

# 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)

#04-1052

***Appointed Times***

May 17, 2009

Shortly after the Lord broke into my life, I was exposed to teaching about the imminent return of the Lord, which states that, since Calvary, there are no prophecies or events that have to be fulfilled in order for Jesus to return for the church. In other words, He could have returned at any time after Calvary. He could have come 2,000 years ago, or 200 years ago, or, for that matter, 2 days ago, and He could come today, tomorrow, or hundreds or thousands of days or years into the future, as far as this teaching is concerned. Simply, the teaching on the imminent return of Christ has His return coming at any moment with no particular trigger point for it or progression of events toward it; thus, it is open-ended. I believe that part of this open-ended thinking stems from a rigid and misguided adherence to Jesus saying that of the day and hour no one knows, but the Father alone (Matthew 24:36).

I bought into much of this thinking for a season until I realized that, according to Scripture, the imminent return of Christ is not true.

At this point, I offer one example that I will explain in greater detail in a subsequent issue on the **Ten Commandments**. The **fourth commandment** given to Moses refutes such a notion, for it calls for a remembrance of the sabbath or the seventh day (Exodus 20:8-11; Hebrews 4), which in the long view refers to the last 1,000-year day (**Lord's Day**) for our present earth and heaven that will have been preceded by six 1,000-year days or 6,000 years (**Man's Day**).

Do the math: There were 4,000 years Adam and Jesus walking on earth, and there have been 2,000 years since Calvary, which yields 6,000 years (roughly). Consequently, Jesus could not have returned at any time in the last 2,000 years. The good news is that the clock has about run out of time, if it has not already done so, and we are in a time of transition that can go on for only so long.

I have shared my thoughts on these matters in article #18, February 2009, *When the Day Comes [2010]*, starting at page 10, and in my book, *The Purpose and Plan of the Eons*, Volume 1, Chapter 2, *After Six Days...On the Seventh Day*. I do not intend to go over this ground here, so please read these materials if you have not already done so.

The point that I want to underline in this issue is that God has set appointed times for everything that is being worked out according to His plan to achieve the ultimate purpose of God being all in all at the consummation of the eons. He has very deliberately and purposely appointed the times. They are not adjustments to events and circumstances that have happened on earth nor are they dependent on mankind in general or His people in particular. If God's plan were dependent on any of us, no matter how righteous we might think we are, or how much intercessory prayer we think we are offering up, or how much smarter we think we are than our forefathers, I doubt that it would ever come to fruition. Look at our track record for the last 6,000 years, or even more contemporary, the last 2,000 years, or even the last 100 years. Man's future, as well as all creation's future, is totally dependent on God, the Creator and Owner of all. **But God!**

Thus, it is my opinion, contrary to the view of some, that we, as the ecclesia, cannot change these fixed times. They are appointed by God, and all the events in between them are driving and working toward the fulfillment of His plan. In fact, as we will see in a future issue, God has established a progression of growth for all believers, at the individual and ecclesia levels, as well as for all mankind, at the individual and national levels, until all mankind and all creation are brought into the glorious presence of God by

experiencing **Tabernacles**, which is entering into the **Most Holy Place**, that is, **New Jerusalem**. This is the purpose of God that He is working out in the eons through His Son.

Now, having made my point, I will support it with a few scriptures.

**In many ways and in various ways of old, God spoke to the fathers in the prophets; (2) in these last days He spoke to us in the Son, whom He appointed heir of all; through whom He indeed made the ages [eons]....** (Hebrews 1:1-2 LITV [CV])

Most versions erroneously translate the word *aion* into the word *worlds*, and others translate it into *universe* or *generations*. The Greek word *aion* should be translated as *age* or *eon*. See issue #03-09131, June 15, 2009, *Eon (Age), Not Eternal or World*. With the proper translation, we learn that the very ages or time itself was made through the Son of God, the Creator of all things in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible (Colossians 1:16). It all starts with our Lord Jesus.

Answer this question: If all things, including the eons and time itself, are made through the Son, do you truly believe that in His capacity as Creator, He does not know the times and epochs as set by His Father? Logic demands that He must know!

As He was about to depart for the throne, Jesus Himself made it very clear to His disciples that God fixes the times and epochs, which includes all that pertains to His return and the coming of His kingdom. The Father fixes them, but it does not mean that the Creator Son of God does not know them.

**He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority...."** (Acts 1:7 NASB)

Daniel affirmed the same thought in reference to kings and their kingdoms.

**"It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding."** (Daniel 2:21 NASB)

Paul also affirmed the same thought in reference to every nation of mankind, except he used the term *appointed times*.

**"The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; (25) nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; (26) and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, (27) that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; (28) for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'" (Acts 17:24-28 NASB)**

Having been a devout Pharisee, when he used the expression *appointed times*, Paul, undoubtedly, thought back on the appointed times given to the sons of Israel through Moses.

**"These are the appointed times of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them."** (Leviticus 23:4 NASB)

The nation of Israel was called out of Egypt (the world) and commanded to commemorate national festivals or feasts at the appointed times of the Lord. The Lord told them the exact day that they were to proclaim the holy convocations, as well as the length and required activities of the feasts. Each feast, especially the three national feasts (Exodus 23:14-17), was significant to the national life of Israel and is a type of the progression all mankind must follow to reach God's new beginning where all is new.

With these few verses, we see that there are appointed times or times and epochs fixed by the Father. They are fixed and not open for negotiation. As we will see later, these fixed, appointed times are all in accordance with God's plan to bring mankind and all creation into His all new, New Jerusalem.