

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)

#03-0962

The Kingdom of Our Lord #2.

January 13, 2009

The Royal Law of Love

This open-ended series has one purpose, and that is to explore what the kingdom of our Lord will look like in the oncoming eon. Another way of stating the purpose is to explore the very character of the kingdom and how it will operate. Actually, in our day, we should see the kingdom in operation in some measure, although not in fullness, in all who have sanctified Christ as Lord in their hearts (1 Peter 3:15) and have submitted to His reign over their lives. But this is limited because, for the kingdom of our Lord to be truly manifested on earth, the nations must begin to submit to the reign of Christ and operate according to the divine law of God. We have not yet arrived at this day, but we pray it is coming soon.

Now, the primary characteristic of the kingdom of our Lord is summed up in the word **love**. Everything that emanates out of the reign of Christ is based on the love of God. **God is love**, and in His kingdom, His character and very essence reigns supreme. Some might say that this is the characteristic of the kingdom of God that we who have believed have been called into. This is true, but we must keep in mind that this love, although it is in our hearts (Romans 5:5) and the world should see it through our lives, is not something that the nations of the world have accepted nor have they seen in a way that transforms the way they conduct their affairs.

However, when the reign of the heavens is manifested on this earth through the Lord's conquerors, the kingdom will be known as the kingdom of love, for it is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love.

(13) He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, (14) in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14 NKJV)

(13) Who did rescue us out of the authority of the darkness, and did translate us into the reign of the Son of His love, (14) in whom we have the redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of the sins.... (Colossians 1:13-14 YLT)

The Father loves His Son and has given Him the nations as His inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as His possession (Psalm 2:8). Christ is the Beloved Son of God. Should we expect anything other than love to be the very character of His kingdom? Since His Father loves Him so much, shouldn't we expect this love to be poured out not only upon the body of Christ but also upon all mankind?

To further add to this thought, let us consider a conversation Jesus had with a scribe.

(28) Then one of the scribes having approached, having heard them debating, knowing that He answered them well, questioned Him, "Which is [the] first commandment of all?" (29) Then Jesus answered him, "[The] first of all the commandments [is], 'Be hearing [or, Be paying attention], O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one.' **(30) 'And you will love the LORD your God with your whole heart [fig., your entire inner self] and with your whole soul and with your whole understanding and with your whole strength'—this [is] the first commandment. [Deut 6:4, 5] (31) And [the] second [is] similar to it, 'You will love your neighbor as yourself—no other commandment is greater [than] these.'** **[Lev 19:18] (32) Then the scribe said to Him, "Well [said], Teacher! You have spoken in truth that He is one, and [there] is not another besides Him. [Deut 4:35, 39] (33) And to be loving Him with the whole heart [fig., one's entire inner self] and with the whole understanding and with the whole soul and with the whole strength and to be loving one's neighbor as oneself is more**

[than] **all the whole burnt-offerings and the sacrifices.**” [Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18; 1 Sam 15:22] **(34) And Jesus, having seen him, that he answered wisely, said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And no one dared any longer to question Him.** (Mark 12:28-34 ALT)

According to Jesus, the first commandment of all the commandments is to love the Lord God and to love our neighbor. Who is our neighbor? Is it not all mankind? Are we not neighbors with one another? There is no greater commandment than these two.

Paul quoted the same verse as the Lord and summed it up with this: **Such love does not bring about evil [or, harm] to the neighbor. Therefore such love [is] the fulfillment of [the] law** (Romans 13:10 ALT).

James also referred to the same verse: **If you indeed fulfill [the] royal Law according to the Scripture, “You will love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well** [Lev 19:18] (James 2:8 ALT). Notice how he called it the royal law. The word *royal* in the Greek is *bailikos*, which means “regal or belonging to the sovereign.” In other words, it is the law of the King.

But Jesus Himself summed up the whole matter: **“The whole of the Law and the Prophets is summed up in these two Commandments”** (Matthew 22:40 WNT). In this context, the word *whole* means all the law and all the revelation of the prophets is summed up in love.

In other words, love of the Lord God and love of one another, which refers to loving all mankind, is the very sum total of all the law. Thus, every law of God is undergirded by the law of love and is for the purpose of expressing the love of God.

This is the foundation of the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Now, notice how the above verses conclude. The scribe commends Jesus for speaking the truth according to Scripture; further, if he truly had known to whom he was speaking, he should have fallen on his face. It is like standing before God as He speaks to you and you telling Him that He speaks the truth. Regardless, the scribe added a further truth in reciting 1 Samuel 15:22: **“Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.”** The sacrifice of bulls and goats is not what God is after; He is after lives laid down for one another. As John wrote: **We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren** (1 John 3:16 NASB).

But here is the connection to the kingdom. Jesus answered the scribe: **“You are not far from the kingdom of God.”** In other words, the wise scribe had rightly touched upon the heart of the kingdom of God, which is synonymous with the coming kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Dear beloved saints, if you have been touched by the love of God and you obey the Lord out of love for Him, and you, in turn, manifest this love in your relationship with one another, then you are not only close to the kingdom, but you are living out the royal law of the kingdom. Yes, it is a law, for we are commanded to love and that is what God’s law is all about. We need to manifest the law of love today in preparation for the kingdom that is coming upon the nations. Paul wrote: **We are more than conquering through Him Who loves us** (Romans 8:37 CV).

Who will be charged with manifesting the royal law of love to the nations? The conquerors (overcomers), for they have known and experienced the love of God for them and have manifested this love for others during our present wicked eon. They have known love and know how to love, and they will more than speak about love; they will be vessels of love that the nations will see and will hunger to be like. Simply, the nations will learn as they see the kingdom of love in the lives of the conquerors.