

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 STARS

And many of the sleepers in the dusty ground shall awake, these shall be to age-abiding life, but those to reproach and age-abiding abhorrence; and they who make wise shall shine like the shining expanse, and they who bring the many to righteousness like the stars to times age-abiding and beyond. (Daniel 12.2-3 REB)

The title I have selected for this issue does not directly refer to the celestial host that we see when we look up into the sky at night. It refers specifically to the righteous who will bring the many unto righteousness.

Today, the word *star* is generally used in reference to people. It can refer to heroes and people who do great things, or it can refer to celebrities, such as Hollywood stars, who may or may not do anything of great value except to entertain others and make a lot of money. But do you realize that God will have a whole company of stars, of super heroes?

The angel of the Lord appeared to Daniel and revealed a vision pertaining to the days yet future (Daniel 10.14), and then he explained to Daniel the truth without revealing the full outcome of events described to him (Daniel 11.2; 12.9).

Now, verse 3, quoted above, caught my attention as I meditated on this matter, and I believe that it reveals something quite profound.

Daniel 12.2 refers to the general resurrection of all the dead that will rise to appear before the great white throne at the end of the millennial reign of Christ. This is in keeping with the Hebrew expectation of a general resurrection of the righteous and the wicked on the last day, which refers to the last day of the seven days or 7,000 years allotted for our current earth. When we come to the New Testament, we discover that the Jews continued to hold to this expectation. In response to Jesus stating that Lazarus would rise again, Martha said: **“I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day”** (John 11.24 NASB). We could say that her response was representative of the view held by the Jews in that day, which is how the Hebrew prophets viewed it.

I have quoted from *Rotherham's Emphasized Bible* because Rotherham more appropriately translated the Hebrew word *olam* as *age-abiding* instead of the common rendering *forever* or *everlasting*, meaning the reproach will have no end. *Age-abiding* or *eonian* as translated in the *Concordant Version* means that the resurrection is unto eonian life or life in the eons (ages), which places a limit of time on it. It does not refer to what many call eternal life, although the resurrection to life does refer to immortal life. If you have read and grasped some of my other writings, you know that I see Scripture teaching us the restoration and reconciliation of **all things** and not the destruction or annihilation of **most things**, especially mankind created in the image of *Elohim*. The purpose and plan of the eons is all about bringing **all things** in heaven and on the earth under the Headship of Christ (Ephesians 1.10), so that God the Father may be *All in all* at the consummation of the eons when death has been abolished (see 1 Corinthians 15). This is the absolute and 100% success and glory of the cross. Christ's victory over sin and death is an absolute success that engulfs all mankind and all creation, to the glory of God.

Two other translations are presented in order to grasp the great meaning of Daniel 12.3.

“Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” (Daniel 12.3 NASB)

And those teaching do shine as the brightness of the expanse, and those justifying the multitude as stars to the age and for ever. (Daniel 12.3 YLT)

Simply, this is what I saw: The ones resurrected to life, eonian and immortal life, will shine like the stars above. They will receive their dwelling from heaven in the resurrection, which is a celestial and spiritual body in the image of Christ (Philippians 3.21; 1 John 3.2b). As Paul wrote, if there is a natural or soulish body, then there is also a spiritual body. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly or Celestial (see 1 Corinthians 15.42-49). As Jesus declared in His parables of the word of the kingdom, the righteous, the sons of the kingdom, will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matthew 13.38, 43). All of these images speak of stars shining brightly like the expanse of heaven.

But here is the profound discovery. What will these stars be doing? According to the angel of the Lord, they will be leading the many to righteousness or, as *Young's Literal Translation* states, justifying the multitude as stars, which refers to a great many in number. In other words, the stars of the resurrection of life will lead the many of the resurrection of judgment (reproach) to righteousness or justification through faith. Their job will be to lead the many to life, not eternal damnation or annihilation. They have been given life to beget more life. They have been given life to bring life to all creation through Christ, not through themselves. After all, they are the complement or the fullness of the One (Christ) who is completing the all in all, which is in accord with the purpose of the eons (see Ephesians 1.22-23).

Paul exhorted the Corinthians: **Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?** (1 Corinthians 6.2 NASB). This judgment is not for condemnation or eternal punishment but for the purpose of leading them to righteousness, so that they too, one day, will be like the stars shining in the expanse. I have written elsewhere on the matter, but the lake of fire is not a torture chamber of endless flame; rather, it is the fiery law of God going forth from the throne of God that is ablaze with flames, which speaks of His divine law going forth to judge and to restore. The river of fire that Daniel saw emanating from the throne of God forms a lake in which to engulf the multitudes found wanting in the judgment. The saints are the ones who will administer this judgment, just as the angels administer the judgment of God in our day. But the purpose is to lead them to righteousness or, we could say, the righteousness of Christ, so that they too, one day, will shine forth in the kingdom of God and enter onto the holy ground of the holy city, Jerusalem, the dwelling of God *in spirit*. All must be justified by faith, and the righteous will lead the many to this justification through the fiery law which is like a tutor to lead them to Christ. How do we know this is true?

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5.18-19 NASB)

According to Paul, all men are condemned through one transgression, but all men are justified through one act of righteousness. **The many** refers to all men (men and women). Thus, the many means all mankind are sinners and all mankind will be made righteous. All are destined to shine brightly as the heavenly expanse, and the ones resurrected to life are destined to lead the rest of mankind to righteousness.

Think about it!