

Date: 10/21/2019 7:54:06 PM

Subject: Postcard

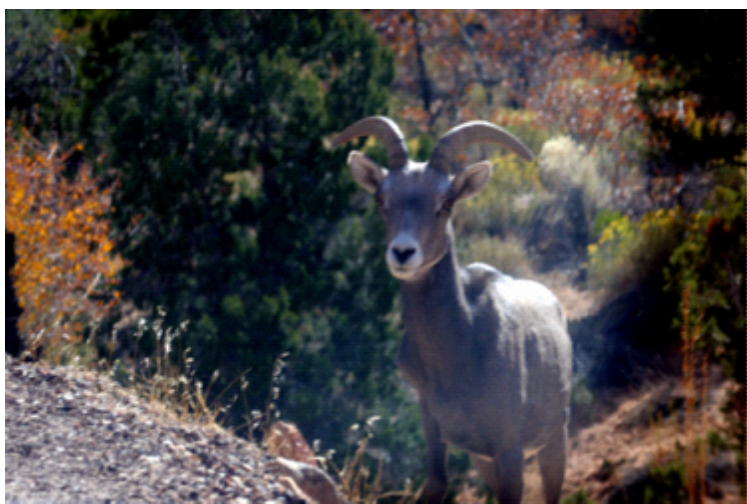
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For our second consolation prize of this trip (we award these to ourselves to alleviate the agony of losing the NCB Lottery) we chose the Watchman Trail at Zion National Park to which, we discovered, we were remarkably near. Hopped in the car. Zipped over.

When entering Zion from the east there is a ritual wait at the entrance kiosk. Inevitably an RV will be coming through the tunnel from the west, forcing a wait at the this end. The visitors hate it, especially the ones who don't know the routine. The ranger enjoys it as he or she can talk importantly on a walkie-talkie and line up waiting vehicles to the horizon.



This time we enjoyed it because a couple of bighorn sheep came to smirk.

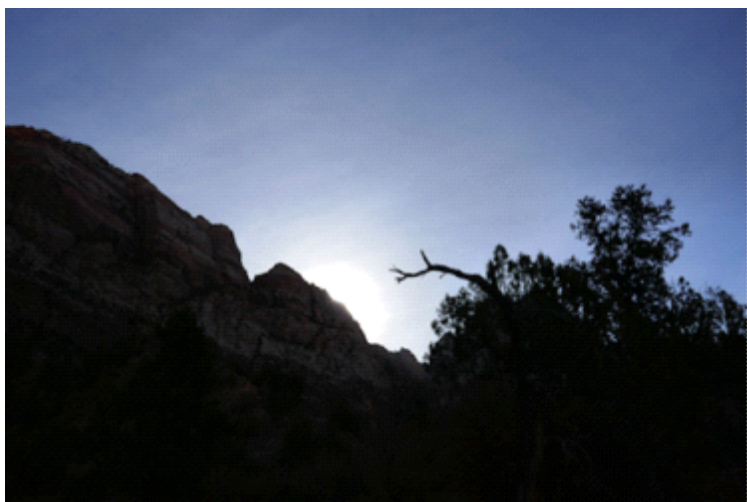


One of them (the other one, not this one) had a huge and hideous GPS/radio transmitter around its neck. It's there so naturalists can watch it on their smartphones as it travels around the park. It's like Harry Potter's Marauder's Map except it's Zion not Hogwarts and it's a sheep.

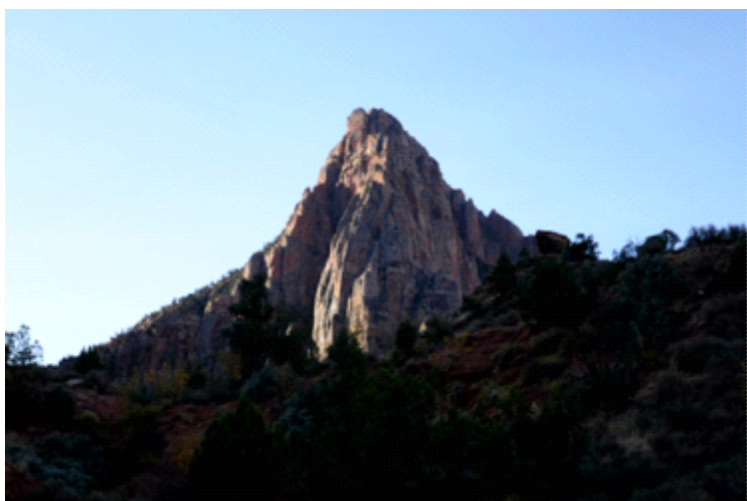
The sun had not yet peeked over the canyon wall when we started.



But it lit contrails and cloud remnants and gave us hope that we would eventually be warm.



The watchman is a mighty peak of red and white sandstone, presumably named after the Watchman Campground below it.



The trail neither takes you to the top nor the base of the peak. Rather, it leads you here and there so you can take pictures of gorgeous Zion Canyon while sidestepping the other hikers.



We literally sidestepped this crew, whom we christened "Baby Brigade". Every one of them had a carrier and a baby. Maybe it was the 1-year reunion of some maternity ward.







We rolled no rocks, good citizens that we are.



Nor, although not explicitly prohibited, did we toss or throw them.





It was almost noon when we arrived back at the car. Visitors were cruising the lot like it was Christmas at the mall. When we opened our tailgate to take off our packs the cruisers' foot soldiers closed in: "Are you leaving now? Are you leaving soon? Are you putting your gear on or taking it off? Did you already promise this space to someone else?" Ahhh, the National Parks experience...

Next it was a party of two and a table with a view.



Great start. Great finish. And, we'll admit, fun in between.

D&S