

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)

#02-08135

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HOPE AND CHANGE

The words *hope* and *change* have been very much in the forefront of news coverage over the last year in the race for the White House. Before I get caught up in my thoughts, I must state that I believe the hunger for change in the world today is the Lord's doing, but the change that people are hoping for is not what the Lord has in mind for the US or the rest of the world. The Lord is going to answer this hunger for change, but it will be on His terms as He leads the world through great shaking until His unshakable kingdom takes root in the earth and all the inhabitants of the world begin to learn true righteousness through His appointed leaders, judges, and ambassadors—the conquerors of Christ.

Now, many people are looking to one man to lead America and the world into the land of milk and honey, metaphorically speaking. In essence, they want a king to take the throne and rule on their behalf. They are looking for utopia, or at least a better life. And yet, there seem to be many who are simply looking for change; it doesn't matter, just so that there is change. I recently heard one young man state that all that matters is that change comes, for change is a good thing. Well, it is a good thing if it is the right type of change. Is evil a good change? Is the spirit of antichrist governing our nation a good change? Is another form of *ism* that places certain groups of people or the whole nation under a new type of bondage a good thing? Is the support of abortion with taxpayer money a good thing? Is lawlessness a good thing? Of course, from the perspective of a Christian, the answer to these questions is a resounding no. I should add that there is another side to this matter of change as well. For example, do we want to see **capitalism** and its sister **isms** of consumerism and materialism continue? Is capitalism as we know it the way the kingdom of God is to operate? From my perspective, the answer is no to these questions as well, but I will put off explaining why for another series that I am planning on how the kingdom of Christ will operate in the next eon.

Attached to the word *change* is the word *hope*. Many people are placing their hope in one candidate. Of course, anyone who does not know that Barack Obama is seen by many as the candidate of hope and change either has been asleep for the last year or is dead. I have heard it stated that the world is looking for a leader who will rise up and have the answers to all the problems that people perceive are in the world today. I state "perceive" because it seems that with so many competing self-interests in our day, it is very difficult to sort out fact from fiction. The fact of the matter is that there is a tremendous amount of distortion of so-called news and analysis of the news so that we are fed a nearly-constant daily diet of illusion and misperception and are being starved for lack of reality and truth. Words are twisted to mean something opposite than what they truly mean. Just today, I heard someone state that a certain individual, whose name is much in the news of late, was not a terrorist because his bomb was not aimed at civilians; rather, it was aimed at the government (military). Good is called evil and evil is called good. Propaganda to push a certain agenda, self-interest, or group-interest has become the norm so that reality and truth are pushed under the rug, so to speak. We live in a day of **relativism**, which means that the basis of all judgment is relative. In other words, the individual (or group) decides what is right and wrong based on his (their) own criteria. Simply, there are no absolutes. It is within this framework that the concept of hope is operating today, and it is very dangerous, to say the least.

Thank God, there are absolutes, and they are discovered in God the Father and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We could say that God is absolute, and there is nothing relative about Him or the things that He does. When it comes to the challenges that this world faces, there are solutions in the realm of absolutes. Most notably, there is only one true leader who has all the answers, and that is God's King,

the Lord Jesus Christ; and there is only one true form of righteous and just government, and that is the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

In the day of relativism, hope from the perspective of the relativists is nothing more than wishful thinking. Hope to the world generally holds much uncertainty, for there is no assurance that their hope will be realized. For example, people might hope for a better economy, but they have no assurance that it will come. All they can do is wish for or desire it to happen. Thus, hope to most of the world today is simply a desire, a wish, or a dream of which they have no guarantee or assurance it will come. Another way of stating this is that there is little to no faith attached to this hope. Some might believe that their hope will come about, but they have no absolute assurance that it will come. We could say that the world's hope is not joined with a faith that says it will come without any shadow of doubt. The world's hope is full of uncertainty. This is the best that the hope of the world can offer.

To me, there is a sort of blindness to the world's hope that is attached to feelings and not necessarily to sound thinking or reasoning. Thus, people might state: "I feel (hope) that some good change will come if I vote for this candidate." They desire something, even hunger for it, but they are not sure what it is or if it will come about. So, there is a sort of **blindness** to the world's hope, and change is based on a **feeling**, even if it is only a groaning feeling. In some ways, this is a good thing, for at least people know something is amiss, as if the world is not running on all its cylinders; something is sputtering. However, I see a very serious danger. Underpinning this hope and change is **the spirit of antichrist**. Now, do not read into this that I am pointing to one man as the so-called antichrist, as some are doing today. In no way am I doing that. What I am stating is that there is a very powerful spirit in the world that John said had gone out in his day and is coming (1 John 2.18, 22; 4.3; 2 John 1.7). It is the spirit of antichrist that denies the Father and the Son. Anything or anyone that takes the place of Christ is driven by the spirit of antichrist. *Antichrist* means "in place of Christ." This is the greatest danger that I see in this political season. Again, it is not about any one man; but rather, it is about a spirit that seeks to replace Christ with a misleading hope of change. I must add that within this spirit is a **moral blindness**, that is, blindness to God's moral law.

As bad as this might sound, I must state that I am encouraged by all of this. It is a good thing because God is in control. He is working out His plan to bring about His purpose, and He will not fail because His Son did not fail on the cross and will not fail to finish His mission to head up all things in the heavens and on the earth so that God the Father may be all in all in all new. A day is coming when the world will cry out for answers as they groan under the weight of Babylon's yoke: Who will set us free? Of course, the answer is Christ Jesus our Lord and His kingdom. When will He set all free? He will do it with the manifestation of the sons of God, the sons of glory, God's rulers of the nations. I have more to write on this matter, but I will do that later

What I want to impress on the hearts of all who believe is that our hope and change is not like the world's concept of hope and change. Our hope is **expectation**, that is, a knowing with no doubt whatsoever that something marvelous and glorious is coming. Ultimately, Christ is our expectation, and we are expecting, even waiting, for Him to come and establish His kingdom over the nations of this earth. Now, this is real change and change for the good.

Actually, I believe that we Christians should be using the word *expectation* rather than the word *hope*. In fact, the *Concordant Version*, seeing the distinction between the two words, uses the word *expectation*. Thus, Paul wrote to Timothy: **The Lord Jesus Christ, our Expectation** (1 Timothy 1.1 CV). We have **the expectation of salvation** (1 Thessalonians 5.8 CV) and **the expectation of eonian life** (Titus 1.2 CV). We also have **a living expectation through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead** (1 Peter 1.3 CV). These are not mere idle words or wishful thinking. These are facts based on God's word that cannot and will not fail. We expect, without one shred of doubt, that Christ Jesus our Lord alone will answer every longing, every desire, every hunger, every yearning, and every groaning that we have had and do have in this day of uncertainty. He alone satisfies, and His kingdom alone will bring about the change that this world is groaning for and so desperately needs.

The Lord Jesus Christ, our Expectation!

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