



Peninsula City Church

Stop and Think!

Explain Why We Need Water

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Explain Why We Need Water

Q. What is the purpose of water?

An Introduction

Have you ever thought about water and our need for it? Let me give you some random facts about water,

“Did you know that if we fit the entire world’s water into a 4-liter jug, the fresh water available for us would be only about one tablespoon (about 15 ml). [Two-thirds of that is still frozen. So, that would mean about a teaspoons worth (about 5 ml) of water is all we have.]

Remember how everybody says that we should at least drink 8 glasses of water every day. Well did you know it actually takes about 45.5 litres per day to sustain a human if we include all uses for water, like drinking, sanitation and food production.

You know how we grab a bottle of water every time we are out in the sun during summers days. Just know this that, a 1/3 of what the world spends on this bottled water in one year could pay for projects providing water to everyone in need.”¹

It has been said that out of the 7.7 billion on the earth in 2018,

“Worldwide, 2.1 billion people still lived without safe drinking water in their homes, and more than one billion people still have no choice but to defecate outside.

However,

In 2016, more than 4.7 million people were reached with clean water through World Vision’s projects. That’s one new person every 10 seconds.”²

So we are able to see that as people we all need water, especially safe drinking water. In this message, we will briefly look at our need for water. Two issues will be reviewed here. Firstly, we will look at an overview of water from the Bible perspective. Secondly, what did Jesus have to say about water?

1. An overview of the Bible perspective

Q. How would you explain the idea of water from the biblical setting?

At the beginning of creation, there was water, which the Holy Spirit hovered over and God separated, Gen 1:2,6. Then in chapter two of Genesis, we read about God creating a water supply that flowed out from the Garden of Eden to water the land. This was a supernatural provision of natural fresh water.

¹⁰ “A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.

¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates” (Gen 2:10-14 ESV).

This was the case until the rupture (fall) of creation and then after the flood in Gen 3:6-8. After the rupture of creation water was at a premium, and especially in the biblical setting of the Middle

¹ “Water Facts.” <https://www.quora.com/search?q=world+water+facts> (14th January 2019).

² “Global water crisis: Facts, FAQs, and how to help.” <https://www.worldvision.com.au/global-water-crisis-facts> (14th January 2019).

East. Without water things and people die that all there is to the matter. So, there were struggles and wars over water supplies.

The in the book of Ezekiel the prophet, he recorded a vision that he had of supernatural Living Water for healing. This is the supernatural provision of natural water. It flowed out from the temple into the desert area and brought life. Ezekiel states that,

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 (450 meters), 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. 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 Dead Sea; when the water flows into it, the water (of the Dead Sea) will become fresh (will be healed). 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 (Mediterranean Sea). ¹¹ But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. ¹² And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fails, but they will bear fresh fruit every month because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing” (Ez 47:1-12 ESV).

Then Zechariah also mentioned this living water as it flowed into the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea,

¹ “Behold, a day is coming for the Lord... ⁸ On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea (the Dead Sea) and half of them to the western sea (the Mediterranean Sea). It shall continue in summer as in winter. ⁹ And the Lord will be King over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and His name one” (Zech 14:1,8-9 ESV).

Then we have John in the Revelation of Jesus Christ who had also written about a supernatural provision of natural water. This also flows from the Throne of God as in Ezekiel,

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” (Rev 22:1-2 ESV).

Genesis, Ezekiel and Revelation all declare the supernatural provision of water. This was to water the land and then Ezekiel, Zechariah and Revelation for healing.

However, from a practical aspect, we all know the value of water for life, and especially in a desert region. One of the best sources of water is clean cool running water, from rivers, streams and from the underground. Other than that it is water held in containers, vats or dams etc. It has been said that,

“On a physical level, water is necessary for life, and in the Middle East, a spring of water (*mayin chayim*) provided a source life and of vigour to the people. Places that had water were highly valued and sought after. Entire cities were often settled on account of the presence of a steady water supply. Water was often carried off to be stored in receptacles or ‘cisterns’ for use in everyday life.”³

The running fresh, clean water is what is called ‘living water’ that is; it is non-stationary water. We all know how water that is not moving can become stagnant over time. Therefore, the best water is this fresh running living water.

On this matter, Isaiah the prophet declared that the Lord would send water into the deserts,

⁵ “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes” (Is 35:5-7 ESV).

So, as we read the Bible with what has been mentioned above in mind, it soon becomes obvious how water played a big role in life in the Middle East. However, living water was the best as it was non-stagnant, but running fresh water. Then again even this fresh running water only quenches the bodies thirst for a while, and they needed to find water to drink again.

2. Did you know that not all waters are waters?

Q. So, what could you teach a new Christ-follower about the difference between natural and living water?

Well, if we went back into the Old Testament, we can begin to get something of the answer. In the Book of Jeremiah, he recorded the Lord pointing out that the Lord has a case against Israel. In fact, this had to do with water. Jeremiah used imagery to help the people see what God was saying to them. That is, the people had forsaken God, and He is the Living Water,

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” (Jer 2:12-13 ESV).

