

It's Time to Get In The River!

An 8 Day Devotional Guide by Pastor Daniel Westbrook

January 3rd through January 11th, 2026

Day 1: Get In the River!

Ezekiel 47:1-6 (ESV)

¹ Then he brought me 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. ² Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side. ³ Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. ⁴ Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep. ⁵ Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. ⁶ And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he led me back to the bank of the river.

Ezekiel dreamed of water *originating from and issuing through* the temple. As he ventured around, he watched as it increased in intensity into a river. The angelic guide in the dream then led Ezekiel *through* the water. At that point, the water was at his ankles, but the guide led him further where it was knee-deep, then further still where it was waist-deep. Soon, further still, Ezekiel could not rely on the surety of his own feet. He was swimming!

The nature of a river is that no human entity controls it. God controls the river, and this river issues from the temple – representing God's presence! This river represents a move of God: a time when His Spirit would issue forth and "everything will live" that is in this river. The Kingdom of God is advancing in undeniable ways in the days in which we live! But here's the glorious invitation: the call of the moment that we're in isn't to try to formulate savvy church growth strategies or to be misled into thinking that our great ideas and human efforts will make the difference. The river is flowing. God is moving. And our response is to step in and join Him.

The time of standing on the sidelines is over. God's Spirit is on the move, and the Kingdom of God is advancing in these last days. In our own lives, do we dare step off the shore into ankle-deep waters, eventually swimming in faith and surrender? Are we ready to cast aside apathy and fear, and go where His current takes us? In the home, the Church, the marketplace and in the nations, the River is flowing! Let's get in.

Let's pray:

Lord, we see You moving in the nations. Gen Z is rushing back to the Church! There is an urgency and a hunger for the eternal things. As we look around us, we're more sure than ever that this world doesn't hold the answers. Only You have the words of eternal life, Lord Jesus. (Jn. 6:68) As we see the churning of the river of Your Spirit being poured out upon this generation, may we not stand on the shore. May we get in. May we surrender to the direction that You want to take us in. May our walk with You take us deeper until we are over our heads, no longer leaning on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5)! In Jesus' name. Amen!

Day 2: Life in the River

Ezekiel 47:7-10 (ESV)

⁷ As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. ⁸ 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. ¹⁰ Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea.

From the banks, Ezekiel began to see the reach of this River. Originating from the Temple, it began to flow into the Arabah – a very vast desert valley. It runs from the Sea of Galilee, through the Jordan Valley, past the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba in the South. Geographically, Ezekiel witnesses the River in his dream spanning about 45 miles!

But the flow of this River passes through metropolitan areas, dry, arid desert, untamed wilderness, and ending in the most lifeless body of water on Earth: the Dead Sea, whose salt content is ten times saltier than the ocean. It is devoid of plant and animal life.

But the River of God produces life in the dead places. The great move of God isn't manufactured and it doesn't need to be embellished. The message of this vision is clear: where the river goes, everything lives. His power speaks for itself: the stagnant, dead places will soon be teeming with life and revived! In his vision, this is a place of every fisherman's envy! They will congregate by the sea where the fish are caught up in the River's flow. In Matthew 4:18-19 & Mark 1:16-1, Jesus tells Peter and his friends that if they will follow Him, He will make them *fishers of men*.

God is moving. He is moving through neighborhoods, schools, offices, and governments. God has always been in the business of bringing dead things to life. May we not regard any

thing as beyond the reach of transformation where the river of God's Spirit is concerned! As you reflect on your life and on our world, where do you see God's river healing, reviving, and cleansing?

Let's pray.

Lord, we see You moving across our nation. As Ezekiel saw the River flowing through the Arabah – dry desert climates and metropolitan cities alike – we pray that You would move through our nation. Open our eyes to see where You're moving in ways that would otherwise seem impossible. Help us to believe You, even when all seems lost. Help us to remember that wherever Your River runs, there is life abundant in Christ Jesus. Amen!

Day 3: His Kingdom, His River

2 Kings 5:10-12 (ESV)

¹⁰ And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." ¹¹ But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. ¹² Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

Naaman was a Syrian and the commander of Syria's army. And, he was a leper. He lived in the tension of being both a victorious soldier *and* a vulnerable patient. But the Lord used him mightily. His wife had a young maiden from Israel who mused out loud, "I wish my lord could be in the presence of the prophet in Samaria, referring to Elisha. Naaman sent word to the king of Syria, who wrote the king of Israel, requesting healing of leprosy. The king of Israel was angry, scoffing at the audacity that he could somehow heal the Commander of Syria of leprosy.

Elisha the prophet sent word to the king of Israel, summoning Naaman to the Jordan River. Elisha then gave the commander of Syria an unusual command of his own: "Go wash seven times in the Jordan River, and you will be healed." Naaman angrily retorted, "*I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?"*

Naaman went away angry, but his servants pleaded with him. Finally, he went and washed, and as he had been told, he was healed. Then, he went away worshipping. But he almost missed out on this great sign and wonder because:

1) God's methods didn't make sense to him.

