

## Are You Thirsty?

*Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Do we have a spiritual thirst to know Jesus more? Are we walking in the power of the Holy Spirit daily? Let's look at John 7:2 and then we will eventually go to John 7:37-39. Verse 2 reads, "Now the Jews Feast of Tabernacles was at hand." It is very important for us to understand this feast so that we can see the significance of Jesus standing and crying out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." The Jewish people had been celebrating this feast for 1500 years. God had instructed Moses to speak to the children of Israel and proclaim seven feasts that they would celebrate (Lev. 23). The Feast of Tabernacles was the seventh and last feast proclaimed by God and commemorated Israel's wandering in the wilderness for forty years and the ingathering of the harvest which ended their yearly agricultural season. The feast was celebrated for seven days but there was a holy convocation on the eighth day (Lev. 23:36). The Jewish people would gather foliage, branches and boughs from trees and build makeshift booths to live in during this celebration. This was in remembrance of their people who had wandered in the wilderness for forty years and lived in these type of booths [temporary shelters] as they moved from one place to another*

*in their journey out of Egypt into their promise land that God was giving them. For this reason the feast was also referred to as the Feast of Booths. Some scholars estimate crowds as low as "tens of thousands" of people would make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for this feast, while others will estimate "hundreds of thousands", and even as high as "a million plus" people would attend. We know from the Word of God that "three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles" (Deut. 16:16). Because it was a requirement of God's law for all males to attend these feasts, it certainly is reasonable to believe there were very large crowds. Water also was a very significant part of this feast. Each day during the Feast of Tabernacles a very joyous celebration was observed in which the priests brought water from the pool of Siloam in a golden pitcher to the Temple. During this procession the crowds of people would recite Isaiah 12:3, "Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." The water was poured out on the altar as an offering to God, while the people shouted*

*and sang. It is believed the people would sing Psalms 113-118 in celebration and praise to God. The water being poured out was symbolic of the water supplied from the rock in Exodus 17. The children of Israel were camped in Rephidim but there was no water for the people to drink. The Israelites were complaining to Moses because they thirsted for water and were fearful that they and their children and livestock would die. Moses cried out to the Lord for help and He instructed him to take his rod and go and strike the rock and water will come out of it, that the people may drink. This was truly a miracle worked by God which provided for the need of His people. The Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote in 1 Cor. 10:4, "...and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." We too must receive our water from the Rock. Jesus Christ is our Rock and supplies us "living water" which we know is the Holy Spirit. I also want to point out something about the pool of Siloam where the priests would draw the water in a golden pitcher and then take it to the high priest in the temple who would pour it on*

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To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me.

COLOSSIANS 1:27-29

the altar. There was a king of Judah named Hezekiah who was a good king and "did what was right in the sight of the Lord" (2 Kings 18:3). In about 701 B.C. while Hezekiah was king, the Assyrians were threatening to invade Judah. There was a problem for Hezekiah because there was no water supply into Jerusalem in case of an Assyrian attack. The Jewish people would draw their water from the Gihon Spring which was outside the city wall. If under attack, the people would be unable to get outside the city to draw water which could lead to dehydration and potentially death depending on how long this would continue. In 2 Kings 20:20 we read, "Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah—all his might, and how he made a pool and tunnel and brought water into the city—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?" Read also 2 Chronicles 32:3, 4, & 30. King Hezekiah seeing the threat opposing his people ordered two crews to cut a tunnel through solid rock, working from opposite ends until they met in the middle. One crew started at the top of the Gihon Spring and the other inside the city's wall at the place we know as the pool of Siloam. They cut through approximately 1750 feet of solid rock so that an aqueduct could be created to get the water supply from outside the city into Jerusalem to sustain the people if under the attack of the enemy. Let's now pick up at John 7:37-39, "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the scripture has said, out of his

heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Now just imagine this scene on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. It was at the height of this religious ceremony, a huge crowd of people in attendance, people singing and shouting, people remembering what God had done some 1500 years ago for their ancestors, and probably all eyes on the high priest as he was about to pour the water from the golden pitcher onto the altar. All of a sudden, Jesus stands and cries out with a loud voice, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." Just as King Hezekiah had seen the need for an aqueduct to get water from a far place into Jerusalem, so now our King Jesus saw the same need to get Heaven's water supply near to those who would believe in Him. An aqueduct is a conduit that brings water supply from a far place to nearby. Jesus knew His followers would need the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives to live a life that would honor and glorify Him. In John 16:7 Jesus says, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you." We know from these scriptures that when Jesus spoke of "living water" He was speaking of the Holy Spirit who would be given when Jesus was glorified. We should be glad that we don't have to go running and looking for a supply of God's Spirit when

