

# 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 TOLD TALE

*For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.* *Psalm 90:9-10*

Back when I was a but a lad, (before we had television, telephones were only for city folks, and computers were not even thought of), some of my entertainment consisted of sitting at the feet of the “old folks”, (when they gathered on the front porch for a Sunday afternoon visit) listening to them talk about events of days gone by. I can remember times, when boredom reared its ugly head, of asking my grandparents to tell us about the “olden times” (as we referred to them). They always seemed to have memories of events which to them might have seemed mundane but to a six year old, with a vivid imagination, seemed rife with adventure and the stuff of legend.

One of the things that I recall them constantly remarking about was the rapidity with which time was moving and how it only seemed like yesterday that such and such an event took place. As a youngster, on the other hand it seemed to me, that time dragged on at a very slow pace. Birthdays were far apart and the next milestone of age seemed to stretch way into the future. At the time, I had very few memories of momentous past events and always was looking forward with great anticipation to “growing up”; not exactly sure what that entailed but convinced that it would be glorious.

Now here I am at 71 years of age, and I can completely identify with my grandparents in their assessment that time has sped up and is rapidly passing before my very eyes; seemingly with greater speed each year of my life. Of course, children nowadays are too occupied with a multitude of pastimes to be in the least concerned with being regaled with tales of the “olden times”. They have little use for such quaint remembrances. Yet as a man grows older, he is increasingly confronted, not with the prospect of new horizons, but with the looming certainty of his last breath upon this Earth. And the memories of the past are often far more vivid to him than his visions of the future.

It is interesting that Solomon gave this exhortation to the young. “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” (Eccl 12:1) It is not often (though certainly not always true) that you find young folks with much more than a passing thought to their own mortality. Young men are strong and for the most part with some level of confidence in their ability to direct their lives according to their own desires. They are usually “too busy” to be much concerned about death, especially their own. Someone has said that youth is wasted on the young for it is seldom that any recognize the blessing of it at the time.

It is popular to say that, with age comes “wisdom” (a thought entertained by many), but the reality is that apart from the SPIRIT of GOD giving a man a “fear of GOD”, he will not possess “wisdom.” “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” (Prov 9:10) A man cannot “learn” the TRUTH of GOD by any measure of his own ability nor gain it by long life in this world. The natural man considers that he will go about his life tomorrow just as he has today. Men grow more hardened against the LORD with each passing year, unless the LORD in HIS mercy should visit them and awaken them to HIS glory and their weakness. “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that

*appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.” (Jas 4:13-16)*

The Psalmist was blessed to picture our life as “a tale that is told”. We can all see this truth very vividly portrayed upon each tombstone in every cemetery. The date of one’s birth is recorded and the date of one’s death as well, usually separated by a dash. That dash (as someone has wisely pointed out) is the “life” of the individual whose body rests there until the day of the Resurrection.

Every “tale that is told”, requires a STORYTELLER. By nature, men think that they are the masters of their destiny and the captains of their soul. They will live and die in this darkness apart from the Sovereign Mercy of GOD humbling them in the dust before HIM, who does all things according to the good pleasure of HIS will. *“Man’s goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?” (Prov 20:24) “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.” (Prov 16:1)* The ONE who tells the story is the ONE who writes it.

A “tale that is told” is looking back upon that which is done. The LORD is not waiting to see how things will turn out for HE knows the end from the beginning. And HE knows them that are HIS. Our times are in HIS hands, and we are reminded daily that we need HIM, HE does not need us. Some will surely say, “such a thought as that is depressing”. It most surely is to the natural man who is determined to control his own life. Yet that man who has been awakened to behold the glory of HIM who is the BEGINNING and the END, is here greatly comforted. By HIS grace, they have fled for REFUGE to CHRIST. *“There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.” (Deut 33:26-29)*

The glory of the gospel is seen in the finished work of CHRIST as the REDEEMER of HIS people whom HE has loved from the beginning. It is a “tale that is told” which grows sweeter with each telling to those who have been given ears to hear it. For the LIFE of CHRIST was given for an unworthy rabble. HE became sin for them that they might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS of GOD in HIM. HIS LIFE was no haphazard attempt to save every individual in the world whose outcome of success was dependent upon what they might do. No, HE set out with one purpose in mind, and HE accomplished that exact purpose even as the angel told Joseph, *“Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Mat 1:20-21)*

The Psalmist after telling us that we live our lives as “a tale that is told”, goes on to express the desire of those who are awakened by HIS SPIRIT to know themselves to be passing away from this mortal realm with each new day: *“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” (Psa 90:12)* While the world goes on without any due consideration of HIS glory in CHRIST, the born-again children of GOD desire to be reminded that this world is not our home. We are strangers and sojourners traveling through this valley of the shadow of death. We have, here, no continuing city. The ungodly are not so but are quite content with this world and the vanity thereof. They give little to no thought of their end. *“A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.” (Prov 22:3) “For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands (i.e.; spiritual struggle) in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.” (Psa 73:3-5)*

All of the exploits of men are essentially insignificant except for the LIFE of the ONE MAN who not only created the World and all that is therein but determined to manifest the glory of HIS grace in the redemption of a people which HE chose in CHRIST before the foundation thereof was laid. This is the GOD-MAN CHRIST JESUS who came to the Earth to live and die for sinners. HE rose from the grave in triumph over the sentence of death which was rightly passed upon all flesh due to their disobedience. HE is the ONE who gives men FAITH to believe that “tale that is told”, which brings “LIFE and immortality to LIGHT” as they are given ears to hear it. Have you heard it? “Tell me the old, old story, of JESUS and HIS love.” Can any other tale be half so sweet?  
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