

WATER FROM BETHLEHEM

(II Samuel 23:13-17)

Bethlehem. . .what memories of days gone by. . .
Green pastures. . .cool waters. . .my soul filled with peace,
And close to the Lord, His voice so clear to my mind.
But this sword has shed much blood since those days. . . .
Being so near home tonight makes me long for past blessings:
Quiet starlit skies above the flocks in the open fields;
Waking at dawn with the meadow-grass still wet with dew;
Cool drinks of crystal clear well-water at the city gate
When parched winds blew through the summer pastures.
My thirst was quenched at that well so often long ago.
How I thirst for those days now—I feel so dry to the bone. . .
“If only I might drink from the well of Bethlehem again.”

Now look! These men, brave comrades, so faithful to me,
They broke through the Philistine lines to get to that well.
God, what faith and courage! Lord, what love and loyalty!
They risked their lives to bless Your servant, Lord.
Here again before me, the water my dry soul longed for,
Water from Bethlehem’s well, meant to quench my thirsting heart.
“I cannot drink, dear heroes, for this water is your lives—
Fit to be poured out only to the Lord, and not for me.”

They could not see, Lord, why I offered You their gift
Their very lives laid down in love was quite enough.
Chased and hunted by my foes, who am I? a dog, a flea. . .
But in Your eyes, O Lord, how highly esteemed.
Though worn and scarred, oppressed and homeless,
I’m set within a loyal fellowship of self-denying warriors.
I see Your faithful blessing much more clearly now.
Your everlasting love has quenched my thirsting soul tonight.
I’ve swallowed deep and full into my heart the living water,
Fresh and satisfying as the water that comes from Bethlehem.

— *David L. Hatton, 1987*