

The WONDERS of WATER

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“He sends the springs into the valleys; they flow among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. By them the birds of the heavens have their home; they sing among the branches. He waters the hills from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle and vegetation for the service of man, that He may bring forth food from the earth.” Psalm 104:10-14

The Bible and Water

One of the oldest Books of the Bible, Job, written almost 4,000 years ago, reveals an understanding of ecological relationships, erosion and distillation, the significance of water to the regeneration of plants, the clouds as water vapour, the process of evaporation and condensation and the water cycle.

Marsh Reeds

“Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can the reeds flourish without water? While it is yet green and not cut down, it withers before any other plant.” Job 8:11-12

Regeneration of Plants

“For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again and that its tender shoots will not cease. Though its root may grow old in the earth and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant.” Job 14:7-9

Smoothing of Rocks

“As water wears away stones and as torrents wash away the soil of the earth...” Job 14:19

Clouds

“He binds up the water in His thick clouds, yet the clouds are not broken under it.” Job 26:8

Evaporation, Condensation and Precipitation

“For He draws up drops of water, which distil as rain from the mist, which the clouds drop down and pour abundantly on man.” Job 36:27-28

“Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds; He scatters His bright clouds.” Job 37:11

Dew, Hail and Ice

“Who has divided a channel for the overflowing water, or a path for the thunderbolt, to cause it to rain on a land where there is no one, a wilderness in which there is no man; to satisfy the desolate waste and cause to spring forth the growth of tender grass? Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew? From whose womb comes the ice? And the frost of heaven, who gives it birth? The waters harden like stone and the surface of the deep is frozen.” Job 38:25-30

“He causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightning for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasures.” Psalm 135:7

The Water Cycle

“All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place from which the rivers come, there they return again.” Ecclesiastes 1:7

Ecological Insights in the Scriptures

Here we see that the ancient prophets, including Job, King David and Solomon understood water's essential relationship to the ecology, its role in erosion of hillsides, smoothing of rocks, regeneration of plants, the water cycle of evaporation, condensation and precipitation and the clouds as composed of water vapour.

Understanding the World of Nature

Because so many of us today live and work in cities, insulated and isolated from the country side, many tend to ignore the vital role of water, unless we are caught off guard by a sudden storm, or a flash flood. However, the authors of these ancient Bible books had an intimate knowledge of their natural world, which compelled them to have great respect for the power of the Creator, demonstrated in the dynamics of water.

Taken for Granted

Water is so common that we hardly pay attention to it, unless we experience a searing drought, raging floods, stifling humidity, or a paralysing blizzard. Water often provides us with much joy and delight, as we see a sunrise or sunset reflected off a river, lake or ocean. But most fail to consider the unseen properties of water that makes it the one thing that makes life on this planet possible.

The Blue Planet

Earth can rightly be called the blue planet because, as far as we have been able to discern so far, ours is the only planet in our solar system with life and water.

Hydraulic Sculpting

Anyone who has stopped to survey spectacular canyons, such as the Fish River Canyon, or Blyde River Canyon, would have to consider the tremendous power of hydraulic sculpting as millions of litres of water have cut through the earth to form these massive canyons. Water can be as gentle as a morning mist, or as cold and hard as ice. Water can be as irresistible as a crashing wave, or a tsunami.

Water is Life

Water and life go together. Virtually everything alive on earth has its source in water. Of course, marine creatures live in and depend upon liquid water and are composed primarily of water. Many creatures and plants depend upon water vapour and are also composed mostly of water. People who live in the humid tropics, can literally feel the water all around them in the sweltering heat.

Our Bodies are Mostly Water

Our bodies are mostly composed of water. A baby is about 78% water. An adult male is estimated to be composed of 65% water. An adult female is composed of about 60% water. Older members of our families are composed of about 50% water. We live longer and remain healthier by drinking more water. Water is the very substance of our cells.

Water Enables Us to Live, Move and Think

Water lubricates and operates our blood flow, digestive systems, metabolism and even muscle and bone movements. Water provides our bodies with the temperature control critical to maintain life. Water even helps us to think. Our brains are 75% water. While we can live for about 30 days without food, we cannot live more than 3 days without water.

Hydrogen and Oxygen

Most of us have forgotten almost everything that we learned in school about the Periodic Table. However, most of us can remember the formula for water: H₂O. Water is a compound formed from

two atoms of Hydrogen and one of Oxygen. Hydrogen and Oxygen are the Creator's basic building blocks. Science calls these elements.

