

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

THE GOD WHO HIDES

But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies. Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves. Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen. Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price. Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us. Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people. My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me.

Psalms 44:9-15

We have all read of the miraculous things that GOD has done in the pages of the Scriptures. We marvel at the parting of the Red Sea, the falling of the walls of Jericho, the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace, and GOD's answer by fire on Mount Carmel just to name a few. David mentions these sorts of clear and open demonstrations of the LORD's power at the beginning of this Psalm where he said, "*We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.*" (Psa 44:1)

David himself had experienced GOD's miraculous deliverance when as a young man he had killed a bear and a lion in hand to hand combat, not to mention the slaying of the giant, Goliath. Yet here he paints a completely different picture, which seems quite at odds with these manifestations of GOD's power and presence.

GOD has been pleased at different times and in various circumstances to perform miraculous feats that defy explanation and are put on display for everyone to see, yet the vast majority of the time HE is pleased to go about accomplishing HIS purpose in a much more mundane and common manner as far as men can see. Yet HE is no less accomplishing HIS purpose when HE is pleased to hide HIMSELF than when HE arrives upon the scene in a blaze of glory.

We see this illustrated with Elijah after the events on Mount Carmel. "*And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.*" (1Kings 19:11-12)

The LORD would teach Elijah that HIS hand is not shortened to save by many or by few, in glorious outpourings or in the stillness of the night when no voice can be heard. In fact it is far more common for the LORD's people to mourn and wait upon HIM to appear than it is that they should bask in the glory of HIS presence on a continual basis. Paul said, "*For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*" (Rom 8:24-25)

We read in the Proverbs, "*Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.*" (Prov 13:12) The more that a man is made to wait upon the blessing of GOD to come, the greater will be the enjoyment of that which he longs for.

So while the LORD does faithfully minister hope to HIS children according to the dictates of HIS will, HE does so in a manner which causes them to be continually searching for HIM, and often HIS work is so subtle as to have them questioning whether or not they are even numbered among those whom the LORD is pleased to work in. It appears unto them sometimes even as it did to the Psalmist, *"But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies."* We are then like the Shulamite, *"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)

The LORD does hide HIMSELF from those whom HE loves, in order that HE might draw them with HIS cords of love. Though he removes HIMSELF from HIS bride (insofar as she is able to discover HIM) from time to time, HE is never far away and observes, she whom HIS soul loveth, from afar. HE never casts her away but works in her a strong desire to feel HIS presence and makes her heart to burn for HIS fellowship even as those on the road to Emmaus, said, *"Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"* (Luke 24:32) As the Shulamite said, *"I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love."* (Song 5:8)

The religious men of this world can have no understanding of this secret work which the LORD is pleased to perform in those whom HE loves. They can be satisfied with the husks of outward religious professions, the letter doctrines of theology, blood moon prophecies and those who count the hairs on the horses tail. They thrive on the accepted and orthodox practices of various approved religious societies and sects of one kind or another, or the contrived and theatrical "miracles and signs" performed by hucksters and charlatans intent on gaining a following and enhancing their bank accounts. Not to mention those who rest in psychological counseling and self help seminars conducted by some imposters claiming to be gospel preachers.

Yet those in whom the LORD indwells with HIS SPIRIT will be yearning for a clearer view of HIM who they are convinced is the SUM and SUBSTANCE of all that is revealed in the word of GOD. Even as Paul said, *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."* (Php 3:8-10)

The LORD does hide HIMSELF, in a measure, from those whom HE loves, that HE might more clearly reveal HIMSELF to them. Yet it has also pleased HIM to do a work in the earth which is in plain sight, yet is completely hidden from those who have not been given eyes to see it. The LORD JESUS even rejoiced in this fact and gave thanks unto HIS FATHER that it was so. *"At that time Jesus answered and said, 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) This is a manifestation of Isaiah's prophecy. (see Isa. 29:14)

The LORD hides HIMSELF from HIS bride to soften her heart and cause her to yearn for HIM, because HE has given her HIS SPIRIT and she desires HIS presence. The world on the other hand is satisfied with its religious preferences, carnal wisdom, and self satisfaction, and cannot in this state even see the kingdom of GOD. The world is satisfied with its own righteousness and is so certain that these things count for something before the tribunal of GOD, they will even argue with GOD as to the worth of their deeds. (see Mat.7:22) GOD has hidden HIMSELF from them and they demonstrate their reprobation before HIM. *"they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:"* (2Thess 2:10-12)