

Some Nervous Cows

This probably won't mean much to most of you, for you have never seen the land of which I am speaking, but please use your imaginations as best as possible. This past week, the flood waters rose once again back "home" in Southern Missouri. You have probably seen pictures of the flooding along the Mississippi River on the evening news, but there were no news crews present to record what I am going to try to describe to you. In the hill-country where my parents reside, a news crew could not have gotten there if they had wanted to.

On my parents' farm, there is a geological feature that we always called "the creek." It has a name, James Creek, but we always just called it the creek. Although records indicate that early in the last century water once flowed continuously in its banks, for all of our lives it has been nothing but an oversized ditch. It varies in depth and width, but probably averages eight feet deep by twenty feet wide. It only runs during the heaviest of rains, and that usually only happens once or twice every couple of years. Otherwise, it just made a wonderful place for us to play.

When the waters would flow, it was a time of great excitement for us as children. While sometimes only a trickle would come down from the valley above, at others, a raging torrent would emerge. We used to love it when it would get up and stay up for a day or two, for that meant not only that there would be no school, but we enjoyed a wonderful new world in which to play. There were times, though, that you might get caught on the wrong side of it (be it in or out), and then it became quite a nuisance.

In my limited years of experience with James Creek, only once did the waters rise above their banks. That was a very frightening Christmas Eve in 1981 or 1982, I never can remember which. This spring, however, it has already done so twice. This past Wednesday, it apparently got higher than any of these, turning the fields on either side into a wide lake with a strip of whitecaps in its center. Nearly seven inches of rain fell in a little under three hours, something that happens rarely enough down here but is almost unheard of up there. There is a little pond at the foot of the hill that my parents' house sits on; it had water from the creek flowing into one side of the pond and out the other.

My dad told me of a little event that happened as the storm began. Most of his cows were on the other side of the creek. As soon as it began to flow, all of the cows crossed over to the north side, the side that has the highest ground. Those cows climbed the hill past the house, and while they didn't go as high as they could have, they went out of sight of the mass of water rolling past. Then—here's the funny part—they all huddled into a circle and stayed that way until the storm subsided. I guess you could say they were, well, nervous, for they knew something very unusual was taking place.

What does it take to make us "nervous"? The economy? Crime? The upcoming Presidential elections? Illnesses? Without a doubt, any of these things could result in an uneasy feeling within us, but seriously, aren't these and many other things are becoming so commonplace in our society that it is doubtful we would feel the need to "huddle up"?

When do we intend to "circle the wagons" against sin? With each passing day, the time of judgment draws a little more nigh. Will we wait until the lake of fire is within our sight to seek shelter? Or will we cross over Jordan to the eternal bliss of heaven while there is still time? Possibly we are not as

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defensive against sin as we ought to be because sin is not as offensive to us as it ought to be. Judgment is truly a “once in a lifetime event.” Don’t you want to be ready?