

# 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)

#03-0910

**1600 Furlongs of Love**

January 26, 2009

In issue #03-0909, *Why Is There So Much War in the Old Testament?*, the point was made that God and mankind were at war during that period, but when we come to the New Testament, we discover that He is no longer at war, having made peace through the blood of His cross. As I continued to consider this matter, I realized that some might legitimately raise the question: If this is so, then why do we discover so much apparent war in the book of Revelation? The answer is that the war is no longer according to the physical sword that kills the body but according to the sword of the spirit, the word of God that divides soul and spirit. Before elaborating further on the answer, let us consider judgment.

Just because God is no longer at war with mankind does not mean that He will not judge all mankind. In fact, He has fixed a day in which He will judge through His Son.

**(30) “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, (31) because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world [inhabited earth] in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”** (Acts 17:30-31 NASB [ALT])

All that have inhabited our present earth must be judged, which means that all mankind from Adam to the last one to be born on this earth must be judged. According to Paul, this is a fixed day, and according to John, this day is when the great white throne is set at the end of the millennial kingdom prior to the day of God. All mankind not raised in the first resurrection will be raised from the state of physical death to appear before the judgment seat of God. This is the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked (Acts 24:14-15). We must keep in mind that judgment is not for destruction or annihilation but for restoration and restitution; it is corrective in nature. This will not occur all at once but will be fully accomplished by the consummation of the eons.

However, it appears that God brings judgment unto nations and its citizens while they are alive on earth, and this judgment can involve loss of life (physical death) as well as death of their systems (isms), such as their political and religious systems. Case in point is the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the casting aside of Judaism, as prophesied by the Lord Jesus. Many Jews were killed in that day and the Christians that heeded the Lord's word escaped. However, what needs to be understood is that physical death is not the actual judgment. After all, all men, both the righteous and the unrighteous, are destined to die and their bodies go into corruption. In other words, physical death in itself does not mean a judgment has been rendered. What it means is that the judgment is delayed until the great white throne. God might bring an early death or what could be called an unnatural or untimely death (some call it an act of God) upon a people or a nation, but this is not the judgment of the fixed day. This type of death simply cuts life short, and the ones that die do not get to enjoy a long life on earth. The actual judgment is put off until the second resurrection and the great white throne judgment.

Besides, we need to keep in mind that God is the God of life and He sees death from an entirely different perspective than man. Death is an enemy of mankind but one that ultimately will be abolished at the consummation of the eons.

Now, putting these thoughts aside, let us consider one passage in the book of Revelation that is often preached from the pulpits of Christendom as if it were literal.

**And the winepress was trodden [trampled] without [outside] the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs.** [*stadia*; about 180 miles or 300 kilometers] (Revelation 14:20 ASV [ALT])

Based on the above verse, most of us have been taught that this scene of blood rising to the bridles of the horses for 1600 furlongs (stadia) will be literally fulfilled as the Lord rides out of heaven to slay all His enemies. Some have tried to calculate how many bodies it would take to accomplish this. There is no width given, only the length, so assumptions have to be made. Someone has calculated that there could be from 3,580 to 30,810 bodies, but not millions as so many assume. And yet, others have stated that even if every person on earth were placed in the space, it still would not achieve this result. Frankly, I do not have the skill to prove it one way or the other.

I recall listening to preachers with near glee in their voices as they expounded on this verse as, according to them, God gets His pound of flesh from rebellious man at the end of our present eon. They spoke of the Lord as if He were “mad as hell” and determined to wipe out thousands upon thousands in His anger for their rebellion and rejection of Him. They would describe how the blood will flow in that day, so much of it that it will rise to the bridle of a horse and for a distance of 180 miles, which is nearly the length of the present state of Israel. Strangely, I never sensed the preachers were broken-hearted over such a thing happening to our fellow humans. There was no love or compassion in their words. It was almost as if they thought these ones will deserve what they get, and that this is exactly how God views the matter as well. When I have heard such oration, I was left wondering whatever happened to **God is love**, which leads to the heart of the matter.

Let us put aside the literal interpretation and consider another possibility on the basis of what it signifies. After all, Jesus declared that He came to save the world, not condemn it (John 3:17). Why? Because God so loves the world!

As with any single verse, particularly in the book of Revelation, there is a lot of background information that needs to be discussed to bring it into the proper focus. Obviously, this cannot be done with much detail in what space is left. Nevertheless, we need to understand that chapter 14 deals with the barley, wheat, and grape harvests in light of the manifestation of the kingdom of our Lord on earth. The barley and wheat harvests pertain to Christians, especially the sons of God. They are the first gathered into the barn. Then the Lord will turn to the rest of mankind, as depicted in the grape harvest, with the number 1600 referring to the full impact of the winepress of God upon the grapes.

I primarily use the NASB in my studies, but, in this case, it does a disservice to the meaning, for it uses 200 miles (not 180) instead of 1600 furlongs or stadia. As I have discussed in previous issues, the number **16** signifies **love**. Seeing the number 16 intensified 100 times should immediately catch our interest. The number **100** often indicates something coming into **fullness**. Perhaps, the number **1600** signifies **the fullness of love**. Could it mean that as John was in spirit he saw the fullness of God’s love in action? Although he described it as a grotesque result of a physical battle, could it be interpreted as something gloriously positive, something only seen in spirit? I think so!

A winepress is designed to produce wine from the fruit of the vine. The end product is a good thing, not a bad thing, for wine is for pleasure and communion. The vine that the grapes hang on signifies the nations. The parable of the vineyard in Isaiah 5 reveals that vines are nations. The grapes on the vines signify the people of the nations. The flesh of the grapes signifies the flesh of carnal man. The carnal flesh must be crushed so that new life can come forth. The blood comes from the grapes being harvested and signifies the soul of man, **for the soul of the flesh is in the blood** (Leviticus 17:11 DNT). He who loses his soul shall gain it. They did not lose their soul (carnal life) during our present eon, so now they must lose it through the winepress of the wrath of God. But remember that God’s wrath is not like man’s wrath. His wrath is for the purpose of restoration and correction, not for destruction. As a father disciplines his child, so does the Father discipline mankind. The heart of wrath is love. Thus, the wine represents the product that will progressively and eventually come forth from God’s love; God and man in communion, which is an intimate spiritual relationship, a necessity for God to be all in all.

Thus, we are given a glorious picture of a harvest of love as the Lord, through His conquerors, turns to the nations to lead them into His kingdom of love. How will He do it? Not by the physical sword but by the much sharper sword of the word of God that divides both soul and spirit, both joints and marrow (Hebrews 4:12). He will do it by His word, which is the very law of God. It is the word of God that will crush the flesh of carnal man, not to destroy or annihilate him but to save him. Thus, the winepress will produce **1600 furlongs of love**, which signifies **the fullness of the love of God**.