

The Dew of Heaven



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Introduction:

Samuel Daniel the romantic poet from the 16th century who equates the natural phenomenon of dew as his personal sentimental feelings of love, he writes, “Beauty, sweet love, is like the morning dew, Whose short refresh upon tender green, Cheers for a time, but till the sun doth show And straight is gone, as it had never been”.¹ However, when Yahweh favors a nation, He gives the nation dew as a pattern of “covered” blessing. At the same time, it represents Yahweh's favorable presence in the nation. Many scriptures in the Bible elaborate on this point by describing how dew covers the ground in the same manner as how Yahweh covers the nation of Israel.

The very first time Bible mentioned the word “dew” (as part of Jacob's blessing in Genesis 27:28), dew was pictured as a treasured blessing from Yahweh to His people. Subsequently, because of people's waywardness, there was a “drying up” of dew from the land symbolizing the displeasure of Yahweh. All of a sudden, people heard a prophetic declaration from the prophet Hosea, “Yahweh will be dew to Israel” (Hos. 14:5). What followed was the restoration of the dew back to the people and their land once again.

The Hebrew word for “dew” (*tal* טַל) generally means “night mist”, but the deeper meaning includes: 1. “to cover”, 2. “lamb”, or 3. “Word of Yahweh”. How do all these

¹ Daniel, Samuel. “Brainy Quotes”, accessed April 20, 2018 (https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/samuel_daniel_188883)

meanings play out in various occurrences in the Bible? What are the connections? Also, throughout the centuries, Jewish sages and mystics believe “dew” represents the person of the Holy Spirit, but this is a debatable assumption. This research seeks to “unravel” this problematic view and to present the proper biblical definition of dew.

In Genesis: The Blessing Dew

The book of Genesis has been called the "seed-plot" of the Bible. The word *bereshyt* (בְּרֵאשִׁית) comes from the Hebrew expression which in its verbal root means *head place*, *beginning*, or *chief*. This first book of the Bible portrayed by many as the "book of beginnings". According to the name and the position of this book in the Tanakh, one expects a chronicle of the beginning of things. Therefore, our story begins with the first mention of the word “dew” in Genesis. “Now may God give you [Jacob] of the dew of heaven, And of the fatness of the earth, and an abundance of grain and new wine” (Gen. 27:28).

In step with the historic Jewish legal guidelines of inheritance, the eldest son was promised a double portion of the inheritance from the family's estate, however, we learned from the book of Genesis, Jacob deceived his father Isaac by means of pretending to be Esau in order to gain the greater portion of the inheritance (Gen 27:1-29). The word “dew” occurred during an event when Isaac offered his holy seal of approval by kissed,

smelled, and blessed his second son Jacob. Due to the geographic nature of Canaan, the portion of Jacob's posterity relied primary on the rain which fell only twice a year (in spring and autumn) and daily appearance of dew on the ground. Those predominant showers and dew impregnates the soil and made the land productive. Thus, one can extrapolate the term "blessing dew" from this story.

This prophetic utterance by Isaac set a discourse for the meaning of this word “dew” throughout the rest of the Tanakh. It is critical to investigate the nature and the reason why many scholars adhere to a particular interpretation called the “law of first mention”². The “law of first mention” directs one to go to the first citing of a word in the Tanakh (which occurs in its simplest form most of the time) and analyze it to get the inherent meaning of that word. As a rule, we see the fundamental concept in the first occurrence that remains dominant and colors all subsequent additions to that word.

When Isaac first mentioned this word “dew” in the book of Genesis, he likened it with “fatness of the earth”, “grain” and “new wine”. Those understandings bear significance in the study of dew all the way through the Tanakh.

