
Episode 1:

WATER REFLECTIONS



JESUS AT THE WATERSIDE

Would it surprise you to discover Yeshua loved living at Peter's home on the north shore of Galilee?

Did He relish the sunrise glinting on the water and the thunderstorms pelting and dotting the lake? Did Jesus love to see the wind ruffle Peter's sail? Was he entranced as he looked back at the wake following the boat? Perhaps He was too spiritual....

Not at all! Remember Jesus is the one who told Nicodemus to be aware of the wind and who told the crowds

to notice the lilies and the birds, and the disciples to treasure the children!

Like us, He was mesmerized by the water lapping at the hull and rocking the boat. Do you suppose Jesus was a swimmer? He couldn't have been afraid of the water! Can you imagine our Lord stripping down with the guys and taking the challenge of racing out to Andrew's boat?

There were plenty of trials in Messiah's life and ministry but still, Jesus is the expert at wringing pleasure out of simple things. He loves to be around the water. Of course he does unusual things with it. He turns it to wine! He walks on it! Picture His tongue-in-cheek smile.

After a day of scrambling over the stony shore following and listening to their astonishing Rabbi what did they do for dinner? Perhaps they barbequed fish with Peter's patented seasoning mix. There was joy on the lake!

JUST ADD WATER

Want to see kids have fun? Just add water! Do you want to cultivate romance? Add a walk by a wooded stream or sandy beach. There are those who love the wilds of the desert but most prefer a vacation or picnic outlined by water.

I shiver with longing when I drive by an ocean, lake or river. I desire water like a fish! Water soothes and invigorates, calms and activates! How refreshing to splash,

dive and swim in the wet! Let me paddle, sail or ski over it. Let me simply dangle my feet in it!

Have you taken a boat cruise, gone white water rafting or tubed behind a speed boat? What fun! Have you gone deep sea fishing? Don't you love it! We can tell God loves H₂O. He made so much of it! He gave birth to water.

Does the rain have a father? Who fathers the drops of dew? From whose womb comes the ice? Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens when the waters become hard as stone, when the surface of the deep is frozen?

- Job 38:28-30

One of the first things you see in Scripture is God's Spirit reverberating and resonating over the waters. There was a miraculous induction of purpose into the deep. As the Spirit hummed, and strummed, and reverberated things came alive!

So please, add the water so the fun and romance may begin!

GETTING SOAKED

Were you born land-locked and never learned to swim? Are you afraid of the deep end, never venturing out over your head? I had a fear of water as a child. As I learned to swim fear diminished. I still have a respect for the deep.

The summer after third grade my parents did a cruel thing. They forced me to join swim team. Why would parents subject their children to miles of exhaustion? I literally tried to hide when swim practice came because it was so doggone hard. I resented the water like a wet house cat. Funny, some things parents force us to do end up becoming loves.

On one childhood vacation our parents rented a little houseboat and we spent a handful of days on a lake in Wisconsin. I was magnetized by living right on top of the water! In my growing-up days enjoyment increased as we lived beside a lovely lake and near splendid rivers. There is no better way to get your eyes open in the morning than by looking out over a body of water!

My ambition in high school was to be a professional water skier. I say in good humor, "The older I get the better I was!" It was exciting to ski jump, spin on trick skis and even fly in a kite behind a boat. I was able to barefoot ski and do tricks with the driver's help, like skiing around the boat. The most invigorating thing was to cross the wake doing sixty and make deep strong turns.

Long hours of canoeing made me comfortable with a paddle. When our son was ten we were in a family camp canoe race. Parents were blindfolded in the back seat of the canoes. Children gave directions from the front seats. Because I know how to keep a canoe going pretty straight without looking Brian just had to do a little touch up in the front and tell me how we needed to turn.

I play memories of sitting pleasantly becalmed in our

homebuilt sailboat, the Sea Hag. I also remember three friends hiking out on the catamaran as we cut through chop doing 22 knots. The hull was humming and the stays were singing with vibration. Thrilling! Sailboat races are in my memory treasure chest.

Over time my relationship with the deep moved from fear of drowning, to wet-cat resentment, and on to comfort, adventure, exhilaration and delight.

Do you keep distant from what you cannot fathom, apprehensive of the denizens of the deep? Is it fear of floundering or getting your hair wet? I suggest a good squirt-gun fight to break the surface tension. There is still time to make memories - by going out over your head. Let's get soaked and venture into the deep end!

FOR SALE: RIVERFRONT PROPERTY

Living by the water in my early years had a “magical” quality. I have had too little contact with open water in recent decades, and get home sick. One of my therapies is to swim three days a week. It helps stave off the longing for the deep.

From time to time I find myself flipping through the ads, scanning for riverfront property, a place on a river to call home. It's beyond my financial reach and unrealistic, but the magnetism keeps pulling. What if ...how wonderful it would be... to dwell by the water again!

Birds sense an intuitive urge to find their way home. My instinctual ache, my intuitive pining, is to return

home and find my place by the river! Do you feel it; the impulse, the longing, to return to Eden and the river which sprang up there?

