

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

EVENING AND MORNING

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. Genesis 1:5

The way of man is usually at odds with the way of GOD. This can be demonstrated even in something as simple as what constitutes a day. Isn't it interesting that GOD describes the first day as the evening and the morning when we most commonly refer to it in the reverse order as the morning and evening? The LORD JESUS said, to pray for those who treat us with spite and to do good to those who mean to harm us. Yet man in all of his wisdom thinks that such a pathway of action denotes weakness. Men think they will accomplish great things in the name of the LORD and thereby earn HIS favor. Yet HE said HIS strength was perfected in our weakness. (see II Cor.12:9) Men say surely GOD will be impressed by our great effort, bless our generosity, and reward us according to our faithfulness. Yet the LORD said when we have been obedient in all of these things we are yet unprofitable servants for we have only done the things HE commanded us to do. (see Luke 17:10)

We hear much preaching today about giving money to the "LORD's work". To hear some tell it, one would expect heaven to be littered with adding machine paper where the scribes of the city are busy keeping up with each nickel, dime, and dollar that men give. It is quite common to hear men preach about man's duty to tithe without even so much as a hint of an explanation of how the freeborn sons of GOD are brought back under such legal bondage. Tithing is often presented as though it is some business contract which if a man enters into; GOD will bless HIS finances in like manner. Some make such impassioned pleas for tithes and offerings that one might be led to think GOD might have to go out of business if men don't help HIM out by sending in some money. HE owns the cattle on a thousand hills and all the treasures of the earth are HIS (see Psalm 50:10) so we can be certain HE does not "need" anything which a man can bring before HIM. Much of the "work" which "needs" support is simply the establishment of men's religious kingdoms in the earth and has nothing to do with the ongoing of the true kingdom of GOD. The simplicity of true worship is most times not enough for our "modern" mindset which thinks that worship can be enhanced by buildings, entertainment and fleshly activity. The FATHER seeks such as worship HIM in spirit and truth and hardly needs the inventions of men to bring this to pass. The gathering of GOD's people and their communion with HIM is not affected whether it be in a house, a barn, or a cathedral. (see Mat.18:20)

The description of a day as being the evening and morning, by the LORD, has significance beyond the simple definition of what a day is. Of course this principal is illustrated in Jewish religious practice as they observe the Sabbath (seventh) day from Friday at 6:00 p.m. (the evening and morning) till 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. There are many lessons in this description:

The LORD created the earth out of nothing.

There was no light in the creation except that which was brought about by the LORD. Of course the darkness was created by HIM also (see Isa.45:7) but HE would have us to see HIM bringing

light out of darkness. Did HE not say, *"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."* (John 8:12) HE dispels the darkness wherever HE goes.

The blessing which GOD intends for HIS people shall increase.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD." (2 Cor 3:18) HE brings us out of the darkness into the light, not just initially as when HE awakened us out of the deadness of our sinful nature, but continually as HE said, *"when HE, the SPIRIT of truth, is come, HE will guide you into all truth: for HE shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever HE shall hear, that shall HE speak: and HE will shew you things to come."* (John 16:13)

The gospel of the new covenant is clearly proclaimed as that which dispels the darkness of the old covenant of law.

"For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto GOD." (Heb 7:19) It was necessary that the darkness of law precede the light of the gospel as the blackness of midnight precedes the dawning of a new day. *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."* (Gal 3:24-25) We had not known sin except the law said thou shalt not, and brought us under its awful condemning power. But thank GOD that HE has not left us in that legal bondage but has set us free just like the beams of the dawn dispels the lingering gloom of the darkest night. *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* (John 8:36) We are without condemnation and are now the children of light. (see 1 Thes.5:4,5)

The unfolding of HIS kingdom will not be overtaken with darkness.

As Isaiah spoke of the burden of Dumah and inquired as to the length of the night the watchman replied that the morning cometh. (see Isa.21:11,12) Zechariah prophesied, *"but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light."* (Zech 14:7) We are now living in that time of great light when the gospel has been sent into the earth to call GOD's people from the corners of the earth and from every land to which they have been scattered. *"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."* (Hab 2:14)

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