

The Visitation Of God

The idea of visiting someone usually brings to mind time we spend with friends, family, those who are sick, in need, or fellowship in general. Throughout the scriptures the word visit has another meaning as well denoting an action on the part of God. The Bible refers to this as a visitation. Sometimes this is negative, demonstrating a judgment by God against evil. At other times a visitation is positive as God performs a work that blesses or otherwise sustains those who are visited. Studying passages that use this language shows us how God works and leads us to a better appreciation of the Lord and emphasizes the need for faithfulness to Him. One of the first occurrences of such a visitation appears in a prophetic statement by Joseph as he prepares his family for his death. ***“And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.”*** (Gen 50.24-25). Joseph, a patriarch, had undoubtedly been told by God that his family would be delivered from the land of Egypt before slavery and oppression had been inflicted on them. Following the history of the Hebrews we know they were enslaved and treated harshly. Four hundred and thirty years later (Ex 12.41), acting through his messengers Moses and Aaron, God did exactly as Joseph had stated. ***“And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.”*** (Ex 13.19). The visitation of God in this instance took the form of deliverance and a display of power by God as the pagan deities of the Egyptians were shown to be powerless before the Lord.

Psalms depicts the positive nature of a visitation by God, stating, ***“Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation.”*** (Psm 106.4). The psalmist pleads for God’s blessings and favor on behalf of the faithful who are recipients of His goodness when he blesses them. Another aspect of God’s visitation, in a positive sense, is that God waits patiently and acts in His time to render His will. The performance of the will of God not only blesses His children with His actions, but also teaches us to be patient as well. The children of Israel waited for 430 years for their deliverance from bondage. The Psalmist highlights the need for patience as we pray for God’s blessings.

Christ told a story of a widow who was avenged of her adversary by an unjust judge because of her continual pleading (Lk 18.1-5). Using this to emphasize perseverance in prayer and trust in God, Christ stated, ***“Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?”*** (Lk 18.6-7). The children of Israel waited many years for their deliverance from bondage, but it happened just as Joseph said it would. Christ told his disciples, ***“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”*** (Matt 10.22). Christ was aware that trials would come on his followers causing some to fall away. Later, as he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, Christ reminded his disciples of their need to rely on God in prayer. Finding the disciples asleep, Christ stated, ***“Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”*** (Lk 22.46). The disciples slept because they were overwhelmed with sorrow (Lk 22.45) and didn’t understand what they had been told concerning Christ’s resurrection. In a similar sense we can allow ourselves to be overwhelmed with the cares of the world and life. We

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may fall asleep spiritually, but if we persevere we'll experience the visitation of God as he blesses us with strength and mercy.