

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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A GREAT STORM ON THE SEA #3

When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!" He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"
(Matthew 8.23-27 NASB)

As I have reported, on July 15 at 1.00 am, I was suddenly wakened with this word: "**A great storm is coming,**" which can be traced to the verse quoted above in which Jesus was in a boat with His disciples when a great storm arose on the sea. Even though Jesus was in the boat with them, the disciples nevertheless feared for their lives.

This account is recorded in Matthew (8.23-27), Mark (4.37-41), and Luke 8.22-25), so we know from the start that it has great importance for us, and, we could say, that it provides us an opportunity for a "teachable moment," for that is what it was for the disciples.

Now, many sermons on this account seem to focus on the Lord calming the storm. After all, this was a miraculous event that proved Jesus was the Son of God. "**What kind of man is this?**" However, I believe there is one aspect that is often overlooked.

Although Scripture does not tell us so, I believe that the great storm was no mere coincidence but an event orchestrated by the Lord Himself. After all, if He could calm the winds, He most surely could stir them up. Nothing is impossible for the Creator of all, and He will spare nothing to teach His own, especially those chosen to reign with Him. Let us not forget that Jesus led them into the boat and into the raging storm. **Follow Me!**

That they were on the sea and the word says that there *arose a great storm on the sea* has some significance that may add more depth to the lesson of this story. In Scripture, the word *sea* often refers to the nations. Truly, in our day, a great storm is brewing across the globe that will inundate all the nations (sea) of the world. To the Lord's people who are also caught in this great storm, at first, it might appear that the Lord Jesus has forgotten them, as if He were asleep to their cries for help as they struggle to know what to do in days of great shaking. However, He is not asleep but ever watchful. He knows what is transpiring, and He knows how to bring His body of believers through it to His glory. It is when He appears asleep to our needs, or does not seem to be listening to our pleas for direction, that faith must take hold of our fears and refuse to give any ground to the fear of "what if."

In our times of trial, we must hold to faith that the Lord has not left us nor forsaken us but rather is in the boat with us as the storm buffets the nations around us and even the nation in which we live. The boat on the sea might reel to and fro, but we can be assured that the Lord is with us, and He alone will bring His peace and calm into our souls that may be under intense pressure. We need to be reminded of the Lord's words to His disciples as they faced the most pressing hour of their lives as He headed toward the cross.

“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome [conquered] the world.” (John 16.33 NASB [CV])

Dear beloved saints, when the great storm comes, do not fear that you will perish. No; you will be led to glory if you endure to the end.

But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. (Matthew 24.13 NASB)

The Lord Jesus was not talking about eternal life and flying off into heaven but eonian life and entering His kingdom on earth in the eon to come. Those who endure to the end of the great storm will be saved into the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ that will overtake the kingdoms of this world. Those who endure will be enjoyers of eonian life, reigning with Christ in the eons to come as He heads up all things in the heavens and on earth (Ephesians 1.10). They are the ones who are left, saved to enter the kingdom, the ones not taken into judgment by death, disqualified from entering the kingdom (Matthew 24.40-41).

When the great storm hits and the nations are in an uproar and in great perplexity over what to do, the gospel of the kingdom, the good news of God's kingdom of righteousness, justice, and peace under the reign of the Son of His love, will go forth through Christ's conquerors. The conquerors are the ones who will proclaim the good news to the nations that will finally *begin* to turn from their ways that have been proven to be a failure and turn to God's ways, which are righteous. In that glorious time, the nations will begin to learn righteousness (Isaiah 26.9). They refused God's ways before, but finally they will learn them as the conquerors instruct them. Thus, *the reign of the heavens* will come to the earth to bring our present wicked eon to an end, and the Kingdom of God with God's Son, our Lord Jesus, as the King of kings, will have come.

And this good news of the reign shall be proclaimed in all the world, for a testimony to all the nations; and then shall the end arrive. (Matthew 24.14 YLT)

Now, this is truly good news and something to get excited about. However, I sense that many of God's people in this day are not living with this in view. Instead, they are looking for experience that brings satisfaction to their souls now. They are adding legitimacy to this worldly desire by doing it in the name of the Lord. But let me ask: Do you honestly think that looking for an experience every Sunday will prepare you for the great storm that lies ahead? Perhaps, for some, it might, so I do not want to be overly dogmatic on this point; but it is the preparation in the wilderness that prepares one for entering the land of promise, to be **fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him** (Romans 8.17 NASB). This is the way to glory, to receive glorified, celestial bodies in the likeness of Christ. This is our land of promise. Being in the wilderness is a time of trial, even suffering, and of trusting the Lord when things seem to be almost impossible. The wilderness can be like being lost in a forest with no compass in hand and not knowing which direction to turn. The Lord's people who conquer are the ones who lean not on their own understanding but look off unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of faith, and trust Him to lead them through the trial. Like the winds that obeyed Him, so do the conquerors when they hear His voice: **Be still, and know that I am God** (Psalm 46.10 NASB). They endure through it, rather than try to escape it, because they know that the Lord is with them and He is working out their situation for good and for His glory. Fear does not grip their soul, faith does; faith in the Faithful One. Remember, He is called Faithful and True. May heaven be opened for our eyes to see Him clearly!

And I saw the heaven having been opened, and lo, a white horse, and he who is sitting upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth he judge and war... (Revelation 19.11 YLT)