

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)

#02-0891

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A GREAT STORM ON THE SEA #1

I write the *Upward Call* each week not knowing who reads them or if they are of any help; only the Lord knows. I often ask myself and the Lord, "What purpose do they serve? Should I even continue to write?" I have gone through periods when I have not been sure what is on the Lord's heart, so I cry out to feel the very heartbeat of God for the hour in which we live. Sometimes, it seems as if He has remained silent with me for nearly an eternity, but then He shows up, almost unexpectedly. At times, I have gotten to a point of desperation and have said, "I am giving this up. I am not writing anymore." But every time I do, I get one of those "Jeremiah feelings" that I cannot remain silent.

So, here I am again, writing on a day when I know in my heart that the things of this world are getting ready to dramatically change. The fact of the matter is that the change has already begun, but it will intensify. At first, it might seem painful to many, but as I have said before, it is a good thing because it is God's way of judging the kingdoms of this world, especially Babylon, the Great City, and the Babylonian system that it represents. **The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether** (Psalm 19.9b). The Stone Kingdom has begun to crush the mixed feet of iron and clay. His judgments are always right and with purpose, and part of that purpose is to set Christ's conquerors free from living under the yoke of Babylon and delivering them into the glory of His kingdom. This truly is good news. But it is even greater than this, for God has purposed to reconcile or, as some would say, restore all things to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven. His glory will fill all the earth.

I find it rather puzzling that there is a lot of talk (preaching) about the Lord's people coming into God's purpose for their lives, but very little talk about God's purpose for the eons and, beyond that, God's grand purpose for creation and all mankind, none excepted. There seems to be much talk about spatial things, things of this earth in our day, but very little talk about the day of Christ in the next eon and beyond. What happened to setting your mind above where Christ is seated among the celestials? What happened to Paul's heavenly vision? What about the goal for the prize set before each one of us who believe?

Some who have read my writings might wonder why I stress the resurrection and the terms *in* death and *in* spirit, along with our hope or expectation to be glorified like Christ and to reign with Him on the earth in the eon or age to come. Our goal is not to go to heaven but to be transfigured into celestial, spiritual, glorified bodies that can transcend time and space and that will live in both the celestial realm and the earthly, physical realm. Now, this is something to get excited about and to pursue. In other words, I do not see Scripture teaching us that we go to heaven for eternity. Rather, it teaches us that we are called to participate with Christ in bringing *the reign of the heavens* to earth as He sums up or heads up all things in heaven and on earth. Apart from my belief that this is the truth of Scripture, I stress these things because so few seem to see it this way and, because of that, so few have any vision of what God's purpose is in His Son and where we fit into this purpose.

Without doubt, many (most?) believers have been taught that when they die, they go to heaven, receive new bodies, and are with the Lord forever. Everyone else goes to hell. For those with a ticket to heaven, the significance of the *first* resurrection and the kingdom that is coming to the nations has much less, if any, significance. Thus, the emphasis turns from God's purpose in the ages to come as worked out through His Son and His conquerors, to what is in it for the believer *now* while on earth. So, many are encouraged to seek for God's purpose in their lives, and I might add, many other things, like the anointing, the blessing, and, of course, the grand-daddy of all, prosperity.

It is quite interesting to observe what is happening in the so-called *church* of our day. I say so called because the word *church* has taken on many meanings in our day; consequently, it means something different than it did 2,000 years ago. I prefer to call it the *ecclesia* when I am trying to express what I see as the Lord's heart on the matter.

My wife and I moved recently, and we have been visiting some local churches. We have purposely avoided the so-called fundamental ones, not because we have anything against them but because we know what to expect when we walk through their doors. So, we have selected churches that are making some sort of claim, like the Lord is moving or great things are happening, which has resulted in large numbers coming together. So far it has been an interesting experience, but not necessarily a spiritual one.

The one thing that I cannot figure out is why the music is played so loud that they give out ear plugs for those who need them. Perhaps I have missed the point, but there seems to be a big disconnect. After listening week after week to music played in the range of 90-100 decibels, or possibly greater, I would have to ask for healing of my hearing. Interestingly, the lyrics to some of the songs are quite good and worshipful, but they seem to get lost in the noise. I don't think this is a generational issue, either; I cut my teeth, as they say, on loud rock music.

Our last experience, which seemed more like a soul experience, not only had the decibel level but also an overpowering bass that made my heart feel as if it were about to go into arrhythmia. Don't get me wrong; I used to play electric bass and to this day dream of playing bass again, so I enjoy a good bass beat, but not one that makes my chest pound with it. It seems to me that many are out to have a good time, to feel good, and to have an experience, much like going to a rock concert. In one case, the pastor came across like a rock star. Believe me, I am not judging such ones or being critical of them or the ministry that they truly believe was given to them by the Lord. I have no doubt that some are helped and encouraged through these ministries. Thank God!

However, I must admit, I have left some meetings crying out to the Lord: "Lord, is this You? Are You in this thing? What's going on? Does this bring satisfaction to Your heart?" I have left these times fatigued, not refreshed. My head aches (literally and figuratively) trying to figure out what all the noise is about. The answer I seem to get from such cries to the Lord is this: **The end has come; tumult is coming;** and, the latest one, **a great storm is coming**, which I will share on in subsequent issues.

This sure does not sound like "go out and live it up in My name," which is the way some view things these days. So I am left with questions: Have the Lord's people been led astray into seeking after soul experiences? Have they lost sight of the day in which we live? Do they have any understanding at all of God's purpose and what the next eon is all about?

Before sharing on the latest word, I want to briefly revisit the previous words I reported, *The End Has Come* (#02-0872, July 4, 2008) and *The Day Is Near—Tumult* (#02-0890, July 10, 2008). As reported, the phrase *the end has come* is discovered in Ezekiel 7. As if to add to the import of this word, the word I received regarding tumult coming is also found in this Ezekiel passage.

'Your doom has come to you, O inhabitant of the land. The time has come, the day is near—tumult rather than joyful shouting on the mountains.' (Ezekiel 7.7 NASB)

The Hebrew word for *tumult* used in the verse is *mehumah*, which comes from the root word *huwm*. As I reported previously, I was kept awake the night of July 5 with a humming sound that my wife did not hear and the source of which I could not discern. Three days later, I heard that tumult is coming, almost as if it pointed back to the hum that I heard to make sure that I got the point. Perhaps this all seems like a coincidence to some reading this, but based on my experience with the Lord, I do not believe in coincidences. I will continue this thought in part 2 of this series.