

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)

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King Jesus' Inaugural & Consummational Arrivals

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. (Colossians 1:13-20 NASB)

In my opinion, these verses are some of the greatest in all of scripture because they sum up the Son of God's love from the beginning—the creation of all, to the end—the reconciliation of all. The beloved Son, our Lord Jesus, is central, supreme, and preeminent in God's plan to achieve His purpose of all in all. If you want to know God's purpose for creation, then you must search the riches of King Jesus.

The question raised by these verses and many more is this: Are we to look at Jesus' victory on the cross as all future or as all today or both? My answer lies with both; I see them as mutually inclusive. I will explain as we go on. But I must confess, in reference to the kingdom, I have been guilty of placing too much emphasis on the future and not enough on the now. An expression that I have come across in my readings lately is *now, but not yet*. I rather like this expression, for it puts the Lord's two arrivals in a better perspective. By the way, His arrivals are also called *comings* or *manifestations*. These mean that Jesus appears to humanity in a literal and bodily way, not in some strictly spiritual, mystical, or ghostly way, regardless of how one views these words.

On my heart is Paul's vision of Christ in the above scripture. There is no hint of something else to do; no hint of maybe's, no hint of failure. All that is necessary for creation and humanity is settled in God's Son, including the reconciliation of all things, in heaven and on earth. It is done. Yet, this "done" is being progressively worked out in our day (or age) with a view to completion or consummation (in ages to come). Given this, I want to share a few words about the two manifestations of King Jesus.

The Firstborn Arrives Twice

On the cross, Jesus declared: *It is finished!* And so, it was. He accomplished all that He came to do in accordance with the will of His Father. Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification were proof of a complete and absolute victory. Nothing lacking! In Him is all the fullness of God.

In His first arrival, Jesus came as ***the firstborn of creation*** and He inaugurated what could be called a work-in-progress to bring about God's *new creation*. In doing so, King Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of the heavens on earth, beginning a process whereby heaven increasingly comes to earth—which is the reason behind telling His disciples to pray to His Father: *Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

In His second arrival, He comes as ***the firstborn from the dead*** to consummate all that He inaugurated until death itself is abolished, for He holds the keys of death and hades, and He alone has overcome death for all humanity (see 2 Corinthians 5:14–15). When death (of all kinds) is no more, sin is vanquished and all other authorities are made

null and void as well. All creation will be set free, and God will be all in all. All will be in God's kingdom as both heaven and earth are united as one.

God's realm today is called a *spirit realm*, for *God is spirit*. Many look at it as something far, far away, as if it is part of our dimension. But this is not how to view it. God's realm is like another dimension, with its own space and possibly even some measure of time. Our physical world is a dimension of space and time as well. A veil lies between the two dimensions that, from our perspective, can only be seen through the spirit of the Lord. It is not a far-away dimension; it is right here among us—we could say, we are enveloped within God's realm. To enter into it is like opening a door to another room that is every bit as, even more so, real as our world.

The first arrival of the king inaugurally opened the door. The second or consummational manifestation of the king throws that door wide open as heaven takes up residence in a living way in our dimension as the two become one. The consummation brings God's realm into union with man's realm. The first manifestation began this process in and through a people brought into the Anointed One. This is why union with the love of our life is so paramount! The second arrival brings this union into light for all to see and, ultimately, to enter into.

Kingdom of the Heavens on Earth as in Heaven

The first arrival of Jesus inaugurated something that is still hidden from the majority of the nations—God's will being worked out in and through a called-out people. The second arrival brings to completion (consummation) what has been developing for nearly the last two millennia that no longer will be hidden; all will see. Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of God on earth, that is, heaven on earth, where the will of God is done on earth as in heaven. God's will in action among the nations is the kingdom of God.

In His first arrival, Jesus manifested both His kingship and the kingdom. He was/is both. He came as the king of Judah. When Pilate nailed the words on the cross, he was declaring a fact, even if it might have been written sarcastically, that Jesus manifested throughout His earthly ministry. He was born as the king that held the scepter of Judah. His ministry was unlike any the world had ever seen—with all power and authority to control creation and raise the dead. As the king, He also personified the very kingdom. To prove it, compare Mark 9:43-45 with 9:47 (forget the word *hell*). The first two verses speak of life and the last verse speaks of the kingdom, making both life and the kingdom synonymous. Who is the life? Jesus! Then, who is the kingdom? Jesus! Amazing truth! In His second arrival, the kingdom life is manifested until the whole earth is full of the glory of God. Jesus the king and the kingdom will consummate all until He is all in all, as His Father will be when all His consummational work is done.

In His first arrival, Jesus (Yeshua-Joshua) came as Shiloh—Joseph, the peacemaker and the unitymaker, who repairs the breach in the birthright that had been divided between the scepter and fruitfulness by Jacob-Israel. This draws us back to creation itself and the birthright given to Adam, the first man. As the creator and the firstborn son, the second man, the Son of God inaugurated the *new creation*, in which peace and unity reign supreme. He has the right to have dominion over all creation and is the fruitful Son, bringing many sons to glory through His faith freely given to the many. As the Son, Jesus has inherited the nations and taken possession of all the earth (Psalm 2:6-8) with the goal of making all things new (Revelation 21:5). But there is more; Jesus also came as Shiloh—Israel, where the rule of God is supreme. He came as Israel's God and Messiah and as Israel itself. He personified Israel as He bore all the pain and suffering that His own received at the hand of the nations of the world. He went to the cross, not only for the whole world, but also for Israel that he sought out as the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Today, there are still breaches as the Jews of the world (one small component of Israel) reject Israel's Messiah. Israel today (not the nation in the Middle East) is the *new creation* (Galatians 6:15-16), which is the *ecclesia*, called-out Christ-abiders. In His second manifestation, Shiloh-Israel comes to bring the Jews who are alive at that time into the fold once again; the cultivated olive branches that have been cut off will be grafted back into the olive tree of the Messiah. The breach will be repaired. And thus, the fullness of the nations will come and all Israel will be saved, the wild and the cultivated olive branches. One tree, one life, one kingdom, one people, one king, one Messiah—all in union. There is so much more. How do we sum it up? All things were commenced in the first manifestation, and all things will be consummated in the second manifestation! All things were inaugurated in Jesus. All things will be consummated in Jesus. There was and is and will be nothing lacking. We wait for our king to come from heaven.