

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)*

#03-0979

The Kingdom of Our Lord #19.

November 25, 2009

The Righteous Judges

Before the LORD, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness. (Psalm 96:13 NASB)

Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns; indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity.” (Psalm 96:10 NASB)

Before the LORD, for He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity. (Psalm 98:9 NASB)

And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity. (Psalm 9:8 NASB)

The Bible is very clear that God is going to judge the world, and His judgment will be righteous, that is, it will be right, just, impartial, and equitable. But this raises five questions: Whom will He judge? When will He judge? By what standard will He judge? How will He apply His standard? Will He alone judge?

First, whom will He judge? Paul makes it very clear that all mankind, without exception, will be judged. It seems that this is so obvious that it is not necessary to make the point; however, it is important since there are some, especially among those who rightfully believe in the restoration of all things, who believe that God is not going to judge anyone. All, individually, are judged at some point in time.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10 NASB)

For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. (Romans 14:10 NASB)

Second, when will He judge? In one sense, God has never stopped judging since Adam’s fall in the garden and will not stop until He is all in all new. Judgment has been meted out upon individuals and nations over the last 6,000 years, and we are in the midst of God’s judgment today as Mystery Babylon is being judged. However, in the context of the above psalms, there is a judgment that is coming when the Lord comes a second time and establishes His kingdom over the nations of the earth. This judgment will continue throughout the millennial (1,000-year) kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Third, by what standard will He judge? This is a very important question for the many Christians who believe that God did away with the law, based on Romans 6:14. It is true we are not under law but under grace in so far as salvation unto immortal life is concerned. We are not justified by law (Galatians 5:4); we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8), and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us through grace (Galatians 2:21). But there is nothing in Paul’s writings to indicate that God’s divine law has been done away with. In fact, Paul refutes all notions of this, for he saw the law as holy and righteous and good (Romans 7:12, 16; 1 Timothy 1:8) and spiritual (Romans 7:14). After all, through the Law comes the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20), and this gives us the proper contrast of what is holy and what is unholy, what is righteous and what is unrighteous, what is good and what is evil, what is of the flesh and what is of the spirit. Simply, God’s divine law is His standard by which He judges.

Fourth, how will He apply His standard, that is, His law? He will apply it with mercy and lovingkindness. In the days of Moses, the throne of God was typified by the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the tablets of the law. The mercy seat was upon the Ark, and the Lord spoke to Moses from

above the mercy seat (Numbers 7:89). The imagery is of a king sitting upon his throne, ruling over his people and judging them according to his law of the land. In the case of the Ark of the Covenant, the Lord was portrayed as sitting upon His throne judging the sons of Israel according to His divine law. But the most important feature of this portrayal is the mercy seat, for this indicates how God applies His law. Simply, He applies His law with mercy. However, the word *mercy* also conveys the thought of love or lovingkindness. In other words, the **God is love** will judge in mercy and love. Psalm 136 speaks repeatedly of the mercy of God. As rendered in three translations, we see that the words *mercy* and *love* are intertwined.

O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy [faithful love; lovingkindness] endureth for ever. (Psalm 136:26 KJV [NLT; NASB])

In Moses' time, the law was understood in light of the old covenant; however, in the coming kingdom, the divine law of God will be understood and applied in light of the new covenant as seen through our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, all of us under the new covenant in this day must view the law through Christ, which requires that we understand it through spiritual sight and apply it as spiritual principles and not as if it were based on laws of physical requirements. In other words, God's divine law must be seen in spirit and not according to the flesh.

Fifth, will He alone judge? There is a future day fixed by God in which He will judge the world through a Man raised from among the dead.

“Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31 NASB)

Most assuredly, the Man is Jesus Christ; but will judgment during His 1,000-year kingdom be done by Him alone? The answer is no; it will be done through the one New Man, which is in Christ, and more specifically, through Christ's conquerors that will be raised up and glorified in the first resurrection and transfiguration. The **corporate Man, the Christ**, is destined to rule and reign over the nations of the earth; these are the conquerors or overcomers that will sit down with Christ on His throne to rule by judging the nations throughout the Kingdom Age (Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21; 20:4-6).

Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? (1 Corinthians 6:2 NASB)

The sons of ancient Israel had judges that were charged to judge righteously and with impartiality.

(16) “Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear the cases between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him. (17) You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.’” (Deuteronomy 1:16-17 NASB)

These ancient judges are a type of the judges that will rule over the nations during the Kingdom Age. But for what purpose is judgment?

“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.” (John 3:17 NASB)

In like fashion, God will send His sons of God, the glorified and immortal sons in the image of the Son of God, into the world during the oncoming eon to save the world, not to condemn it or to destroy it. After all, love and mercy are at the very heart of God's purpose and plan of the eons.

One final question: What is the purpose of God's mercy and love in judgment? Isaiah 26:9 gives us the answer: **For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.** In the coming kingdom, the sons of God, the judges of righteousness, will go forth filled with the mercy, love, and righteousness of Christ and teach the nations what is right in the sight of God. The Lord's judges will have more than an imputed righteousness; they will be righteous.