2) His pride (“*I thought he would surely come out to me and stand...*” and “*Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?*”) stood in his way.

Naaman’s story is a great reminder of why God’s ways are all that matter. He has the right to use whatever river He chooses. Am I going to let my prideful protests prevent me from trusting that He knows what He’s doing? What if He doesn’t want to wave His hand, but he wants us to *step deeper* into the river? Our feet may not touch the ground. I may not get to choose His methods or the river He uses, but obedience says, “I choose You.”

Let’s pray.

Lord, stepping into the river is an act of obedience but also of surrender. It may feel vulnerable, but this is Your Kingdom. Your Church. As Naaman’s obedience led to his worship of the One True God, may our surrender impact those around us. Father, please be with our missionaries who are like the Israelite maiden whose confidence in Your power to save, heal, and deliver places them in front of people of all walks of life. Amen!

Day 4: The River or the Reservoir?

Jeremiah 2:11-13 (ESV)

¹¹ Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. ¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, ¹³ for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

The Lord speaks to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah. The cycle of forsaking God continues, and the Lord calls them to account. Even the nations of the world were somewhat *faithful* to their gods of wood and stone. But God’s people were unfaithful to the God who sees, knows, hears, understands, and saves. This was cause for even the heavens to be horrified!

God calls out the two great evils that Israel committed against Him. First, they had forsaken Him—the *fountain of living waters*. The Hebrew word for this describes a natural spring that never runs dry. Its Source is the Lord God, alone! Imagine a stream that is continually and perennially flowing. These fountains were highly valuable and guarded – and still are! – in the arid Middle East. Water, the most precious commodity in such a dry region, flowing from a spring represents prosperity and provision – the very source of life is dependable and accessible!

But the second great evil is this: forsaking Yahweh as the Fountain of Living Water and then *trading Him* for manmade, broken cisterns that cannot hold water. These cisterns

were waterproofed and often represented a kingdom's power. But they were only manmade containers for *God-made* streams. What good is a broken container? Who would trade an endless supply of water for no water at all? Because that is what they ended up with: in rejecting God, their endless Source, and choosing their inferior manmade water sources, they came up empty.

Anytime we choose our way over *His* way, we miss *Him*. Like a container with a hole in it, our human efforts apart from *Him* cannot satisfy us. We all have a choice: we can have the River, a divinely-created and endless supply of life-giving nourishment, or we can have the Reservoir – a limited, broken container that leaves us dry and thirsty.

Let's pray.

Father, we want the River. Not the reservoir. Lord, in my home, we want the River—the Fountain of Living Water. As a church family, we don't want programs over presence. As a nation, Lord, we have many broken cisterns that we have chosen over Your living water. Forgive us. Help us to bring others to Your river of life. Your fountain of living water. In Jesus' name. Amen!

Day 5: Refreshed in the River

Isaiah 44:1-4 (ESV)

¹But now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen! ²Thus says the LORD who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you: Fear not, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen. ³For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. ⁴They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams.

The Lord tells Israel through the prophet Isaiah that in spite of the fiery trials of Babylon and the judgments they've encountered that He still loves them. They are still His. They are still chosen. They are still precious to Him, and He remembers forming them in the womb.

The captivity of Babylon was a judgment for the wickedness that we discussed in yesterday's devotional – rejecting Him and going after other gods. But like a good Father who kneels down after having to correct His child from, He longs to wipe their tears.

Then, He gives them this promise: “Listen, My beloved servant and child: I am going to pour water on the thirsty ground. There will be streams of refreshing water on the dry places.” This water of His Spirit will refresh them where the scorching heat had created a desert. There will be water poured out again upon the wildernesses! But not only that: He will pour His

Spirit upon their offspring and descendants, and they will repopulate along this life-giving stream.

When God moves, it is not only for us. His Spirit will restore and revitalize our dry and desert places. But He also has His eye on our children. As parents, grandparents, and spiritual parents, we have a natural concern for the next generation. But it's not greater than our Heavenly Father's concern. Our God desires to be *their* God! Let's pray for the younger generation to be refreshed by the Fount of Living Water!

Let's Pray.

Father, we thank You that the river of Your Holy Spirit is not only meant for us, but also for our children and grandchildren. There will never be a generation that You won't long to father and to draw to Yourself. Today, we commit our children to Your care—whether they are children, grandchildren, or spiritual sons and daughters. We pray for Your Spirit to be poured out in our homes, schools, college campuses, and streets. May the desert places come alive where Your River flows. In Jesus' name. Amen!

