

## **Gone But Not Forgotten**

*Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God..." Nehemiah 13:14*

This year on May 27<sup>th</sup>, Americans all across the land will be celebrating Memorial Day, an event that has been officially observed in the US since 1868, a few years after the conclusion of the American Civil War. It marks the time on the nation's calendar which commemorates those who paid the ultimate price by giving their lives in the service of their country. It differs from Veteran's Day observed every November 11<sup>th</sup>, which broadly acknowledges those who served in the nation's military. Both holidays are special in their own respect and give due reward for time spent on the battlefield and the personal sacrifice made – some more than others, but each to some extent. It is an appropriate holiday, and we are grateful that it has a place in the tapestry of our nation.

### **Precious Memories**

For many years in our local fellowship, there was a bulletin board in the hallway with the caption which read: "Gone but not Forgotten." Underneath, were pictures of various believers in our assembly, now with the Lord, who faithfully served the Savior in our little chapel. Some quietly served behind the scenes, others due to the public gifts and abilities given from the Lord, were more obvious. There was no specific designation other than their names, but each was duly acknowledged, having served in some capacity while they walked the pilgrim pathway to glory. Thinking about them, the line of a song comes to mind: "Precious memories, how they linger, how they ever flood my soul..." Those that knew them, recall who they were, what they were like, and what they did that made them such a precious memory to many.

It is much that same way in things eternal. One day, we will all be enjoying the land of "no more" where there is no more death, sorrow, crying, and pain...for the former things will have passed away. (Rev. 21:1-5). What will remain at the judgment seat of Christ will be the things that were of gold, silver and precious stones - deeds done for the Savior with the right motive and the right method. The rewards given, mainly crowns – gained because our hands either stuck to the sword (2 Sam. 23:10) or stayed by the stuff (1 Sam. 30:24).

### **Powerful Service**

An example of the former is seen in the life of one of David's mighty men whose exploits and achievements are recorded in God's Word. His name was Eleazar, the Ahohite who singlehandedly fought against the Philistines and won a great victory for his captain. It says that after the people fled that he arose and attacked the enemy until he was weary. Despite being alone and greatly outnumbered, his hand held fast to the sword until he won the battle (2 Sam. 23:10). It was only after that happened that the people of God showed up to reap the benefit. The whole chapter chronicles the deeds of many of David's mighty men, a ragtag group (1 Sam. 22) that he inspired to rise up and do great things beyond what they would have accomplished ordinarily (just read the outstanding and interesting list of exploits that many did in 2 Samuel 23!). These mighty men of David, rising out of relative obscurity became a mighty force, and much like the disciples of the Lord who hazarded their lives in love for their King (Acts 15:26), turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). Daniel 11:32 reminds us well, "the people who know their God shall be strong and do great exploits."

### **Personal Reward**

It reminds me of many of God's people, who are indeed gone, but certainly not forgotten, who were faithful to the core and faithful to their King, the Captain of their salvation. Their deeds may not have measured up to those of David's mighty men, but they gladly spent and were spent in the service of the greatest of Masters, who will acknowledge everything done for Him at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3). In Nehemiah 3, one of the gates that was repaired by Nehemiah and those who helped him was the Miphkad gate (v. 31). It was the gate next to the Horse gate, the gate through which warriors would go out into battle. Upon returning from the field of service, they came through the Miphkad gate and were rewarded for deeds done on the battlefield. We celebrate that type of thing in our country every fourth Monday in May and it is those types of things – whether big or small – that will be celebrated when the Lord appears again for His people.

Mark Kolchin