In Exodus and Numbers: The Covering Dew

This word “dew” occurred a few chapters later in the book of Exodus. The nation

² Cooper, David L. “Rules of Interpretation”. Accessed April 24, 2018. (<http://www.messianicassociation.org/ezone21-dc.hermeneutics-messianic.htm>)

went through a severe trial; they served the “wrong gods and goddess” for 400 years. This time, Yahweh selected a righteous leader, Moses, to lead them out of their bondage. During this entire ordeal, Yahweh became a “covering” for them, “in a pillar of cloud by day...a pillar of fire by night”. (Exo. 13:21)

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the grumbings of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'" So it came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew (*hatal* הַטַּל) around the camp. When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground. When the sons of Israel saw *it*, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. (Exo. 16:11-15)

This occurrence of the word “dew” painted a significant word-picture for the readers. The Scripture depicted the nation surrounded by hostility. The people of Yahweh were running from their foe. They were fearful, hungry, without any ability to combat “except” relying entirely on Yahweh. It was during this time of distress Yahweh confided in Moses “you shall be filled” and “you shall know I am the LORD your God”. Upon hearing the favorable report from Moses, The Israelites were in total astonishment the next day when they discovered that the “dew” from the night before turned into pleasant-tasting “manna”. With this story in mind, the word “dew” became a symbol of Yahweh's providence. This miracle dew which turned into manna satisfied the nation's

demand for food.

The Hebrew word *talal* (טָלַל) derives from the root word of “dew” *tal* (טַל) which means “to cover”. There is also another similar word *taltelah* (טַלְטֵלָה) which means “captivity”. Are these all coincidental words? As we know from reading the Scripture, “coincidence” is not a biblical word. Consequently, in view of the Exodus story, “dew” represents as: 1. Yahweh's protection to “cover” them all through their journey. 2. Yahweh's providence to provide their day-to-day needs.

Like the surge of thunders strikes across the open sky just before the onslaught of a massive storm, the book of Numbers chapter 11 opens with some frightening words:

Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the LORD; and when the LORD heard *it*, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed *some* of the outskirts of the camp. The people therefore cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD and the fire died out. (Num. 11:1-2)

Yahweh's anger escalated because of this newborn nation's perversion. The Israelites received the sacred Ten Commandments through which Yahweh gave His laws and ordinances. They instituted the Levitical priesthood, and the people built the tabernacle with all its elaborate furnishings. They celebrated their narrow escape from Egyptian's bondage and Yahweh's plan for them to become a real nation. However, they found grounds to complain. Why did they complain? What was it all about? The real reason was the lack of choice on their menu. Like a bad-tempered customer complained to the

restaurant's chef, the Israelites complained to their Provider – Yahweh.

Suddenly, the word “dew” appeared right after this dreadful event. “When the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna would fall with it” (Num. 11:9). Contrary to the previous remarks about the dew, Moses placed a unique emphasis on the “timing” of this incident. This time, both the dew and the manna fell at night instead of day. This “new sign” from Yahweh symbolized the immediate and future judgment of this wayward nation. The nation murmured against Yahweh. The occurrence of dew meant to covered the nation's transgressions. We discovered later, “the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very severe plague” (Num. 11:33).

In Deuteronomy: Dew as the Word of Yahweh

“Dew” re-appeared as the “Word” in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy in Hebrew is *Sefer Devarim* which translates as “*these are the words*”). In the various narratives in the course of the accounts, there seemed a promising slither of hope was rising from the horizon for the nation. Moses recorded this dramatic event after Yahweh situated the whole nation in front of two mountains - the mount Ebal and mount Gerizim (Deu. 11:29). Both mountains stood against each other on the terrain, and the people positioned on their sides. Half of the people upon one and half upon the opposite; the lower valley which separates the mountains stood the ark guarded by the tribe of Levi. A group of people stood on Gerizim responded to the blessing, another group stood on Mt. Ebal responded to the cursing. The

whole nation heard Yahweh's every word thundered in their ears. "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order you may live, you and your descendants" (Deu. 30:19).

The word "dew" appeared again after this dramatic episode. This time, Moses sang about this word, (Following are the first two stanzas from the famous Song of Moses) "Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth." Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb" (Deu. 32:1-2).

Apparently, the nation made the right choice by accepting Yahweh's invitation to "love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it" (Deu. 30:16). Because the covenant of blessings from Yahweh is evident, few chapters later we find this verse: "So Israel dwells in security, The fountain of Jacob secluded, in a land of grain and new wine; His heavens also drop down dew" (Deu. 33:28). Both the "fountain of Jacob" and "wine" refer to dew, and signify a visible assurance from Yahweh. Fountain of Jacob means that the lineage of Israel comes from the patriarch Jacob who is the source; therefore, the dew and the wine are symbols of their source of joy. With these verses in mind, the next line starts with "Blessed are you, O Israel" (Deu. 33:29).

