

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)

#05-1147

Specificity in the Day of Babel

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I haven't written an issue of TUC for several months for two reasons. First, I have been diligently studying the book of Revelation from the historicist view and writing study notes on what I have learned. Lord willing, one day I might post these notes. Second, I have not been given anything to share that I have felt would be helpful. I have much I could share that the Lord has revealed to me over the last several months but most of it has been more on a personal level. Besides, I try to post only that which I sense the Spirit is prompting me to write and post. I am sure I am not 100% successful in this regard, but, at any rate, this is my heart.

With this in mind, this morning a few thoughts came to me while I was attending a prayer time. The prayers being offered up were sincere and heartfelt; they were prayers according to what was on the heart of each person. This is good, and in no way am I trying to be a critic of it. Yet, I found myself crying out to the Lord for direction as the prayers went in a multitude of directions.

"Lord, how should we pray? What prayers should we offer up together? Lord, how can we pray for repentance if we don't know the root sin of our wicked ways?"

This latter question is what truly gripped my heart, and as I cried out silently, two words came to me: **specificity** and **babel**.

With all that is going on in America today, it is very common to hear people pray along the lines of 2 Chronicles.

(13) "If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, (14) and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:13-14 NASB)

The Lord was speaking to the **United Kingdom of Israel**, and as such, this call to prayer was national, not individual. Of course, we all need to repent of our individual sins, but this particular call to humility and prayer and seeking was national. In fact, it was to start with the Lord's people and proceed to all the nations, for it was in reference to the Lord's house of prayer that was to be a blessing to both Israelites and foreigners (2 Chronicles 6)—*all the nations and families of the earth*.

Given this, it is clear that the condition of a nation is a reflection of the condition of the Church.

Consequently, if we are led to pray along these lines, it seems to me that our prayers must have some specificity to them. Especially, if we are to turn from our wicked ways, that is, repent, we need to know what specific sins have beset us as a nation and as the Church of God that require repentance.

This is what is on my heart: As the Lord's people, we desperately need to hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the Church regarding the root of our sin. I am not referring to generic prayers about our sin as the Church but very specific prayers that go to the very root of our sin as the Church.

Essential and effective repentance starts at the root, not the outward manifestation or the trunk of it.

I have been studying the **olive tree** lately, and it is a very tenacious tree. Its trunk can be destroyed in fire or drought, but its root system is so pervasive that the tree will revive itself. The only effective way to kill an olive tree is to kill its root. In like fashion, the only way that the outward (cause-effect) sins of the Church that are reflected in the nation can truly be dealt with is to get to the root of the matter that is hidden under the surface, not by dealing with what we see being manifested. If we can get to the root and stand together in humility, confessing and repenting of the root cause, then the Holy Spirit can do the work of cutting off the life of the root and restoring our nation. In my estimation, anything less than this will fall short of reaching the mark, no matter how sincere and desirous we are in our prayers.

As an example, we pray against abortion, but what is the root cause of it? Do you realize that abortion is the judgment of God upon, not only America, but the entire world? If you don't believe this, then read Hosea 9:13-17. What was the problem? Ephraim refused to listen to the Lord and, as a result, his root was dried up. Further, we all know that the US Supreme Court began to throw God out of our public life in the 60's. This too was and is a judgment on the Church, but what is the root of the sin that led to this action on God's part? The financial crisis that won't go away has a root sin attached to it. What is it?

Consider another example. What was the source of the problem for ancient Jerusalem that will ultimately lead to its final demise when modern-day Jerusalem falls in the very near future? They burned their sons in the Temple as sacrifices to Baal (Jeremiah 19). Can you imagine such a thing? What did the Lord say would happen to Jerusalem?

'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Just so will I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter's vessel, **which cannot again be repaired**; and they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place for burial." (Jeremiah 19:11 NASB)

Although it has been rebuilt many times, if we are to believe Jeremiah's prophecy, the present-day Jerusalem is destined to fall, never to be repaired or rebuilt again. Read Galatians 4:21-31 for our attitude toward the present Jerusalem. By the way, if you want to understand the *gehenna of fire* (so-called *hell*), it is discovered in the word about *Topheth*. *Gehenna of fire* is reserved for Jerusalem.

There are many examples that could be cited, but the point that needs to be driven home is that we must hear from the Holy Spirit regarding the root of sin in the Church and the nation so that we know how to pray and repent. This leads to the second word that came to me, *babel*.

Does anyone have any doubt that we are living in the day of Babel? *Babel* means "confusion" or "to mix." As I see it, it means that things are mixed up. Why? Because there are so many voices speaking within and without the Church that they are drowning out the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Church has become **a chatter house of countless voices all vying for attention**, and the Lord's people are being tossed to and fro by all these voices as if it is all from the Lord. But is it? Granted some is; but we need to discern the times, and we can only do this by discerning His voice, not in the earthquake or the fire, but in the sound of **the gentle blowing** (1 Kings 19:12).

As I look back on the many prayer times that I have been involved with over the years, I conclude that often the prayers were like mud thrown on the wall to see what stuck. We could call these **mud prayers**. At other times, prayers were what could be called **emphasis or group-think prayers**; they were based on the emphasis of a man's ministry or church or some new teaching. There may have been a time, a place, and a purpose for such prayers in the past, but no longer. The time is short; we don't need **mud or emphasis prayers** anymore. If we are to pray according to 2 Chronicles 7, we need prayers of specificity that speak to the root of sin, not its trunk. We need **root prayers**.

Dear beloved brethren, it is time to stop the train with all its clamor and noise, get off it, and set our ears to the heavens to listen for the voice of God. It is time for the many voices to be silent and for the Lord's people to begin listening quietly for what the Spirit is saying to the Church. "**The LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him**" (Habakkuk 2:20 NASB).