



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

EZEKIEL

Week 4

Ezekiel 34–35

OPENING
up to the Word

What positions of responsibility do you hold, and who gave them to you?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Because the men God had called to shepherd Israel had failed to do it, looking only to their own interests, the people had been left shepherdless (34:1-9). Do you feel some modern shepherds are doing the same thing?
2. From whom did God need to rescue his sheep (v. 10)?
3. A new shepherd was going to be placed over his sheep, God said. Who was God's surprising choice (vs. 23-24)?
4. How would life be different for Israel in the future than it was at this time in their history (vs. 25-31)?
5. What was God's case against Edom (35:5-9)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you ever been given a special responsibility to care for or to help guide someone else? Do you think you were faithful?
2. Were there ever times when you just wanted to quit and let someone else do the job? (a) yes; frequently; (b) yes, occasionally; (c) no, never.
3. Has God ever asked you to help shepherd his sheep spiritually? Would you do so if asked? Do you think you are qualified?

WINDOW
on the Word

*"My servant, David" (34:23). David was long dead at this time, so there is much debate as to who this refers to. Some see in this a literal resurrection of David to rule over Israel. Others see this as a human king in the line of David who would rule Israel under God. However, the language and description of this kingdom seem to point to the Messiah, the branch of David (Jer 33:15). **Edom** (35:15) is called Mt. Seir, the mountain range where the Edomites lived. Edom had an ancient hostility to Israel, and rejoiced at her destruction, hoping to take possession of her land when the people were sent into exile.*

““This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘I am against you, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand against you and make you a desolate waste.’””

