

## Living Water

Have you ever been extremely thirsty? Thirsty because there is no water to drink? Thirsty because there is no life-sustaining liquid available? Few of us have been in situations or locations where we could not find something to drink. In survival school, you can learn to distill water from plants and make drinking water from most contaminated waters. But the result does not compare to the water springing forth from a continuous source of rock and gravel filtered water from deep in the earth.

The ancient people noted the difference between water from different sources. Scripture uses those distinctions. Some water accumulated from rain into pools both below and above ground. Soon after the rain collected, the pools provided good, freshwater. But after setting for weeks, it did not taste as good. Over time it could become contaminated or even be deadly. Running water was fresh, cool, and refreshed both mind and body. It was used in part of the sacrificial, cleansing, Law (Leviticus 14:5; Numbers 19:17-19).

Therefore, when wells were dug, the desire was to find a source of "flowing" water such as could be found in a clear mountain stream. We sometimes refer to these wells as artesian wells. Artesian springs are natural occurring springs above ground. Their water is desired above all other sources for wildlife, farming, and human consumption. (Song of Solomon 4:15) refers to their life-sustaining nature.

The analogy used by Jesus in John 4:5-42 contrasts the difference between the law carved in stone and what is flowing continuously. Jacobs Well, a major source of water, was filled by rain filtering through the ground around the well. It was more like a cistern than a well in that respect. The quality of its water was not as desirable as an active spring-fed well or pool. Refer to (Genesis 26:18-25) to read of the dispute over running water as Jacob settled where God directed him to stay.

The Samaritan woman drew water from the cistern dug by Jacob at the place where he built an altar and sacrificed to God. She understood the difference between what she pulled up from this source and a well of living water. Now she is conversing with one who is talking of spiritual things rather than natural, physical things. The conversation about a cistern vs. a well must change the contrast between the revealed word of the past and the living word of God which brings eternal life.

Jesus said in John 4:10, "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 lesson contrasts time-based comfort to the body from water and the eternal life given and sustained to the Word of God through His Son and Spirit. As she perceived that He was a prophet (John 4:19), she may have recalled passages like Jeremiah 2:13, where God is identified as "The fountain of living waters" for she said, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things" (John 4:25). Later, she and the villagers whom she called, understood. "Then they said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world'" (John 4:42).

On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2), about six months before His crucifixion, Jesus said: "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).

He did say "I will give you Living Water" and "Come to me and drink" The life-giving stream flows from God through the Son. In Proverbs 13:13-14, the phrase "the fountain of life" refers to the Word of Law. Today, Jesus supplies the Word of God which is the life-giving substance (John 7:38-39; 6:63).

Today, as we continually drink from God's Word it should bubble up and flow from us by our example and speech as we go about our daily duties.