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**Rivers
and
Streams**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Rivers and Streams.

Topics.

- The Hebrew meaning of river.
- A pure river of water of life.
- Water of the river, turn salt water to fresh water.
- Trees on each side of the river.
- A river of life flowing from God's throne and the Lamb.
- Jesus and living water.
- Verses that speak of rivers and streams.
- Overview of rivers and streams.

THE HEBREW MEANING OF RIVER

Rivers and streams: the word river comes from the Hebrew word (nahar) and refers to a running stream (including the sea; especially the Nile and the Euphrates, etc.). Figuratively it carries the idea of sparkling, cheerfulness, prosperity (i.e., as a flood of blessing). There may be an allusion to a particular river or stream in the area, but it is more likely the image is designed to represent a state of peace, blessing, calm and security in contrast to rough and troubled seas.

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Depending on the context, rivers and streams can be seen as symbols of the following:

- The covenant of grace, and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- God's promises, the Spirit of grace, and its influences upon the faithful.
- God's word, laws and ordinances that gladden the heart of every believer.
- The grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit, which flow through every part of the faithful's life and collectively the faithful global church.
- Overflowing favour, prosperity, blessing, happiness, abundance, peace, and joy.
- Abundance of all good things, and God's everlasting love and eternal life.

Primarily rivers and streams can be seen as symbols of all things good, prosperous, calm, and peaceful in contrast to the roaring seas which symbolise all things contrary to God and opposed to His will, and contrary to peace security and calm.

A PURE RIVER OF WATER OF LIFE

- **Ezekiel 47:1:** Then he brought me (Ezekiel) back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.

Ezekiel saw a river in his vision flowing from below the door of the temple of God, and of that river he wrote:

- Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. (Ezekiel 47:9).

In this context the pure water symbolises:

- The Holy Spirit that proceeds from the Father working through the Gospel to convict of sin, and lead to life everlasting.
- The everlasting love of God and the fulness of eternal life.
- Life in its gladness, purity, activity, vitality and fulness.
- The ever vitalising and comforting influence of the Holy Spirit.
- The Lamb without blemish, who is the free-gift of God to all mankind, and who washes clean from sin all who by faith come to him.

Places that have an abundance of fresh water (especially pure clean water) are the most prosperous and happiest, in contrast to this, no life can survive without water. The river is called, "the pure river of the water of life," because in our present fallen world it symbolises those who are dead in trespasses being quickened, and being washed clean from sin, and signifies all who drink of it, being restored to eternal life, happiness and love which will flow forever.

The river began as a stream: but as John moved further into the river, it deepened and broadened the further he moved into it, signifying the more we embrace and submit to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and his word and fellowship, the greater our experience of his love and grace will be, and the more life we will bring to others.

WATER OF THE RIVER, TURN SALT WATER TO FRESH WATER

- **Ezekiel 47:8–9:** And he said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. ⁹ And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes.

The waters of the river purify the salt sea and brings life to all it touches, signifying the spirit of God, giving eternal life to all who embrace it. Salt preserves food, and enhances its taste, signifying the saving grace of Christ preserving the sinner and enhancing their life.

The sea being changed from salt water to fresh water, signifies those in Christ no longer needing the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, for all will be like the pure waters of the river, without any impurity, pollution, and uncleanness.

TREES ON EACH SIDE OF THE RIVER

- **Ezekiel 47:12:** And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."

The trees on each side of the river, produced fruit every month, meaning, they perpetually produced food, they also produced leaves for healing, signifying the life-giving power of God's Spirit to give those who come to Him through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, all they will ever need for salvation, happiness, fulfillment, and eternal life.

A RIVER OF LIFE FLOWING FROM GOD'S THRONE AND THE LAMB

- **Revelation 22:1:** Then the angel showed me the river (a pure river in KJV) of the water of life, bright (clear in KJV) as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

The angel here, is not Jesus, but is said to be "A servant with John and all who keep the words of this book:" (Rev. 1:8-9) and verse sixteen says, "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches," clearly showing the angel is Jesus' angel. This pure river flows without any form of pollution or stain, signifying all who dwell in the Holy City the New Jerusalem will be without any uncleanness in mind, thought and body.

The waters of life: carries the idea of living and flowing water, like a spring or fountain, contrasted with a stagnant pool. John had previously spoken of pure water that will spring up to eternal life

- **John 4:14:** Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Now he sees in this vision a river flowing from the throne of God through the streets of the Holy City New Jerusalem, signifying, the Spirit of God in all its perfected glory will pervade every space of the Holy City.

JESUS AND LIVING WATER

In the following verses, Jesus uses the imagery of water as a symbol of the pure delights of spiritual joy and communion with God and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

- **John 4:10-14:** Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." ¹¹The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." ¹³Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."
- **John 7:39-39:** On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' " ³⁹Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

In these verses, Jesus speaks of:

- Living water flowing up out of the heart.
- Water that once a person has drunk, they will never again be thirsty.
- Water that will spring up to eternal life.