Ezekiel 35:3

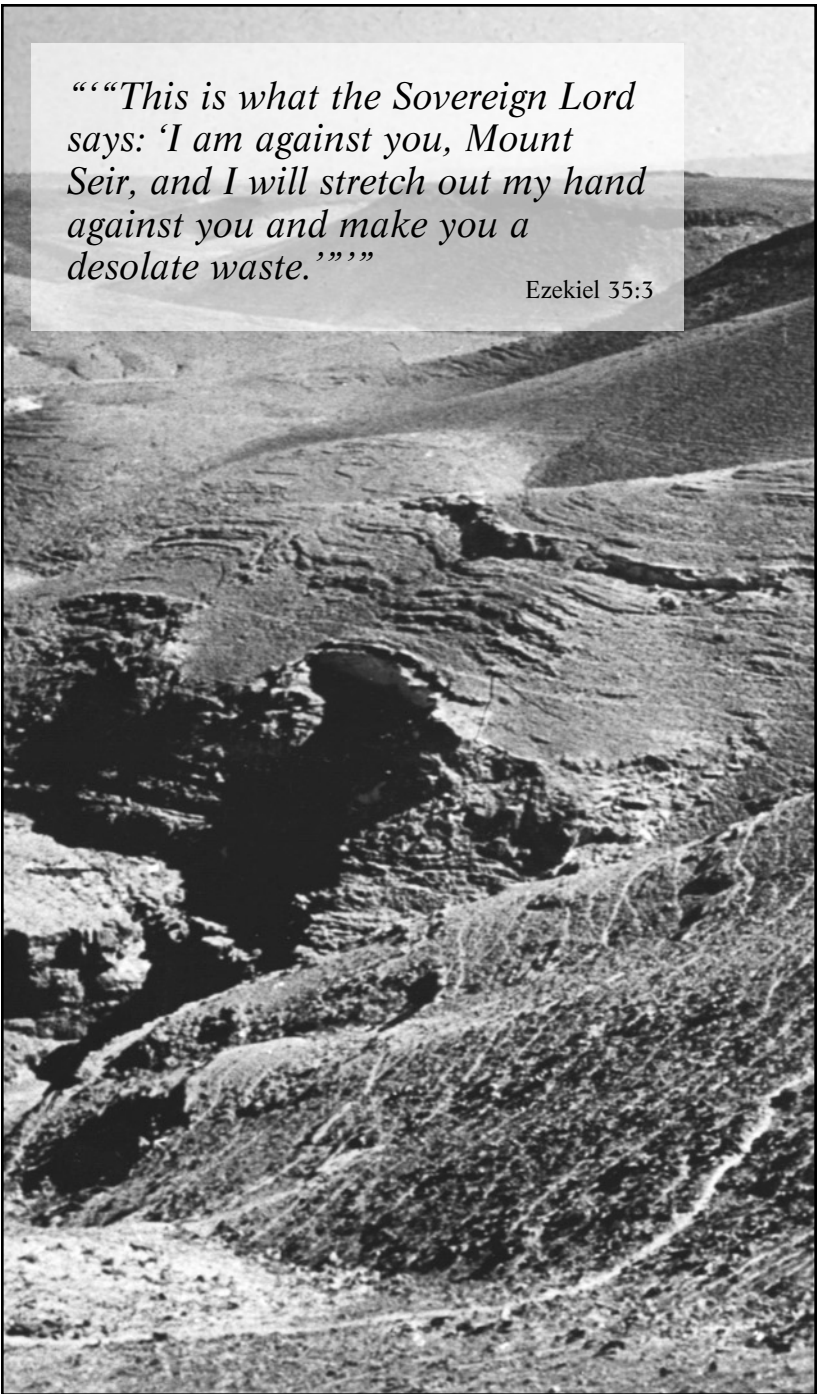


Photo of area of Edom by B. Ruthenberg

Scheduling Heart Transplants

Ezekiel 36

OPENING
up to the Word

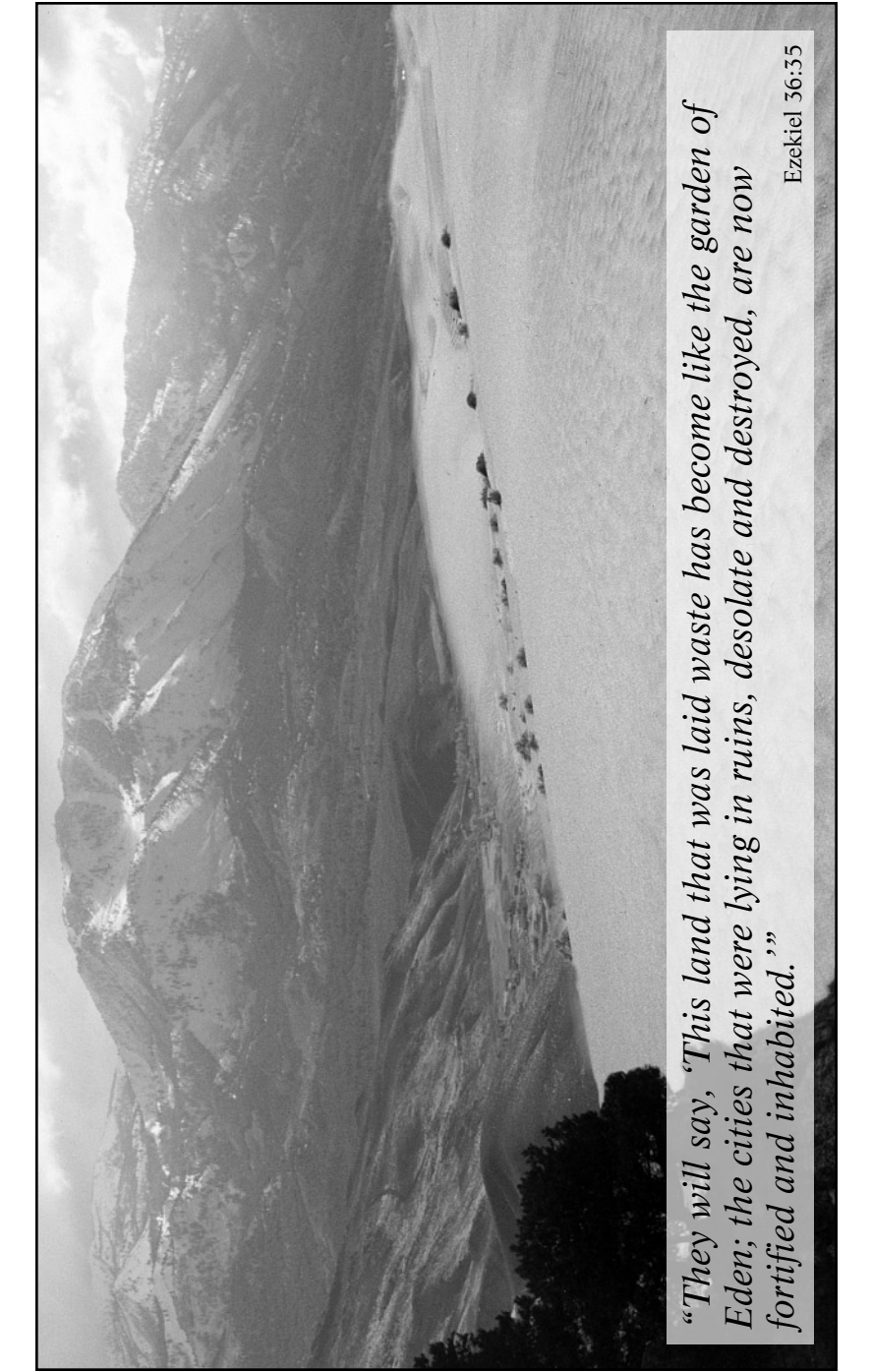
Have you or anyone in your family ever had heart disease or heart problems?

