

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)

#06-1202

2012: His Council Speaks of the Restoration of All Things

January 1, 2012

(18) **"But who has stood in the council of the LORD, that he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened?** (19) "Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone forth in wrath, even a whirling tempest; it will swirl down on the head of the wicked. (20) "The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has performed and carried out **the purposes of His heart; in the last days** you will clearly understand it. (Jeremiah 23:18-20 NASB)

As introduced in the first issue of the New Year, it seems that the Holy Spirit is asking a question of God's people. Who? Who is standing in the council of the Lord? But, it also seems that this is more than a question; it is an invitation to enter into the council of the Lord or, as shown in the previous issue, to come into intimacy with the Lord to hear the secrets of His heart for this day and hour. Another way of stating this is that it is about abiding in Christ, that is, making home in Him, having a heart-to-heart relationship with a hearing ear that leads to obedience.

With so many voices speaking for God in our day and so many other voices trying to refute and subvert God and His character, even His ways, His plan, and His purpose, it is truly a very dangerous day. We need to be reminded that the Lord Jesus, along with Peter and John, warned of false prophets as well as false teachers (Matthew 7:15; 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; Luke 6:26; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1). To this we could add Paul's exhortation to beware of the character of men in the last days, evil men and imposters, deceiving and being deceived (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3). However, there is something much more subtle that permeates the church in our day, and that is the **tradition of men** (Mark 7:8; Colossians 2:8) and the **systematizing of the deception** (deceitful scheming) that Paul warned about (Ephesians 4:14).

Putting all these concerns and challenges together, there should be little doubt as to the relevance of the Lord asking who is standing in His council to hear and heed His word.

Today, in America, many Christians are citing 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 as the way for God's people to bring about healing of our land. However, if we are not standing in the council of the Lord, how will we know of what we must repent? We need to know the root of the problem in order to repent, and, to know this, we must be in the council of the Lord. The problem in Jeremiah's day was many that called themselves prophets were expressing their own distorted views of their condition and not inquiring of the One who knew their heart.

Well, much exhortation could be offered on the matter of false prophets, but I have seen something in the matter of standing in His council that has to do with the word *council* in relation to God's plan and purpose. In the above, note that Jeremiah referred to **the purposes of His heart; in the last days**. The word *purposes* is more akin to the word *plans*. A *purpose* refers to an objective, and a *plan* (or, *plans*) refers to how one achieves the objective or purpose.

As shown in the last issue, the word *council* or *counsel* (depending on the translation) comes from the Hebrew word *sod*, which refers to "a *session*, that is, *company* of persons (in close deliberation); by implication *intimacy*, *consultation*, a *secret*."

Another word for *secret* is the word *mystery*. Depending on the translation, Paul wrote in several of his epistles of the secret or mystery (e.g., the mystery of the gospel, the mystery of Christ, the revelation of the mystery).

Now, I believe the meaning and gematria of the Hebrew word *sod* in itself speaks of the very secret or mystery of God. Another way to state this is that when we come into the very council of the Lord, we learn of His mystery, the mystery relating to His plan and, most importantly, His ultimate purpose. For those who might think this is unnecessary since the Bible tells of His plan and purpose, I would ask: If it is so clearly laid out in scripture, then why are there so many varying views and, frankly, so much confusion among His people today about His plan and even His ultimate purpose?

The word *sod* is comprised of three Hebrew letters, which gematrically yield the sum of 70.

Hebrew	Numeric Value	Literal Meaning	Symbolic Meaning
Daleth	4	Door	Pathway, to enter
Vav	6	Nail	"And," to add, secure, hook
Samech	60	A prop	Support, to turn

A *door* signifies a pathway or a way to go, which could signify a *plan*. A *nail* signifies that the plan is *secure*; it is nailed down, so to speak. A *prop* could have several meanings. According to Webster's Dictionary, as a noun, it could mean 1) a rigid support, as a beam, stake or pole, placed under or against a structure; 2) a person who is one of the main supports of an enterprise. As a verb, it means to support, hold up, or hold in place.

Taken together, these three Hebrew letters speak not of a thing but of the Person of our Lord Jesus. He is **the Door** (John 10:9). He who was nailed to a cross is the same One who secures the salvation of all mankind (1 Timothy 4:10). He is the entire enterprise, so to speak. He is the one who **upholds** (holds up, props up) **all things by the word of His power** (Hebrews 1:3).

This may be a stretch, but notice that *Vav* also refers to the conjunction *and*. Is Jesus not the *and* of all things, that is, is He not the Alpha *and* the Omega, the First *and* the Last, the Beginning *and* the End? Is He not the One who is *and* who was *and* who is to come?

In other words, when we come into the council of the Lord, we come into the very One who is the Word. It is more than coming into words, it is coming into the Word Himself to see and hear Him. It is about seeing Jesus and hearing His voice and abiding in Him. It is about being intimate with Him, being in His intimate Presence. It is about a face-to-face, heart-to-heart encounter with the Lord.

The plan of God is being worked out through the one Lord, Jesus Christ, **by whom are all things** (1 Corinthians 8:6). The plan of God is to **sum up or head up all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth** (Ephesians 1:10) in order to achieve the ultimate purpose of God, **so that God may be all in all, making all things new** (1 Corinthians 15:28; Revelation 21:5). This is glorious news!

This leads to one more vital meaning attached to the word *sod*. The sum total of the three Hebrew letters is the number 70. The last issue of 2011 was purposely written on the number 70, which refers to the **Restoration of All Things**. In other words, the council of the Lord speaks of the very plan of God to restore all things to Himself.

Please note that I did not state that this is the purpose of God, for it is not. The restoration of all things is in the plan of God, but it is not the endpoint or the ultimate purpose of God. In the next age, which is variously called the Kingdom Age, the Messianic Age, the Tabernacles Age, or simply the Millennial Age, Christ, through His Body of conquerors, will begin restoring all things. This will continue for 1,000 years and into the next age until the consummation of the eons (ages) when the Son has put all things in subjection under His feet, including the last enemy of man, death. But restoration is not the endpoint; the endpoint is to make all things new, which means that when God is all in all everything is new, not simply a cleaned-up version of the old. Can you think of anything more glorious? Well, I will leave you with one more thought. *All things* refer to everything and everyone that has ever lived in God's creation, past, present, and future! All things or *ta panta* (*the all*) in Greek has no exclusions. It is 100% inclusive!