

DAY AND NIGHT, AND NIGHT AND DAY

Scripture reading: John 9:4; Rom. 13:11-14.

Intro: These two passages are very interesting to compare because they seem to be contradictory.

In John 9:4 the Lord says that "it is day."

In Rom. 13:11 Paul says that it is night. "The night is far spent," but it is still night.

Our first thought is that it was day while the Lord was here on earth, but it was night following His ascension. Then it will be day again when He returns.

There is some truth to this, but it cannot be the real solution because our Lord was speaking of a night "when no man can work," i.e., no man is able to work. He might want to, and others might want him, to, but he will not be able to work. Work will be forbidden!

That cannot apply to the present time because we are able to work. Otherwise we could have no Union Gospel Mission or Hinson Memorial Baptist Church.

So this is not the full meaning.

What else can we notice that might be a significant contrast between these passages?

May I make a suggestion which seems to be to be perfectly consistent with both passages.

There is no question but that in Rom. 13 Paul is writing to and about believers.

Is it not equally clear that in John 9, although the Lord is talking to His disciples (see v. 2), yet He is talking about the world, and their work in the world?

Therefore, we make this discovery: IN OUR LORD'S LIFETIME ON EARTH AND DOWN TO THE PRESENT HOUR WE HAVE A PERIOD OF TIME WHICH IS:

- (1) Day for those who do not know the Lord. It will never be any better for them if they do not come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. It is as bright now as it will ever be for them.
- (2) Night for those who do know the Lord. We are the children of light, but we are living in a world of spiritual darkness. But, "better days are coming." "The night is far spent; the day is at hand."

Let us begin by looking more in detail into John 9:4 to consider:

I. THE DAY AND NIGHT FOR THE WORLD (John 9:4).

- There is strong textual support for the reading, We "must work the works of him that sent me," instead of simply "I."

Here is an amazing truth that we as the Lord's fellow-laborers must not lose sight of! He has called us to share in the work which the Father sent Him to do!

Over 40 times in the Gospel of John our Lord refers to the fact that He was sent by the Father. And it begins in John 3:17. Cf. also John 4:34-38.

So our ministry to the world is not our idea, or our work; it is His!

And our participation in this is not a matter of choice, it is a "constraint which arises from divine appointment" (Thayer, 126). "We MUST work the works of Him" Who sent our Lord Jesus. As Paul says in Rom. 1:14, We are debtors!

- If we are to understand our part in His work we must see the divine side of it first.

And we have to realize that our part in it is just as necessary as "ye must be born again," or, "even so must the Son of man be lifted up, or John the Baptist's, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:7, 14, 30).

But the point is that this must be done "while it is day."

What did our Lord have in mind here? How can you possibly say this for people who are darkness, and who walk in darkness, and who do the works of darkness?

Paul gives us our answer. It is still day for this world, i.e., there is still hope for the people of this world BECAUSE "now is the accepted time; behold, now is THE DAY OF SALVATION."

- Oh, thank God it is still "day" for the world. People can still be saved. There is hope for a world dead in trespasses and in sins.

But listen to this final statement of John 9:4. It is

one of the most ominous statements in all of Scripture. Listen to it: "THE NIGHT COMETH WHEN NO MAN CAN WORK."

That comes for some at death--like it did for the rich man in Luke 16:26, and it will finally come for all at the judgment of the Great White Throne.

It even seems that this might have been in John's mind when he wrote about Judas in John 13:30, "He then having received the sop went immediately out; and it was night!"

No wonder the Lord said, "We must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day." And I trust that these words will mean something more to us tonight. The time is coming when the day of salvation will be over and then for all men without Christ it will be eternal night

But let us look at the other side of the picture for a moment or two.

II. NIGHT AND DAY FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD (Rom. 13:12).

Paul begins by saying, "The night is far spent."

Is there a child of God here tonight that is not aware that for us we are living in the night? There is a growing apprehension among the people of God as to what is ahead for us--and there should be.

But is it not comforting to know that it is almost over. In v. 11 of this chapter Paul reminds us, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Today we are closer to the end of this night than we were yesterday. We are one day nearer heaven. We don't have as long to wait as we had this morning.

But there is another thought in this verse.

III. When I was in Junior High I took a course working with metals. We called it "metal shop." And one thing we had to do for practice was to take a long piece of metal and beat it out to see how long we could make it.

This is the idea in this word, "far spent." God is lengthening it out just as long as He can because, remember, the night to us is day to the world. Cf. 2 Pet. 3:4, 9, 10.

But, "the day is at hand." It has been a long night for the people of God, but it is now just before the dawn. "The day of Jesus Christ" will soon break upon us, and "the dead in Christ will rise first, then . . ."

So, what should we do?

Look at the last part of our verse.

Regardless of how dark it might be, and regardless of how close we may be to the coming of the Lord, we are not to fall prey to the works of darkness, but we are to put on "the armor of light." THIS WILL BE OUR GREATEST DEFENCE AGAINST ALL THAT THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL CAN TURN OUR WAY.

Cf. Eph. 5:8-11.

Here is an amazing thing! We are living in the night, in the darkness, but we are children of light and we must "walk as children of light."

Concl: Possibly the most tragic thing that is going on in the world today is not--
the hippies, as tragic as that is,
nor the rebellion which we see everywhere,
nor the lowering of moral standards until we
are practically without any standards.

No--the most tragic thing in the world today is to find the children of light adapting themselves more and more to the darkness . . . instead of remembering that
"the night is far spent, the day is at hand!
Let us therefore . . ."

These two verses give us all we need as the servants of the Lord. Let us take them to heart, doing everything that we possibly can by our lives and by our words to bring me to Christ (remembering it is HIS work which cannot fail). But let us also keep on the armor of light knowing that the day of His appearing is just beginning to dawn.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).