

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 LAW IS GOOD #2

For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted. (1 Timothy 1.6-11 NASB)

“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” ... And nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. ... Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. (Revelation 21.8, 27; 22.15 NASB)

In the previous issue on the law is good, I made the point that the law is being written on our hearts and that the very foundation of all the commandments is love, for love is the fulfillment of the law. The moral law of God is based on the love of God. Further, the law is holy and spiritual.

Now, I want to take a little risk in this issue and propose that the law is good for those who will be cast into the lake of fire at the great white throne judgment that occurs at the end of the millennial reign of Christ and His conquerors (Revelation 20.4-6, 11-15). The lake of fire may be a season of anguish or, even, torment for those cast into it, but this is a good thing, for I believe that it will lead to their ultimate restoration through the love of God that wins their hearts to truly and willingly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. In that glorious day, God the Father will be *All* in all, and all creation will be in love. This is the absolute success, victory, and glory of the cross.

Most people see the lake of fire as a literal lake of intense heat called *hell* in which people are either tortured forever and ever or are completely annihilated (destroyed). I cannot go into detail on this subject in this issue, so I refer you to my book *The Purpose and Plan of the Eons*, especially Volume 2, Chapter 5, *Our God is a Consuming Fire*.

Essentially, the fire of God is the law of God. Consider these verses: **“Is not My word like fire?” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer which shatters a rock?” (Jeremiah 23.29 NASB). The voice of the LORD hews out flames of fire (Psalm 29.7 NASB). “Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words [commands, law] from the midst of the fire” (Deuteronomy 4.36 NASB [added by writer]). From his right hand went a fiery law for them (Deuteronomy 33.2 KJV).** God’s word is His law, and it is a fiery law. In fact, God’s throne is described as a blazing flame of fire. Both Daniel and John were given visions of the judgment of God going forth from His throne. Carefully read Daniel 7.9-10 and Revelation 20.11-15 and you will discover that Daniel saw the throne of God ablaze with fire, along

with a river of fire flowing from the throne, and John saw the river turn into a lake of fire. Putting the two visions together reveals that the source of the fire is the throne. In fact, the throne is ablaze with fire, which speaks of the law emanating from God Himself.

Daniel was given a picture of the throne and Who sat upon it. He was shown thousands attending to the Ancient of Days and myriads upon myriads standing before the One on the throne. Clearly this is a judicial scene, for the court sat. In other words, it is a scene of the divine court room in which judgments will be made. The King is seated, and from His throne come forth judgments. In our day, a judge sits upon a bench and makes judgments of guilt by applying what is written in the books of law that he is sworn to uphold. In Daniel's vision, books were opened, which refer to the law by which the court will judge the myriads standing before the Ancient of Days.

John's vision reveals who are summoned to appear before the court of God. They are the great and the small that were not included in the first resurrection. They are standing before the throne to be judged according to their works. We could say that the fire flows from the throne as a river, which grows into a lake. Interestingly, the English definition of a lake includes this: "**A place where a river widens out greatly.**" It seems that we are given a picture of a river of fire that widens out so greatly that it engulfs the myriads upon myriads standing before the throne. It is the fiery law of God that engulfs the multitudes, not for destruction or for eternal torture, but for correction and restoration.

As I was reading Galatians recently, I was caught by Paul's reference to the law being a tutor to lead to Christ in reference to the rebellious and ancient nation of Israel. But the thought occurred to me: Is this not what the fiery law of God, the lake of fire, is to do for the multitudes as well? Is it possible that God will tutor the masses to Christ through the law as signified by the lake of fire? All are shut up in sin; all are rebellious. No man will be justified by the law, only by faith, but will not the law be used to lead all mankind into the faith? Is this not the mercy of God?

But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3.22-26 NASB)

Paul tells us that the law is for the lawless and the rebellious, which is the very group of people that will stand before the great white throne whose names are not recorded in the book of life. They need the law to lead them to faith in Christ, to justification by faith. Is it not more merciful of God to tutor through the law than to roast them in an eternal hell? If He does not restore all mankind, then where are mercy and grace and love? The cross would be a miserable failure!

To prove the point, compare Paul's word to Timothy and John's word to the ecclesia.

1 Timothy 1.8-10

Lawless, Rebellious, Ungodly, Sinners, Unholy, Profane. Murderers, Immoral, Homosexuals, Kidnappers, Liars, Perjurers

Revelation 21.8, 27; 22.15

Cowardly, Unbelieving, Abominable, Murderers, Immoral, Sorcerers, Idolaters, Liars, Unclean, Dogs

Paul reveals the character of those who need the law and John reveals the character of those who will be cast outside of New Jerusalem. They are one and the same; the law is for such as these. Those who believe in this day will enter New Jerusalem by grace, but those who do not enter must be tutored to Christ by the law so that they too, one day, might enter the holy city of God **by grace**. Thus, the law is good, for it will lead all to Christ. This is what the lake of fire signifies. It is good!