

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 GREAT CITY—CITI BANK

“And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’” ... “The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!’... ‘What city is like the great city?’”... Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.”
(Revelation 18.9-10, 15-18, 21 NASB)

It is interesting that the latest and, I might add, the biggest bank to hit the financial iceberg is **Citigroup Bank**. Some claim that the world was very close to the most colossal collapse in history. Whether this is true or hyperbole, I am not sure, but we can take it to the bank, so to speak, that the situation was quite severe. Actually, I am not sure if we should be taking anything to the bank in this day, considering the instability of the financial system. At any rate, Citigroup Bank is a mighty big fish in the financial sea, and its failure, or even the possibility of its failure, was and is a great threat to the entire beast system. I say is a threat, for we have no assurance today that it will not yet fail.

It could be said that, as far as banks go, Citigroup is a symbol of the financial banking system, much like the **World Trade Center** was a symbol, even an icon, of the economic or financial strength of the US. Given this thought, what strikes me about this latest bank crisis is the name of the bank itself. It is Citi, which is very similar to the word *city*. It is as if Citigroup, or, we could say, the City Bank, is representative of the great city that is described as **mystery Babylon**. As the verses above indicate, mystery Babylon is the great city at the end of the age, and this city, which is a counterfeit to the mind of God, must fall to make way for the true city of God, New Jerusalem.

I find it fascinating that on November 23, 2008, a meteorite fell from the sky over Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. The pictures of this huge fireball falling to earth are remarkable. Some state that the odds of capturing such an event on camera are pretty low; nevertheless, many caught it on video for the rest of us to see. However, what catches my imagination is that it occurred just as Citigroup Bank was being bailed out by the Federal Reserve, the FDIC, and the US government to the tune of \$300 billion; at least this is what we are told is the current price tag. What it will be in a month or whenever, no one knows. Some have projected that the current risk at Citi Bank is in the trillions of dollars. Whatever it is, the numbers are staggering. There seems to be no end in sight to the bailouts (and the cost), and the leaders are not promising that there are no more on the horizon.

Many are starting to proclaim with glee that president-elect Obama's team that he is announcing to help him run the government and steer the country through the current crisis is a “dream team,” “a near perfect team,” and “an outstanding team.” Many are rooting for this team to raise the Titanic or to keep it afloat. (See issue #02-08131, October 17, 2008.) Of course, whether one sees the Titanic on the bottom of the sea or dead in the water and taking on water is based on how one views the current global crisis. Frankly, there are times I am not sure how to view it, for there seems to be something strange or weird about the whole thing. On the one hand, it seems as if there is another colossal iceberg hidden under the

surface that we do not know about. Yet, on the other hand, it seems that much of the crisis might be contrived by a few for personal gain. Of course, this last thought is food for conspiracy theories, and, as a rule, I do not entertain such things. If there is a conspiracy, it is one that has been inspired by the unseen powers of darkness.

To me, the key to unlock understanding of all that the world is experiencing today is discovered in knowing the day in which we live. If I were not convinced that we are at the end of the age and that the kingdom of our Lord is coming very soon, I would be rooting for this dream team to succeed. However, our only anchor is to hold to the word of God and not to the news media or the politicians that have a variety of interests in the current state of affairs. Let us hold to God's interests.

He [God] has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken....
(Hebrews 12.26-28 NASB)

I began the year with this verse, and it seems appropriate to remind all of it as 2008 comes to a close. (See issue #02-0801, January 1, 2008.)

All the shaking that is occurring is about a kingdom that is coming to this earth very soon. For this reason, I am not surprised that a fireball fell out of the sky at the time the financial power brokers were trying to save the global financial beast system by bailing out the behemoth Citigroup Bank that many say is too big to fail and cannot be allowed to fail. Similarly, I am not surprised that a tornado swept through **Wilson, NC** the same day that President Bush was hosting an economic summit in Washington, DC in hopes of finding a way through the global crisis through a cooperative effort of the nations. This event occurred in Wilson as a reminder that one of the culprits, if not the culprit, in our current crisis is the **Federal Reserve Bank System** that was signed into law in 1913 by **President Woodrow Wilson**. These are not mere coincidences but reminders of who is in control. I also find it curious that on **October 27, 2007**, I heard, what I believe was from the Lord, the word: "**Watch Dubai.**" On October 14, 2007, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, or ADIA, a sovereign wealth fund owned by the world's fourth-largest oil exporter, bought a 4.9% stake in Citigroup. In early 2008, some experts began to question if this would be enough to save them. Well, obviously, it was not, so now the US government is taking a whack at it. But with oil prices now around \$50 a barrel and the Saudi Kingdom highly dependent on their shrinking oil revenues, what if they begin to pull their money out of the US to salvage things on their home front? In the next year or so, watch Dubai! This may be where the final nail will be pounded into the coffin of mystery Babylon.

In talking to people who do not have a personal relationship with the Lord and, consequently, do not have any knowledge of the kingdom that is about to overtake the nations, I hear many speak of a faith in the system and its leaders. This is not unexpected, for what else are they to have faith in if they do not have faith in the Lord Jesus? They put their trust in a system that has up-and-down cycles, boom-and-bust cycles, trusting that the boom side will ultimately prevail and give them what they desire in the way of security. Unfortunately, many Christians, who should not be of the world, are not much different than those who are of the world. So, Christian and non-Christian alike put their trust in a system that they have been yoked to and that jerks them around, giving and taking at will. Another phenomenon that is heard from many is that they are in the current system for the long haul. Again, this is an acknowledgement that although the system might be cranky at times and even seems like it is going down the tubes, it will eventually turn around and again give them what they want, and that is, security for their future. This is foolishness. It is like living with an abusive alcoholic who one moment loves you and the next moment is beating on you. Right now the system is beating on not only those in the US but also those throughout the earth, something that has not happened on this magnitude for over 70 years, at least this is what we are told; and people continue to have faith in it.

It is time to have faith in the Lord Jesus. It is time to pray: **Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven**; not as a common prayer that is repeated as some tradition but as a heartfelt cry to God for the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ to finally come to the nations. Come soon!