

The Kingdom of God - What will it be Like? - 9

In parallel with Ezekiel's vision of the river springing up from the environs of the temple in Jerusalem, Joel 3:18 says that "it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine" = vineyards will flourish even on the mountainsides, "the hills shall flow with milk" = numerous flocks and herds will graze the green hills, "and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water" explained by the fact that "a fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord and water the Valley of Acacias" which is near Jericho and is connected with the Jordan Valley.

Ezekiel 40:3 adds that the river "goes down into the valley, and enters the sea" = the Dead Sea which is where the Jordan River used to empty. That body of water is now too salty for fish. But when the waters from the temple "reaches the sea, its waters are healed." Healed in what way? - verse 9 - "And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. 10 "It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea" = the Mediterranean, "exceedingly many."

Ezekiel noticed that 7 "there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other." His guide explained to him, 12 "Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine." This truly will become a country to live in, with a very high quality of life indeed.

Isaiah spoke of this time, when the immortal saints, under the authority of the twelve apostles, who "will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" - Matthew 19:28 - these will provide constant guidance to bring the people of Israel back to the straight and narrow - Isaiah 30:21 "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left." As a result of Israel's consequent compliance with Christ's authority, 23 "Then He will give the rain for your seed with which you sow the ground, and bread of the increase of the earth; it will be fat and plenteous. In that day your cattle will feed in large pastures...."

Their submission to God's immortal guardians will lead him to "open rivers in desolate 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." In the places that were for centuries a dry desert, 19 "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine and the box tree together, 20 That they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it" - Isaiah 41:18.

The prophet summarizes the great transformation of environment in the Holy Land, reflecting not only the blessings of the physical changes in the land, but in the joyous and spontaneous expression of gratitude by the people to God - "For the Lord will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody" - Isaiah 51:3.