

# The wonder of water

Peter Danks

**W**ATER IS QUITE a remarkable substance. It is claimed that seventy-five per cent of the world's surface is covered by water as ocean, lake, river and swamp. It is the only substance that can be found naturally in all three states, liquid, solid and gas. It makes up between fifty and ninety per cent of the weight of most living matter. Pure water rarely occurs in nature.

In the Scriptures there are 383 references in total to this remarkable substance, 311 in the Old Testament and seventy-two in the New. In the record of the first three days of Creation the word 'waters' appears eight times, and goes from referring to a substance which merely forms part of the abyss (Gen. 1:2) to something God prepares to use to sustain life.

In Genesis 2:10 we read: "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads". In this place the word translated 'water' means 'irrigate', and here, right at the beginning of Scripture, is the idea of water as a life-sustaining substance needed to encourage and preserve growth. This idyllic and tranquil scene, given to us by our Father, is only a taste of the scenes that will be set before immortal eyes in the Kingdom.

As well as being life-sustaining, water is also able to take life, as in Noah's day. The Flood, while it was the means of saving Noah's family, at the same time destroyed the wicked and all other living things, apart from those in the safety of the Ark.

Pure liquid water is odourless and colourless, but Scripture also mentions the other forms of water. In Job we read: "I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that Thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain? If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (9:28-31). Commentaries suggest that the reason for the statement about snow water by Job is the colour of snow. Its whiteness portrays purity, and Job recognised that no amount of physical washing could purify a man. It is only through God's love that peace with Him can be found.

Frozen water is a very hard substance. The word 'ice' appears only three times in the Bible, and all these are in the books of Job and the Psalms. The word 'steam', water in the vapour state, does not appear at all. It is, however, produced when liquid water boils, and boiling is referred to in the Bible. Isaiah 64 talks about a fire causing waters to boil so that God's Name would be known to all at the end (v. 2). In Ezekiel 24 we have the parable of the boiling pot, its meaning being the destruction of Jerusalem. Ezekiel 46 relates a vision of the future age when, from within the holy city, the priests will boil trespass offerings for the people (v. 20). In 2 Kings, references to cannibalism due to hunger are made, and again boiling is mentioned (6:29). So throughout the Scriptures we have lessons associated with the very different forms of water, from lessons to do with human depravity to lessons to do with cleansing; from offerings to new beginnings. It is quite fascinating that water can change from something that can freeze you to something that can burn you.

What lessons can we take from this? Perhaps there is a parable here. I see this transition of water to be something similar to our lives in the truth. We may come to the Truth as cold, hard blocks of ice and need to be warmed to the things of God. We need to act like liquid water, capable of being channelled and directed, until ultimately we are used by God as steam, as mentioned in Isaiah, to let God's Name be known throughout the whole earth.

Have you ever tried to throw a pot on a potter's wheel? A great deal of skill is required, otherwise you end up with a terrible mess. It is impossible to mould the clay without water constantly being used. Through this we may see the exhortation for us to be as malleable clay in the potter's hands, to be wet with the water of the Word so that we can be formed and sculptured by the caring hands that envelop us, and be as bowls able to hold the water of life.

Without water it is impossible to live either physically or spiritually, and water has wonderful cleansing properties. There is an illustration of this in John 9. This relates the healing of the man blind from birth. Such acts of healing done by the Lord are to most people quite breathtaking.

ing. Here we have Jesus in the role of healer showing openly the power of the Spirit and the incredible effects that it had on the recipient.

There is a specific reason for, and an important lesson in, the actions of Jesus in spitting to make clay prior to anointing the eyes of the blind man with it. No doubt Jesus could have healed the man just by words, but a deeper message was to be brought forward. It is one that will bring us to the focal point of our regular meeting for the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine. In spitting on the ground, we have presented before us in symbol something that came from the Lord's mouth, the Word of God. It was this that the Lord preached. The mixture was further made from the dust of the earth from which God made man. So here we are presented

with a remarkable picture to demonstrate to us God's love for all who put their trust in Him.

Jesus covers the eyes of the blind man with the clay and then tells him to go to the Pool of Siloam and wash. The route to Siloam was across the city and would undoubtedly have been somewhat precarious, so perhaps he needed help to get there. Once there, negotiating the steps would have been a worry to one who could see, let alone one who could not as yet. Siloam means 'sent', and it was here, following his confidence in and his obedience to the Master who sent him, that the blind man received his sight.

As we approach our oasis in the desert week by week, in order to remember him who died for us, we pray that in obeying the command given to us we shall be similarly blessed.



## Exposition

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# The Exodus

## A commentary on Exodus 1-15

### E. Moses and Pharaoh: first encounters—Exodus 5-6 (Part 2)

Mark Vincent

#### The format of the commentary

The narrative has been broken down into several **major sections**, of a chapter or two each; some of these will be covered in one month, others will take longer. An **Introduction** is provided for each of these major sections, which sets out the major events and themes dealt with in those chapters.

Each major section is broken into **sub-sections** or **episodes** (these are typically between five and twenty verses each). For each the **AV text** is followed by a **Comment**, which draws out the major lessons and items of interest from the text. The AV text also contains **Footnotes**, in which additional 'one-off' points are made for those wanting to work through Exodus more slowly.

#### Introduction

THE FIRST ENCOUNTER between Moses and Pharaoh had hardly been a success. Faced with Moses' request to let the Israelites go, the evil king had only added more to their burdens. With despair in their hearts, the Israelite officers now come to Pharaoh to plead with him to relent. When this fails they turn finally to Moses, crying out in desperation and blaming him for what has happened. What can Moses do but take their words to God, as he does at the end of the chapter? But it is not until chapter 6 that the response of God will be heard.

#### An appeal against Pharaoh's harshness

5:15 Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying,