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Can You See Him?

I was in high school when a classmate showed it to me. At first I thought it was an image from that new-fangled “Rorschach Inkblot Personality Test.” (You know... that psychological test with patterns of blotches presented on a card and sometimes used to evaluate thought disorders.) Anyway, my friend challenged me to stare at the amorphous pattern for 30 seconds and then look at a blank wall. When I looked at the wall, she said,

“Can you see Him? Tell me...what do you see?”

“Well, lo and behold!” I exclaimed. “I see Jesus! Plain as day!”

“Isn’t that just groovy?” she questioned in typical 1970s lingo. “It’s an optical illusion!”

That event from my distant past resonated in my memory as I read my Bible this Christmas season and pondered,

“What does it mean to really *see* Jesus?”

The New Testament is replete with characters “seeing” Him from the time of His birth all the way through to His post resurrection appearances. Lowly shepherds were the first visitors to “see” Him as the vulnerable Babe yet Infant King; later followed by regal, Eastern Magi laden with invaluable gifts. At His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, a group of Greeks came to the disciple Philip and said:

“Sir, we would see Jesus.”

At Jesus’ arrest in Jerusalem, Governor Pontius Pilate sent Him to be paraded before Herod, who had “for a long time desired to see Jesus.” Though bitter, political enemies prior to that moment, Pilate and Herod thereafter became fast friends as a result of Pilate’s ignoble gesture. (And, yes, politics do make for “strange bedfellows!”)

But it was Jesus' encounter with the inquisitive Philip recorded in the Book of John, chapter 14, which offers the reader the "sine qua non," the very linchpin of **really seeing** Jesus:

"Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"

At this scripture, we need to pause and take the time to "stare" at the grandiosity of what Jesus openly testified to Philip:

"...he that hath **SEEN ME** hath **SEEN** the **FATHER**..."

Can we mortals broach such an audacious declaration with any sense of plausibility? I think not! It is too wondrous for human comprehension! Almighty God, The Great God Jehovah who "stretcheth forth the heavens alone" by the Divine fiat--**Incarnated!**...And for what purpose?...The Great Reclamation! Eternal life which was lost in pristine Eden because of rebellion is now reclaimed for us by the Voice of that Garden made manifest in human flesh! His Voice is speaking, even now:

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

Are you ready to "rest" from futile labors to appease Holy God? Then, this Christmas look beyond the manger to the efficacy of the Incarnation upon the cross to atone for human sin. Take time to stare, my friend, for there you will find forgiveness, perfect ablution, and The Gift of Eternal Life. Fallen humanity **can** see Him in all His fullness, with Heaven's blessed assurance that He is no optical illusion! And...that's way more than groovy!!!

Joanne Carraway resides in Hattiesburg and authored the book, "Windows into the Third Heaven," West Bow Press, a division of Thomas Nelson Publishers, available through online bookstores.