

From Where I Sit . . .

Our Search For Spiritual Perfection"

We contend that man has a yearning -- a spiritual hunger that needs satisfying. David, in the long ago, said: *'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.'* (Psalms 42: 1). A spiritual side of man longs for spiritual excellence, for the perfecting of the soul, for a union with God. There is a thirst that can not be quenched easily, and will not be quenched by the artificial sources of enlightenment in the world.

A state of spiritual death results when one is separated from God who gives and nourishes our spirit. The Gentile world had experienced that separation for centuries (Eph. 2:11-13). They were not privileged to share in the covenant relationship that produced promise or hope. Of their own selves, they were not able to come back into God's spiritual presence. No amount of ritual can bring life back into a spiritually dead soul. It takes the divine intervention of the Father of all spirits. Thanks be to God He has now called those who "were not my people. . . my people" (**Romans 9:25; Hosea :23**).

Even as these Gentiles had a longing for spiritual things, and pursued them idolatrously, the majority of this world's population has some religious concept of spirit-beings and a longing for an afterlife in some form. Many cultic world religions have formulated concepts of the exaltation of man to a higher realm. There is, evidently, a world-wide longing for some extraordinary spiritual connection. In spite of the atheistic impact on the modern mind, man doesn't really want it that way, He's hungry for more.

The Mormon religion is a case in point. Not only do they teach that there is a plurality of gods, but that man will one day be exalted to become a god. They are not untypical of countless millions who have a sense or longing for eternal life, and of spiritual perfection -- to be like God!

The apostle Paul thrills us with the prospect of spiritual transformation -- spiritual growth. **In II Corinthians 3:18**, he writes, *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* Friends, we don't have to be satisfied with just being "ordinary," same song, second verse Christians. **Christians are born for a state of glory-to share with and bask in the glory of God.** Spiritual attainment and maturity are within the grasp of each one of us as a birthright.

By "glory" we are referring to two things: One, the state of blessedness into which believers are to enter hereafter through being brought into the likeness of Christ. (**Rom. 8:18,21; Phil. 3:21; 1 Peter 5:1,10; Rev. 21:11**). Secondly, as in 11 Corinthians 3:18, the marvelous, glorious change God can work in us as we grow into the image of His Son. From an earthly form of glory which withers and dies, we can partake of the divine nature (**11 Peter 1:34**). We can be transformed into the image of His Son.

Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, believers have been "begotten again" to a living hope, and that hope includes sharing in the glory of God. Peter writes: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"* (1 Pet 1:3-5)

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