

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

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Lesson 44: "Every Thing Shall Live Whither the River Cometh," (Ezekiel 43–44; 47)

Introduction



Have you ever been excited while watching a sporting event or some other kind of entertainment? Have you ever been so excited at such an event that you stood and shouted or cheered? Can you think of sacred events that have been or will be accompanied by enthusiastic expressions of joy and gratitude? Some of these events include: The creation of the earth, the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the Second Coming of Christ and the Resurrection.

While the excitement of sporting events or other entertainment is temporary, the joy associated with sacred events is eternal. A sacred event in the Church where participants show their joy and gratitude by standing, shouting, and waving occurs during the dedication of a temple, the congregation participates in a great expression of joy called the Hosanna Shout.

"The Hosanna Shout is whole-souled, given to the full limit of one's strength. The congregation stands and in unison shouts the words 'Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna to God and the Lamb. Amen, Amen, and Amen,' repeating them three times. This is usually accompanied by the rhythmic waving of white handkerchiefs with uplifted hands. The epithet 'Lamb' relates to the condensation and atonement of Jesus Christ" (Encyclopedia of Mormonism, 5 vols. [1992], 2:659).

This lesson will help us understand some of the many ways the temple brings joy. We are encouraged to partake of the life-giving, healing powers that are available in the temple.

Ezekiel is shown a vision of the temple in Jerusalem. (Ezekiel 43:1–12; 44:6–9, 23)

We can learn about the temple in Ezekiel's vision from these verses:

• **Ezekiel 43:2, Ezekiel 43:4–5** - The glory of the Lord fills the temple.

• **Ezekiel 43:7** - The temple is "the place of [the Lord's] throne" on earth.

• **Ezekiel 43:7** - The Lord walks in the temple, calling it "the place of the soles of

my feet".

• **Ezekiel 43:7** - The temple is a place where the Lord may "dwell in the midst" of his people.

• **Ezekiel 43:11** - We learn

Lesson Highlights

- Ezekiel is shown a vision of the temple in Jerusalem.
- Ezekiel sees a river flowing from the temple that gives life to the desert and heals the Dead Sea.
- Ezekiel measures the river's depth.

A study of this lesson will help us to partake of the life-giving, healing powers that are available in the temple.

Next Week

#45 "If I Perish, I Perish" (Daniel 1; 3; 6; Esther 3–5; 7–8)

about the laws of the Lord in the temple.

- **Ezekiel 43:11** - There are ordinances that the Lord wants us to perform in the temple.

- **Ezekiel 43:12** - Even the grounds that surround the temple “shall be most holy”.
- **Ezekiel 44:6-9** - Only those who are worthy

should enter the temple.

- **Ezekiel 44:23** - In the temple we learn the difference between holy and profane and between clean and unclean.

Ezekiel sees a river flowing from the temple that gives life to the desert and heals the Dead Sea. (Ezekiel 47:1, 6–12)

Ezekiel 47:1 - Ezekiel saw waters coming from the east doors of the temple in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 47:8 - The water went into the Judean wilderness and the Dead Sea east of Jerusalem.

The Judean wilderness is a barren desert, and the Dead Sea is too salty to sustain animal life.

Ezekiel 47:6-12 - According to Ezekiel’s vision, changes will take place in the Judean wilderness and the Dead Sea will be healed because of the river flowing from the temple.

Revelation 22:1-3 - In a vision similar to Ezekiel’s vision of the temple, John the Beloved was shown the throne of God. A pure river of the

water of life flowed from the throne of God in John’s vision. The “water of life” refers to the doctrines of the gospel.

We are like the Judean wilderness and the Dead Sea if we do not partake of the “water of life” because we will not be able to sustain life.

The “water of life” that is available in the temple heals and gives life to marriages, families, our ancestors, and the Church as we observe the doctrines of the gospel and reap the blessings.

Other things also flow from the temple that give spiritual life and healing including truth, wisdom, revelation, and covenants.

Ezekiel 47:12 describes the trees that grew along the banks of the river in Ezekiel’s vision.

In common with the waters of the river, the trees had healing and life-giving powers.

Revelation 22:2 – Fruit bearing trees grew along the banks of the river in John’s vision.

1 Nephi 8:10-11; 1 Nephi 11:25 – These are other scriptures where the prophets are shown the tree of life.

1 Nephi 11:25 - In the dream given to Lehi and Nephi,, the tree of life represented the love of God, which heals and gives life.

Ezekiel measures the river’s depth.

Ezekiel 47:2-3 - The first time Ezekiel waded across the river it was ankle deep.

Ezekiel 47:4-5 - The second, third, and fourth times he waded across, the river increased in depth to knee-deep, up to the loins, and

then it was so deep that he had to swim.

There is a truth that these verses suggest about the temple—that the power of the temple increases in our lives the more often we attend. Wonderful truths are

taught in the temple, many through symbols. If at first our understanding of these truths or of temple ordinances is only “ankle deep,” we should wade into the “river” again and again—or, in other words, attend the temple as often as possible.

Conclusion

The Lord has called the temple “a place of thanksgiving” (D&C 97:13). We should be thankful for the blessings that come because of the temple. Just as the waters from the temple healed the Judean wilderness and the Dead Sea in Ezekiel’s vision, the gospel of Jesus Christ will heal and cleanse us if we will partake of it.

Additional Teachings

“The Great Symbol of [Our] Membership”

President Howard W. Hunter said: “I invite the Latter-day Saints to look to the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of your member-

ship. It is the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church worthy to enter the temple. It would please the Lord if every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend. The things

that we must do and not do to be worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families” (Ensign, Nov. 1994, 8).



Ezekiel 47:1 The Temple Fountain Stream



Ezekiel 47:4 Journey Down the River



Ezekiel 47:7 The Healing River

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- Have you experienced the water of life that is available in the temple to heal and give you life? How?
- Have you felt the love of God in healing spiritual and physical wounds? How?