



## THE NAZARETH PRECEDENT

As in all things, there are gradations.

Levels; strata; rank. Ways to evaluate not just how proficient one is at something, but the ensign that shows others how much they have achieved.

In Christianity, it is the same—without the labels. It would be better that we had them: Christian First Class, Second Class, etc.—then we might have an incentive to be better Christians not only in the sight of our fellow humans, but in our own sight.

There is a difference between practicing Christianity, and actually being a Christian—there really is.

This may make some uncomfortable, but it is the truth. You can practice Christianity with your mind alone (as is evidenced by those who make more than occasional forays into legalism), and you can BE a Christian: strive to be like Christ, emulate Him in your life, think as you believe he would, do as you believe He would—from the power of your heart and soul, perfected by your mind.

When you reach a certain level of being Christian, you feel the undoubtable urge to take the word out; to go into the Hollow Lands; to take the Long March; to engage those in the Valley Of Shadows—in the Name Of Christ. As a soldier; a worker; a bondservant who toils for the Cross.

This level may be reached later in life—and if it is I am issuing a warning to you: do not be negatively swayed or deterred by those who knew you earlier in your quantum path. Some of them may still be young Christians; some may be oppositional to you, or the faith; some may be ego-involved, wishing they were partaking of the task of the Great Commission that you have elected to perform.

Case in point: the Nazareth experience of Jesus Christ—and hence the phrase, “a prophet is never accepted in his own country.” When Christ dealt with fellow Nazarenes, He often found it necessary to endure the comments of those who remembered Him as a carpenter; who did not believe that He could be Who he was now; who wanted Him to prove Himself—and he refused them.

He made statements—and I paraphrase—that “Even if you do not believe in Me, believe in the work that I do...” He was vilified by the Pharisees for telling the truth; He was eventually killed by the Romans because He accurately said He was the Son Of God—God Incarnate. A note to all you soldiers: be prepared to have chilly receptions by some jointly, severally, and individually when you tell them the truth. Sometimes, people can't handle the truth—especially from a fellow countryman they knew as a child who now professes to come in the Name Of The Lord.. Don't quit; don't despair; don't seek reprisal; don't lose your focus.

March on, soldier—push on; prevail; endure; run the race to the end; even when those around you are not on YOUR side—they still need you; they are slaves to sin, blinded by the adversary; captives of their humanity, and you must still carry on—because you are on the LORD's side...

You are His; you represent Him; you are called according to His riches in glory; you are set upon a High place; you are called out and peculiar; you have a destiny which is manifest; you cannot be overcome by the adversary's means; you cannot be possessed, or oppressed, beyond your ability to endure; you have power to do the “greater” things Jesus referred to, and He has put you in this place—a place prepared for you in the presence of what might be your enemies, because it is them that you have come to set free. And with the Holy Spirit guiding you, in spite of themselves, you will lead them out of darkness into the light!