DIGGING
into the Word

- 1.** To what strange audience was Ezekiel commanded to prophesy (v. 1)?
 - 2.** What did some people accuse the “mountains of Israel” (a metaphor for the land of Israel) of doing to her children (v. 13)?
 - 3.** Israel didn’t deserve any good news, but God had a different motivation for blessing Israel, what was it (vs. 22-23)?
 - 4.** What major spiritual operation was God going to perform on Israel in the future (vs. 26-27)?
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LIVING
out the Word

- 1.** When you became a Christian, did you experience a heart transplant (2Co 5:17)? Who performed the “surgery”? Who paid for it? You were unconscious, right?



“They will say, ‘This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited.’”

Ezekiel 36:35

Resurrecting Dead Bones and Dead Dreams

Ezekiel 37

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever experienced the death of a dream very dear to you? How did that affect your outlook on life?

DIGGING
into the Word

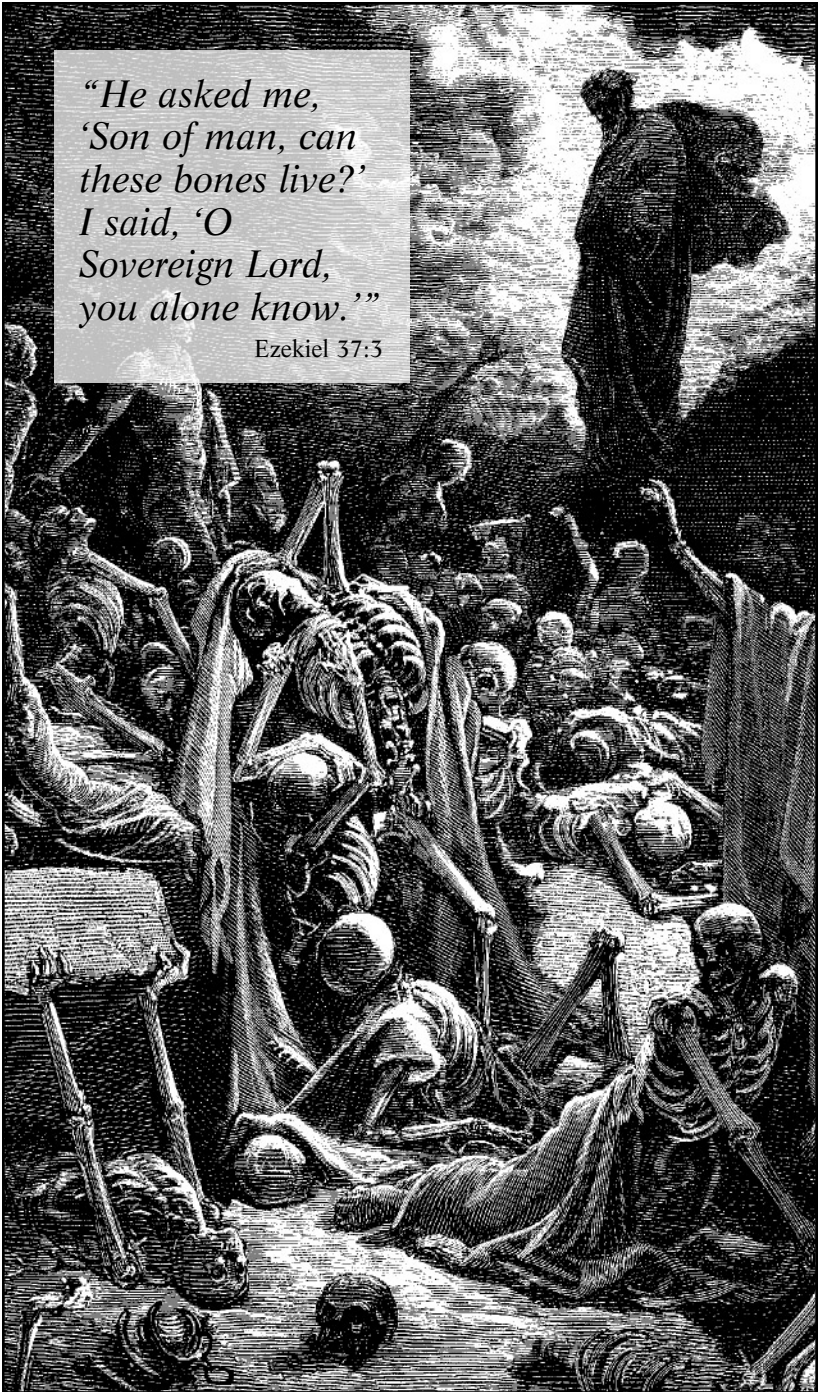
1. Does it appear that Ezekiel was taken to a literal valley full of dead bones, or that he simply saw a vision of this valley (vs. 1-2)?
2. What question did God ask Ezekiel about these bones, and what was Ezekiel's guarded reply (v. 3)?
3. Ezekiel witnessed an amazing sight: dead bones were resurrected to new life (vs. 7-10). Who did these dead bones represent (vs. 11-12) and what was the meaning of the sign (vs. 12-14)?
4. What do you think the two sticks of Judah and Joseph represented (vs. 19-22)?
5. Jerusalem had been destroyed and the people were in exile. Why do you think God gave them this vision at this time?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Is there a special promise in God's Word that seems like it will never be fulfilled for you? What is it, and why does it look so hopeless to you?
2. List all the promises that you can think of from God's Word that have been fulfilled in your life.
3. What promise of God means the most to you and why?

