

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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An Epoch Event is Coming!

The history of the world is replete with what could be called epoch events or periods of time that brought great change and, as it were, altered the course of history. However, although it might appear that history was altered, it was probably an indicator that history was simply repeating itself along some line, not exactly but in some measure. Unfortunately, much history is framed in the rise and fall of nations and their leaders in conjunction with wars, along with famine and disease that devastate the world population, either regionally or globally.

Pick any point in time - except perhaps the 1980s-90s, an anomaly of sorts as prosperity flourished and technology began to rocket - and put yourself on the scene of epoch-making events with great change and you might think the world or an age is coming to end. A Jew in Jerusalem from 66-73 AD might have thought the end had come, which, in a sense, it did for Judaism and for the age of Moses. Of course, if you were a Christian at this time, you might have thought Jesus was coming back very soon. History books, if they haven't been rewritten to push a social agenda, are full of examples of epoch-making periods. Although Rome was clearly in power in the days of Jesus, by the 4th-5th centuries, its power was gone and power had shifted to Constantinople. In more recent memory, if you were in Europe during the early part of the 20th century, you sensed things were changing. World War I hit the continent in 1914 and then WWII came on its heels, ending in 1945. People with a level of discernment could sense change in the air as Nazi Germany rose to dominance.

It is interesting to read what some Christian commentators wrote back in that time. They knew there were great forces at work, forces that brought great pressure on people, including and especially on the Lord's people. To some, it meant that the end of the age had come and Jesus' arrival was very soon. However, instead of the end of the world or the age, the earth kept spinning and history plodded on its course with man thinking he is at the helm of his destiny as the few continually seek for world domination and power at the expense of the many. Not much has changed since the days of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel.

We are now 71 years from the end of World War II. During this period, we have had many wars and rumors of wars, with the United States leading the charge for most of them without having a single decisive victory as we had in 1945. Instead, thousands have been killed or maimed in war with no lasting peace, worldwide democracy, or any real change in the heart of man. As a side note, when ancient Israel went to war as commanded by God, they never lost a man, but when they proceeded without God, they always lost. Think about it!

Today, many are saying that globally we are at war, but it is a different kind. Of course, the physical wars of guns continue in parts of the world, most notably, the Middle East, and there are rumors of war that could start any day between the big global powers. To this we add what is called *the war on terrorism*, which is global in its scope. Then, we have the economic/financial war that has continued since 2008. To round these out, we could say that there is also a war of morality verses amorality driven by ideologies, such as social justice, diversity, and non-discrimination based on group identity. To this latter point, gender identity is probably the most bizarre of the wars as it demands non-discrimination based on whatever gender or even non-gender one wants to assume at any point in time. Christians who want to fight in this war (mostly of words) have to endure all sorts of *phobic* labels as if they are evil and need to be silenced. It is as if this war says "to hell with your morality." This is not a religious war. Although it is never couched in this way, it is an ideological war with one side, basically taking an amoral-immoral stance against the righteousness of God, and the other side basically taking a moral, biblical stance for it.

If you don't think this is true, then consider the recent words of the chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights: "*The phrases 'religious liberty' and 'religious freedom' will stand for nothing except hypocrisy so long as they remain code words for discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia or any form of intolerance.*" And, this comes from a government official of the Obama administration. By the way, words very similar to these were used by one of the presidential candidates very recently. Don't be mistaken; this statement is directed toward one group and one group only, namely Christians; it is not directed toward any of the religions, especially Islam.

But let's be clear on one thing; as the Lord's people, we must not be about ideology or religion, although many Christians make the claim to having a religion. We are about a Person and everything of God that is embodied in that Person, who is the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. If we want to know justice and equality, we must know Him; if we want to know the impartiality of God, we must know Him; if we want to know peace, and, most of all, God's love, we must know Him. The fullness of God is embodied in Christ, and this Christ, who is the Anointed One, is in all who have the faith of Christ. We are about a Way, a Truth, and a Life; all of which are in Christ.

Dear brethren, let us keep the proper perspective on the day in which we live. These people are not our enemies; God loves them and God will get their hearts, even if it takes the ages to come. We don't have to gear up to go head to head with them, so to speak. No; as Paul the apostle tells us, our battle is not against flesh and blood, meaning it is not against them as people nor against their ideology. Our battle is with the dark powers and principalities among the celestials. **Put on the panoply of God, to enable you to stand up to the stratagems of the Adversary, for it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials"** (Ephesians 6.11-12 CLV). We don't see them with our eyes, but we can feel them as they try to come against our spirit and to stir us up to take action from our flesh and apart from Christ. Don't be suckered into it. Hold true to the love of God that has been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

There are those who regularly offer conspiracy theories about a few global uber-rich elitists or global agencies and institutions making backroom deals to dominate the world and bring about change that suits their ideology and desire for domination. There may be some of this going on and some who see themselves in this light, but I think we give them too much credit. There are true conspirators in the world, but they are in the unseen spirit realm that conspire to unite the world in their wickedness. These unseen powers conspire to influence and manipulate flesh and blood. These powers are adversarial to Christ and all His people, especially His conquerors. This is what John the apostle calls *the spirit of antichrist*.

How do we battle? Based on Paul's words, the battle is fought by simply holding to Christ in truth, righteousness, peace, the faith, and the *rhema* (word) of God. We have the good news of salvation and the gospel of the Kingdom, and we need to manifest it in the world. Manifestation is not about getting on a soap box and preaching to people. It isn't about our words. No; it is about being, being the living Christ in an antichrist world. It is about setting the evidence that Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God. This is how we fight the good fight; and this fight is won on the basis of love, the love of God in righteousness and through the faith of Jesus.

Now, returning to the opening thought about sensing or believing as so many have done in past generations that our generation is the last of this age and that we are on the cusp of the Presence of the Lord. Many of us believe we are at this point in the history of man and his day of domination over the world apart from God. There are many indications of the hour in which we live. As for me personally, I hold to this not as a theory or a speculation but as something I believe the Lord Jesus has revealed to me. When He broke into my life 35 years ago, He revealed Himself as the Conqueror who stands over the whole of the universe, having defeated every foe. Then, He revealed to me He is coming again very soon; and later, He revealed He is coming in my lifetime. Thirty-five years is a long time to wait, but wait we do as we walk by *the* faith of Christ, not by the sight of man. Besides, Man's Day is a 6,000-year day. God's calendar is the only one that matters, but it would appear that this day has run its course. Add to this the fact there are about 7 billion humans on the planet, and the world in many respects has truly been united globally in a new world order called *Babylon*, and we have the potential for the fulfillment of Revelation 17-18 and the makings of the Presence of the Lord. If there has been one special calling on my life, it has been **to announce the Presence of the Lord and the arrival of His Kingdom**; and so I do. An epoch event unlike any before is coming!