

Ezekiel 47:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

Analysis

The progression—ankles to knees to waist (loins)—depicts increasing immersion in God's Spirit and purposes. Knee-deep water (Hebrew בִּרְכַּיִם, birkaim) requires greater commitment; one can't casually wade but must deliberately engage. Waist-deep water (מֹתְנַיִם, motnaim—loins) represents the center of strength and reproductive capacity—God's work affecting core identity and fruitfulness. Each thousand-cubit interval maintains consistent progression, teaching that spiritual growth follows divinely ordered stages, not haphazard fluctuation. The guide repeatedly brings Ezekiel 'through the waters,' emphasizing experiential knowledge over academic theory. Reformed theology sees progressive sanctification: justification (initial salvation—ankle deep), sanctification (ongoing transformation—knee to waist deep), glorification (ultimate perfection—swimming depth). Growth requires patient endurance; instant maturity is impossible. The water's increasing depth comes from the source, not Ezekiel's effort—grace enables growth.

Historical Context

Biblical imagery frequently uses water depth metaphorically. Jonah's drowning experience represented death and resurrection (Jonah 2:3-6). Israel's Red Sea crossing combined judgment (Egyptians drowned) and salvation (Israel passed

through) (Exodus 14:21-29). Psalm 69:1-2 depicts overwhelming troubles as deep waters. Psalm 42:7 describes affliction as 'deep calleth unto deep.' The waist-deep measurement is particularly significant—Levitical priests washed at this level (Exodus 30:19-21), and circumcision (sign of covenant) occurred at the loins (Genesis 17:10-14). As the water reaches the loins, it touches the seat of covenant identity and generational transmission. This suggests God's work affects not only individuals but produces fruit for future generations—faithful discipleship reproduces itself.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. At which depth are you currently—knees or loins—and what's preventing progression to the next stage?
2. How does the waist-deep water affecting 'loins' (reproductive capacity) speak to spiritual fruitfulness and discipling others?
3. What does patient, measured progression (1,000 cubits at a time) teach about unrealistic expectations for instant maturity?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּמְד Again he measured H4058	אֶלֶף a thousand H505	וַעֲבַרְנִי and brought me through H5674	יַם י the waters H4325	יַם י the waters H4325
בְּרִכְיָם were to the knees H1290	וַיִּמְד Again he measured H4058	אֶלֶף a thousand H505	וַעֲבַרְנִי and brought me through H5674	
יַם י the waters H4325	מִתְּנָיִם: were to the loins H4975			

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