

## UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God*

**IN KING JESUS.**

(Philippians 3:13-14)

#09-1515

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### ***Replacing Man's Mess with God's Glory***

It is an understatement to say that the news of our day is quite fascinating and very telling of the overall state of world and national affairs from one extreme to another, which is best described as confusion, even chaos. On one extreme, the blogosphere is filled with all sorts of ominous warnings about what is soon to come upon the world. Of course, true to man's fallen nature, many of the prognosticators are trying to make money off of doom by scaring people into buying whatever magic potion they have concocted in order to prep for and save oneself from the particular doom they purport to be coming. On another extreme, life seems to go on with people running to and fro as if tomorrow will be no different from today, except perhaps for death. "Life is a beach, so let's party." Or, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." This was first said of ancient Jerusalem (Judah) as they were under God's judgment brought upon them through the Babylonians. Things weren't going so well for them, so they decided to just eat and drink. Why not, they were soon to die? The Lord God of hosts responded: *Surely this iniquity shall not be forgiven you until you die* (Isaiah 22:13-14).

I was going to list a number of interesting news reports as examples of the extremes, but where does one start? Besides, anyone with an ounce of spiritual discernment can see it for themselves. Suffice it to say, we are living in a day of great perplexity. This should not surprise us since Babylon (i.e., *babel*) means "confusion." Many Christians have been taught that Mystery Babylon is yet future, but they have been deceived. It is called a *mystery* (secret) because *the* many will not know they are living under its seductive power until it is too late. We are under Babylonian captivity today. The fact is that we have been under its immoral seductive power for well over 100 years. It is time to wake up, sober up, and humble ourselves before God, for its end is coming very soon.

In the same chapter of Isaiah quoted above, we are told: *For the Lord Yahweh of hosts has a day of tumult [panic] and trampling [subjugation] and confusion in the valley of vision, a tearing down of walls and a cry for help to the mountains* (Isaiah 22:5 LEB [NASB]). The valley of vision referred to Jerusalem, the seat of divine revelation and vision that came through the prophets. In spite of all that God had revealed to the people, they had fallen into a low state. Instead of humility and turning back to the Lord as the enemy was at the gate, they were reckless. Is it any different in our day?

People of God, this describes our day, one that will only increase until the Lord comes to set things right. Man cannot right (fix) himself, and Christians are limited (but greatly set free to do as the Lord leads) in what they can do while they remain in mortal bodies with only an earnest of the spirit. However, there is one thing we are to have that the world does not and that is spiritual vision and revelation of God's plan and purpose coupled with expectation of the coming of the Lord.

As quoted elsewhere, in relation to New Jerusalem, F.B. Meyer wrote: "Around us the most stable structures are being tested and some are crumbling to the ground. As they fall, they show that their service was transient. But as the scaffolding is taken down, the true building, the city of God emerges."

Adding to this, I often refer to a word that came to me twenty years ago during a time of relative peace and prosperity (February 27, 1995): *When you see the structures crumble, testify of My kingdom*. It is time to proclaim publicly the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

Obviously, man's structures have been tested and many have crumbled throughout the history of the world. Safe to say, man's structures have not fared so well (an understatement). So, in this regard, there is nothing special or new in either of these quotes. The fact of the matter is that the history of mankind has been pretty much about

man's so-called *stable structures* being tested (as in shaken) and crumbling in failure. This should not surprise us, for the book of Hebrews says that God is removing those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain (Hebrews 12:27). Why? Because we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken! This kingdom is none other than the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15) that is coming to this world very, very soon.

This is the kingdom of which I have been called to testify. This is not a present reality; it is a coming reality. Those who say that the kingdom is all about a present spiritual reality in the heart of believers, as if this is all it was ever meant to be, do not understand God's plan of the ages or His ultimate purpose of ALL, nor do they understand that God truly loves the world. God plans to reconcile all things (*ta panta*) back to Himself through His Son.

Prior to 1945, the world, especially Europe, was greatly tested during the two major wars, but after 1945, great advances were made as peace, prosperity, and technology began to build, especially in America. However, with the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it has become obvious that another dramatic shift in the stable structures has taken place, as if their very foundations are cracking and crumbling because they were built on sand. Man's world is broken! The kingdom of this world is a huge sand castle that the stone kingdom is going to crush like chaff from the summer threshing floors until not a trace of it is found. In that glorious day, the kingdom of God's Son will fill the whole earth (Daniel 2:35), and, after a long 6,000 years, mankind will see the glory of God once again.

If man's structures can be shaken, then they are the created things that will not remain when the kingdom of Christ, which is a kingdom of righteousness, justice, and peace, takes root among the nations. The good news is that the crumbling of structures is a sign that the unshakeable kingdom of God's Son is coming. We are in the very last days of *our present wicked age*, as Paul called it.

These structures include everything created by man that is outside the will of God. They must crumble, for the kingdom is not about cleaning up corrupt man-centered systems (structures), even ones that might claim Christ; it is about replacing the entirety of it with a new way of life and governance. It is about replacing man's mess with God's glory! Mortal flesh cannot clean up messes left by mortal flesh. History, even church history, proves it. The good news is that what is coming will truly be a new world order; a new life based on divine order is coming. God's life and governance is not a system because God's Son is not a system. He is life itself and the full embodiment of the kingdom of God. In Him are righteousness, justice, and peace. Let me state it more emphatically: Jesus is both king and the kingdom.

Now, many might agree with the above but would disagree over the how and when. It would take considerable energy to sort out all of these, so I won't try. However, it is apparent that the one thing or line of demarcation that separates all of them is how one views the resurrection and transfiguration. Is it past? Is it progressively ongoing? Is it future? Is it spiritual, physical, or both? Is it an event? Is it something we ease on into as we get more revelation and become more like Jesus? Is it so mystical that some have already arrived as full-fledged sons of the kingdom while yet in mortal bodies, as some are now proclaiming? If we let him, Paul settles all differences.

First, he told Timothy that two men had gone astray from the truth and were upsetting the faith of some by saying the resurrection had already taken place (2 Timothy 2:17-18). As a former Pharisee, Paul believed in a literal, bodily resurrection, and this great hope did not change after Jesus broke into his life (Romans 8:23; Philippians 3:11). Paul saw the *out-resurrection* as a future event called the Day (Philippians 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:8).

Second, he devoted all of 1 Corinthians 15 defending not only Christ's resurrection but also that of all mankind, each in their own order. This mortal must put on immortality (vs. 53)! Paul even quoted the same verse previously cited from Isaiah: *If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die* (vs. 32). Perhaps, this is why so many are living as if life is a party; they have no expectation of resurrection and transfiguration. Immortality is about being beyond death. Who among us mortals can claim that we are beyond death when the grave will eventually swallow all of us until Jesus arrives? Only one is immortal today, God's Son (1 Timothy 6:15-16), the king of glory, who is coming very, very soon.