

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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Bread of His Presence

Do you long to see the Lord or, as I often write, the love of your life? Perhaps I should ask: Do you see the Lord Jesus as the love of your life? Do you hunger and thirst for Him and Him alone, just as the deer pants for the water brooks (Psalm 42:1)? Have you set your love on the appearing of the Lord? Do you have a cry in your heart? Perhaps, it goes something like this: *Come, Lord Jesus, I need to see You! There is nothing more important than to gaze upon Your lovely face, to be in Your presence.*

Good news: He is coming, for it is the appointed time. Without doubt, the Lord has appeared to His people in special ways down through the centuries and continues to do so in our day, whether in judgment, revival, visions and dreams, or in very personal ways through the experiences of life. But I am speaking of our Lord Jesus manifesting Himself to His people as He openly manifests *the reign of the heavens* to the nations of this earth, so that the nations acknowledge there is only one King and one Lord, and His name is Jesus, the name above all names. In that glorious day, the nations will bow the knee to the one who has been given the nations as His inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as His possession (Psalm 2:8).

Looking at it from another angle: Are you tired of trying to be a Christian? Are you tired of always hearing about how things ought to be and seeing that we seem to be so far off the mark? Are you tired of just sitting and being taught, given spiritual truths, but not entering into the reality of them all? Are you tired of lukewarmness in the church and in your own life? Are you crying out to know Christ, to gain Him, to be found in Him? Are you crying out: *I am tired of all the religion, all the facades, all the veils, all the curtains, all the fuzziness between us. I must have You and You alone. I must see You and You alone. I don't need more religion; I need oneness with You. Lord, I want to see You, for I know that when I see You, I will be like You. I might fall down as dead like John, but I know that Your love will raise me up.* Obviously, this line of questioning could go on at some length, but I trust you touch the heart of it. Let me be clear that I am speaking of actually meeting the love of our life, not just in some veiled way but literally.

We, meaning not only believers but all humanity, were created to be in His presence because we were created to be in His image. But there is something special in store for those who have been called and chosen in this age. Those who believe, putting their trust in the Lord and conquering through His life, have an amazing destiny; they have the joy and privilege of being in the first company of saints, the firstfruit of new creation—snatched into His presence—glorified as He is glorified, celestial as He is celestial.

In the Greek, the word *purpose* is translated from the word *prothesis*, which means "setting forth, specifically the show bread (in the temple) as exposed before God" (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*). It also is defined as "before-placing." This is the same Greek word that is used by Paul for the purpose of the ages (Ephesians 3:11) and for the showbread, the cakes of bread, or the hallowed bread that sat on a table across from the golden candlestick in the Holy Place.

But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated [*prothesis*] bread,

which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone?" (Matthew 12:3-4 NASB)

For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred [*prothesis*] bread; this is called the holy place. (Hebrews 9:2 NASB)

The tabernacle was comprised of the court and the Holies of the Holies, which had two divisions, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies. The first objects that the priest beheld as he entered the Holy Place were the table of shewbread, which represents Christ as the bread of life, the manna that came down out of heaven (John 6:33, 35, 48, 51), and the golden candlestick, which represents Christ as the light of the world.

Some translations refer to the sacred bread as ***the bread of the Presence*** (ESV, GW, ISV, JMNT, YLT), an expression found in Hebrew scripture: So the priest gave him consecrated bread; for there was no bread there but ***the bread of the Presence*** [*paniyim*] which was removed from before the LORD... (1 Samuel 21:6). We could say that it is the *Presence Bread*, which refers to the very presence of the Lord.

The Hebrew word for *presence* is *paniyim*, which can refer to "the face (as the part that turns)." It also refers to being "purposed by." Thus, the shewbread is more than a figure of Christ as the bread of life; it signifies being before the face of the one who is the very bread of life, the one whom all will feed upon to receive life. All being in His presence is another way of stating the purpose of God!

Now, here is the good news that I believe has been lost in our day but is being recovered in some measure: God's plan is to progressively bring **all** humanity into His presence, something that was lost in the garden of Eden. Before their fall, Adam and Eve knew the presence of the Lord, for immediately after their fall, they heard the sound of the Lord God (Yahweh Elohim) walking in the garden in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8). The presence of the Lord was not some feeling but His actual presence. I believe it is safe to state that prior to his transgression, which most likely occurred when he was 32-33, Adam lived in the Holy of the Holies as typified by the garden with the tree of life. After his transgression, the way was barred for him and his race from entering into this sacred place while in bodies of death. In the typology of the tabernacle, mankind moved to the outer court.

The good news is that the plan of God requires that all humanity eventually, but not all at the same time, be brought into His presence, to move from the outer court to **the Holies of the Holies**. But first, mankind must be brought into the Holy Place to behold the face of Jesus. The Son of God is the only way into the Most Holy Place, the very presence of God; into the glory of God. All must appear before the bread of the Presence, the one who holds the key of life and who is the light of the world. All must pass by and through the Son of God, for He alone is the way to God the Father. Those of us who have believed on Jesus in this age have been brought into the presence of the Lord *in spirit*, and because of this, we have **a hope set before us, an anchor of the soul, which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner** (see Hebrews 6:18-20a). We are destined to enter the Holy of Holies to be presented to God the Father in glorified, spirit-animated bodies.

In that day, we will see the lovely face of, not just *our* love but, most importantly, **the lover of our life**. What a destiny! Oh, may we long for the day we see our beloved Lord and stand in His presence.

Christ in you, the hope of glory!