

# 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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## A SHORT WORK

*Esaias 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. Romans 9:27-28*

At the close of his Gospel record, John penned these words, under the inspiration of the SPIRIT of GOD; *“This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”*(John 21:24-25) This is an incredible statement, yet one which only serves to testify of the absolute dominion of CHRIST over all of HIS creation, and the far reaching effects that CHRIST JESUS the MAN had upon this world which HE condescended to dwell in, bearing witness of the glory of GOD’s grace in the redemption of that people which HE came into the world to save.

I believe that John primarily had in mind the many miracles, acts of kindness, and testimonies of TRUTH that came forth from the LORD as HE ministered to the sons of men during the three years (approximately) of HIS public ministry which commenced with HIS baptism in Jordan by John the Immerser. Yet there is good likelihood that, John (the disciple whom JESUS loved), was a cousin of the LORD JESUS and was acquainted with HIM in the years leading up to the commencement of that ministry. Thus he might likely, also, have reference to the exploits of the LORD before HE became widely sought, loved, and ultimately hated by the multitudes to whom HE ministered the WORD of GOD in SPIRIT and TRUTH.

We only have a smattering of testimony concerning these early years, and it has not pleased the LORD to give us more insight into HIS life during this time. We have the first mentioning of HIS life when the babe (John the Baptist) leaped in his mother’s womb as the virgin Mary, being with CHILD, came into the presence of Elisabeth (John’s mother). Then we see the testimony of HIS life when the Angels bore witness to those shepherds that HE was born in a stable, and they went to see HIM. Then we see HIM being circumcised and ultimately brought to the Temple according to the Law (which HE fulfilled even in infancy) where Simeon, a common man whom the scripture describes as just and devout, led by the SPIRIT, took HIM in his arms, prophesying and rejoicing that he could now die in peace, having seen the SAVIOR, the CONSOLATION of Israel. *“And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”* (Luke 2:34-35) Anna, a prophetess, testified of the same. *“And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”* (Luke 2:38)

Then we see the first mention of HIM as HE began to develop into a young man. *“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.”* Luke 2:40) Next we see HIM in the Temple. *“And it came to pass, that after three days they*

*found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:46-49) Even as a youth, HE had but one purpose in HIS mind, which was to do HIS FATHER's will. HIS early years are summed up as HE honored HIS parents as the LORD demanded in HIS Law. "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Luke 2:51-52)*

Then the scriptures grow dim as far as information about HIS growing years. It is only when we see HIM turn water into wine at a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, that the narrative about HIS ministry of miracles and testimony picks up in earnest. "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Mark 1:9-11) "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age." (Luke 3:23) at the time of HIS baptism in the River Jordan.

It is commonly received as fact that HIS ministry from that time covered a period of three years. While the scriptures do not spell this out, scholars have settled upon this time frame from piecing together various historic events which are relative to HIS life. In any event we can be sure that HIS public ministry was relatively short compared with the length of HIS life. Thus, we see illustrated in HIS life, a principle by which the LORD is pleased to work among men.

As the LORD fulfilled HIS appointment with Nicodemus, HE set forth this very principle as HE described to Nicodemus the manner in which the LORD is pleased to bring HIS people from darkness to LIGHT. What HE told Nicodemus, a student of the Scriptures, is that a man cannot "learn" his way into the Kingdom of GOD. Rather this entrance can only occur "suddenly" and without warning. The ability to "know" the things of this Kingdom, comes only as the LORD awakens a man. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:7-8)

Men cannot gain this "Kingdom" by natural birth into a certain family of people. (i.e.; "not of blood"). Nicodemus considered that he, being a Jew, was already privy to this access, and many, even today, assume that their family ties are useful unto this end. Men cannot gain it by any ability which they may possess, (i.e.; "nor of the will of the flesh"). Neither can they find an entrance there through study or learning. (i.e.; "nor of the will of man"). The LORD revealed the blindness of men in grasping the TRUTH found in the WORD of GOD when HE told the Pharisees (who were studious and learned men), "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) A study of the Bible (though useful to all) cannot minister any true help to them apart from the revelation of the ONE who is the SUBJECT and OBJECT of all that is recorded there. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:13)

While we see the work of regeneration (i.e.; being born again) as a demonstration of the principle of a "short work" by the LORD, the grandest demonstration of this principle is seen in the final words of CHRIST upon Calvary's cross. We understand that the LORD JESUS came into the world and lived approximately thirty-three years, during which time, HE went about doing good and fulfilling the Law in its jot and tittle. Yet it is with those final words, "*it is finished*", that the glory of the Kingdom of GOD was ushered in as HE completed the work which HE came to do in being made sin for that remnant which HE loved from the beginning. "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.*" (Rom 8:1) mam