

# Scriptural Truths

## E-Mail Meditations

The Lord Will Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

No. 54

August 2016

### The Greatest

#### Introduction

On Friday, 3rd June 2016, the man who called himself “the Greatest” and who was described by others as “the greatest of all time” died. The effects of sin within the human body reduced the once vibrant, abundant energy, bragging individual, to a helpless dying individual, and ultimately a corrupting body. Gone forever, except in videos, will an individual be able see the brilliance of his abilities. As the news of his death spread across the globe, tributes began to pour in from boxing legends and sports writers, etc. It was irrelevant that which others said or wrote about him, Ali had left this scene of time and had gone into eternity. Just as those left will never hear his voice again in real life, neither did he hear the cries of broken hearts.

I remember as a child hearing my mother sing the old hymn, “Five minutes after I die”. The words still resound like a ghostly echo across the years, words which could well be written of Ali and all who stand around the body of a loved one who has died. From that moment of death, the weeping of loved ones who stood by his bedside, he never heard, the last kiss, he never felt, the hushed murmurings never reached his ear, but the question comes, “Where is his spirit now?” I am not in a place to say where Ali is for I do not know if he ever trusted the Lord for salvation. One thing I do know is, Ali is still alive, in either Heaven or Hell.

#### Contrasting Meditation

While Ali was a very skilled and wonderful boxer, there were bouts when defeat followed him to the dressing room. Then I think of a man who never knew defeat in the greatest conflict of the ages. Of course I speak of the Lord for He, standing supreme, has showed mastery over disease (Matt. 8:3); demonic powers (Matt. 8:16); death (Jn. 11:43-44); the devil (Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8); and creation (Mk. 4:39). Without boasting or self glorification, He alone could declare: “I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33), or in triumph He cried: “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev. 1:18). He could say these truths without fear of contradiction, from personal awareness, demonic accusations, or God Himself. He is the God appointed King (Psa. 2:6; Psa. 110:2), and will be the greatest monarch who will ever rule. No czar, potentate, president, king, or emperor can ever compare with Him. Age will never restrict His energies, disease will never debilitate his body, for he is the unchangeable Lord. The writer to the Hebrews was, by the Holy Spirit, caused to write, “Thou hast anointed Him above His fellows” (Heb. 1:9), and develops the theme of the glory of the superiority of Christ over all prophets (Heb. 1:1-3); angels (Heb. 1:4-6; 2:5-6); peers (Heb. 1:9); creation (Heb. 1:10-11); Adam (Heb. 2:6-9); Moses (Heb. 3:3); Jesus (the name “Jesus” in this instance refers to “Joshua” and it was Joshua who led the children of Israel into their earthly rest (Heb. 4:8); and Aaron (Heb. 5:1-6). He holds a more glorious priesthood than any other, is a greater shepherd than any other,

and lives in the power of an indissoluble life. Irrespective of who the Lord is compared with, He stands unique, without peer, and will eternally be “The Greatest”.

Matthews records three times when the Lord declares He is greater. Boldly the Lord makes these three statements concerning Himself: “ One greater than the temple” is here (Matt. 12:6); “A greater than Jonas (Jonah) is here” (Matt 12:41); and “A greater than Solomon is here” (Matt. 12:42).

### 1) Christ is Greater than the Temple

The superiority of the Lord over the temple is manifested in several ways. He is greater in:

#### a) His Perpetually:

i) The Lord is greater than the Temple, for the temple in which the Lord stood as was a replacement of the one previously destroyed, and the one the Lord stood in was destroyed in AD 70. In contrast to those, the temple of the Lord’s body will never be destroyed. The Lord prophesied, “Destroy this temple (speaking of His body), and in three days I will raise it up” (Jn. 2:19).

#### b) His Purity:

i) The temple was corrupted by man making it a place of merchandise and not of openness for prayer for all nations (Matt. 21:12-13). The body of the Lord was never defiled by man. The casual nonchalant attitude of the people never affected His zeal for God, the language of the common man never defiled His holy mind, the lust of the men never contaminated His spirit, soul or body. The Lord was holy at birth (Lk. 1:35); when bearing our sins, the sin offering was most holy (Lev. 6:25); in the tomb (Acts 2:27); and now as our High priest (Heb. 7:26).

