

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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THE NEED
OF THE
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Living Stream Ministry

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From [chapter seven](#) of the Gospel of John we shall consider the need of the thirsty. This case is in contrast with [chapter six](#) of John, the need of the hungry. In [chapter six](#) the Lord is clearly revealed as the bread of life to satisfy our hunger, but here in [chapter seven](#) the Lord brings the flow of living water to quench our thirst. In [chapter six](#) the people are hungry, but in [chapter seven](#) they are thirsty. [Chapter six](#) presents the living bread, and [chapter seven](#) introduces the living water. The bread of life is for hungry people, and the rivers of living water are for thirsty people. For the thirsty, Christ is the quenching life. He is the very life that is able to quench man's thirst.

The thought that the Lord is our food and water is seen throughout the Scriptures. For example, in [Genesis 2](#) the tree of life is a picture of the Lord as our life supply of food. Beside the tree of life in [Genesis 2](#) there is the river of water, which is a portrait of the Lord bringing us the rivers of living water. In other words, this pictures the Lord's

purpose in the creation of man—man must eat and drink. If he fails to eat, he will become hungry, and if he fails to drink, he will become thirsty. The Lord is the food to satisfy our hunger, and He has the living water to quench our thirst.

Later in the Scriptures, the children of Israel, as they traveled through the wilderness, also had both food and water. On the one hand, they had the manna from heaven as their daily food ([Exo. 16:14-15](#)); on the other hand, they had the living water flowing from the smitten rock to quench their thirst ([Exo. 17:6](#)).

In the Gospel of John, the Lord also is the living bread and He offers the living water to satisfy the hunger and the thirst of the multitude. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the three Persons of the Triune God, are very much related to this matter of food and water. God the Father is the source, God the Son is the food, and God the Spirit is the drink. The first Person of the Triune God is the source of the second Person as the food, from whom the third Person flows out as the drink.

[First Corinthians 10:3-4](#) also points out these two things. There, Christ Himself is the spiritual food and He is the smitten rock from which flows the spiritual drink. The Holy Spirit is the spiritual

drink flowing out of the crucified Christ. Therefore, Christ is our food, and the Holy Spirit who flows out of Christ is our drink.

Finally, we come to the end of the Scriptures, where we see the New Jerusalem. Again, the flow of the living water is the Holy Spirit, and the tree of life growing in the flow is Christ ([Rev. 22:1-2](#)). Hence, there is a line running throughout the whole Scriptures showing us that Christ is our spiritual food, that the Holy Spirit is our spiritual drink, and that man needs both to eat and to drink in order to satisfy his hunger and thirst.

THE SCENE OF THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

[John 7](#) is a continuation of [chapter six](#), because the matter of food is related to water. In the scene of [chapter six](#), there was the feast of the Passover. In the scene in [chapter seven](#), there is the feast of Tabernacles. The feast of the Passover is the first of the annual Jewish feasts, and the feast of Tabernacles is the last ([Lev. 23:5, 34](#)). The feast of the Passover, as the first feast of the year, implies the beginning of man's life (cf. [Exo. 12:2-3, 6](#)), which involves man's seeking for satisfaction and results in man's hunger. The feast of Tabernacles, as the last feast of the year, implies the completion

and success of man's life (cf. [Exo. 23:16](#)), which will end and result in man's thirst. In the scene of the feast of the Passover, the Lord presented Himself as the bread of life, which satisfies man's hunger. In the scene of the feast of Tabernacles, the Lord promised that He would flow forth the living water, which quenches man's thirst.

The feast of the Passover occurred early in the year, when the people were working and laboring hard. The case of the feeding of the five thousand finds the people working to fill their hunger, but failing to be satisfied. They labored, they worked, they sought something to satisfy, but they failed. The feast of Tabernacles, on the contrary, occurred at a time when the harvest was over. The people had reaped the corn and the wine ([Deut. 16:13-14](#)). Everything of the harvest had been reaped, and the people were to come together at the feast of Tabernacles and enjoy everything with their families and even with their servants. We must realize that during the feast of Tabernacles the people do not labor because the work is over, the crop has been reaped, and the corn and wine have been harvested. That was the time to rejoice in their enjoyment—but they were still thirsty! This case reveals that their thirst was not quenched even by their success.

