

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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The Unshakable Kingdom

This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12.27-29 NASB)

As I contemplate what has been transpiring in Washington DC with the Senate hearing for Supreme Court justice, I am reminded once again, as I seem to be reminded practically every day: **"When you see the structures crumble, testify of My Kingdom."** As I see it, *structures* refer to anything that can be shaken; they could be physical structures, both manmade and natural, but mostly, I see the structures as the whole gamut of things created by man including institutions, governments, ideologies, ism's, causes, and even theologies, all of which carry some descriptive label or name.

The current ideological and political (power) drama that is being played out in social media for all to be obsessed with is simply another sign of the crumbling structures; only in this case, the structure is the institutional government of the land. But we are not alone, for other nations are in various stages of crumbling as well. The world is either at or rapidly approaching critical mass when wholesale crumbling occurs on every front.

The best way to put this is that **those things which can be shaken will be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.** Things that can be shaken by God to the point of total removal are, as I have defined, *structures* created by man. The only hope for these things is if they align themselves with God's Kingdom, which embodies the very character, nature, and essence of God. If they do not, they will be shaken as if built on sand. Jesus Himself warned of such a demise in Matthew 7.24-27.

Case in point is the subject matter of Hebrews, which was written years prior to 70 AD. Jesus warned that Jerusalem and the Temple were going to be destroyed by God's Roman army (Matthew 22.7; Matthew 24); and, in 70 AD, they were by Titus' siege that, in God's economy, made that which was becoming obsolete and growing old (i.e., Judaism) completely disappear (Hebrews 8.13). Why? Even though it began with God under Moses, it had become a corrupted structure of man that was no longer aligned with God's Kingdom. When God shook it, no fruit fell from its branches. It was barren of God's Kingdom fruit and it could not remain.

We are in a very similar place in our day. Corruption of our institutions is widespread, not just in government but also in education and society in general. Case in point; one hospital just announced that they will no longer identify the gender of babies for the sake of "gender diversity." What? Also, a major university is indoctrinating new students with a list of the type of students that are privileged and the ones that are unprivileged. In many circles, social justice is not God's forgiving, impartial justice; it is more about vengeance, revenge, and class identity, victimization, and separation. What sort of mind comes up with such things? A mind not aligned with God's Kingdom.

Here are a few thoughts, even exhortations along these lines:

First, as the Lord's people, we must not align or identify ourselves with man's crumbling structures, even if there are things in them with which we agree. In the days ahead, alignment will lead to disappointment and discouragement as these things crumble by God's shaking. We must identify and align ourselves with the Kingdom of God, and nothing else. This is the only alignment that matters in our day.

Second, regardless of the structure, where there is light and truth that is of God's Kingdom, these things will remain. God, who is Light, honors anything that manifests His truth, justice, and righteousness. If we see things aligned with God's character, then embrace these things but without embracing the structure itself. Simply, rejoice that the Kingdom of God is being manifested in some measure, no matter how limited it might be at the moment. Of course, some level of spiritual maturity and spiritual sight is required to discern God's character in play. Another way of stating this is that God honors anything that lines up with His Kingdom, even if it is in the realm of what is called the "secular." God honors that which is good and right. We need to be open to some measure of truth in all sides of various contentious issues and fight the urge to pick a side; we must stand for the Kingdom alone.

As a side note, one test of whether something is of the Kingdom or not is how much forgiveness and humility is being manifested. So much of the so-called "conversation" of our day in all these emotionally-charged causes (many with some catchy hashtag name) lacks these two characteristics. Test them and you will see. In particular, we see very little, if any, of this coming out of Washington. We need to be reminded that the humble inherit the earth, and the Father forgives as we forgive; two traits of the Kingdom as taught by Jesus (Matthew 5.5; 6.14).

Third, do not think that the public church (not what Christ is building) gets a free pass on being shaken. God is a consuming fire! There is much of man built into what many call the "church" today. A day is coming when even the denominational and theological/doctrinal divisions will be shaken through the spiritual fire of God. Fact of the matter is that, in some churches, the shaking has already begun. God will not allow the tares of corruption to remain. They will be removed, burnt up, just as ancient Judaism was removed and destroyed by literal fire. We must see all things through the lens of the Kingdom and let go of all that is contrary to God's character. Why hold to something that is going to be tinder for God's bonfire?

Fourth, **God's Kingdom is unshakable**, and we are called or invited into this Unshakable Kingdom. We are not told to build it, advance it, or do anything with it, except to receive it and submit to it. Many today are proclaiming they are advancing the Kingdom. How can one advance something they receive that existed before the world was? Jesus told His disciples that the Father gladly gives the Kingdom (Luke 12.32). Jesus also declared that we are to inherit the Kingdom that was prepared before the foundation of the world (Matthew 25.34). In other words, before there was anything resembling a world, God prepared the Kingdom just as the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. Everything needed for mankind to thrive and live according to the law of liberty or freedom was prepared before the world was; and God gladly gives it now through His Son. The history of mankind and its ultimate destiny are fixed on these two great truths.

Fifth, and most importantly, Jesus is the King of the Father's Kingdom. It is the Kingdom of the Son of God's love, and those who have been given the faith of the Son to believe have been transferred out of the domain of darkness into the Kingdom of the Beloved Son. Let us live in His light and not the darkness of man's kingdoms. **Jesus who is our life and our hope!**

Let us be reminded that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the throne of glory and He reigns as the ruler of the kings of the earth. He rules today with a rod of iron, meaning He raises up and brings down the kingdoms of men when they cease to have any alignment with His Kingdom. At times throughout history, He has given a long leash to nations but, be assured, no kingdom (nation) of man has a stamp on it that says "No Expiration Date." All are destined to expire, some sooner, others later. Why? Because there is only one Unshakable Kingdom and one King that cannot and will not be deposed. **"But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain. ... 'You are My Son...'"** (Psalms 2.6-7).

Finally, I take every opportunity in my writings to remind those with ears to hear that **God is love**. Consequently, the very heart and soul and foundation of the Kingdom is love. The Kingdom was prepared in love; it is manifested in love; and it will be fully consummated in love so that God the Father may be *All in All in love*; that is, He may fill all with His very essence - love. This love is discovered in the Son of God's love who is the full embodiment of the **Unshakable Kingdom of Love**.

Let us hold fast to what is not shaken!