

ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

In all wisdom and prudence making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him the plan for the fullness of the times

**TO HEAD UP THE ALL THINGS IN THE CHRIST,
the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, in Him...**

(Ephesians 1:8b-10)

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Article #36

Who Has Stood in the Council of the Lord?

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Each year I ask the Lord for a word for the year, and He has faithfully given me one, sometimes two. One of the words given for 2012 is Jeremiah 23:18: **"But who has stood in the council of the LORD, that he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened?"**

Before getting into the meaning of this verse, especially the word *council*, some background is in order.

Around 931-930 BC, the **United Kingdom of Israel** was split into two kingdoms, **Judah (holder of the scepter, representative of the King)** and **Israel (holder of the birthright, representative of the Kingdom)**. This was brought about because Solomon had turned his heart from the Lord (1 Kings 11:9-11). Unfortunately, it did not take very long for the houses of Judah and Israel to turn from the Lord as well, leading to the Lord's judgment upon both houses. Jeremiah was raised up to speak to Judah as they were about to enter into an iron-yoke judgment in 604 BC at the hands of the Babylonians. Israel had already entered into their iron-yoke judgment in 745-721 BC at the hands of the Assyrians.

The whole of Jeremiah chapter 23 speaks encouragement and warning. The encouragement was the fact that God was going to raise up for David **a righteous Branch**, namely, the Lord Jesus, **"the Lord our righteousness,"** as well as shepherds to tend His flock. God's Branch will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness. Praise God!

However, most of the chapter is directed to the many false prophets that had arisen in both Israel and Judah. The land had become full of adulterers who were walking in falsehood. Even the prophets and the priests had become polluted. The prophets were accused of speaking "a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord." They were saying "Peace" and "Calamity will not come upon you." It is in this context that the question was asked.

Apart from Jeremiah and like-minded prophets, there was no one among the so-called prophets that was standing in the council of the Lord to see, hear, and heed His word. Simply, no one was standing in the council of the Lord to receive and know His word. If they had, they would have known their true condition before the Lord instead of living according to the lie that they were God's chosen, and, simply because of their bloodline, they could get away with all sorts of abominations and the Lord would not see it or care about it.

This raises the question: What does this have to do with us today? Surely, the Lord's people are not worshipping Baal as ancient Israel did. Further, we are living in the day which was spoken of through the prophets that the Lord's people would prophesy and be given visions and dreams (Acts 2:17). Yet even further, one could argue that the church is being continually immersed in God's Word through all sorts of media. In fact, there seems to be no lack for the word of the Lord going forth to believers. Surely, we cannot be in the same condition as ancient Judah was in Jeremiah's day.

Let us not be so quick to glory in our day, for perhaps it is not much different from Jeremiah's day. Are we so sure that we have no idols of the heart? Further, are we not surrounded by many prophets, both true and false, both in the world and in the church? Keep in mind that, in its broadest sense, a prophet is simply a spokesman for some cause, group, movement, etc, or one who sees things, both now and in the future. A true prophet of God sees from God's perspective and speaks for God, contemporaneously (the now) and predicatively (the future).

In the world, there is a countless number of secular prophets; ones that could be called **media prophets**, for they peddle their so-called "expert opinions, analyses, and predictions" through the many media outlets of our day. Just as Babylon was overrun by the Medes, so are we being overrun by the Media (play on words). Surely, many of them are false prophets as they spin truth and lies together to sell their "intellectual property."

In the church, there is a countless number of prophets and other voices purportedly speaking for God according to His Spirit and in conformance with His Word. However, in aggregate, there seems to be much contradiction in what is being sent forth across the spectrum of Christian media. The word that often comes to me as I listen to it is *babel*, which means "confusion."

