
LET JUSTICE RUN DOWN LIKE WATER

Contributed by Jim Jordal
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RUN DOWN LIKE WATER…”

By Jim
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One of my favorite Bible verses is Amos 5:24: “Let justice run down like water; and righteousness as a mighty stream.” This phrase appears at the conclusion of another longer invective from God saying that he despises religious feast days, sacred assemblies, peace offerings, and songs and musical instruments if not accompanied by serious attention to justice and righteousness. The message is that our halting efforts at religious authenticity are worthless in God’s eyes when we fail to act as prophetic voices crying in the wilderness against entrenched domination systems and their unending war against the poor and vulnerable of society.

Is this powerful revelation of Divine values still true today? Does it say anything to modern Christian churches and denominations? Some will no doubt label this passage as “law” and thereby negate its meaning and application to societal evils today. But if we simply did what God’s law for the nation says, our society would be greatly different in many profound ways.

What would society look like today if justice actually did “run down like water”? In the realm of government we would find candidates running for office on platforms of true justice for all people. They would finance their campaigns with small public contributions, not the current multi-millions from political action committees of the wealthy and powerful. Office-holders would spend their time legislating what the public needs rather than making endless contacts to raise more campaign financing. And the real intent of the preamble to our Constitution would be evident: that government was formed to “establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.” Note: It doesn’t say that government should serve the wealthy and powerful, nor does it say that corporations should be accorded the same rights as individuals.

Under a system where justice really did run down like water, the economic order would be based upon serving the public rather than making profits. Monster banks would not ride herd over public welfare and tranquility, as they do now with

their manipulation of money to enrich the already wealthy at the expense of everyone else.

If America's

religious establishment got this message we might experience a real Old-Fashioned Revival, perhaps like The Great Awakening (1730-55) that swept the country in 1741 as theologian Jonathan Edwards preached his still-quoted sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." The graphic symbolism he used of unregenerate sinners hanging like "loathsome insects" over the fires of hell awakened thousands to their needy spiritual state. There have been scores of other such revivals, perhaps on a lesser, more local scale, and who can forget the thousands of people flocking to the altar during the Billy Graham revivals. But never did these revivals, powerful as they were, succeed in turning the nation back to God, not only in a spiritual sense, but also in the political and economic realms that would be included if we were to allow "justice to run down like water." We seem to think that revivals are only spiritual and personal in nature, missing the eternal truth that they can also occur in other aspects of human life.

Should

"righteousness run down like water" we would have a transformation of human relationships with God, each other, and the earth. The term "righteousness" means more than personal piety: It also means right relationships in every aspect of human life. Right relationships would bring to fruition the biblical concept that transcends all others: "Love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself."

Imagine a

nation where this really happened. It would be nothing short of heaven on earth, and it would probably occur even as we sleep in religious stupor, unaware of the moving of God in human affairs.

The opportunity is now here for all concerned persons to join the "Revival of Justice and Righteousness" longed for by the prophet Amos. Why don't you unite with it