

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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by – Stuart H. Pouliot

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Every Knee Will Bow

(9) Because of this also God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name, (10) that at the name of Jesus “every knee should bow [*kampto*],” of heavenly ones, and earthly ones, and ones under the earth, (11) and “every tongue should confess” that Jesus Christ is “Lord,” to the glory of God the Father. Isa. 45:23 (Philippians 2:9-11 LITV)

I suppose that most of us have been taught by well-meaning teachers that, one day, the lost will be forced to bow their knees to the Lord and confess with their tongues that Jesus Christ is Lord. Further, many have been taught that they will be forced to make this confession right before they are unmercifully cast by an angry and vengeful god into an eternal torture chamber called *hell*. If you have read any of my material, you know that I reject this teaching, not only because I don't agree with it, but because it is in opposition to Scripture and the whole concept of **God is love**.

The purpose of the lake of fire (not hell) is to bring the carnal deeds of the lost into the second death, right the wrongs of their life (judgment of their deeds), and teach them righteousness. In other words, it is to restore them, not to destroy or torture them. God wills all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and so all will, barring none (1 Timothy 2:4). This will take time, but each will be made alive in Christ in his own troop (1 Corinthians 15:22-23), even if it takes many eons to fully restore all mankind.

Every knee will willingly bow and every tongue willingly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Do you honestly think that when the lost stand before the **Great White Throne** and see Jesus standing there in all His glory that they will say to themselves: “He is not Lord”? I doubt it. They will be like John and fall at His feet like dead men (Revelation 1:17).

Besides, Paul tells us that no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

Because of this I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, Jesus is a curse. And no one is able to say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3 LITV)

This may surprise some, but whenever a knee bows and a tongue makes this great confession, it is because the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in the person. In other words, all mankind, none excluded, will, one day, have the spirit of God within them. Consequently, all mankind will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

In the Greek, the word translated as *bow* is *kampto*, which means “to bend.” *Vines Expository Dictionary* states that it means “to bend, is used especially of bending the knees in religious veneration.” The word *veneration* applies to worship and means “to look upon with feelings of deep respect; a feeling of deep respect and reverence.” In other words, *kampto* applies to one who willingly bows out of deep respect and is not forced or coerced into it. If Paul meant that all will be forced to bow, then he would have used the word *sunkampto*, which means “to bend down by compulsory force.” Paul used this word in quoting David in reference to Israel.

And David said, “Let their table become for a snare and a trap, and for a stumbling block,” and a repayment to them; (10) “let their eyes be darkened, not to see, and their back always bowing [*sunkampto*].” LXX-68:23, 24; MT-Psa. 69:22, 23 (Romans 11:9-10 LITV)

As one who had been a blasphemer and who knew he was saved, not according to his own righteousness or works but by the righteousness of Christ and His one work (Philippians 3:2-11), Paul knew the heart of God for mankind. When Jesus broke into his life, Paul became a changed man, and he started to search Hebrew Scripture in an entirely new light. Yes, the Lord broke into his life; Paul was not seeking for Christ; on the contrary, he had set out to destroy the Christ (the Way) as he was on the road to Damascus. See article #3, November 2007, *Laid Hold of by Christ Jesus*, and article #5, January 2008, *Being Ignorant, In Unbelief, Yet The Grace*.

Consequently, Paul did not make up these words but repeated them and explained them in light of the new covenant that shone brightly in his inner man. He quoted Isaiah.

(22) “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. (23) I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow [kara], every tongue will swear allegiance [shaba]. (24) They will say of Me, ‘Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.’ Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him will be put to shame.” (Isaiah 45:22-24 NASB)

Consider carefully the word of the Lord to Isaiah. The Lord has called forth to all the ends of the earth, meaning all mankind. He has called all mankind to turn to Him and be saved, for salvation comes through no other. But then, the Lord swears by Himself. In other words, He makes an oath that He has sent forth His word and that His word will not come back to Him as if it were not accomplished; that is, it will not fail. But fail at what? It will not fail to cause, not force, all mankind to bow the knee to Him and every tongue to swear allegiance to Him. **Love will do this!**

The Hebrew word for *bow* is *kara*, which means “to sink or prostrate.” The Hebrew word for *swear allegiance* is *shaba*, which has a very interesting meaning. It comes from the root word *shebah*, *shibah*, which is a primitive cardinal number, the number seven, which signifies **spiritual perfection**.

In other words, when every knee bows to the Lord and swears that He is truly Lord, it signifies spiritual perfection, which can only come through the Holy Spirit taking up residence in everyone who bows, that is, all mankind. All are destined for spiritual perfection.

Not only will all mankind bow and swear allegiance or confess, but all will acknowledge, just as Paul did, that only in the Lord is righteousness; a righteousness through faith in Christ, which comes from God on the basis of faith (Philippians 3:9). **The Lord our righteousness** (Jeremiah 23:6).

All who were angry with the Lord, even ones who rejected Him, will come to Him. Undoubtedly, the Great White Throne judgment will bring shame upon many, but this does not mean that they will become like toast for eternity (i.e., burned and tortured in a never-ending literal fire).

Some might raise an objection: Do you mean that there is no judgment? I mean no such thing, **for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad** (2 Corinthians 5:10 NASB). This applies to ALL! Some will be saved to arise in the first resurrection and transfiguration, and others will arise in the second resurrection **saved, yet so as through fire** (1 Corinthians 3:15). Paul confirms this again in light of every knee bowing and every tongue confessing.

(11) For it has been written, “As I live, says the Lord, that every knee will bow to Me, and every tongue confess to God.” Isa. 45:23 (12) So then each one of us will give account concerning himself to God. (Romans 14:11-12 LITV)

Dear brethren, let us revel in the glory of our Lord and what He has accomplished for all mankind. Can you think of anything more glorious than God *eventually* saving all mankind through His Son? Can you think of anything that will bring Him more glory than this? I doubt it!