With so many voices speaking for God in our day and so many other voices trying to refute and subvert God and His character, even His ways, His plan, and His purpose, it is truly a very dangerous day. We need to be reminded that the Lord Jesus, along with Peter and John, warned of false prophets as well as false teachers (Matthew 7:15; 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; Luke 6:26; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1). To this we could add Paul's exhortation to beware of the character of men in the last days, evil men and imposters, deceiving and being deceived (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3). However, we must also guard against the **tradition of men** (Mark 7:8; Colossians 2:8) and the **systematizing of the deception** (deceitful scheming) that Paul warned about (Ephesians 4:14).

Dear brethren, we are living in the midst of Mystery Babylon. It is a day of confusion (*Babel*). What are we to do? How are we to navigate our way through this time, conquering all the more? The answer lies in Jeremiah's question in verse 18: ***Who has stood in the council of the Lord?*** But more specifically, it lies in the spiritual meaning and symbology of the Hebrew word from which the English word *council* is derived. There are three layers of meaning. The first is the definitional meaning of the Hebrew word. The second is the meaning of the three Hebrew letters that make up the word. The third is the gematria of the word and its signification.

Council Signifies Intimacy and a Secret

The word *council* or *counsel* (varies by translation) comes from the Hebrew word *sod*. According to Strong's Concordance, *sod* (H5475) refers to "a *session*, that is, **company of persons (in close deliberation); by implication intimacy, consultation, a secret.**" *Sod* comes from the primitive root word *yasad* (H3245), which means "to *set* (literally or figuratively); intensively to *found*; reflexively to *sit* down together, that is, *settle, consult.*" Interestingly, Webster's English Dictionary states that an archaic meaning is "**wisdom; shrewd judgment,**" and an obsolete meaning is "**a confidential idea, plan; a secret.**"

There are two concepts built into the word *council*. The first and, by far, the most important is the concept of **intimacy**. Specifically, it is about coming into personal intimacy with the Lord, to know the secrets of His heart, to know His plan and purpose, to receive His wisdom, His thoughts, and His judgment of things on earth. It implies coming into the secret chamber of the Lord's heart.

Personally, I liken it to being in the very thumping heartbeat of God, not just hearing His heartbeat but being caught up in the very beat of God's heart. It is moving up and down with the very muscle of the heart of God, metaphorically speaking. Can you think of anything greater than being in this type of intimacy?

Mind you, coming into His council is not an exclusive invitation, as if it were only for a few select people of God. In his discourse with his friends, Job was questioned by Eliphaz on this very ground: "**Do you hear the secret counsel [sod] of God, and limit wisdom to yourself?**" (Job 15:8). No; this is for all who desire to hear His voice (word) and to heed it. "**The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant**" (Psalm 25:14).

We all need to be drawn into intimacy with the Lord to hear the voice of the love of our life in order to share His life and His thoughts with others, both within and without His Body. In contrast, given the evil of our day, we need hearts that cry out like David: "**Hide me from the secret counsel [sod] of evildoers, from the tumult of those who do iniquity**" (Psalm 64:2).

The second concept built into the word *council* is that of "a secret" or, as some translations state, a "mystery." In several of his epistles, Paul referred to the secret or mystery (e.g., the mystery of the gospel, the mystery of Christ, and the revelation of the mystery).

The Hebrew word *sod* in itself speaks of the very secret or mystery of God. Another way to state this is that when we come into the very council of the Lord, we learn of His mystery, the mystery relating to His plan and, most importantly, God's ultimate purpose. He takes us into His confidence and reveals His plan and purpose, which leads to the next layer of meaning.

Council is the Person of the Lord Jesus

The word *sod* is comprised of three Hebrew letters.

Hebrew	Numeric Value	Literal Meaning	Symbolic Meaning
Daleth	4	Door	Pathway, to enter
Vav	6	Nail	"And," to add, secure, hook
Samech	60	A prop	Support, to turn

A *door* signifies a pathway or a way to go, which could signify a *plan*. A *nail* signifies that the plan is *secure*; it is nailed down, so to speak. A *prop* could have several meanings. According to Webster's Dictionary, as a noun, it could mean 1) a rigid support, as a beam, stake or pole, placed under or against a structure; 2) **a person who is one of the main supports of an enterprise**. As a verb, it means to support, hold up, or hold in place.