*“He asked me,
‘Son of man, can
these bones live?’
I said, ‘O
Sovereign Lord,
you alone know.’”*

Ezekiel 37:3



Artwork by Gustav Doré

What if They Gave a War and God Showed Up?

Ezekiel 38–39

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever planned on doing something that you thought would be a walk in the park only to discover that it was more like running a marathon?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. When would the huge invasion by Gog and Magog take place (v. 8)?
2. Though God would prompt the armies of Gog and Magog to invade Israel (v. 4), what would motivate them to do so (vs. 10-13)? God would not lead them against their will, but would use their lust and pride to accomplish his will.
3. When the huge army attacked Israel, what would God use to stop them (vs. 19-23)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Sometimes we can feel as helpless as the nation of Israel seems in this passage. What do these scriptures teach you about God's protection?
2. God would deliver Israel by a series of unexpected miracles. Has God ever delivered you in a totally unexpected way?

WINDOW
on the Word

*There has been a great deal of speculation concerning the identity of **Gog and Magog** (38:2), especially identifying them with the former Soviet Union. Others have identified them as Babylon, Alexander the Great, Greece and Antiochus Eupator, among others. The search to identify specific nations who are Gog and Magog is a fool's errand. Jewish tradition treats Gog and Magog as individuals, leaders of enemy forces who would attack Israel before the coming of the Messiah. In all probability, physical details about nations are not the purpose of this passage.*

Ezekiel 40-42

Have you ever taken a drafting class, or looked at a set of architectural blueprints? Were you able to understand them, or did they just confuse you?

1. Where was Ezekiel taken to receive the architectural vision of God's Temple (40:1-2)?
2. What specific instructions were given to Ezekiel regarding what he was shown (v. 4)?
3. Do all these details imply a literal future Temple or could this all be symbolic?

