

THE HOLY MOUNTAIN



By Tim Czapiewski

A great sense of anticipation permeated the Jewish nation two thousand years ago. The prophecies referred to in the book of Daniel (see Daniel 9) pointed to the year A.D. 27 as

the year of Messiah's arrival. In a heightened state of alert, the Jewish leadership prepared to welcome the Messiah at the earliest indication of his approach.

The Jewish people were desperate for a revival to take place among themselves. Over the long years of Roman domination, the fabric of their culture was wearing away. Many were giving in to the ways of Roman life, infuriating those who vowed to resist its encroachment. But hope for change had long been expected for by the Jewish people. **"I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse"** (Malachi 4:5-6).

In A.D. 27, the expected indicator of their hopes had arrived. **"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"** (Matthew 3:1-2). Emissaries of the Jewish leadership were dispatched to investigate the phenomenon. **"Who are you? And he confessed...I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Are you Elijah? And he said, I am not. Are you that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who are you? that we may give an answer to them that sent us (John 1:19-22).**

Through the investigation of the prophetic symbols (See Daniel 2:34) many knew that a kingdom of a heavenly origin would be hurled into the feet of an imposing image. Later portions of this symbolic image pointed to the Roman power which held the chosen people in subjection.

Once this power was overcome, the Kingdom of God, broken apart so many years before would be restored. God's people would stand like a glorious holy mountain and would outshine all earthly kingdoms. The ancient ways would be again practiced and the brilliance of the Israelites would exceed their former glory. **"The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will...crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron."** (Daniel 2-44).

It is essential for the people of the last days to understand how the stone cut without hands applied to the people at the time of Christ. The word **stone** comes from the Hebrew word **eh'-ben** meaning **"building material"**. The word **cut out** comes from the Hebrew **ghez-ar'** meaning **determiner or watcher**. Simply stated, the stone of Daniel 2 foretells the coming of a prophet (John the Baptist) pointing to the material (the teachings of Jesus) who would construct an unbreakable structure (the church). What would come afterwards would be the establishment of the Kingdom of God. **"Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"** (Matthew 16:18).

As the days of Christ's mission began to pass, those looking on at His work were puzzled. "If Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Messiah, then why is He not working to restore the Kingdom that was promised to us?" Sadly, the minds of the people refused to comprehend the process by which the Kingdom of God was to be implemented. We who are living today, must resist the spirit of prejudice so we don't reject His Kingdom when it is manifested again in these last days. **"These things happened unto them for examples: they are written for our warning, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Therefore let him that thinks he can stand take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:11).**

The primary failure of the Jewish people was their inability to receive prophetic instruction. The foundation of their faith was established by Moses 1450 years earlier. Yet it had been replaced by new teachings made by their Jewish leaders. The work of Jesus was to break up their false ideas, restore the original teachings, and proceed with the plan agreed upon by their ancestors in the wilderness. It was God's purpose for the Jews to live out these instructions so that those of the wayward nations would exclaim; **"Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." What other nation is so great as to have their God near them...What other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you."** (Deuteronomy 4:6-8)

Jesus had come to help the Jewish people understand the evangelistic nature of their mission saying; **"What is the Kingdom of God like? How can I illustrate it? It is like a tiny mustard seed planted in a garden; it grows and becomes a tree, and the birds come and find shelter among its branches"** (Luke 13:19). Note the similarities illustrated by the tiny mustard seed and the stone mentioned in Nebuchadnezzar's great dream. **"The stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."** (Daniel 2:35). The stone and the seed were both very small, yet they grew into impressive objects. As the seed grew into a tree, it served as a refuge for those around it. The same can be said of the stone that becomes a mountain; **"In the last days the mountain of the Lord's**

temple will be established...it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many people will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths" (Isaiah 2:2-3). Notice that this mountain is attracting to it those who have never known God's way.

The Jewish leadership first discovered Jesus when he was a child in the temple. They could see that his intellect far exceeded that of an average twelve year old child. More compelling for them to witness was His zeal for the successful establishment of the Kingdom of God by the chosen people. Had only the leaders continued to pursue the avenues of His thoughts, they would not have been blind-sighted when he began his mission 18 years later.

The silent years of his life were spent in observation of his people's culture. He realized that their misconceptions in regards to the Kingdom of God would bring the nation to a disastrous end. **"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee"** (Hosea 4:6). Restless factions among them had begun to devise plans to provoke their Roman enemies. By doing so, these men hoped to force their nation into a conflict and create a worldly Kingdom.

They based their mission upon their interpretation of the Holy scriptures. Many had committed large portions of supporting texts to their memory. Great debates would often take place upon themselves over the minutest detail of their religious matters. Upon this ground Jesus chose not to venture. To insure that His voice would be heard above all others for generations to come, Jesus carefully crafted over one hundred lessons of nature and from the common experiences of life to illustrate the truth about the Kingdom of God. He only spoke openly to those who accepted His teachings **"The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables"** (Mark 4:11).

God held out a great opportunity for all the Jewish nation to overcome the Roman power. Success in this venture hinged upon the acceptance of Christ and HIS interpretation of the Kingdom of God. There is no such thing as an unanswerable argument. Heaven will never force it's inhabitants to believe. God moves on so unbelievers can enjoy the solitude of perfect darkness. **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together...but you were not willing. Look your house is left to you desolate"** (Matthew 23:13).

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