Taken together, these three Hebrew letters speak not of a thing but of the Person of our Lord Jesus. He is **the Door** (John 10:9). He who was **nailed to a cross** is the same One who secures the salvation of all mankind (1 Timothy 4:10). He is the entire enterprise, so to speak. He is the one who **upholds** (holds up, props up) **all things by the word of His power** (Hebrews 1:3).

Also, notice that *vav* refers to the conjunction *and*. Is Jesus not the *and* of all things; that is, is He not the Alpha *and* the Omega, the First *and* the Last, the Beginning *and* the End? Is He not the One who is *and* who was *and* who is to come?

In other words, when we come into the council of the Lord, we come into the very One who is the Word. It is more than coming into words, it is coming into the Word Himself to see and hear Him. It is about seeing Jesus and hearing His voice and abiding in Him. It is about being intimate with Him, being in His intimate Presence. It is about a face-to-face, heart-to-heart, heart-thumping encounter with the Lord. It is about seeing Him, hearing Him, knowing Him, and experiencing Him.

Council Signifies the Number 70

The third layer of meaning is discovered in the gematria or sum total of the Hebrew letters for the word *sod*. Daleth (4), vav (6), and samech (60) total to the number 70. Numbers in Scripture have meaning, and the number 70 is significant in regard to God's plan for the nations and for all things in heaven and on earth. It is the number of restoration and universality.

In the Hebrew alphabet, the number 70 is assigned to the letter *ayin*, which literally means "eye" and symbolically means to "see, know, or experience."

Also, the number 70 is made up of the number 7 and the number 10. The number **7** signifies **spiritual perfection**, and the number **10** signifies **ordinal completion of a series** or **perfection of divine order**. Thus, both numbers signify perfection or, we could say, completeness.

In the book *Number in Scripture*, E.W. Bullinger states that "7 x 10 signifies perfect spiritual order and carried out with all spiritual power and significance. Both spirit and power are greatly emphasized."

To further understand the number 70, let us consider some places in Scripture where it appears.

The first mention is discovered with the descendants of Shem, Japheth, and Ham that repopulated the earth after the flood. Adding up the descendants of Noah as recorded in Genesis 10 reveals that there were 70 of them, signifying 70 nations.

The house of Jacob that entered Egypt numbered 70, and from this group eventually came the nation of Israel.

(26) All the persons belonging to Jacob, who came to Egypt, his direct descendants, not including the wives of Jacob's sons, were sixty-six persons in all, (27) and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were seventy. (Genesis 46:26-27 NASB)

When the Lord delivered the sons of Israel from Egypt and led them into the wilderness under the leadership of Moses, God gave Moses the command to choose 70 elders to help him judge the people.

The LORD therefore said to Moses, "Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you." (Numbers 11:16 NASB)

Later and after Solomon's United Kingdom of Israel was split into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, Judah was given the **iron yoke** of judgment (Jeremiah 28:13-14) and sent into Babylonian captivity for 70 years, which was also the length of years for the Babylonian monarchy. With the end of the 70 years, Judah was allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city and its temple (Jeremiah 25:11, 12; Daniel 9:2; Zechariah 7:5).

The Lord told Daniel that 70 weeks were set for his people to finish the transgression.

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*. (Daniel 9:24 NASB)

These 70 weeks were actually 490 (7 x 70) years that ended with the crucifixion of Jesus in 33 AD. The last week or 7 years of Daniel's 70 weeks occurred from 26-33 AD. Jesus began His ministry in the midst of the week in 29 AD when He went to John for baptism on the Day of Atonement. This is when He presented Himself for ministry and made an end to sin, which was fully consummated at the Cross.

A bit more obscure reference to the number 70 is discovered in the **Feast of Tabernacles**. As a reminder, this feast is a type of the sons of God being manifested in glorified, spiritual, celestial, immortal bodies (new tabernacles) which commissions them to reign with Christ on earth and in heaven for 1,000 years in what is called the Kingdom Age or the Tabernacles Age.

