

# 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)

#05-1136

## **Engedi Demands a Trusting & Seeking Heart**

July 4, 2011

The last two issues have been about an "Engedi moment." By this, I mean it is a moment when a nation or a group of people realize there is an insurmountable enemy at their gate, figuratively speaking, that will overcome them or even annihilate them without the help or intervention of God. This is what Jehoshaphat and Judah faced when the sons of Lot, along with some Edomites, gathered a great multitude of an army at Engedi (2 Chronicles 20).

However, there is one vital point that must not be missed about an "Engedi moment"; the heart of the people, including their leaders, must be prepared to cry out to God. In other words, the soil of their hearts must be prepped in such a way that they have already turned to God before the danger of Engedi presents itself to them. Simply, they cannot be a rebellious, unrepentant people and expect God to miraculously move on their behalf.

We see this matter clearly in the contrast of the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Following Solomon's death, the united kingdom of Israel was split into Israel (holder of the birthright) and Judah (holder of the scepter). For fear that the ten tribes would return to Jerusalem for worship, Jeroboam, the king of Israel, instituted worship of Baal and the golden calf, and named priests outside the line of Levi (1 Kings 12:25-33; 2 Chronicles 11:14-17). This was an abomination to the Lord (1 Kings 13:33-34; 14:7-10), as well as to some who defected from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon (2 Chronicles 15:9).

There is no doubt that all the tribes joined together in Judah were well aware of how the Lord turned against Jeroboam (Israel) when he warred against Abijah, the king of Judah. The sons of Judah trusted in the Lord, the God of their fathers, and subdued and conquered the sons of Israel by slaughtering 500,000 chosen men of Israel. Jeroboam did not recover from such defeat, and the Lord struck him dead (2 Chronicles 13). This event alone should have been and, in fact, was to many a wake-up call, so to speak, for clearly the Lord would fight for those who remained true to Him and did not depart to false gods.

God is not unfair with His people. The fact of the matter is that He is just and righteous even when His people go astray. Throughout the history of Israel and Judah, the Lord often warned them of their departure from Him and the need to return to Him. Even when He knew they were not going to return to Him, He would tell them in advance what He was going to do. Proof of this is discovered throughout the writings of the prophets.

**Surely the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets.** (Amos 3:7 NASB)

Further, the Lord often brings certain calamitous events to His people to get their attention. Case in point is the slaughter of 500,000 Israelites. We might not like such things or even deny that they are from the Lord, but the historical biblical record clearly reveals these are the judgments of the Lord.

This leads me to the present day and my own country. In light of Engedi, a few questions come to mind. If America were faced with an Engedi, would our national leaders humble themselves before the nation and, especially, before the Lord, calling upon Him: **"We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You"**? Do we see any national leaders on the scene today who project such a heart? Of course, we do not know the heart, only the Lord does, but the words and actions coming forth from our political leaders indicate that we are in a vacuum when it comes to true, righteous, spiritual leadership. What about the church and its leadership? Take some time and visit many of the "church" services in your area and answer the question yourself. David Wilkerson was a genuine leader who had a heart for the

Lord and continually sounded the trumpet of warning. The Lord took him so abruptly that it should make us wonder if the time is up before the Lord finally strikes at the heart of the nation that has been gradually turning from Him and trusting in its own strength (Isaiah 31:1). See issues #03-0947 to #03-0953, April 2009, *Hammer Which Strikes A Rock*. Where is our boast in this day (Psalm 20:7-9)?

Dear brethren, America is under the judgment of God. Over the years, I have heard so-called Christian leaders rebuff any notion that our country is under God's judgment, regardless of what is going on and its source. Of course, the media jump all over any Christian who dares utter the word *judgment*, as if the person is an extremist nut. Whether it is violent weather, earthquakes, man-made crises, or terrorist attacks, God is not seen as having any hand in any of them.

For example, after September 11, 2001, there were some in the Christian community that were declaring the terrorist attack was God's judgment, but, for the most part, it was not a popular thing to say; it was considered heretical by some to even imply any complicity on the part of God. After all, as the thinking goes, God could never cause or allow such horrible things, especially on America that is blessed by God. What about the slaughter of 500,000 sons of Israel? What I find strange is that some who deny God's judgment are also ones who see God casting billions upon billions of people created to be in His image into a torture chamber called *hell* forever and ever with no chance of reprieve.

Let us consider another example occurring in 2011. In parts of our country, we are experiencing extreme flooding the likes of which has not been seen for many years, and, in other parts, we are experiencing extreme drought accompanied by massive wildfires. So, we have rain deluging one city (region) and rain being withheld from another. Does this sound familiar?

**"Furthermore, I withheld the rain from you while there were still three months until harvest. Then I would send rain on one city and on another city I would not send rain; one part would be rained on, while the part not rained on would dry up."** (Amos 4:7 NASB)

**(1:11) "I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands." ... (2:17) 'I smote you and every work of your hands with blasting wind, mildew and hail; yet you did not come back to Me,' declares the LORD.** (Haggai 1:11; 2:17 NASB)

Many other present-day examples could be cited, but I will leave them for you to discern. What is clear to me is that God's judgment has fallen on America in many realms, both natural and manmade. It is also clear that, at the same time, an antichrist (even, anti-God) spirit has taken hold of our national, political leadership, as well as much of the media. It has become so blatant that even the mention of "God" or the "Creator" in our Pledge of Allegiance or Declaration of Independence has been left out of some speeches by our leaders. Also, some in the media blatantly attack Christians in their commentary. Every week now, we see or hear examples of these things.

Now, I realize there are still many righteous in America, so do not take what I have to say as an indictment on all. What I am speaking to is the heart of the nation. Right now, if we were faced with an Engedi, would we expect our leaders to humble themselves before the nation and, especially, before the one true God and rally us with the cry: **"We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You, the Lord God of our forefathers"**? Or, would they posture for political position and power and feed us spins, lies, and hypocrisy? Again, I realize there are exceptions, even among our leaders, but given all that is going on in our country today, do you have the confidence that our leaders would respond as Jehoshaphat did? Do you have the confidence that a majority of Americans would cry out in such a fashion, or would they demand the government save them? I will leave you to answer the question.

I have come to the conclusion that, at this point in history, which is the last hour, the responsibility rests with us individually, not nationally. We need to seek the Lord and submit to the Holy Spirit to break up all fallow ground that remains in our heart: **Sow with a view to righteousness, reap in accordance with kindness; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD until He comes to rain righteousness on you. You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped injustice, you have eaten the fruit of lies and trusted in our own way** (Hosea 10:12-13 NASB).

Judgment is upon us! It is time to turn from all unrighteousness, seek the Lord, and trust Him!