

## *Watch with Creation at the Cross*

### **Lord of Creation Suffers Thirst**

- ⌘ **Clean created water and plants**
- ☠ **Thirsty souls since the Fall**
- ✝ **Hyssop clears the leprosy of sin**
- ⌘ **Thirst finished forever**

In the Name of Jesus, the Lord of all Creation, dearly redeemed sheep of the Good Shepherd:

Thirst is not as well understood as some think. I was glad when one of the grandmas explained that sometimes the fed, diapered and burped baby just needs a little water to fall asleep. Have you ever thought you were hungry when really you were just thirsty? It's a simple weight loss technique to drink a nice glass of water before eating. And what about those college students in the Boundary Waters Wilderness who thought it was really funny when they forgot drinking water? They had plenty of beer! On the third day of alcohol dehydration plain water would have beat the labels off anything they had.

But for all our lack of understanding physical thirst, much more harm come from spiritual thirst. A thirsty soul is dying unknown. Crucifixion victims suffered intensely from thirst that raged through their bodies as cells collapsed along with their lungs. What little moisture was left after the beatings evaporated into the desert air. Far worse for Jesus was the thirst inside His soul. But God the Father forsook His own Son for us to never need suffer such soul thirst in hell. His victory is ours because of the promise: *“After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.”* (Isaiah 53:11 NIV) Tonight as we again *Watch with Creation at the Cross*, we marvel that the **Lord of Creation Suffers Thirst**.

### ⌘ **Clean created water and plants**

“Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink.” There were no whales like Moby Dick yet on Day Three of Creation Week, no Captain Ahab athirst in bobbing boat. The grand Creator had serious work to do after creating light on the first day, then the firmament with waters above and below on the second. We hear a double “good” verdict by the skilled Word of God who was there at the beginning to gather all the water under the firmament into seas and out of that muddy mass to make dry ground appear. That catastrophic day God formed the land in geological upheaval none but His eyes were there to see.

By the Holy Spirit's inspiration the Psalmist could marvel two millennia later: *“He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth.”* (Psalm 104:5-9 NIV)

With land and seas in place it was time to make the ground burst forth with greenery and establish the most remarkable protection of our food supply. Did you catch that from the one historical account available to us? *“Then God said, ‘Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.’ And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.”* (Genesis 1:11-12 NIV)

The Holy Spirit's Hebrew is very explicit. God created with age. He made mature fruit trees to be literally, *"bearing fruit each his seed in it according to its kind."* Without this creative precision we would have no food supply. A farmer might think he was planting wheat, but some ugly shrub would jump up instead. Even our ability to engineer herbicides is based on the fact that each weed produces seeds according to its own kind. Otherwise, weed genetics would overwhelm every single crop. And all around was plenty of water because the Creator made it so when He **Clean created water and plants.**

### ☠ **Thirsty souls since the Fall**

We've heard about the Fall of Adam and Eve into sin. Adam's known act of rebellion brought death and suffering into this world just as one tiny canister of sarin gas could wipe out an entire cruise ship through its ventilation system. But what about the effect of sin on water itself and the disastrous effects of dried up water supplies on God's whole creation? From the moment God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden, they would have to make sure they had clean water for themselves and their animals. This may not have been as much of a problem in the pre-Flood world when the Bible says, *"The LORD God had not sent rain on the earth..., but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground."* (Genesis 2:5f NIV) The first recorded incident of rain came 2,000 years later when the LORD destroyed the earth with the worldwide Flood of Noah's day. People had become so violent, only Noah's family still walked by faith in God.

But that shows how deep down in man's soul he was dying of thirst without even knowing it. Perhaps billions of people on most likely a single continent heard about this man and his sons building a huge barge on dry land. How they must have laughed for a hundred years at Noah's warnings that God would destroy the earth in a flood. They still laugh today as they deny the evidence in the geological record all over the world. It's no accident. Man's soul is thirsty. The Holy Spirit gives us this insight through the Lord's Apostle Peter: *"They deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."* (2 Peter 3:5-9 NIV)

### ✝ **Hyssop clears the leprosy of sin**

There, dear friends, is the key of Lent. One word helps us admit our awful thirst and see the one way God delivers the water of life to quench our souls. Repentance can feel it. And a repentant heart is the only kind that can stoop down and drink and live.

It was foreshadowed in Moses' Old Testament law for healing lepers of that family of dread diseases that eats away at rotting flesh while flies have their feast on the living stench. My one encounter with a leper in a distant country is one I will never forget. He was so desperate, yet his relatives would leave him at a church gate all day, then take his money to spend on their own pleasure.

Homes in Israel suffered a similar attack of construction-type leprosy, translated in modern English as "mildew." The same miracle herb used for lepers was used for purifying homes. The Egyptians knew about it. Even ancient Greek physician Hippocrates prescribed the herb for various maladies. And modern herbalists suggest it for the treatment of bronchial infections. But the Holy Spirit uses it to picture something far more deadly than physical diseases. When the soul is lost in unrepentant sin, eternal death is waiting in hell to torment body and soul in everlasting separation from God.

And of all the people to help us see, it's the King whom God called a man *"after his own heart."* (1 Samuel 13:14) King David knew what he was supposed to be doing that *"spring... when kings go off to war."* (2 Samuel 11:1) But his soul was thirsty without even knowing it. He was like a sheep being led by

his Good Shepherd up to the high country pastures of pure, clear water glistening in the sunshine. But David stopped like a foolish sheep on a manure spattered road to drink from the mud puddle of adultery. Like a foolish sheep, he felt fine because he was so in love with that woman. He thought he could cover it up by her husband's military leave. But Uriah the Hittite was a better man than his Commander in Chief, King David. Uriah would not go home to his wife, but he did unknowingly obey his king and carry back to General Joab the kill order against him and his fellow soldiers in a futile attack meant to fail.

When finally the flukes and nematodes in David's soul began to grow, the parasite problem would not go away with tossing and turning. Anguished cries for his little baby from the womb of Bathsheba, seemed to go unheard. The baby died. And then David asked for food. How strange that seemed to his servants, but David explained: *"While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."* (2 Samuel 12:22fNIV)

It's obvious, isn't? The prophet Nathan had already been with David. His admonition had already hit home. God's Law convicted the king of his sin, and the Gospel already healed him by God's grace. What was foreshadowed in those ancient laws of Moses had already come true. **Hyssop clears the leprosy of sin.** David had prayed in the Penitential Psalm: *"Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity."* (Psalm 51:7-9 NIV)

### ✠ Thirst finished forever

We don't want to over interpret this or to allegorize leprosy. It does make a vivid picture of the way sin eats at our hearts and lives. But suffering and death came into this world not by chance mutation to make way for higher life forms, but by Adam's sin. Yet the Holy Spirit gives us this Good News to quench our thirsty souls: *"For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ."* (Romans 5:17 NIV)

The dear Holy Spirit draws the connection from creation through David to the cross of great David's greater Son. For as Jesus willingly hung there between the earth and sky which He created, He said, *"I am thirsty."* *A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.* (John 19:28-30 NIV)

Thanks to Jesus, by trusting in Him our desiccated souls enjoy **Thirst finished forever.** Jesus told the sinful woman at Jacob's well: *"Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* (John 4:14 NIV)

**Lord of Creation,** *"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."* (Psalm 51:7-12 KJV)

To that our Lord Jesus says, *"It is finished."* (John 19:30)

And to Jesus, we say, "Amen."

***“After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.”***

***“He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth.”*** (Psalm 104:5-9 NIV)

***“They deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*** (2 Peter 3:5-9 NIV)

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