

# 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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## **BEHOLD, I AM MAKING ALL NEW! #3**

As stated in the last issue, there are six words that begin with the letter *r* that pretty much sum up God's plan for the eons: **restoration, restitution, revival, recovery, reconciliation, and redemption.** Each of these words, which begin with the prefix *re*, meaning "back, again, anew, over again" speaks of bringing something back to where it once was or, at least, close to where it once was. Many people seem to get excited about restoration, but, as I see it, restoration is God's plan to bring about His purpose of being **all in all** in **all new.** Consequently, what excites me is that God has a much greater and grander thought for mankind and creation than merely restoring things back to some starting point. God restores with a view to bringing all mankind and creation into something new. Now, this is something to get excited about.

Now, in this issue, let us consider the word *restoration*. Starting in Genesis 1.2, we see that God began to work on the ground of restoration. The earth was a waste place, formless and void, and the spirit of God hovered over the surface of the waters. We are not told how the earth got to be a waste place, but obviously something happened in between Genesis 1.1 and 1.2. So, right from the start we see the principle of restoration coming into view. But let us also see that as Scripture ends we are given this great declaration: **Behold, I am making all new!** This is God's purpose; restoration is His plan to bring in the new.

According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, the word **restoration** means "reinstatement; a putting or bringing back into a former, normal, or unimpaired state or condition." The word **restore** means "to give back (something taken away, lost, etc.); make restitution; to bring back to a former or normal condition, as by repairing, rebuilding, altering, etc.; to put a person back in a place, position, rank, etc.: as, restore a king; to bring back to health, strength, etc.; to reestablish something that has passed away, as a custom, system of government, etc." Notice that the word *restitution* is included in this definition. In the Greek, we discover the same inclusion.

In Scripture, the Hebrew word translated as *restore* is *shub*, a primitive root word that means "to turn back (not necessarily with the idea of return to the starting point), to retreat."

**He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore [*shub*] the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."** (Isaiah 49.6 NASB; also see Jeremiah 27.22)

The Greek word for *restore* is *apokathistemi*, which means "to reconstitute (in health, home, or organization), and the word for *restoration* is *apokatastasis*, which means "reconstitution, restitution."

**"Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration [*apokatastasis*] of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time."** (Acts 3.19-21 NASB; also see Acts 1.6)

Restoration was definitely a word spoken through the prophets, and it was on the minds of Jesus' disciples as well. Clearly, there is a period of restoration of all things that will commence once heaven releases the Lord Jesus to return to this earth to take the scepter of the kingdom of this world. In other words, the Father must send His Son back to this earth in order for the period of the restoration of all things to commence. This earth and the nations of the earth need the presence of the Lord, for all

things must be restored to the One who is Creator of all, even the Firstborn of all creation and the Firstborn from among the dead (Colossians 1.15, 18).

God is definitely in the business of restoration, and this will kick into high gear in the oncoming eons, which refers not only to the millennial kingdom of Christ but also to God's day that follows. I believe that it will take all of the next two eons for the Lord to restore all things. At times, I have the impression that many people think that once *the reign of the heavens* comes to this earth everything is restored or changed in an instant, but this cannot be so. Christ must head up or sum up all things in the heavens and on the earth as He subjects all things to Himself (Ephesians 1.10; 1 Corinthians 15.25-27). This will not occur as if passing a magic wand over the earth and creation and "poof" it is all changed, and it will not occur all in the next eon either. As grand as the millennial kingdom will be, it will not bring about the full restoration of all things. At the end of the millennial age, we know that Satan must be released to deceive the nations one last time (Revelation 20.7-10). We also know that following this period is the general resurrection of the vast majority of mankind and the great white throne judgment (Revelation 20.11-15) in which some will enter life and others will experience a second type of death (of works) with a view to their full restoration and restitution. In other words, the second death or the lake of fire is God's means to restore these ones and to bring about restitution or to right the wrongs they committed during their life on earth. Essentially, just as the nations learned righteousness in the previous eon, so will the resurrected that are cast into the lake of fire, which refers to the fiery law of God, learn righteousness. For what purpose? So that they too will be restored, for God wills that all mankind be saved (1 Timothy 2.3-4)!

Let us not forget that in reference to the coming day of God (God's day), Peter declared that **we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells** (2 Peter 3.13 NASB). Today, the righteousness of God is lost in the sea of the self-righteousness of mankind. In the next eon on earth, the nations will learn righteousness through the conquerors of Christ. But, in the day of God, righteousness will dwell. Through this dwelling, all things will be restored to the righteousness of God through Christ, the Son of Righteousness.

Consider this fact: When the new heaven and the new earth come into view in God's day, there will be a people who will not be allowed to enter New Jerusalem. Nothing unclean will ever enter New Jerusalem. Outside will be **the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death** (Revelation 21.8 NASB). Fire and brimstone are for purification, cleansing, and healing; not for destruction or annihilation. In fact, brimstone, which is sulfur, is likened to the sulfur drugs used today to combat diseases. In other words, fire and brimstone are part of the work of restoration and restitution. The unclean must be cleaned up (actually changed) if they are ever to enter into New Jerusalem. If these ones are not restored, then God's will to save all mankind and to restore all things cannot and will not be accomplished, and the cross of Calvary will have been a miserable failure.

Thus, the restoration of all things is a progressive plan that commences when the Father sends His Son to this earth and continues throughout the next two eons until all things in the heavens and on the earth have been subjected to the Son. It is only at this point that it will be declared that the period of the restoration of all things has been accomplished. This will bring about the consummation of the eons when Christ is not only all in all but God the Father is **all in all** in **all new**.

To me, the millennial kingdom of Christ as it relates to the earth and the nations of the earth is a time of pure restoration. However, the eon that follows, which is the day of God, is not only a time of restoration but also a time of making all new. Restoration will progressively give way to all new. As good and wonderful as restoration is, it is not the endpoint that God seeks or the ultimate purpose of God. The end result is not a restoration or return to the way things were or were meant to be but to something gloriously and entirely new.

**Behold, I am making all new!**