

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)

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Sodom & the Rainbow

Friday, June 26, 2015 was a remarkable day. Internationally, it was called a *bloody Friday* as terrorists struck in three nations (Tunisia, France, and Kuwait). Also, Greece continued in the news as it heads toward the brink of default. I mention these only to bring to our attention what kind of day this was. Apart from this, I have no specific word to offer other than these are signs of the day in which we live.

In America, the big news was the 5-4 Supreme Court ruling that made same-sex marriage part of the law of the land. This day will go down in history as the day America was officially declared *Sodom*. To cap it off, the executive branch of government lit up the White House with rainbow colors to celebrate this so-called *victory for equality and justice*. And, to top off the events of this day, the President of the United States sang *Amazing Grace*, specifically, *grace that saved a wretch like me*, during a eulogy for one of the slain brethren in Charleston. What a day!

There is more to this day, for before the day even began, the Lord spoke an encouraging word to me about *His presence* that brings it all into sharp focus; His presence speaks of His second coming or consummational arrival.

So, I must say that I am full of thought about this day. But, where to start?

First, we can be sure of the obvious outrage among many Christians to the Supreme Court ruling and the President's in-the-face message to many Americans by having the White House lit up with rainbow colors, the symbol of the LGBTQ movement. Some are saying that this is going to bring the judgment of God down on America, possibly even to destroy us as a nation. I don't quite see it this way. Instead, I see the ruling and the White House reaction as a sign of God's ongoing judgment of America. What I mean is that we are in the midst of His judgment right now, and God has just declared what we have become and been for some time—*Sodom*. Perhaps this is good news, for we might be approaching the end of our judgment, not entering into it.

I don't think I have written much about this before, but some time ago, I wondered if America (not the entity called the *United States* starting in 1776) has been under God's judgment since the first official British colony called *Jamestown* was founded on our eastern shores in 1607. One commentator, Dr. Stephen Jones (God's Kingdom Ministries), has observed a cycle in scripture he calls *cursed time* that lasts for 414 years. Although it is called a *cursed time*, it is actually a *time of grace* in which a people (or, nation) are given 414 years to repent before God brings His final judgment on the people. So, I would call the 414-years *grace time*. I believe this is what America has been under for the last 408 years, a time of grace.

Given this, I find President Obama's singing about *grace saving a wretch like me* as a prophetic statement for all of America. As our elected head, he sang for the entire nation, acknowledging before God and the world that the only thing that has saved America for these last 408 years is the grace of God. We have been a people under God's grace. It seems unlikely that he intended it this way, but God is able to speak through any and all sources He so chooses. Obviously, the one voice that can speak for America is the president, intentionally or not.

By the way; 414 years from 1607 brings us to the year 2021; a year mentioned elsewhere in light of a **21-year cycle** that has been in play since 2000-2001.

Second, there might be a bright side to the White House being lit up with rainbow colors. Again, keep in mind; man can say or do something with a certain intention, but God can use it to declare something entirely different. Perhaps, this is one of those cases. Consider God's conversation with Noah after the flood.

And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. (Genesis 9:12-15 NKJV)

Many take this to mean that God will never literally destroy the earth by physical water ever again, but He will literally destroy it with physical fire. This is an old covenant or fleshly way of thinking about it. We need to see it through the eyes of the spirit that says *God is a consuming fire*, and His fire is a spiritual fire that devours carnal flesh without destroying the person or the earth, for that matter.

God sent His Son to this earth to save it, not to destroy it, and He is sending His Son back to this earth to restore it, not to destroy it. The end of the world is not coming—the end of carnal flesh that rules the world is coming without fully destroying the earth or America or other nations, for that matter.

The account of the Noachic flood also gives us further indication of how God's consuming fire will go forth. The dove that Noah sent forth three times from the ark was a type of the holy spirit going forth into the earth. The second time typified a Pentecostal filling of believers. However, of greater significance was the third time when the dove did not return. This signified that the spirit of the Lord would one day go forth throughout the whole earth, filling it with the glory of God.

But to understand what this going forth will be like, we need to link it with what John the Baptist said.

"As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matthew 3:11-12 NASB)

The world is unknowingly awaiting God's immersion in fire, His spiritual fire that will burn up the chaff or the carnal flesh that rules the world. This is essential for the manifestation of the kingdom of our Lord that will steadily increase in the oncoming age until *the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea* (Habakkuk 2:14).

Thus, the White House being lit up with rainbow colors may have meant one thing to the LGBT movement that is fully endorsed by the President, but, perhaps God is sending us a message of His own. Like in the days of Noah, could He be telling us that His covenant with the earth still stands and that He is getting ready to directly move upon the face of the earth once again?

Just as Methuselah and Noah preached repentance to the ancient world, so are we being called to repent or change our ways. However, do we even have the capacity to change? Perhaps not! I sense we are helpless and destitute, soon to become desperate. *For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all* (Romans 11:32). God is not going to destroy us; in His mercy, He is going to send forth His spirit fire to cleanse or purge us of our carnality, especially the carnality of His people that are responsible for the fallen state of our nation. He is going to remove the chaff from His kingdom. His spirit is going to go forth like the dove that flew out of Noah's ark for the third time. Perhaps, the White House rainbow is God's reminder of His mercy and love for the whole earth and every living thing. This is good news!