

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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Understanding the Times

On December 12, 2010, the Lord cautioned me that "**nothing is as it seems.**"

I keep pondering these words, for they mean that we cannot trust ourselves to clearly understand the times and how God is going to bring about His plan for these times. What we think could happen might be way off the mark, and what we think could never happen might be right on the mark. Of course, we have scripture to guide us; however, let's face the fact that we can easily misinterpret scripture, especially where it is veiled in symbols, as is much of Revelation.

For those who hear words or have dreams and visions from the Lord, it could be a rather unsettling thought that nothing is as it seems. But, we must keep in mind that words, dreams, and visions truly from the Lord are given for a very specific purpose, such as for exhortation and encouragement. The challenge that many face is how to interpret these things from the Lord. Unfortunately, He does not give a 101 lesson on how to interpret them, although there are those who do teach such a thing.

In my experience, it is important to ask the Lord for an interpretation, and He is faithful to give one. Mind you, He does not necessarily do it instantaneously. I have had some interpretations come that very same moment or day, others have come months or years later, and some have yet to come. However, lately, the interpretations are coming much sooner than later. I suspect this is because we are nearing the end of the age, and many things are about to fall into place.

The interpretations that I find the most encouraging and supportable are the ones that relate directly to scripture. When the Lord gives a word based on scripture, then I know that this is important, and there is a vital lesson to be learned or message to be delivered. For example, I received the word *Engedi* during a night last year, and this became a teachable moment for me personally. I wrote on this.

I must admit that when predictive words, dreams, or visions literally happen, it is exciting, for this truly confirms that you have not lost your marbles, so to speak, and the Lord is revealing things to you. But let me be clear that if it is from the Lord, it must and will happen.

Those who experience the Lord in this way are encouraged to journal everything; leave nothing out and then periodically review your journal. In time, you will see patterns and will learn what seems to be of the Lord and what is not. I have learned to make a record of every day, even if there is nothing relevant to record. If a major event occurs in the world, I jot it down as well, for I have come to see patterns in these. I have had the Lord refer me back to these events as a result of something He speaks to me.

A word of caution; in my early years, I treated these things more as novelties that I simply recorded. As time passed, I began to realize that they are not novelties. The Lord is not in the business of entertaining us or boosting our egos with things we might think others have not seen or heard.

I am thankful I made journal entries of many things early in my walk with the Lord; otherwise, I could have missed some vital messages from the Lord. I can look back now and see that the Lord has been faithful to repeat certain things to be sure I did not miss the point.

Another thought on my heart is that when it comes to the prophetic, especially as it relates to people, we must have a heart of love for those to whom it relates. Again, we need to be clear that the Lord gives us these things for encouragement and exhortation, but even exhortation must be given in love, not with a big stick that beats up on others or those not of our camp.

Understanding the Times

Well, what does this have to do with this matter of nothing is as it seems? Frankly, everything!

It is an exhortation from the Lord designed to drive us into His intimate council, as I shared in the first issue for 2012 and in article #36, January 2012, *Who Has Stood in the Council of the Lord*. You are encouraged to read these if you have not done so already.

It is imperative in these last days to be in intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus. There are far too many voices and influences in the world and in the church-at-large that are all trying to persuade our minds to think certain ways. For example, if we pay attention to the survivalists who are stocking up on food, gold, guns, and bullets, we will interpret what the Lord shares with us, whether in words, dreams, or visions, as if the world is about to come to a violent, catastrophic end. By the way, if we follow the pre-tribulation rapture school of thought, we might come to the same conclusion.

Consequently, as I look back on my journals, especially the word about a great cataclysmic upheaval coming, I have to ask myself what this means. If nothing is as it seems, then surely God could be about to do something that none of us ever considered. What if this upheaval is a direct judgment of the corrupt ones who have been deceiving the world and keeping all of us in bondage to their system of greed? What if this upheaval is an overturning of the elites that have been deceiving all of us? **What if the upheaval is the Kingdom of God itself?** If so, perhaps the earth will not go into some sort of near destruction. We will know soon enough.

The bottom line is that we need to be like the sons of Issachar who understood the times.

Of the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their kinsmen were at their command. (1 Chronicles 12:32 NASB)

However, we have a challenge in our day that they did not have in their day. They were not bombarded with a countless number of voices expressed through a vast array of media. Daniel was told that knowledge would increase in the end (Daniel 12:4). How are we to work our way through all these voices and knowledge? There is only one way. Stand in the council of the Lord to hear the one voice and tune out all the other voices! But how are we to do this? Consider a few verses.

(2) Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. **(3) For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.** (Colossians 3:2-3 NASB)

(20) Which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, (21) far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. (Ephesians 1:20-21 NASB)

(4) But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **(5) even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you have been saved), **(6) and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus....** (Ephesians 2:4-6 NASB)

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ.... (Romans 13:14 NASB)

We come into His council by coming into the place of our Lord. It starts with knowing that we have died and our lives are hidden with Christ in God. Where is Christ? He is seated at the right hand of the Father in the heavenlies, far above everything, including every name, and, I might add, by extrapolation, every voice and word. To make sure we understand this truth, Paul adds that we are seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. When we put on the Lord, we are seated with Him in the heavenlies.

Dear beloved in Christ, we need to stop listening to the lies that tell us otherwise and by faith stand in this truth as we seek to come into the council of our Lord. He calls us into His council and into the intimacy of His presence. This is the way to understand the times and to interpret words, dreams, and visions. By faith, let us stand in His council.