

# 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)*

#03-0921

## ***Called According to Purpose#2***

March 16, 2009

In the previous issue of this short series, the point was made that all who are born from above, having received the seed of Christ, are called. If you are interested in the subject of being born from above and having the seed of Christ, please read issue #02-0887 (July 7, 2008), *His Seed Abides In Him*, as well as my book, *Born From Above* (November 2008).

The Greek words for *calling*, *called*, and *call* are *klesis*, *kletos*, and *kaleo*, respectively, which mean "invitation," "invited or appointed," and "bid or call." In other words, the call is an invitation. Without doubt, most evangelicals see the invitation in relation to initial salvation. After all, among some groups, an invitation is offered, Sunday after Sunday, to the so-called lost as they are beckoned to walk the aisle and be saved; of course, so that they can go to heaven, not to hell, when they die. If you have read any of my material, you will realize that I do not hold such a view. Going to heaven when one dies is not the good news of Jesus Christ. **Resurrection, transfiguration, and immortality are the good news.** Well, this is a major topic that is beyond the scope of this issue, so I will leave it.

The calling or, more specifically, the invitation is something that comes into view after we are saved, not before or as we are being saved. Once we are given the faith of the Son of God to believe, by His grace we are saved (see Article #5, January 2008, *Being Ignorant, In Unbelief, Yet The Grace*), and then we are invited by Jesus Himself to come to Him, to sit at His feet, to be in communion with Him, to mature in His life, to be counted worthy to reign in His coming kingdom, and to conquer (overcome) and be part of His bride. This is the call. The call is to Jesus Himself. **"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest"** (Matthew 11:28 NASB).

Come to Me! It is not a one-time event when one walked an aisle or whatever occurred in one's life when he or she first met the Lord. It is a daily coming to the Lord, a daily seeking His face, a daily knowing Him in our life experiences.

Now, let us consider a few more aspects of this calling.

First, it is a **holy calling**.

**Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with {me} in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity** [before times eonian). (2 Timothy 1:8-9 NASB [CV])

This calling is an uncommon calling. The religious world calls based on works; we are not called according to our works but according to His purpose and grace in Christ. However, let us not forget that this calling places a demand on our lives. The world knows nothing of this type of calling because it is not holy. The world is impure and defiled. But we are to keep ourselves unstained by the world (James 1:27) and to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1). The holy calling means: **"You shall be holy, for I am holy."** This is the call of the Holy One. We are to be holy in our behavior, today. We are to be set apart from the world in our behavior because we have a new life dwelling within us. It is a holy, sanctified life. This is according to God's purpose and His grace that enables us to live such a life. We cannot live it apart from Christ. He is our holiness. The holy calling demands that, by His grace, we be holy in Christ.

Second, it is a **celestial or heavenly calling**.

**Whence, holy brethren, partners of a celestial calling, consider the Apostle and Chief Priest of our avowal, Jesus.** (Hebrews 3:1 CV)

Most translations use the word *heavenly* in the place of *celestial*, but the translators of the Concordant Version point out that the Greek word is *epouranion*, which refers to that part of the universe that is on, or higher than. The Greek word for *heaven* is *ouranos*, which implies what one sees when one looks up. Given these distinctions, *celestial* implies that which is beyond the heavens. However, I carry the meaning one step further. As I have studied Scripture, it appears to me that the word *celestial* implies more than a physical place in the universe; it implies the spirit realm of God in which all the universe sits, the very realm that all the holy brethren are being invited into in the age (eon) to come. For more on the word *celestial*, please see issue #02-0863 (August 4, 2008), *The Celestials*.

The fact of the matter is that we have a celestial calling, a calling or invitation to enter the very realm in which God resides. God is spirit, and we are invited to join Him in His realm. After all, as Paul wrote, we are **all being connected together, growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom we are being built together for God's dwelling in spirit** (see Ephesians 2:21-22 CV). When the saints are resurrected and transfigured into the likeness of Christ, they receive their inheritance of glorified and immortal bodies in the image of **the Celestial One** (see 1 Corinthians 15:49 CV). So, we have a celestial calling. It is not a calling to go to heaven when we die; it is a calling to become like our Beloved Lord when He comes to resurrect and transfigure His saints. As John wrote: **We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is** (1 John 3:2 NASB).

Jesus walked this earth as our Apostle, and today He ministers in the celestial sanctuary, interceding for His people as the High Priest. Today, **He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them** (Hebrews 7:25 NASB). We are all partners of this celestial calling because we are partners of His life.

Third, it is a call to **purpose**.

**And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to {His} purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined {to become} conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.** (Romans 8:28-30 NASB)

Here we discover the full meaning of our salvation. We are to be conformed to the image of God's Son. We are to be like Him in moral character. He is the first-born from the dead. Having been raised from the grave, He has birthed a new creation, a people who are to be like Him. We are saved to be in His image in glory (Colossians 1:27; 3:4). This is God's purpose predetermined before He sent His Son to earth to die. Those who believe on Jesus *are* called, *are* justified in the sight of God, and *are* glorified. In the first resurrection and transfiguration, He will raise His company of conquerors from the state of death to be glorified in them. This is God's purpose and calling for His people.

Finally, it is a call or invitation into **God's kingdom and glory**.

**(10) You [are] witnesses and [so is] God, how devoutly [or, in a godly manner] and righteously and blamelessly we became [fig., proved to be] to you, the ones believing, (11) even as you know how each one of you, as a father his own children, we [were] exhorting you and comforting [you] (12) and imploring [you], in order for you to walk about [fig., conduct yourselves] in a manner worthy of God, the One calling [inviting] you into His own kingdom and glory.** (1 Thessalonians 2:10-12 ALT)

With such a great calling set before us, we are to walk in a manner that is worthy of God who gives the invitation into His own kingdom and glory. Simply, we are being invited to join Christ as He takes the scepter of the kingdom of the heavens and reigns over the nations for 1,000 years. God is worthy of our walk that reflects our invitation into royalty. Let us pursue our invitation into the kingdom of our Lord.