

In the Dark

“Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.” (Micah 3.4)

I have never been a great fan of spelunking; however, I do enjoy an occasional stroll in a well-prepared cavern after all of the dangers have been removed - walkways have been carefully put in place (with handrails) - and, of course, lighting. As I get a bit more age on my weary bones, the non-skid surfaces are especially appreciated.

Our last big family vacation prior to Mandy’s death, took us North into Amish country - some of Pennsylvania’s most beautiful country. During our return, we decided to swing by Luray Caverns near Luray, Virginia. It is amazing how someone can take a hole in the ground and make it attractive enough to draw tourists from all over the world.

Some of the most ornate rock formations drew our attention as we followed the guide through the labyrinth of passageways. At one place, he pointed out a rather small passage explaining that was the place where one of the original spelunkers had been trapped by a shifting rock. The rock pinned his leg so he could not go forward or backward - he was stuck. The passage was too small for him to turn around in to regain his freedom - he was stuck. One can only imagine what it was like to be trapped as the only light he had began to burn its last bit of fuel and plunge him into complete darkness.

At one particularly impressive place in the cave, a drop-off surrounded by a guardrail, the guide stopped. He cautioned each one of us to hold on to the railing because we needed a solid reference point when he turned off the lights. I am thankful he warned us - the darkness was more intense than I had ever experienced - more intense than I had expected.

In the darkness, I used my free hand to check my vision. As I moved my open palm toward my face, I had no perception of its being there until I felt it touch my nose. Complete - total - absolute darkness! Had it not been for the handrail, I could have been upside down and never realized it.

During times of normal darkness, one can become accustomed to the dark. Physically speaking, it is a good thing since our eyes adapt to those situations. Spiritually speaking, it is not a good thing since becoming accustomed to the dark indicates our consciences have been seared and we are no longer aware of the tragic results of sin.

After only a few seconds (which seemed much longer), some in the group became uneasy - restless. They lost their orientation and sought a light source. The guide lit a small candle. Oh, how bright it seemed in the total darkness. All heads turned toward the light - it was the only light in the entire cavern.

The world around us is dark - spiritually dark. It is a darkness that spiritually minded people can feel - it is stifling. The candle is lit - God's Word is available; however, many have become so accustomed to the darkness that they are no longer affected by the light - they can see just enough to be able to feel their way around the sin-darkened world. But then, the darkness becomes more intense - their little light is no longer sufficient - a rock falls and pins them helplessly in a strait place - they cry out to God for help.

As their light begins to go out, panic sets in - they are in the dark, and no one is there to help. Because they have gone their own way for so long, God hides His face from them - they suffer alone.

If you are reading this, there is still time to develop a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It has never been His desire for you to spend your life traipsing through the caverns of the earth alone - He wants to walk with you. He wants to be a companion which sticks closer than a brother - He wants to be your friend.

Now is the time - today is the day to begin this relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. In doing this, you will find that He is ever near - you really have no need to call out hoping He will hear. He will be at your side always.

Rev John H Hill