

Prepare the Way of the Lord!

Jesus honored the prophet, John the Baptist, with these words: *“Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist”*(Matthew 11:11a) John certainly did not see himself as “great” he did not see himself as worthy enough to baptize Jesus or even to carry His sandals.(Mat.3:11,14) The “greatness” that Jesus refers to concerning John has to do with John’s unique position in history. In fact, immediately after stating that John is the greatest Jesus says, *“Yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he”*

Jesus called John the Baptist the “greatest” was that John being chosen by God as the forerunner to the Messiah. The Bible tells us that he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, connected with to vow of the Nazirite as a consecrated one. The angel Gabriel had informed Zacharias that his son would be instrumental in turning many unto the Lord, going before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, making ready a people prepared for Him.(LUK1:16) John’s ministry was foretold in Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1. John’s mission was to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. John introduced Him the Messiah as the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. (Joh.1:35) John prepared the way for Christ by calling people to acknowledge their sin, repentance and their need for salvation. His baptism was a purification ceremony meant to ready the peoples’ hearts to receive their Savior.

How are we going to understand the principle of spiritual greatness? Gideon received a call from God to lead and save Israel. God does not choose the mighty and the nobles.(Judges 6:15) His eyes are upon those who are weak, who are meek and lowly of heart. Spiritual greatness has to do with the quality of spiritual life. The greatness of John the Baptist consisted in the quality of his person. And he says his most famous sentence. *He must increase, but I must decrease.*(John 3:30) Do you see the humility in John the Baptist? Meek and lowly of heart! Now, this is spiritual greatness! Remember the words of Jesus in Luke 9:48. *For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.* He who is lowly, and meek and humble, this one shall be great. In the kingdom of God, the great person is the lowly one and the way to be great is to be humble.(Mat.18:4) Why is that so? Because when you humble yourself before God, that is when God will exalt you.(James 4:10) ‘Humble yourself.’ This should be the starting point of any talk about spiritual greatness. Jesus humbled Himself to be the least in the kingdom. And that is why He is the greatest. And Jesus, who humbled Himself to be the least, is also the greatest because God the Father exalted Him. (Phil.2:8-9) *Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*(Matthew 18:4)

In Matthew 27:52-53 tells us that many of the Old Testament saints were resurrected and walked around Jerusalem. The Bible says that after Jesus died He descended into Hades to the saints who were there. It was at this time that all of these pre-Jesus saints were saved and moved to Heaven, where they now await the resurrection of their bodies. After Jesus’ death, Jesus journeys to Sheol/Hades to the City of Death, which is ‘down’ in the earth and rips its gates off the hinges. He liberates Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, John the Baptist and the rest of the Old Testament faithful saints, ransoming them from the power of Sheol. They had waited there for so long, not having received what was promised. They were held 'captive' there awaiting our Lord's atonement for them so that He could then lead them. After His resurrection, they were loosed from this “holding area”, “led a host of captives.” Jesus ascends to heaven and brings the ransomed dead with him.(Ephesians 4:8-10) Since OT saints are to occupy the kingdom of heaven.

In Matthew 11:12, the Lord Jesus speaks of the kingdom of heaven as already in actual existence. He says, *From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence.* The kingdom of God has been coming since the days of John the Baptist until now. This statement implies that the kingdom of God began to exist with the beginning of John’s ministry. In Matthew 3:1, *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.’* And then, when we read Matthew 8:11, Jesus says, *And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.* Abraham, Isaac, Jacob are in the kingdom of God and we are going to sit with them in the kingdom of heaven. Now, if those are in the kingdom of God, how can we say that John the Baptist is not in the kingdom of God? There will be different levels of honor in the kingdom of God.

Are you personally preparing for the second coming of Jesus Christ? Who is the Bride and who will be the wedding guests at the Wedding feast of the Lamb? In Mat.9:14-15, Jesus refers to himself as the Bridegroom. John the Baptist called himself the friend of the Bridegroom will be the guests with O.T. saints, and those who are called to marriage supper of the Lamb!(JOH3:29-36;REV19:9)A glorious church without a spot or wrinkle become the Bride of Christ[Lord’s true & faithful]. They are overcomers, perfect in Christ, raptured before tribulation, stand before the throne of God in heaven and the Lamb in mount Zion.(REV14:1) Christ is waiting for the Bride to be prepared and presented to Himself. Now is the time to get prepared for wedding of the Lamb, in blessed hope, dressed in white robes, pure as chaste virgin, be holy & blameless, be ready standing next to the Groom. “Halleluia! Wedding is coming soon; Groom is preparing himself, so also the Bride will rejoice at her Wedding to the Lamb at Lord’s reign.(REV19:7) Amen. come, Lord Jesus!