

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 SIXTH HOUR

Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his Journey sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. John 4:6

The measurement of time is of great importance to men. Since we are finite creatures, everything we are and do, is surrounded by time in one fashion or another. Time is the great limiting factor which weighs upon all of the decisions of men. The LORD made time to fulfill HIS purpose, but HE is in no wise surrounded or subservient to it. HIS consideration of time is described by Peter, "*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" (2Pet 3:8)

When I was but a lad, I used to hear the "old folks" talk about how time seemed to speed up as they got older. Of course, in my childlike mind, I thought it was moving far too slow to suit me, especially when I was sitting in a church meeting or at school. Now that I am one of the "old folks", I can completely understand what they meant. Time is a most precious commodity, and it is something that we never seem to quite have enough of. I remember an elderly gentleman remarking that he was eighty-eight years old. A young man said, "I wouldn't want to be eighty-eight." The elderly gentleman replied, "Well, son, that is because you are not eighty-seven."

So, our perspectives of time and our value of it, may change as we age, but as someone has wisely said, "Time waits for no man." Every passing moment is that which we shall never get back. Thus, the Psalmist expresses a deep desire unto the LORD, "*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*" (Psa 90:12) It is a good thing for men to be reminded that they are dust and to dust they shall return. The passing of time is that reference point which inexorably brings us to the one appointment for which no man shall be early or late. "*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*" (Heb 9:27) HE who numbers the hairs upon our heads has also numbered the days of our lives in this world. "*Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.*" (Job 14:5)

When the LORD created the Earth out of nothing HE created the concept that we have of night and day according to HIS unchangeable purpose. "*And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.*" (Gen 1:4-5) On an interesting side note: our great scientists (falsely so-called) tell us that the Sun is our source of light. Yet the light existed on the first day and the Sun was not created until the fourth day. The LIGHT dispelled the darkness. Yet so that we might understand that HE is pleased to cause those that sit in darkness to see a GREAT LIGHT; we are taught that the evening always precedes the day and thus the day is defined by HIM, as the "*evening and the morning*".

The Jews consider (rightly according to the scriptures) that a day begins at sunset and ends at the same. By this we are reminded that we are by nature born in darkness and move in the same nature towards darkness, apart from the grace of GOD to show us that ETERNAL LIGHT which can only be seen in the face of JESUS CHRIST. For when this DAYSTAR has arisen, HE dispels all darkness, and by HIM men can see the glory which surrounds HIM.

The scriptures tell us that HE inhabits eternity and 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 honour and power everlasting. Amen."* (1Tim 6:16) Thus it is utterly amazing when we discover that HE took upon HIMSELF, human flesh and became obedient unto death just as any other man in the flesh. Just as surely as we are born as an infant of a span, so too was HE wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Do we not marvel that HE who created time and marks out every moment of every day since the beginning, did humble HIMSELF and become a servant of time, just as every son of Adam. In this human body *"when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. (Heb 5:7-9)* We are struck dumb with amazement at such a revelation and must fall upon our faces in adoring wonder. We can but say with the Psalmist, *"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."* (Psa 139:6)

In the limitations of time, which HE imposed upon HIMSELF, HE kept every appointment which HE marked out from before the foundation of the world. We see just such an appointment with a Samaritan woman who had never met HIM nor had any inkling of who HE was. Thus *"he must needs go through Samaria."* (John 4:4) Her name was in HIS appointment book but HIS was not in hers. This event could only have taken place according to HIS purpose and not hers. This was no random meeting but was prescribed to take place at the *"sixth hour"*.

This "sixth hour" would have been about twelve noon as we would reckon it. The evening had ended at sunrise and the day had begun. The sun was at its "zenith", and the glory of the sun was shining in all of its strength, when the LORD of glory, who made the seas and rivers, asked this adulterous woman for a drink of the water which HE had placed in a well which HE ordained men to dig. This well could have been no where else upon the earth, just as this woman could not have been in another location at this particular time. Little did she know that it was HE who would give her a drink of WATER, which would forever satisfy her thirst.

Thus, we see the demonstration of the LORD's mercy exhibited as HE sought HIS lost sheep and led her in a path which she had not designed or contemplated. HE told her of HIS intent to give her "LIVING WATER", though she had no understanding of that of which HE spoke. She was intrigued with HIS words and in her flesh (as many religious folks do) she asked for this WATER. Yet the LORD must strip her of her supposed righteousness in order that she might rightly desire it. She sought to skirt the issue of her "husband" (just like the politicians do), yet the LORD broke down her excuses and laid her adultery bare before her eyes. *"For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband."* (John 4:18) She was rendered without excuse.

Yet she was not yet fully broken, however, because we see her appealing to her religion, *"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain."* (John 4:20) I can almost hear someone singing "Give me that old time religion." But the LORD would not abandon HIS lost sheep even though she was clinging to the brambles which she had become entangled in, all the while thinking that they offered her comfort and hope. HE spoke words of truth to her, as HE described the nature of true worship, *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:24) Then HE made her to be a true worshipper. *"the Father seeketh such to worship him."* (John 4:23) We see that illustrated as the SAVIOR **sought** HIS lost sheep. HE revealed HIMSELF to her, *"I that speak unto thee am he."* (John 4:26) She believed and went on her way with the testimony of CHRIST upon her heart and lips. This all took place in the sixth hour.

Our blessed LORD had another appointment which HE would undertake at a particular time and place, which HE gladly kept, though the burden HE bore was greater than any other man has or could ever bear. HE made HIS soul an offering for sin. *"And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour."* (Luke 23:44) *"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."* (Luke 23:46) The GIVER of LIFE, yea even LIFE itself, died a sinner's death. Well did the sun in darkness hide and shut his glories in, when GOD the MIGHTY MAKER died for man, the creature's sin. Has there ever been love like this? Can we do any less than fall upon our faces in adoration and worship?

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