the enemy attacks, because as a born-again believer in Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit indwells us and leads us through any battle we may face. Hallelujah! Don't you know that when Jesus stood up and cried out that the eyes of the people shifted from the "earthly high priest" in all his priestly garments to Jesus the Son of God in His common clothes who would soon be "...a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens" (Heb. 2:14). Don't you think Jesus was telling them then, and us now, that religious ceremonies and rituals will not satisfy the spiritual thirst in our lives. That just gathering together as the people of God and remembering what God did in the past will not satisfy the need in our heart for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Have we forgotten what this Christian walk is all about? It's not about just going through the motions, meeting together, singing together, remembering together, and waiting for some man to pour water on us from a golden pitcher named a sermon. No! No! No! Jesus says, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." We come to Jesus the Christ, the Son of God daily in a personal and intimate love relationship. Jesus satisfies our spiritual thirst! Religious exercise does not! Jesus told the Samaritan woman in John 4:13, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst." Let's all go past the waters of religious activity and come to Jesus by way of a daily personal relationship and experience the precious rivers of living water that flow out of our hearts! Jesus bids us to come!

Love in Christ,  
Clark Stallings

*God's Gracious Gift*

.....UPDATE on Moyewood Subdivision.....We held a tent crusade November 21-22 and the Lord showed up in a big way! Over forty people gave their hearts to Jesus! And with the help of so many of you, we were able to supply Thanksgiving dinners to 222 families. We had a great time ministering the love of Jesus to that community. Thank you so much for your help! May God pour back into you a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over! A special thanks to Church of the Open Door for partnering with us!!!

Thanks to all who sponsored a family during Christmas... with your help, we were able to bless more than forty people with gifts! We have received many phone calls from those families expressing deep appreciation. It's so wonderful to share the love of Jesus! God is also increasing our opportunities to help those in need of clothes, food and household items.

We are so excited about this new year at God's Gracious Gift. As we reflect on last year, so many prayers have been answered. However, we are just getting started on what the Lord has called us to do. Isaiah 54:2 says, "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. You will expand to the right and to the left." The Lord is giving us a spirit of expectancy about this upcoming year. We ask that you join us in prayer and stand in agreement with us for the approval of some grants...these will enable us to do so much more for the Kingdom of God in Pitt County.

God has been doing awesome things in our partnership with Greenville Community Shelter and their mentoring program. And we would like to thank Keais Hoyt and his wife, Lisa, for helping in this program with their ministry of financial counseling. What a blessing to be able to see the many gifts in the Body of Christ come together in unity working towards a common goal!

If you are interested in supporting this ministry, or have questions or suggestions, please call Aaron Kennedy at (252) 321-6857.



"For they drank of that spiritual Rock...and that Rock was Christ" - 1 Cor. 10:4

# Cafe

Attention all of you coffee drinkers.....

Cold weather is here and coffee beans have arrived at The Rock! People are warming up to the vision of "The Rock Café".....Pound by Pound is how it will grow!

Come and check out the variety of regular and decaffeinated coffees that are available in 1lb. and 1/2 lb. bags. This makes for a great gift idea for teachers, house warming, and of course - the coffee drinker in your life!

Coffee by the cup will be available soon for your enjoyment for only \$ 1 per cup ....you can sip while you shop!



Check out The Rock's new website ...you can now order online!

[www@therock-nc.com](http://www@therock-nc.com)

## Mark Your Calendars!



**FEBRUARY 7:** Kids double premier day. Come see the premier of the new VeggieTales movie, "The Easter Carol", and the new Hermie movie, "Flo the Lyin' Fly". Premier starts at **10:30 a.m.** There will be free refreshments and free giveaways for the kids, and special sales on the new movies.

**FEBRUARY 14:** Valentines Day Giveaway. Register for giveaways all day Valentine's Day. Free candies while supplies last!

**FEBRUARY 21:** Super Saturday CD sale. For this day only, all single CD's in the store will be \$9.97! Double CD's, such as Wow Hits 2004 are only \$12.97. No exceptions, no special rules...just a great price on today's top CDs!

For additional information on these great days in February, call The Rock @ (252) 756-5546, or see your February catalog coming in late January.

## New "Fishbowl Ministry"

### We Need Your Support

We ask you to prayerfully consider supporting Hope of Glory Ministries financially. Your prayers and gifts enable us to fulfill the mission God has given us. Thank you very much for your support! We had over 200 people support our mission in 2003. Praise God!

