Leaving the temple's east side, the waters drop through the rough country east of Jerusalem into the Great Rift Valley through which the Jordan flows. This new river flows into the Dead Sea, the large salt lake more than a thousand feet below sea level, whose briny waters can't support *life*. But as the fresh waters of the river flow into it, the Dead Sea becomes the Sea of *Life*: the salt is transformed to freshness. Fish begin to flourish, and the formerly deserted shores of the sea become populated by the fishermen who move there to seek a living from its waters. Providing fruit for food and leaves that have medicinal value. And so we

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/the-healing-waters/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

perceive from the prophet's vision how important it is, in any restoration, to get to the heart of the matter. Only with God's presence firmly re-established in the center, of the temple, could there be new *life* and restoration. And what was true for Israel is true for the Church. When God's presence is firmly established at the center, the blessing of that presence flows out to transform the wilderness with life-giving waters.

LESSON:

Ezekiel 47:13-14 God's Instruction For Distributing

47:13 Thus saith the Lord God; This shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions. God informs Ezekiel that these are the boundary lines within which the twelve tribes of Israel shall enter into possession of the land.² Jacob had 12 sons. The families of those sons became the 12 tribes of Israel. So, each tribe receives a share of the land that God promised to their nation. However, Joseph will have a double portion. This is in keeping with the promise of Jacob to Joseph. There would still be 12 equal parts of the land. The descendants of Joseph became two separate tribes to make up the number 12. It was always Jacob's intention that Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, should be separate tribes (Genesis 48:5). The picture is that of an enlarged Canaan for all to inhabit.

47:14 And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another: concerning the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance. God had sworn; made a promise that only He could bring about. The Promised Land sworn to Abraham shall be divided equally (one as well as another). Originally, the land that the tribes received was very unequal. Some tribes were not even in this country – they lived on the other side of the Jordan River. Many families – and even one tribe – were unable to take their land. They had to live elsewhere. There were practical reasons for all these arrangements, but they were not God's perfect plan. When Ezekiel received this vision, they were in exile. Enemies had destroyed their homes and cities in Israel. So the Israelites had to live in foreign countries. But in the ideal arrangement that God had told Ezekiel about, all the tribes were equally important, so all the tribes received equal shares of the land. All 12 tribes except the tribe of Levi. Levi had no portion (44:28); the Levites were provided for both by the offerings of the people and by the land in the central holy portion to the north of the sanctuary. This is the reason why Joseph was given two portions in the names of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (47:13; 48:4, 5). Thus, the number 12 was retained for the tribes of Israel.

Ezekiel 47:15-20 Division Of The Land Among The Tribes

47:15 And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad;– The borders described beginning on the north. The northern boundary runs from the Great Mediterranean Sea. It will go by way of Hethlon, toward Lebo Hamath and on to the town called Zedad.

47:16 Hamath, Berothah, Sibram, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazarhatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran. Hamath, Berothah, Sibram are a list of the city areas that are included in this border. These towns are on the border between Damascus and Hamath. This border will end at the town called Hazer Hatticon on the border of the country called Hauran.

47:17 And the border from the sea shall be Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And this is the north side. All of these continue the borders: border will go from the Great Sea east to the town called Hazar Enan. Here the land that belongs to Damascus and Hamath will be on the north side. "*Hazernan*" means village of fountains.

47:18 And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And this is the east side. The eastern border runs alongside the territories of Hauran, Damascus, and Gilead, and alongside the territory of Israel. Jordan sets the boundary to the eastern sea to Tamar.

47:19 And the south side southward, from Tamar even to the waters of strife in Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And this is the south side southward. The southern boundary runs west from Tamar to the waters of Meribah-kadesh, along the Brook of Egypt, and out to the Great Mediterranean Sea. This is the southern boundary.

47:20 The west side also shall be the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath. This is the west

² <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/ezekiel40-48-ks-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

side. The border for the west: the Mediterranean Sea will be the border all the way to the area in front of Lebo Hamath.

Ezekiel 47:21-23 Additional Guidelines For Distributing

47:21 So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel. God tells Ezekiel to divide this land among you to the tribes of Israel.

47:22 And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. This is their inheritance. Those strangers who have made themselves at home; those who have sojourned among the people and now have children shall have inheritance with and among the tribes of Israel. The difference which existed under the Old Covenant between Jew and Gentile is now at last done away. This is a new beginning!

47:23 And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord God. A stranger will get his portion same as the sons. The vision of a restored land is seen by one in exile; the prophet has no land and is cut off from the land to which he once belonged. Without permanent residence, he envisions a time when all his people will live permanently once again in a God-given land. But Ezekiel is not only an exile, but also a stranger. And as a stranger in captivity, he has no special privileges and no right to hold land. But in the restored land of Israel, even strangers would have rights and privileges, provided by God.

SUMMARY:

³The land had originally been divided amongst the people following their initial settlement in the Promised Land. Now, the prophet envisions a new return from exile and a new division of territory amongst the chosen people. And all 12 tribes receive the inheritance God had sworn to Abraham (**vv.13-14**).

Although the *boundaries* are similar to those of other geographical accounts (Num. 34:1-12), the allocation of land to the tribes is quite different (**vv.15-20**).

Formerly land had only been allocated to the tribes, and then subdivided amongst the other Hebrew members. But in the restored land, even strangers would be entitled to hold land. It was God's ideal plan for the 12 tribes all to have equal shares of the land. This shows us that God does not consider one person to be more important than another person. God also cared about people from other nations apart from Israel (**vv.21-23**).

APPLICATION:

I can't imagine having a new beginning without God's power. He lays out everything step by step. He does not leave out anyone. He provides for all! Can you give Him complete control over your life today so you can witness this new transformation that only He can give?

³ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/borders-of-the-land/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>