

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 POLISHED SHAFT

Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

Isaiah 49:1-3

The grandest of all mysteries which the LORD has seen fit to manifest to the world, is the incarnation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18) The fact that HE who is the CREATOR of all things should take upon HIMSELF the likeness of the creature and walk among men, is beyond the understanding of men. This can in no wise be received and believed by natural men apart from a supernatural revelation.

It is well within the power of men to consider that this MAN who is named JESUS has some divine characteristics, even that HE is some sort of secondary figure in a panoply of gods. Yet only by the gift of faith can a man see that this ONE who was born of a virgin in Bethlehem, is THE GOD, the Everlasting FATHER, the "fullness of the GODHEAD bodily."

Not only, is HE, ONE with the FATHER, HE is the FATHER (so that he that hath seen HIM hath seen the FATHER) who is of purer eyes than to behold sin, and yet HE became sin for us. HE who is the epitome of RIGHTEOUSNESS and the ONE who hates the workers of iniquity, did take upon HIMSELF the likeness of sinful flesh and did come into the world to save sinners. O who can fathom such a display and who can embrace it in its glory! "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1Tim 3:16)

To truly believe as the Ethiopian did, when he confessed "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Act 8:37), is to embrace all that HE has done and is, as the GOD-MAN in the Heaven and the Earth. This is a hidden mystery revealed in its glory to a relative few.

The Old Testament saints knew that a MESSIAH was coming, and they knew that HE would be born of the tribe of Judah but they did not know what HIS name (or identity) among men would be. Yet when the LORD sent the angel to Joseph HE made "mention" of HIS name saying, "thou shalt call his name JESUS." Not only did HE "mention" HIS name but HE declared the purpose for which HE came, "for he shall save his people from their sins." (Mat 1:21)

Thus HE was hidden until the time appointed, that HE was to be "called" from the womb of the Virgin, as the spotless LAMB of GOD who was ordained to fulfill and consummate the purpose of the ALMIGHTY in the earth. Wicked man comes forth from the womb speaking lies, (see Ps.58:3), yet HE came forth from HIS mother's womb with the "sharp two edged sword" of GOD in HIS mouth as the WORD of GOD who was "with GOD" and who "was GOD" (see John 1:1), declaring, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John

14:6) Whereas, the natural man despises the will of GOD, JESUS of Nazareth came to perform the will of HIS FATHER and to fulfill HIS law in every jot and tittle for that elect people for which HE was ordained as a REDEEMER.

We read *"in the shadow of HIS hand hath HE hid me"*, and we understand that HE, being GOD, did not reveal HIS identity as the ONE sent by GOD, until the appointed hour. The LORD has in all ages communicated with HIS people by various revelations of HIS word delivered by Prophets, yet in these "last days" HE has spoken unto them by the ONE and only true PROPHET, JESUS CHRIST. HE has not only revealed HIM but HIS *"generation"* as well (see Isa.53:8, I Pet.2:9) as HE has come to call HIS own sheep by name, who exclusively follow HIM. (see John 10:5)

An arrow which flies straight to its mark must be straight and perfectly fashioned in the hands of a skilled maker. So we see JESUS CHRIST come forth as the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON of GOD, *"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."* (Heb 5:7-9)

HE is thus that *"polished shaft"*, both perfect in HIS spotless character, and perfected in the fires of temptation and trial as that SON of man who came as the sinless, HIGH PRIEST over the *"house"* of GOD and being tempted in all points like as we are, can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. *"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."* (Heb 2:16-18) *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."* (Heb 4:16)

This *"polished shaft"* was *"hid in the shadow of his hand"* and *"in his quiver"*. By this we understand that GOD has now revealed not only HIS identity but manifested HIS purpose to redeem HIS people by the work of this ONE who was perfectly crafted by HIM for the specific task of bringing glory to the FATHER through the manifestation of HIS grace in the work of redemption. *"For such an high priest became us, (i.e.; was perfectly suited for us) who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."* (Heb 7:26) This purpose, though hinted at throughout the Old Testament, is now fully made known in the birth, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of our SIN BEARER, ADVOCATE, and GREAT HIGH PRIEST and will see its final fruition when HE returns for HIS purchased possession.

None of this was an afterthought with GOD. Rather the very reason that HE called a people HIS own and made the world, was for HIS glory alone. *"Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him."* (Isa 43:7) This is a fact which is disregarded by those who preach for the purpose of "saving souls" rather than for the purpose of declaring the glory of GOD in the redemption of HIS elect. *"For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another."* (Isa 48:11) *"And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob."* (Isa 49:26)

We read of this *"polished shaft"*: *"Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."* In this we see that HE is identified as ONE with HIS people since HE is called by their name *"O Israel"* JESUS CHRIST is the SUBSTITUTE for HIS people. Their sins and iniquities are borne by HIM and carried away. HIS righteousness is imputed to them and is that in which they are seen before their FATHER's face. They are that *"apple of HIS eye" and that one HE calls "my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled."* (Song of Sol. 5:2) *"Thou art worthy:-- for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."* (Rev 5:9) *"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."* (Rev 4:11) mam