Romans 11:14 says, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" There is an urgency for the message to be heard! We have a "Fishbowl Ministry" that the Lord is using as a tool to get the gospel message into the hands of the people, & ultimately into their hearts. We currently have fishbowls in 4 places of business & we are supplying them with tapes of our Thursday Night teachings. The vision is for the person to take a tape (free of charge), listen, & then pass it on to someone else. We are receiving great reports of what the Lord is doing! The Lord says in Matthew 4:19, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men". It's time to cast out into the deep! ...but we need your help.

If you would like to come onboard and make a donation to the "Fishbowl Ministry", please call Pat Kinlaw at (252) 321-6857.



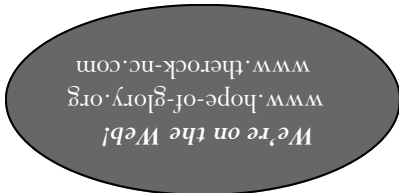
I am in awe of how richly the Lord blesses His children. I want you to know that I have been thoroughly blessed by all of you. It has been a privilege to see God move by His Spirit on Thursday mornings and I anticipate great things as we gather again on February 12th. As we lay down our lives for the One who created us, we can begin to embrace what He has for us. Does not every little girl desire to be a queen? Come, journey with us through the Book of Esther as we begin our study "Daughters of the King". What does a queen do when the circumstances do not seem so royal? She obeys her father and king "for such a time as this". The time is now! His harvest is plentiful for those who are ready and willing to serve as a "Daughter of the King". Come feast with us as we seek and receive. The Lord wants to equip us for His purposes and plans to advance His Kingdom! The Lord has clearly stated and confirmed that Lisa Ryan from the 700 Club will be joining us for an upcoming Women's Community Outreach. The date is not yet set. But when it is, we will be sending out an announcement to you and it will also be posted at The Rock. We pray that women of all ages will come together in unity to glorify the Lord. Lisa Ryan has written two books, For Such a Time As This and The Esther Generation. We expect great things as she ministers to us through the Spirit of the Lord.

Our monthly Pastor's Wives Breakfast is still meeting the last Tuesday of the month. This isn't just for the wives of pastors, but for the wives of full-time ministry leaders also. We invite you to come rest and receive together with us! If you have any questions or comments, please call me at (252) 321-6857.

Gina Robinson,

Women's Ministry Outreach

3030 3-6-03-0503



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**MISSION STATEMENT**  
To stand in the gap between our community of believers and the church, and between the church and the lost. We will come alongside these three groups to proclaim the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ and minister through Christian resources, evangelism, discipleship and community outreach.

**Needs:**

- Large-capacity Color Copier for Ministry Center (our old copier has died)
- Microphones (3)
- Microphone Cords (5)
- Microphone Stands (3)
- Piano Monitors (2)
- Automatic Tape Player for recording

**Praise be to God who supplies all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus! (Phil. 4:19)**

**Prayer Requests:**

- Powerful move of God's Spirit in new Thursday Night Bible Study & Women's Bible Study
- To have more churches join us for the next Unity in the Community Service
- More area churches to partner with God's Gracious Gift/ Approval of grant proposals
- God's direction on where to hold next tent crusade

**Praises**

Over 200 men from about 25 different churches were challenged in their walks as Bishop Larry Jackson ministered at our Area Men's Conference Jan. 16 & 17.

↙ *God is doing a "new thing" on Thursday nights...*

**NEW COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY**

We would like to invite you to join us beginning Thursday, February 5th at 7p.m.—8:30 p.m. as we begin an 8-week Bible Study on "Jesus in the Feasts of Israel". We will be using this book as a study reference which was written by Richard Booker. It presents these festivals as Jehovah's foreshadowings of the New Testament Christ and His various works of grace in the lives of all believers. The author clearly depicts the unity found in God's unfolding purposes for His people—from the new birth found in Passover and the crucifixion, all the way to entering God's rest found in the Feast of Tabernacles and the Second Coming! It points out how the Feasts represent seven steps to Christian growth and the peace, favor, and rest of God! The cost of the book is \$12, and will be available at the first meeting. Both men and women are welcome. Clark Stallings and John Lofton will be teaching. Each teaching will be taped. Call 321-6857 to pre-register.

- Upcoming Ministry Events:**
- Beginning February 5th: Bible Study every Thursday @ 7-8:30 p.m.
  - Monthly Pastor's Appreciation Luncheon (2nd Tuesday of month).
  - Monthly Pastors Wives Breakfast, (last Tuesday of month)
  - Jan. 29 (7PM): John & Elaine Lofton, Lofton's Covenant Ministry
  - March 20: Capital Worship Center Easter Drama