

'Living Water' Scriptures

1. Exodus 17:5-7 MSG

God said to Moses, "Go on out ahead of the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel. Take the staff you used to strike the Nile. And go. I'm going to be present before you there on the rock at Horeb. You are to strike the rock. Water will gush out of it and the people will drink." Moses did what he said, with the elders of Israel right there watching. He named the place Massah (Testing-Place) and Meribah (Quarrelling) because of the quarrelling of the Israelites and because of their testing of God when they said, "Is God here with us, or not?"

2. Judges 15:18-19 MSG

Now he [Samson] was suddenly very thirsty. He called out to God, "You have given your servant this great victory. Are you going to abandon me to die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" So God split open the rock basin in Lehi; water gushed out and Samson drank. His spirit revived—he was alive again! That's why it's called En Hakkore (Caller's Spring). It's still there at Lehi today.

3. Psalm 23:2 NIV

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

4. Psalm 36:8 MSG

How exquisite your love, O God! How eager we are to run under your wings,
To eat our fill at the banquet you spread as you fill our tankards with Eden spring water.
You're a fountain of cascading light, and you open our eyes to light.

5. Psalm 42:1-2 MSG

A white-tailed deer drinks from the creek; I want to drink God, deep draughts of God.
I'm thirsty for God-alive.

6. Psalm 46:4 MSG

River fountains splash joy, cooling God's city, this sacred haunt of the Most High.

7. Psalm 63:2-4 MSG

So here I am in the place of worship, eyes open, drinking in your strength and glory.
In your generous love I am really living at last! My lips brim praises like fountains.
I bless you every time I take a breath; my arms wave like banners of praise to you.

8. Isaiah 12:3 MSG

Joyfully you'll pull up buckets of water from the wells of salvation.

9. Isaiah 41:17-18 MSG

The poor and homeless are desperate for water, their tongues parched and no water to be found.
But I'm there to be found, I'm there for them and I, God of Israel, will not leave them thirsty.
I'll open up rivers for them on the barren hills spout fountains in the valleys.
I'll turn the baked-clay badlands into a cool pond, the waterless waste into splashing creeks.

10. Isaiah 44:3 MSG

I will pour water on the thirsty ground and send streams coursing through the parched earth.
I will pour my Spirit into your descendants and my blessing on your children.

11. Isaiah 55:1-2 MSG

"Hey there! All who are thirsty, come to the water! Are you penniless? Come anyway—buy and eat!
Come, buy your drinks, buy wine and milk. Buy without money—everything's free!
Why do you spend your money on junk food, your hard-earned cash on cotton candy?
Listen to me, listen well: Eat only the best, fill yourself with only the finest.
Pay attention, come close now, listen carefully to my life-giving, life-nourishing words.

12. Isaiah 58:11 MSG

I will always show you where to go.

I'll give you a full life in the emptiest of places— firm muscles, strong bones.
You'll be like a well-watered garden,
a gurgling spring that never runs dry.

13. Jeremiah 2:13 MSG

My people have committed a compound sin: they've walked out on me, the fountain
Of fresh flowing waters, and then dug cisterns—
cisterns that leak, cisterns that are no better than sieves.

14. Ezekiel 47:1-12 MSG

Now he brought me back to the entrance to the Temple. I saw water pouring out from under the Temple porch to the east (the Temple faced east). The water poured from the south side of the Temple, south of the altar. He then took me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the gate complex on the east. The water was gushing from under the south front of the Temple.

He walked to the east with a measuring tape and measured off fifteen hundred feet, leading me through water that was ankle-deep. He measured off another fifteen hundred feet, leading me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another fifteen hundred feet, leading me through water waist-deep. He measured off another fifteen hundred feet. By now it was a river over my head, water to swim in, water no one could possibly walk through.

He said, "Son of man, have you had a good look?"

Then he took me back to the riverbank. While sitting on the bank, I noticed a lot of trees on both sides of the river.

He told me, "This water flows east, descends to the Arabah and then into the sea, the sea of stagnant waters. When it empties into those waters, the sea will become fresh.

Wherever the river flows, life will flourish—great schools of fish—because the river is turning the salt sea into fresh water. Where the river flows, life abounds. Fishermen will stand shoulder to shoulder along the shore from En-gedi all the way north to En-eglaim, casting their nets. The sea will teem with fish of all kinds, like the fish of the Great Mediterranean.

"The swamps and marshes won't become fresh. They'll stay salty.

