

Water in the Desert

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Introduction

Water has always played an important part in the story of God. From the Edenic Paradise flowed a river to water the garden, from whence it divided into four distinct rivers: the Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and the Euphrates (Gen. 2:10-14).

Genesis 2:10-14 (NASB95) — 10 Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. 11 The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. 13 The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

Deliverance from Egyptian captivity was accomplished by crossing the Red Sea (Exod. 14:19-31), while entrance into Canaan was achieved by crossing the Jordan River (Josh. 3:14-17).

Exodus 14:19-31 (NASB95) — 19 The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. 20 So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night. 21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided. 22 The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. 23 Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit, and all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the midst of the sea. 24 At the morning watch, the Lord looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion. 25 He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made them drive with difficulty; so the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from Israel, for the Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians." 26 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen." 27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained. 29 But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. 30 Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead

on the seashore. 31 When Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.

Joshua 3:14-17 (NASB95) — 14 So when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people, 15 and when those who carried the ark came into the Jordan, and the feet of the priests carrying the ark were dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest), 16 the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho. 17 And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

The Land of Promise was bounded by the river of Egypt on the south and the river Euphrates on the north (Gen. 15:13-21).

Genesis 15:13-21 (NASB95) — 13 God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 “But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 “As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. 16 “Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.” 17 It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. 18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.”

Depending upon man’s behavior, God changes rivers into a wilderness and springs of water into a thirsty ground, or alternatively, He changes a wilderness into a pool of water and a dry land into springs of water (Psa. 107:33-38).

Psalms 107:33-38 (NASB95) — 33 He changes rivers into a wilderness And springs of water into a thirsty ground; 34 A fruitful land into a salt waste, Because of the wickedness of those who dwell in it. 35 He changes a wilderness into a pool of water And a dry land into springs of water; 36 And there He makes the hungry to dwell, So that they may establish an inhabited city, 37 And sow fields and plant vineyards, And gather a fruitful harvest. 38 Also He blesses them and they multiply greatly, And He does not let their cattle decrease.

The Messianic age is described as a time when “the wilderness and the desert will be glad, and the Arabah will rejoice and blossom” and “waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the Arabah. The scorched land will become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water” (Isa. 35:1-7).

Isaiah 35:1-7 (NASB95) — 1 The wilderness and the desert will be glad, And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom; Like the crocus 2 It will blossom profusely And rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, The majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the Lord, The majesty of our God. 3 Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble. 4 Say to those with anxious heart, “Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you.” 5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. 6 Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah. 7 The scorched land will become a pool And the thirsty ground springs of water; In the haunt of jackals, its resting place, Grass becomes reeds and rushes.

The Word of God Gives Life

Like water in the desert, the Word of God gives life (Psa. 63:1; 143:5-6; Isa. 32:1-2; 41:17-18; 43:19-21; 44:1-4; John 4:7-14; 7:37-39).

Psalm 63:1 (NASB95) — 1 O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.

Psalm 143:5-6 (NASB95) — 5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your doings; I muse on the work of Your hands. 6 I stretch out my hands to You; My soul longs for You, as a parched land. Selah.

Isaiah 32:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Behold, a king will reign righteously And princes will rule justly. 2 Each will be like a refuge from the wind And a shelter from the storm, Like streams of water in a dry country, Like the shade of a huge rock in a parched land.

Isaiah 41:17-18 (NASB95) — 17 “The afflicted and needy are seeking water, but there is none, And their tongue is parched with thirst; I, the Lord, will answer them Myself, As the God of Israel I will not forsake them. 18 “I will open rivers on the bare heights And springs in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water And the dry land fountains of water.

Isaiah 43:19-21 (NASB95) — 19 “Behold, I will do something new, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert. 20 “The beasts of the field will glorify Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I have given waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My chosen people. 21 “The people whom I formed for Myself Will declare My praise.

Isaiah 44:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 “But now listen, O Jacob, My servant, And Israel, whom I have chosen: 2 Thus says the Lord who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you, ‘Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; And you Jeshurun whom I have chosen. 3 ‘For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants; 4 And they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water.’

John 4:7-14 (NASB95) — 7 There came a woman of Samaria 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 Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” 11 She said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? 12 “You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?” 13 Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

John 7:37-39 (NASB95) — 37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’ ” 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The Word of God is Oft Hidden

Like water in the desert, the Word of God is often hidden (Prov. 2:1-5; Matt. 11:25-30; 13:10-16, 34-35, 44).

Proverbs 2:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, 2 Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; 3 For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; 4 If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; 5 Then you will discern the fear of the Lord And discover the knowledge of God.

Matthew 11:25-30 (NASB95) — 25 At that time Jesus said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. 26 “Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. 27 “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. 28 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Matthew 13:10-16 (NASB95) — 10 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” 11 Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. 12 “For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. 13 “Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they

do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 “In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; 15 For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they would see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.’ 16 “But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

Matthew 13:34-35 (NASB95) — 34 All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. 35 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world.”

Matthew 13:44 (NASB95) — 44 “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

The Word of God Must be Protected

Like water in the desert, the Word of God must be protected (1 Tim. 6:20-21; cf. Rom. 3:1-2; 1 Cor. 9:16-18; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; 1 Tim. 1:8-11; 2 Tim. 1:13-14).

1 Timothy 6:20-21 (NASB95) — 20 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”— 21 which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.

Romans 3:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? 2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

1 Corinthians 9:16-18 (NASB95) — 16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. 17 For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. 18 What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21 (NASB95) — 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Timothy 1:8-11 (NASB95) — 8 But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers 10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, 11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

2 Timothy 1:13-14 (NASB95) — 13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

Conclusion

Will you joyously draw water from the springs of salvation (Isa. 12:2-4)?

Isaiah 12:2-4 (NASB95) — 2 “Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the Lord God is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation.” 3 Therefore you will joyously draw water From the springs of salvation. 4 And in that day you will say, “Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; Make them remember that His name is exalted.”

Will you manifest the mindset of the Ethiopian nobleman, who upon hearing the gospel said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:25-40)?

Acts 8:25-40 (NASB95) — 25 So, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans. 26 But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, “Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a desert road.) 27 So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and join this chariot.” 30 Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31 And he said, “Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: “He was led as a sheep to slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He does not open His mouth. 33 “In humiliation His judgment was taken away; Who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.” 34 The eunuch answered Philip and said, “Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?” 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. 36 As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” 37 [And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”] 38 And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the

Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea.

The water of life is promised to those who obediently follow the Lamb of God (Rev. 7:16-17; 21:1-6; 22:1-5, 14-17).

Revelation 7:16-17 (NASB95) — 16 “They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”

Revelation 21:1-6 (NASB95) — 1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” 5 And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” 6 Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.

Revelation 22:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Revelation 22:14-17 (NASB95) — 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. 16 “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” 17 The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.