

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)*

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The Kingdom of Our Lord #15.

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Healthcare #1

Anyone living in the United States these days who does not know that there is a raging debate over Obama healthcare reform must be living in a cave. Actually, what has been presented so far is not simply a reform or an adjustment of our current system but a dramatic and revolutionary change of it.

Having been covered by company-provided as well as private health insurance, having managed filing insurance claims to pay for sky-high medical bills while my wife was being treated for a life-threatening illness, having bought insurance coverage and being denied certain coverage because of pre-existing conditions, having dealt with a 60% increase in our insurance premium because we moved from one zip code to another, and having dealt with Medicare and end-of-life care for both my mother and father, I think I have a pretty good idea of how the system works, both pro and con, both good and bad. It's not broken as so many want us to believe; it is simply too expensive and often wasteful. The question is whether whatever comes out of Congress actually will lower costs while maintaining all the good and shedding all the bad of our current system. Based on the track record of the Federal government, I doubt that it will, no matter how many promises we are given to the contrary. I have no doubt that there is a much bigger agenda at work than simply an overhaul of the healthcare system.

Well, I will leave this matter with these few comments. Frankly, there are so many talking, debating, and arguing over healthcare that I have no desire to put a stake in the ground with one of the many camps that have formed to try to persuade the outcome. What I do desire is to present an entirely different view that no one in the media is discussing, and it has to do with the kingdom of God or, more specifically, the kingdom of Christ that is coming to this earth.

There is a solution to the so-called healthcare "crisis," but it is not discovered in the kingdoms of men or through the laws, regulations, and insurance plans of men. It is not even discovered through any medical system in the world, no matter how great any one system might be. I might remind you that many healthcare systems in the world are not very good at all. I have seen some and can attest that they are throwbacks to the early 1900's in equipment and care. Some areas of the world have no expert medical care at all. It might be a good thing for Americans to consider the great blessing that they do have when it comes to medical care. Actually, I believe many do see the blessing, and this is why they are fearful of the dramatic change they sense is coming if the present administration gets its way. I need to be careful or else I will get sidetracked with my opinions.

There is only one answer to healthcare, not only in the US but in the whole world, and that answer is in Christ, His kingdom, and His immortal conquerors who will lead the nations in the oncoming eon (age). You see, it is not about insurance or even doctors and drugs; it is about healing and good health in general. When the kingdom draws near and begins to reign over the nations, there will be a change in the very health of mankind, not all at once but over time. How do we know? Isaiah tells us so.

Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. ... There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed.
(Isaiah 65:18b; 20 ASV)

I am creating a Jerusalem, full of happy people. ... No child will die in infancy; everyone will live to a ripe old age. Anyone a hundred years old will be considered young, and to die younger than that will be considered a curse. (Isaiah 65:18b; 20 CEV)

Two translations are presented to bring out the full tenor of this truth. Notice that Jerusalem is in view but not the old, earthly Jerusalem; it is the Jerusalem associated with new heavens and a new earth that supersedes the former things (Isaiah 65:17). This is New Jerusalem.

Also, take note of the way the ASV words verse 18b. If you have followed my writings, you know I have stressed many times that New Jerusalem is a people, not a city of wood and stones. It is **a holy temple in the Lord** (Ephesians 2:21). As such, when the Lord declares that He is creating Jerusalem a rejoicing, He is declaring that New Jerusalem, that is, His immortal, glorified conquerors, the sons conformed to His image, will be a joy. How will they be a joy and to whom will they be a joy? They will be a joy to the mortals who are living during the Kingdom or Tabernacles Age. The joy will come upon the mortals because New Jerusalem (the immortals) will bring healing to the nations. How do we know this? We know it through John's Revelation.

And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:2 ASV)

On each side of the river are trees that grow a different kind of fruit each month of the year. The fruit gives life, and the leaves are used as medicine to heal the nations. (Revelation 22:2 CEV)

Again, two translations are presented to bring out the full tenor of this verse. The river signifies the spirit of God that gives life to all, and the tree of life signifies the nation that sustains the life of all other nations. If you recall, Jesus told the Jews of the ancient, earthly Jerusalem that the kingdom of God was being taken away from them and given to a nation [ethnos] producing the fruit of it (Matthew 21:43). This nation is New Jerusalem, the tree that produces kingdom fruit.

In Scripture, the word *tree* signifies *nation* (see Judges 9:8-15), which refers to a community of people under one government. In other words, the tree of life is *the* Christ or, more explicitly, the immortal body of Christ. We could say that the nation or people of life will be the fruit that sustains life, and its leaves will be medicine to the nations. There are twelve kinds of fruit, for New Jerusalem is made up of twelve tribes of the sons of Israel (Revelation 21:12), which also speaks of the perfection of government.

It is also interesting that the first mention of leaves in Scripture is the fig leaves that Adam and Eve used to cover their naked bodies after Adam's one transgression (Genesis 3:7). In Hebrew, the word for *leaf* is *aleh*, which comes from the root word *alah*, which has many meanings, one of which is "to ascend or arise." Since the tree of life first appears in Genesis, perhaps, we can apply this same meaning to the tree of life in Revelation. If so, then the leaves speak of the ascended life of the nation or New Jerusalem. It is the ascended life of Christ in an immortal people called New Jerusalem that will bring healing to the nations. The healing comes through New Jerusalem, that is, the complement of Christ or, if you will, the all in all new of God in Christ.

I realize that most of us have been taught to look at New Jerusalem as a literal, physical city that will reside on a new earth. I have no doubt that in God's day we will not be floating on some clouds or in some ether but that we will have a new earth that we will call home, an earth that embodies both the spiritual and the physical realms in a way that we cannot even imagine. However, if we understand that New Jerusalem signifies a people, that is, the sons of God conformed to the image of Christ, the Son of God, then we must realize that healing of mortal bodies, starting in the next eon, will come through the first fruits of New Jerusalem, the immortal conquerors, the tree of life, the ascended of the throne of God, the anointed, holy ones that will bring healing to the nations.

New Jerusalem will bring healing to the soul of the nations by teaching them righteousness (Isaiah 26:9) and will bring healing to the mortal bodies of the nations in much the same way that Jesus did when He came the first time preaching the kingdom of the heavens. As He taught the people and proclaimed the good news of the kingdom, He also healed every kind of disease and every kind of sickness (Matthew 9:35), and those who are counted worthy to be part of New Jerusalem, the nation bearing the fruit of the kingdom, will do likewise. In the next age, hospitals will be gradually emptied and health insurance will be a thing of the past. Healthcare will be kingdom *care*! Praise God!