

THE RIVER

“There is a river” Psalm 46:4

THE FAMOUS MISSISSIPPI

Contrary to what many may believe, the Mississippi River is the second-longest river in the United States, behind the Missouri, but it is by far the most famous. The lore around it has inspired:

- Books – *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are two examples
- Songs – 'Ole Man River' is a famous example, though there are many
- Plays - 'Show Boat' is one

THE MISSISSIPPI'S LESS THAN MIGHTY BEGINNINGS

If you saw its headwaters, where it actually begins, the word mighty wouldn't come to mind. Its origin is in North Central Minnesota, where waters from Lake Itasca overflow into what appears to be a small creek. At this point, it is only 20 feet across bank to bank. There is a single board laid across that people can walk over.

THE MISSISSIPPI'S MIGHTY IMPACT

It doesn't remain a small creek, however. It:

- Measures a half-mile wide in spots
- Flows 2,340 miles to its climax in the Louisiana Delta
- Runs through 10 states and major cities such as St. Louis, Memphis, and New Orleans
- Provides drinking water for tens of millions of people
- Supports a 400 billion dollar per year shipping industry
- Supports countless other jobs in agriculture and other fields

MORE THAN ITS BEGINNING

With such small beginnings in Minnesota, how does the Mississippi become the force it is? That happens through its tributary system. The Mississippi becomes mighty when the waters of countless lakes and streams in 32 states flow into its watershed. This watershed includes bodies of water from the Rocky Mountains to the Appalachian Mountains.

OTHER RIVERS

Jesus referred to another river. He said of it, *“He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”* (John 7:38). Followers of Christ are commissioned to tell others about the availability of this river and the life-giving spiritual water available in it. Our efforts may seem small, like the Mississippi at specific points, but when we come together as the Mississippi's tributaries do, we can create significant momentum in this effort. Jesus also described a river to John in Revelation 22:1. *“And He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb”*. On either side of that river is the tree of life whose fruit heals the nations (Revelation 22:2). I want to partake of that water. I want to help others do the same.