

## A Strange Thing?

Joe Slater

**I have written for him the great things of My law, but they were considered a strange thing** (Hosea 8:12).

Israel had strayed far from God. His law ought to have been near and dear to their hearts, but instead was regarded as strange (i.e. foreign to their way of thinking).

Moses had warned their ancestors of the danger of forgetting God's word. *"Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments . . . Therefore be careful to observe them . . . And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all of this law which I set before you this day?"* (Deuteronomy 4:5-8).

During Hosea's ministry, Israel worshiped not only Jeroboam's golden calves, but an assortment of Baal gods (Hosea 13:1-2). But wait! Didn't the first two commandments prohibit other gods and image-worship? Yes, indeed, but such precepts sounded bizarre to the people. All the neighboring nations worshiped numerous gods. How could they all be wrong?

God's word strikes many today as something foreign. No longer can we presume that most people accept the Bible as God's inspired, authoritative word.

John 14:6 says Jesus is the only way to God. Does that strike you as strange? Ephesians 4:4 says there is one body (church), and the next verse specifies one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Isn't that awfully narrow-minded and exclusive? Certainly it is foreign to the thinking of most. Jesus limited marriage limited to one man and one woman for life, with one exception (Matthew 19). Here, too, the world scoffs at what it finds foreign.

God's word is foreign only if you neglect to store it up in your heart (Psalm 119:11). Read and study it! Teach it! Live it!

## Longing For Home

"And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying 'God will surely visit you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you'" (Exodus 13:19).

Joseph had enjoyed a distinguished career in Egypt. Next to Pharaoh, he had held the highest position in the country. Yet those long years of faithful service never made him feel he really belonged to Egypt. Before he died, he made his people swear to take his mortal remains to the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Lord expects His people to be faithful in their earthly positions and responsibilities. By so doing, they honor Christ and His church. Yet they never are to become so attached to this world that they prefer it to the land of promise.

Our home is not here, but in heaven. Here we are pilgrims and sojourners on our way to a better place (1 Peter 2:11).

Peter thus wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3, 4).

--Glen Walton (Amarillo, TX) via Old Paths

## JUST ONE

**"Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these, you have done it unto me"** (Matt. 25:40).

Do for one what you would do for the Lord.

What if we focused on just one person to influence or encourage? In concert, how many people would that be? I wonder if we think we have to make a big splash to be effective. All we have to do is be salt and let our light shine to just one.

Just one made a difference to the Lord. When you have clothed, given water to the thirsty, or visited just one who is in prison you have done it unto the Lord (Matt. 25:34-40). When we helped a brother who was in need, we made differences in that one's life (1 John 3:17).

One made a difference to Paul. He said no one stood with him, not even just one (2 Tim. 4:16-17). What if just one had stood with Paul? But the one who stood by him was the Lord. In that moment that One strengthened him.

If one soul is lost, and that soul is mine, doesn't it make a difference? If that one soul is lost, and it one of my children or grandchildren, doesn't that make a difference? Are we so concerned with converting the world we forget about just one?

One mate can make a difference. What if just one mate is unfaithful? Doesn't that one make a difference to the innocent? What if just one serves the other selflessly, doesn't that one make a difference? What if for just once we forgot about ourselves and thought of the other person? Would that one time make a difference?

All it takes is one act of love. One act of compassion. One demonstration of mercy to lift a broken heart. All it takes is one sin to be a lawbreaker. It took just one sacrifice to atone with His blood what that one sinner could not do for himself.

Just one made a difference for the world. That one is our Lord. Will I be the one to change just one soul and bring them to the Lord?

--Rickie Jenkins (Garland, TX)