

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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Choosing National Leaders

December 26, 2011

Starting early next year, the race for the presidency of the United States will go to full throttle. It seems like it has been in this mode for some time; unfortunately, it has just begun and we have another ten months to go.

Now, this issue is not about any particular candidate or party or even ideology. Many Christians have very strong views about the candidates, the issues, and the course our country seems to be on. Some are even so adamant about these matters that they are willing to accuse fellow brethren of departing from Christ.

Case in point is the recent criticism of Franklin Graham that was first reported on December 22.

In an interview, Franklin was asked about supporting a Mormon like Mitt Romney for president. He answered that he was not bothered about the appropriateness of evangelical Christians voting for a Mormon. His criterion for president is who is most qualified for the office. He even stated: "You can have the nicest guy and he can be a Christian and just wonderful but have absolutely no clue as to how to run a country."

This, in turn, solicited an outcry from Steven Andrew of USA Christian Ministries calling on Franklin to repent for making such an assertion. He accused Franklin of misleading other Christians and betraying Jesus, citing 2 Chronicles 19:2 as a biblical warning about helping the wicked. According to Steven, we need leaders who fear God, and voting for a Mormon will bring God's judgment on America.

Rather than deal with these comments directly, I would rather direct your attention to the Lord's word regarding two ancient world leaders that did not know the Lord.

The first leader was Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who the Lord raised up to judge Judah.

(8) "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Because you have not obeyed My words, (9) behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' declares the LORD, 'and **I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant**, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them and make them a horror and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. (Jeremiah 25:8-9)

Notice that the Lord called Nebuchadnezzar "My servant." In other words, the Lord raised up a pagan leader to bring judgment upon His own people.

But then, when the iron-yoke judgment of 70 years was completed, the Lord raised up another world leader who did not know Him either in order to bring down the kingdom of Babylon and release His people to return to their land of Judea.

(28) "*It is I* who says of **Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd!** And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'" ... (1) Thus says the LORD to **Cyrus His anointed [messiah]**, Whom I have taken by the right hand, To subdue nations before him and to loose the loins of kings; To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: (2) "I will go before you and make the rough places smooth; I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through

their iron bars. (3) "I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden wealth of secret places, So that you may know that it is I, **the LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.** (4) "For the sake of Jacob My servant, and Israel My chosen *one*, **I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor though you have not known Me.** (5) "I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, **though you have not known Me....** (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-5)

I recall hearing a pastor of a well-known denomination quoting these verses then quipping out loud that he did not understand how this could have occurred through an unbeliever. His template told him that God can only do good things through the saved and bad things through the lost. In other words, he just could not fathom the thought of God using any vessel He so desired in order to do His will on earth.

But take special note that this is the Lord Himself speaking through Isaiah. The Lord, who knows all hearts, stated that Cyrus, the ruler of the Medes, did not know Him, and yet, He called him **"My shepherd."** This is an amazing statement; one that should shatter every notion that God cannot and will not work through leaders that do not know or acknowledge Him. To make sure the point was not lost, the Lord went so far as to declare that He called Cyrus by name. This was no case of mistaken identity.

Another very important point is that Cyrus was not called a servant as Nebuchadnezzar was called but His shepherd and anointed. In the Hebrew, the word for *anointed* refers to a messiah. Can you imagine that a so-called unsaved or pagan ruler was a messiah? This was a title of honor, for the Lord was going to use him to deliver His people out of captivity in a foreign land. We do not know if Cyrus consciously did this out of obedience to the Lord; nevertheless, he did it and the Lord commended him for it.

Cyrus was a type of Jesus the King who will one day deliver His people and, for that matter, all the nations out of the kingdom of this world and into His kingdom of righteousness. Thus, the lesson to learn from this is that the Lord can take any world leader and use him (or her) to fulfill His plan.

As a side note, some commentators believe that the Lord is going to do something very similar in our day to bring down **Mystery Babylon** of the western world. Accordingly, **the Kings from the East** (Revelation 16:12), predominantly from China and other eastern countries representative of the Medes, will be raised up to judge the Babylonian financial system to which the Lord Himself yoked the world, especially the western Christianized world, around 1913-1914 with the rise of the **Federal Reserve System**. A glorious day is coming when the Lord's people will hear: **"Come out of her, My people"** (Revelation 18:4).

God is the Sovereign over His creation and George Bush was raised up by the Lord to lead our nation just as Barack Obama was raised up to lead us in this hour, regardless of how one views his presidency so far. In fact, I have stated in previous issues that, at times, President Obama has unknowingly stated things that seemed prophetic. I recently said this to a Christian who was not a fan of the president and I received a strong look of disbelief, as if the Lord could never do such a thing through this leader.

All I can say is let us be very careful how we view our leaders and of any attitude that denies they are in office by the will of God, for they most assuredly are. The Lord can put anyone He so desires into office.

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. **For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.** (Romans 13:1 NASB)

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. (Colossians 1:16 NASB)

What if the Lord chooses a leader for judgment and discipline of our nation? What if this is what He has been doing through our most recent president? What if He isn't done with His judgment of us yet? In the coming year, we need spiritual discernment like we have never had before. Let us stand in the council of the Lord to see and hear His voice.