

Tourist vs Traveller

When it comes to being a Christian.
Are you a tourist or a traveller?

One is just looking for the shallow experience.
The other is looking to understand and to become part of something.

One is focussed on short term fun.
The other is long term focused.

One is focused on self.
One is focused on others.

One goes to another country and stays in western hotels, hanging out with other tourists, eating McDonalds because you just don't know what is in their food.
The other stays where locals stay, and hangs out with them, eating their foods because you just don't know what is in their food.

Kind of like "look I got this t-shirt" vs, "I learned to speak some of their language".

Vince Antonucci wrote a great little book called, "I Became a Christian and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt". It's all about how most people go on holidays and just do the ordinary touristy stuff, and all they bring back is the t-shirt. But some people go on vacation and have adventures. Things might not always go smoothly, but they bring back incredible, powerful stories.

So many Christians seem content with the t-shirt when there is so much adventure to be had.

So many Christians settle for mediocrity when God wants us to be warriors, people of valour, fighting spiritual battles, adventurers who are making a difference.

Several people in the Bible displayed what you might call a "tourist mentality" — engaging with God or spiritual things superficially, out of curiosity, benefit, or excitement, but without true commitment. Here are a few examples:

In John 6 we read, "Yeshua answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you look for me, not because you've seen signs, but because you ate the loaves of bread and were satisfied." It seems this crowd followed Yeshua not because they truly wanted him, or his teaching, but for free food and a spectacle — like tourists after a good show and some snacks.

In Acts 8 Simon, (the Sorcerer), believed and was baptized, but when he saw the apostles laying hands to impart the Holy Spirit, he tried to buy that power. He was used to performing for a crowd, and he wanted this power for the prestige it would bring him, not the repentance and transformation — like someone who wants a spiritual "souvenir" without the journey.

In Matthew 19 there is a rich young ruler, who eagerly came to Yeshua asking what good deed to do to gain eternal life, but walked away when he was told he had to give up his wealth. He liked the idea of spiritual life, but not enough to actually change his priorities.

In John 6 we see something stunning — Many of the disciples who were following Yeshua around, were saying that the message was difficult. And they walked away from following him! When Yeshua's teaching got hard, the "tourists" left — they were interested until the reality of discipleship demanded more than they were willing to give.

And even in Old Testament times, even back in Genesis 19 — Lot's wife left Sodom but she disobeyed God and looked back. Her heart was still back there — like a tourist who takes the trip but can't let go of home comforts or sinful attractions.

And the Old Testament Israelites themselves. Having been set free from their slavery in Egypt, all they seemed to do was complain about God, and wish they could go back! Remember how good it was back in Egypt. Free fish, leeks, onions, garlic.

And of course we have our modern equivalents, people who go to church mostly for good music, community events, or free meals — but not for transformation. People interested in what God can do for them, (heal, bless, provide), but not in what he can do **in** them, and certainly not interested in **submitting** to him.
"Jesus fed 5,000, and all I got was a free lunch."

And just like Simon the Sorcerer, we still have people who are attracted to Christianity because of influence, platform, or a trendy spiritual vibe. Some jump on the Christian influencer train or use the language of faith for the political clout it gives them.
They want spiritual gifts, not spiritual fruit.
"I went to a revival, and all I got was this t-shirt."

READING

John 6
Acts 8
Matthew 19
Genesis 19
Exodus 14-16

*I Became a Christian and All
I Got Was This Lousy T-
Shirt*

The modern rich young ruler, loves the idea of following Yeshua but won't let go of lifestyle, relationships, reputation, or comfort. He says things like "I'm spiritual, not religious" or "I follow Yeshua, but not the church." "Loved the message, didn't want the mission."

And we have many equivalents of the disciples who turned away. They move from one church to another whenever the teaching gets too personal or too convicting. They want encouragement without correction, and comfort without challenge. They want to be Christian without it impacting their lifestyle or their life choices. "Went for love — left for freedom."

Lot's wife... says yes to Yeshua but is constantly looking back at old habits, old friendships, or old sins. She is kind of half-in, half-out. She still clings to Netflix theology and TikTok morality.

"Escaped destruction — missing the drama."

And the modern Israelites in the wilderness - always grumbling when spiritual life doesn't go how they hoped. "Why is God letting this happen to me?" They long for how things were before these trials hit. They miss Egypt, (their old life), more than they desire the Promised Land.

"Wilderness adventure? Wish I'd stayed in Egypt!"

What's **your** t-shirt say?