1. Why do you think God provides us with such detailed information? Can these details derail our understanding?

The Temple area (v. 5). Under Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonians would burn down the Temple of Solomon when Jerusalem was destroyed, thus removing the Temple as the center of Jewish religious worship. But God had promised to rebuild the Temple (Eze 37:26-28). There are several views concerning this Temple. Some believe that Ezekiel was predicting the rebuilding of Solomon's Temple after the Babylonian captivity, but it was not built to these grand specifications. Some think Ezekiel was referring to the church, and the details are not to be taken literally. Still others feel this Temple will be built during a future millennial kingdom. Those who have such a view have no answers for the fact that a literal Temple and sacrificial system would appear to nullify the cross of Christ.

OPENING
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*“And where these have
been forgiven, there is
no longer any sacrifice
for sin.”*

Hebrews 10:18



Coming Home to Stay

DAY 27

Ezekiel 43

Has a member of your family, or a beloved friend, ever left home for a long time? How did you feel when they returned?

1. What scene did Ezekiel witness that must have overwhelmed him (vs. 2-4)?
2. Who spoke to Ezekiel from inside the Temple (vs. 6-7)?
3. How did God want the altar in the Temple dedicated (vs. 18-26)?
4. Is there any need for literal sacrifices since Christ was the Lamb of God in our stead (Heb 10:18)?

1. Have you ever come home after a long absence or vacation? Were you happy to return home, or was it difficult?
2. How long have you lived in your present home? Does it seem like your real home, or is there another place that feels more like home to you?
3. Does it seem strange to you that this life does not contain your ultimate eternal home? What will make your eternal home seem like your real home?

*Some people believe that a **sacrificial system** will be reestablished after Christ returns. It will not remove sins, they say, but will be a reminder of the sacrifice of Christ, which does remove sins. However, Hebrews 10:18 says that there is no need for sacrifices, and that is just as true for the future as it was in the first century. In the new covenant, we are reminded of Christ's sacrifice by the Lord's Supper, not by animal sacrifices. When Christ returns, he will not re-establish the old covenant instead of the new. Ezekiel and the other prophets were merely describing a renewal of worship in terms that the old covenant people would understand.*

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Honor to Whom Honor Is Due

Ezekiel 44

OPENING
up to the Word

How do we traditionally show honor to people in our culture when they have served well?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Why would the east gate of the Temple be shut, and who would be the only one allowed to use the gate (vs. 1-3)?
2. Who do you think this prince typifies, and why would he alone receive such honor?
3. While God was giving instructions regarding a future Temple, what instructions did he also give to the people of Ezekiel's day (vs. 6-9)?
4. The role of the Levites would be reduced. Why would they be given such a demotion (vs. 10-14)?
5. The priests who were descendants of Zadok would be given a promotion (vs. 15-16). Why would they be given such an honor and what does that tell us about the benefits of faithfulness and obedience to God?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you ever been singled out for a great honor? What had you done to receive such an honor? Do you feel that you deserved it?
2. What is the difference between an earthly honor, bestowed by men and women, and heavenly honor, bestowed by God?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Some see the **prince** (v. 3) as King David; others see him as Christ himself. **Descendants of Zadok** (v. 15). The line of Zadok was a branch of the Levites. Zadok was appointed chief priest during the reign of Solomon (1Ki 1:32-35; 2:26-27, 35). The priests of Zadok had remained faithful to God while others had strayed, and for that obedience they would be rewarded with being able to minister to God in the future Temple.*

Princely Duties

DAY 29

Ezekiel 45–46

Have you ever met anyone of royal blood? How do you think their life differs from others?

1. Who is the prince (45:7) mentioned in these chapters? Is he the same prince spoken of earlier in Ezekiel (34:23)? What argues against this prince being Christ (45:22; 46:2, 6, 18)?

2. What did God condemn the princes for doing, (45:9-10, 46:18)? How were the future princes to be different (45:8)?

3. How had Israel's former princes defrauded the people (v. 10)?

1. Do you think you would like to be royalty? What would be attractive about the royal lifestyle to you? What would be unattractive?

2. What do you think would test your character most as a person of royal privilege?

3. What in your present life do you think you would miss most if you suddenly became royalty?

The prince (45:7). Unlike earlier designations of the prince David (34:23), this description of a prince of Israel cannot be the Christ. This prince offers sacrifices for his own sins (45:22), he worships (46:2), and he has children (v. 16). Those who believe that the prince in 34:23 is a resurrected David maintain this is the same person. Those who saw the earlier prince as the Messiah identify this as an unknown future prince or as symbolic of something else.