Hydro Genesis

Hydrogen is the most basic of all elements. It comes up as number one on the Periodic Table. The word Hydrogen is made up of two Greek words, meaning water and born. *Hydro genesis*. Water, birth and life are inter related. Hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe, making up something like 90% of its weight. Hydrogen atoms have a positive electrical charge and Oxygen has a negative charge. Together they are like magnets which attract each other and together form water vapour or drops of water and eventually clouds, thunder storms, puddles, streams, rivers, lakes, seas and oceans.

The Properties of Ice

Generally we understand that as liquids become cooler they become more dense until their molecules stand still and freeze. However, as water gets colder, it does get more dense, but just before freezing, it expands. That is why ice floats. If it did not do this, then ice would form at the bottom of lakes and rivers and gradually build up, killing all life in the rivers or lakes. This would ultimately destroy all life on earth.

Discovering the Character of the Creator

The 19th century author George MacDonald, wrote in *Discovering the Character of God*: *"I walked home one Winter Sunday morning after church. It was a lovely day. The sun shone so warm that you could not help thinking of what God would be able to do before long – draw primroses and buttercups out of the earth by force of sweet persuasive influences. But in the shadows lay fine webs of laces of ice, so delicately lovely that one could not but be glad of the cold that made the water able to please itself by taking such graceful forms and I wondered over again, for a hundredth time, what could be the principle which, in the wildest, most lawless, fantastically chaotic, apparently capricious, work of nature, always kept it beautiful. The beauty of holiness must be at the heart of it somehow, I thought. Because our God is so free from stain, so loving, so unselfish, so good, so altogether what He wants us to be, so holy, therefore all His works declare Him in beauty. His fingers can touch nothing but to mould it in loveliness; and even the play of His elements is in grace and tenderness of form."*

Cohesion

Water has a surface skin so that even a sewing needle can be made to float on the surface of the water. This surface tension enables water to form droplets, vital to life processes and important to the function of every living cell.

Adhesion

While cohesion causes the water molecules to stick together, adhesion helps water to stick to other things. It is this adhesive force that creates capillary motion, the ability of water to climb up tubes. Cohesion and adhesion together make water molecules able to reach up and grab the sides of a tube and seemingly in defiance of gravity, pull itself upwards while at the same time, reaching down and pulling fellow molecules up. It is this adhesive property that enables water to move up through living plants and through the capillaries of our body.

Temperature Control

Water is the earth's thermostat and our human body's thermal regulator. You may expect water to become a gas at room temperature. However life exists because it does not. Water does escape our surface skin and become vapour through the process of evaporation. *E-vapor-ation* cools the surface area where it occurs. Water also stores heat extremely well and gives it up reluctantly. It is water's ability to store heat and hold it, that it is just one more way that it supports life on earth. If water did not retain heat so well and if it did not cover over 70% of the earth's surface, the

temperature fluctuation on the earth between night and day would become so extreme that all life would quickly cease to exist.

Solvent

Virtually all natural elements can be dissolved into water, from sodium to gold. Water has the capacity to carry to every cell in our bodies the dissolved nutrients and critical components we need to live a healthy life.

Fresh Water and Salt Water

Although water seems to be abundant along the coast lines, rivers and lakes, over 96% of the earth's water is found in oceans. While sea water is critical to life everywhere, it is too salty for human consumption, for irrigation and for most agricultural and industrial purposes. Fresh water amounts to approximately 3.7% of the world's water supply. However, most of that is in glaciers, ice caps and in the atmosphere. Of all the water in the world, only about 0.007% of the global water supply is available to human beings, as fresh water in streams, lakes and wells. However, even that is more than enough for all of our needs.

Abundant Fresh Water

It is calculated that if all the world's fresh water was evenly divided, each human being would have over 5 million litres. In a normal life span, we would tend to take in about 45,000 litres. So we have more than enough fresh water available for all of our needs. If we do not pollute it, do not over exploit it and do not hoard it, all air-breathing creatures of the earth loved and cared for by our Creator, would have more than enough fresh water available.

The Constancy of Water

Two thousand years ago, less than 3% of the total population living today, were on earth. Yet there is no more water available today, than there was then, or at the day of Creation. We live in a closed system as Psalm 104:10-15 describes. *"He sends the springs into the valleys; they flow among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. By them the birds of the heavens have their home; they sing among the branches. He waters the hills from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle and vegetation for the service of man, that He may bring forth food from the earth and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread which strengthens man's heart."*

The Threat of Pollution

Rivers, lakes and wetlands are vital to the health and survival of all domestic and wild animals and people. However, it is estimated that 1 out of every 5 people in the world are without access to safe drinking water. Half of the world's population lack adequate water purification systems. 40% of the world's population do not have adequate access to sanitation. Three billion people suffer from water related diseases and millions die each year from cholera and other water borne diseases. In Bangladesh, 60% of infant mortality is related to water borne diseases.