"But the river itself, on both banks, will grow fruit trees of all kinds. Their leaves won't wither, the fruit won't fail. Every month they'll bear fresh fruit because the river from the Sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing."

15. Zechariah 13:1 MSG

On the Big Day, a fountain will be opened for the family of David and all the leaders of Jerusalem for washing away their sins, for scrubbing their stained and soiled lives clean.

16. Zechariah 14:8 MSG

What a Day that will be! Fresh flowing rivers out of Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea, half to the western sea, flowing year-round, summer and winter!

17. John 4:13-14

Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst—not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life."

18. John 7:37-38 NIV

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit...

19. Revelation 7:16-17 MSG

No more hunger, no more thirst, no more scorching heat. The Lamb on the Throne will shepherd them, will lead them to spring waters of Life. And God will wipe every last tear from their eyes.

20. Revelation 21:6 NIV

And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

21. Revelation 22:1 NIV

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

22. Revelation 22:17 MSG

"Come!" say the Spirit and the Bride.
Whoever hears, echo, "Come!"
Is anyone thirsty? Come!
All who will, come and drink,
Drink freely of the Water of Life!



The desert will bloom and rejoice

Place a paddling pool in the centre; if appropriate, fill it with water.

Speaker's props: cup, water pistol, watering can, sprinkler etc – whatever is used with water.

Children could create a picture of a desert and fill it with flowers cut out of magazines.

Picture a flat sports field with a hedgerow at the far end. The sun is beating down, and the ground is baked hard; the grass is almost brown. Many of us have been playing the game for a while, and we're tired, thirsty and bad-tempered.

The game has paused, because a crater has appeared in the middle of the pitch, represented by this paddling pool. As we gather round it, we can see that there is water inside. Those of us who dare to climb in find that the water is cool and fresh; 'living water'.

Not only is it refreshing, the water is extensive, like a cave underneath the pitch. Water stretches away into the darkness as far as the eye can see. This is something God created, and has revealed by breaking open the ground itself.

The game cannot continue as before, because the landscape has changed. There are mixed feelings of surprise, uncertainty and 'What now?' God is doing something groundbreaking and unexpected; something game-changing.

Interpretation

For those of us who have been playing the game for a while, going through the motions, God is providing refreshment. There were no onlookers or substitutes on the bench; everyone I saw was in the game. Some were simply closer to the action than others. Just as He did for Moses¹ and for Samson², God is bringing water in dry places, out of solid rock. He is bringing life. The encouragement and challenge to you is this: "Are you going to get in there?"

Applications

1. This is for God's people. None of us are on our own. Individuals may have jumped into the water, but they are part of a wider picture. This refreshment is for groups, projects and congregations that have been going for a while and are feeling stale or stagnant. We are to draw on His resources; His living water; His Holy Spirit. Because this means change, some will be more eager than others.

2. This is for the World. None of us operate in a vacuum. The picture may have been given to the Church, but it doesn't end with the Church. As pioneers break new ground, God is able to change the landscape because of them. We are to be an oasis of living water for those in need; a focal point, not an island. Because we are God's people, some will be more eager to get involved with us than others.

About water-carriers

Water takes the shape of its container. Each and every one of us has a distinct shape, because God made us that way. This isn't so much about how tall we are, what body type we have, or our skin colour. It's about our purpose: it's about how we work as a person, what gets us going and who we respond to. Regardless of how we feel, we are made to have an effect in the world.

Maybe we can only carry a little at a time, like a cup. Others carry more, like a watering can; others can sprinkle water over a huge area, like a lawn sprinkler. The main thing is to seek God, the one who made us. To keep being filled with the Spirit and keep giving out to a dry, needy world. Your capacity will grow as you keep doing it!

Prayerful questions

- 'How does this picture change the way we see ourselves?'
- 'How does this picture change the way we see the world around us?'
- 'How does God want us to make this water available?'
- 'What needs does He want us to address first?'

Which groundbreaking Christians can you think of?

- Francis Bacon (founder of modern science)
- William Carey (father of modern mission work)
- Elizabeth Fry (prison reform)
- Billy Graham (international revival campaigns)
- Nicky Gumbel (Alpha)
- Chris Mould (Trussell Trust foodbanks)
- George Muller (orphanage funded entirely 'by faith')
- Florence Nightingale (hospital reform)
- Robert Raikes (Sunday Schools and *actual* schools)
- Lord Shaftesbury (social reform)
- Charles Wesley (turning Great Britain back to Christ)
- William Wilberforce (abolition of slavery)

¹ Exodus 17:6

² Judges 15:19