

# 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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## ***Chastening in the Day of Judging***

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For those of us who believe that Scripture clearly teaches the restoration of all things, which means that, when all is said and done in regard to the eons or ages made through the Son, all mankind will be made alive in Christ, for there will be no more death of any kind. This is what Scripture tells us.

**In these last days did speak to us in a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He did make the ages....** (Hebrews 1:2 YLT)

**For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified [made alive]. ... (25) For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. (26) The last enemy that will be abolished is death.** (1 Corinthians 15:22, 25-26 CV [NASB])

When people hear of the restoration or reconciliation of all things, especially that most of mankind is not going to end up in an eternal hell of physical torture, or be annihilated completely, never to see the light of day again, they quickly think that we do not believe that God will judge anybody. This is far from the truth. However, there is a difference in the kind of judgment most Christians believe God will mete out, and what Scripture presents in respect to restoration. Based on what I have heard come from pulpits and written in books, many Christians see judgment as punishment of the lost for rejection of God's Son. In other words, God is mad at mankind for not believing, as if man's salvation depends totally on man. This is the false tradition of men and not the word from God.

**God must and will judge all mankind** (Romans 14:10), but it is not for destruction; it is for restoration and restitution of all the wrongs. In the end, every knee will willingly bow to Him (Romans 14:11). On what basis must He judge? What standard will He use? It must be based upon His divine law. **Sin is lawlessness** (1 John 3:4), so the only way to judge sin is by the law, for without the law we would never know what sin is in the first place. But do not confuse this with being justified by faith. **We are justified by faith.** As Paul wrote: **For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law** (Romans 3:28 NASB). We are not justified by the works of the law, but our faith will be judged by our works done by faith (James 2:14-26).

God judges by His law, which is His word, the entire Bible and what His spirit speaks to our hearts to obey (James 4:17). His word is **like fire** and **a hammer which shatters a rock** (Jeremiah 23:29).

God has revealed the end from the beginning, and He is working all things toward His end (Isaiah 46:10). Nothing that has happened, is happening, and will happen in this world is outside the purpose and plan of God, and everything is driving toward God's end for mankind and His entire creation. In a world full of evil, I realize that this is almost beyond our capacity to grasp. How could everything, even the evil we see and experience all around us and in our lives, be part of God's plan to bring about His purpose? As much as it might not set well with the doctrines of men, Scripture tells us that God is the creator of evil (Isaiah 45:7), and since this is so, we must conclude that all evil has a purpose in the working out of God's plan. Simply, the Creator is fully responsible for His entire creation.

However, if God created evil, then why does it seem to us that He is so harsh in judging? When we study the history of Israel and the nations in Scripture, we read of thousands of people and many nations brought into death and destruction through the judgment of God. Even during our present wicked eon the fury of God has been brought to bear on the world. Why? When we look around us today and consider our own lives, we see evil and wickedness abound. Why does God allow so much evil to befall even His own people who love Him?

Obviously, God's ways are not our ways. His wisdom and judgments are not our wisdom and judgments. Nevertheless, God has told us the end from the beginning. So what is the end? It is

explained in one word: Glory! God's purpose for all mankind is glory, starting with the many sons who will be led into glory (Hebrews 2.10; Colossians 1.27) and consummating with the heavenly city that will come down out of heaven having the glory from God (Revelation 21.10).

What is glory? Glory is when everything in God's creation is as He intended it to be from before the beginning of the eons. It is God's purpose to transform all mankind from Adam to the last human born on earth into the image of His Beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, so that His God and Father may be *All in all new*.

For me, this explains everything. As painful as evil and death are, and as painful as judgment might be to many, even the fury of God, these are merely momentary light afflictions compared to the glory to come when there is no more evil, no more death, no more mourning, no more clamor, no more misery. In that day, the former things will pass away, and the One sitting on the throne will be making all new (Revelation 21.4-5).

God allows every human to go through some form of suffering, fiery trial, discipline, and evil because these, and many more hardships, are needed to bring us all through to His end. Even the ones who seem to be filled with evil and who are brought into severe judgment, even unto death, are in the purpose of God to be saved (restored) in the end. From our perspective, death is a great enemy, and even though God hates death, as we do, He nevertheless sees the end and knows that it is all leading to life. **Death is a means to His end, and He sees beyond death to life.** After all, what is death to **the God of the living** (Matthew 22.32)? What is death to God who has brought forth victory over sin and death through His Son, who is **the Resurrection and the Life**?

So, when mankind experiences judgment and death, God sees the life that ultimately will come forth for all mankind, even if it comes forth for many at the consummation of the eons. We may not understand why God has chosen to do it this way; but He is God and who of us can question His wisdom?

It is unfortunate that the doctrines of men have created such havoc in understanding the judgment of God, as if He is an angry God who is determined to punish mankind with an eternal hell, because we are unable to do what we were never capable of doing in the first place, that is, save ourselves. God is the Savior of *all* mankind, and He wills that all mankind be saved, even though His judging may seem severe at times. His judging is for chastening, not for an eternal hell.

**The Lord is acquainted with the rescue of the devout out of trial, yet is keeping the unjust for chastening [kolasis] in the day of judging, yet specially those going after the flesh in defiling lust and despising lordship.** (2 Peter 2.9-10 CV)

Most translations use the words *punishment* or *tormented* instead of *chastening*, but this wrongly makes judgment penal in nature rather than corrective. This is interpretative bias to bolster man's doctrine of a never-ending punishment in a physical fire. Penal judgment is designed to mete out punishment on the perpetrator but not to correct or restore the person.

In the Greek, the word *kolasis* is concordantly translated as *chastening*, which means "**to chasten with a view to amendment, in contrast to punishment which is penal**" (also used in Matthew 25.46; Acts 4.21; 2 Peter 2.4; 1 John 4.18). In other words, *chastening* has a purpose, and that purpose is to correct and to purify the one who is suffering through the chastening. However, *punishment* aims to satisfy the one who is inflicting the punishment. For example, before he met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, Saul was seeking to destroy the Way. He testified: **I went into Damascus, to be leading also those being there, bound, to Jerusalem, that they may be punished** (Acts 22.5 CV). Saul had no intention of correcting those of the Way; he sought to inflict punishment on them, to the point of death if necessary, to satisfy his own rage against them, on account of which he later considered himself the least of the apostles.

Let it be indelibly written on our hearts that God's judgment is to settle accounts to bring forth the highest and most pure form of righteousness and justice. It is not to penalize or to destroy but to restore. This is the fruit of love.

Oh, how different is the heart of God and His love toward mankind! The unjust are kept for chastening, not for destruction or for an eternal hell. May our spiritual eye be opened to this truth!