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“He said to me, ‘This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Sea. When it empties into the Sea, the water there becomes fresh.’”

Ezekiel 47:8

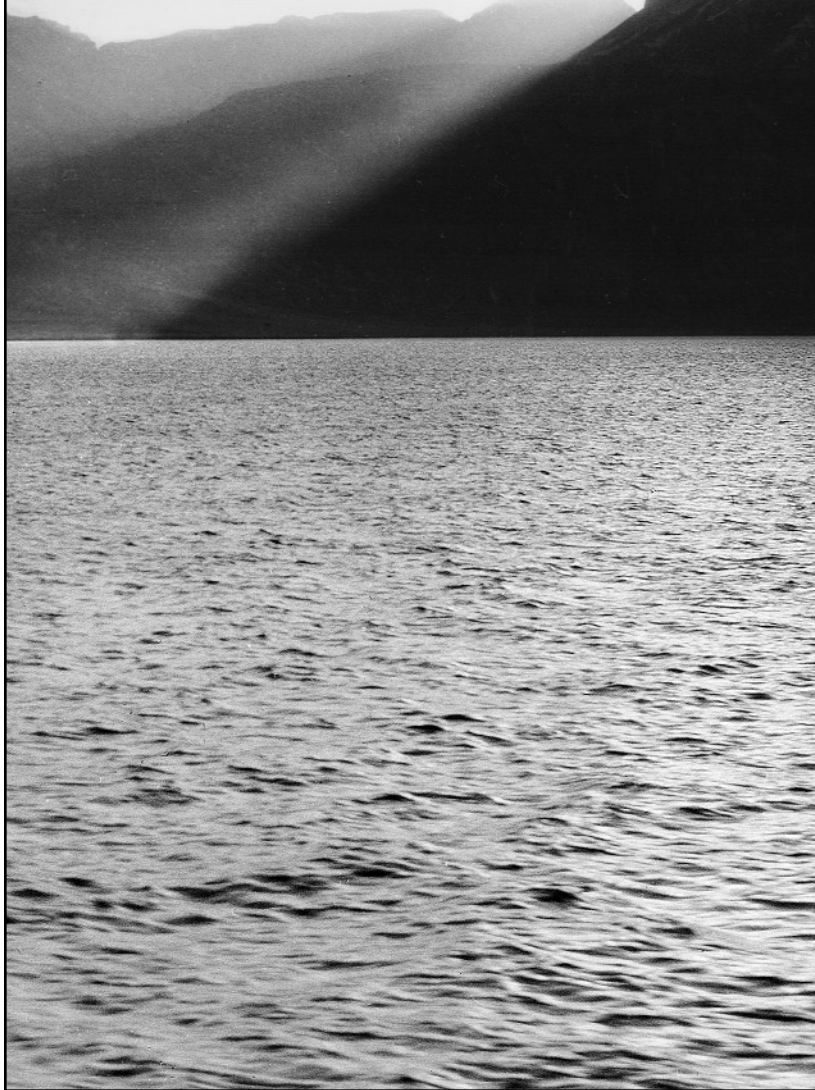


Photo of Dead Sea by Matson Photo Service

Dividing Up the Land

DAY 30

Ezekiel 47-48

Have you ever received an inheritance from a relative?

1. What substance flowing from the Temple did the angel show Ezekiel (47:1)?
 2. What miracle was predicted for the salty Dead Sea (47:8-10)?
 3. Each tribe of Israel was given an allotment of land. Although Israel had sinned and God needed to judge her, yet he renewed his promise that the land would belong to her. How is this encouraging to you when you think of God's promises to his people?
 4. How would gentiles fare in this kingdom? Would they be treated as foreigners or as part of the people of God (vs. 22-23)?
 5. What would be the new name for Jerusalem (48:35)?
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1. What would you like to leave as an inheritance?
 2. What do you look forward to most in your heavenly inheritance?
 3. What one thing would you most like to receive as an inheritance from your family or parents, and why?
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The Sea (47:8) refers to the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is six times saltier than the ocean, yet God speaks of it being purified and made fresh. This is certainly symbolic of spiritual renewal and life; scholars are not agreed whether it is also to be taken literally.

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