

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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by – Stuart H. Pouliot

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Heaven Comes to Earth

He shall send from heaven and save [rescue, deliver] me... (Psalm 57:3a)

Contextually, this psalm was written by David as he was being pursued by Saul. However, there is a context for us in this day. We are surrounded by ones with a Saul nature, whether it is within the visible or nominal church or within the world-at-large. The heart of Saul was very much different from the heart of David who is described as *a man according to God's own heart* (1 Samuel 13:14). We are called to be ones with a heart like David.

Without doubt, there is a much greater context for this verse in both the first (inaugural) and second (consummational) arrival of King Jesus. His first arrival occurred roughly 1,000 years after King David and we are currently awaiting His second arrival 2,000 years later. Both arrivals can be summed up with a rewording of David's words: **The Father sends His Son from heaven to save!** He did it once and He will do it again, for this is the plan of God to achieve His ultimate goal of all in all or, as one translation puts it, so that the Father may be *everything in everything*.

I haven't come **from heaven** to do what I want to do. I've come to do what the one who sent me wants me to do. (John 6:38 GW)

What was the will of the Father for His Son? It was to save. In Psalm 57, the Hebrew word for *save* is *yasha*, which means "to be open wide, to be free; to be safe, to free." It has been translated as *avenging, defend, deliver, help, preserve, rescue, be safe, bring salvation, save (savior), and get victory*. All these words capture the heart of Jesus' dual missions to earth. (I find the word *rescue* especially appropriate.)

And, so the Son of God will come again as promised to consummate His rescue mission of the earth and humanity. Why? It is the will of a loving Father who sees His creation, along with mankind, as *very good*. This is how He saw His creation at the beginning and this is how it once again will be in the ages to come as He sets all things right. We of this present age who believe have tasted what is to come—it is called *new creation*, for this is who and what we are in the life of Jesus. *King Jesus living within us as the expectation of glory!*

By the way, we who believe *are saved* (Acts 15:11; 1 Corinthians 15:2), *are being saved* (1 Corinthians 1:18), and *will be saved* (1 Corinthians 3:15). In other words, Jesus' rescue mission did not stop at the cross; it is an ongoing, progressive mission that ultimately leads to glory for all.

Now, the point I want to emphasize, which is seldom, if ever, emphasized in many Christian circles, is that throughout scripture, the direction is always heaven to earth, not earth to heaven. True, Jesus ascended back to heaven, but the angels also told the disciples that Jesus would return in the same manner, meaning He will come from heaven once again. Why? Because it is the Father's plan to bring heaven to earth as His glory fills the whole of the earth.

It's rather odd how David had more insight into God's plan than many Christians in our day. David (as well as others, such as Daniel and John) looked for heaven to come to earth. Today, many see God's rescue plan as heaven removing us from earth or, using the common vernacular, us "going to heaven." When we die, we "go to heaven" as a disembodied spirit or, when Jesus comes again, we will be "raptured to heaven." There is little, if any, indication in the modern-day gospel message about heaven coming to earth, which, by the way, is fully ingrained in the gospel message of scripture. In case there is doubt along this line, here are some verses that make the point.

For when others speak of us they report the reception we had from you, and how you turned from your idols to God, to be bondservants of the true and ever-living God, and ***to await the return from Heaven of His Son***, whom He raised from among the dead—even Jesus, our Deliverer from God's coming anger. (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 WNT [bold italic added])

For ***the Lord Himself will come down from Heaven*** with a loud word of command, and with an archangel's voice and the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:16 WNT [bold italic added])

We, however, are free citizens of Heaven, and ***we are waiting with longing expectation for the coming from Heaven of a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ***, who, in the exercise of the power which He has even to subject all things to Himself, will transform this body of our humiliation until it resembles His own glorious body. (Philippians 3:20-21 WNT [bold italic added])

And I, John, saw the holy city, ***New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God***, having been prepared as a bride, having been adorned for her Husband. (Revelation 21:2 LITV [bold italic added])

He comes to rescue His true *Christ-abiders* (my term), by giving His body (both dead and alive) new bodies in His glorified image. Paul calls it ***sonship*** (adoption as sons), ***the redemption of our body*** (Romans 8:23), which also speaks to our inheritance in the kingdom of God. He comes to rescue us from sin (not living according to God's original standard or perfection for humanity), death (all forms), the world (man's order in opposition to God's divine order), and the devil (all forms of evil). But this is simply the negative side of His mission. The positive side is what God is truly after—a ***fully matured body of believers that are in the image of the resurrected and glorified Jesus, the pattern Son of God***. The sons of God are the first fruits of the new creation that God, through His beloved Son's death and resurrection, inaugurated nearly 2,000 years ago and will consummate when our Savior, the Lord Jesus, comes from heaven to openly manifest His rights over the earth and its nations. The earth is His possession and the nations are His inheritance.

Given these few fragments (supported by many more), are we to suppose that God has given up on His creation that He declared is very good? No! God never gave up on earth or humanity. His plan from before the foundation of the world is to set to right His creation, not to destroy it or replace it with something else. It was very good at the beginning, and it will be very good, even more so, in the ages to come as King Jesus subjects all things to Himself until He destroys all rule and all authority and power. The last enemy to be destroyed is death itself. Then, King Jesus will hand over His kingly rule to God the Father, so that He may be all in all. In that glorious day, God will fill His entire creation with His presence and love. The kingdom of God will be a ***kingdom of familial relationship grounded in love***. It will be a paternal kingdom, for ***the Father will be the paterfamilias, the Father of a glorious family***. This is the consummation of the rescue mission that began at Calvary. The Father is soon to send His Son from heaven to earth to complete the mission by ushering in a glorious new creation age that will continue until all things are new.