

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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Come Out of Her, My People

Dear brethren, as we close out 2014 and enter a new year, and, perhaps, reflect on what has transpired, both good and bad, let us be clear that the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ has not been manifested to the world yet. I know the counter argument that the kingdom is within us, and I don't disagree. However, we cannot look at the nations, especially America, and proclaim that Jesus has been given His rightful place as King of the Nations and King of the Ages by the leaders of the world. If anything, they are proclaiming themselves to be little gods who reign over the people of the earth. It seems as if it is locked into perpetuity that life goes on from year to year with its ups and downs as if nothing really changes. As the Lord spoke through Solomon: "**Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity"** (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

In spite of all this, there is good news. Life will soon change for this earth, and this change will progress until the glory of God fills the whole earth and great blessing comes to the nations as they come under the reign of God's King and His many sons of glory. What is vanity today will give way to the glory of God in the ages to come.

However, this glory has not been manifested yet in such a way that the nations recognize it. The nations continue to live in deception as they are seduced by the **Harlot** called **Babylon the Great** (Revelation 17:4-5). This city is identified as a mystery or secret, meaning the very ones held captive to this seductive, immoral spirit do not recognize it or their captivity to it. Many are looking for this mystery city to be revealed in the future, yet the secret is that it is with us today and the whole world is being held captive to it. John heard a voice from heaven command: "**Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.**" (Revelation 18:4-5)

It is a fact that in ancient days, God sent His people into captivity for breaking their covenant with Him. He raised up enemies to chasten His people in order to turn them back to Himself. He even became the enemy of His own people. When the people repented, that is, changed their minds and ways back to God, then He removed the yoke of bondage to their enemies. He set them free. However, fighting against God's judgments as if He were not inflicting them upon His people is a gross error. You might recall that in Jeremiah's day, those who fought against God's judgment and refused to go into captivity to Babylon were destroyed. God had allotted a 70-year captivity that could not be turned back. The people were told to submit to the rule of Babylon, and if they did, they would prosper. Many prospered during their captivity so that when the appointed time came to return to Jerusalem, many did not. Why leave the comfort of Babylon and return to the ruins of an old city?

Fast forward to our day; starting in the last century, it would appear that God began to yoke the world to this mystery city, a worldwide counterfeit system to His Kingdom and His divine rule of law. If so, then the world, including America, is under the judgment of God. He didn't place us under an iron yoke where we were removed from our land. Instead, we were placed under a wooden yoke with foreigners ruling over us in our midst. This system is so pervasive that nothing has been left untouched by it, even the visible church. Of course, nothing touches the *ecclesia* that Christ is building.

This is the mystery that God has kept the world, even many of His own people, from seeing. Why? Perhaps, many would have been like ancient Judah who refused God's judgments by not submitting to their captors. In other words, many would have fought back, which would have been tantamount to fighting with God Himself. In His mercy, He has blinded the masses, even many of His own, to this secret hidden in what is called *a great city*. God

has placed the world in bondage to this **mystery, Babylon the Great**, until His appointed time, which is also a secret. So, we wait! Personally, I do not believe it will be a long wait.

Now, according to John, the voice from heaven calls for God's people to **come out of her** (i.e., the Harlot). However, how do we come out of something to which God has yoked us without knowing the appointed time of captivity? If we come out before the appointed time, are we fighting against God? And yet, there is another way to come out of it, and that is by changing our mind and heart back to God in what is called *repentance*. The two actually go hand-in-hand. The captivity is to drive people back to God when they see that their captors do not love them and do not have their best interests at heart. Only God does! In fact, no matter how prosperous one might be in captivity (e.g., thriving 401K accounts, or government entitlements), the taskmasters, in some measure, are still cruel and deceptive, for they are out for their own gain, often at the expense of the masses.

Again, how do we come out of her? How does anyone come out of something that rules the world and, in some measure, has infected every institution on earth? Where do we go? Do we become a prepper and live in some cave or mountain retreat hidden in the woods? To be sure, some are attempting this, but most cannot and will not. We cannot fight our way out, for the odds are not in our favor. Besides, we are called to be **peacemakers** and our war is one of peace through spiritual, not carnal, means. How are we to heed this word?

I propose that this is not a call of action on the part of God's people, or anyone for that matter. I believe this call to come out is the Lord's promise to His people to deliver them out of Babylon. It will fall, and we will come out of it when it does. This is like the call to Lazarus who was wrapped in the death cloth: "**Lazarus, come out**" (John 11:43). Lazarus had no way out of death. He was held captive in the grave clothes. If the Lord Jesus had not called him, he would have remained dead. In like fashion, unless the Lord calls us out and removes us from the bondage of Babylon, we will remain in it. He must call us forth and remove the grave clothes. The fact of the matter is that, when He comes, the "alive and remain" conquerors will exchange their grave clothes for glory clothes as they put off mortality and put on immortality. What a glorious thought!

One of the most notable examples of deliverance from bondage was the removal of ancient Israel from slavery in Egypt. The Lord heard the groaning of the sons of Israel (Exodus 6:5) and the call went forth: "**Let My people go, that they may serve Me**" (Exodus 9:13). And so it will be at the end of the eon in which we live. Are you groaning to be set free? If you are, there is good news.

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 [Mystery Babylon] has caused. (Isaiah 21:2 NASB)

This verse speaks of the fall of Babylon, both the ancient and the modern-day one. A day is coming when Jesus will put an end to all the groaning.

At the Father's appointed time, our beloved Lord Jesus will arrive for His people during the fall harvest feasts and the shout will go forth and the trumpet of God will sound, and all the dead in Christ who conquered will rise in the first resurrection and, along with those who are alive and remain who conquered, will be transfigured and glorified as Christ is glorified. They will put on the image of the *Celestial* (Heavenly) One. During this period of time, Babylon, *the great city*, either will have already fallen a relatively short time before or will fall the same week or day when the trumpet of God sounds; the world will be introduced to the sons of glory that will lead them to the Lord and His ways of righteousness, peace, justice, and mercy, and for the first time, they will see the true love of God manifested in and through a people in the likeness of Christ, the very Son of God's love.

With the world's Babylonian system in total collapse, the leaders of the world will be ripe to hear the ways of the Lord from a people who know Him, know His ways and laws, and know His love, righteousness, justice, and mercy. They know the life of BEING! Until then, seek for more of the heart and mind of God. Even though we are held captive by the Harlot-system, we must not embrace its heart or mind. We have the mind of Christ and the love of God that has been poured out within us. Set your mind above where Jesus is seated (Colossians 3:1-7).