

Illustrated Bible Life

“Better”

On my last trip out to see my family in Oregon, my brother and his daughter flew out to Kansas City and drove across the country with me. This gave me the chance to introduce them to some of my favorite places along this route—I’ve been driving between KC and Oregon for about 20 years now.

One of the fun things I like to do while traveling is “rock-hounding.” I am one of those people who pick up rocks wherever they go just because rocks are interesting. They make good souvenirs too—they are free. As a seasoned rock hunter, I have to add the caveat that one must be sure collecting rocks is allowed before picking up said souvenir, but that is not hard. Rock collecting for personal use in small amounts (what you can carry in a small bag) is allowed almost everywhere except national and state parks and private property (but even private owners may grant permission if you ask!).

I wasn’t sure my family would be all that interested in picking up rocks, but I knew of a few good sites along the way, and they were willing to humor me. Then we came to Garnet Hill in eastern Nevada, and they caught the bug!

Garnet Hill is about three miles up a twisty, narrow dirt road. For years, local rock hunters have come to this spot to pick handfuls of garnets off the ground—literally. The rock there is studded with what must be millions if not billions of the tiny red crystals. Most of them have too many flaws to be gem-worthy, but they are still pretty. The rocks have eroded through the eons and as they do, the little gems inside pop free and roll down the hillside to where those who have sharp eyes can pick them out. We found a bundle. Okay, about a few dozen tiny stones each, but we were happy.

The thing about rock hunting is knowing when to stop. I had set a time when I thought we should get back on the road, knowing I need to give myself a deadline on such excursions. In the case of my niece, once she had a few dozen, it was enough and she went back to the car, presumably to text her friends about her finds. My brother and I found it harder to stop. No matter how many we had, there was the possibility that we would find one more—that elusive gem-quality stone that would be better than all the rest!

“Better” is a funny word. We human beings are always on the hunt for something “better,” something that will last us a lifetime, that will put our search for perfection to an end. The end of that hunt is what the book of Hebrews is all about. We have that better goal, that better high priest, that better sacrifice: Jesus Christ. In every way, Jesus is superior to everything that has come before. We can stop searching. In Christ, we already have the best.