

# Chronicles of Diversity

*Your leadership weekly*



*Source of the Jordan River, Israel*

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## Living Water

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In “The Chronicles of Narnia” the saga begins in “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe” with the scenario of it always being winter, but never Christmas. It flows, as we begin to look at the community building properties of Wonder Springs, at this time of year to develop C. S. Lewis’ concept into a hydraulic model of our age.

We have used the principle of the lack of water in the desert to illustrate this principle, and the “Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” but both tend to limit our understanding of the hydrology of our civilization. “Always winter, but never Christmas,” deepens the concept of the abundance of water, but temperature limits its usefulness.

A few weeks back I was amazed with my limited understanding. While developing the Wonder Springs idea, I never made the connection to the term “living water” in the Bible. I had pondered the life aspects of wonder in natural water. I contemplated the “boink” ideas of Wonder Springs. But I didn’t really get the transference from these worldly definitions to the Biblical concept of wonder springing from living water.

The first Bible study I ever taught completely on my own was on living water. So this limited vision, made for wonder in my own mind as I again began to integrate the aspects of Biblical living water with my springing and my ecology. First, we will look briefly at the amazing life giving qualities of natural water, then use that to make a few illustrations of the Biblical concept.

Winter is a good place to begin, for in much of the world it is the period of ice and snow. Of the two solid forms of water, snow is noted for the unique individuality of snowflakes, ice is many times visioned as a sheet of uniform clarity. We have developed various enterprise uses for both materials, but by just a gentle warming, these frigid properties are no longer present, and a new world of life giving opportunities emerge.

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Jerry Bannon

**Wonder Springs**

7950 Seward Park Ave. S.

Seattle, Washington USA 98118

phone: 206.723.7433

eFax: 425.675.8022

email: [bannon@createleaders.org](mailto:bannon@createleaders.org) or [chronicles@createleaders.org](mailto:chronicles@createleaders.org)

Please forward prayer requests to: [prayer@createleaders.org](mailto:prayer@createleaders.org)

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The hydrologic cycle as it now functions on earth, is the process by which life is maintained and restored. In the Pacific Northwest and other regions of the world, our winter snow pack furnishes us with water to sustain life in summer drought. In other regions of the world, rainy summers, or seasons provide needed liquidity to allow plants to grow where it does not snow at all. Throughout the world life is really all about water.

In the blue skies, the blue is mainly the result of water vapor, as opposed to the condensed white, and gray droplets that form clouds and overcast. Back on earth, we humans, can live up to a month without food, but only about three days, without water.

When we look at the common grace manifestations of God in creation, we look at the trees, the mountains, and everything else and are amazed, but for the most part we never make the connection with the fact that most of the present geological representation, is the result of water. Many times the excesses of water in limited periods of time.

Overlaid upon the geological landscape, everywhere in the world, we exist because of the properties of water that allow life to have been created as we know it. In all of man's religious theories of why God did not create the cosmos, just the wonder of why water, or how water is such a miraculous substance, should blow our cognitive synapses. Especially if you realize that those synapses are only able to exist and to fire because of water. This chemistry within the individual, is quite similar to sea water. In our aqueous body, energy is utilized, dissipated, and waste eliminated, within, and because of this amazing liquid.

From this amazing substance which is the source of all life, and source is definitely an inadequate word, the Bible makes a transition to the term "living water." The Biblical inference is that natural water is the source of life in this world, living water being the source of life in the eternal sense.

In the modern translations, the New American Standard has six references to living water, the New King James and the NIV seven each with a variation of one in each. Those references are:

***SONG OF SOLOMON 4:15 (NKJV)***

A fountain of gardens, A well of living waters, And streams from Lebanon.

***JEREMIAH 2:13***

"For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.

***JEREMIAH 17:13***

O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You shall be ashamed. "Those who depart from Me Shall be written in the earth, Because they have forsaken the LORD, The fountain of living waters."

***ZECHARIAH 14:8***

And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur.

***JOHN 4:10***

Jesus answered and said to her, "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."

***JOHN 4:11***

The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?"

***JOHN 7:38***

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

***REVELATION 7:17 (NIV)***

for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

If you believe that the Song of Solomon is a type of love sonnet of God to his bride, the eternal Israel, then all eight references refer to a prophetic fulfillment at the end of time or a judgement for disobeying the law. Jesus also signifies that living water is available to some extent today for Christian believers. So why is our landscape such a parched desert, or more appropriately a land in which it is always winter but never Christmas?

This summer I developed a well on my property in NE Washington that will never run dry. Actually, my guess is if the nearby river would dry up for three to four years, I would still have water for my needs and for many of the neighbors. That was not my goal at the beginning, from my perspective it just turned out that way. I wasn't planning on developing such a well, but such a well I have none the less. And I believe that the application reaches well beyond its use in this series of messages, but right now, for the most part I still wonder why.

