

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)

#04-1020

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March 1, 2010

Shaking Has Purpose

Compared to the 1990's, which have been described as the decade of peace and prosperity, the first decade of the new millennium has been just the opposite. It seems as if every sphere of life across the globe, from the natural to the manmade, has been (and continues to be) shaken to varying degrees, some to the extreme, especially regarding natural events.

When the world experiences catastrophic natural events such as earthquakes, some describe the events in terms of Armageddon, the end of the world and time itself, or God's judgment of the world. On the other end of the spectrum, there are those who see themselves as voices of reason by discounting anything to do with God—to them, the events are simply part of living in a changing world, and we need to find ways to help one another through these times. Of course, there are always those who seek personal gain through tragedies. Further, with the year 2010 starting with two major devastating earthquakes hitting the Caribbean/South American region 47 days apart, the casual observer might be tempted to conclude that earthquakes are on the increase, while the experts, armed with their scientific data, state that this is not so, for the earth is constantly shaking.

When seen from God's view, we learn that shaking is part of His plan to achieve His ultimate purpose of all in all. In this regard, although painful to many, shaking has great purpose. Consider these points.

First, shaking from the creator is a teachable moment for the inhabitants of the earth—*For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness* (Isaiah 26:9 ESV). *Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters* (Revelation 14:7).

Second, shaking leads to receiving His kingdom. At least two times in history, God declared that He, yet once more, was going to shake not only the earth, but also the heavens, denoting the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain (Hebrews 12:26-28; also, Haggai 2:6, 21). **Contextually**, Hebrews is about the great shaking that occurred shortly after Hebrews was written, when, in 70 AD, Jerusalem and the temple were totally destroyed by the Roman army, as Jesus prophesied (Matthew 22:7), and biblical Judaism was made obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). This was a great shaking of heaven and earth as an entirely new creation order—that was inaugurated with Jesus death and resurrection—was fully set free from Judaism—no longer a mixture of old and new, or a perceived sect of the old. **Instructionally**, through Hebrews, we learn that we receive a kingdom (God's) that cannot and never will be shaken.

Third, shaking brings the six days (6,000 years) of man's day (1 Corinthians 4:3 LITV/YLT), the day of man's labor, to an end. Six days clearly speak of a definite and limited period of time, the appointed time of God. By most accounts, at least as far as man is able to discern, the 6,000 years have been completed. If so, then we must presently be in a transition between two ages, a period characterized by shaking. The transition is not an indefinite period but an appointed time of limited and, most likely, short duration.

Fourth, shaking could be likened to birth pangs, the pains associated with childbirth—meaning something glorious is about to be birthed in accord with God's purpose. There are two Greek words that are used for the metaphor of childbirth. In Greek, the primary word for *birth pang* is *odin*, which refers "to a pang or throe, especially of childbirth" (Matthew 24:8; Mark 13:8). This word appears in the text of Jesus' explanation of *the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age* (Matthew 24:3). (Of course, one has to decide what age Jesus is referring to—the Mosaic age or our present age. I won't weigh in on the matter, for the principle applies either way.)

"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs [*odin*]." (Matthew 24:7-8 NASB [added])

Notice that earthquakes are part of the birth pangs. Jesus did not state that quakes would be on the increase; He merely stated they would manifest in various places. However, perhaps the frequency and severity of the quakes could increase just as the pains of natural childbirth do until the child emerges into the world.

Fifth, shaking births the seventh day when King Jesus' reign on earth—the reign of the heavens comes to earth and God's Son manifestly rules over the nations. Shaking will precede this glorious age.

Sixth, shaking births God's glorious new creation (in a consummational sense) where all things are made new. It is the birthing of a divine new order where righteousness dwells—openly manifested to all, no longer hidden spiritually.

Seventh, shaking births the glorified, immortal body of believers, the complement of Christ that has been trained over the last 2,000 years to reign with King Jesus and to be an integral part of the summing up all things in heaven and on earth—reconciling all things to God the Father.

For our realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself." (Philippians 3:20-21 CLV)

Eighth, (fruit of the seventh point), shaking leads to freedom for all creation that is in slavery to corruption. The only way for creation to be set free is for man to be set free. This freedom begins with the freedom of the children of God when the first fruits anointed, the first troop to be resurrected and transfigured into immortality, are placed (adopted) as sons of the kingdom. The adoption as sons is consummated through *the redemption of our corruptible body*. Consequently, in many respects, the shaking that precedes the coming of the kingdom of Christ is good and necessary, for it will birth many sons unto glory, to the praise of God.

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also, we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:19-23 NASB)