

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)

#05-1103

Birds Falling, Fish Floating

January 3, 2011

As 2010 came to an end, we heard that 10 tornadoes hit 5 Midwestern American states killing 7 people and that a massive area in Australia was flooded in what some call a "biblical flood," which continues to affect thousands in northeastern Australia. Eighty percent of one town was submerged by the worst flooding on record, and 1,000 homes were inundated. It was reported that 4,000 homes in the region were flood-affected in some measure.

As if this were not enough, as 2011 began, we heard of birds falling out of the sky and dead fish floating on the water and washing ashore. Here are some of the headlines I just pulled off the Internet:

Thousands of birds fall from the sky in Beebe (Arkansas)

Mass La. bird deaths puzzle investigators (Labarre, Louisiana)

Woman reports dozens of dead birds in her yard (Gilbertsville, Kentucky)

Dead fish cover 20-miles of Arkansas River

Thousands of dead fish wash onto Bay shores (Kent Island, Maryland)

Mysterious killing of fish in coastal area (Parana, Paranagua)

Scientists will be quick to point out that bird and fish kills are not unusual events. US Geological Survey records indicate that, in the last 30 years, there have been 16 events in which at least 1,000 blackbirds have died all at once. Others are saying that this many birds out of millions is not really that many.

Without any doubt, they are correct to make such assertions, but what is unusual to me is that these things are occurring so soon in 2011 and that they are occurring in different places. As I am writing this issue, I just heard that some birds have also fallen out of the sky in Sweden.

In Beebe, Arkansas, an estimated 3,000 red-winged blackbirds fell out of the sky, and then 500 of the same species fell in Labarre, Louisiana. A woman in Kentucky also reported dead birds scattered across her yard. Needless to say, this brought some panic and fear in some people who, undoubtedly, had visions of Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds."

Along a 20-mile stretch of the Arkansas River, an estimated 100,000 drum fish washed ashore or were floating in the water. Drum fish could be called detritus or bottom feeders, since they eat debris that settles on the river bottom. Over a period of nearly a week, 100 tons of fish (sardine, croaker, and catfish) have been found dead off the coast of Parana, which is located in the southern part of Brazil.

Now, this poses the question: Are these events harbingers or fulfillments of prophecy?

First, it seems to me that they are all part of the broader shaking that God has promised would come upon the earth and the heaven (Haggai 2:6; Hebrews 12:26). The natural order of both heaven and earth is being shaken. Birds fly in the first heaven or, if you will, air around the earth. They are to fly, not fall. This is a shaking of the air regardless of the cause, whether manmade or natural. Fish are to swim in water, not float on it or end up on land. Death is a common everyday occurrence for God's creatures, but when they fall out of the sky or float on the water in mass, this is not natural; it is a shaking.

I know there are many who will counter this with the argument that events such as this, as well as many others, have been occurring since the beginning of time. I agree. Events occurring here and there across the globe do not necessarily portend the end of our present wicked eon [age].

But we need to be reminded that Jesus spoke of famines and earthquakes, that is, natural events, occurring in **various places** at the end of the age (Matthew 24:3, 7). He did not state that they would be widespread as if to cover the whole earth. He likened them to birth pangs (Matthew 24:8), which, I might add, come in waves. Also, famines and earthquakes are only two examples of what will occur in various places (Luke 21:11), for surely God's shaking of the earth and the heaven includes far more than these two types of events. John's prophetic Patmos vision bears witness to this, as well as to the fact that most of the shaking will be worldwide as the end of the age comes.

Second, these events should remind us of John's Patmos vision and judgment of **Mystery Babylon**.

The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died. (Revelation 16:3 NASB)

And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. (Revelation 18:2 NASB)

Mind you, I am not stating that these naturally occurring events are fulfillments of these prophecies. Biblically speaking, according to the law, red-winged blackbirds are not unclean birds, for they eat seeds and insects. However, in some cultures, blackbirds are considered bad omens. These events are more an indication that we are living at the end of an age, that is, **Man's Day**. Again, I see the events of our day in the broader perspective of God shaking the earth and the heaven in the last days.

Third, and most importantly, we must go beyond interpreting God's word from a physical perspective to discerning what it spiritually signifies. Let us not lose sight of the fact that the battle is not of flesh and blood (carnal) but of the spirit (Ephesians 6:12). What occurs in the natural realm is merely an indication of what is and will be transpiring in the spiritual realm. For too long, too many of us Christians have been looking at God's word on the physical level with an Old Covenant mentality. It is time for us to move beyond the natural sphere and discern in spirit. John's Patmos vision signifies spiritual things (Revelation 1:1) and, as such, the prophecies must be discerned in spirit. Paul would exhort us to be **taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words** (1 Corinthians 2:13).

Finally, in order to discern in spirit, we must be watchful of the signs of the times. Jesus warned an evil and adulterous generation to discern the times.

"Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?" (Matthew 16:3 NASB)

We must not follow the course of the world (Ephesians 2:2), an evil and adulterous generation that ignores, even rejects, God's hand in history and knows nothing of **God's eonian plan and purpose**. We might be labeled doomsayers, but we are not, for our message is the good news of **the kingdom of our Lord** that is coming to establish righteousness and justice in the governance of the nations.

Discerning the times requires spiritual sight. Those of us in our generation with ears to hear what the Spirit is saying must discern the times and what the events on earth spiritually signify. In the greater plan of God, are the events indications of God's appointed time to judge the nations and usher in the kingdom of the Son of His love, that is, the appointed time of the **Second Coming of Christ** and the revealing of the first fruits of **the sons of God** through resurrection and transfiguration? I believe so!

Based on a word the Lord gave me on January 17, 2010, I believe we are seeing the shaking of the natural realm coming like **waves** that are moving across the globe. We need spiritual sight not only to see the waves but to discern what they mean.

Jesus says to us today: **And what I say to you, I say to all. Watch!** (Mark 13:37 LITV)