

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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HAMMER THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES #2

As stated in the first issue, I have been considering the question: What will be the message of the conquerors (overcomers) of Christ when they are commanded to go forth to the nations as the Kingdom or Tabernacles Age commences? The gospel of the kingdom must be preached to all the nations, but what is the message? Well, I have not tried to answer the whole question, but it seems to me that Scripture clearly tells us part of the initial message that the sons of the first resurrection will take to the nations. It will be on the very matter of disarmament. In other words, the command or law of God in the next age will require that all implements of war be removed and that mankind no longer learns or trains for war. Both Isaiah and Micah prophesy the exact same words.

And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war. (Micah 4.1-3 NASB; also Isaiah 2.2-4)

The prophets spoke of the last days, which refer to the era called the Kingdom Age or Tabernacles Age. In Scripture, the word *mountain* often symbolizes a kingdom, as revealed when Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the stone striking the statue and becoming a great mountain filling the whole earth (Daniel 2.35). The stone represents the kingdom of Christ that will fill the whole earth in the last days. When the chief mountain appears on earth, the nations will seek to learn the ways of the Lord and to walk in them; they will seek to know the laws of God that will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Zion refers to the government of God or *the reign of the heavens* on earth, and Jerusalem refers to the city of God manifested through His people on earth, specifically the conquerors who are counted worthy of the kingdom of God to rule and reign with Christ and to judge the world (1 Corinthians 6.2). Jerusalem represents the dwelling of God *in* spirit. Finally, one of the first words of the Lord to go forth to the nations will be to hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. In other words, the nations will be commanded to give up every weapon that is used to train for and learn war. Why? So that the nations will never war again! If there is no more war, then there can be no more senseless killing in the name of nations and for the purpose of gaining power over others.

As I have stated, I am concerned that many of us have become warriors in the wrong sense. We have lost sight of the fact that **the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh and our struggle is not against flesh and blood.** We are not to be those who are labeled with the phrase *God and guns*. The two are like mixing water and oil. The next eon is about righteousness, justice, and peace. Isn't it time for us to think and act in accord with the destiny in Christ for all who conquer in this life? We conquer not by taking up the war cry of the nations but by taking up the word of God that declares **God is love.** We overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loves us!

It is vital for us who believe to understand that we are to think and act differently from the world that lies in the power of evil. We are called to live with the coming kingdom in view and to walk in a manner that is worthy of entering this kingdom. As He went up on a mountain, which signified His kingdom, and sat down with His disciples, Jesus began to teach them about the character of the ones who will enter the kingdom. As recorded in Matthew 5.3-10, He spoke of the happy or blessed ones who receive the kingdom of the heavens and inherit the earth. Let us consider a few points.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Do you understand that you only have an earnest of the spirit of God in you, and do you groan for the day that you will enter into the fullness of Christ as His complement, living *in* spirit? Or, do you see yourself full of the spirit, as if you have arrived and have no further need except to die and “go to heaven?” Only those who are poor in spirit will enter into the coming reign of the heavens on the earth to rule and reign with Christ. It is not about going to heaven but about bringing the will of God to the nations on earth.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Do you mourn over the many murders occurring each day and the wars that are being fought, even in the name of justice and democracy? Or, do you desire to destroy or get even with those who do harm to others? People of the world get angry, for they do not understand the heart of man. The people of God know that there is no good in man, and they mourn over man’s condition without God. Only those who mourn will be comforted, not only in this day but also in the day of Christ.

“Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.” Are you gentle or humble? Or, are you proud? The Lord gives grace to the humble but resists the proud. Only the gentle or humble will reign with Christ who has been given the nations as His inheritance and the ends of the earth as His possession (Psalm 2.8).

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”
“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” The kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of righteousness. Are you hungering for the day that His righteousness rules the day? Or, are you demanding righteousness in this day, even demanding it with the weapons of the flesh? Rather than demanding righteousness, are you standing in the righteousness of God, even if it leads to your persecution? Persecution for the sake of righteousness is not fighting back with carnal weapons; it is standing in the strength of His might. Standing in righteousness is a far cry from forcing righteousness through war. Those who hunger for righteousness in this day will lead the nations to the righteousness of God in the next eon.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” Do you have a heart of mercy, even for your enemies or the enemies of your country? Or, do you seek for vengeance? We need to be reminded that we are to love our enemies (Matthew 5.44). God’s word does not tell us to get even with them but to leave vengeance to Him.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Is your heart pure for the Lord; is it undivided? Or, is your heart divided between God and the world? When will the pure in heart see God? They will see Him when they look into the face of the love of their life at the first resurrection and transfiguration that commences the Tabernacles Age.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Are you a peacemaker? Do you turn the other cheek? Are you an ambassador for Christ going forth with the word of the conciliation **how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them** (2 Corinthians 5.19 CV)? Or, are you one who demands war or a battle to correct all wrongs? Being called a son of God means that one has been counted worthy to attain to the coming age to reign with Christ. *Sonship* means *rulership*. *Sonship* means *glory*, becoming a son of glory in the kingdom of glory.

Obviously, this is only a small token of what could be shared on these verses, but the point is that those who will be called to take the message of the kingdom to the nations think and act differently from those who will not be counted worthy to enter the kingdom to reign with Christ.