

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

THE RULER IN ISRAEL

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Micah 5:2

When the three wise men from the east came to Herod, seeking the ONE they believed was born KING of the Jews, they asked where they might find him. Herod called for the chief priests and scribes, who then quoted this passage from the prophecy of Micah, "*And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.*" (Matt 2:6)

It was this very scripture that these scribes and priests later used as a reason to discount the Kingship of CHRIST since they knew HE was from Galilee. (see John 7:52) In this they demonstrate the blindness of men by nature to see and understand the truth of GOD. Since they could not, in their human reason, understand how the LORD JESUS was taken out of Bethlehem they refused to believe He was the KING that should come. Yet these men from the east, who had been given a divine revelation, would not rest until they found HIM of whom the prophet spoke and the GOD of the heavens had told them of.

Religious men are impressed with fanfare, ceremony, and pomp, yet the LORD despises all such and seeks men to worship HIM in SPIRIT and TRUTH. That which is of GOD is not put on display for all to easily see, even as the LORD testified as to why HE taught in Parables. "*And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.*" (Luke 8:10)

The LORD often uses the things that seem, to men, to be very insignificant in order to manifest the true nature of HIS mediatorial kingdom. When the LORD JESUS came into Jerusalem, HE did not come sitting high in an ornate saddle upon a valiant steed, rather HE came rather meekly sitting upon the foal of an ass. When HE carried out the most important business of HIS sojourn here upon this earth, HE did not sit in royal state garbed in a purple robes and a golden crown, but rather HE ignominiously hung upon a Roman cross with lash marks upon HIS back and a crown of thorns embedded in HIS sacred brow, as HE poured out HIS life's blood for sinners.

Two thieves were crucified with HIM as HE was "*numbered with the transgressors*". They both mocked HIM. But an amazing thing happened. One of those thieves suddenly was made aware of his own just condemnation and began to rebuke his compatriot. Both men had the same vantage point from which they might look upon this MAN JESUS, as HE hung on the cross just like them. Yet one of them was given eyes to see that this MAN hanging in naked shame was truly the KING of Israel while the other only saw a failed prophet. Only the grace of GOD made a difference between them.

The work of GOD is hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes. That which appears insignificant to the wisdom of the world is most precious to those who are given eyes to see and ears to hear. Paul wisely said, "*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us*

which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” (1Cor 1:18-19)

It seems logical to the natural man to make much ado about the birth of ONE who is born a KING. Therefore the greatest celebration of the year in nominal Christendom is supposedly devoted to remembering the birth of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth. Millions make a show of remembering the little CHRIST “child” and woe be to the man who questions the celebration.

While we personally have no vendetta against such celebrations, we are quite aware that the focus and centrality of the KINGSHIP of CHRIST is not displayed in HIS birth but rather in HIS death and subsequent resurrection, which validated the redemptive work which HE accomplished on Calvary’s cross. We are never commanded to remember HIS birth, which in the overall scheme of redemption is a mere necessity in order to accomplish a greater purpose. Yet we are specifically directed to remember HIS death (in a very specific manner) until HE comes again.

It is the death of CHRIST that is at the heart of the kingdom which HE came to establish upon this earth. We are not waiting for some future time when HE will manifest HIS kingdom in pomp and splendor. Rather we are rejoicing in HIM who came into this world in the most humble of places, walked among men as one despised and rejected, by the very nation into which he was born. We bow down to HIM who came into Jerusalem, meekly, riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass. We weep as we see HIM give HIS back to the smiters and is spat upon and defiled by the sons of men. We behold HIS kingdom of power and glory, revealed, as HE hangs upon the cross of shame and gives HIMSELF as a SACRIFICE and SUBSTITUTE for the subjects of HIS kingdom who HE has loved with an everlasting love.

Has any king of this earth ever sat in more royal state than this ONE who takes captivity captive and destroys the rule of all kingdoms as HE breathes HIS last breath and declares, *“It is finished.”* O tell me, you who seek for glory, is there any glory with exceeds this triumphant victory. Has there ever been any who have accomplished more or ever been lifted higher. O yes! HE rules and reigns over death, hell, and the grave and has not failed in one jot or tittle to accomplish exactly what HE came to do though he was a KING born in a stable and crucified by wicked men.

HIS kingdom arises from an Eternal KINGSHIP. HE did not come into the world in order to become a KING but HE was born as a KING even as Micah says of HIM, *“whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”* *“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58)* This claim to Eternal KINGSHIP is despised by men as is evidenced by the actions of the Jews who sought to stone him. Natural man will balk at the notion of a Sovereign GOD who will show mercy to whom HE will.

HIS kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” (Isa 9:6-7)*

HIS kingdom is a mediatorial kingdom. At the center and heart of HIS kingdom is HIS work of redemption which HE has performed in the behalf of those whom HE loved from before the foundation of the world. HE created the world to set a stage in order to display the glories of HIS grace in HIS blood redemption of them. CHRIST JESUS the LORD is alone exalted in this redemption even as HE declared, *“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12:31-32)* and as Paul replied, *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” (Gal 6:14)* May we be given grace to bow down before this mighty RULER in Israel. *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”(1Ti 1:15)*

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