Then Jeremiah records how the Lord dealt with Judah’s sin, what the sin was and their punishment,

“O LORD, the hope of Israel, all who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn away from you shall be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living water” (Jer 17:13 ESV).

It was in light of their forsaking God that, Israel found they were always thirsty. If this is the case, how could they have their thirst quenched? This was not merely a physical thirst. Jeremiah saw it as a spiritual thirst, which could only be quenched by God and not the false gods that were around them.

³ “Mayin Chayim (Drink of Living Water).”

https://www.hebrew4christians.com/Meditations/Mayim_Chayim/mayim_chayim.html (17th December 2018).

When we come to the New Testament, we see that Jesus had the same view of living water. That is, He built on this understanding of the Scripture, but He went one step further. He used this expanded idea when He met the woman at the well of Jacob in Sychar,

⁵ “So He (Jesus) came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as He was from His journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour (noon). ⁷ A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ ⁸ (For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to Him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ ¹¹ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?’ ¹² Are you greater than our father, Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.’ ¹³ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again (forever⁴). The water that I will give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’ ¹⁵ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water” (Jn 4:6-15 ESV).

So, Jesus saw Himself as this Living Water, which is continually welling up to eternal life. In fact, He is more than natural water to quench physical thirst. Instead, He is supernatural life-giving water to quench an eternal spiritual thirst for God. This water is available to everyone, who will come and drink from Jesus Christ. Isaiah had already announced the Lord announcing this truth,

“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is 55:1 ESV).

John in his Revelation of Jesus Christ picked this prophecy up and interpreted it. To John, Isaiah, in reality, was speaking about Jesus Christ,

⁶ “And He (Jesus Christ) said to me (John the disciple), ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty, I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.’ ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be their God, and they will be My son” (Rev 21:6-7 ESV).

Wow, what an amazing truth. However, there is another powerfully important Kingdom usage of this idea of living water. Isaiah again used this to illustrate the blessing of God to Israel. One aspect of this blessing is supernatural water that is said to be the Holy Spirit.

“For 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” (Is 44:3 ESV).

Jesus picked up this idea of Isaiah’s and interpreted it as being about Himself. John recorded this in John’s gospel on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths or Ingathering of the barley harvest (Hebrew *Sukkot*), see Lev 23:33-35,39-43. It is also called the “Feast of Yahweh, Lev 23:39.”⁵ For six days the priest would go down to the Pool of Siloam (Hebrew meaning ‘sending’ it is assumed that it was built by King Hezekiah together with his tunnel, cf. 2 Chron 32) and fill the golden bowl with water about 1.1 liters⁶ and return through the Water Gate (named after this

⁴ “The words ‘shall never thirst’ are from a construction in the Greek in which there are double negatives before the verb, and a phrase which means ‘forever,’ which comes after the verb. The idea is, ‘shall not, shall not thirst, ever.’” Wuest, Kenneth S. *Wuest’s Word Studies: Treasures*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1966), 30.

⁵ Wise, M.O. “Feasts.” In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. (Green, Joel B. Et Al. Eds). (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992), 237.

⁶ Edersheim, Alfred. *The Temple: It’s Ministry and Service as They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ*. (England: Candle, 1997), 181.

ceremony) on the south of the temple, and then on to the Temple.⁷ The pool was part of the Liberation Water-Well Ceremony.⁸ It has been said that,

“From Talmudic sources, it appears that “the place of the Water-Drawing” is in the Court of the Women. *Talmud Sukkah* 53a tells of the rejoicing that took place after the lighting of the huge candelabra’s, which *Mishnah Sukkah* 5:2 says took place in the Court of Women.”⁹

This was done with great joy during the week, thankful for the harvest, the early and the latter rain that was to come.¹⁰ The priest would tip the water with some wine in a basin at the foot of the altar and walk around the altar once. The people would carry and wave palm branches and branches of willow and myrtle¹¹ and sing the Hallel Psalms, i.e. Ps 113-118.¹²

Then on the last day (the seventh)¹³ of the feasts (Hebrew *Hoshana Rabbah*, i.e. the Great saving [deliverance]¹⁴ or the great judgment is delivered), this would happen all over again, cf. Ps 118:25 “save now,” i.e. hosanna. Except for this time, the priest would walk around the altar seven times. There was an eighth-day, which was a Sabbath Day (Lev 23:34-36), but the water procession and pouring did not happen on this day.

Jesus declared His Messiahship on this last day of the feast¹⁵ when He cried out,

³⁷ “On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, ‘If anyone thirsts, let them come to Me and drink (that is spiritual thirst and drinking cf. Jn 6:35). ³⁸ Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, “Out of their heart (belly, i.e. the inner person) will flow rivers of living water.”’”³⁹ Now, this He said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given because Jesus was not yet glorified” (Jn 7:37-39 ESV).

