

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)

#03-0964

The Kingdom of Our Lord #4.

January 27, 2009

The Law of Impartiality

As a reminder, at the heart of the kingdom of our Lord is love, for **God is love**, and this love must be manifested through all who are the Lord's, even in our day. The manifestation of the love of God is not only a future deportment (behavior) but also a present one. However, as the kingdom of our Lord takes root among the nations, there will be an ever-increasing manifestation of God's love.

Now, the love of God demands impartiality. We could say that love is impartial. In English, the word *impartial* means "favoring no one side or party more than another; without prejudice or bias; fair; just." We could say that this is the law of impartiality, which is first presented through Moses to describe the Lord God.

"For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe." (Deuteronomy 10:17 NASB)

The word translated *partiality* comes from two Hebrew words: *nasa*, which means "to lift" and *paniyim*, which means "face." (You might notice that the US space agency, NASA, derives its name from the Hebrew word to lift, meaning it lifts payloads into outer space.) In the Greek, the word translated *partiality* is *prosopolepsia*, which is derived from a root word that means "accepter of a face." Thus, *partiality* means that "one lifts up the face of another" or "accepts one person over another," implying that there is a prejudice of persons or an attitude of personal favoritism. The following literal translation clearly makes this distinction.

For Jehovah your God, He is the God of gods, and the Lord of lords; the great, the mighty, the fearful God who does not lift up faces, nor take a bribe. (Deuteronomy 10:17 LITV)

Without doubt, the epistle of James draws heavily on the law of God, which has led some to discount the epistle entirely as not relating to ones who believe on Jesus and are now under grace. It is beyond the scope of this issue to resolve the controversy. But suffice it to say, according to Paul, the law is good (1 Timothy 1:8) and the law is spiritual (Romans 7:14). In fact, grace and mercy are based on the law of impartiality. After all, God's judgment is that all (no one excepted) have sinned (Romans 3:23), and God has shut up all (no one excepted) in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all (no one excepted) (Romans 11:32). There is no partiality in God's judgment of all mankind or in His mercy.

At any rate, James reiterates the law of impartiality that is to be followed in the kingdom of our Lord.

(1) My brothers, do not with partiality have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. (2) For if a gold-fingered man in splendid clothing comes into your synagogue, and a poor one in shabby clothing also comes in; (3) and you look on the one wearing the splendid clothing, and say to him, You sit here comfortably; and to the poor one you say, You stand there, or, sit here under my footstool; (4) did you not also make a difference among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? (5) Hear, my beloved brothers, did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to the ones loving Him? (6) But you dishonored the poor one. Do not the rich ones oppress you, and they drag you to judgment seats? (7) Do they not blaspheme the good Name called on you? (8) If you truly fulfill the royal Law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well. Lev. 19:18 (9) But if you have partiality you work sin, being reproved by the Law as transgressors.
(James 2:1-9 LITV)

Another literal translation words the first verse: **My brothers** [and sisters], **stop holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the [Lord] of Glory, with accepting of faces** [fig., with a prejudiced attitude] (James 2:1 ALT).

Obviously, James knew that those entering the synagogue or assembly meetings were treated one way or another based on their appearance. The ones that looked rich by their outward appearance were given the more prominent places, but the ones that looked poor were given the less prominent places. They were judging by appearance, which in itself breaks another law of God, that is, the law of the heart, judging by heart, not by outward appearance. As I have written in a previous issue (#03-0902, January 5, 2009), Babylon looks at people by their appearance, just as ancient Israel looked at the appearance of Saul.

Notice how James identified the kingdom with the law of impartiality. The rich snub their noses at the poor, but God chooses the poor to be rich in faith. What they lack in earthly possessions, they gain in their faith and their love for the Lord. The poor (materially) but rich in faith will be the heirs of the kingdom, not the prejudicial rich (materially). Rather than having mercy on the poor, the rich oppress and prejudicially judge the poor. They ignore the royal law of love, the law of the King.

James sums up the matter by declaring that partiality is sin. It is lawlessness. Is it much different in our day? No! We see partiality exercised throughout the world, including in the church of God. I don't need to give examples, for I am sure we all have seen them, and, if we are honest with the Lord, each of us has been partial to others somewhere along the line. Actually one example does come to mind. Watching the news today, I saw a good example of the arrogance and prejudice of the rich in the one who was charged with bilking \$50 billion from investors, both rich and not so rich, through a Ponzi scheme. As he was under house arrest, he began to distribute his wealth to his relatives and friends; wealth he had allegedly gained through fraud. And, he did this in defiance of the judge's order that froze his assets so that those hurt by his scheming might get some of their money back.

The good news is that in the kingdom of our Lord, the law of impartiality will be taught to the nations until it becomes the norm. Judgments will be rendered impartially based on the law of God, with love as the foundation. No one will be treated differently than another in regard to the same matter.

Dear beloved in Christ, do you realize that in the coming kingdom of our Lord, His people, the holy ones, will be the judges to settle all matters among the inhabitants of the world?

You know that the holy ones will judge the world, do you not? And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy [or, incapable] **of the smallest court** [cases]? (1 Corinthians 6:2 ALT)

Paul undoubtedly understood this by revelation and knowledge of sacred Scripture, especially the charge given by Moses to the judges appointed over the tribes of Israel.

(16) "Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear the cases between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him. (17) You shall not show partiality in judgment [shall not recognize persons in judgment]; **you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's.'** (Deuteronomy 1:16-17b NASB [ALT])

Paul exhorted the Corinthians for turning to the world to settle their disputes rather than resolving their disputes among themselves. They sought the way of the world and not the way of God. Undoubtedly, the reason they could not judge properly was because they did not apply the law of impartiality, but rather looked upon matters with prejudice. They were carnal, not spiritual.

Are we any different from the Corinthians? Frankly, I have seen some of the worst prejudice among Christians, especially the religious ones. It is time we learn the ways of the kingdom and apply the law of impartiality in all our dealings, both within and without the ecclesia. The Lord's conquerors, the sons of glory, are being prepared to become the judges of the world in the kingdom of our Lord. If we are to be among this holy company, we need to learn and apply the law of impartiality.