The Decline of Water Quality

Rapid population growth and overcrowding in cities, has not only over-burdened water supply systems, but has also led to the downgrading of the quality of available water. Much of the world's fresh water supply has been contaminated by pollution, dumping of sewerage and chemicals from industry. Hormone and antibiotic laced animal products are also finding their way into our fresh water supplies. Chemical pollution is creating a devastating effect on both human and animal immunity, endocrine and reproductive systems. The huge amount of hormones found in both food and water are leading to an early onset of puberty. Rapid urbanisation has also tended towards more intensive agriculture production, with fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, poisoning and choking river systems and infecting food supply.

Stewardship of Creation

The Creation Mandate makes clear that we must not only consume water, but be its caretakers. The life, health and well-being of billions of animals and people throughout the earth depend upon our understanding and wise management of the earth's resources. Our Lord said that whoever offers a cup of fresh water will receive a reward. Providing clean water to friends, neighbours, visitors and the animals who share our part of the world, is a Christ-like act of neighbourly love.

Wise and Efficient Irrigation Methods

More than 70% of the water drawn from the world's rivers, lakes and underground aquifers is used for agriculture and irrigation. More than half of that water is lost to evaporation before it even reaches the roots of the plants. So one of the most significant water stewardship practices which we could develop, would be more efficient drip, or micro irrigation, systems.

Recycle, Renew and Reuse

Recycling urban waste water to irrigate and fertilise fields and rain water harvesting from roofs, would be other positive developments. Western countries have learnt to use half as much water to produce a tonne of paper, as for example, China does. Creative landscaping to match natural local vegetation and rainfall is also wise. It is not necessary to have green lawns in a desert, maintained by massive irrigation. Desert gardens made of cacti and rockeries may be more appropriate. In our homes, repairing water leaks, installing low-flow shower heads, washing only on full washer loads and using dishwashers only when they are full and channelling that water into the garden, are other ways we can recycle and use grey water from showers, sinks and washers to water plants. Harvesting the rain water that falls on our roofs into large water containers, to later be utilised for either the garden, or drinking purposes, is also a wise option.

Care for Creation

The wonder of water should remind us of the One who created our world and our responsibility to be good stewards of all of His Creation.

Water in the Bible

Genesis 1:1-2: *"In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."* The Spirit of God brooded over the fathomless depths of the oceans as the Creator brought life out of the waters. The Lord God created the earth with the capacity to nourish all the life to which it gives birth. Life could not exist without water.

All Creation Testifies to the Creator

Psalms 148:1-6: *"Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the Heavens; praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you Heaven of heavens and you waters above the Heavens! Let them praise the Name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created. He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away."*

The New Covenant

"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you..." Ezekiel 36:25-26

Born of Water

After conception we grew for nine months, swimming in the placental water sac of our mothers. This provides the simplest explanation for our Lord Jesus' statement to Nicodemus from John 3:5-6: *"...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which*

is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” We are first born naturally out of water and when we place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are born a second time – born of the Spirit.

Power Over Evil

The sea often symbolises evil and chaos in the world. God's power over the sea shows His power to limit and ultimately destroy all evil (Psalm 46:2-3; Psalm 74:13-17; Daniel 7:3).

Water in Biblical Miracles

Water is a primary element of many of the miracles of the Bible:

The Creation of life (Genesis 1).

The Flood of Noah (Genesis 6-9).

The preservation of baby Moses in a basket on the Nile River (Exodus 2).

Several of the plagues on Egypt involved the River Nile (Exodus 7-10).

The dividing of the Red Sea to enable the entire nation of Israel to pass through it (Exodus 14).

The water which God provided from the rock in the wilderness (Exodus 17).

The dividing of the Jordan River to enable the entire nation of Israel to pass through into the Promised Land (Joshua 3).

How the Lord provided for the Prophet Elijah during the drought (1 Kings 17-18).

The fire that fell on Elijah's water saturated altar on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18).

The floating axe head on the river as witnessed by Elisha (2 Kings 6).

Our Lord Jesus turning water into wine (John 2).

The miraculous catches of fish in the Sea of Galilee (Luke 5 & John 21).

