



## The Living Word

# Water of Life: the Blind man sees

## Clay in the hands of the Potter

One of the basic essentials of life on this planet is water. Without water life is very short, ranging from a matter of hours on a hot day in the desert to a few days in dire conditions. This has a direct parallel to the survival of those who would wish to serve and worship the Creator.

Isaiah 68 presents a pictorial view of the importance of water to the potter, who fashions a lump of clay into a useful and an aesthetically pleasing object and this creates a parallel to the way in which the Word of God should mould the faithful.

But now, O LORD, thou *art* our father; we *are* the clay,  
and thou our potter; and we all *are* the work of thy hand.  
(Isaiah 64:8)



The potter takes the clay and unless the clay is kept moist with water, it cannot be moulded. If the clay dries out it is impossible to make anything out of that clay. The nation of Israel, to understand their God, had to pay heed to their Law, and the writings of the Psalms and the Prophets and obey God's Laws, rejecting false religions and idolatry.

## 2) The Water of the Word

In Ephesians 5:26, Paul in writing to the Ephesians states that all the members of the congregation needed to study the Word of God to create an acceptable attitude to the Lord and an understanding of his requirements for those who believed in him and would faithfully serve him. Paul states:

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (Ephesians 5:26)

He is saying that we are then washed by the Word of God, which reveals God's purpose with man. The spiritual water of the Word is added to our minds and without it we cannot be moulded into a vessel that is usable. The essential moral and spiritual qualities required in the faithful man and woman are revealed in God's written word. The Ephesian congregation needed to study the writings of the Psalms, the Law and the Prophets that were available to them. Jesus ([Yeshua](#)) had also given this instruction to his followers during his ministry.

In the following verses from Jeremiah 2, Jeremiah brings Yahweh's condemnation of the nation of Israel before the people. They had forsaken Yahweh and turned to the "broken cisterns", devoid of water, of false religion, worldliness and political unfaithfulness. Here again the concept of water is

used, referring to the ideas gained from false religions, particularly of the worship of idols and false gods. These false religions were useless, offering no hope of salvation, as Yahweh alone is the “fountain of living waters” and provides knowledge of the way of salvation.

Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead.

For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed *their* gods, which *are* yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for *that which* doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, says the LORD.

For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. (Jeremiah 2: 9-13)



Again in Jeremiah, the nation is reminded that Yahweh alone is the “fountain of living waters”, the only one who sustains life.

O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, *and* they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters. (Jeremiah 17:13)

Jeremiah expands on this image of the potter. Just as the potter destroys a marred and useless vessel, so too will Yahweh destroy those who do not hear and obey his words.

Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it* . Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay *is* in the potter's hand, so *are* ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. (Jeremiah 18: 2-6)

Isaiah also uses the image of the water of life. We are asked to consider what we most desire in life. We have been offered the waters without money and without price. Where do we place all our efforts? We are advised to “hearken”, to listen diligently and carefully and then “incline” and hear the words of life, as promised to the faithful such as Abraham and David.

Ho, every one that thirsts, come ye to the waters, and he that has no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which* is not bread? and your labour for *that which* satisfies not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which* is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David. (Isaiah 55: 1-3)

Isaiah reveals the joy that awaits the faithful, who listen, hear and obey the word of the Lord.

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands. (Isaiah 55:11-12)

Owing to the word going forth, the people will be “led forth with peace”. The word is working in the lives of the faithful now, so there will be ultimately peace on earth for them to inherit. There are blessings for those who heed the “word” and they are like a “watered garden”.

And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. (Isaiah 58:11)



### 3) The Pool of Siloam

Traditionally at the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles (In Hebrew known as *Sukkot*), water from the Pool of Siloam was poured out before the Altar and the words from Isaiah 12 were sung. It reminded the nation that they had to place complete trust in Yahweh and the promise of salvation revealed by his name, “He will be who He will be”, and in the writings regularly read to them. Yahweh requires the faithful to acknowledge him before the people and trust in him, as he is the only source of salvation and life.

And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.  
Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD Yahweh *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation.  
Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.  
Sing unto the LORD; for he has done excellent things: this *is* known in all the earth.  
Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great *is* the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee. (Isaiah 12:1-6)

The Messiah, who had been “sent” to the nation of Israel during the Roman occupation of their land, was the “holy one in the midst” of them and not acknowledged by them.

He made an allusion to Isaiah 12, when on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), he stood in the Temple and declared his Messiahship and referred to the scriptures, which prophesied of him.

In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He that believes on me, *as the scripture has said*, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (John 7:37-38)



### **The man born blind Sees**

The New Testament presents a very interesting incident related to the pool of Siloam and the significance of the verse just quoted. It involves a blind man, who, we could say, was a *sign* to the leaders in Israel. In John 8: 59, after a confrontation with the Jewish leaders Jesus left the Temple. It would appear that this blind man was in the vicinity of the Temple.

Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (John 8:59)

And as he passed by, he saw a man which was blind from birth.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. (John 9:1-7)

The Pharisees, who accused Jesus of being a sinner for healing on the sabbath, did not recognise that the “Holy One was in their midst”, as Isaiah 12:6 had prophesied. They were blinded by the eye of the flesh, of pride in their position and lack of understanding of the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets, whose writings they should have understood and expounded to the people. Of all the people in Israel they should have recognised and acknowledged their Messiah. Jesus had used the figure of blindness to describe the Pharisees' lack of understanding of the scriptures. Isaiah had

described those who should have been concerned with the spiritual welfare of the people in the following way.