Search the web for “River of Life” and you will find millions of references. “River of Life” has been published on the billboards of thousands of congregations. It is the theme of songs and sermons. Followers of Jesus refer to it, but it seems the truths of this river are only vaguely known.

“What can you tell me about the river of life?” I’ve spent a couple decades pondering this river yet every time I ask the question I learn something new.

There is One who holds the answer to all mysteries. Let’s inquire of Him for revelation.

Dear Heavenly Father,

You are the Spring of Life!

You are the Revealer of mysteries.

We humbly ask You to uncover the secrets of Your river.

Lamb of God, lead us to streams both outward and tangible, and inward and transformational.

Romance us, captivate us, by the river.

We long to learn more, to experience more of Your power, love, wisdom and purpose.

Make us conduits of Your liquid life for those who may not even realize they thirst.

For the splashingly wonderful things You disclose, we give thanks!

Rivers are made of vast congregations of water molecules. What is in a droplet?

ENGINEERING THE WATER MOLECULE

Water is the most amazing chemical! We should tremble every time we hold a cup of it. It's used for leveling and lubricating, tempering and dissolving, cooling and heating. Some even bathe in it! It comes in three manifestations. We harness its power to mill our flour and brew our coffee.

Water has other important functions. It is for stomping on in puddles. It's for splashing and for squirting. God our Father, the great, creative, chemical Engineer, did a walloping job in designing water. There are more complex chemical compounds but none so plentiful and intriguing as dihydrogen monoxide, that is, water.

You can hardly call the water molecule boring. The Oxygen and Hydrogen atoms do a wildly exotic dance. Their do-si-dos are much faster than you can blink. Every millisecond, every one thousandth of a second, they swing atoms to trade partners. Water is not a static element but lightning quick!

This magnificent molecule is smaller than a light wave so we can't see its inner machinery. We can deduce

some of its qualities, such as its triangular shape. Do you ever have that “clumpy” feeling as you drink down those three-cornered molecules? Where does water’s slippery texture come from? Rather mysterious.

Water, unlike most molecules, expands when frozen. What would we do if ice sank to the bottom of lakes and oceans? The molecule can act like an acid or a base. We can separate water electro-chemically into hydrogen and oxygen. When we burn the elements the product of combustion becomes water again!

Two thirds of our planet is covered with it. There are gazillions of these molecules. If the earth was perfectly round and smooth the depth of the water would be 9,000 feet. No wonder Noah’s boat cleared the underwater mountains in the day of earth’s calamity.

Here is yet another reason to worship our Creator. See how He designed the perfect surface tension for H₂O. If it were lighter it would not bead and fall as rain. If it were stronger we could be clobbered by one gallon rain drops!

Like the earth’s surface most of our physical composition, about 65%, is water. If you were a jellyfish it would be 95%. Lord forbid we be dry personalities!

THE PROBLEM OF THIRST

You wake in the night with cotton mouth and a tongue like leather. You are thirsty! A tall glass of water and you feel human again. We all have a little experience with thirst.

What would you do if you turned on the faucet but there was no water? Do you have a few gallons stored for an emergency? Do you have a lake, stream or well nearby? Could you purify water by filtering, boiling, or with chlorine? You may have a stocked pantry but if you don't have the ability to access clean water you are in trouble! Thirst is not a philosophical or theoretical problem.

Water is sorely missed when absent or polluted. We are in a world of hurt without H₂O! Dehydration shuts down our digestion. The blood thickens. The heart labors. Our urine darkens. We become feverish. Unless we get rehydrated we are facing a parched death.

The ancients probably valued water more than we do. Even today some trudge miles to find it.

There is a story of primitive people who visited our nation and after seeing our technological wonders were asked what most impressed them. They said water coming out of a pipe amazed them most!

Water makes it to market with a price. Some have predicted it will become more valuable than oil. In some places it already is. When we were in Kenya water was delivered by truck or donkey cart. I choked tears at the airport in America where we got fresh, clean water, with ice, for free!

Hell's fire is pictured as a place devoid of moisture, with a miserable longing for just a drop of water. Millions today have more than an idle interest in water. They long for it with a parched, withering desperation. Who will

satisfy their need? Perhaps you are part of the answer.

Our Lord Jesus, the One who said “I thirst”, is also the One who leads us to living waters! We don’t think of water as having taste but when we are parched it tastes delicious! Consider the kindness of God. He sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

GOD'S HEART TO SATISFY

Our Creator generously satisfies our thirst!

Psalms 107:9 tells the lost desert wanderers,

Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for men, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

Psalms 104:10-11 tells us God gives

...water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

Our gracious God never intended for people to be oppressed by drought. His heart is to satisfy the thirsty. He even has a bucket blessing!

Water will flow from their buckets; their seed will have abundant water.

- Numbers 24:7

HUNGER AND THIRST ARE ANSWERED IN JESUS!

The thirsty get a dose of prophetic assurance in Revelation 7:16-17.

Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Never hungry! Never thirsty! Living water is the refreshment given those who follow the Lamb.