The direct Bible inference from the discussion that Jesus had at the well with the sinful Samaritan woman (the John 4 passages), is that not only do I now possess a natural well that will never dry up, for many years, I have possessed a eternal well, that really will never run dry. As of this writing, I have done little to develop either my natural well or my eternal well.

Now there is an application here that might go unnoticed. Jesus is talking to the woman about well water. The other living water applications, while they do not eliminate well water, imply rivers, springs, and fountains of free flowing water, the well no longer needs to be dug and the water drawn. Therefore the nature of the living water of eternal life in this era, from the advent of Messiah, which we celebrate at Christmas, until He returns at His second advent, is visibly a spiritual well, not a flowing stream directly available to all. As many of the other verses testify this is the result of sin.

Natural water has a heat of fusion from water to ice and the other way around. That means that energy needs to be added to ice to make it change from ice to liquid, in excess of that required to change its temperature in the liquid state. This is what makes the illustration of the Chronicles of Narnia so amazing. There is plenty of fresh water to go around in this world, it is just frozen. In many areas of the world this melting happens every year in the spring, the season after Christmas. But in the spiritual sense, much of it remains locked in glacial flows.

There is a term in the church called the "frozen chosen." I think I first heard it associated with those of my Lutheran heritage. Another term, that is usually used in self description, is "on fire for the Lord." Water also has a heat of vaporization. The point here is both ice, and water vapor have uses, but they are of limited value to life in the world. For the church to be of any value, you either have to thaw the living water, or condense the living steam.

Many of you are beginning to notice a developing parallel with the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3. While I have yet to hear a sermon illustration expounding the virtues of the cold, only the hot in these verses, the contrast is still present, even though it has been completely ignored in most exegeses. But there is an application in Laodicea that does relate to the living water passages, that is the passage in Jeremiah 2:13. Not only has much of the church hewn for itself cisterns that are broken and hold no water, as a general rule, cisterns hold stale and tepid water.

With the advent of the so called science of evolution, the church ceased from becoming the force of positive cultural change. One group sought to fire up the hope of a quick escape from the desert of this world, the other retreated into the security of a self righteous frozen doctrine of early Narnia. This could have been the inspiration for C.S. Lewis as he began the Chronicles.

The rivers of eternity are free flowing. The Pacific Northwest is an area of hydroelectric, irrigation, and transportation dams. I bring this up, for I read a number of years ago, the condition causing the decline to the Snake and the Columbia River salmon was not the dams per se, it was the detention time behind the dams, that was the chief cause of the loss of fish. For example, before the dams it took less than a week for the small salmon to get from Lewiston, Idaho to the Pacific. Now because of the dams, it takes over a month. The hypothesis was that when salmon are moving that slow, they lose their way, get caught up in all sorts of worldly hazards and never make it to sea. While I do not want to make an endorsement of the science of this hypothesis, its metaphysical application, to those who call themselves the church, is apparent and truthful.

The church is not called out of the world to be ice, or hot air, nor is it called to be a cistern, a lake, or a reservoir. Individual springs slowly join to become creeks, and creeks become streams, and streams become rivers, and the rivers flow into the oceans, and our God given hydrologic cycle renews and replenishes the earth, through rain, snow and ice. Water, natural and living, is why life exists at all on this blue planet. Now is the time for the church to melt the ice, condense the steam and let the cool refreshing waters, restore the land and bring life to our portion of Narnia, for Christmas is to be a celebration of what has already taken place, not something that never happens.

## **From Wonder Springs**

The applications of natural water as a parable of living water is without limit. That is because living water is in some way different from natural water. Its indwelling spirit of God, not only is the source of life that natural water conveys, it is also the antidote for death. That, we do not understand, only stand on its promise.

From that spring, Wonder Springs continues to look at boats and ships and I get a better idea of what God would have this ministry do, as wonder becomes a more important part of our springs. After discussing certain aspects of the local ship last week with the owners, I feel that the limitations were too tourist oriented (passive) and restrictive to local seas. In that light I have broadened that search to what is classified more as a “work boat” that can go pretty much anywhere the Lord might send her.

## **Seeds for Prayer**

The last couple of weeks were some of the most trying I can remember. One gift of getting older is that many times those memories fade. In any event, as I heard a couple of missionaries share last week, in some incomprehensible way you can actually feel the prayers of others in intercession. To that end I too am personally much restored, and convicted that I need to focus more on the abundance of water, even in the desert, or more specifically Narnia. This spiritual winter season was a couple of trying weeks, but I believe it coincided with an abundant snow pack in the mountains. Strangely, my problems also seemed to in many ways to flow with the return of the wet dark winter days of Seattle. Something the sunny time I spent in Eastern Washington this summer, and an unusually dry autumn on the western slopes, did not prepare me for.

Please continue to intercede for the attempt to have this ministry become more than a little spring, but be able to voyage on the mighty seas.