

“Eye Hath Not Seen”

“But as it is written; Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:7).

This quotation from Isaiah 64:4 is cited by the apostle to show that none of the world’s rulers understood God’s wisdom in a mystery; for had they know it, they would not have crucified the Lord of God. In Isaiah’s prophecy, the prophet had addressed the inability of idols to see, hear or to speak; he has lauded the ability of Israel’s God not only to do these things, but to reveal things which had not come into man’s heart. Often the Corinthians passage is quoted in funerals to comfort; to speak of the glories of heaven. We agree that “heaven will surely be worth it all” and that to a finite mind, it is impossible to comprehend the glories of heaven had God chosen to reveal them to man the exact nature of heaven. He has not, of course. Paul spoke of *“one who was caught up to the third heaven”* and there heard *“unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter”* (2 Cor. 12:4). General, if not universal, agreement has it that the apostle was speaking of himself when he wrote of knowing *“a man.”* There is surely reason to so believe. The apostle, in his humility, wrote that he would boast only of those things that portrayed his weakness; not of those things which might cause some to have a higher esteem of him that they ought (2 Cor. 12:5f). Then, as he continued his thoughts of *“a man”* caught up to Paradise he wrote, *“And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelation; that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh”* (2 Cor. 12:7). These two factors seem, at least to me, to present overwhelming evidence that Paul wrote of himself when he professed knowledge of a man caught up to Paradise.

While there is compelling evidence Paul wrote of himself when he said, *“I know a man,”* there is absolutely no inkling of what those unspeakable things were Paul heard. They were *“unlawful for a man to utter”* thus these things forever remain a mystery to mortal man, just as what message was given through the sounding of the seven thunders which John heard on Patmos (Rev. 10:3f). John was prohibited to write the content of their voice. But, if those unspeakable things Paul heard in paradise described the glories of that heavenly domain, we could not, in our mortality, comprehend them. Truly, neither has the eye seen, neither the ear heard, nor hath entered into man’s heart, the wonders of the things God has prepared for those who love him. Suffice it to sing, *“Won’t it be wonderful there?”*

But, it was not of heaven Paul was writing when he quoted Isaiah 64-65. Notice the following verse after his quotation: "*But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God*" (1 Cor. 2:10). God has revealed, made known, unfolded the things which eye saw not, near ear heard. The glories of heaven remain shrouded in mystery and expectations of joy; hidden; but things which "eye saw not" were of those things which, had the rulers of the world know, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; the mystery ordained before the worlds unto our glory (1 Cor. 2:7). That revelation is the glorious news of salvation in Christ Jesus.

The agency through which those hidden things have been revealed is the Spirit. Our next few notes will address this important work of the Spirit in His revelation of God's hidden mystery to us.

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