#### c) His Power:

i) The temple was a magnificent building but despite all the God given rituals and ceremonies within its walls, it could never give the guilty conscience peace or remove the condemnation of sin. It was a cold lifeless building without power. In contrast, the power of the Lord is the power of a living man who, by His sacrifice, has provided a once for all sacrifice (Heb. 10:10) which cleanses from all sin (1 Jn. 1:7-10); is an eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12); being a superior priest He functions in a superior place (Heb. 9:11); and by an oath from God is a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 7:21).

#### d) His Preparation:

- i) Man built the temple but it was God who prepared a body for the Lord (Heb. 10:5).
- ii) The body of our Lord was so like every other human and yet so very different. He was made in the “likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3); “took part of flesh and blood” (Heb. 2:14), but unlike every other human being, His was a body which was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of a virgin. He alone was holy and void of any internal sin or distortedness due to sin. Prophetically He could say, “Thou art He that took me out of the womb” (Psa. 22:9; 71:6). There has been four types of manhood on the earth:
1. Adam was innocent man
  2. Then after partaking of the forbidden fruit and since then, with the exception of the Lord, all have been fallen manhood
  3. The believer today is redeemed man
  4. But the Lord was holy humanity. Of Him alone it could be said, “That holy thing which shall be born of thee” (Lk. 1:35).

### 2) Greater than Jonas

#### a) General contrasts:

- i) Jonah disobeyed the Lord, the Lord never did. He was greater than Jonah in His obedience (Jon. 1:1-3; Heb. 10:9; Jn. 8:29).
- ii) Jonah tried to leave the people of Nineveh in their sins by disobeying the Lord, and under the condemnation of God, the Lord came to save individuals from the penalty of their sins (Jon. 1:3; Matt. 1:21).
- iii) Jonah was angry at God for removing the sheltering gourd from himself and providing shelter for the people of Nineveh (Jon. 4:1-2; 6-11).

#### b) The Lord’s specific contrast:

- i) The contrast the Lord made, the typical resurrection by Jonah, and literal resurrection by the Lord (Jon. 2:10; Matt. 12:39, 40, 41).

### 3) Greater than Solomon

#### a) General contrasts:

- i) The Lord had commanded the rulers of Israel not to multiply wives or horses. Solomon disobeyed the commands of the Lord (Deut. 17:16-17).
- ii) Solomon was compared to the lilies of the field in clothing (Matt. 6:29) and how glorious it was, but the clothing of the Lord is more precious and moral.
  1. His literal clothing:
    - (a) As a baby He was wrapped in swaddling clothes (Lk. 2:7, 12)
    - (b) As a dead man He was wrapped in grave clothes (Jn. 20:6-7)
    - (c) Poetically it was said of Him, all His garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia (Psa. 45:8)

#### b) The Lord's specific contrast:

- i) Christ is greater in wisdom. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). Men were astonished at the wisdom with which He spoke (Matt. 13:54).

There are three times in the book of Isaiah when God gives a challenge to all others. He asks the question: "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? (Isa. 40:18). He will say basically the same words in Isaiah 40:25 and 46:5. The answer of course is that God is absolutely beyond comparison.

The person of our Lord Jesus Christ surpasses all others who have gone before irrespective of what position they may have. His moral glory and mediating grace, His perfection of power is throughout the ages without equal.

There is combined in Him the protections of sympathy, sufficiency, and superiority, all of which are uncurtailed and cannot be described in any way.

As the chief Shepherd's love, His care for His sheep excels all other shepherds. As the wisdom of God, His knowledge and understanding surpasses all other directors and educators.

Because of the virtue of concept, He was exclusively able to offer himself to be a sacrifice for sin, and having procured salvation, He assures that the individual has peace with God, acceptability with God, approachability to God, and eternal redemption. As we gaze on the Lord we can truly say, "He is the Greatest".

... Rowan Jennings

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