

DWELLING IN UNAPPROACHABLE LIGHT

by Tony Mauck

When asked to describe God, a child may picture a grand old heavenly gentleman with a long flowing gray beard, slightly bent over and leaning upon a wooden staff. I don't see any harm necessarily in a child's view of God in this manner. However, those who are older should have quite a different concept. God does not possess human form. In reality, God's essence is indescribable. Paul, under inspiration, said of his Father in heaven, ". . . He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, King of kings and Lord of lords; who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen" (1 Tim. 6:15-16).

Paul here gives the clearest description found in Scripture of what God is. What is God? Yes, He is a God of love, goodness, kindness, mercy, grace, forgiveness, patience, and wrath against ungodliness. Yes, He is all-powerful and all-wise. Yes, God is personal, not an "it"! But as to what "He" is, Paul simply says of God — He dwells in UNAPPROACHABLE LIGHT!

Although "no man has seen God at any time" (Jn. 1:18), it may be accurate to say that Moses saw more of God than any other man has seen (Ex. 33-34). Isaiah (chap. 6), Ezekiel (chap. 1) and John (Rev. 4) each had visions of divine glory as well. What I find interesting is the similar response of amazement by each one. "Moses laid haste to bow low toward the earth and worship" (Ex. 34:8). Isaiah said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Is. 6:5). Ezekiel fell on his face (Ezek. 1:28). John twice attempted to worship an angel because of what he had seen (Rev. 19:10; 22:8). Mere visions of the divine glory, a visible appearance of an invisible God, were overwhelming to the minds of these men.

One should not be surprised at the incredible majesty which surrounds God. All the stars of the heavens were created by Him. "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands" (Ps. 19:1). The beauty of this planet and the intricacy of the human body — are they not also a dim reflection of the beauty of Him who designed it?

An understanding of who God is should enhance our worship and increase our devotion to His word. The privilege of prayer should be most appealing to us. Solemnity, humility and awe should characterize our approach to His throne. Should it not also cause us to desire obedience? Should not a better understanding of just who and what God is promote a greater dedication to keeping His words? God deserves our praise. He deserves our all. Our thoughts of God should be inspiring to us. He is our creator whom man has not seen and who dwells in unapproachable light.

In another sense, however, man has seen God (Jn. 1). Although men have not seen God in His spiritual essence, they have seen Jesus who was God revealed in flesh. God walked among men. (Sadly, he who should have been treated with reverence, respect, honor, esteem, kindness, etc. was put to death as a blasphemer and insurrectionist.) By seeing Jesus, we see the Father (Jn. 14:9). What He was and what He did should drastically affect the way we live.

One might be tempted to say — If I could only see what Moses saw, I would be . . . , or I would do We have every advantage Moses had and more. Moses never saw Jesus. Moses never heard the gospel of grace. The fact is we do see Him through the eyes of faith. The Bible tells us what others saw. I know God lives because Moses did see. I know God lives because Jesus said He was God. We have the completed written revelation. We have the testimony of eyewitnesses. Blessed are we who believe, yet have not seen (Jn. 20:29; 1 Pet. 1:8-9).

By our faithful obedience and God's good grace, we will one day stand in the presence of Jehovah, who dwells in unapproachable light, and we will worship Him eternally. "In Thy presence is fullness of joy, In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever" (Ps. 16:11).