

# 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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## ***IF I AM LIFTED UP***

**“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw [or, drag] all to Myself.” But this He was saying signifying by what sort of death He was about to die. (John 12.32-33 ALT)**

**And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will make all men come to me. This he said, pointing to the sort of death he would have. (John 12.32-33 BBE)**

It seems that today there are many things lifted up from the pulpits of Christendom. I have listened to some preaching that had little to do with the one Person that is to be lifted up and then, at the end of the message, the preacher gave an invitation for people to be saved. Often, I have been left scratching my head, wondering how anyone could ever get saved when the Lord was never lifted up in the message. It makes me wonder what one is being saved into, in response to such an invitation. Thank God, the Holy Spirit is not hindered by man's inadequacy or even error.

With so many things emphasized amongst the Lord's people, we must not lose sight of the one thing, and that is lifting up our Lord Jesus Christ. We can talk or preach about many things, but let us never forget the one thing.

Let us be like David who wrote: **One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple** (Psalm 27.4 NASB). He sought to behold the beauty of the Lord and to be in His presence. There is nothing greater than this. Or, let us be like Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, when she sat at the feet of the Lord, listening to His words. Jesus commended her for gazing upon Him: **“But only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her”** (Luke 10.42 NASB).

Let us lift up our Lord in a day in which many things are being lifted up, for the day is coming when there will be only one name lifted up over the earth.

Now, I want to consider Jesus' declaration as He pointed to the sort of death He would have. Of course, He was lifted up and impaled on stakes of wood to die for the sin of the world. But there is something tremendous in His declaration that seems to be lost in much preaching today. Oh, His words are often quoted, but the depth of their meaning is often not fully understood.

When Jesus declared that if He were lifted up He would draw all men to Himself, He meant exactly what He said. In other words, if He died on the cross of Calvary for the sin of the world, which He most definitely did, then He would literally draw all men to Himself. He did not elaborate on how He will do this or when He will do this, but He declared that He would do it. I believe He spoke of the victory that He was about to win and did win for all mankind at Calvary.

The word *draw* literally means “to drag.” In the Greek, this word is *helkuo*, which appears eight times in the New Testament Greek text (John 6.44; 12.32; 18.10; 21.6; 21.11; Acts 16.19; 21.30; James 2.6).

To understand the meaning of this declaration, we need to see it in the light of another word the Lord declared to His disciples.

**“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws [drags] him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”** (John 6.44 NASB)

Again, the word *draw* comes from the same Greek word meaning “to drag.” Thus, the dragging starts with the Father. He drags people to His Son. But notice that the Lord said that He would drag all men to Himself, and the word *all* is an inclusive word that means “everybody.” In other words, it is the Father’s will to drag all mankind to His Son and His Son’s will to drag all mankind to Himself. This is in accord with other Scripture, particularly: **For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth** (1 Timothy 2.3-4 KJV). Notice that God will have all men to be saved. It does not state all men might be saved, or probably will be saved, or that God wishes all men to be saved, although some translations word it as such, but that God **wills** for all men to be saved.

Through Isaiah the prophet, God declared: **“My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure”** (Isaiah 46.10 NASB). If God wills that all men are to be saved and thus He will drag all men to His Son, do we think that He will not accomplish what He has willed?

Now, some might agree but also argue that this dragging is for entering either heaven or hell. If you have read much of what I have written, you will realize that I reject man’s concept of *hell* as a place of literal fire into which the lost are cast to be tortured forever and ever. I don’t have the space to go into this so I refer you to my book, *The Purpose and Plan of the Eons*, especially Volume 2.

Jesus declared that all that the Father drags to Him, He will raise up on the last day. For years, I thought this referred to the end of our present eon, but I have since come to see that this last day refers to the end of the millennial reign of Christ when all the dead that were not raised in the first or *out-resurrection* will be raised in the second resurrection to appear before the great white throne, or what Jesus called the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment, and Paul called the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. For further understanding of this subject, I refer you to issues #02-0840, June 20, 2008, *Sons of the Resurrection*, and #02-0839, June 13, 2008, *All Who Are in the Tombs Will Hear*.

**“Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”** (John 5.28-29 NASB)

**“But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets; having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”** (Acts 24.14-15 NASB)

These verses refer to the resurrection that precedes God’s day when all is new. In that day, all that were not raised in the better resurrection 1,000 years prior will be raised up from the state of death to appear before the throne of God, not for the purpose of annihilation or eternal condemnation but for the purpose of either being **saved, yet so as through fire**, or being judged and brought under the fiery law of God, not for punishment but for correction and restitution. Thus, all men will be dragged unto the Lord, for, ultimately, the cross will be an absolute, 100% success in the reconciliation of all things, of which all mankind is included. God has sworn: **The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance** (Isaiah 45.23 NASB). Consequently, all will be dragged to the Lord and all will bow the knee. This is the will of God for all mankind, none excepted. Praise God!