

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

**IN CHRIST JESUS.**

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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## THE OUTER DARKNESS

**And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping [lamentation] and the gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 8.11-12 ASV [CV])**

**“And I tell you that many will come from the east and from the west and will recline at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of the Heavens [the reign of the heavens], while the natural heirs of the Kingdom will be driven out into the darkness outside: there will be the weeping aloud and the gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 8.11-12 WNT [YLT])**

Many interpretations have been written about the outer darkness and the weeping and gnashing of teeth, including to whom this refers and when it occurs. Some see the outer darkness as a literal place that will exist during the millennial kingdom. This thought is reinforced by the translations that translate the Greek word *ekei* as *place* rather than as *there*. Thus, in the outer darkness, there will be weeping or wailing and gnashing of teeth. The word *weeping* is used in most translations, but the word *lamentation* more aptly conveys the depth of sorrow. The word *lament* means “to break forth into sobs and ejaculations of sorrow.” The phrase *gnashing of teeth* refers to the act of grinding or striking the teeth together. Consequently, the thought conveyed is that of deep sorrow.

According to the Lord Jesus, as recorded in the above verses, the outer darkness is in relation to *the kingdom of the heavens* or, as the *Young's Literal Translation* puts it, *the reign of the heavens*, which refers to the rule of Christ coming to the earth, not to a people leaving the earth and “going up to heaven.” Consequently, the outer darkness also refers to who will not enter the coming kingdom. Simply, those who are not allowed to enter the kingdom will be outside the kingdom, which is likened to darkness or darkness outside the realm of the kingdom.

So, who will be excluded? Most translations tell us the sons of the kingdom will be excluded, which sounds rather strange since sonship is about entering the kingdom to reign with Christ. The *Weymouth New Translation* clears up all confusion by describing the sons of the kingdom as the natural heirs of the kingdom, which refers to the blood descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Paul described such ones as his kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises (Romans 9.3-4). In other words, Jesus was speaking to His kinsmen according to the flesh (Romans 9.5), some of whom, but not all, will not enter His millennial kingdom on earth.

So, the next question is: Why will they, that is, some of the natural Israelites, be excluded from His kingdom? Because they rejected Him as Messiah! They refused to believe that the One who stood in their midst is the Messiah and Savior of the world. *Yahshua*, which means “salvation,” came to save His people from their sins; but many, due to the hypocrisy and lawlessness of their religious leaders, rejected Him and even demanded His crucifixion (Acts 3.14-15). Further proof of this rejection is discovered in Jesus' parable of the wedding feast in which an invitation went forth to the wedding feast. Some of the invited were unwilling to come, others were more interested in their own affairs, and yet others turned on the king's slaves and killed them. This enraged the king, so he sent his armies and destroyed the murderers and set their city on fire (Matthew 22.7-8), which refers to 70 AD when the Roman army destroyed the old city of Jerusalem. The parable concludes:

**“But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?’ And the man was speechless. “Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ “For many are called, but few are chosen.”**  
(Matthew 22:11-14 NASB)

The one who came into the wedding feast thought he had a right to be there, but he was mistaken, for he was not dressed for the occasion. He was speechless. Why? Because he thought just because he was a blood relative of the king’s family, he had a right to be included. In other words, he was a natural heir of the kingdom, and on this ground alone, he claimed his right. But through His parable, the Lord Jesus declared that being kinsmen of His is not enough, for all who come to the wedding feast must believe on Him as Messiah. If they reject Him, no matter what their pedigree or bloodline, they will be excluded.

The parable of a nobleman who went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself clearly explains the rejection and the consequences of such unbelief (Luke 19:12-27). The nobleman is God’s King, the Lord Jesus. Some of His citizens, which refer to the natural heirs, hated Him and sent a delegation after Him, saying, “We do not want this man (that is, Jesus) to reign over us.” This was a prophetic word, for when Pilate presented Jesus to the chief priests by declaring, **“Behold, your King!”** they cried out, **“Away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him. We have no king but Caesar”** (John 19:14-15). Thus, the parable concludes: **“But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.”** Forty years after their rejection of the Messiah, the natural heirs found themselves in great tribulation as their entire religious system crumbled and the temple centered in ancient Jerusalem was totally destroyed by the Roman armies; many were killed, and the survivors scattered. They entered into the outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing. But it does not end here, for since Calvary, we could say that all the natural heirs who have rejected Messiah Yahshua are in the outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing. Today, there are many who see the state of Israel in the Middle East as the chosen people and nation of God. How could this be? They have rejected and continue to reject the true Messiah. Who can deny that the ones given the promises through their ancient fathers have been in deep sorrow throughout the centuries?

T. Austin-Sparks, in *God’s New Israel*, Chapter 3 - *The Foundation Law of God’s New Israel*, states:

That first Israel is not now in blessing, nor in life, nor is it in the Divine vocation. It is where the Lord Jesus said it would be if it rejected him – in outer darkness, where there would be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and for these many centuries the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem has fulfilled that prophecy! Why is that? There is one little fragment of Scripture which is tremendous but it has a terrible statement in it: **“The covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake”** (Jeremiah 31:32). Israel broke the covenant of separation and distinctiveness.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, European visitors to Palestine noticed that the Jews would assemble before the western wall of the remnants of the Temple Mount and mourn over their fallen condition and the loss of their temple. They referred to it as “the Wailing Place.” Interestingly, those who call themselves Jews in our day do not call it the Wailing Wall but simply the Western Wall. Why? Because since the Israeli capture of Jerusalem in the Six-Day War of 1967, the Israelites no longer see any reason to wail. How sad! They are in the outer darkness and they do not know it, and they will remain there until at the name of Yahshua (Jesus), they bow the knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11). Either they will do it in this day or at the great white throne of the second resurrection. Until then, they will know weeping and wailing.

May their eyes be opened to the truth of the good news of Messiah Yahshua!