

## 30 AMAZING BIBLE STORIES YOU MAY NOT KNOW

### #23 | The Millennial River

#### GOING DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE

- The African-American spiritual *Down by the Riverside* was written, it is believed, somewhere prior to the civil war, though first published in 1918.
- There are several mistaken thoughts about the song:
  - That it is about Baptist in the Jordan River. We shall see that it is about the millennial river that is not at all the Jordan River, and has nothing to do with Baptism.
  - That it is a “pacifist” song, because of its line “ain’t gonna study war no more.”
    - This line made it popular during anti-war protests during the Vietnam war.
    - The misunderstanding of the line also caused Elizabeth Morgan to include it in her collection of socialist songs, *Socialist and Labor Songs: An International Revolutionary Songbook*.
- One of the most common perversions of Christianity is to put millennial (kingdom) truths in the current time-frame.
  - This causes a social-justice version of Christianity which, though popular, has no Biblical basis. It is therefore not Christianity at all.
  - Until the church separates itself from a kingdom identity, it will forever be struggling with *kingdom now* mistakes.
- What is the *river* where “I’m gonna lay down my burdens?” and where “I aint gonna study war no more?”

#### A FUTURE TIME OF NO MORE WAR | ISAIAH 2:2-4

- Verse 4 is the hope of the ages, and many people and movements have tried to usher in that coming day, but few people are interested in the *context*.
- Verse 4 doesn’t happen until...
  - **The last days** (v. 2).
  - The establishment of the Temple and the reign of God from Jerusalem (v. 2).
  - The nations flowing into Jerusalem to worship (v. 2-3).

- When verse 4 takes place...
  - The Lord will be the judge.
  - War will be a thing of the past.
  - Learning war would be a useless way to spend your time.
- Those who seek Isaiah 2:4 without Isaiah 2:2-3 create bloodshed of the innocent by naively *beating their swords into plowshares* when swords are still needed.
- Isaiah 2:4 will be a reality when the Lord reigns from Jerusalem. Until then, there will be *wars and rumors of war*.

#### THE BLESSED MILLENNIAL RIVER | EZEKIEL 47:1-12

- The river which brings life and healing is the millennial river, never given a name in the Bible.
- It flows from the south side of the millennial Temple and out the Eastern gate.
- If topography doesn’t change, it would flow down the Kidron Brook into the Valley of Josephat.
- The river grows in strength until it cannot be crossed (vv. 3-5).
- The river will bring *life* to the *Dead Sea* (vv. 6-11)
- The river will be lined with trees on either side. These trees will provide both *food* and *medicine* (v. 12).

#### MILLENNIAL BLESSINGS

- The millennium is the 1,000 year period of the earthly reign of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. It is the beginning years of the eternal *Kingdom of God*.
- The millennium is a time when the created order is *as it was created to be* rather than *as it is today*.
- For almost two millennia, the church has mistakenly tried to “build the kingdom” by trying to *be the kingdom*. The reason it has been such an unmistakably unmitigated failure is because *the church is not the Kingdom*.
- Every social-justice (and other hyphenated-justice) effort of mankind will fail because they falsely assume millennial realities to be present.
- What are some “secrets” to peace and prosperity in this pre-millennial day?
  - Work to make sure that God-given roles and responsibilities are followed.
  - Recognize that *shortage* is the *rule* and not the exception, and create systems to overcome this as much as possible.
  - Build a society that has uniform values.