During the 7-day Feast of Tabernacles that the sons of Israel celebrated each year, starting on the 15th day of the 7th month, they were required to present a specific number of bulls as burnt offerings.

(12) 'Then on the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work, and you shall observe a feast to the LORD for seven days. (13) 'You shall present a burnt offering, an offering by fire as a soothing aroma to the LORD: thirteen bulls.... (17) 'Then on the second day: twelve bulls.... (20) 'Then on the third day: eleven bulls.... (32) 'Then on the seventh day: seven bulls.... (Numbers 29:12-32 NASB)

Notice that on the first day, they sacrificed 13 bulls, and on the second day, they sacrificed 12 bulls. Each day they reduced the number of bulls to be sacrificed by one until on the 7th day they sacrificed 7 bulls. There were a total of 70 bulls sacrificed over this 7-day period.

Drawing from Genesis 10, the Jewish Talmud saw these 70 bulls as representative of the number of the nations, 70, in the world. Thus, the purpose of these sacrifices during the Feast of Tabernacles was to appeal to God for the **restoration of all the nations** of the world, to restore them back to God. They were doing this with full knowledge of God's heart as revealed through His prophets.

Jesus, who is the fulfillment of all the prophets, confirmed this when He sent out 70 of His disciples into the harvest of the world, He did this as a sign that it is God's plan to restore all the nations. God plans to harvest (i.e., restore) all the nations to Himself through His Son who has the power to subject all things to Himself (1 Corinthians 15:25-28; Philippians 3:21).

Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. (Luke 10:1 NASB)

Later, Peter reminded the men of Israel of the restoration of all things as spoken by God through the ancient prophets.

(19) "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; (20) and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, (21) whom heaven must receive until *the* period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. (Acts 3:19-21 NASB)

Notice how Peter expanded the restoration to all things, not just the nations. Of all the apostles, Paul most often used the comprehensive Greek phrase ***ta panta* or *the all***, commonly translated as ***all things***. I have written much on this subject, so it won't be repeated here. Nevertheless, consider some of the encouragement given to us by Paul.

(19) For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, (20) and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven. (Colossians 1:19-20 NASB)

(25) For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. (26) The last enemy that will be abolished is death. (27) For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. (1 Corinthians 15:25-27 NASB)

And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church.... (Ephesians 1:22 NASB)

Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Philippians 3:21 NASB)

Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. (1 Corinthians 8:6 NASB)

(16) For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. (17) He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:16-17 NASB)

(9) He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him (10) with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. (Ephesians 1:9-10 NASB)

He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) (Ephesians 4:10 NASB)

These are but a few verses that speak of God's plan to head up or sum up all things in His Son in order to achieve His ultimate purpose: **So that God may be all in all, making all things new** (1 Corinthians 15:28; Revelation 21:5), for **From Him and through Him and to Him are all things** (Romans 11:36). God is not counting the world's trespasses against them (2 Corinthians 5:19); He plans to restore not only all the nations, as representative of the number 70, but all things. God's plan is being and will be worked out through Christ and His Body, **the complement of the One completing the all in all** (Ephesians 1:23 CV). This is the true calling of the Ecclesia.

Dear beloved in Christ, the Holy Spirit is asking a question of God's people. Who? Who is standing in the council of the Lord? But, it is more than a question; it is an invitation to enter into the council of the Lord, to come into intimacy with the Lord to hear the secrets of His heart. It is about abiding in Christ, that is, making home in Him, having a heart-to-heart relationship with a hearing ear that leads to obedience.

Another way to state this is that it is about having a seeing, listening, heeding, obeying, and loving heart.

When we enter into His council, the love of our life will reveal to us and seal in our hearts the most intimate desire of His heart, which is to restore all things back to the Father so that God may be all in all. However, it is much more than restoration as if to simply clean up the old. When God is all in all, all things *are* new. Hallelujah!