

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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WHO IS THE LIAR? #1

'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ... 'Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.' (Revelation 2.9; 3.9 NASB)

"But for 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)

In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21.25-27 NASB)

These verses have one thought in common, and it deals with lying and being excluded from entering the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ in the next eon, as well as New Jerusalem in the following eon, which Peter called the day of God (2 Peter 3.12). The verb *lie* means "to utter an untruth or attempt to deceive by a falsehood." The person who makes it a practice to lie or to deceive by falsehood is a *liar*, one who deceives. In the context of these verses, Jews according to the flesh are the liars that will be excluded. This is explained in the next issue. In this issue, let us look at this matter more generically.

I have been thinking about these verses over the last few months, especially during the national and local election season, as I heard candidates for many offices accuse their opponents of lying about their record or about the so-called facts. Several research groups tracked what had been said during the campaigns and reported on what was fact or fiction; but, in the final analysis, no one really knows whether the candidates purposely and knowingly told untruths, that is, purposely deceived to gain an advantage over the opposition. Yet, it seems that politicians are known for their capacity to stretch the truth or ignore it altogether. Often this is how they maintain their power. At times, I think that politics is actually the art of lying. The sad truth is that most people know that a whole lot of lying takes place during campaigns and even once the elected are in office, but most seem to accept it as the norm.

What caught my attention and brought this back into the light were the results of a recent "**high school ethics survey.**" The **Josephson Institute** surveyed 29,760 students at 100 high schools that had been randomly selected. They discovered that in the past year 30% of the students surveyed had stolen from a store, 64% had cheated on an exam, and 42% had lied to save money. But the most revealing result was that 93% of those surveyed were satisfied with their personal ethics, and 77% felt that when it came to doing right, they were better than others they knew. As I see it, there are either a lot of deceived students or a lot of liars out there. I wonder how politicians would compare with these statistics. My reaction is that these students are merely a reflection of the adults (parents) and the moral bankruptcy of our society today. There is no doubt that this goes hand-in-hand with the financial bankruptcies (collapses) of our day.

The problem with the students that were surveyed is that they have no absolute standard by which to measure or govern their actions; they look at the actions of those around them and this forms the basis

for their ethical standard. This is called **relativism**. But even worse than this is that, as they look around themselves, they don't even see or care to see that they are no different from their peers that they have placed on a lower ethical level than themselves.

It reminds me of the people that I have known that claimed they were "good people"; after all, they had "not killed anyone or robbed a bank." I am sure you have heard the same thing. I vividly recall the day that I told someone very dear to me that she was a sinner. She looked at me as if I were nuts. Her reply was that she was a good person. Well, good people, according to the world's standard, are not righteous or moral people.

What has happened? Most people, especially children, have not been taught that there are absolute standards or moral laws that come from God; and, by the way, there are serious repercussions for ignoring these laws. If they have been taught God's moral law, then they have chosen to ignore it, and they are truly liars. I doubt that they have been taught such a thing since it is not taught much today.

We need to ask where the church of God is in these days. Who is standing for the moral law of God? Well, each of us needs to ask the spirit of God to search us to see if there are any wicked ways within us. We need to repent. Repentance is good for us.

I find it interesting that in the years since the early 1960's when a concerted effort began to throw God and the name of Jesus out of the affairs of state of the US, there have been many attempts to remove from public places plaques that contain the Ten Commandments. This has been out of fear or ignorance that the commandments somehow breach the flawed concept of the separation of church and state. The concern I have had over this controversy is that these plaques are like letters of the law.

What our country and the world need is the moral law of God written on the hearts of the people, not on stones placed in public places. **The letter kills but the spirit gives life** (2 Corinthians 3.6). This is what the youth and the adults need in this day.

Thank God; a day is coming when a whole company of conquerors will be raised up that have God's laws written on their hearts (Hebrews 8.10), and they will lead the nations in the way of righteousness and God's moral law. The day that is coming is the day of Christ. You can count on it!

There is another related matter that deals with what is called **moral hazard**, which is an insurance-industry term that, I believe, goes hand-in-hand with what I have stated so far. The underwriters of insurance policies use this term to describe a situation in which policyholders have little incentive to avoid or prevent the very thing or event that they have been insured against. In other words, they take no responsibility for preventing the thing that they are insured against from happening. Why should they? After all, someone else is going to pay for their loss. It is true that they must pay an insurance premium for the coverage, but this cost often pales in comparison to what is covered. For example, a \$100 premium may insure a loss of \$100,000.

The problem with moral hazard is that people become careless, and with carelessness comes a greater likelihood that the very thing that they are insured against will happen. We see this very thing happening in our day as so many sectors of the US economy are expecting the Federal government to bail them out to the tune of trillions of dollars. This is moral hazard in the extreme. Some that created the problem are the very ones that are expecting the government to come to the rescue, which, of course, means that all Americans are going to pay for their failures through higher taxes and inflation that will pale in comparison to the problems we face today. This you can count on!

Well, how does this connect with the student survey and lying? It connects in the sense that no one takes responsibility for their actions, and they justify their actions based on a distorted and failed moral standard. After all, each is good in their own eyes, as if they are their own gods, and their actions or inactions are ok. Actually, it is an immoral, relative standard in which there is little to no personal responsibility. It is not based on an absolute moral standard. Consequently, it is all a lie, and those who live by this standard are liars destined for the second death.