

## OUR PRIVILEGED POSITION

[jkroberts\\_us@yahoo.com](mailto:jkroberts_us@yahoo.com)  
[www.pacolethillsbaptist.org](http://www.pacolethillsbaptist.org)

March 7, 2021

Matthew 11:7-15

1. John the Baptist was in prison for confronting King Herod about his sinful lifestyle.
2. He had sent messengers to Jesus because he wanted to be reassured that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.
3. After speaking with, and sending away John's disciples, Jesus spoke to the multitudes present about John and declared, "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he."
4. No one can dispute the fact that John was a great man.
  - a. His birth was miraculous.
  - b. He was filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb.
  - c. His life, ministry, and message were a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.
  - d. He was God's chosen messenger to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah.
  - e. He baptized Jesus and proclaimed Him to be the Messiah, the Expected One.
5. In what sense was John greater than the prophets that preceded him?
6. No prophet before John had the privilege of seeing his prophecies related to the coming of the Messiah fulfilled in his lifetime, yet John did.
7. In what sense are those who are least in the Kingdom of Heaven greater than John the Baptist and other Old Testament saints?

### I. They possess a fuller revelation.

A. It is clear that the Old Testament writers were given great insight concerning the things of Christ. Luke 24:44-47

Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

B. It is also clear that the Old Testament writers did not possess as full a revelation as we do. 1 Peter 1:10-12

As to this salvation, the prophets **who prophesied of the grace that would come to you** made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look.

C. Shouldn't we follow their example and make careful and prayerful searches and inquiries so that we can know all that can be known?

## II. They can proclaim a more complete message.

A. John's message was true as far as it went.

B. Paul encountered some of John's disciples years later in Ephesus and found that they lacked essential information about the Holy Spirit and believer's baptism. Acts 19:1-7

It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. 2 He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." 4 Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. 7 There were in all about twelve men.

C. Note Jesus' concluding statement to the Apostles in Luke 24:48

"You are witnesses of these things (about which the Old Testament prophet could only write about). 49 "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

D. The humblest New Testament believer has access to more spiritual truth, and can proclaim a more complete message, than any of the Old Testament prophets could.

E. We need to remember that with greater privilege come greater responsibility.

F. John faithfully fulfilled his ministry; are we faithfully fulfilling ours?

## III. They, along with all true Christians who are saved during the Church Age, will constitute the Bride of Christ.

A. John the Baptist declared, John 3:27-30

"A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven. 28 "You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.' 29

"He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. 30 "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:27-30

B. John declared himself to be a friend of the bridegroom, but not a part of the Bride.

C. That privilege is reserved for those who are saved during the Church Age.

D. I believe that there will be four groups of believers in Heaven; the Old Testament saints, the Bride of Christ, the Tribulation saints, and those who embrace Jesus Christ during the Millennium.

E. Two groups are mentioned in Hebrews 12:22-24.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 **to the general assembly and church of the firstborn** (the Bride) who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and **to the spirits of the righteous made perfect**, (other believers), 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

F. Both groups will be present at the marriage supper of the Lamb, some as friends, and the rest as the Bride. Rev 19:5-10

And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great." 6 Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. 7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen,

bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God." 10 Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

## **APPLICATION**

1. Note Paul's goal in 2 Corinthians 11:1-6.

I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me.

**2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.**

3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.

5 For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles. 6 But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not so in knowledge; in fact, in every way we have made this evident to you in all things.

2. Paul's goal should be our goal on a personal level and on a shared level.
3. What are you doing to get ready for the wedding as part of the Bride?
4. What are you doing to help others to be ready?