

Why a Generation Saw God's Wonders but Not His Promise

I've been doing a study on the book of Hebrews, not an easy study, but very good. This week I was asked to read about the Israelites, particularly the part where they are complaining. That is a *big* part of their history. And mine. I know that I have compared myself to the Israelites before ... I'm a grumbler just like them, dang it.

Did you ever think about the fact that the Israelites who had to wander in the wilderness because of their unwillingness to trust God were the generation who had witnessed all of the signs and wonders of God? That hit me this week.

Those people had lived through the plagues of Egypt. They witnessed God changing the hearts of the Egyptians so much so that they gave them jewelry and animals and stuff to take on their journey. They followed the pillar of smoke during the day and been comforted by the pillar of fire at night, they'd walked through a wall of water, they'd eaten manna, feasted on quail and seen water come from a rock. Good grief! It seems like even one of those signs or wonders would be enough to convince someone to follow God forever.

And yet, they struggled. They weren't worse people than us. In fact, they were very much like we are now.

Lord, give me a sign. Lord, this is too hard. Lord, I know you promised, but I'd sure like it now. Lord, that Promised Land looks scary. Lord, are you sure? Lord, this way looks so much better, easier, nicer, fun ... Lord, do you mind if I just do my own thing this one time? Lord?

In my life, I really wish that things had already changed, that things had gotten better by now—better in my terms.

This place that I am in, I wonder; is this my Egypt? My wilderness? Or is it my walk into the Promised Land?

I don't believe it is my Egypt. I'm no longer a slave. Jesus made sure of that.

Is it my wilderness? I guess I have to evaluate my life and my walk with the Lord. Have I missed milk and honey for caffeine and sugar? (I'm pretty much living on caffeine and sugar.)

I don't think I'm in a wilderness. I think I'm where God wants me. Oh gosh, I hope so.

Am I walking to the Promised Land? I believe I am on that journey. Maybe it's not the journey to a promised land here on earth, maybe it's *the* Promised Land.

But maybe trying to match my walk with the Israelites isn't exactly the walk I should be trying to match. There are other stories, other people with unique walks.

Maybe my story is gonna be more like Joseph—lots of hard stuff before the great reveal.

Maybe my story is gonna be more like Ruth—sorrow, hard work, barley and Boaz.

Maybe my story is gonna be more like Esther—a season of service, preparation, fasting and then feasting.

Maybe my story is gonna be more like Peter—some dipping below the surface of the stormy sea, some denial and some serious forgiveness.

Maybe I'm a little bit like all of them, a combination of chaos! Well, not chaos ... just a little bit of crazy.

I wonder if I should stop trying to figure out whose life my life is like and just live the life God has given me to live.

My life.

Exhausting, but blessed.

I used to keep a list of things I considered blessings. Things like the colors of fall, playing the piano, the sound of tires driving on gravel, waves crashing on the beach, a breeze blowing the curtains, hot cocoa in coffee, a hug from one of my children, a text from a friend ... there were (and are) so many things in any given day that were a blessing. I've lost sight of that. I've forgotten to count my blessings.

Again.

How often am I going to forget to count blessings?

So this study in Hebrews has reminded me of some things to be thankful for. I'll share a few that have comforted and convicted me.

"His works have been finished since the creation of the world" (Heb. 4:3). (Nothing left to do!)

"Since then we have a great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who was in every sense tempted like we are, yet without sin. Let us then come with confidence to the throne of grace, that *we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*" (Heb. 4:14-16, emphasis added).

"Therefore *He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, because He at all times lives to make intercession for them*" (Heb. 7:25, emphasis added).

"For Christ did not enter holy places made with hands, which are patterned after the true one, but into heaven itself, *now to appear in the presence of God for us*" (Heb. 9:24, emphasis added).

added).

“So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many, and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin but *to save those who eagerly wait for Him*” (Heb. 9:28, emphasis added).

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse them from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us firmly hold the profession of our faith without wavering, for *He who promised is faithful*” (Heb. 10:22-23, emphasis added).

“Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which will be greatly rewarded. For you need patience, so that after you have done the will of God, you will receive the promise. ... But we are not of those who draw back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:35-36, 39).

I know that’s a lot of verses, but I couldn’t figure out which one I’d want to leave out! I love them all. Studying Scripture is so encouraging ... so edifying. God does still speak so strongly through His Word. I’m so thankful for His Word! There!! That’s the first thing I’ll add to my new thankful list I’m gonna restart tonight.

What a perfect time to get back to thanking God for things!

I don’t know that it’ll fix my life, but an attitude, outlook, and perspective fix will definitely be a good thing ... actually, it’ll be a great thing!

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