

Beholding the Glory

A volcano erupted in Iceland on March 20, 2010, after having lain dormant for nearly 200 years. The billowing flume of ash and the explosive fountains of lava have transfixed thousands of observers for days. The ancient Israelites witnessed a similar display of power in today's Templates of Truth.

In the Exodus journey, God had led Moses and His people to the base of Mount Sinai in the wilderness. It was there God intended to make His presence seen and heard so that the people would know that He was God and that Moses was His divine appointed leader. If you were standing in Iceland on March 20, you may have seen something very similar to what Moses described – *there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound...now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently...Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder* (Exodus 19:16-19). Bible scholars are divided on whether Mount Sinai was a natural volcano or not. It certainly could have been, but we must be careful not to insist that since it reacted like a volcano in this passage, it most certainly had to be one. God doesn't need a natural creation to display a supernatural power. He could have manifested His presence in the same way over flat desert sand, had He wanted to.

I think when you use a natural phenomenon to explain a supernatural demonstration, you always leave a tinge of doubt as to whether or not it really was God. No such doubt can remain. It was the purpose of God to display His glory in such a way that the people would hold an unquestionable and indelible mark in their mind and heart that they had just beheld the presence of God. Sometimes I wish people today could witness such a scene so awesome. Maybe there would be far more believers and far fewer skeptics. Yet, the glory of God is all around us; we have just taken for granted His divine presence in it all.

Every time an infant is born, the glory of God blossoms in birth. Every time the seasons change and the sun rises to set, the glory of God radiates in glowing majesty. When a man and a woman fall deeply, intimately in love, the glory of God is felt & embraced. As the miracle of healing renders a body free of terminal illness or disease, the glory of God is shown superior over medical expertise. The transforming power that changes a pagan derelict into a surrendered man of faith is the glory of God revealed in forgiveness and eternal salvation. The pardon & restoration of a fallen saint expresses the grace, mercy and lovingkindness of God's redeeming glory. Science may describe the process by which life is created, but they can't explain the element that makes it life. We can predict the seasons and teach our children the revolutions of the earth that bring about daytime and evening, but we can only tell them that God made light and dark, cold and hot. Only God can forgive sin, and only God can bring life out of death. It is all observed as we behold His unmatched glory.

Moses and seventy-three of his countrymen were privileged to scale Mount Sinai to the point at

which *they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself* (Exodus 24:9-10). Can you imagine such a sight! Only three other persons in the pages of Scripture have been privileged to this scene – Ezekiel, Daniel and John. It is the throne room of heaven described in Revelation 4, where beneath the feet of God rests the Sea of Glass. One day, those of us who are saved by the blood of Jesus, will stand in that throne room and behold the glory of the eternal God of heaven. When the voice of God sounds once again like a trumpet and calls His saints home in the Rapture, we will join Him in the glory of that throne room. “O that will be glory for me, glory for me, glory for me. When by His grace I shall look on His face, that will be glory, be glory for me.” (Charles H. Gabriel, 1856-1932).

That’s today’s Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide in Christ. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in the Lord Jesus.

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