

WE WONDER

It's been years since the old prospector actually did any mining. He still likes to be considered part of that profession though. It seems to justify the limp in his step, the pain in his hands, and the furrow in his brow. This morning, as he heads to the truck for his weekly run into town, the sun is rising over the Grand Canyon that lies behind his humble home. It's a spectacular sunrise, but he does not notice. He has lived and worked here all of his life and has other things on his mind today. Anticipating the traffic congestion that the tourist season has brought to the town, his frown deepens. "Fools!", he mutters to himself.

The day is already hot when the Israeli compound receives word from Moses that it is time to move again. Camp must be broken quickly. As the woman collects the same old manna for breakfast that has fallen every day of their lives, her husband wearily puts on the same robe and sandals he has worn for the last thirty years. It was hard to sleep last night with the pillar of fire above the tabernacle lighting up the camp. Predators or not, it was a nuisance. This morning though, it was a welcome relief to have the shade from the pillar of cloud. At least it was good for something.

Up to our necks in a river of blood, we rarely pause any more to consider that it comes from Calvary. Sure, it is nice every now and then to dip under it and come up clean and free from the weight of the past. But it has been so long since we waded into it that we have forgotten the fear we once had of death and what came after. Life is what concerns us now. So much to do, so much to obtain. With a future to plan for, we fix our eyes ahead on our goals, our hopes, and our dreams. We turn our backs to the source of the stream and plod on. Hopefully, the river will at least push us in the direction we want to go. Otherwise, we will probably have to leave it for a while.

When did we lose the wonder? At what point did the miraculous become commonplace? If we cannot remember what poverty feels like, then it is easy to become accustomed to splendor. We take no thought that our existence on this earth depends on our next breath until we face a struggle to draw it. When we live with peace, joy, and grace so long that the past fades away in the recesses of time, it is all too easy to take the Savior for granted. It is said that absence makes the heart grow fonder. What a shame it would be for God to have to withdraw His love and protection from us in order to teach us their value again.

We are blessed with access to the presence of God. Perhaps for so long that sometimes our senses and our faith have been dulled to the riches He would like to bestow upon us. His Spirit within us has become as commonplace as the air that we breathe. We walk in newness of life, but its the same old neighborhood. Diamonds in our fields are just rocks that get in the way of our daily plowing. Worst of all, the carpenter in our midst that we have known all of our lives gets tired of trying to reveal His true identity. So He looks for another place to live where He can do the miracles and wonders of which He is capable. A place where they know Him as God.

Isaiah 9:6 gives us a list of the names that God manifested on this earth would be called. It is significant that the list begins with "Wonderful". What follows after this is God as a Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. Perhaps God chose to put "Wonderful" at the beginning of the list because, if we do not remain full of wonder in the presence of God, can He fulfill any of the roles that follow? We wonder!

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever experienced wonder at something, such as a snowflake perhaps, then soon ceased to wonder because of repetition?
2. Have you ever become blasé in the presence of the supernatural? Are you no longer impressed by salvation? Tongues? Healing?
3. Does it seem incredible to you that the children of Israel could live in the very shadow of the supernatural manifestation of God as a column of clouds and still lose their awe and faith in Him? How much like the children of Israel are you?
4. Have the small details of living in this world robbed you of the sense of importance that the continual application of God's blood on your life should have?
5. Can you think of any time that God has removed the blessings of His salvation long enough from your life to remind you of their importance?
6. Is that the same lesson He taught His other bride, the children of Israel, time and time again?
7. Denomination after denomination, one group after another throughout history, has had and enjoyed the presence of God in their midst, and lost it. Do you feel it is because that presence became commonplace to them and so they did not value it?
8. If His deity is created by the position in which you place Him in your life by your worship of Him, is it fair to say that if you do not consider God with a certain amount of awe, He has ceased to become your God?
9. Suppose you had a fiancé who absolutely adored you, worshipped the ground you walked on, sang your praises every time they were in your company, and never failed to thank you for every large and small thing you did for them. Then gradually, their attention faded to the point where, when they came to visit you or vice versa, they ignored you, played and talked with others, did their checkbook, wrote letters, etc., and never even noticed when you left feeling hurt. How long would you keep coming to see them or consider yourself to be special in their eyes?