

# 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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## ***THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD***

Today, within certain groups of Christians, there is much talk about moves of the spirit and little talk about the spirit of the world, as if believers are exempt from the influence of such a spirit. But we must acknowledge that we live in a world that is dominated by a spirit other than the spirit of God, and this spirit is a mighty influence that permeates the kingdom of this world that awaits the coming of the kingdom of Christ.

Paul, the apostle by the will of God, is the one who has given us the phrase *the spirit of the world*.

**Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.** (1 Corinthians 2.12-13 NASB)

Essentially, Paul stated that when we first believed, we did not receive the spirit of the world; we received the spirit of God. The Greek word from which the word *received* is translated is *lambano*, which means "to take or to get hold of." In many respects, the spirit of God got hold of us, but the point is that Paul presented two opposing spirits; one that relates to the things of the world or, in the Greek, the *kosmos*, which refers to an orderly arrangement, and one that relates to the things of God or, more precisely, to the things of the spirit, which is the realm of our God who is spirit.

Later, Paul referenced the spirit of the world in relation to the sons of disobedience and the lust of the flesh.

**And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.** (Ephesians 2.1-3 NASB)

However, Paul was not alone, for John specifically warned against the same spirit of the world and actually defined it for us.

**Be not loving the world, neither that which is in the world. If ever anyone is loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him, for everything that is in the world, the desire [lust] of the flesh, and the desire [lust] of the eyes, and the ostentation [boastful pride] of living, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing by, and its desire, yet he who is doing the will of God is remaining for the eon [(*aion*) age, times age-abiding].** (1 John 2.15-17 CV [ALT/REB/YLT])

Again, the word *world* is from the Greek word *kosmos*, which refers to the orderly arrangement in which the inhabitants on earth live. Although it might appear orderly, there is nevertheless a danger to even believers, and that danger is to love the orderly arrangement in which we live. Notice how John qualifies or explains everything that is in the world. It is qualified by the desire or lust of the flesh and of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. This defines the spirit of the world, and, I might add, qualifies the kingdom of this world, absent God's King, our Lord Jesus.

But, both Paul and John were simply referring back to what happened in the garden of Eden about 4,000 years prior to their time, when Eve looked upon the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and saw that it was desirable to the flesh and the eyes and could make one wise.

**When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.** (Genesis 3.6 NASB)

The Lord God made the serpent craftier than all the beasts of the field that He had made (Genesis 3.1), and, if you think carefully about this, you will have to conclude that the Lord God actually made the serpent to tempt Eve. I know that this goes against the grain, so to speak, of the theology of our day, but, to me, the word is quite clear that the serpent was made crafty, and John verifies this in his first epistle, **for the devil has sinned from the beginning** (1 John 3.8 NASB). In *The Unveiling of Jesus Christ*, it is noted that John makes it clear that the serpent and the devil are one and the same; **the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world** (Revelation 12.9 NASB), which, by the way, lies in evil (1 John 5.19).

There is more to the story, for the gospels record that the serpent of old, the devil, was also used over 2,000 years ago to tempt the Lord Jesus in the wilderness in the very same manner that it tempted Eve in the garden. Space will not allow the printing of the temptation, but by placing three sets of Scriptures side by side, it is easy to see the similarity between the accounts recorded in Genesis and Luke, as well as John's description of Paul's phrase *the spirit of the world*. All are in agreement with this truth.

<b>Genesis 3.1-7</b>	<b>1 John 2.16</b>	<b>Luke 4.3-13</b>
Tree was good for food.	... Lust/Desire of the flesh ...	Jesus was hungry and was offered bread to satisfy His flesh,
<b>I want it!</b>	<b>Go for it, Now!</b>	<i>But</i> He did <b>not</b> eat!
Tree was a delight to the eyes.	... Lust/Desire of the eyes ...	Jesus saw with His eyes all the kingdoms of the world and their glory,
<b>I want it!</b>	<b>Go for it, Now!</b>	<i>But</i> He did <b>not</b> take them!
Tree was desirable to make one wise.	... Boastful pride of life ...	Jesus had the authority and power to command angels,
<b>I want it!</b>	<b>Go for it, Now!</b>	<i>But</i> He did <b>not</b> command them.

Please take note of the spirit of the world that says, even demands: **“I want it; go for it, now.”** There is no waiting by the spirit of the world, for the flesh craves instant gratification. When He was delaying going to the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus told His disciples: **“My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune”** (John 7.6 NASB), which means that they were always ready to act on an impulse. Studying their time with the Lord proves that they were impulsive (e.g., Luke 9.54). This is the spirit of the world. However, notice how Jesus responded to the temptations of the devil. With each of the three temptations, He did not take the bait, but instead refused to act. **He did not!**

Dear brethren, the serpent of old is alive and well, and it continually tempts the Lord's people to act *now*, to even demand that things be done *now*, even in the name of the Lord. I am concerned for many of the Lord's people who are seeking for things of this world now and telling people they can have it, even demanding it of the Father, now; things that will only come in the next eon. We must guard ourselves from this diabolical spirit. Our day will come when our Lord comes. Until then, let us not fall for the deception that we can have it all now, as if the kingdom of our Lord has literally come to this earth. It is very interesting that Jesus spoke about their time as always being opportune in reference to Him going up to the Feast of Tabernacles. If we conquer in this day by not falling for the spirit of the world, our day will come when the Feast of Tabernacles comes to usher in His kingdom. Until then, let us be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might, taking up the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6.10-20), and fight the good fight to the end. The battle is not over yet!