

Ezekiel 32:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord GOD.

Analysis

Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord GOD. After describing devastation, God announces restoration—but a strange, ominous restoration. **I will make their waters deep** (ashkia meimeihem) suggests settling, clearing, becoming tranquil after turbulence. **Cause their rivers to run like oil** (ve-naharotem ka-shemen olid) presents two possible meanings:

1. smooth, undisturbed flow like oil's viscosity, or
2. slow, sluggish movement indicating reduced volume and vitality.

The imagery is ambiguous—is this positive (peaceful, clear waters) or negative (stagnant, lifeless flow)? Context suggests the latter: following judgment and depopulation (v. 13), these undisturbed waters reflect absence of activity rather than peaceful abundance.

The "oil-like" flow indicates not richness but heaviness, slowness—waters no longer teeming with life and commerce. **Peace without prosperity is desolation.**

This illustrates that external calm doesn't equal blessing. The waters appear peaceful only because devastation eliminated disturbance. Similarly, churches or individuals may appear tranquil while spiritually dead—no conflict because no vitality, no stirring because no Spirit-movement. True peace comes from God's presence, not mere absence of activity (John 14:27). **Beware stillness that reflects death rather than rest.**

Historical Context

Egypt's Nile was famously turbid during flood season, its waters churning with silt, debris, and activity. This fertility-bringing muddiness was celebrated, not lamented. Clear, calm waters weren't necessarily desirable—they indicated low water and reduced agricultural productivity.

Ezekiel's prophecy of oil-like waters suggested abnormal calm: reduced flooding, diminished activity, depleted vitality. This matched historical reality: after Babylonian invasion, Egypt's agricultural productivity and population both declined. The Nile still flowed, but Egypt's glory had departed. The waters ran smoothly not from abundance but from abandonment—fewer people, less commerce, reduced civilization disturbing the riverbanks.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Are there areas of your spiritual life where apparent 'peace' actually reflects complacency or spiritual deadness rather than genuine rest in God?
2. How can you distinguish between godly peace (shalom—wholeness and flourishing) and mere absence of conflict or activity?

Interlinear Text

אַשְׁקָעַ יְעַמֵּד

H227

deep

H8257

מִימִינָה מִ

H4325

Then will I make their waters

וְנִבְרֹאֶת מִ

H5104

כַּשׁ מִןּוּ יְגַבְּרוּת מִ

H8081

like oil

יְהוָה אָדָנִי נָא מִאָוָל יְגַ

H1980

saith

H5002

the Lord

H136

GOD

H3069

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org