It has been pointed out that,

“Jesus used the traditional practices of the Jewish religious festival to set the stage for His message.”¹⁶

He waited for the right moment to declare His Kingdom truth, and it would have been like “a thunderclap from heaven.”¹⁷ That is, by saying what He did, Jesus pointed out that, the only place that a person can have the longing or thirst of their inner person quenched is in Him. He was the actual fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles. He was the One who gives the Living Water. The theme of water is a major subject in John’s gospel. In fact, of the 29 times that the gospels reference it, John mentioned water 21 times.¹⁸ As people believe in Jesus Christ, (as John added)

⁷ Levine, Amy-Jill & Brettler, Marc Zvi. (Eds). *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (NRSV). 2nd Ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 192 n. 37-39.

⁸ Backman, Philip. *Mishnayoth: Order Moed: Vol II. Pointed Hebrew Text, English translation, Introductions, notes, supplement, Appendix, Addenda, Corrigenda*. (6 Volume Set) (English and Hebrew Edition). (New York, NY: Judaica Press, 1963), 2:342.

⁹ Backman, *Mishnayoth: Order Moed*, 2:341.

¹⁰ Morris, Leon. *The Gospel of John*. The New International Commentary of the New Testament. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 420.

¹¹ Morris, *The Gospel of John*, 419 n. 69.

¹² “Sukkot: A Promise of Living Water.” <https://jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/issues-v06-n07/sukkot-a-promise-of-living-water/> (15th January 2019).

¹³ *The Complete Jewish Study Bible: Insights for Jews & Christians*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2016), 1533.

¹⁴ Levine, & Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (NRSV), 193 n. 37-39.

¹⁵ *The Complete Jewish Study Bible*, 1533.

¹⁶ *The Chronological Study Bible* (NKJV). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 1159.

¹⁷ Beasley-Murray, George R. *Word Biblical Commentary 36: John*. (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 114.

¹⁸ Burge, G.M. “Water.” In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. (Green, Joel B. Et Al. Eds). (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992), 869.

they will receive the Holy Spirit and thirst will be eternal quenched. He is the One who is a “continual source of satisfaction.”¹⁹ It has been pointed out that,

“The Jerusalem Talmud (J. *Suk* 5:1) connects the ceremonies and this Scripture with the Holy Spirit: ‘Why is the name of it called, the drawing out of the water? Because of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, according to what is said: “With Joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation.”’²⁰

Notice that Jesus built an unfolding truth here in these verses, 37-38. That is,

“The result is a synthetic parallelism: if anyone thirsts, they should come to Jesus; and if they have taken this step, they should drink.”²¹

So, it has been rightly pointed out that, it is those who are thirsty non-believers, who need to come and drink and not those who are believers.²² However, as they now believe and overflow with Living Water, they become those who can lead others to the Living Water. What this means is that,

“Rivers of water will flow because a River-Maker is in you. That’s the point. You will never have to search again for a source of satisfaction for your soul. Every river that needs to flow for the joy of your soul will flow from Jesus. When you come to Him, you get Him. And He never leaves.”²³

Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

Q. What is the purpose of water?

We all need water to live. If we do not drink we die, that’s the truth of the matter. However, even more than this, we need the living water, to quench our deep inner spiritual thirst and physical water cannot quench it. We can attempt to quench that thirst with anything else in life, but it will not work. If we are believers today, we know that is true, as we have tried to quench that thirst. That is why many around us are also frantically trying to quench the deep thirst of their inner self.

However, if we already believe in Jesus Christ, we have already received the full and overflowing of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the giver of the Living Water. The Holy Spirit the Living Water is already flowing up from deep within us. We need to be continually overflowing with abundant life, the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit. We need to rest in Him and let Him overflow from us and soak the people around us where we have already been sent and planted. In our street, workplace, uni, school, sports club, shopping centres and crèches etc. So, could you now teach a new Christ-follower about the difference between natural and living water?

Stop and listen to the Holy Spirit right now,

In response to what has been said in this paper, we need to ask:

- What personal application can be found from the passages?

¹⁹ Walvoord, John F. & Zuck, Roy B. (Eds). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1984), 301.

²⁰ Morris, *The Gospel of John*, 420-421. Lightfoot, John. *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979), 3:322-323. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 182.

²¹ Menken, Maarten J. J. “The Origin of the Old Testament Quotation in John 7:38.” *Novum Testamentum* Vol. 38, Fasc. 2 (Apr., 1996): 163. Guilding, Aileen. *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship: A Study of the Relation of St. John's Gospel to the Ancient Jewish Lectionary System*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1960), 2

²² Morris, *The Gospel of John*, 423.

²³ Piper, John. “Out of Your Heart Will Flow Rivers of Living Water.” <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/out-of-your-heart-will-flow-rivers-of-living-water> (17th December 201).

- That is, what is God teaching me for today?
- That is to say, “What is God saying to me right now?”
- It may be something like:
 - What does He say about you and God as the Living Water?
 - Are we walking step by step being led by the Spirit in this matter?

So, “Stop and reflect.”

“How should I respond to what is being said?” or, “so what?”

- What are you going to do about it?
- What do you need to do to respond?
- Pray and respond