

# 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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## ***Babylonian Leaders Are Smart***

January 5, 2009

Lately, I have heard it said several times that many of the leaders in the news that are helping to steer the country out of the current financial crisis or meltdown, as many call it, are “smart people.” When I hear such things, several questions come to mind: By what standard are these people so smart? What does being smart actually mean? Have their so-called “smarts” actually produced something of value? What makes them so smart? Just because many see these leaders as smart, does that truly mean they are smart?

If you listen carefully to those who speak of this smart group, you will discern some of the criteria upon which such statements are made. When I listen, what I hear is that they are smart because they speak eloquently, or they graduated from a prestigious school, or they were a Rhodes Scholar, or they have a name that is associated with public service or fame or power.

Consequently, as the thinking goes, the new president of the US is a smart man because he speaks eloquently and he went to a prestigious school, and the outgoing president is not so smart (actually, some say *dumb*) because he does not speak so eloquently, and yet, he too went to a prestigious school. Of course, the outgoing president saw torture as a smart move, and the new president sees \$1 trillion of more debt as a smart move. The president before the current one was a pretty smart guy too, for he was a Rhodes Scholar. But, if my memory is correct, he was also the president who was brought before Congress for impeachment for lying under oath. But who cares; after all, doesn't everyone lie, especially politicians? Isn't this what makes them so smart? Wasn't it under this same president's watch that the government-backed mortgage companies (Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae) were pushed by the government to give mortgages to people who could not afford to pay them back? Mmm; isn't this what started the financial meltdown? I hear that the financial leaders are pretty smart. How about the previous chairman of the Fed? He was called a smart guy over the many years he served as the head of the banking cartel. But when the crisis hit, he admitted that he had made mistakes that helped the crisis materialize. How about the head of Treasury? Again, I have heard that he is a smart guy, but nobody seems to know if what he has done so far in doling out billions of dollars will work. We do know that to make it work, at least as he perceives it, he strongly urged (i.e., forced) banks to take the bailout money even if they did not need it or want it. Is this what smart is all about? How about the other two smart guys in Congress, both of whom had regulatory oversight of Freddie and Fannie, who are now going to help straighten out the current mortgage mess through more regulation? One of them had a gay prostitution ring being run out of his house, supposedly without his knowledge. The other received a sweetheart deal from one of the mortgage companies that he was supposed to be overseeing.

Now, the news has been all aflutter over the prospect of the daughter of a slain president becoming a senator. After all, she is really smart because she has a name, knows how to raise money and has a lot of money, and, by the way, raised a family. Mmm; wasn't there another name in the news during the presidential campaign? If memory serves me correctly, there was a candidate for vice president who is raising a family, including a mentally-challenged child. But somehow, she wasn't as smart as other women because she didn't talk like those who go to prestigious schools. Oh, and by the way, the reason this woman with the famous name is being considered for the senator's position is because another really smart woman, a former first lady, is vacating it to take a cabinet post in the new administration. Wasn't she the one who stood by her man, forgot where important papers were hidden, and also failed to put together a health care plan?

Well, I hope that you realize this is an attempt to make light of what is perceived to be “smart” in our day. I am not trying to place myself above any of the ones I have cited. I have no doubt that I would not

be much different if I were among this elite group. We all live in glass houses, and we all need grace and mercy.

Over the last year, it seems that the Lord has gradually opened my eyes to see that the world system that dictates our lives each and every day is none other than the great city Babylon described in Revelation 18. (See Article #9, May 2008, *A Mystery, The Great City Babylon*.) It seems that many are looking for a revived Roman Empire to be the final world government of our present eon, but the revelation given to John, as he was in spirit, clearly calls the final empire Babylon. It seems to me that the world system or government of man, that which has attempted to rule or have dominion over the earth apart from God, has always been Babylon, stretching all the way back to Nimrod. It may have changed names over the years, but the very heart of it has always been Babylon. The mystery of Babylon in our day is that we are all in Babylonian captivity, and, as such, all leaders are Babylonian leaders, and we do not realize it.

However, I believe the Lord also keeps opening my eyes to see that we all have been trained by this Babylonian system, and, as such, we think like Babylonians. We have come to accept so many things as being right without realizing that they are simply man's ways and not God's ways. One example that comes to mind, that I will address in the series on *The Kingdom of Our Lord*, pertains to churches establishing banks to lend money at interest (usury) to other churches. This is most acceptable within Babylon, but it is not within the kingdom of our Lord (see Deuteronomy 23:19).

I have no doubt that most of us have little idea how much of our thinking is according to the mind of Babylon and not according to the mind of the kingdom of God. We need our minds renewed to think as our Lord thinks, to judge (discern) as He judges, to see as He sees, to feel as He feels (i.e., love). We should not be looking for the smart ones but for the righteous and holy ones, the ones with the character of Christ, the ones who understand how God's kingdom operates.

Interestingly, the word *smart* is very much a Babylonian concept, for it means "alert; clever; capable; quick, witty," and "shrewd, sharp, as in one's dealings." This describes how Babylon operates and who is rewarded the most under this system. The clever and the shrewd ones are the ones that are most revered in the great city Babylon. They are the ones that not only survive but also rise to the top to lead others. The ones that are not labeled smart are not revered but often scorned or looked down upon.

There is another characteristic of Babylon, and it deals with the basis upon which people are judged. Babylon looks at appearance, not at the heart.

**But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7 NASB)**

The sons of Israel were looking for a king like all the nations (1 Samuel 8:4-5). Saul was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. In other words, outwardly, he had a stature among the people; he looked like a leader of the nations. Of course, we know the outcome of his reign. This is how Babylon looks at things. Does the person look good, dress right, say all the right things, speak eloquently, project the right image, make everyone feel good, even look presidential? God says that this is not His way; He looks at the heart, which means that He looks at the inner man, the character of the person. Babylon does not care about morality, ethics, and character, but God does; and all who are chosen to reign in the kingdom of His Son in the eon to come must have the very character and mind of Christ. But let us not wait until then; let us be prepared in this day by cooperating with the spirit of God in order to be conformed to the image of Christ and to learn the ways of God's kingdom.

We need the eyes of our heart opened to see that we have been trained by Babylon and our thinking is more Babylonian than we realize. But there is more, for we also have not been much different than the sons of Israel; they demanded a king, liked one man's appearance over others, and got Saul. In the Lord's kingdom, character more than counts; it is essential. Let us not be smart; let us be like Christ!