

# 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*

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## THE NAZARENE

*And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.*

*Matthew 2:23*

The Kingdom of GOD is hidden in plain view. It does not in any wise appear to the carnal understandings of men, as it actually is. Yet the TRUTH of its unfolding is plainly set forth in the prophetic record which the LORD has given to men. Many think that by rigorous and thorough study of the scriptures, they can come to a right understanding of them. The Pharisees were just such students. They diligently studied, discussed, and debated the scriptures, and while they possessed great knowledge of the letter of scripture, they were totally ignorant of the nature and appearing of the Kingdom of GOD. The LORD JESUS told them, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39)

HE followed this admonition with these words, "*And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*" (John 5:40) All prophecy has its fulfillment in the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON of GOD. Whatever else a man might learn from the scriptures, if he is without a revelation of CHRIST as the center, sum, and substance of all that GOD would manifest to men, then he is ignorant of the nature and power of the Kingdom which CHRIST came into the world to establish.

This is illustrated quite clearly for us in the passage in Matthew's gospel. None of the prophets whose prophecies are recorded in the canon of scripture ever used the exact phrase, "*HE shall be called a Nazarene.*" Yet when one understands that all of the old testament prophecies (which were not the forecast of local events), were written for the purpose of declaring the REDEEMER KING which was to come into the earth at GOD's appointed time, then the veil of such prophecies begins to fall, as men (by the grace of GOD) begin to search the scriptures for CHRIST rather than for mysteries and signs..

The Pharisees, in rebuking Nicodemus, said, "*Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*" (John 7:52) They were right according to the letter of the scriptures as they understood them. Yet they willingly would not and could not see that the scriptures did indeed declare that the greatest of all prophets would be a Nazarene and therefore of the region of Galilee.

In the book of Isaiah, chapter 11, verse 1, we read; "*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:*" This verse gives us the origin of the MAN CHRIST JESUS, and the subsequent verses declare the nature of HIS Kingdom over which HE would rule forever and the character which HE would display in the establishment of that Kingdom.

The LORD promised David that the throne of his kingdom would be established forever ("*He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.*" II Samuel 7:13) when HE revealed to him that Solomon would be the next king of Judah. Of course it is obvious, to those who are given eyes to see, that Solomon, being a finite man, could not and did not continue in that kingdom forever. So when one can see the FULFILLER of all prophecy, the

MAN CHRIST JESUS, then it becomes clear that it is HIS Kingdom which is here spoken of and not that of Solomon who could only continue his kingdom for a few short years. Isaiah confirms this when he wrote, *"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, Counsellor, 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 for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."* (Isa 9:6-7)

So HE is the ONE who is called the BRANCH. This word BRANCH is translated from the Hebrew word "netzer" which literally means a green shoot or limb and by illustration refers to green trees, plants, and grass. It is concluded by many scholars that the city of Nazareth got its name directly from the Hebrew word "netzer", because of its verdant growth of foliage of all types. Hence HE shall be called a Nazarene, or an inhabitant of Nazareth.

This is a historical fact which can be discovered by anyone who is looking for CHRIST in the pages of the scriptures, just as surely as it is hidden from those who look therein, merely for signs and mysteries in the letter. The chief desire of those who seek signs, is not to worship HIM, but to promote their sacrosanct ideas. In this fashion the Pharisees were blinded as are all who place confidence in their religion and its schemes of doctrine whatever they may be.

Philip excitedly told Nathanael, *"We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth."* (John 1:45) Nathanael's response was, *"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"* (John 1:46) His response was decidedly sarcastic and skeptical for two reasons: One, was that the town of Nazareth seems to be regarded with a certain contempt or disdain. Secondly, the Jews believed the prophecy of Micah, which clearly stated, *"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)

They had the prophecy correct but since they looked for prophetic fulfillment according to their fleshly understanding, they could not see that the NAZARENE was indeed born in Bethlehem. They assumed the RULER would live in Bethlehem and not Nazareth. The Jews in the main rejected CHRIST because HE did not "rule" as they assumed that a Messiah would. They figured one would arise and deliver them from their carnal oppression, yet the KING of kings came to deliver HIS people from a far greater oppression than any earthly nation could bring upon them.

To this end HE did indeed establish HIS Kingdom in the earth and does presently deliver HIS own from the dominion of sin with its curse and guilt. HE is the Nazarene who *"made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."* (Philip 2:7-8) While HE could have come in the pomp and splendor which is rightfully HIS, instead HE came ignominiously so that HE might hide HIMSELF from the wise and prudent and reveal HIMSELF and the nature of HIS kingdom to babes.

There are some who are yet looking for HIM to set up HIS kingdom in the earth at some future time. In relegating the establishment of HIS dominion to some future era, they do, (perhaps unknowingly) despise the KINGLY work which HE has already demonstrated in triumphing over all of HIS enemies and taking captivity captive. They make the work of REDEMPTION to be a secondary work rather than the substance of HIS reign. HE was born into the world as a KING (according to Isaiah's prophecy) over a Kingdom which would never end. HIS Kingdom is demonstrated in this world but it is not of this world, since HIS dominion transcends flesh and blood and extends over the world even as light swallows up the darkness. (see Isa.11:9)

This is the same error of the Jews who looked for the establishment of an earthly king to subdue their carnal enemies and restore them to their nation. They could not see the fact as the LORD pointed out to them that the Kingdom of GOD was in their very midst. *"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation."* (Luke 17:20)

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