

Isaiah 33:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.

Analysis

But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams (ki im-sham adir YHWH lanu meqom-neharim ye'orim rachavey yadayim)—there the (adir, glorious, majestic) Yahweh is to us a place of rivers (נהר, nahar) and streams (יאור, ye'or) of (rachav, breadth, width). **Wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby** (bal-telekh-bo oni shayit vetsi adir lo ya'avrenu)—no warship (oni shayit) or gallant ship will pass.

God Himself becomes the river—source of life, provision, protection. But unlike natural rivers that enable enemy invasion (Assyrians used Euphrates/Tigris for transport, Egyptians used Nile), God-as-river permits no hostile vessels. The paradox: all benefits of water (fertility, commerce, beauty) without the liability (military invasion). Psalm 46:4: 'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.' Ezekiel 47:1-12 and Revelation 22:1-2 depict river flowing from God's throne, bringing life. Jesus offered 'rivers of living water' (John 7:38-39)—the Holy Spirit.

Historical Context

Ancient cities needed water—rivers provided drinking water, irrigation, commerce. But rivers also enabled invasion—Babylon used Euphrates to attack, Egypt

controlled Nile. Jerusalem lacked major river, relying on springs and cisterns. Isaiah promises supernatural river—divine presence providing all benefits without military vulnerability. New Jerusalem needs no created river because 'the Lamb is the light thereof' (Revelation 21:23), and the river of life flows from God's throne (Revelation 22:1).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does God as 'river' provide all life's necessities without the vulnerabilities of earthly provision sources?
2. What does it mean that no enemy ship can pass on God's river—complete security in His provision?
3. How have you experienced the Holy Spirit as 'rivers of living water' (John 7:38-39) in your life?

Interlinear Text

רָבָּה	אָמֵן	שָׁמֶן	אֵיךְ	יְהִי	לֹא	נְהִיא	מִקְרָם
H3588	H518	H8033	But there the glorious	LORD	H0		will be unto us a place
			H117	H3068			H4725
רִבְבָּה	אָמֵן	שָׁמֶן	אֵיךְ	יְהִי	לֹא	נְהִיא	מִקְרָם
rivers	and streams	of broad					
H5104	H2975	H7342	H3027	no	H1980	H0	galley
			H1077				with oars
							H7885
אֵיךְ	יְהִי	לֹא	נְהִיא	מִקְרָם			
ship	But there the glorious	pass					
H6716	H117	H3808	H5674				

