

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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LET US GO AFTER OTHER GODS

Previously, I wrote two issues titled *Gods Whom You Have Not Known* (#02—0895, July 25, 2008; #02-0896, July 26, 2008) based on a word the Lord seemed to impress upon my heart as I considered many things that are reported to be happening in the Christian world, and, frankly, many things others are expecting the Lord to do in our day. As I considered this matter, I was led to the following passage in Deuteronomy.

“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ‘You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.” (Deuteronomy 13.1-4 NASB)

Since writing on this matter, I must confess that I have not had a real peace about the many things reported to be happening. Something is not right. Frankly, some (not all) of what I hear and read that others are either expecting of the Lord or are proclaiming He is doing in our day does not seem to be like the God that I have known. I have a few thoughts to offer on the matter, but before I do, I must state that I fear for many brothers and sisters in Christ that may be easily persuaded and ultimately hurt by some of what is being accredited to the Lord. I am not passing judgment on any one thing or on any one individual, but rather, I offer my concern in a very general way and leave it to the spirit of God to reveal to hearts what is of the Lord and what is not. But let us be very diligent to look for the fruit of changed lives and glory going to God.

First, as I have observed and listened to some of the Lord's people, I have sensed an immaturity, even a naiveté, that is leading some (perhaps, many) to go from one thing to the next. I think of the Corinthians who were operating in all the gifts of the spirit, and yet, Paul had to exhort them as children.

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food [meat]; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? (1 Corinthians 3.1-3 NASB [KJV])

We are to be growing to **a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ** (Ephesians 4.13 NASB), but instead it seems that many are like babes seeking for milk and not meat. As a result, many are still **children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness with a view to the systematizing of the deception** (Ephesians 4.14 NASB/CV). When they hear of a new thing happening in the name of the Lord, they go running after it with little discernment of its true nature, with little to no dividing of spirit and soul. It is often granted legitimacy when it draws large crowds (and money) and some positive things do happen, like people being saved or some being healed.

Unfortunately, these events can, and often do, become a mixed-bag experience, a mixture of spirit and soul.

To me, one of the tests of immaturity is when the leader(s) of these new happenings (events, teachings) preaches things that are flat-out unscriptural, even extra-Biblical, and the crowds respond with great enthusiasm, even joy. I think of the Lord's warning to His disciples as He sent them forth: **Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves** (Matthew 10.16 KJV). I am in no way stating that the leaders of such movements (or whatever they are called) are wolves or men trying to trick or deceive others. But it is possible that many of these leaders may be deceived themselves or lacking in spiritual discernment due to their own immaturity. They too can get caught up in the systematizing of the deception.

Second, I find it quite interesting that in some circles of Christians, there is much talk about catching the next move of God, as if when the spirit of God moves, it is a wave. Thus, they say that people must be ready "to catch the wave." Is this not what Paul warned about, being tossed here and there by waves? The word *wave* has been translated from a Greek word that means "to surge." Waves surge to and fro, back and forth. So, many run to and fro following after the newest surge of activity, of manifestation, of "out-pouring," or of teaching, to name a few.

To me, the whole concept of moves or waves of God or, more specifically, of the Holy Spirit, is not based on Scripture. God has been on the move since the very beginning of creation, and He is driving toward the consummation of the eons when His Son will subject all to Himself and be all in all so that God the Father may be **all in all in all new**. During certain periods of history, it may have appeared as if God were slumbering or off on vacation, but in His longsuffering with mankind, He has been continually pressing on toward His goal of all. We need to keep in mind that although God works in time (the eons), He is outside of time as well, for He declares the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46.10). After all, He has written the entire story of mankind and has put into play His plan based on the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13.8).

Third, I suspect that the spirit of the world is driving some of the things being assigned to the Lord. After all, we are living in **a day of instant gratification**. I was listening to a secular radio commentator the other day and this is exactly how he described our day. If you don't feel it all around you, then I wonder if you are alive. I feel it every day and have to fight it off. The whole American lifestyle is highly energized. No matter where we go or what we see or hear, so much of it is driven by an intensity that seeks for more and cannot be fully satisfied. It is like being thirsty and continually drinking water and never losing the thirst. This is the spirit of the world that John warns us about even after 2,000 years (1 John 2.16; also 1 Corinthians 2.12). This spirit cannot and will not be satisfied, just like an addiction. I wonder if it is the Lord's doing that even His own people are caught by this spirit so that they will become satiated with it. I use the word *satiated* in the sense of the word *sate*, which refers to being so filled or stuffed that all pleasure or desire is eventually lost for such things. Perhaps, a day will come when some (perhaps, many) will not only see but also feel the futility of following after such things and be so wearied by it all that they will cry out for only one thing, and that is the Lord Himself.

Fourth, the god that some are seeking after seems like nothing more than a master of ceremony of a three-ringed circus. For those who have never been to an old-fashioned circus, the master of ceremony was often dressed in a tux or formal dress along with a top hat and would announce the acts that were to perform in one of three circles under the big tent. Activities of all sorts went on under the big tent. There were clowns, animals, high-trapeze acts, and much more going on, all at once. This is the picture I often see when I consider what many are attributing to God in our day. They make Him a caricature of the master of ceremony. Let us be reminded that our Lord **Jesus Christ yesterday and today is the same, and unto the ages** (Hebrews 13.8 REB).

Let us **not** go after other gods. Let us seek for the one true God that does not change with the wind!