
BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord

by

Pastor Robert Bruce Record

Taken from the November-December 1999 issue of "The National Message, News and Comments"

When our Lord came the first time some 1900 years ago, it was necessary that a forerunner be sent to prepare the way for his coming. National Israel of the Ten Tribes had been divorced of God and taken captive into Assyria over 700 years before and was long gone. And in about 500 B.C. a remnant of the Judah remnant which had been carried captive into Babylon, were returned to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of the city and to rebuild the temple. Judaism had become the religion of the land, and the people were sitting in darkness. The long awaited Messiah was about to make His appearance and the people needed to be aroused and awakened to receive Him. Thus it is that the ministry and mission of John the Baptist is predicted in Isa. 40:3-5. And in fulfillment of this prophecy, we read in Matt. 3:1-3, *"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make His paths straight.'"*

But the ministry of John the Baptist at our Lord's first coming was more of a type of a greater similar ministry that would precede our Lord's second coming to complete that for which He had come the first time. I say this for two reasons. First the call to "prepare the way of the LORD, and to make straight in the desert a highway for our God", etc. was, and is a call to the nation of Israel to set their national house in order, preparatory to the Kingdom Age. Most of national Israel at this time was in the region of Asia Minor where Paul went on his missionary journeys. They had not yet arrived in their new home in the West, as per such scriptures as II Sam. 7:10 and Hosea 2:14. Nevertheless the message of John the Baptist to the Judah remnant residing in Palestine was still appropriate for our Lord's first coming. Secondly, when John the Baptist came in the first century, the prophecy of Isa. 40:5 was not fulfilled. The glory of the Lord was not revealed—save to Peter, James and John, on the Mount of Transfiguration. "All flesh" did not behold His glory. This revelation awaits His Second Coming.

I believe we have now reached the end of the age. The coming of Jesus Christ the second time is imminent, and preparation must and need be made for His coming. But the question is what preparation is to be made? It is right here that most evangelical preachers fumble the ball. Having limited the Israel of God to the Jew, a religious sect classed with Protestants and Catholics, they have no kingdom nation that they could call to repentance. They have thus spiritualized Israel, and are seeking to show the fulfillment of her promises in a so-called "Gentile Church." And to further confuse the picture, they labor under the delusion that the Second Coming of Christ is in two scenes. The first scene, they say, is the Rapture of the Church, and for this anticipated event they are laboring feverishly. Heaven has been set before the world as the goal of the believer. And the gospel they preach is an appeal to the sinner to get saved so he won't go to hell, and so he can go to heaven. It is a gospel in which the Kingdom of God has been supplanted with a heaven above. Carried to its destined end, the earth has no future. All men are headed for heaven or hell, and the kingdom for which we are taught to pray must therefore come to naught.

The Church and the clergy who subscribe to such a theology as this have lost the Divine perspective. Like the foolish virgins of Matt. 25:1-13, they believe in Christ and that His coming is imminent. They are trimming their lamps and beating their drums as they prepare for the Rapture, but their lamps have gone out. The message they preach sheds no light on the developing crisis, especially in the realm of Bible prophecy. It is largely a tradition which makes the Word of God of none effect.

I have said all this by way of saying that while the New Birth is God's prerequisite for Kingdom citizenship, there is nothing in a purely evangelistic message that will prepare the nation of Israel for the Kingdom Age. Getting people saved so they won't go to hell is not the Gospel of the Kingdom. God is not carrying on a sort of salvage program in which He is waging a losing battle for the souls of men. God has been saving people, that with them, He might establish a kingdom of righteousness here on the earth. To therefore confine our preaching to a message of personal salvation, and to healing and spiritual gifts, without the Kingdom and national message of the Bible, is to leave people without a proper goal for their having been saved in the first place.

America is God's kingdom nation. We are the land of re-gathered Israel. But our land is full of sin, and we are bent on our own way for God. We have been taught by the clergy that we are just another Gentile nation, and thus the message of the prophets goes in one ear and out the other. We do not see that the time of Jacob's trouble has to do with us, and the developing crisis is the call of God to a national awakening and a national repentance. We do not see what God is after, and thus are making no effort to set our national house in order as a necessary preparation for the coming of the Bridegroom. Christ is not coming to take a Gentile Church off to heaven some place, but He is coming to take a bride, which is national Israel, and the bride must make herself ready. You can preach personal salvation, and Divine healing, and positive thinking, until hell freezes over, and it will not prepare the bride for the coming of the Bridegroom. That is why Jesus declared in Matt. 24:14 that, *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached as a witness to all nations."* The nations alluded to are the Israel nations promised to Abram in Gen. 17:4-5, where God changes his name to Abraham because he is to be the *"father of many nations."* Just what would be the point in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom to heathen people and nations? They not only do not believe in our God, but there is no place in their religion for the Kingdom. And why would it be necessary to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom as a witness to Israel? I believe that the answer lies in the fact that modern preaching has supplanted the Kingdom of God with a heaven above. We have thus lost our vision and it is the kingdom message that will get Israel back on track again. It will enable us to labor in harmony with the Divine will. It should be obvious that if we are to prepare the way for our Lord's Second Coming, we must be laboring in harmony with the Divine will. Instead of getting people ready to leave the earth, we should be getting them ready to live here upon it. To be busy working for God without a proper recognition of His will, is but to fail to bring forth the fruit of the kingdom. It is to fail in occupying for Christ until He comes. It behooves us therefore to examine our ways lest we be found to fall short in our labors for Christ.