

# 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)*

#03-09164

## ***Thus God Loves the World***

September 14, 2009

**For thus God loves the world, so that He gives His only-begotten Son, that everyone who is believing in Him should not be perishing, but may be having life eonian.** (John 3:16 CV)

**“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”** (John 3:16 NASB)

This one verse is probably the most quoted verse of the entire Bible, particularly among those who wear the evangelical label. Unfortunately, it is also one of the most abused, for it is used to tell people that if they do not believe, then they will spend eternity, that is, forever, in an eternal home of literal fire that is commonly called *hell*. If those who have been taught this would put aside this tradition of men and seriously study Scripture under the guidance of the spirit of truth, then they would discover that the whole concept of hell, as taught among evangelicals and even held by many in the world, is not only not biblical but is based on pagan mythology.

In issue #03-09163, September 13, 2009, *Hermes*, I brought to light a spirit that has come upon the United States that can be traced to pagan mythology, specifically, the pagan Greek god Hermes. This mythological god that carried a wand, which is now the symbol of the medical profession, was also known as the god who escorted the dead to Hades. In a sense, he could be called a messenger god of the living and the dead.

We need to realize that the Greeks and most pagan religions believe that the soul is immortal and, therefore, never dies; it just goes to another world called the underworld. Isn't it strange that many Christians are taught this as well, for many believe that the soul is immortal? Scripture does not teach this and, in fact, makes it quite clear that the soul is connected with the body. **The soul of the flesh is in the blood** (Leviticus 17:11 DNT). Pour out the blood onto the ground (death) and the soul goes with it into death.

We must think like a Hebrew and not a Greek. The Hebrews saw the soul going to sheol (hades), the unseen. Simply, they did not know where the soul went in death. The unseen does not imply that it is a place, especially a place of torment or paradise, as pagans believe. **The dead know nothing whatsoever** (Ecclesiastes 9:5), so it is not biblically sound to teach that the soul is immortal and resides in another place in death. This is pagan thought!

In light of what I discovered about the spirit of Hermes, it appears that as our national leaders are under the influence of this spirit of darkness, so are many teachers within Christendom.

Now, I have presented two translations of John 3:16. The CV or Concordant Version reads differently from the New American Standard Bible, which is the way most translations word it. It is my opinion that the CV is the better translation and more clearly captures the heart of God for the world.

First, God loves the world. It is not enough to say that He loved the world, as if His love is past tense. If it is a past love, then does He not love the world today? Was His love exhausted on the cross? Has His love grown cold for the world? I doubt it! **God is love** should settle all these questions with no doubt remaining. At the cross, **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them** (2 Corinthians 5:19). This is love in action, and God hasn't changed.

Second, God gives His only-begotten Son. It is not enough to say that He gave His only begotten Son. Surely, He did give Him up on the cross, but He also raised Him up from among the dead so that **in Christ all will be made alive** (1 Corinthians 15:22). The Father continually gives His Son to mankind so that all shall come to the knowledge of the truth. This is not some mystical thing like Christ being in some box sitting on some altar with a shining red light to indicate that He continues to die for our sins. Definitely not! He died once for all and now He lives for all, for God gives His Son for all. He is the Way, the Resurrection, and the Life, and all come to the Father through Him.

Third, God gives His firstborn Son, the Son of God and the Son of Man, the firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15), so that He will bring **many sons to glory** (Hebrews 2:10). This is God's plan to achieve His purpose of being *All in all new*. Because God gives His firstborn Son for mankind, we can be assured that all mankind, one day, but not in the same day, will come to be sons of God.

Fourth, everyone believing in Him shall not be perishing, that is, dying. We must believe on Jesus if we are to ever come into immortality, which is what I believe salvation is truly all about, for without immortality, death and its partner, sin, will continue to be a curse upon mankind (Revelation 21:4; 22:3). Sin can only reign in death (Romans 5:21; 6:12); it cannot reign in life, so remove death or the mortal body, and sin is no more. In some respects, death of the mortal body is a blessing from God, for it removes sin. We need immortality to see Jesus and to reign with Him in the oncoming eon.

The word *perish* comes from the Greek word *apollumi*, which means "to die, to destroy, to perish." When the disciples were in the boat with Jesus as a great storm arose, they cried out to the Lord: "**Save us; we are perishing** [apollumi]" (Matthew 8:25), for they feared for their lives.

Personally, I see two ways to view this word about perishing.

First, most people are taught that the majority of mankind will never believe; consequently, most will perish, which to some means a life in hell and to others a complete annihilation of the person (i.e., burned up in a literal fire). I reject both thoughts as unbiblical. Instead, I believe that Jesus was not making a statement that any would perish in this sense, for all will eventually believe; He merely was stating that, without Him, dying (or, perishing) would continue to be a curse for mankind. All would die and never come out of death. He was not saying that if you don't believe in Me, you will end up in an eternal hell to be tortured and tormented. People read this into His words, but Jesus made no such assertion.

Second, the dying or perishing that Jesus referred to is in reference to whether one will have life in His kingdom, that is, during the Tabernacles Age. John wrote: **They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years** (Revelation 20:4-6 NASB). The question is whether one will be counted worthy to come to life (out of the state of death into immortality) to reign with Christ for 1,000 years, or will remain in the place of death until the completion of the 1000-year reign. Those who did not believe on Jesus over 2,000 years ago were perishing, for they died and will remain in the place of death until the second resurrection. The same must be said of all that have rejected Christ since then, including those in our day; all are perishing or dying and will physically die one day and not be raised up until the completion of the 1,000-year age.

This last point leads to the matter of **eonian life**. Most translations state eternal life, but as I have stated in other writings, the more accurate translation of the Greek transliterated word *aion* is eon or age, not eternal. In John 3, Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus about seeing and entering into the kingdom of God. The Jew of that day was looking for the kingdom of the heavens to come to earth with the Messiah as the King of Israel. Consequently, we could (should?) assume that eonian life refers to having life in the coming eon; this is what eonian life is all about. For more understanding of eonian life, please see my book *The Purpose and Plan of the Eons*, Volume 2, Chapter 3. *Eonian Life*.