

Chat With the Chaplain

Nov. 2017

If we could stand on a hilltop in Israel and have a look around at a panorama of the wilderness, the mountains, the valleys, canyons and all that, much of what we'd be looking at would be desert. We'd be looking at a portion of the landscape that Moses and the Israelites traveled through on their way to the Promised Land. While they were moving through that desert wilderness, they were living in tents.....for 40 years mind you, and the best guess at their numbers has been about 2.5 million. I don't know about you, but over the years, I have spent a good deal of vacation time (read hunting) tent camping, and it's always been fun and something out of the ordinary. But 40 years worth? I don't think so. I dearly love my Sealy and the older I get, the more I love indoor plumbing. However, the Israelites tent camped all that time and I think there's a revelation, or message there. They were directed by Almighty God Himself, as a pillar of fire at night and a pillar of smoke during daylight hours. Whenever the fire or smoke would lift up and begin to move, the Israelites would break camp and set out for their next campsite. Everything about their life was temporary, and you could say that everything in our life is the same. Different experiences, jobs, stages of life, health, circumstances, positions.... All are temporary. They could all be seen as a tent of sorts and we are all camping some longer than others, but still, we are not destined to be here forever. Even your physical being can be called a 'tent' and temporary, and the older we get, the more temporary we are. Our 'stakes' sometimes break, our seams sometimes leak, our tie-downs become frayed and break. You get the picture. We could make a pile of analogies here, but it could get a little rude in places.

For the child of God, this life is a journey home home to our Promised Land ... to Heaven. If we take a look 2nd Corinthians 4:16 – 5-5, it tells us about this. It's a little lengthy so bear with me for a bit.

" Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man (tent) is decaying, yet our inner man (soul & spirit) is being renewed day by day. For momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of Glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house (physical being) is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house (our body) we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from Heaven; inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that

what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit (Holy Spirit) as a pledge”.

The “...building from God, a house not made with hands...” , is the glorified eternal body all born again believers are given when their earthly, mortal ‘tent’ finally goes on strike and says,” Ok, that’s it! I’ve had it! I quit!”

If then you have claimed Jesus as your Lord and savior (Romans 10:9, &13), then your eternity in Paradise is a sure thing, and while you are still here in this world, you are on a pilgrimage (camping). One author has likened this world to the ‘Shadowlands’ because it is only a shadow of what’s to come. Another, a scientist/engineer/teacher, has called this world a ‘virtual reality’ compared to Heaven and not the whole banana. I’d like for someone to explain that one.

A parting thought from author John Eldridge, who wrote “Journey of Desire”. Writing about a sea lion, he says, “How the sea lion came to the barren lands, no one could remember. So long ago in fact, it appeared as though he had always been there. Not that he belonged in such an arid place. How could that be? He was, after all, a sea lion. But, as you know, once you have lived so long in a certain spot, no matter how odd, you come to think of it as home”.

I suppose it could be like the ride to Sturgis every year. Passing through Montana, you’re riding with and camping beside other bikers, so there’s a sense of belonging. But, Montana, Wyoming, and South Dakota are not home. You’re just a pilgrim passing through.

For the born again child of God, maybe you ought to just leave your helmet on.... You could wind up getting a tail wind when you least expect it and your pilgrimage will land you home at last, beyond the ‘Shadowlands’, and past our ‘virtual reality’ into the “Real Deal”. (Check out John 5:24 and 14:1 -3).

Wanted : More Bikers in Heaven

Dan Benson

ANI Chaplain

bensoncma@gmail.com

208-262-6418