

A Mirage Becomes a Pool

By R.T. Nusbaum

*"And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water."
(Isaiah 35:7a)*

The word "parched", found in the above scripture, is taken from the Hebrew word "sharab." It is translated to mean, "glare, quivering glow of the air, especially the mirage." So the parched ground described here is a mirage. What is a mirage? It is an optical illusion caused by the reflection of light making distant objects appear very near. One of the most common mirages or optical illusions in the desert is that it will appear as if water is just ahead. Therefore, this scripture can read, "The mirage shall become a pool."

In context this Scripture refers to journeying through the desert. In Bible times men made these journeys with camels. As they would journey, they would become very thirsty; and desire to arrive at an oasis where they could become refreshed with some cold water. As the sun would beat down upon them, they would think they see a pool of water close at hand. They would become so encouraged with the thought of finding an oasis where they could relax and refresh themselves, but when they would arrive at that point they found nothing but glowing sand -- there was no water. It was only the reflection of the sun on the sand. It was a mirage, which is an optical illusion.

Our Christian walk can be like one taking a journey through a desert. David said, "I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were." He was not of this earth but, like Abraham, sought for a heavenly reality.

The reality of just being "strangers and sojourners" in the earth has not always had the impact on Christians as it should. Too many have fixed their eyes on earthly things or gone about to set up home here on earth. And how many set their affects on that which is only a mirage. They follow after an optical illusion. When will they be awakened to the fact that what they pursue only turns out to be empty? They have little conception that when they arrive at their intended goal, they will find nothing but a mirage!

There is no problem over the fact that man is looking for peace, joy and happiness. There is an empty place in the heart of man that presses him onward toward his journey for true happiness. The problem is found in the source by which man attempts to gain this. By nature man will attempt to fill that empty place with the things of this world -- outside of God and Christ. He will attempt to fill that void with anything except the fullness that is found in Christ.

So where do we go to find fulfillment? Most often we seek happiness in entertainment, possessions, intellectual interests, or relationships. If we have these things and yet fail to be happy then we try changing vocations, changing where we live, or finding new hobbies -- thinking that a new start will bring us to that elusive place of fulfillment.

But we can spend a lifetime pursuing such things only to find that it is all a mirage. It has also been a great waste of time, money and energy. This earth is a desert and it is all empty outside of Christ! It is in Christ that the mirage shall become a pool in which we shall find water for a thirsty soul.

"Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled," (Mt. 5:6). Christ is a fountain of living water according to John 4:14. "Jesus stood and cried saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink," (John 7:37). As long as we find pleasure and satisfaction in this world, we will look away from the true Substance Himself.

There are some who have gotten to a dry place in their walk with the Lord. They have been dry for so long that they begin to think something is wrong with them. But it may be that there is not something wrong with them but with what they are doing! Maybe they have just sought the "God of a comfortable life" instead of the living God.

However, comfort is not just found in lounge chairs and VCRs. We can find comfort in insulated ourselves with the familiarity of busy-ness for the Lord. After a while you don't "feel" much at all from the Lord, for everything is on cruise control. God allows you to be brought into the desert of your own dryness.

In the desert God removes the blessing that you once walked in. The dryness is intended to make you hungry for Him. The desert can become a place of no distraction where you realize your own emptiness and begin to seek Him. But that is not the only option. The desert can become a place where we live after the illusions of blessing and happiness. In other words, we become self-deceived. So the wilderness doesn't make the difference but our response to it.

The desert makes it difficult to maintain a false front or "act" when you're literally dying of thirst. The end result is that you either get tired and give up which, in some cases means you literally leave God. Or you might have boundless self-energy and are able to "fake it" forever. God's goal in your being in the desert is not to destroy you. He wants you to give up seeking after mirages and illusions. As I said, you tire quickly in the desert. He wants you to learn that things can shimmer yet have no substance. The option that the Lord wants you to come to is that you cry out for God as a thirsty land would cry out for the rains from heaven.

The Lord Jesus knows how to survive in the desert. When there was a famine in Israel, God fed Elisha miraculously for three years. Jesus Himself was tempted in the desert but did not use supernatural means to satisfy His flesh. He will feed us and give us the water of Life if we will but cry out to Him. The desert doesn't have to be a place of lack of blessing... if the blessing we seek is the Father's presence. God said that, "he shall make the desert to bloom." ***