

The Northeast U.S. has had an unusually wet summer this year with lots of rain. With respect to the rain, (and perhaps with more complaint than respect) someone I was listening to quoted Charles G. D. Roberts, a Canadian poet: **“Water is a very good servant, but it is a cruel master.”** Water is essential for life, but it is also an instrument of destruction. Of course, when I mention the instrument of destruction, we all might immediately think of hurricanes, tsunamis, shipwrecks, or floods. But consider the more subtle ways that water can destroy. Water can erode soil and damage the stability of terrain or wash away the fertility of a farmer’s field. Moisture promotes oxidation of iron and steel, which we know commonly as corrosion, or rust. Standing water allows mosquitos to breed; I guess that’s a good thing if you’re a frog or a bat. When humidity is high for a prolonged period, fungus and mildew thrive and can cause disease and render objects, even one’s own house, unusable and requiring destruction.

*“If the defiling mold reappears in the house after the stones have been torn out and the house scraped and plastered, the priest is to go and examine it and, if the mold has spread in the house, it is a persistent defiling mold; the house is unclean. **It must be torn down**—its stones, timbers and all the plaster—and taken out of the town to an unclean place. (Leviticus 14:43-45)*

God even uses mildew as a punishment (see Deuteronomy 28:22.) In the absence of water (like a dry desert) mildew and fungus do not survive. Water can be a cruel master. But, it is also a very good servant. Without moisture to grow fungus, **we would not have yeast for bread.** Mycorrhizal fungi live in the soil in partnership with plants, vastly improving the plant’s ability to acquire nutrients for growth.

Great are the works of the LORD; studied by all who delight in them. (Psalms 111:2)

Because we delight in the works of God and have been given an amazing creative ability, we, mankind, often are **successful at turning adverse things into something useful.** Maybe this sounds familiar to you; our desire to turn “bad” things into good resembles something we are promised by God:

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Erosion happens when water runs over a surface and carries some of that surface away. Some smart folks in the Roman empire about 100 years before Jesus was born, used the principle of erosion to their advantage by directing water to wash away less dense soil, leaving behind the heavier gold in parts of Spain and Great Britain. That idea has continued to be developed and today we use water-jet cutting technology to cut all types of materials. The erosive capacity of high-pressure water-jet cutting can cut through foot thick steel! We use water to generate electricity, grow our food, and clean everything. Water is called the universal solvent because **it can of dissolve more substances than any other chemical.**

The need for water to support life is an undisputable fact. Water is the first thing scientists look for when they’re searching for life on other planets. Humans cannot live for much more than three days without water. Water gives life.

*Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, **coming from the throne of God** and of the Lamb, 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. (Revelation 22:1-2)*

Water gives life, both physically and spiritually. Baptism is a symbol that uses physical water to enable spiritual life, cleansing us of our sins. Water also symbolizes God's Spirit. Here, Messiah is teaching the Samaritan woman, and us, about the spiritual nature of water:

Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 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 4:13-14)

The importance of water and its connection between the spiritual and the physical shows up most evidently in the story of creation. **Water was one of the first things created** – before light.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (Genesis 1:1-3)

On day 2, it seems that God made a space in the waters for our earth to exist. I don't claim to fully understand this day and how it might have looked before and after, but in Genesis 1:6-8 God created an expanse surrounded by the waters where all of the forthcoming elements of creation exist. This image reminds me of how a human is created in the womb, surrounded by water. Water protects us, refreshes us, cleanses us, and gives us life. The water that comes from the throne of God, **allows us to bear much fruit**.

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD And whose trust is the LORD. "For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; But its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit. (Jeremiah 17:7-8)

Physically, water cleanses through its ability to dissolve so many substances and its cohesive properties that allow it to cling to particles and carry them away in the flow (like erosion.) In our bodies, blood (composed mostly of water) cleanses us by taking away the waste material our cells produce and carrying that waste to our liver and kidneys. Water gives us life by allowing most biological processes to function. Life is in the blood delivering oxygen to our cells. Spiritually, **water and blood both give us life and cleanse us**. When a person is stabbed, generally there is blood that flows out of the wound. But here we see something different:

*But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately **blood and water came out**. (John 19:34)*

Clearly this shows us how Messiah is The Source of Life – Life comes from water; Life is in the blood. We need to dwell in Him and allow Him to dwell in us. When salt is dissolved in water, you end up with neither water nor salt. You end up with saline, the scientific word for salt water. This is how inextricable the relationship is between the Father and the Son – and eventually, in that day, between Messiah and all of us:

"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. (John 14:20)

As it says in Matthew 5:13, we are the salt of the earth. Let us take a long drink of the water that flows from the Throne of God and be dissolved into it.

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)

Peace to you and glory to God!

-Nate

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