

Can We Still See It?

Our front cover this issue features an artistic rendition of the return of Christ to earth. Scripture reminds us that we need to have a vision of our goal kept firmly before our eyes lest we fall short of reaching that goal. Indeed, we are reminded that without God's vision we are at risk of perishing.

In line with having that forward-looking vision, it is wise to look into our spiritual mirrors to be reminded of the people that we once were. Some confuse the words of Jesus found in Luke 9:62 where we are admonished that, once putting our hand to God's plow, we should not look back. This admonition refers to first attending to the affairs of this world before following Christ. Above all other things, we need to be following Christ and all that such entails.

My thought is to heed the warning of James 1:23-24 which is that we should not forget what manner of men and women that we once were. This is not to say that we should wallow in self-recrimination. We shouldn't. The sacrifice of God's only-begotten Son was more than enough payment for all of our sins of which we have repented and asked for forgiveness. That is either truth, or the God who created all things great and small would find it expedient to lie to us; He doesn't and He plainly says so.

What James is saying to us is that we ought to remember how we were because in the remembering comes the vision of our new destination. We don't need to continue to repent of those things except as we find ourselves falling victim to that dead man's vices once again; they are to be forgotten! Instead we remember because with remembrance comes thankfulness that we don't get the reward that we so richly deserved for our sins. This is a promise from the God who has created everything that we can see—and can't see!

Beyond that, James' admonition provides a platform for hope that we can use for the purpose of helping others. That is to say, our vision of the mercy we have been provided can give rise to hope for others who have similar obstacles to overcome.

I don't know if people realize this or not, but there are people walking this earth in the depths of despair thinking that their sins are so bad that not even God can forgive them. It does not matter to them that Paul murdered the Church brethren. It does not matter to them that David, a man after God's own heart, was not only guilty of murder but of doing so to cover up an adulterous affair

with the man's wife. Yet, we know that these men were rescued by God and are, not to mention were, powerful witnesses for the Way of God!

There are people around who are so steeped in guilt that they can't see the blessed mercy that is part of what it is that God is doing with all of us. Is it any wonder why we see as many suicides as we do in the United States, arguably the most blessed country on Earth?

We know that the return of the Christ heralds a time when death and sorrow will begin to be put away, chained with the Evil One to a destiny of eternal destruction. It is that vision held firmly that gives us the hope to go on when we see all of the madness around us, madness that grows progressively more prevalent as we cascade dizzily toward that prophesied crash at the end.

Yes, things are going to get bad, and bad in a way that we have never seen on this planet. That is saying much considering this present elder generation has seen the likes of Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Paul Pot, and the veritable plethora of child murderers that have been discovered in this generation's lifetimes. Some among us will probably live to see that time of unimaginable horror.

But, if we are holding fast the vision of our King and Lord returning to stop the madness, our fear of that future madness should wane, giving way to hope.

In light of that, we are starting a new set of articles written by you, the readers, in which you will tell us how you came to know about the Law of God and to be convicted that you need to keep God's Commandments, including His Sabbath days. We will be publishing those short articles as an encouragement to many brethren and potential brethren who will read them. However, we hope in encouraging you to see the Hand of God in your calling that you will likewise rekindle the fire of the vision that keeps your eyes focused on the same place Abraham focused—on a city whose foundations were built by God, a city made for all of His Children, where there is no more sorrow, no more death, only eternal life in service to the rest of the forgiven Children of God, Almighty.

—Editor