

# 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*

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## A FAMINE

*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. Amos 8:11*

Amos was but a simple man, a herdsman and gatherer of sycamore fruit in Tekoa. Though he had no pedigree of learning nor descended from any prophets, (see Amos 7:14) yet HE was chosen by the LORD to deliver some of the most solemn and sobering prophetic warnings, which we find in the scriptures. He was a contemporary of Isaiah, though we have no information as to whether or not their paths ever crossed. Amos said this prophecy was given to him two years before the earthquake which occurred during Uzziah's reign (see Zec.14:5); while Isaiah mentions that he had his vision of the Glory of the HOLY GOD in the year that King Uzziah died.

Many brilliant scholars have grouped him in with those that they label the "minor prophets". While we understand their reasoning in grouping these books of prophecy in neat categories; in reality there are no such things as "minor prophets"; for any prophecy or word which has come unto men from the lips of the LORD cannot be in anywise considered to be "insignificant" nor should we consider them in any sort of light which may seem to diminish their import.

Amos said that the time was coming when the LORD would send a famine in the land of "hearing the words of the LORD." Many "bible prophecy experts" teach that this is a prophecy which is yet future and even, perhaps, occurring at the present time. I believe that the direct fulfillment of this prophecy is demonstrated in the "long silence" of about 400 years that occurred between the close of Malachi's prophecy until the day that the "Sun of righteousness (did) arise with healing in his wings." (Mal 4:2) Yet this prophecy also has an application in every age as it reveals to us the only SOURCE and POWER which can cause men to heed the word of GOD.

One thing that is clear from the words of Amos, is the Sovereign purpose of GOD to hide HIS word from those HE wills not to hear it. Just as surely as it is by HIS hand that the rain falls, or drought encompasses the land, so too is it, only, according to HIS purpose that men are enabled to hear HIS word and on the other hand prevented from doing so. The LORD taught this most clearly when HE said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John 6:44) "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." (John 6:65) HE prayed thusly, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Mat 11:25-27) When HIS disciples asked why HE taught in parables, HE said "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." (Mar 4:11-12)

Thus, we are made to understand that HE opens and shuts the windows of Heaven according to the good pleasure of HIS will, and that men are made to hear and believe according to that same

good pleasure and not their own. This is a very humbling message and reminds us that we have nothing that we have not received and therefore have no place in which to glory except in HIS mercy and kindness which has caused us to hear and believe; if indeed we be the sons of GOD.

There is never an age when those who are born again by the SPIRIT of GOD are not desirous of hearing the word of GOD. This is the very commandment of the LORD to the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration. *"While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."* (Mat 17:5) The blessing of those saints who have lived in the age when the risen CHRIST has been revealed, is that there is a clear revelation of the purpose of GOD in the earth. Paul describes this "mystery" which is now made known. *"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."*(Eph 3:9-11)

*"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."* (Heb 1:1-2) Here we can see that there is no doubt who the MESSIAH is and the extent of HIS power, the purpose for which HE came, nor the blessing which is given to those whom HE is pleased to call. *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."* (Acts 13:48) This glorious redemption, which was only seen in types and foreshadows in the ages past is now made plain to the children of GOD in the proclamation of the Gospel. *"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."* (Col 1:26-28)

So, while all of these things have been made very plain to those whom HE is pleased to awaken and send a messenger, such as the Ethiopian Eunuch, yet they are desirous of "hearing from heaven." Yesterday's manna is not sufficient for today. GOD's people are never forsaken by HIM but HE does from time to time hide HIS presence from them for the purpose of stirring them up from their natural complacency and tendency to trust in the arm of the flesh. Even as the bride discovered when she did not rise from her bed at the knocking of her BELOVED. (see Song of Solomon 5:2-5) *"I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer."* (Song 5:6)

It is then that they are made to desire those *"times of refreshing--- from the presence of the Lord."* (Acts 3:19) and to go about the city in search of HIM. HE alone can provide such comfort as they need. No other counselor or physician will do. Habakkuk was acquainted with this desire as he cried; *"O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."* (Hab 3:2)

David had some understanding of this longing as he said, *"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."* (Psa 63:1-7) It is the sensible barrenness of the man who is caused to believe, that also stirs him to seek refuge in HIM who alone can cause the darkness to flee away and the LIGHT to appear. HE is the BREAD of LIFE. LORD evermore give us this BREAD. mam