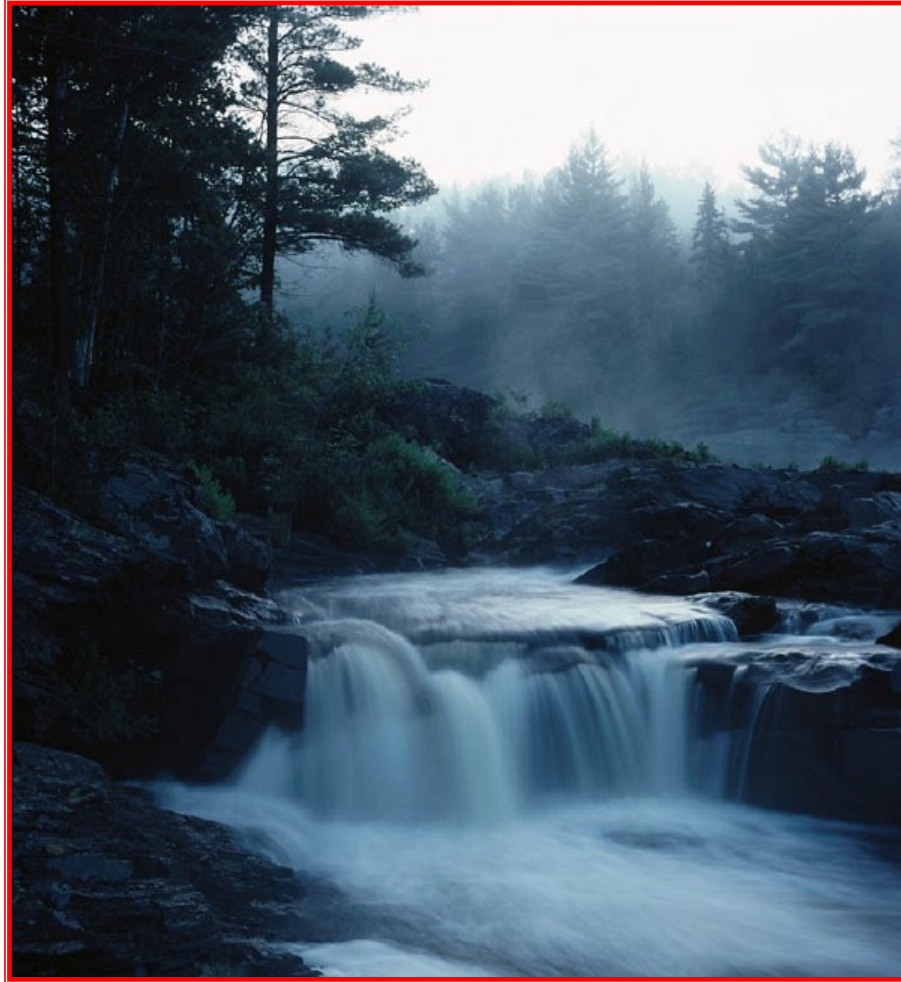


WATERFALL



If you have a waterfall near where you live, take a good look at it. If you do not have a waterfall near your home, look at the pictures in this story. There is a great lesson being taught to us from God in that waterfall.

As the water flows down the river, it seems calm. Suddenly, the river reaches the edge of a cliff and it falls down in a great rush of water. When the water hits the bottom of the cliff, there is a great crashing and smashing of water from above with water below. There is a lot of noise. The water is very rough for a distance and then it becomes peaceful again.

What can we learn from God's creation of the waterfall?

There are two lessons God teaches us using the waterfall. One lesson is about life on earth and the other lesson is about eternal life. Both are very important lessons.

The first lesson shows us how God works in our lives to strengthen our faith. If we believe in Jesus as our Savior we are like the river that flows peacefully along. Often, we sin and go astray and cause harm, just like a flood. God may then punish us so that we will return to proper ways of living as He taught us in the Bible. We may have trouble for a time but there

will be peace again. We have peace with the Father because of what Jesus did for us and because the Father loves us so much, He sometimes has to be strict and punishing - just like your earthly parents. It is for our own good. In Psalm 119:67-68 we learn, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. You are good and what you do is good; teach me your decrees." God uses bad times to bring us back to the right way to live according to the faith He has given us. He is doing everything for our own good like a father who teaches His children right from wrong. The Bible teaches us in Hebrews 12:10-11, "God disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." The waterfall gives us a good picture of this lesson doesn't it?

The second lesson God teaches us using the waterfall is about eternal life. When we believe that Jesus is our Lord and Savior, we will have eternal peace and joy in heaven as we learned in the first

lesson above. The second lesson is to warn those who do not believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior that they cannot hope to avoid eternal punishment for their sins without Jesus. People who do not believe in Jesus are like the river before it comes to the waterfall. It flows along peacefully because it does not realize what lies ahead. Some people do not believe in God at all. Some people do not believe in God as the Bible teaches us to and make up their own religion. This is dangerous because it is God who rules the universe and not mankind. We must live according to the Bible's teachings and not our own ideas of right and wrong. The Bible teaches us in Proverbs 16:4-5, "The Lord works out everything for his own ends - even the wicked for a day of disaster. The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished."

For those who do not believe in Jesus as their Savior, the day will come when, like the peaceful river, they go over the cliff into great distress. They do not realize how dangerous sin is or do not care and they ignore God's forgiveness until it is too late.

When they die they will not have peace in heaven but great sorrow. The crashing waters of the waterfall give us a picture of this. God does not want anyone to miss going to heaven as the Bible teaches us in 2nd Peter 3:9, "(God) is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance." God tries in every way to make us sorry for our sins and realize that we need Jesus to be our Savior. Our sin was so great that only the awesome sacrifice of God's own Son Jesus was enough to earn our forgiveness. Jesus tells us this in John 3:16 when He said, "For 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." God gives us the faith to believe in Jesus as a gift so that everyone can be saved. All that is needed to be saved from our sins was told to us by Jesus in Mark 16:16 when He said, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

If God did not love us so much, He would not have given us such a good picture to learn from as the waterfall. God is a loving God but He is also true

to His word. We do not have to be afraid of God if we believe in Jesus because Jesus made peace with the Father for us. We can eagerly look forward to seeing God in heaven one day. If we ignore God's word, we cannot expect anything but eternal punishment. It is just like if we ignore our parents' wishes or the law. We cannot expect anything but punishment for our sinful ways.

Let's learn the first lesson of the waterfall and praise God for all He has done for us now and for all eternity.

