

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)

#02-08159

DECEMBER 22, 2008

THE NUMBER 17 — VICTORY!

He made the moon for the seasons. (Psalm 104.19 NASB)

On December 12, 2008, my wife and I took our usual morning walk. Since we like to walk before we begin the day, oftentimes the sun has not come up yet, particularly during this time of year. On this day, we were awestruck by the sight of the moon. It was low in the sky, and it seemed much larger and brighter than usual. Even its craters seemed so much larger and distinct. The sky was crystal clear and, I might add, the outside temperature was cold, which added to the mystique of this luminescent orb that had captured our attention. It was a beautiful sight, the kind that brings out worship as you behold the mighty works of the Creator.

Later that day, we discovered that the moon was, in fact, closer to us than normal. In its orbit around the earth, the moon's distance from the earth varies, and on December 12, 2008, it was 170,000 miles closer; something that last occurred 15 years ago. The next day I heard a meteorologist state that the moon's brightness was the greatest, and it is often called the Harvest Moon.

Needless to say, these facts and figures got my mind working as I saw the numbers 12, 15, and especially, the intensification of the number 17 (170,000); and all of these occurred in relation to the moon.

In Scripture, the moon has many meanings depending on the context. It is not the intent of this issue to discuss the various meanings of the moon. The only thing that I want to underline is that the moon was made for the seasons, that is, it is God's way of revealing His appointed times based on months of the year, which, prophetically speaking, are based on the cycles of the moon. We see this very clearly in the appointed feast times (Leviticus 23) that the sons of Israel were called to celebrate and that speak prophetically of how God sent His Son to die for the sin of the world (Passover), the Son was raised from the dead to appear before the throne (Wave Sheaf), the church was given an earnest of the spirit (Pentecost), and, ultimately, the conquerors will begin to reign on the earth in glorified, celestial, spiritual, and immortal bodies (Tabernacles). This last prophetic event will occur in the seventh month of Tishri.

When the conquerors experience tabernacles, it could be proclaimed that they have come into the fullness of victory. The word *conqueror* comes from the Greek word *nikao*, which means "to conquer, to overcome, to get the victory." While occupying bodies of death, we continually seek to get the victory that is ours in Christ. But in that day, those who heeded the Lord's word to conquer (overcome), as recorded in Revelation 2-3, will be in victory and be counted worthy to reign with Christ in His kingdom.

In light of the word *victory*, my attention was caught when I heard that the moon was 170,000 miles closer to the earth. It was a reminder to me that the manifestation of the victory is coming soon for the world to see, just as the world saw the lesser light come closer to earth and shine brightly as a Harvest Moon. A fall harvest is coming soon in which the sons of the kingdom will begin to shine forth, not as the moon, but as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matthew 13.38, 43).

Before looking at the number 17, let us consider the numbers 12 and 15. It was on **12-12-08** that we observed this bright orb come closer to the earth.

The number **12** signifies **governmental perfection**. There are twelve patriarchs from Seth to Noah and from Shem to Jacob, twelve sons of Israel, twelve tribes of Israel, twelve apostles, and twelve foundations, gates, and pearls associated with New Jerusalem, which itself is 12,000 furlongs square. Consequently, the number 12 pertains to rule. E.W. Bullinger (*Number in Scripture*, page 25, Kregel, 1967) points out: “The sun which “rules” the day, and the moon and stars which “govern” the night, do so by their passage through twelve signs of the Zodiac which completes the great circle of the heavens of 360 (12 X 30) degrees or divisions, and thus govern the year.”

The number **15** speaks of **rest** and ultimately points to the 7th day or the Sabbatical rest of the millennial kingdom of Christ (Hebrews 4.4). According to the appointed times of the Lord, Israel was to rest on two different days that fell on the fifteenth day of the month (Leviticus 23.6-7; 34-35), and Mordecai called for a rest in the month of Adar (Esther 9.20-22). It is of significance that the feast of tabernacles begins on the 15th of the month of Tishri which, prophetically speaking, leads to the 7th day of rest for the earth.

Now, let us consider the number **17**, which refers to **victory**. *Seventeen* is not only a prime or indivisible number, but it is also the seventh in the series of prime numbers (i.e., 1, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17). The number **7** signifies **completeness**, which adds to the significance of the meaning of the number 17. Again, Bullinger explains (page 258): “In like manner *seventeen* being the seventh of the series, it partakes of and intensifies the significance of the number *seven*. Indeed, it is the combination or sum of the two perfect numbers—*seven* and *ten*—*seven* being the number of *spiritual* perfection, and *ten* of *ordinal* perfection. Contrasted together the significance of these two numbers is clear; and when united in the number *seventeen* we have a union of their respective meanings, viz., spiritual perfection, plus ordinal perfection, or *the perfection of spiritual order*.”

There are many illustrations of the number 17 in Scripture, but let us consider two. When Noah and his family were called into the ark, the fountains of the deep were broken up and the windows of heaven opened up on the seventeenth day of the second month. However, on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat (Genesis 7.11; 8.4). Noah and his family had weathered the great storm and come not only into rest but into victory. In the ark, we see deliverance and resurrection. Another illustration that truly supports the meaning of victory is discovered in Israel being delivered out of Egypt on the fourteenth day of the month, traveling three days and then passing through the Red Sea in the night of the seventeenth day. When they reached the other shore and the Egyptian army was swallowed in the sea, the sons of Israel sang their victory song (Exodus 15.1-21). Passing through the Red Sea (baptism) can be likened to the resurrection that will begin the fall feasts (Trumpets) and of the commencement of the oncoming kingdom of Christ.

Returning to the number 170,000, it is instructive that this is made up of 17 times 10,000. In Scripture, the number 10,000 is found in 20 (the number of redemption) verses and is often, not always, associated with victory (e.g., Leviticus 26.8; Judges 1.4; 3.29). Thus, 170,000 is truly an intensification of victory.

In conclusion, for me, seeing the brightest moon, the Harvest Moon, on the 12th of the 12th month, as it was the closest to the earth by 170,000 miles, and this has not occurred for 15 years, encouraged my heart that the appointed time fixed by the Father will come soon. The manifestation of the sons of God, the ones destined to reign with Christ in His kingdom because they overcame or conquered, is coming as sure as the moon shines in the night announcing the seasons. The conquerors are the victors, the ones who will be first to come into spiritual perfection and will lead the nations into the seventh day of rest. In this day, the government of the King of kings will begin to take root among the nations, and for once in the 6,000-year history of the nations, mankind will begin to experience the kingdom of God in action; that is, they will experience governmental perfection. Victory is coming!