

MisSion CriTikal

#17 – Gates 'n Goats

How can you describe it? Maybe it's about as hard as describing a rainbow to Ol' Tom, and his blindness. As Tom sat in the little tent church, above his village, a couple ladies and about four teenagers sat on the ground in front of him. There wasn't any need in him asking everyone's permission to share descriptions of God's beauty with them. They all knew that Tom saw more of God with his heart than man's eyes ever could, and all were anticipating what beauty he'll describe next.

After a short but very humble prayer for guidance, he began. “Do you all remember last time we were talking about the beautiful tent church God named the TABERNACLE? Well, there's so much of God's beauty to describe it all, but for right now, let's talk about goats and roofs.”

All of Tom's listeners looked at each other wondering if he was having one of those moments that old people often have. He continued with, “Before you all think I'm looney let me explain about the roof of that portable church so precious to God. Well, God's nation had lots of sheep and goats. So God told Moses to have the workers make the roof and much of the curtains using goat's hair, even though the people didn't know why. This was another opportunity to trust God's directions, period.”

Tom continued with, “A long time ago, I heard a preacher that also raised goats describe goat hair. He said it's really light weight for the amount of year round insulation it gives. This preacher said it's almost like air conditioning. When the air is dry the goat hair roof is kind-of porous like a screen door. It lets in the cool air. But when the air is humid, like it's fixin' to rain, the goat hair swells up and becomes waterproof. I mean is that really smart of God, or what?”

The little church tent group looked up at their tent roof and it's tablecloth patches and got one those 'both-barrel-blessings' like Lenny's grandpa used to say. After a little discussion about that goat hair roof lesson, he began another lesson you could tell was very deep in his heart. Ol' Tom's calloused wrinkled hands rubbed his forehead like he was trying to shake the right words loose to show God's beauty of the 'Gate Goats'. His lesson began with some

gentle hand motions. Tom said, “God designed a curtain fence all around the Tabernacle that used posts covered with pure gold. Can't you just see the sunlight glittering off those golden posts. I'm thinkin' each one was a reflection of the sun's power and beauty. Well, I wanna tell you about the gate, that was also made with white linen curtains that included blue, purple, and red colors.”

“Now before, we talked about the Gospels and how they presented Jesus Christ as a king, an ox servant, a perfect man, and an eagle flying in the blue sky. Well for me, I think of these when I learned the colors of the gate curtains. The purple is a color for kings, red is the sacrifice color probably of an ox, white would show the purity of a man, and the blue would be heaven's blue sky, the home of the all seeing eagle. 'Course that's just my thinking.”

“But most of all, my mind tries to see the depth of the gate goats. See, the tabernacle was a place of sacrifices of animals, lots of them. Some were for thanks to God, some were for sin offerings. Sin is God's name for things we do and think, that we know God doesn't like. Well, the Tabernacle was the place where innocent animals were sacrificed – their blood was shed as a temporary payment for those sins.”

“So two goats would be brought to that gate of the Tabernacle. One goat was chosen to be the innocent blood sacrifice for the people's sins, and was called the 'SCAPEGOAT'. The other goat was taken out into the wilderness and set free.”

Tom took a couple deep breaths and rubbed his forehead some more. He continued, “Now just suppose you were that goat that was set free – totally free. Just pretend that you turned around and saw that other goat – the scapegoat being sacrificed. What would you think? Would you just say, 'Oh well...' and continue on?”

“Whether you have blinded eyes like me, or you can see and describe a sunset, the question is asked of everyone – even you and me. What is our response to the scapegoat? Jesus Christ, God's only Son was the truly innocent scapegoat – sacrifice for you and for me. We are set free from sin's terrible future, because of our heavenly Scapegoat. What do you have to say about that?”