The 9th Month: A Contrast of Light & Darkness

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We've started the ninth month of the year on the Hebrew calendar.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the ninth and tenth months are the darkest of the year - the nights are longer than any other time. In the Southern Hemisphere, they are the lightest season of the year – the days are longer than any other time.

But the winter solstice always falls this time of year. The winter solstice is the day the light and dark begin to reverse. In the Northern hemisphere the days start getting longer; in the Southern hemisphere the nights start getting longer.

It's a contrast of extremes – It gets darker and darker until, on one day, it stops, and begins to get lighter and lighter. On our Gregorian calendar that day is always December 21.

The Ninth Month in The Bible

I found this same theme of contrasts as I read the various events in the Bible that take place during the ninth month. There are five stories – all of them in the writings of the prophets:

Ezra 10
Nehemiah 1
Jeremiah 36
Haggai 2
Zachariah 7
Plus the story of Hanukah in 1 Maccabees 4

Each of these accounts has Yehovah calling his people to righteousness. In each story the people have a choice: To ignore the warning, or to repent and return to Yehovah's ways.

The theme is around this decision to repent or not. In these stories, some people repent, some don't – even people who've heard the exact same words and warnings make opposite decisions. Dark and light dwell right beside each other.

Just like it is today. We have the dark getting darker, evil and sin increasing, at the same time as many more are turning to the light. The gospel is being spread across the globe, and more and more people are returning to Yehovah's ancient paths.

Contrasts Of Good & Evil In The Last Days

Isn't this what we are told would take place? Yeshua tells us in Matthew 24:12 as part of the end times lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. Yet Joel tells us that in these last days the spirit will be poured out before the day of the Lord.

"And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids. In those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord comes." Joel 2:29-31

On one hand lawlessness is increasing like never before. On the other, the spirit is being poured out like never before. We are in these times.

We see this theme of contrasts again in the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13:28-30. The enemy plants tares among the wheat, and they begin to grow alongside the wheat.

"The workers said to [the farmer], 'Do you want us to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest;'"

It's for the sake of the wheat and those who will come to repentance that the tares are not done away with.

Another allusion to this theme is in the parable of the ten virgins, in which they are called to light their lamps in the middle of the night at the coming of the bridegroom.

Light in the middle of darkness. This is the season we are in, two extremes side by side.

The Light Overcomes The Darkness

Yet the extremes are not of equal power. This is not a battle of equals, because we know that, *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* (John 1:5)

Darkness will give way to light.

The rabbis have called this season a "Season of Victory." To believers in Yeshua this is even more true, because we know Yeshua has overcome the world.

This is the month where light and darkness / good and evil are right next to each other, showing a clear distinction and presenting a choice to either repent or not.

So today, be the contrast to darkness. Be that oil lamp in the night. Be the wheat that stands next to the tares. Show people the difference, an example of righteousness.

And take heart – this is the season that the darkness increases, but then gives way to the light.