

Home Worship for May 2018 by the Revd Jack Dunion

May 6th

The river of life

Read Revelation 22:1-6 and John 4: 7-15

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God." Revelation 22:1

Water is such an amazing substance, it can somehow morph into three different forms: a solid, a gas and a liquid. As a gas it is in the air and when it cools it turns into a liquid and runs into deep crevices in the earth. It can then freeze into a solid and as it does so it swells out causing huge sections of rock to split apart and this helped shape the landscape we see today. As a liquid it also seeps into the earth releasing nutrients for plants and flowers to drink up through their roots. Water is vital for many other things and up to 78% of the human body consists of water.

The usefulness and life giving qualities of water make it the perfect representative for the Lord's life giving truths. As water means truth, then a river means an abundance of truths flowing from the Lord's Word. The Lord has now revealed the inner spiritual sense of His Word: which gives life to the letter. In the book *Apocalypse Revealed*, paragraph 932, we read: "By 'the pure river of water of life bright as crystal' is signified the Divine truth of the Word in abundance translucent from its spiritual sense, which is in the light of heaven."

Reading the Word in the light of the spiritual sense, causes its literal sense to be translucent and its internal truths flow out from it like a river. Those who read the Word in the light of its internal sense and apply the truths from it in their lives are therefore likened to trees along a riverbank. *"Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream." Jer 17:7-8*

These internal truths strengthen us against self-love and love of the world. They confirm for us the reality of our divine creator, a life after death, a purpose to all creation. And so the Lord said,

"Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst." John 4:14

By drinking the water of life, which the Lord gives us, means we are applying the truths of His Word to our own living and so making them a part of who we are in spirit.

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God." Revelation 22:1

Lord Jesus Christ, give me the courage and strength to grow as a tree watered by the life giving truths of your Word, which flow from you that I might be refreshed in spirit.
Amen

May 13th

The Light of the World

Read John 8:12-19

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

Light is of course responsible for our sense of sight. Throughout history people have used lack of light as a symbol of evil. Darkness can bring a feeling of insecurity and uncertainty regarding our surroundings. Darkness perhaps also highlights in us our deep fear of the unknown.

I'm sure as a child we all remember times when we were convinced someone was standing in our room when the lights were out only to find that when the lights go on it was something silly like a coat hanging on the door or a Hoover with clothes draped over it. When light is introduced, all becomes clear and what we looked upon with fear becomes almost laughable. It is no wonder that there is this linking of darkness with evil. We know there are two kinds of light. There is light that enables us to see with our physical eyes, and light that enables us to see with our understanding. This is why we often say, "I see what you mean" or "Let me shed some light on the subject."

The light which helps us see with our physical eyes is of course natural light from the sun. But the light which helps us see with reasoned understanding is spiritual. We have natural light and spiritual light and they correspond and it is because natural light corresponds with spiritual light, that we can easily know the nature of spiritual light. As light and darkness correspond to spiritual light and darkness then all the related effects correspond too. So, for example, if natural darkness causes us fear then spiritual darkness will cause spiritual fear too. And since the effect of a light coming on clarifies things: there must also be a spiritual light that clarifies things spiritually. That light is the Lord because He Himself is truth which clarifies and manifests the divine love. The divine love is called in the Word "the Father" and this is why the Lord said in many places He was sent from the Father. **Matt. 10:40. Luke 10:16. John 4:34, 5:24, 5:30, 5:37 etc.**

The world we are born into is like that room without the lights on. We have many fears in this world. Many things are yet unknown to us. The Lord said, "I am the light of the world." Whenever we do what we do from the Lord, it brings spiritual light from the Lord into our natural life, dissipating fear and darkness. It is worth remembering that darkness is by default; we need the Lord's light before spiritual darkness is dissipated.

"All the light of truth is from the Lord, and all darkness is from man." *Arcana Caelestia (AC) 1321*

That which switches on our spiritual light is love, which we acquire by doing as the Lord teaches, because the Lord Himself is pure love and pure truth. When we live from the Lord by doing what He commands, He is then in us and we see in the light of His truth, and darkness and fear have no place in our lives.

Recommended reading: AC 1321, 3223

Lord, lead me from the darkness of my ignorance and fears to the light of your truth. May it shine light on my fear, reminding me that you are with me. I need not fear for I am not alone. Your strength can overcome where I am helpless and fail. I know I can always turn to you. Your light will always guide me, reminding me of your love and bringing me back to you to save me.

