

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*

A VINEYARD OF RED WINE

And In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. *Isaiah 27:2-3*

The phrase "in that day" occurs forty three times in the book of Isaiah. Men generally understand a "day" to be a twenty four hour period even as the scripture says, *"the evening and the morning were the first day."* (Gen 1:5) Yet when we find this phrase used prophetically as it is in Isaiah's prophecy it seldom refers to a particular twenty four hour period but rather to a division or period of time.

GOD transcends time and is in no wise affected by it, since HE is eternal and *"inhabith eternity"*. HE has created time as a place wherein HE would display HIS creation since all else besides HIM is finite, (*"He is before all things, and by him all things consist."* (Col 1:17)) and must of necessity, because of their finiteness, occupy a different realm than HIMSELF. Even the heavenly creatures must shield their eyes from HIM who is set apart (i.e, Holy) as they cease not day and night to cry out *"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."* (Rev 4:8) Paul reiterates this very concept saying that HE *"only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen."* (1Tim 6:16) HE alone is eternal, immortal and invisible (insofar as the ability of HIS creation to know or approach HIM in their own power), all else is created.

We can discover four general divisions of time which are related to the creation which we can see and know about to some degree in the scriptures. These divisions are for the benefit of man only. (1) Before the foundation of the world. (2) The former times. (3) The latter days. (4) The ages to come. There is little that we are given to know about the first era or the last since they are before our creation and after our glorification.

The only divisions of time which have been clearly revealed in every detail is the middle two which are the former times and the latter days. It is with these two divisions that most all of the scriptures which have been given to us are primarily concerned.

"Before the foundation of the world" is quite often defined by many as eternity and surely it is as close to eternity as man can be allowed to come when going backwards. Yet eternity cannot be defined in terms of time and therefore it has no before or after. Eternity is the habitation of GOD alone. (see Isa.57:13) The era which is described as *"before the foundation of the world"* is the earliest point at which anything which is presently appearing in this world could be said to exist. *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."* (Heb 11:3) It was here that the manifestation of redemption and the redeemed was begun. (In man's understanding)

"The ages to come" is again often defined by many as eternity and is truly (insofar as not having an end) the closest man can ever come to eternity moving forward. Yet eternity has no "ages" since it is the habitation of GOD alone who defines and creates the ages. This is a glorious

period for the redeemed who shall dwell in the presence of HIM who designed and purchased their redemption. *“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”* (Eph 2:6-8) This is the era when all enemies shall have been destroyed, the former things forgotten, and the full fruition of the ETERNAL LIFE which has been given to the elect shall have its free course. This is that which the LORD JESUS promised HIS disciples, *“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”* (John 14:2-4)

So we are left with those two eras in the actual life of the world which are clearly set forth in much detail in the word of GOD. The first being the “former times” or “*times past*”. Hebrews tells us that these times are those from the beginning of the world until the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST and then those “*last days*” or “*latter days*” being the present wherein HE has clearly spoken HIS truth in the earth. JESUS CHRIST is the hinge upon which those “*times past*” and these “*last days*” turn. This is the day of the LORD. This is “*that day*” of which the prophet spoke, when CHRIST shall manifest HIS kingdom and call out HIS elect from the corners of the earth. We wait for no future kingdom, but we have been privileged to dwell in it at the present time. *“For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”* (Luke 7:28)

The Old Testament Prophets desired to see the things which we see clearly but they could not because those things were hidden from them. *“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.”* (Col 1:26-27) This is truly a glorious day because the Gospel, which brings “*life and immortality to light*” is now published from every hilltop and the wheat of GOD is being gathered into HIS garner. *“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.”* (Isa 40:1-2)

This is “*that day*” of which Isaiah says, *“In that day sing ye unto her.”* (Isa 27:2) GOD has not only designed and provided redemption for HIS people but HE is presently sending men to declare these glad tidings far and wide, that HIS people may hear and believe, and believing may be comforted by this pleasant song. What good news to a sinner deep in debt and bowed down under the guilt of his wickedness. The LORD HIMSELF has wrought salvation for even the chief of sinners.

Those to whom these glad tidings are sent are described by Isaiah as a “*vineyard of red wine.*” This is a vineyard of HIS own planting and grafting. Did HE not say *“I am the vine, ye are the branches.”* (John 15:5)

It is a “vineyard of red wine.” which is indicative of the fact that this vineyard (i.e, the church of GOD, the bride, the elect) is purchased with the blood of the everlasting covenant which was shed by none other than JESUS CHRIST, making full and complete atonement and obtaining eternal redemption for all of those included therein. *“But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”* (Heb 9:11-12)

It is a “vineyard of red wine.” Wine is symbolic of joy and is the ultimate purpose for the planting and nurturing of the vineyard. *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* (Heb 12:2) *“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”* (John 13:1)