Dew does not Represent the Person of the Holy Spirit

From ancient Jewish sages to the modern-day authors, many throughout the centuries equated “dew” with the person of the Holy Spirit, and they held on to this notion as being scriptural. In the Talmud there were many texts that recorded rabbinic discussions about the dew symbolizing the role of the Holy Spirit during the miracle of resurrection. For instance, a person asked, “Where the doctrine of resurrection comes from”? A rabbi will usually answer the question by citing supporting texts from the Torah. When someone asked Rabbi Gamliel how he knew Yahweh would resurrect the dead? He replied:

From the Torah: for it is written: “The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise ...” (Deu. 31:16). From the Prophets: as it is written: “Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your *dew* is as the *dew of the dawn*, And *the earth will give birth to the departed spirits*” (Isa. 26:19); from the Writings: as it is written, “And your mouth like the best wine!" It goes down smoothly for my beloved, Flowing gently through the lips of those who fall asleep”.³(Son. 7:9)

Scanning through recent scholarly writings, we have discover many contemporary writers who also echo the similar view on dew's representation as the person of the Holy Spirit. D. L. Moody writes,

The wind is another emblem. It is independent, powerful, sensible in its effects, and reviving; how the Spirit of God revives when He comes to all the drooping members of the Church. Then the rain and the dew -- fertilizing, refreshing, abundant; and the dove, gentle -- what more gentle than the dove; and the

³ Mahan, William Dennes. “*The Archko Volume; Or, the Archeological Writings of the Sanhedrin and Talmuds of the Jews.*” (HardPress Publishing 2012), 90b.

lamb? -- gentle, meek, innocent, a sacrifice. ⁴

Even though these sages and authors believe “dew” represents the person of the Holy Spirit, it is critical to differentiate the spiritual applications and their usage among “dew”, “rain”, and “water” at various usages throughout the Bible. Looking through biblical lenses, water differs from the dew in many aspects. Water (maim מַיִם) is more connected to its “flowing” property, which points directly to the person of the Holy Spirit.

When Yeshua conversed with the Samaritan woman in John 4, He uttered the phrase “water springing up” picturing a source of spring water “flowing” through her spiritual being. We observed a comparable verse in Genesis that talked about this aspect of flowing water, “But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of flowing water “(Gen. 25:19).

The biblical perception about dew (*tal* טַל) is emphasizing the “scattering” property of the water. To better recognize the verbal meaning of the word, picture a person who watches the rain as it comes down from heaven “scattering” over the plain. (Deu. 32:2) or as the manna “scattering” over the ground. (Exo. 16:31) These are all metaphors to teach us about this “casting out” or the “scattering” property of the dew. Another example is in Jeremiah, “So I will hurl you out (*tul* טוּל) of this land into the land which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers; and there you will serve other gods day and

⁴ Moody, D. L. “Secret Powers”. Accessed April 20, 2018
(http://biblehub.com/library/moody/secret_power/chapter_v_power_hindered.htm)

night, for I will grant you no favor”. (Jer. 16:13)

In comparison to dew, we learn the term “blessing of water” resembles the “blessing of the Holy Spirit” from the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, “For I will pour out 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”. (Isa. 44:3) Floods, rivers, streams, and waters, are metaphors in the Scripture to indicate plentiful divine blessings under the abundant influences of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah's words also point to the future blessing of the “offspring” and “descendants” of the sons and daughters of Israel.

Centuries later, Yeshua's words to the Samaritan woman coined the similar concept as Isaiah, “Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst, but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life””. (John 14:3-4)

Scripture speaks abundantly about the blessing of water and the direct reference to the Holy Spirit, but is mostly silent about the connection between dew and the Holy Spirit. Metaphorically speaking, what separates dew, rain, and water are due to their different spiritual attributes, although their physical properties remain similar.