May I keep following you, doing as you teach and guided by your light on my path. May I so live that your light will shine out of me bringing your brightness into the world's darkness. Amen

May 20th

Crossing the Jordan

Read Joshua 1:1-11 and Matthew 3:1-6

"Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them." Joshua 1:2

The children of Israel had wandered about in the desert for 40 years. But why not just go straight to Canaan? Well it's because the literal story is only a means through which a spiritual story can be told. The deeper message of these wanderings tell us about the temptations someone goes through once they commit themselves to following the Lord. So from a natural and worldly state they begin to move towards a more spiritual and heavenly state. From a life lived from self and the world, to a life lived for the Lord and the neighbour.

Before we embark on this spiritual journey, we are slaves to our own natural desires; they pull us down, they oppress us and they cause problems in our lives which we don't want. The Lord asks us to follow Him

and trust Him so He can free us and lead us away from living in a selfish and worldly state. The destination is Canaan, which represents the heavenly state we are promised at the end of the journey, a journey away from self-living: it's the Promised land. But to get there, we first need to remove the things of self and the world. The journey in the desert represents the refining process that we must go through before we can become more loving and more heavenly people.

We need to go through this process before we can cross to a more heavenly life. This requires a cleansing of the soul and is signified by the crossing of the Jordan River. The Jordan River forms from the melting snow, the rain and the dew which descends upon the mountains above. This pictures how the truths of heaven descend upon the higher regions of our minds down into the natural mind, cleansing our lives of evils and falsities. This of course is why people were baptised in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, in preparation for the Lord's coming. John the Baptist said, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.*" (Matthew 3: 2

Repentance helps us to get ready to cross over into a more heavenly life by identifying and removing evils and falsities. Only then are we ready to receive the Lord's goodness and truth which will flow in and bring life giving truths for our salvation. "*Crossing of the Jordan'* means introduction into cognitions of good and truth".

AC 6536

"Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them." Joshua 1:2

Lord Jesus, help me to be aware of when I am seeing only from my perspective and am not taking into account how others might see things. I am sorry for my shortsightedness. Teach me your way, and lead me to your heavenly kingdom. Amen

Day 27th

Lord in the human

Read Exodus 3: and Judges 6:11-24

I wonder if you have ever been speaking with someone and they mention something you apparently said to them a long time ago. You may have forgotten you even said it. But for them it has somehow been of enormous value - life changing even: yet you may even doubt it was you who said it at all. Or it may be that someone has said something meaningful to us, and we have taken it on board in a deep and meaningful way, yet they may not even remember saying it. What is it in such a statement that has inspired us so much?

In the book **Heaven & Hell** we read that "To be inspired is in fact to be inserted into angelic communities." ¶¶ 69. If we take this beyond just the way in which the prophets were inspired to write the Word of God then perhaps a person who speaks to us and says something which inspires us has actually introduced us into an angelic community! Wow! Now that is quite profound! But isn't it interesting that the person who does this is completely unaware that they did so?

In many places in the Word we know the Lord Himself inspires people through angels: for example, in Exodus, *"There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush... When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush..."*

God said to Moses, "I am who I am." Exodus 3:2, 4, 14

"From these verses it is evident that it was an angel who appeared to Moses as a flame in the bush and that he spoke as Jehovah, because the Lord or Jehovah was speaking through him." AC 1925.2

Why else would the angel of Jehovah suddenly be called Jehovah Himself unless Jehovah was speaking through the angel? Again in AC it is explained how the Lord communicated His Word to the prophets. We read:

"So that man may be spoken to by means of articulated sounds heard in the natural world, the Lord employs angels as His ministers by filling them with the Divine and by rendering unconscious all that is their own, so that for the time being they know no other than that they themselves are Jehovah." AC 1925.3

Here is another clear example from the book of Judges of an angel being addressed as the Lord (Jehovah):

When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the Lord, he exclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign Lord! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!" But the Lord said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." Judges 6:22-23

Clearly then the Lord employed angels so He could be seen and heard in ultimates when he spoke to the prophets. Their spiritual eyes would of course need to be opened to see the angel through whom the Lord spoke. But when the Lord Himself came into the world, He assumed a human form of His own. He then made His whole human divine: and we read in *Apocalypse Explained* 619.15 that the Lord "glorified or made Divine His whole Human, even to its natural and sensual". So the Lord can now speak to us through anyone around us. It shouldn't matter whether it comes through a good person or a bad person: the Lord can speak to us through anyone, anywhere at any time.

So the next time someone says something to us which holds great meaning for us we might want to think about who really said it! *"Ah, Sovereign Lord!"*