Day 6: The River Comes to Rescue

Isaiah 59:19-21 (ESV)

¹⁷ He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. ¹⁸ According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment. ¹⁹ So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the LORD drives. ²⁰ "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD. ²¹ "And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the LORD, "from this time forth and forevermore."

Isaiah 59 continues to lament about the condition of wayward Israel. The Lord speaks through Isaiah that the people:

- Shed innocent blood, think only iniquitous thoughts, wreak havoc in their path (v. 7)
- Know no peace nor justice, and they trade righteousness for crookedness (v. 8)
- Long for light, but there's only darkness. (9-10)

Their sinful condition leaves them in a state of despondency and despair.

But in verse 15, the tone changes. The Lord says that He saw their brokenness, and that there was none to save. There was no one to intercede. How does the Lord respond when darkness seems to be gaining the upper hand? He goes to war.

He puts on righteousness as a breastplate. He dons the helmet of salvation and wraps himself in zealous love. There wasn't a man to stand in the gap and turn back the tides of the enemy's tactics, so the Redeemer Himself came. From the west to the east, He came like a *rushing stream*! Like rushing waters, rescue swept across the nations! The Lord is still moving in the nations, and He is still the one who redeems.

That's why today, there is still *one Gospel*. As Paul says, there is "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." In 2026, let's pray for a global awakening!

Let's pray.

Father, we thank You that You have sent Your Son, Jesus to redeem. When there was no way, You provided One – Jesus Christ! Today we pray for the nations of the world in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America. Lord, stir up a hunger in homes, churches, and city squares. Raise up mighty intercessors and preachers of righteousness to proclaim the Way has come! In Jesus' name. Amen!

Day 7: The River of Revelation

Revelation 22:1-5 (ESV)

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 ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

As John's letter of this beautiful, enigmatic, holy vision from Jesus Himself, the angel shows him a glimpse of our glorious future. There is a river that flows from His throne. There are trees planted beside it, and true to scriptural pattern, the trees bear fruit and are always in season. This is the future of the Church! This is the *future reward* for the *present urgency*.

Our local body has shed tears. We've experienced heartache and sorrow. Nationally, there is an outcry for something lasting and transcendent – beyond our broken systems. Internationally, there are wars and rumors of wars. Individually, many of us have experienced tragic "unfixables" on a human level. Some of these are scars that only Heaven can heal.

But here's the promise at the end of the Book: He can and *will* heal. Jesus can fix the unfixables. Let's thank Him today that our future in Christ is more beautiful than our little minds can comprehend or imagine!

Let's pray.

Lord, we thank You that we have a future. There is a future around Your throne with You as our God, and we as Your people. There, every tear will be wiped away. Every wound healed. Every heart fulfilled. There, You will be our light. We will see the river of the water of life, flowing through Your throne, in the middle of the streets of the New Jerusalem! The war will be over. We wait expectantly for that day, but it gives us hope. There is purpose in the here and now as we get in Your river in 2026, watching, praying, and proclaiming Your Kingdom until we live there with you together. Whatever comes this year, we trust You because we know our future is in Your presence, gazing upon You. Face-to-face. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 8: The River is rising.

Psalm 1:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He 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.

The assassination of Charlie Kirk rocked the world in ways that man could have never orchestrated. We were reminded yet again that the world is a dark place and man will shed blood over polarizing worldviews. Regardless of political views, the human race was reminded that the world we live in is capable of the darkest darkness.

Yet, even earlier in 2025, we began to see the river's depth increasing. USA Today even took notice:

- Record numbers of young Gen Z men returning to church.
- Easter Sunday across the US saw churches with record attendance.
- Bible sales spiked.¹

Since the assassination of Charlie Kirk in September, this spiritual awakening has increased. Some may be reluctant to call it a revival. It doesn't matter what we call it. But we can't deny that the Holy Spirit is moving *like a river through the nations*.

One thing is clear: when God moves, the Church needs to join Him. What the Psalmist (most like David) opens this compilation of songs with is the contrast of those who abide in the proximity of wickedness, and those who choose to make their home in the *righteous*

¹ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2025/04/20/easter-church-christian-gen-z-men/83138618007/>

presence of God. A person can walk in the counsel of the wicked, stand in the way of sinners, sit with the blasphemy of scoffers. Or they can build their lives as close and intimately as they possibly can beside and upon and *in* Christ.

Getting in the river means deciding His agenda is worth laying down one's life for, and joining Him. It means going all in, even if it means going *under* – plunged into the current of the ever-increasing government of His Kingdom.

We do that by making a *decision* today to *surrender today*. Let's root our hearts and our hopes, and raise our hands in surrender so we can bear fruit that brings sons and daughters to His table.

Let's pray.

Lord, I surrender. No matter where I go, I know I want to go with you. I don't want to walk, stand, or sit as the wicked do. I want to abide in You, where I never dry up and always bear fruit. I want to get in the river. Let's go, Lord. I'm ready.