

## The Granddaddy of the Lake

The hauntingly melancholic and sonorous tone echoed through the trees surrounding the bog. It sent chills up the spines of the two pre-pubescent young males whose exploits had carried them into the Adventist Camp in Gladstone on a mission to discover the source of the eerie sound. We had both seen too many “Godzilla “ movies, as well as “The Creature from the Black Lagoon”, to be comforted that this sound did not emanate from a monster whose long muscular tentacles would not reach out suddenly and pull the diminutive and unsuspecting explorers into the mire of the swamp.

This particular lake was inside the boundaries of the Adventist Camp in Gladstone of the late 1950’s. Unfortunately, what was a boon to the imaginations of not only my friend and me also whetted the mercenary appetites of the people who actually owned the land in which the ostensible monster was. Unlike the elusive Nessie of Loch Ness Scotland fame, the sound which filled the area around the body of water was coming from a very large bullfrog. So, with all the necessary tools of big game hunting, my friend and I set out on the challenge to apprehend the subject of the myths and legends of the third and fourth grade “men” of Gladstone Elementary School...The Granddaddy of the Lake.

To apprehend such a “beast” would surely nominate a young man for a medal of bravery. As we entered into the camp and followed the way to the lake, we spied the creature resting on a bed of lily pads. With great stealth and determination I went out into the pond, supported only by the distribution of my weight over the leaves on the surface of the mire. Just as I got to the beast and captured it in my hands, I sank up to my armpits in swamp. My friend, thinking like a true member of the expedition, rose to the top of the adversity and extended a broken branch in order to save my life, but, more importantly to bring in our prize. We had captured the Granddaddy of the Lake.

On a much more important mission, when Moses dispatched one member from each tribe of Israel to explore the land of Canaan he told them to report on the riches of the land and the size and ferocity of its defenders. Only Joshua and Caleb brought back reports which were intended to give the Israelites hope and encouragement regarding the land God had said was for his children.[1]

Faith waxes eternal in the hearts of God’s followers, and, as a result Israel did eventually end up in the Promised Land, but, not without rebellion, sin, and concomitant offerings by Moses and Aaron to satisfy the wrath of God at the rebellion of His Children. They were rebelling basically at not having their lives laid out for an easy path to follow. As a result of this rebellion, God condemned the children of Israel to wander in the wilderness for forty years until all were dead who had been a part of this uprising.[2]

Just as the reports of the bounty and splendor of Canaan filled the children of Israel with hope for what lay ahead, and fear for their lives at the thought of the enemy whose size, strength, and ferocity had become legendary, so the Granddaddy of the Lake was legendary in the halls of Gladstone Elementary.

In spite of the encouragement of Caleb about the ability of the children of Israel to go up and take possession of the land of Canaan, those with him were able to make the people look at the problem and not the Lord Who brought them into the situation in the first place. Thus, the people rebelled and wanted to stone the up lifters of the Faith in the Lord[3]. This precipitated a series of revolts against not only the leaders who explored the land of Canaan, but also against Moses and Aaron and ultimately, God Himself. How much like the rebellious Israelites are we when we live a life of rebellion against God’s Authority by our lifestyles and choices we make.

Truly, we as a society have sunk into the bog and mire of sin; we are buried up to our armpits and cannot move, yet we steadfastly hold on to the ostensible “prize” we have managed to salvage. The only way out, since we are unable to extricate ourselves on our own power, is to be pulled out just as my friend pulled me out with a stick. Jesus lived, died, and rose again so that he might extend a stick of hope to a society, and individual members there of, that we might be saved from sin[4], and once saved, have a more abundant life[5].

My friend and I were allowed to keep the bullfrog for three days, taking it to “show and tell”. We relished in the accolades of the male members of our respective classes and the grimaces of the female members there of. At which time

the bullfrog was returned to its home in the swamp. My mother went into her “worry wart mode” by saying to her fecklessly intrepid offspring, “you might have drowned”. She did not appreciate the daunting challenge my friend and I were able to overcome. Neither did the children of Israel fully appreciate Joshua, Caleb, Moses and Aaron. In our own way, we each faced obstacles.....Admittedly some were of a more serious nature than others.

---

[1] Numbers 13: 1-33

[2] Numbers 14: 1-45

[3] Numbers 13:26-14:12

[4] John 3:16

[5] John 10:10