If you read the verses concerning the Passover in [Exodus 12](#), you will see that the Passover indicates or implies the beginning of life. The Passover, of course, is for salvation. When we were saved, we had a new start. The Passover was always in the first month of the year. Hence, it marked a new beginning. In a sense, all of the young people are in the Passover, for their life has just begun and they have many high expectations. Although perhaps you have not yet graduated from college, you expect that after graduation you will be a professor, doctor, or attorney. This is the feast of the Passover. We have already seen that the feast of the Passover always ends in hunger. After your graduation there will be nothing but hunger. The higher position you attain in your profession, the more hunger you feel. The more money you earn, the more dissatisfied you will be. In [John 6](#), the feast of the Passover, as the initial step in life, ends in hunger.

THE COMPLETION AND SUCCESS OF LIFE WITH ITS ENJOYMENT IN A RELIGIOUS WAY

After the full harvest of their crops, the Jewish people observed the feast of Tabernacles to enjoy what they had reaped in the worship of God

(Exo. 23:16; Deut. 16:13-15). Hence, this feast signifies the completion, achievement, and success of man's career, study, and other matters of human life, including religion, with the joy and enjoyment thereof. Thus, the feast of Tabernacles implies the completion of your job, achievement, and career. Although you may be successful in your occupation or career, you must realize that it will all issue in thirst. Eventually, after working your entire life, you will be thirsty, because everything has a last day. Everything ends. The last day is always a great day. After people attain a certain success, other people will give them a memorial day. A person's memorial day is always his last day. It is the end, and the end is empty. It results in thirst. In [John 6](#) we have the beginning of life, which results in hunger; in [John 7](#) we have the success and completion of life, which end in thirst. The case in [John 6](#) sets forth the people laboring, working, seeking, and striving to find something to satisfy their hunger, but they fail to get it. This case sets forth the people already having everything they need, but they find that it does not quench their thirst. They have obtained everything; they have enjoyed everything. But with all of their success, with all of their gain, even with all of the things connected

with their feasts—their religion and their temple—their thirst cannot be quenched. Therefore, these two cases compare those who are working with those who are resting. Nevertheless, regardless of whether you are working or resting, you cannot fill your hunger or quench your thirst.

However, the Lord is the food to the people who labor and He will afford living water to those who rest. Actually, humanity exists in only one of two conditions. One is that because they lack something they must seek, work, strive, and labor; the other is that because they have everything they may rejoice and enjoy their riches. In other words, at first you find that you do not have anything; therefore, you must work and labor hard. For example, perhaps you are in the first year of college and you have to labor over your studies. This is like the feast of the Passover. After you have graduated and received your degree and have an excellent occupation, you are rich. This is like the feast of Tabernacles because the work and labor are over. Now you are at rest and are in the position to rejoice and enjoy the benefits of your labor.

Which feast are you attending—the feast of the Passover or the feast of Tabernacles? Regardless of which feast you are attending, you are still

hungry or thirsty. Whether you are in a poor or rich condition, whether you are in a state of poverty or plenty, you will realize that you are either hungry or thirsty. Many foreign students come to the rich country of the United States for an education, but in reality, they are simply hungry. After they work hard for several years and finally achieve their Ph.D. degree, some will become very wealthy, but they will still be thirsty.

Perhaps as a young person you are considering marriage. This reveals that you are hungry—hungry for a wife, hungry for a helpmate, hungry for a family and children. I must tell you that although you may marry the best wife, have the best children, and possess the best of everything, you will eventually be seventy or eighty years old. That will be your feast of Tabernacles in which you will rejoice in everything and enjoy everything. At that time, you will discover that nothing has been able to quench your thirst. At the Passover, you were hungry, but after the feast of Tabernacles, you were still thirsty. When you made out your application for college, you were hungry, but after your graduation, you were still thirsty. When you were first married, you were hungry, but now, after you are married, you sense that you are still thirsty.

Praise the Lord that Christ is the bread of life for those who are laboring at the feast of the Passover. A college education can never be the bread of life. Only the Lord Himself can be our satisfaction. Furthermore, only Christ can quench the thirst for those who are resting and rejoicing at the feast of Tabernacles. Even when people have everything, the corn and the wine, they realize that an inner thirst still persists. They may rejoice and enjoy the produce that is in their hands, yet only the Lord has the living water to quench their thirst.

