

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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Death of Icons, WASP-17, & Rebellion.

September 9, 2009

Some Thoughts

It has been some time since I have given some thoughts on current events. I have been saving some of this for a while, so here are some thoughts and questions to ponder.

The death of icons.

From June to August of this year, we have seen three major icons, and a few lesser ones, die that makes me wonder if they speak of coming judgment of the entertainment, journalistic, and political systems that are a major part, if not the central component, of our present-day culture. It seems there is so much emphasis on and downright idolatry in these three spheres of influence over the lives of Americans.

Actually, it all started on June 25, 2009 with the fall of an angel, so to speak. Actress **Farrah Fawcett** of **Charlie's Angels** (1976) fame died after a long bout with cancer. I find it intriguing that the day began with a fallen angel.

But this death was overshadowed by a greater death later that day, the death of **Michael Jackson**, a pop icon who is described as the **King of Pop**. The word *icon* is defined as "an image; figure; representation; picture." Needless to say, this was a huge event throughout the world. After all, the word *pop* implies popular, and in spite of his idiosyncrasies, Michael Jackson was a very popular entertainer who was idolized by many. Recently, his death has been ruled a homicide.

So, in one day, the world saw an angel fall and a king killed, both of the entertainment world.

Then, **22 days** later, on July 17, 2009, another icon died, only this one was an icon of journalism and, more specifically, the news media. **Walter Cronkite** died at the age of 92 of vascular disease. He had been a news anchor for CBS Evening News for 19 years from 1962-1981, and he was highly respected for his fairness in reporting the news. Many believe that his breed of journalism has been lost in our day as he was described as "**the most trusted man in America**," a commendation that is seldom, if ever, made about any in our day.

Then, exactly 2 months or **61 days** after Michael Jackson's death, another icon died, but this one represented the political sphere. On August 25, 2009, **Senator Edward (Ted) Kennedy**, age 77, died of brain cancer after having served in the US Senate for 46 years. Senator Kennedy's career epitomizes the **professional politician** of our day; one who made a career out of holding a position of power in our government. Regardless of how one views his character and record, which is not without controversy, I believe that his longevity in office and the near worship (idolization) of him by his constituents and much of the political world is the real issue. The US political system as envisioned by our Founding Fathers was not to be one of **a professional class of elite politicians** and, most definitely, not to be one of **an elite ruling aristocracy**.

Without focusing on the individuals, for they were mere mortals and sinners needing a Savior just like the rest of us, I leave you with a question: Do these deaths portend the judgment of God upon the entertainment industry, the news media (journalism), and the political system that have become increasingly more antichrist over the last century and have become fortresses against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)? It makes me wonder if a major death in the religious world will be next.

WASP-17.

During August 2009, I read a fascinating article about a recent discovery. The article was titled "**Newfound Planet Orbits Backward**." This was quite a discovery, for no one has ever observed a planet going backward. It was reported to be going the wrong way and as "one of the strangest planets we

know about.” This strange planet was designated as WASP-17 because it was the 17th extrasolar planet discovered by the **Wide Area Search for Planets** (WASP).

Of course, astronomers have their technical theories as to how and why this planet is acting in such a manner, but I was caught by the number of the planet that is spinning around out there in a direction contrary to all astronomical observations to date.

To put a spiritual spin on the subject, pun intended, I was caught by the fact that the 17th extrasolar planet discovered operates contrary to conventional wisdom and that the number **17** in Scripture often signifies **victory**.

Now, some might question my sanity at this point and wonder how a backward-moving planet could be likened to some sort of spiritual victory.

For me it is easy; when the world, even much of the religious world, including Christendom, is going in one direction, the true victory in Christ is going in the opposite direction. I believe that those who are truly conquering in our day are not the ones who are going with the flow of the crowd but are like salmon swimming upstream against the flow. They are the ones who see what the Lord is doing, listen for His voice, and, out of obedience, follow Him. They are the ones who know the meaning of pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14).

Victory is in following Christ, not in following the crowd, best described as the blind leading the blind. As I listen to much of what is being reported and even what seems to be the teaching and emphasis of many churches today, I sense a great disconnect to what the Lord is doing and what is soon to come upon this world. It truly is as in the days of Noah, as well as the last days spoken of by Peter; a day in which the mockers come, saying: **“Where is the promise of His coming?”** (2 Peter 3:4). I also liken it to the day in which our beloved Lord was on this earth 2,000 years ago. Back then, the ones who should have known the season in which they lived were blind to it; it was the blind leading the blind, and the heart of the people was dull, their ears could not hear, and their eyes could not see. The Lord spoke to them in parables so that they would not understand (Matthew 13). We are in days like this as the second coming of our Lord approaches. The ones who conquer in this day and will be counted worthy of the kingdom that is coming are those with hearts that love the Lord and are obedient to His word, with ears to hear what the Spirit is saying, and with eyes that have spiritual vision (Revelation 2-3).

Let us be willing to be a WASP-17 planet! Who knows; perhaps this planet is actually going in the better or right direction. We need to be going in the direction of the Lord, for this is the path of true victory.

Rebellion.

This leads me to a thought on all the protest and unrest that seems to be boiling up among Americans, especially in relation to the direction in which President Obama is clearly trying to take us. As Christians, we need to ask ourselves this question: **Are we under the judgment of God, and, if so, are we fighting against His judgment?** (1 Peter 4:17)? This question does not imply that what our government is trying to do to us is right or wrong; what it clearly means is that we need to be clear we are not fighting against the discipline of our heavenly Father. We need to seek God first.

(5) And you have forgotten the exhortation which He speaks with you, as with sons, “My sons, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint while being corrected by Him. (6) For whom the Lord loves, He disciplines, and whips every son whom He receives.” Prov. 3:11, 12 (7) If you endure discipline, God is dealing with you as with sons; for who is the son whom a father does not discipline? (8) But if you are without discipline, of which all have become sharers, then you are bastards, and not sons. (9) Furthermore, indeed we have had fathers of our flesh as correctors, and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits, and we shall live? (10) For they truly disciplined us for a few days according to the thing seeming good to them; but He for our profit, in order for us to partake of His holiness. (Hebrews 12:5-10 LITV)

Our nation was founded on rebellion against King George; let us not end it on rebellion against God’s King, Jesus, the King of kings.