The source of this water (signifying the lifesaving power of God), is the river (signifying the Spirit) flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

VERSES THAT SPEAK OF RIVERS AND STREAMS

Following are a few verses that speak of rivers and streams:

- **Psalm 1:3:** He (who delight is in the law of the LORD) is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Here the streams of water are a symbol of God's blessing, prosperity, and eternal life.

- **Psalm 32:2:** Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

Here the streams of water are a symbol of life (i.e., bringing life to spiritually dry hearts and minds especially eternal life).

- **Psalm 36:8:** They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

Here the river is a symbol of God's abundant blessings.

- **Psalm 46:4-5:** There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. ⁵God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.

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Here the river and streams are a symbol of God's joy, presence, and help.

- **Isaiah 12:3:** With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

Here wells of water are a symbol salvation.

- **Isaiah 33:21:** In Jerusalem the LORD in majesty will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, where no galley with oars can go, nor majestic ship can pass.

Here the streams and rivers symbolise God's protection, (i.e., like a moat is to a fortress or castle).

- **Isaiah 41:18:** I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

Here the streams of water are symbols of God's abundance of blessing and new life.

- **Zechariah 14:8:** On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea and continue in summer as in winter.

Here the rivers are a symbol of God's eternal Spirit.

- **Revelation 22:1:** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Here the river is a symbol of God's life flowing to all who will receive it.

These verses show that the state of Jerusalem, the Holy City of God is represented by calm and gently-flowing rivers and streams, and that rivers and streams of water are a symbol of God's presence, help, Spirit,

and joy bringing spiritual life to the heart and mind of the faithful, and to God's protection and abundant, blessing, prosperity, salvation, and eternal life flowing to all who will receive it. While wicked, the corrupt and those who are aggressively against God are represented by the roaring, raging, foaming sea dashing against mountains, as if it would overturn them.

The importance of a natural river: during ancient times a river was the very making and mainstay of their towns and cities, and during war the great fear of an ancient city, town, or fortress was that their water supply would be cut off during a siege, since this would bring about their defeat in a very short period, whereas, if they could secure the water supply the city could hold out against attacks for an indefinite period.

The importance of a spiritual river: when a river is used symbolically and spiritually, it signifies the heart of God's sovereign goodwill and love and the channel through which it runs is the Lord Jesus Christ. The river signifies God's everlasting love, grace; joy and bliss that brings life wherever it flows. It is not boisterous like the wave of an ocean, but a placid and calm stream that by its influences make glad the city of God and the faithful by assuring them that the Lord of Jerusalem will supply all their needs.

Natural clear, cool, fresh, abundant rivers support life, and bring joy to all who swim in them, likewise when rivers are used symbolically, they signify eternal life and abundant joy to all who fully submit themselves to God, and His divine love, power and grace flowing out to all mankind, and making the hearts of His people glad. The river of God's Spirit in the heart and mind of the faithful, is like a river that runs underground, it flows secretly breaking up the hard ground, and is manifested in large streams, that flow outwardly in love, mercy, grace, peace, and joy toward all people and on into eternity.

It is a spiritual river that:

- Its depth of love and joy is unfathomable, and no one can swim it, except by faith in the promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and God's grace.
- Its height, depth, length, and breadth cannot be comprehended.
- It is pure and clear as crystal; free of all pretence, deceit, and hypocrisy in the heart and mind, and clear of all corrupt motives.
- It is living, and brings life to spiritually dead sinners, and revives drooping hands of the faithful.
- It raises the faithful in the first resurrection, and secures them from the second death and the lake of fire.
- It gives eternal life, and makes everything it touches fruitful.

OVERVIEW OF RIVERS AND STREAMS

In Genesis, Adam, and Eve (his bride), in innocence in the Paradise of Eden, were tempted by the serpent, and driven from the tree of life, and from the pleasant waters of Eden, but not without hope, but with the promise of a Redeemer who would crush the serpent. Now at the close of God's eternal plan of mankind's salvation, the old serpent is cast out

forever by the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, who appears with His Bride, the faithful Church, in a far better Paradise, and amidst a superior river with richer waters. The tree of life is no longer guarded with a flaming sword, but open to all who overcome (Rev. 2:7), and there is no longer a curse, for it is replaced with healing. In contrast to Ezekiel's vision (Ezek. 47:1) there is no temple in the New Holy City Jerusalem, the entire city is the House of God, and God the Holy Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are the temple of it.

No life can survive without water, in contrast to this, places that have an abundance of fresh water (especially pure clean water) are the most prosperous, and its citizens the happiest. The citizens of the Holy City New Jerusalem will have no need of anything to make them happy, for every need, to fulfill the mind, the thoughts, the heart, the body, and every aspect of social life will be lavishly and perpetually abounding, signified by the river of pure water flowing directly from the throne of God and the Lamb through the streets of the Holy City.

For further information concerning the sea, see the title:

- Sea.

In Symbolisms (ON WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.