

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)

TUC #08-1421

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December 21, 2014

An End of All the Groaning

Before launching into the word the Lord gave me this morning, I have a commentary to make about prayer. Over the years, as I have sat in times of prayer with others, I have been struck with how seldom the Lord's people ask Him what He thinks on whatever topic is on the table for prayer. Most times, people just jump right in with a standard array of language (words), pleas, and declarations that are common to most prayer times, especially routine meetings attended by the same people. There is a group think that comes forth during prayer. Again, what seems to be lacking so often is a group heart that simply seeks the Lord on a matter, waiting upon Him for an answer. I am not saying this never happens, but in my experience, it is not the norm.

I recall a home-church meeting we were in several years ago. During a period of a few months, there were two people associated with the group that developed cancer. Being a somewhat charismatic-prophetic group, for the first person, the brethren jumped right in with their standard toolkit of prayers, which included yelling at the devil, calling it all sorts of names, declaring it was defeated, and casting the cancer out. By the way, this person refused to accept that she had cancer. The group never honed in on this as an issue, as if it were OK to deny a reality. I couldn't go along with this craziness (my opinion), so I silently asked the Lord: "*What is Your will in this matter?*" Immediately, I heard: "*Unto death.*" She died shortly thereafter. Then, it was announced some time later that a second person had cancer, to which they jumped right in with the same prayers. So, I sat quietly and inquired of the Lord. This time, I heard: "*Unto life.*" Later, it was announced that he got a clean bill of health after he had received chemo and radiation treatment.

Group prayer is somewhat different from personal prayer, for it can be more quiet and intimate as we seek the Lord. Over the years, I have learned that the Lord desires for us to know what is on His heart. For me, this is far more important than lobbing a laundry list of requests and supplications His way. There may be times for this; after all, Paul exhorts us to pray and supplicate (Philippians 4:6), and Jesus says to ask, seek and knock (Matthew 7:7). However, for me, I desire more times than not to know His heart. After all, He knows the innermost thoughts of our heart already, even before we are aware of them or able to verbalize them.

Well, this morning I was being quiet before the Lord when the thought came to me to ask the Lord a question. So, I asked: "***Lord, for what are You longing? You know my heart and longing, but what is Yours?***" The answer came rather quickly. I heard: "***Isaiah 21:2.***"

A harsh vision has been shown to me; the treacherous one still deals treacherously, and the destroyer still destroys. Go up, Elam, lay siege, Media; I have made an end of all the groaning she has caused. (Isaiah 21:2 NASB)

I was immediately caught by the word *groaning*, for this is exactly what I wrote about in my last posting: *Springboard to Union-Life*: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/tuc/tuc617.pdf> Mind you, I did not know that Isaiah 21:2 contained the word *groaning* until I looked it up. So, I wrote about groaning on the 20th, something that is on my heart, and the next day, on the 21st, the Lord reveals that He longs to end all groaning, something that is on His heart. What a gracious, loving Lord! The Lord took my groaning on a personal level and enlarged it to a global level in light of the day in which we live under bondage to Mystery Babylon. Do you realize that the whole of the earth and of mankind is groaning in various degrees, not just His people that have an earnest of His Spirit? The encouragement from the Lord is that He is going to make an end to all groaning. He longs to fully bring all into His life so that the groans give way to pure joy as all are in full union-agreement with the will of God.

Now, let us consider this verse, both contextually and prophetically, for in it we will see that the groaning that the Lord longs to end has great and far-reaching implications, especially as we near the end of our present age.

Isaiah lived when Assyria was the dominant world power. According to *Halley's Bible Handbook*, "Isaiah sang of the Fall of Babylon a hundred years before its rise." Elam and Media were two nations in the area of modern-day Iran, and the reference to them in this verse points to the conquest of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, starting in 537 BC. Darius the Mede ruled Babylon while Cyrus the Persian continued his conquests. In 534 BC, Cyrus returned and assumed direct rule of Babylon. The Babylonians had caused the people to sigh or groan under their rule, but their 70-year rule was over three years before Judah's 70-year captivity was over (Jeremiah 25:12). It was time for Babylon to be judged and conquered by another cruel ruler. So, the decree went forth: "**Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the images of her gods are shattered on the ground**" (Isaiah 21:9 NASB).

Contextually, the Lord spoke through Isaiah that He was making an end of all the groaning that Babylon (she) caused or inflicted on His people. However, prophetically, the Lord looked to a day well into the future, about 2,500 years later, in which another rendition, an end-time version of Babylon called the **Mother of Harlots and Mystery Babylon** would rise and fall. In his Patmos vision, John heard the great cry go forth that an end-time Babylon would fall before the glorious arrival of **the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ** (Revelation 11:15). "**Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird**" (Revelation 18:2 NASB).

There are many interpretations of Revelation 18. Some see Mystery Babylon as a religious system, primarily the Roman Church; others see it as an economic/financial system; some see it as a combination of the two, and others see it as yet future when an antichrist comes on the stage of world history. I, along with others, see it as a present-day reality that has been rising since early in the 20th century, that is reaching (has reached) its peak in our day, and that God is about to crush to dust by the **Stone Kingdom** (Daniel 2:31-35) when He manifests the **King of kings and His conquerors** that will rule in the coming glorious age of Tabernacles.

The world, especially what is called the Western world, is in captivity to this harlot city. The whole world is groaning to one degree or another under the cruel and evil weight of this demonic, unclean spirit-filled system that dominates practically every aspect of life in the world, especially commerce, which includes the religions of men. This system emanates out of the Western nations that once were bastions of Christianity, as well as out of the present-day earthly Jerusalem and its ungodly influence on the world. All have been made drunk with the wine of the passion of her immorality.

For more on **Mystery Babylon**, see **article #9**: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art9.pdf>

When it comes to God's people that are entrenched in the visible, institutional, at-large church (as opposed to the *ecclesia* Christ is building in heart and in spirit), there are many reasons to groan. What the world and many Christians call the *church* has been seduced by the same unclean spirits that have seduced the kings and merchants of the earth. This church long ago opened its doors for this seduction. It is time to shut down this church, shutter its doors, and come out to the Lord Himself.

Dear people of God, if you are not groaning under the weight of this system, you need to question where your heart is. Is your heart in love with this Babylonian system, its love of money, and all of its idolatry and idols of the heart? Or, have you heeded the cry: "**Come out of her, My people**" (Revelation 18:4)? If you are groaning, be encouraged: **The Spirit intercedes along with our groanings too deep that they cannot be expressed in words. He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God** (Romans 8:26-27). The Spirit of the Lord groans!

But, here is the good news: The Lord is about to make an end to all groaning caused by Mystery Babylon, the Great City, the Mother of Harlots. The Stone Kingdom is coming to grind this harlot, counterfeit system to dust and to release the world and God's people from bondage to this evil system. Until then, we groan along with the Spirit of the Lord as we wait for the glorious appearing of the One who declares: "**I have made an end of all the groaning she** (Mother of Harlots, Mystery Babylon) **has caused.**" **The King is coming!**