If you see the thought concerning these two feasts, you will see the two phases of man's condition and the two aspects of Christ as our supply of life. On one hand, He is the bread of life while we are laboring; on the other hand, He supplies us with the living water while we are resting. Once you see this thought, you will understand the whole of [John 7](#). Although it is a long chapter, it is brief in thought. The thought is that when you have succeeded in all of your achievements, when you have enjoyed all of your possessions, when you have rejoiced in all of your best circumstances, you will then realize that your thirst has not been quenched. Nothing is adequate to quench your thirst. Only the Lord

can quench your thirst by affording you the living water.

THE NEED OF THE ETERNAL TABERNACLE

God ordained this feast of Tabernacles so that the children of Israel would remember how their fathers, while wandering in the wilderness, lived in tents ([Lev. 23:39-43](#)) with the expectation of entering into the rest of the good land. Hence, this feast is also a reminder that people today are still in the wilderness and need to enter into the rest of the New Jerusalem, which is the eternal tabernacle ([Rev. 21:2-3](#)). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob also lived in tents, looking forward to this eternal tabernacle ([Heb. 11:9-10](#)), in which there will be “a river of water of life, . . . proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” to quench man’s thirst ([Rev. 22:1, 17](#)). At the end of such a feast with such a background, Christ cried out the promise of the rivers of living water, which will satisfy man’s expectation for eternity ([John 7:37-39](#)).

The feast of Tabernacles reminded the people of their need of the eternal tabernacle with the river of life flowing in it. Many years ago I read some articles that said that when the Israelites

celebrated the feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem in the ancient times, they set up a huge rock and over the rock they had waters flowing as a reminder that their forefathers wandered in the wilderness and drank of the waters that flowed out of the cleft rock. Near the rock there might also have been tents showing how the forefathers lived in tents and wandered in the wilderness, but had the cleft rock with the living water to quench their thirst. All of this signifies that all of human life is in the wilderness. Whether you collect the trash or are the President, a laborer or a professor, you are wandering in the wilderness. Whether you live in a high-rise apartment or a brick house, you are living in a tent. A tent signifies a temporary dwelling. Compared to the New Jerusalem, even a palace is a tent. We all are pilgrims wandering in the wilderness, living in tents, and needing to drink living water out of the rock. This reminds us that one day the real feast of Tabernacles will come. That will be in the new heaven and new earth within which the New Jerusalem will be the eternal tabernacle. [Revelation 21:3](#) says that the New Jerusalem is the tabernacle of God with man. It is the real, constant, eternal tabernacle. In the tabernacle of the New Jerusalem there will be the river of

water flowing continually to quench the thirst of God's elect. Thus, the feast of Tabernacles reminds us that we have such a future and causes us to realize that we can never be satisfied with the things of this age. Those things are the things of our pilgrimage. All of them will end. We are travelers. We are journeying toward our final goal—the eternal tabernacle of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth. We do not have the real quenching water here; it is there in the New Jerusalem.

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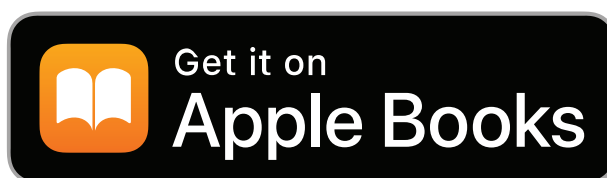
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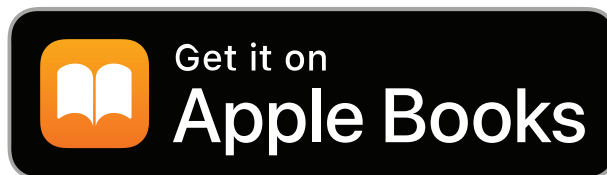
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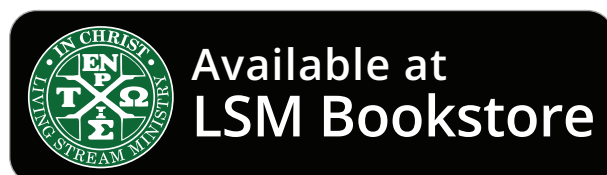
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