

A Grand Adventure



RECENT PREPARATIONS FOR TEACHING the book of Hebrews to our adult Sunday School class reminded me of the time, back in February 1982, when Linda and I spent 2½ weeks on safari in Kenya. It was quite an adventure.

Out on the savannas of the Serengeti and the more mountainous regions of East Africa we witnessed sights of incredible beauty: myriad beasts gathering at watering holes at night; sunsets and sunrises a glorious backdrop to the primitive stage set of acacia trees festooned with hanging buffalo weaver nests, lazing lions, cheetahs, and wary gazelles; vast herds of wildebeest, water buffalo, and rivers and pools populated by languid yet dangerous hippos.

Along with the beauty we witnessed sights of ugliness, as well—the survival of the fittest being played out every day with one beast consuming another. We saw countless things we had never seen before—and perhaps never will again. We met strangers who became friends. We experienced ecstatic joy and profound discomfort, such as awakening one morning to a thatched hut (and ourselves) swarming with ants that had risen in the night from the surrounding rain-soaked soil. We were, at times, bone weary and dirty, but at other times exhilarated—sometimes both!

In those 2½ weeks we experienced many of the colors, the ups and downs, the pleasures and inconveniences of a lifetime. It was a grand adventure from which we came away with new knowledge and memories that warm us to this day.



For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

In the rush and tumble of everyday life it is easy to take for granted the irreplaceable treasure we have in God's word. It is very easy, as well, to forget that reading and studying that word can be a great and grand adventure.

The Bible is many things in its parts: It is an excellent reference work. The language of certain portions is elegantly penned, and falls like music on the ears. The Bible illumines the ancient past and reveals the future. Here and there are scattered bits and bobs of wisdom for living.

But when we see God's written word only in its parts—only as a handy resource for whatever we need in the moment—we miss much of what God has written there for us.

We miss the forest for the trees.

God's word is a grand adventure. When we approach it more as a cohesive whole, rather than as just a handy reference tome; when we truly *experience*, rather than just read, the text; when we invest its truth in our lives—the word begins to come alive in our hands—it begins to invigorate, revive, and *transform* our lives.

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
And do not return there without watering the earth
And making it bear and sprout,
And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;
So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
It will not return to Me empty,
Without accomplishing what I desire,
And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it."

Isaiah 55:10-11

God's word is far richer than just words on a page. In it we witness sights of incredible beauty—and horrible ugliness. We see marvelous things we've never seen before, meet strangers that will become friends, and old friends that we will now appreciate in a new way. In the Bible we experience fresh joy, as well as painful discomfort. When we truly dig into its truths we might get a little dirty, and may grow weary of it all. But when we tough it out, accepting a little pain for the reward that awaits us, we can also be exhilarated and revived.

In God's word we gain new knowledge and eternal perspective—and that knowledge and wisdom will warm us for the rest of our days.

