

BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED by DR. AYODEJI AWE

QUESTION 45 –PASTOR, WHY DOES IT SEEM LIKE GOD NO LONGER APPEAR TO PEOPLE AS HE USED TO IN THE TIME PAST?

ANSWER:

I believe your observation is not farfetched. Going through the account of the Bible, we saw persons of faith both in the New and Old Testament enjoy the theophanies (physical or near physical appearances) of God. Adam and Eve (Gen 3), Abraham (Gen.12), Lot (Gen.19), Hagar (Gen.16), Jacob (Gen.35), Moses (Exo.3), David (2Chro.3), Solomon (2Chro.7), Joseph (Matt.1), Mary (Luke1), Zacharias (Luke1), Peter (Act.10), Paul (Act.9), John (Rev.1), the women at the tomb on the resurrection day (Mark 16) , etc are a few of those who saw God or Christ or his angelic representation of some sort.

All these people who encountered God in a physical or near physical form accessed special instructions or words or assignments or guidance from him. Most assuredly, whenever two people meet there 'got to be a momentous exchange of facts, words, and materials. Theophanies were not to be exceptions. In this piece, I will speak on four reasons why the theophany of God had dwindled in the present.

1. DISPENSATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The dispensation we are at this point is the post life of Christ, that is, after (his) death. In the old dispensation (pre Christ), God the father was the major known part of the God head. Jesus as the son was not fully known retroactively as we do now, until his advent at the beginning of the New Testament. The Holy Spirit was not known either as we do now; instead, known was the 'spirit of God' which in contrast to the Holy Spirit did not reside with a man on permanent basis. Therefore God was in full charge of human- divine encounter until the Pentecost day when following the promise of the father through Jesus the son the Holy Spirit came down and started a permanent residence in the life of all who had believed in God through Christ (John 14:16-18).

When a man is born again, the Holy Spirit now comes to inhabit the person. As a permanent resident in the heart, he has job duties including: helper, teacher, comforter, empowerer to do God's bidding and revealer of Gods mind. All these job duties we must agree have covered the theophanical functions of the Lord of the past. Through the internal spiritual manifested guidance and modes of revelations like words of knowledge and wisdom, the highly privileged of God are led and through spiritual operations like discernment of spirits, foes are separated from the flock of helps as a child of God presses successfully along the path of destiny.

2. COMPLETENESS OF THE BIBLE

The completion and ratification of the canon (completed scripture) presents a complete life guide to latter day believers. This was yet to birth during the days when God's appearances to his loved ones were rife. In our lives of today, the Bible presents us not only a model ensamples for our daily living to follow(1Cor.10:11) but in addition gives us fresh insights and guidance as we press along our journey as faith pilgrims, called to evangelize a lost world by speaking the gospel and living as emblems of God on earth. Subscribing gracefully to the Bible makes us fully equipped and completed to be the man or woman that God intends us to be, lacking absolutely nothing (2 Tim.3:16).

The written word is referred to as the logos, and this is what principally guides us along life. Though like in the old dispensation (like of the prophets), some of us today still have access to rhema and spontaneous words of the Lord (especially when the Lord has agendas to execute), nevertheless we don't have to wait for it if the written word has granted us a green light to proceed on issues or matters arising in our lives (Psa.119:105). In other words we may desire theophanies, but we don't have to force it. Walking with the Lord obediently and making ourselves available unto him for kingdom services, the Lord can choose whatever form he wants to appear to us. Dispensation does not absolutely bar theophanies.

3. DECLINE OF HOLINESS

One of the major qualifications for encountering God at a close near physical or theophany has not changed. Except for when God has an important job to get done

in which case he may choose to use anyone or anything he finds (Num.22:22), holiness, purity of heart and cleanness of hands have always and will always be key qualifications for people selected for this special privilege and honor. The Psalmist declared, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul into vanity, nor sworn deceitfully”. Along the same line of thought the writer of Hebrews declares, “Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man will see the Lord” (12:14); either in a brief theophany or in the final reunion with him following the rapture of the church (Rev. 21:27).

Sad enough, the manifestation of the signs of the end time has caught up with the present world. Iniquity has abounded (Matt.24:12) and the ‘best’ it has to offer in disguise is the pleasures that are sinful and eternity aborting. And so, the standard remains standing: sin-coated lives can rarely see the Lord here now or there in yonder.

4. CIVILIZATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

As has been forecasted, the increase in knowledge as the age winds up is very glaring. Today, science and technology have soared and left a mark of civilization unparalleled since the world began. Inventions have littered the face of humanity and existence to such degree that dependence on God has shrunk; and common sensibly so. For instance when I was growing up as a kid in Nigeria, I could remember many a season when the region (as a block) where we lived had to rely on prayers to make rain fall in order for plants and crops to thrive; whereas in the confines of the modern days of science and technological advancement, irrigation for most part will get the job done.

In some quarters, prayers are employed principally to prop good health and God was showing up in such situations. I was raised in a Church that would not use medication for ailments and for most part we enjoyed good health. In our world of today, almost all conveniences are on the finger tips of scientific and technological feats. The summation is that the need to rely on God or see him is no longer compelling.

Another aspect of the new era of inventions are the distractions that come with it thus stifling the concentration on spiritual stance that often

precipitates divine encounters for most part. Modern gadgets like television, telephone, and radio, just to mention a few, though useful on one end has proved to be distracting on the other end. Generally, time for God is becoming a big time struggle in the life of many who have potentials to encounter God in some graphic fashion.

In conclusion, let us now accept the fact that most of the high profile appearing of or words from the Lord are now at Gods own discretion or choice of will underscored by his own purpose and will at building his church. It is important to also note that most of these God initiated contacts are carried out through the ministry of the Holy Spirit by way of manifestations and spiritual gifts(1Cor.12:7- 11). This pretty much has deemphasized the physical out of such experiences. Remember the caution: “God is a spirit; those who will worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth, and now He is looking for those that will worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). In this era of spirituality, seeing God face to face is not the fad but more grace is available to those who are content with relating with him by faith, for without faith it is impossible to see and please him. To all those who have learnt to diligently seek after him in faith, he eventually rewards beautifully with experiences that cannot be less theophanical.

For prayers, counseling on any part of your spiritual life or to have any of your Bible questions answered, feel free to contact us at:

B Q A

Our Saviors Church,

1840 Holyridge Dr., Missouri City Tx 77489

*713/8947832 * 713/7761958*

Jumie888@yahoo.com