His watchmen *are* blind: they are all ignorant, they *are* all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

Yea, *they are* greedy dogs *which* can never have enough, and they *are* shepherds *that* cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. (Isaiah 56: 10-11)

Jesus used the same figure in reference to the Pharisees in response to his disciples' comments about the Pharisees' attitude towards him.

Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Know thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. (Matthew 15: 12-14)

Note that in John's account of the healing of the blind man, John gives the meaning or interpretation of the word Siloam as 'sent'. The name Siloam originally applied to Hezekiah's aqueduct which allowed the water of Gihon, outside Jerusalem's walls to flow into the city to sustain life in the city. Jesus had been "sent" to the nation of Israel to save those who would listen and hear the words of Yahweh but the Pharisees were blinded, unable to see and accept Jesus as their Messiah.

The blind man, who possibly spent time in close proximity to the Temple, and listened to the reading of the Word, did recognise the Messiah.

In this instance, this miraculous cure involved that which came from the mouth of the Lord and was mixed with the dust of the ground. Man was created from the dust of the ground and the Lord typically places the flesh/human nature on the blind man's eyes. He is then 'sent' to wash it off in the Pool of Siloam (by interpretation 'sent'). The scribes and Pharisees were looking at the Lord with flesh covered eyes. They were looking for the Messiah of their choice. They were not prepared to look at the Lord with the eyes of the spirit and of faith, which comes through the understanding of the written word.



On the other hand, the blind man, figuratively representing those like the Pharisees who did not recognise the power and authority of the Son of God, had obviously listened to the words read regularly in the Temple and heard the words of the Lord. He saw with the eye of faith and obeyed

the Lord's command to wash in the Pool of Siloam. He saw physically but more importantly he saw with the eye of faith. The blind man, his family and friends would have had overwhelming joy that the man born blind could now see. Only a small number within the nation of Israel sought the "water of life" from their Messiah.

This was a reflection of the attitude of the people described by Isaiah when the nation trusted in other nations and the arm of flesh rather than in Yahweh. The nation had suffered then with the Assyrian invasion and were destined to suffer again in AD70.

Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;

Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, *even* the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach *even* to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel. (Isaiah 8:6-8)

#### 4) The Pharisees confront the Man born Blind

In explaining how he received his sight, the blind man used the image of the clay and the water, as used by the potter.

The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

Some said, This is he: others *said* , He is like him: *but* he said, I am *he* .

Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. (John 9: 8-11)

The Pharisees, wanting to find some accusation against Jesus also sought the man and interrogated him. When the Pharisees questioned the man, he again uses the image of clay, moistened from Jesus' mouth and the waters of the Pool of Siloam. Some of the Pharisees accused Jesus of being a sinner because he had not kept the sabbath. The cured man immediately states that he was undoubtedly a Prophet. He recognised the power of Yahweh was needed for such a miracle.

Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. (John 9:15-18)

The man on further questioning again asserts that Jesus was a prophet. The Pharisees again assert that he was a sinner.

Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise:

we know that this man is a sinner.

He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner *or no* , I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. (John 9: 24-25)

The Pharisees claimed that they were Moses' disciples.

Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

We know that God spake unto Moses: *as for this fellow* , we know not from whence he is. (John 9: 28-29)



If they indeed were Moses' disciples they would have known that Moses had prophesied that a greater than Moses would arise to redeem the people.

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; (Deuteronomy 18:15)

The enlightened man shows his understanding and recognition of the power at work in their midst.

The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes.

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. (John 9: 30-34)

Jesus revealed himself to the man born blind, whose faith is shown in his response to Jesus.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. (John 9: 35-38)

The leaders of Israel were blind in the sense that they failed to recognise their Messiah, because they did not really understand their scriptures. They were conscious of their position and were more caught up in the ritual of their traditions and worship. They thought that they understood, but they did not. On the other hand, the man born blind represented the extension of the hope of salvation

that was about to be extended to the nations, the Gentiles, that had formerly been in darkness and ignorance.

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.  
And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? (John 9: 35-40)

Moses, also using that image of blindness, had long ago warned the nation of Israel that terrible judgements would come upon them if they turned from their God.

The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save *thee*. (Deuteronomy 28:28-29)

## 5) We were blind: how we see

Blindness was also used figuratively by the prophets such as in the following verses in Isaiah.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

And I will bring the blind by a way *that* they knew not; I will lead them in paths *that* they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye *are* our gods.

Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.  
(Isaiah 42: 1-4, 16-18)

The nation of Israel, now re-established after two thousand years, will see their Messiah and acknowledge their sins. They will mourn over the crucifying of Jesus (Yeshua) and their current attitude (as why would they mourn about something their ancestors did?).

And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.





And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn. (Zechariah 12:9-10)

The Jews will continue to return from the nations to where they fled following the Roman invasion of Israel and destruction of Jerusalem in AD70. Jews and Gentiles will be united in worshipping the God of Israel when the Messiah returns to bring peace to a world in distress.

And they shall bring all your brethren *for* an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. (Isaiah 66:20)

For there shall be a day, *that* the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God. For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel... I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim *is* my firstborn.

Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare *it* in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd *doth* his flock. (Jeremiah 31:6-10)

The promise of salvation requires our minds and bodies, from the dust of the earth, to be moulded like the vessel shaped by the potter using clay moistened with water. The water which moulds us is the Word of God as we read and meditate on its wonderful promise of salvation. It is the sole source of knowledge. We cannot trust in the traditions and man made laws, such as those of the Pharisees.

The woman at the well in Samaria was shown the source of salvation. For us today there is no other way of salvation than the word of God.

But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:14)

These words echo that promise made in Isaiah 55,

Ho, every one that thirsts, come ye to the waters, and he that has no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.... Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David. (Isaiah 55: 1,3)

