

Scarce or Precious

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The above caption contains two English words that are very important when applied to the Word of God!

Webster defines *precious* as *something of great price or value; highly esteemed or loved; dear!* The same dictionary gives the meaning of *scarce* as "deficient in quantity or number compared with the demand; not abundant; hard to find; uncommon; rare." These meanings we want to apply strictly to our attitude toward the Word of God in this article!

Is it *precious* or *scarce*?

Is it a thing of great price, highly esteemed and loved or is it a thing hard to find, uncommon, and rare in our lives? Such is the question we are confronted with at the beginning of the year 1959 and its answer will determine how much *truth or error* prevails in our lives!

The Word of God itself speaks of this in I Samuel 3:1 where strikingly we find the word *precious* used in the sense of *scarce*. We read there: *And the Word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.* It was during the days of the judges in Israel that these words were recorded. Israel had apostatized from the ways of Jehovah, their God. They were at the time governed by the weak Eli who was for all practical purposes judge in Israel only in name. The priesthood had also become corrupted as was evident from the conduct and service of Hophni and Phineas, the two sons of the aged judge. There were no prophets whose testimony could be heard from Dan to Beersheba. God was silent. He refused to reveal Himself either directly or through the medium of visions, etc. The Word of God was scarce, a thing hard to find, rare. And the effect of all this was evident in the corruptions that filled the land. There was no *preciousness* of the Word manifest! Evil was apparently tolerated without punishment. Truth and righteousness were disregarded and even despised. The law of Jehovah, with its demands and threats, was not highly esteemed and there was obviously little or no desire to keep it. The people lived in gross error!

Today, it cannot be said that the Word of God is scarce in the sense that it is unavailable, difficult to find or obtain, rare! There is no book as common as the Bible. Millions of copies are run off the printing presses each year. In every book store in the land they can be obtained at practically any price one is willing to pay. Copies are found in every home and they are freely distributed in public places. There is no scarcity here!

However, in the sense of finding the Word of God in the *true sense* of the word, - the Word of God as God Himself speaks it and through which speech He reveals Himself as He is so that the recipients of that revelation are brought to a saving knowledge of Him through Jesus Christ, the Word of life, and a walk that corresponds to that knowledge - is something else again. In this sense of the word, it may be questioned whether there ever was an age in which the Word of God was more scarce than it is now. One can spin the dial of the radio to any number of stations that will herald the vain and corrupt philosophies of men concerning that Word. You can subscribe to countless religious magazines and invest thousands in books that are written on religious themes but in them the Word of God can *scarcely* be found. You can travel throughout the land and in vain look for a church or churches where the menu is *the pure Word of God!* Many pulpits are given to entertainment; others to social, political and economic discussions involving the problems of mankind but in vain do you look for those who *faithfully proclaim the way of salvation.*

The Word of God is scarce in our day!

This in turn is inseparably related to the fact that it has lost its *preciousness*. It is no longer *highly esteemed and loved*. It is rather taken for granted. Let us not be oblivious of the fact that we are living in a materialistic age and that this spirit of materialism has made deep inroads into the sphere of the church and to a very large extent crowded out the Word of God. The latter is being replaced and substituted by other things.

Then, too, there is a certain standard of the *Joneses* with which all must keep pace today. Inflation has placed a high cost upon the necessities as well as the luxuries of life. There are so many things to be had to make life comfortable and pleasant in our day - new houses, automobiles, televisions, hi-fi's, radios, refrigerators, freezers, automatic dryers, dish-washers, organs, pianos - are but a few of the many things that must be had today. These things are *precious* so that men will labor untiringly, day and night if need be, to keep pace with those that have!

And the Word of God?

For it there is so little time. No time for societies! No time for personal study and meditation! No time for family devotion! These things must be left to the clergy in monastic seclusion! There is time only to reap the material things that are so *precious* to the carnal flesh and to indulge in pleasures so that in our age the *bowling league* is more prominent than the *societies of the church* and the *scores of the games* are better known than the *dates and times of the Word* and *professional players* more familiar to children and adults than *the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!*

Yes, but we do not exaggerate. The Word of God is fulfilled before our very eyes. *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parent, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof..”* (II Tim. 3:2-5).

From such turn away...!

If we neglect the Word of God and place before it the things of our present age, it is *true* that the Word of God is *scarce* and that very *truth* is our *error!*

If we seek the things below, these things are *precious* to us and that too is living in *error*; in a false sense of values, and with a distorted world and life view!

If the Word of God is *not scarce but precious*, we will seek it and utilize our opportunities in the midst of the church to the utmost advantage so that we may increase in the knowledge of the truth which teaches us that: *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* (Titus 2:13).

And that is the only way to attain a *Happy New Year!*

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