He leads me beside quiet waters. - Psalm 23:2

The Lamb, who is also our Shepherd, will lead us to comforting, refreshing waters!

God tosses in another blessing—a tear-free eternity! (Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 21:4) Pain, regret and death are wiped away along with our tears!

I suggest you let Revelation 7:17 make a big impression. Engrave it or whittle it into your imagination. You might take a card and write it out to post on your bathroom mirror or fridge. Absorb its reality. This is good news! Our thirst finds its quenching because of the Lamb!

For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

The Jewish prophets tell us about the river of life which

will spring from Jerusalem. Our Jewish Messiah Yeshua will lead us by that riverside. To provide context we look now to Israel and their waterworks both ancient and modern.

ISRAEL'S WATER SYSTEMS ANCIENT AND MODERN

It would be fascinating to climb into a time machine and observe life in ancient Israel. But to study archaeology and dig through ruins is plenty exciting! I had the privilege of studying in Jerusalem back in 1974. Our group uncovered antiquities from the time of Christ at the south end of Herod's Temple mount. We discovered large baths called mikvahs used for ceremonial purification. Before entering the temple area the religious would bathe in the mikvahs. The Christian practice of baptism finds its roots there.

In those pools we discovered artifacts, lamps and pottery. What an eerie, thrilling thing to uncover mysteries which have been buried in darkness for generations! Those lamps once glowed in the hands of their owners. One can't help wonder about their names and faces, their joys and troubles.

Jerusalem averages 26 inches of rain yearly. There are six months without rain so when it returns there is celebration! Some places in the south, like the desert of Zin get only a couple inches yearly. In the far north, Mount Hermon fares better, getting 45 inches. Water systems have been integral to sustain the population of ancient Jerusalem which was often in the hundreds of thousands, swelling to the millions during holy festivals. Where was water found for bathing, drinking, washing and cultivating?

I'd love to take you on a tour of Israel and show you ancient water systems. How tremendous to stroll through places where biblical characters walked thousands of years ago! We would visit Warren's shaft, a water tunnel which David's men may have used three thousand years ago to capture the Jebusite city, and make it his capital. (1 Samuel 5:8)

Old and young are fascinated as they wade through the waters of Hezekiah's tunnel. It was carved to protect the water supply from the siege of Assyrians seven hundred years before Messiah. (2 Kings 20:20)

We would look at the water conduits to the Temple and the ceremonial baths. You'd be awed with the aqueducts of Herod! They ran from miles away in the hills of Hebron and Bethlehem to Jerusalem. They also ran to the Dead Sea providing for palaces and gardens in the desert.

In Herod's day "PVC pipes" were carved from stone. These were coupled together to channel water down and then back up hills. Those ancients were clever! Can you imagine how labor intensive, to carve pipes and keep them sealed for pushing water up hills!

You should see the pool of Bethesda on Jerusalem's north where Jesus healed the lame man. On the south you would be impressed with recent excavations at the Pool of Siloam. Jesus sent the blind man there to gain his sight.

Yes, I do think you would enjoy a tour of Israel, where people, with names and faces, long ago cut channels

through stone, and dug ponds and cisterns. When would you like to visit?

WATERWORKS IN ISRAEL TODAY

Israel is like children arguing over a toy which was ignored, until one child picked it up and started playing with it. No one wanted Israel. Since it has been made beautiful and prosperous everyone wants a piece.

In 1800 only a couple hundred thousand lived in Israel. Now the young, reborn nation is going on eight million! The land was stark and deserted. Today Israel has been cultivated and beautified! The barren land of a hundred years ago is now sought after.

Prophecy is being fulfilled; the desert has been turned to garden!

The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.

- Isaiah 35:1-2

Today the Israelis are experts in conserving, transporting and metering out water. Much of the land is still waste but so much has been reclaimed! There are striking “before and after” pictures where the wilderness has turned to savannahs of grass, and to forests. You may drive by miles of farms, fruit groves and greenhouses

that just a few decades ago were uncultivated desolation.

Modern Israel has battled water shortages since its re-birth in 1948. Out of necessity amazing technologies have been created. They don't squander water for frivolous things like washing cars. In the dry season most cars are covered with dust. We used a bucket to sponge bath ours!

Most of Israel's water supply comes from Mount Hermon and the rainy north. Those waters infiltrate the soil creating the headwaters of the Jordan River. The beautiful Sea of Galilee is the nation's chief water reservoir. Waters exiting Galilee continue south down the Jordan. Most of it is captured for good purpose before reaching the Dead Sea.

The nation capitalizes on their limited resource stretching their potential with drip irrigation and water reclamation. They aid developing nations through the export of water technologies.

Rain and snow are not sufficient to meet the nation's demands. Israel is the leader in water desalination. The world's largest reverse osmosis desalination plant is in Ashkelon providing 165, 000 cubic meters of water per day. This plant filters drinking water from the Mediterranean providing thirteen percent of Israel's domestic needs.

A land that was ignored for centuries is again blooming like a rose through the care of her modern residents!

All this is background. Now let's turn to a puzzling verse of Scripture.