Our Lord Jesus Christ walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14).

Our Lord Jesus calming the storm (Mark 4).

Miracles of Nature

Each of these miracles demonstrated the power of God. However, consider the fact that the regular processes of nature are also miraculous. Job 5:9-10: *“Who does great things and unsearchable, Marvellous things without number. He gives rain on the earth and sends waters on the fields.”*

“He does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number.” Job 9:10

Water from the Rock and From Clouds

Is the sending forth of water from the rock in the wilderness any more awe-inspiring than the water that God pours forth from the clouds to provide the fresh water essential for our daily life?

The Pillar of Cloud by Day and Fire by Night

Is the guidance of God through His presence in the towering pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, in the wilderness more magnificent than the manifestation of massive, silver-lined thunder clouds that dash over the earth's surface with thunder and lightning?

Water and Wine

Is the turning of water into wine any more amazing than God's daily miracle of drawing up colourless, tasteless water from the earth, forcing it through the vines to produce sweet and savoury grapes?

“...A vineyard of red wine! I, the Lord, keep it, I water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day.” Isaiah 27:2-3

Creator and Sustainer

While our Lord Jesus Christ walked on earth, He performed extraordinary miracles. But prior to His Incarnation and since His Ascension, to this present day, He performs daily miracles which maintains all material aspects of the cosmos. *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in Heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. **All things were created***

through Him and for Him. And He is before all things and in Him all things consist.” Colossians 1:15-17

By the Word of His Power

*“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and **upholding all things by the Word of His power**, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”* Hebrews 1:1-3

He Makes all Things New

For the One who created all matter and continues to hold all material things together, the One who bonded the first Hydrogen atoms with Oxygen to form the first life-giving water, is the same One who changed the composition of water to wine when He was on the earth. He is the same one who offers us the water of Eternal Life.

Wells of Salvation

*“Behold, God is my Salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; ‘For Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my Salvation.’ **Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of Salvation.**”* Isaiah 12:2-3

Forsaking the Fountain of Living Water

For those of us who have worked in the desert, water is the most basic daily need and concern. To have a guide who knows where the spring or well is, can make the difference between life and death. *“For My people have committed two evils: **They have forsaken Me, the Fountain of Living Waters and hewn themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that can hold no water.**”* Jeremiah 2:13
“O Lord, the Hope of Israel, all who forsake You shall be ashamed. ‘Those who depart from Me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the Fountain of Living Waters.” Jeremiah 17:13

Living Waters Flow from Christ

Zechariah speak of when the Lord Jesus Christ would come to Jerusalem: *“And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur.”* Zechariah 14:8

A Fountain of Water Springing Up into Everlasting Life

In John 4, we read of the Lord Jesus Christ coming to the Samaritan woman by Jacob’s well: *“...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. The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?’ Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’”* John 4:10-14

Rivers of Refreshing Water in the Desert

“A man will be as a hiding place from the wind and a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” Isaiah 32:2

Rivers in Desolate Heights

“I will open rivers in desolate heights and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water.” Isaiah 41:18

Springs of Water

“They shall neither hunger nor thirst, neither heat nor sun shall strike them; for He who has mercy on them will lead them, even by the springs of water He will guide them.” Isaiah 49:10

Come to the Waters

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Isaiah 55:1

Rivers of Waters

“They shall come with weeping and with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel...” Jeremiah 31:9

A Fountain Shall Flow from the House of the Lord

“And it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; a fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord and water the Valley of Acacias.” Joel 3:18

Living Fountains

“For the Lamb who is in the midst of the Throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Revelation 7:17

Rivers of Living Water

“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7:37-39

Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

In order to be filled with the Holy Spirit we need to thirst. *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”* Matthew 5:6. We need to come to Jesus. Only our Lord Jesus Christ can satisfy our spiritual thirst. It is He alone who can fill us with His Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11).

Drink

We need to drink. We need to receive the Holy Spirit. A step of faith is needed. Even a baby can drink.

Believe

We need to believe. We are filled with the Holy Spirit when our hunger and thirst leads us to the Lord Jesus Christ and by faith we receive the fullness of the spirit to surrender to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rejoice

“Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of Salvation.” Isaiah 12:3

Come to Christ

“And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’” John 6:35

The Fountain of the Water of Life

At the end of the Book of Revelation, we read: ***“And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.’”*** Revelation 21:6

Come to the Water of Life

“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17

Life Everlasting

Without water, life could not exist. Without the living waters of our Lord Jesus Christ, everlasting life would not be ours.

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” John 7:37-39

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