



04 | God's Presence Renews

HANDOUT

By: **Steve Ellis** | July 2026

Throughout Scripture, one of the pictures we see of God's Spirit is the image of **living water**.

What did "living water" mean in an ancient biblical context?

John 7:37-39

"On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."

The Wilderness

Exodus 17:3

"But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

As Moses cried out to the Lord, and Yahweh answered:

Exodus 17:5–6

"The Lord answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel."

In the wilderness a weary and thirsty people were renewed.

The Promise

Isaiah 44:3–4

"For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. 4 They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams."

Isaiah is not saying that God's Spirit is water, but he's describing the effects of water on thirsty and dry ground.

Just as falling rain or a cool flowing spring, refreshes and renews the land, **God's Spirit renews His people.**

The Fulfillment

Jesus picks up the image of God's presence through refreshing water.

John 4:10

"Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

notes:

John 7:37–39

“On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”

Jesus pulls from all the imagery of the Old Testament as **He announces times of refreshment and renewal.**

The Church

Titus 3:5–7

“he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

God's presence is life and renewal for the church today.

Continuing The Story

The wilderness isn't defined by the absence of water. It's defined by the absence of God's refreshing presence. And every time God provides living water, He is reminding His people, **"I am with you."**

Because where God's presence is, renewal flows.

Scripture Acknowledgement

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For Additional Study

[Empowered By The Spirit: God's Gift to Strengthen His People and Transform the World](#), Wes McAdams

[Who Is the Holy Spirit?](#) BibleProject Guide

[What Role Does the Holy Spirit Play in Christian Life?](#), N.T. Wright Online (video)

notes: