

Chasing the Mirage

When it's hot many of us know what it is to be in the car and see on the road ahead, something unusual. The rising of the warm air produces an effect which results in the sky being reflected to our eye as in a mirror. It appears as if there is a body of water on the ground some way ahead. It seems there is a lake in the road! But as we approach the 'lake' it disappears. It was really a *mirage*!

This phenomenon is common in desert regions. Weary and thirsty travellers have often seen what they thought was a pool of water. It looks identical to the real thing. Being desperate, they make their way towards it. Then, tragically, as they get nearer, the mirage disappears and their hopes are dashed!

The Journey of Life

Life is like a journey. We often plan our lives with certain aims in mind. We intend to make our journey through life by achieving certain goals. Often we feel that if these objectives are achieved



they will bring, with them, a lasting sense of satisfaction and fulfilment. It may be at this very moment you, yourself have some objective in mind. You feel that this thing will bring with it a tremendous sense of achievement and will make all the difference to your life.

The objective may be to pass an exam, improve your home, or buy a car - or to simply enjoy a good holiday. Now many of these things are legitimate and necessary. They are things we all need to do at some stage in our lives. However, often our experience is that the goal we placed such hopes upon, does not deliver the satisfaction and sense of achievement we anticipated. It is said that people have the greatest happiness just at the moment before they achieve or gain their objective, because the achievement never quite fulfils its promise.

Solomon's Mirages

King Solomon was able to anticipate and enjoy every possible experience or activity this life could give. He tells us that he built fabulous palaces and gardens, with orchards and water features! He obtained every possession a person of his day could desire. He enjoyed the finest of music and entertainment. Other kings sent him a multitude of gifts and

treasures. At one time he devoted himself to the pursuit of the greatest knowledge and

learning of his day. He says, "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure" (Ecclesiastes 2:10).

Yet having gone after and achieved all these things, did Solomon feel a real and lasting contentment and satisfaction? He gives us his verdict. He said in the end it was all "vanity" or worthless (Ecclesiastes 1:2). In the end the things Solomon pursued did not truly deliver. They were *mirages*.

Made For God & To Enjoy God

In the prophet Jeremiah's day

people were giving no thought to God. At that time water was often held in containers called 'cisterns'. God says to His people through His prophet, "They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). In rejecting God, the people were turning to other things, whether entertainment, possessions or

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from them"*

prosperity, but finding no true satisfaction.

The Bible says that we are made in the

image of God (Genesis 1:26). Christ says, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). We are made to know God. Men and women try to find satisfaction and fulfilment in the things God has made while at the same time, wilfully ignoring the One who made them.

This is why things eventually prove empty and disappointing. We are focusing our desires on the things God has made rather than on God Himself. He alone is the true source of satisfaction and joy.

The Mirage Becomes a Pool

There is a wonderful promise in the Word of God. Isaiah 35:7 says, "The mirage shall become a pool." There are those in this world who know true satisfaction and joy, and a real purpose in life because they know God and live for Him.

They too were once those who merely went after the activities and pleasures of this life. Though they proved to be mirages, they knew no different, and would still be following this course now. However God dealt with them. They came to see that they were in rebellion to God, ignoring Him and preferring their own pleasures and ways, which were often contrary to His. They realised they rightly deserved God's anger and condemnation. However, they came to see that through Christ they could know God's forgiveness and be brought into relationship with Him.

The Bible speaks of 'living water'. Not the water we drink, but the very life of God which gives complete satisfaction. Christ says, "Whoever drinks of the

water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). The Christian has come to know Christ for themselves. They have eternal life. They know God and seek to serve and obey Him in all things. All they do, they do as unto God. They know a

"The mirage becomes a pool"

satisfaction and joy from God, which nothing in this world can compare with.

They know the truth of God's Word when it says, "In your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures for-ever-more" (Psalm 16:11).

True Christians have the Spirit of Christ at work in them. As a result they know a true and lasting joy and contentment. They have faith in God and so trust in Him, putting God first in all situations. This is because they truly know Christ, have Him in their hearts. They have the living water which only He can give.

Do you have such an experience of God?