

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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FOR THUS GOD LOVES THE WORLD

For thus God loves the world, so that He gives His only-begotten Son.... (John 3.16 CV)

Truly, God is going to shake all that can be shaken, for we receive an unshakable kingdom, the kingdom of Christ. As all things in the heavens and on the earth, the things invisible and visible, are shaken, many will wonder if there is a God and others will conclude that He must hate mankind.

Let us be clear that there is only **one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all** (Ephesians 4.6 CV), and that **God is love** (1 John 4.8, 16). God loves the world; this is why He sent His only begotten Son to the earth to die for the sin of the world. He did not die for sin so that mankind would be annihilated or perish forever, or even roast and toast forever and ever and ever in a place many call hell. He died so that the world may be saved through Him (John 3.17), and so it will be to the glory of God the Father. It is God's purpose in Christ to give life to all mankind, not all at the same time or all in the same manner, but all will eventually be given life through the Son of God. **For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified [made alive]** (1 Corinthians 15.22 CV). Many believers see Jesus' death on the cross as an abject failure, for they see multitudes being tortured in hell for eternity, as if Jesus could not and will not save all mankind. But let it be shouted from the rooftops and from the pulpits that Jesus' death is an absolute, 100% success in the redemption of every single person that ever came forth from the line of Adam because the last Adam is a life-giving spirit (1 Corinthians 15.45), and He will not fail to give life to all. He must bring all into life so that God the Father may be All in all (1 Corinthians 15.28), which is the very purpose of the eons.

It is for the life to come, immortal life and eonian life, that we labor and strive, **because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of believers** (1 Timothy 4.8-10 NASB). Notice that Paul does not state that He is the savior exclusively of believers, as many incorrectly interpret this verse, but that He is the savior of all men (mankind). This should bring out praises and shouts of hallelujah from the lips of His people, for our God loves not only those He calls and chooses in this eon, but He also loves the whole world to the point that, one day, He will be All in all to every creature that has ever lived or will live in His creation.

Dear beloved in Christ, this is the meaning of God is love, for thus God loves the world. So as the shaking comes and perhaps increases in intensity and the things that we hold dear to our selves and provide us security are shaken to dust, let us not lose sight of the fact that there is something coming that is so great that the world and our lives as we know them will be but pale, yellowed images compared to the brightness of the glory of Christ.

John is often called the apostle of love, for he was the one who knew that the Lord Jesus loved him (John 21.20). Truly, Jesus loved the others as well, but John knew that he was personally loved. He had leaned on the breast of Jesus and felt the very heartbeat of God. **There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved** (John 13.23 NASB).

In addition to telling us that God is love, John explains this love and its origin.

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)

The love of God is expressed in a perfect life laid down for the sin of the world; a life that knew no sin (2 Corinthians 5.21).

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4.9-10 NASB)

We love, because He first loved us. (1 John 4.19 NASB)

Love does not start with mankind; it starts with God and His Son. It is the very nature of God to love, for this is who He is. If we want to know true love, we must know God. If we want to understand true love, we must see it in the death and resurrection of God's Son.

I remind all who read my writings of the love of God, because I fear that many believers in our day have become warriors and not lovers; many have become warmongers and not peacemakers. Our testimony before the world is that God is love and that He loves the world so that He gives His only-begotten Son. God is not out to destroy mankind and cast multitudes into an eternal furnace. He is out to bring all mankind into glory through His Son. Do you get it? It is only through His Son, but His Son will save all mankind, all to the glory of God His Father.

Paul has given us the message of peace that we are to extend to the world. God is not reckoning their offenses to them.

Yet all is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation, how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us the word of the conciliation. For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching for Christ's sake, "Be conciliated to God!" For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him. (2 Corinthians 5.18-21 CV)

We are to be ambassadors for Christ that God has made a peace treaty with mankind. Be at peace with God! God is love, and He is not reckoning your offenses to you. He is reconciling all things in the heavens and on the earth to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1.20). This is not only for believers, but ultimately it will be for all mankind and for all creation.

Saints, when the world is shaken, then lawlessness increases, which means that mankind thwarts the law of God and sets his heart against God and His Son. When this happens, love grows cold. Jesus has forewarned us.

"Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold." (Matthew 24.12 NASB)

Consider John's answer to lawlessness: **For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments [law], and His commandments are not burdensome** (1 John 5.3 NASB). There is one commandment that sums up all the other commandments: **Love God and love one another** (Matthew 22.37-39; John 15.12-13). Let us not follow the example of the world; let us follow our Lord Jesus Christ and be His ambassadors of love and peace. We have a message for the world that is seeking answers for all its problems, but they are not seeking the One who is the answer to all things.

For thus God loves the world, so that He gives His only-begotten Son!