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Viewpoints

Observing events in our modern world from the viewpoint of our ascended Savior.

Spelunking Scripture - February 23, 2015

Crawl through the passages of the Bible to explore cavernous treasure!

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Was it really by accident that Gary Tenen and Randy Tufts happened to see bats flying out of the ground just off a paved highway? That their random curiosity led them to a hole in the ground the size of a basketball? That because they're spelunkers (cave explorers) they squeezed themselves through that bat hole to become the first people to set eyes on the beautiful treasures of [Kartchner Caverns](#)? By the way, these caverns were recently in the news again and will continue to make news as they produce a wealth of information for science and for public (tourist) consumption.

Actually, the facts are different than the folklore. Tufts purposely targeted the area as a location for finding caves. A tip from a local miner led him to find a cave's sinkhole, featuring a narrow crack in the rock. He took note of the crack and left, continuing to search for more promising features. Then seven years later, Tufts returned with Tenen. This time that narrow crack produced a warm, moist breeze. They squeezed through the crack (remember, spelunkers love to explore!) and found a small room. Human footprints revealed that others had been there already. But upon further examination, they found a tight passageway the previous visitors had not entered, because they weren't *that brave*. After crawling 25 feet into this cramped fissure they came to a dead end: the fissure narrowed down to a 3-inch hole. But the warm air was coming through that small hole. So... "we laid in the crawlway for two hours, widening the hole with an 3 pound sledgehammer and a chisel. Finally we were able to squeeze through the hole... but only by taking off our belts and exhaling." As a result, they discovered cavernous treasures that eclipse a gold mine.

Perhaps you think that with just a little exploring here and there, you can lay eyes on the riches of the Bible? This may surprise you, but yes! You can! God is the Savior who wants all to be saved, so all over the Bible he has made huge entrances into the caverns of his truth. So even if someone takes a leisurely walk across the pages of scripture, one can "fall into" a passage of salvation. Here is one gaping entrance: "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

But you would be mistaken if you think that scripture is only as shallow and unsophisticated as the plastic-built kid's tunnel erected in the local park. And this is why, after we have stumbled into one of the caverns of God's truth, God still wants us to become scriptural spelunkers. To go exploring in his Word. To crawl through the passages of the

Bible. And to find beauty, strength and peace that makes Kartchner Caverns seem like a plastic-built kid's tunnel erected in the local park.

For example, let's spelunk the first verse of the Bible where God led Moses to write: **"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"** (Genesis 1:1). Look, there's a warm breeze blowing through the Hebrew word Elohim, the word for God. Crawl closer! The word Elohim is a plural word, yet it's matched to the singular verb, created. Remove your belt, exhale, and let's squeeze into these God-chosen words. The plural name for God reflects that there is more than one person in God; yet because there's only one God, the singular verb "created" is used. Don't chicken out, keep crawling. Moses is leading us to a discover what Luther summarizes well: "It is plain that Moses wants to hint at the Trinity or the plurality of Persons in one single divine nature. Because Moses is speaking of the work of creation, it follows clearly that he is excluding the angels. There remains, therefore, this contradiction: God is one, and nevertheless, the most perfect unity is also the truest plurality. Why else should it be of importance that Moses makes us of the plural number?"

As we continue to spelunk in the first chapter of the Bible, we come to verse 26. Moses writes: **"Then God (plural) said (singular), 'Let us (plural) make man in our (plural) image (singular)."** If we're willing to spelunk these divine passageways, we discover how one passage connects to another, leading us to find the splendid truth that God is Triune: that there are three persons in one God. And low and behold, the caverns in Genesis run so deep and long, we find them connecting to the passage that, **"God (the Father) so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son..."** But this crawlway continues to lead us to other passages such as Jesus teaching this: **"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name (singular) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (plurality of persons)..."** (Matthew 28:19). How spectacular to travel passages that lead from Moses to Christ's disciple Matthew... to a passage penned by the Apostle Paul. **"If God (the Father) is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"** (Romans 8:31-32).

As one passage leads to another we find the cavernous truth that God is Triune (3-in-1). This means that when **"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" it's the eternal Son of God – God the Creator!— who paid for our sins by dying on the cross!** Only God's innocent blood can pay for the sins of the whole world. Thus, in Jesus' sacrifice at the cross, you are forgiven! Heaven is your home! And all of scripture's strengthening promises are yours to keep!

Need some help getting started with your own spelunking? Let me know. I love giving guided tours. There are also self-guided tours that we [offer here, called sermons](#). Enjoy the spelunking!

Source Material (Links may become inactive over time.)

[Kartchner Caverns Microbial Observatory](#) @ University of Arizona

[New Helmet and Headlight Tour at Kartchner Caverns](#) @ AZCentral.com

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Blessings to you and your loved ones, Pastor Mike Nitz

