

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)

#11-1703

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Establishment, Listen Up

Let it be known that the kingdoms (nations) of men rise and fall at the behest of God, and no one is in authority apart from the hand of God. I cringed when I heard a well-known evangelist recently state that God showed up for the November 2016 election and heard the many prayers of His people to elect Trump. Really? Did God not show up for all the previous elections, as well? Recollection says that there was a great prayer effort by God's people against Obama's second term. Did God not show up for that? Did He not hear the prayers of His people?

As I listened to President Trump (sounds strange) give his inauguration speech, I had two reactions.

First, I was stunned at how this man stood against the establishment, which seldom, if ever, likes to be challenged. Rather the establishment—whether in the realm of government, business, or religion—protects itself at all cost. But Trump took no prisoners and laid open every politician and past president that sat behind him listening. I said to myself: "This guy just insulted everyone on the platform, essentially telling them they sold out the American people for their special interests, to bolster the establishment at the expense of 'We the people.'"

As an aside, the one former president that sat there listening that has truly manifested the love and peace of God after leaving office is Jimmy Carter. He may not have been the best of presidents, but he has exceeded all of them in his example that is best described as the Christ-life.

Of course, the media was beside itself over Trump's speech. One commentator was quoted as stating that you do not say that sort of thing in an inauguration speech. The expectation was that he would "play nice," build bridges with his detractors (i.e., haters), and offer the inane platitudes presidents usually give at such a time. "Don't speak the truth or what you are actually thinking, play nice as 60 or so congressional Democrats boycott your inauguration, many challenge your legitimacy, some plan for your impeachment, and former Republican presidents openly state they did not vote for you." The hypocrisy is astounding. Only the Lord knows how this is going to play out over the next four years, but it surely is an amazing start and may not bode well for smooth sailing.

To be clear, I am not making Trump into some sort of great saint or deliverer of the American people. I have made the point elsewhere that he is not our deliverer—Jesus is! Time will tell where Trump's place in history will reside. Without a doubt, he is a rough stone, but the Lord is good at polishing stones into His likeness. Some think he is a Cyrus or a Darius, and the prayers offered for him at the inauguration included him having the wisdom of Solomon. I am not so sure we want a Solomon whose kingdom did not end so well, as the king in his old age sought after the gods of his wives.

I would prefer to see Trump with some of the character of Jehoshaphat who followed the example of David and sought the God of his father. When a great multitude (over a million) gathered at Engedi to come against Judah and Jerusalem, Jehoshaphat sought the Lord and proclaimed a fast (see 2 Chronicles 20:1-25). In other words, he called the people to join him in seeking the Lord as he acknowledged that *God is the ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You.* God heard their cry and humility and declared: *Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's. Stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf.*

I have held for some time that, as a nation, we are heading for what I call an *Engedi moment*, and we will need a Jehoshaphat leader in that hour. Given the late hour of our age, our Engedi might be the *darkest hour* that is surely

coming, but in that hour, seeing the salvation of the Lord will be seeing Jesus, the one who is salvation. When He shows up, all enemies will be brought to naught.

Regardless, we need to be open that perhaps God simply wants a man who is unique in his own way and not likened to others in scriptural history. Maybe God is going to do a new thing. After all, God, through His Son, is making all things new. Since we are at the end of the age, we might see something entirely different unfold as we near the arrival of King Jesus.

We need to be open to what the spirit of Christ is saying at the end of this age and not be persuaded by the many deceptive voices or even remain locked in our own thinking and the thinking coming forth from many of the institutional pulpits that speak forth "another gospel" as they coerce money from the people. In the days ahead, we need to be alert to greater prosperity and/or advances in technology that will become (has already become) idolatry to many people. Paul has left us a warning from his day that could just as well apply in our day.

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these. (2 Timothy 3:1-5 NASB)

Now for the second reaction. With his inauguration speech, in some measure, as he stood squarely against the establishment, Trump sounded a bit like Jesus. It could be likened to Jesus overturning the tables of the money changers (Matthew 21:12). To be abundantly clear, Trump does not display the character of Jesus in much that he says, especially his lack of humility, so I am not making that comparison. However, Trump sounded somewhat like Jesus as Jesus openly exposed the heart of the religious leaders of that day much like Trump does to the political leaders of our day. The issue in both days was/is how the people were/are treated by their leaders.

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." ... "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. "You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." (see Matthew 23:13, 23-25, 27-28)

The lesson here is that establishment religious leaders of our day are not exempt from Jesus' exhortation any more than our political leaders are—no leader is exempt. Only the Lord knows how much hypocrisy there is in both realms.

I believe God has put the establishment in all spheres of the kingdom of men on notice. Great change is coming that will overturn the tables of the establishment, even the public church that has sought to better itself and its interests at the expense and detriment of the people.

President Trump undoubtedly will play a part in the change that is coming, but God is putting all on notice. Establishment, listen up—a new king is soon to arrive to openly manifest His kingship and God's kingdom that has been in charge all along. You have had your opportunity to rule righteously on behalf of the people. You failed. Your time is about up!

King Jesus is coming!