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The Fountain of Living Water

JOHN 7:37-39

Introduction

1. Water is a necessary part of our daily diet.
2. Sixty percent of our bodies are composed of water — our blood is 90% water.
3. While there is no universally agreed quantity of water which we must consume on a daily basis, there are a number of recognized benefits which come from drinking water every day.
4. Water . . .
 - a. Lubricates our joints — cartilage, found in our joints and the disks of our spine, contains around 80% water.
 - b. Forms saliva and mucus — saliva helps us digest our food and keeps the mouth, nose, and eyes moist.
 - c. Delivers oxygen throughout the body — blood is more than 90% water, and it carries oxygen to different parts of the body.
 - d. Boosts skin health and beauty.
 - e. Cushions the brain, spinal cord, and other sensitive tissues.
 - f. Regulates our body temperature.
 - g. Is needed by our digestive system for proper functioning.
 - h. Flushes body waste.
 - i. Helps maintain blood pressure.
 - j. Is needed by our airways — Dehydration can make asthma and allergies

worse.

- k. Prevents kidney damage.
5. These are the physical benefits of water.
 6. Twice, in his gospel, the apostle John records Jesus speaking about “living water” and how a person who drinks from such water “will never be thirsty again.”
 - a. The first time is by the well in Sychar, a village in Samaria.
 - 1) There he spoke to a woman who had come to draw water from Jacob’s well.
 - 2) He told her that if she had asked Him, He would have given her living water (John 4:10).
 - b. The second time is in Jerusalem, during the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) (John 7).
 - 1) John tells us that it was “the last day of the feast, the great day” (John 7:37).
 - 2) “Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” (John 7:37b, 38).
 7. Two questions come to mind as I think about this statement:
 - a. What is this living water?
 - b. What is its purpose?
 8. To answer these questions, let’s first examine the background of this feast and its importance to the Jewish people.

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I. The Feast of Tabernacles

A. BACKGROUND

1. The third of three great Jewish festivals at which attendance was compulsory for all adult male Jews (i.e., Passover, Feast of Pentecost, Feast of Tabernacles (Booths)).
2. It was held at the time of harvest in the fall, the 15th day of the 7th month (Leviticus 23:34), around the end of our September into the beginning of October.
3. It was also a feast associated with Solomon's temple which had been dedicated at the Feast of Tabernacles (1 Kings 8:2).
4. It was a time when rich & poor, servant & master, orphan & widow all came together to share in the universal joy of God's provision.
5. The Jewish historian, Josephus, called it "the holiest and the greatest festival among the Jews" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 3.10.4).
6. Deuteronomy 16:13 seems to suggest that the feast lasted for seven days.
7. Leviticus 23:36 makes it plain there was also an eighth day.

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B. RITUAL

1. On the last day of the feast, there was a solemn ceremony which involved the pouring of water.
2. A priest would fill a golden pitcher with water at the Pool of Siloam while the words of Isaiah 12:3, were repeated — "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."
3. He would then lead a solemn procession from the pool of Siloam to the altar in the Temple.
4. Those worshipers in the procession carried in their right hand a lulab which

consisted of several myrtle and willow twigs tied to a piece of palm branch.

5. This lulab represented the stages of the wilderness journey (marked by different kinds of vegetation).
6. In their left hand, the worshipers carried a citron:
 - a. This was a yellow, thick-skinned fruit resembling a lime or lemon but larger and less acidic.
 - b. It represented the fruit of the good land that God had given His people.
7. As the worshipers followed along in the procession, they sang the Hallel Psalms (113-118), psalms of special praise.
8. When they came to . . .
 - a. Psalm 118:1 — “Give thanks to the Lord”
 - b. Psalm 118:25 — “Save us, we pray, O Lord!”
 - c. Psalm 118:29 — “Give thanks to the Lord”. . . the worshipers shouted and waved their palms towards the altar.
9. At the altar, the priest would pour the water into a basin with a tube which led to the base of the altar.
10. This whole ceremony was a vivid thanksgiving for God’s good gift of water and an acted prayer for rain, and a remembrance of the water which sprang from the rock when they traveled through the wilderness.
11. On the last day of the feast they marched seven times around the altar in memory of the seven times Israel had marched around the walls of Jericho before they fell down and the city was taken.
12. The prophet Joel, in Joel 3:18, had spoken of a time when God would cause “a spring” to “go out from the house of the Lord.”

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II. Jesus’ Declaration

A. "JESUS STOOD AND CRIED OUT" (JOHN 7:37)

1. On this last day of the feast, what John calls "the great day," as all this is happening, Jesus did two things.
 - a. He "stood"
 - 1) Teachers usually sat with their disciples so that more attention was drawn to their message.
 - 2) By standing, Jesus put Himself in a position for the maximum number of people to see and hear Him.
 - b. He "cried out."
 - 1) He had done this earlier (v. 28), when He spoke about them knowing Him, but not His Father.
 - 2) Jesus spoke out loudly and with emphasis, possibly also with emotion so that all might hear Him and give Him their attention.

5a

B. HIS MESSAGE

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink" (v. 37).

1. The significance of this statement is that throughout the seven days of the feast water has been brought from the pool of Siloam to the Temple.
2. However, on the eighth day, no water was poured out at the altar.
3. On this day, Jesus promises to the person who believes in Him, "rivers of living water" which will flow "from his innermost being" (v. 38).
4. As with the woman at the well in Sychar, each of us will thirst again after having drunk from the physical we drink each day.
5. However, Jesus speaks of a water which He provides that is abundant and will satisfy forever.
6. He called it "rivers of living water." What did He mean?
7. John tells us in verse 39, "But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who

believed in Him were to receive.”

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- a. Earlier at Capernaum, Jesus had told His disciples, “It is the Spirit who gives life . . .” (John 6:63, cf. 2 Corinthians 3:6).
- b. In Romans 5:5, Paul said that it is “through the Holy Spirit” that “the love of God” is “poured out within our hearts” (Romans 5:5).
- c. In Ephesians 3:16, Paul prayed that the Christians in Ephesus would “be strengthened with power through [God’s] Spirit in the inner man.”
- d. In Titus 3:5-6, Paul informed Titus that God “saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior”

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8. However, as John points out at the end of verse 39, “the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”
9. Jesus would not be glorified until He had been crucified, buried, raised on the third and finally, ascended back to His Father’s right hand.

7a

10. In the upper room, on the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you” (John 16:7).
11. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples “were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4), as Jesus had promised.
12. In his sermon that day, Peter told the crowd that “Jesus . . . having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear” (Acts

2:33).

13. After Peter told them that they had crucified the One whom God had made “both Lord and Christ” they asked Him what they should do (Acts 2:36, 37).

7b

14. Jesus answered, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

Conclusion

1. Jesus promise of “living water” is still available today to those who have a thirst of the soul.
2. It is a thirst which nothing else can satisfy — only the Holy Spirit.
3. If you have a longing for something more in your life, I encourage you to seek the salvation which God promises you through His Son, Jesus Christ.
4. When you come to God in obedient faith, turn away from your sins, confess Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and allow Him to wash away your sins in the water of baptism, He will give you a most precious gift — the Holy Spirit.
5. Then you will have those “rivers of living water” to satisfy the thirst of your eternal soul.