

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

MAHERSHALALHASHBAZ

Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahershalalhashbaz.

Isaiah 8:3

Shakespeare's character, Juliet, (of Romeo and Juliet fame) posed this question, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." She discounted the significance of a name, yet when we come to the names we find in the Holy Scriptures (i.e. the Bible), they often have very profound meanings. Emmanuel, means "GOD with us". Joshua, means "Jehovah is Salvation". Adam means "man". Abram means, "high father", and the LORD changed his name to Abraham which means, "father of a multitude". Peter means "a stone", whom the LORD used to contrast that True ROCK on which HE has built HIS church. The oldest man in the Bible is named "Methuselah" which means "he that brings death" or as some say, "in the year of the flood", for regardless of how long a man lives, he shall not escape the "judgment".

There are most notable examples of places which are given significant "names", which are meant to remind us of the unfolding of GOD's blessings to HIS people. When Abraham was given a LAMB for the sacrifice in the place of his son, he worshipped and named the place. "*And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: (the LORD has provided and will perform it) as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." (Gen 22:14)* When Jacob awoke from his dream of the "ladder" upon which the angels ascended and descended; he placed there a stone and memorialized the place with great trembling and awe. "*And he called the name of that place Bethel: (i.e.; the house of GOD) but the name of that city was called Luz at the first."* (Gen 28:19; see also Gen 35:7;15) When he later wrestled with the ANGEL, he did the same. "*And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: (i.e.; the FACE of GOD) for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."* (Gen 32:30)

It was there at that very place that the LORD had changed his name from Jacob, (which literally means "heel catcher, or supplanter"), to Israel, which means, "he will rule as GOD, or he will prevail over men". This is especially significant at this juncture of his life, as he was going out to meet with Esau (whose heel he caught) and was somewhat fearful of the outcome of that meeting. Thus, the LORD comforted him and demonstrated that which HE revealed to Malachi (1:2) and was repeated by Paul, "*As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* (Rom 9:13)

So, as we study the scriptures it is most profitable to seek out the meaning and purpose of the names given to various persons and places, especially when they are mentioned in connection with unfolding events, prophecies, and the demonstration of HIS mercy. Because of the problems of translation and our own dullness, it is sometimes very difficult to ascertain exactly what these names signify. Surely, if we do arrive at a proper understanding of them it is because it is shown to us and not as a result of our own adeptness.

Of all of the prophets in the Old Testament, none speak more clearly and voluminously, on the coming and triumphant reign of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in the unfolding of HIS Kingdom, than Isaiah, the son of Amoz. He is aptly named since "Isaiah", literally means "JAH (i.e. Jehovah) has saved". He prophesied for approximately eighty-five years, throughout the reigns of four kings.

(see Isa.1:1) Though he was, no doubt, puzzled as to the complete meanings of some of those things which he was given to prophesy (*"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."* (1Pet 1:10-12); yet he most gloriously declares the gospel of the glory of the Blessed GOD. He prophesied of CHRIST's birth (7:14), HIS ministry (42:1-7; 11:2-5), HIS suffering and death (53:3-10), HIS resurrection (63:5), and HIS ascension back to the throne of GOD as the triumphant REDEEMER KING. (6:1-3; 53:11) Other than the Psalms there is no other book which is quoted from, more often, in the NT than the prophecy of Isaiah.

The LORD signaled the beginning of HIS ministry by standing up, in the Synagogue in Nazareth, to read Isaiah's prophecy concerning HIMSELF. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke 4:18-21) Though these Jews marveled at HIS words and wisdom, yet only a short time later they were ready to cast HIM off of a cliff, as HE preached unto them of the Sovereign Grace of GOD in visiting HIS salvation upon the Gentiles.

The LORD told Isaiah to name his son, "*Mahershalalhashbaz*." This unusual name literally means "hasting to the prey". In the specific moment in which the LORD gave Isaiah this direction, HE had reference to the swiftness with which the king of Assyria would employ in spoiling and conquering Damascus and Samaria. No doubt the swiftness of HIS judgment was demonstrated here and in order to illustrate that, HE instructed Isaiah in the naming of his son. Yet as in all things, the LORD would magnify the NAME and glory of CHRIST in the unfolding of all events which HE has ordained to occur in the Earth.

Lest we have any doubt about this name being descriptive of HIM, we read a little further and find, *"And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."* (Isa 8:8) The enemies of GOD's people had well nigh destroyed them, and surely oppressed and enslaved them, when CHRIST came upon the scene. As HE declared, HE came to "preach deliverance to the captives." *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."* (Rom 5:6) This is the fulfillment of that prophecy, *"So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."* (Isa 59:19-21) *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Rom 5:8)

HE has indeed "hastened to the prey." For that work which CHRIST has performed, though it was long in coming, was a quick and short work according to HIS purpose. *"Esaias (i.e.; Isaiah) also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha."* (Rom 9:27-29) HE shall see of the travail of HIS soul and be satisfied. Are you reconciled unto HIM?

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