

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

A SUDDEN APPEARING

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. Malachi 3:1

John the Baptist was the greatest of the old testament prophets according to the testimony of the LORD JESUS. (see Mat.11:11; Luke 7:28) Yet he did not perform great miracles as Elijah did nor did he write poetic prophecies foretelling the coming of the MESSIAH as did Isaiah. But greatness in the kingdom of GOD is not measured by miracles and deeds, nor by doctrine and the setting forth of mysteries, but by the proximity one has to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The LORD went on to say that though John was the greatest of the old testament seers yet even the weakest babe in the kingdom of GOD was greater. (see Luke 7:28) Now this kingdom of which HE speaks is that true and revealed kingdom which the LORD JESUS ushered in when HE set foot upon the earth as the REDEEMER KING. Though John lived to see HIS coming in the flesh yet he did not live to see the full establishment of that kingdom by the LORD's subsequent death as a SUBSTITUTE for HIS elect, HIS triumph over death as the risen SAVIOR, and HIS ascension back to the FATHER where HE ever lives to make intercession for HIS own by HIS presence there.

John the apostle (not the Baptist) said, "*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth,*" (John 1:14). John could testify of having seen HIS glory because he became a witness of HIS death, resurrection, and ascension. As they tarried in Jerusalem in the days after the ascension, the LORD was ministering to them as only HE can. Then on the day of Pentecost the actual reality of the kingdom which HE came to establish was made known to them in power which they had not experienced before, even at the mount of transfiguration. Thus John could write of having seen HIS glory while HE lived, even though while HE yet walked with them on the earth and constantly taught them of the nature of HIS kingdom, they still entertained the notion that it would be a kingdom of flesh and blood which would be ushered in by a mortal defeat of the enemies of the Jews. It was on the day of Pentecost when the glory of the LORD was fully revealed to them, that he could look back upon the time they spent with HIM. Looking back John could see that glory revealed as HE healed the sick, raised the dead, preached the sermon on the mount, taught them to pray, gave them the example of compassion, and taught them to be one another's servants. This was not the glory they had in mind when they "signed on" as the LORD's disciples but they came to understand that HIS kingdom is not of this world.

Some of those who claim to be Christians never seem to grasp this concept fully as they go about to establish "kingdoms" of their own, supposedly in HIS name. Some study to become effective fundraisers in order to bring in these "kingdoms". Some think HIS kingdom is but the extension of an earthly covenant replete with circumcisions of one type or another. Some lay burdens and duties upon the free born sons of GOD as if they were servants working to pay off

their own indenture. The sons of GOD are without condemnation of any kind, for anything, because JESUS CHRIST has fully paid any debt they ever did or could owe. They are under no law except the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom.8:2) which has forever set them free from the law of sin and death. Some think the kingdom hinges upon the recitations of pigeon hole doctrines and creeds. Some devise schemes and methods to draw men to the gospel as if the SPIRIT of GOD was not effectual enough for the task. Many cannot be satisfied with the LORD's timetable but think they can streamline and expedite the SPIRIT's working. *"But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him."* (Hab 2:20)

The prophet Malachi says that HE would come suddenly, which HE did when HE was born of a virgin and wrapped in swaddling clothes. There was no fanfare leading up to HIS arrival. HIS birth was announced in the relative obscurity of a shepherds meadow. HE shall also come suddenly when HE splits the sky with the trump of GOD and the voice of the archangel. HIS first appearing as a babe and HIS next appearing as the visibly triumphant KING are two separate events but not for two different reasons. These events occur over two thousand years apart yet HIS first coming and HIS last are for the same purpose, which is the establishment of HIS kingdom, manifested in the redemption and deliverance of a people upon whom HE set HIS love before the foundation of the earth. Many bible "teachers" try to make HIS second coming that which will usher in HIS kingdom while they consider HIS first coming something else. HE came into the world as a KING, died as such, rose as such, and ascended back to the FATHER as such. HIS kingdom is very much alive in the present day as HE is calling HIS own to himself through the preaching of the gospel and the quickening power of the HOLY GHOST. HE is drawing men to HIMSELF day by day and HIS triumph over sin and the grave is complete. The LORD told the Pharisees, who were blind to HIS present kingdom, *"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (i.e.; literally in your midst)"* (Luke 17:20-21)

Though the LORD sent his messenger, John the Baptist, before HIS coming, HE did not leave the establishing of HIS kingdom to an old testament prophet, but rather came HIMSELF as THE MESSENGER of that new covenant which was built upon better promises and to establish HIS own kingdom which shall never end. *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people"* (Heb 8:10)

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