

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 KINGDOM OF GOD IN POWER

And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. Mark 9:1

There are many passages in the scriptures which appear to us so clearly stated that we can set forth their meaning unequivocally. One which comes to our minds is Acts 13:48; *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”* Another is John 1:13; *“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* And yet another (just to name a few) is found in Hebrews 9:12; *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”* The only controversy that can be found in the reading or attempted “explanation” of them is in the minds of those who simply choose to ignore what they plainly say or refuse to give GOD all glory in the salvation of sinners.

Now we are sure that no man can have any true spiritual understanding of the scriptures apart from the illuminating work of the HOLY SPIRIT. Yet we are also sure that words have meanings even in the natural realm which cannot be denied. Much of that which is recorded in the Bible for the benefit of mankind falls into that category. Men often cannot see because they will not; even as the LORD upbraided the Pharisees for their refusal to hear HIS words which were so plainly spoken unto them. *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”* (John 5:39-40)

Thus, no man can plead ignorance before the LORD because HIS WORD is made plain even in the creation which surrounds all men. *“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”* (Rom 1:19-22) Men will, by nature, rebel against every true revelation of the glory of GOD in JESUS CHRIST.

Many do so while professing to be the followers of CHRIST as they exalt the free will of men and make the redemptive work of CHRIST to be a mere attempt to save men which ultimately depends upon them instead of HIM. One cannot deny the testimony of Paul, *“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”* (1Cor 1:30-31) Yet many will seek to modify what Paul clearly stated. in order to promote their schemes which, give men a place to glory in their own decisions, works, faith, and obedience. In the same fashion they will revolt against Paul's clear declaration of the absolute sovereignty of GOD, *“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?”* (Rom 9:20-21)

While we see most of the scriptures in their “unequivocal” meaning, or at least desire to see them more clearly, we are also aware that there are some scriptures which men made wise by the SPIRIT of GOD, tread lightly and confess that they know nothing as they ought to know. For the import and

meaning of these scriptures is not so clearly revealed. Yet we must look at them, seeking greater light, and desiring to speak truth alone. Thus, we can merely state our opinion about them, desiring to glorify CHRIST alone, and confessing with trepidation that we are not always correct in our opinion. The man who is convinced that his opinion is always correct is either a fool or unlearned in the limitations of even "spiritually minded" men.

This passage found in Mark 9:1 is one of those scriptures which I confess to having no absolute understanding of, yet I feel it necessary to set forth what light I have on it, thinking that I do have some understanding of it. I hope to do so in a manner which would encompass the essence of truth as it is in JESUS even if I might miss the exact import of it in every detail. Many of the scriptures which seem, to many, to speak of future events fall into that same category.

It is true enough that the LORD could have been speaking of an event far off in the future, yet it would appear that it could not be beyond the lifetime of those to whom HE was speaking. Some have surmised that HE is speaking of the "coming" of HIS Kingdom at the end of the age, when HE returns with a shout and the voice of the archangel. But such seems unlikely to me since HE did say that the event which HE is describing would occur while some of them were still alive. "*some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death*".

Others have thought that HE has reference to the coming destruction of Jerusalem around the year 70 AD. Such seems a strained consideration to me since one has to adopt the whole theory of what has been called "preterism" (which primarily contends that all prophecies have had their fulfillment at that time, including the return of CHRIST to the Earth) in order to support that view. While "wise" and "studied" men have held this position (not without any foundation; I might add), I cannot embrace it and am of the opinion that much learning has made them mad.

Then there are those who believe that HE has reference to the day of HIS ascension back to the right hand of the FATHER, which was witnessed by them, as the Heavens opened and HE was received into the glory which HE had with the FATHER from the beginning. This was indeed a momentous and glorious event which surely shaped their concept of the extent of the reign of HIS Kingdom. Yet I do not believe this is the event, which was referenced by the LORD, due in large part to HIS statement that "*some of them*" would see this event. It would appear that all of them were present when HE ascended.

So, we are left to consider what event did HE have reference to. When we look at the scriptures which are considered "prophetic" we can be certain that they have their fulfillment in CHRIST, since the "*testimony of JESUS is the SPIRIT of prophecy*". (Rev. 19:10) All of the creation shall worship at HIS footstool because HE is the CREATOR of all things which HE made for that very end. HE would reveal HIS glory to a people which HE created for that very reason, who would delight not simply in HIS creation of them but in their redemption, which is clearly made manifest in the unfolding of HIS Kingdom in the Earth. HE had reference to this fact when HE said, "*upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" (Mat 16:18)

The opening up of the understanding of HIS disciples was an ongoing work of HIS ministry. One can only guess at their wonderment each time HE performed some act which caused them to say, "*what manner of MAN is this*". Usually, the LORD brings home truth to our hearts, not in the initial word which HE gives us, but later, as HE is pleased to open our minds and causes us to see what should have been apparent to us from the start, like the men on the road to Emmaus.

So, it would appear to me that the event which HE has reference to here in Mark 9:1, is the event which occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration. We can tell the limited knowledge that the disciples had of who HE is and the place which HE occupies in the Kingdom of GOD, by the fact of Peter's desire to build three tabernacles of equal import for Elijah, Moses, and the LORD. Now to be sure I expect that Peter was overwhelmed at this vision and probably spoke without thinking too deeply. Yet his line of thought is in keeping with his Jewish heritage and tradition. How startling it was to hear that VOICE from Heaven thundering out, "*This is my beloved Son: hear him.*" (Mar 9:7) as Moses and Elijah faded from view. If this is not a revelation of the Kingdom of GOD coming with power, I am not able to imagine what would be. Yet that revelation was not immediate to Peter, but was cemented in his mind on the day of Pentecost when he declared, "*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*" (Acts 2:36) This is the message of HIS Kingdom which has no end. mam