

The Son of God is with us

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.” –Psalm 23:4

Sometimes the Son of God is really with us. Really.

In Daniel 3, the Bible tells us that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, erected a gigantic golden idol and ordered all his subjects to bow down to it whenever they heard the music play. Anyone who didn't, he warned, would be pitched into “a burning fiery furnace.”

Three Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—refused to bow down to the idol. When the king threatened them with death, he added, “And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?”

They answered boldly, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” Notice that they did not say that God would indeed deliver them: they left that up to God Himself. Whether God chose to do so or not, they would not bow down to the idol and serve a false god.

So the king ordered them cast into the furnace. And then something happened that made the king doubt his own senses.

“Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” he cried. “Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” And the men came out of the fire unharmed, for God had delivered them; and the king was humbled.

This was not the only time that God performed such a miracle. Fast-forward into the 20th century.

As Europe was tuning up for World War I, explorer Ernest Shackleton set out on an expedition to cross Antarctica by land. But his ship was crushed in the ice, and he and his men made a narrow escape to a desert island. There they would surely die, unless they were rescued.

After many hardships and extreme peril on the sea, Shackleton and two companions arrived on South Georgia Island, where they then had to hike over mountains and glaciers in hope of reaching the whaling station on the other side of the island, from whence word could be sent to summon rescuers. It was a grim and difficult march, a race against death.

Now let Shackleton tell us what happened during that march.

“When I look back at those days I have no doubt that Providence guided us, not only across those snow-fields, but across the storm-white sea that separated Elephant Island from our landing-place on South Georgia. I know that during that long and racking march of 36 hours over the unnamed mountains and glaciers of South Georgia it seemed to me often that we were four, not three. I said nothing to my companions on the point, but afterwards Worsley said to me, ‘Boss, I had a curious feeling on the march that there was another person with us.’ Crean confessed to the same idea. One feels ‘the dearth of human words, the roughness of mortal speech’ in trying to describe things intangible, but a record of our journeys would be incomplete without a reference to a subject very near our hearts.”

For two persons, let alone three, to have the same hallucination at the same time is exceedingly unlikely, and may not even be possible. We have heard of this same miracle happening on other occasions, but Shackleton in his time was a very famous man, not one to squander his reputation on tall

tales, and his witness is worth very much. Its similarity to the Biblical account cannot be ignored.

It would have been pugilistically interesting to see what would have happened, had anyone dared to call Shackleton a liar to his face; but no one ever did.

We will not always emerge from the valley of the shadow physically alive or unharmed.

But we will not walk through it alone.

I have discussed these topics, and others, on my blog, <http://leeduigon.com>, throughout the week. Please stop by and read! All it takes is just one click to get you there.

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