In the Book of the Prophets (*Nevi'im*): Dew Disappeared

In the book of 2 Samuel, Scripture wrote about King David who was chanting this

bittersweet psalm, “O mountains of Gilboa, Let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings; For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil” (2 Sam. 1:21). Although David was lamenting over the death of King Saul and his son Jonathan, this utterance has prophetic implications for the nation. Unbeknown to David, his words became a prophetic fulfillment under the reign of King Ahab. Bible recorded these words, “Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word””. (1 Kin. 17:1)

Starting with the reign of Jeroboam, King Ahab was one in a line of evil kings in Israel’s history. Ahab “did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him”. (1 Kings 16:30) The main event in Ahab’s life that led to his downfall was his marriage to Jezebel, she was an idol worshiper with a particular hatred for Yahweh’s people. (1 Kings 18:4) Because of his marriage to this pagan woman, Ahab devoted himself to the worship of the false gods Baal and Asherah. (1 Kin. 16:31–33) Later, Yahweh punished King Ahab because he disobeyed the Lord’s commands. He abused his responsibility as Israel’s king, and he led Yahweh’s people straight into idolatry.

It was during this troubled time that the prophet Elijah (Elijah means “Yahweh is my God”) risen from among the people and delivered the Word of Yahweh to Ahab. From Elijah's forecasting, he associated dew to the physical manifestation of "rain" and the

spiritual manifestation of the "words of Yahweh". The lack of dew and rain meant: 1. Lack of Yahweh's words, and 2. Drought was on the way.

The nation of Israel was in distress once again, which was caused by their continual acts of disobedience. These acts, brought a series of natural and spiritual consequences. From the natural realm, there was no dew or rain for decades. This situation meant a severe drought was coming, but from the spiritual realm it meant the departure of the Word of Yahweh and the precious Holy Spirit. Later, the nation found out the real significance of the word *Ichabod* (*Ichabod* means *glory has departed*). This three-pronged departure of Yahweh taught the nation about their moral deprivation and His soon coming judgments.

The Final Prophecy: Yahweh will be Dew

The name Hosea (הוֹשֵׁעַ) means "salvation", it comes from the root word *yasha* (יָשַׁע) which means "to deliver". If one adds a *yod* (י) in front of the names Hosea (הוֹשֵׁעַ), it becomes the Yehoshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ). Or if one replaces "ה" with the "י" then it changes to Yeshua (יֵשׁוּעַ). All three references point directly to the Name which is above all other names (Phi. 2:8-11) – Yeshua HaMashiach. During the writing of the book of Hosea, his name is likely a reference to Hosea's position in Israel as a beacon of hope to those who would repent and turn to Yahweh because of his intense message.

Following the command from Yahweh, Hosea married Gomer, a bride Yahweh

described as “a wife of harlotry”. (Hos. 1:2) Gomer bore Hosea three children (two sons and a daughter). Yahweh used the names of Hosea’s children coupled with his wife’s unfaithfulness to send a specific message to the people of Israel.

The name of Hosea’s first child is “Jezreel” (Hos. 1:5) which means “Yahweh scatters”. The second child, a daughter named “Lo-Ruhamah”(Hos. 1:6), translates as “not loved”. These names are signs of Yahweh's displeasure with the people of Israel following other pagan gods. The third of Hosea's children is a son called "Lo-Ammi" (Hos. 1:9) which shows that Yahweh has denied Israel's inheritance and deems them as "not my people" any longer.

The final chapter of Hosea opens with Yahweh's plea to this wayward nation, “Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, For you have stumbled because of your iniquity” (Hos. 14:1). What follows next builds the intensity and suspense right into this chapter. Yahweh declared, “I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely, For My anger has turned away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; He will blossom like the lily, And he will take root like the cedars of Lebanon” (Hos. 14:4-5).

At this juncture in Israel's history, the nation was on its way to ruin. Within a few years after they heard Hosea's comforting words, the Assyrians annihilated the nation in 722 B.C. But why did Yahweh declares these promises? Were these prophetic utterances ever fulfilled?

Concluding Thoughts

Yeshua fulfills this final prophecy of dew. He is the dew (*tal טל*) which comes down from heaven to bring the genuine blessings and prosperity to His own. As the lamb (*taleh טלה*) of Yahweh, His blood-sacrifice on the cross “covers” (*talal טלל*) the sins of the world. Dew fall and made no noise (Num. 11:9). Yeshua, in the same manner, He makes no sound: “Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth” (Isa. 53:7).

To the Jews, Torah signifies an important inheritance and blessing to them. Dew, in the same manner is also an inheritance and blessing to the people. As the Word of Yahweh (Yeshua) blesses, covers and protects the people, so is dew to blesses, covers and ensures that the blessings from Yahweh flow to His people. These characteristics are emblems and hallmark of the works of Yeshua, the Dew of Heaven.