

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)

#03-0931

Earnest of the Spirit

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In some of my writings, I emphasize that today believers only have an earnest of the spirit of God; we do not have the full measure of the spirit because we have not been manifested as sons in immortal, glorified, celestial, spiritual bodies.

It seems that in some Christian groups, there is much emphasis on “having it all now,” as if every provision has been made for the Lord’s people to act as if they have already been placed as sons of glory in the kingdom of our Lord. They often cite Paul’s encouragement that the ecclesia has every spiritual blessing in Christ in the heavenlies (among the celestials) and has been seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6). It is true that Paul presents this as a present spiritual verity, but Paul also presents that our future expectation (hope) is in Christ and that this expectation is glory. **Christ Jesus, our hope [expectation]** (1 Timothy 1:1 [CV]). **Christ in you, the hope of glory** (Colossians 1:27).

Recently, I heard one pastor speak as if this glory is a present reality and not a future expectation, as if we have it all now; we just need to tap into it and manifest it. But what about Paul’s word to Timothy that the Lord will bring him safely to His celestial kingdom (2 Timothy 4:18), or, that in the future, there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award not only to him **on that day**, but also to all who have loved the thought of His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8)? Let us be clear that Paul saw the celestial kingdom as something coming in the future; something that he (asleep in death) and all believers are waiting for; and it is linked to the appearing of the love of our life, our Lord. It is that day! Paul called that day **the day of Christ** (Philippians 1:6, 10; 2:16).

Or, consider Paul’s word to the Philippians.

(20) For our citizenship exists in [the] heavens, from where also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform the body of our humble state for it to become similar in form to the body of His glory, according to the supernatural working [or, energy] [by which] He also is able to subject all [things] to Himself. (Philippians 3:20-21 ALT)

Or, consider Paul’s defense of the resurrection, both of Christ and of all mankind, starting with the first fruit anointed, as presented by two translations.

(48) Of what sort [is] the earthy [one], such also [are] the earthy [ones]; of what sort [is] the heavenly [One], such also [will be] the heavenly [ones]. (49) And just as we bear the image of the earthy [one], we also shall bear the image of the heavenly [One]. (1 Corinthians 15:48-49 ALT)

(47) The first man was out of the earth, soilish; the second Man is the Lord out of heaven. (48) Such as the soilish one is, such are those also who are soilish, and such as the Celestial One, such are those also who are celestials. (49) And according as we wear the image of the soilish, we should be wearing the image also of the Celestial. (1 Corinthians 15:48-49 CV)

Well, these are only a few examples from Scripture that point to a future manifestation, something that we do not have while we occupy mortal bodies. We have an expectation, and that expectation is in Christ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

Now, to prove the point that we only have an earnest of the spirit, let us consider Scripture. Again, we must turn to Paul's epistles, for he alone gives us the answer.

(21) Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; (22) who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest [arrhabon] of the Spirit in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 ASV)

(13) In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, (14) which is the earnest [arrhabon] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14 KJV)

And the One having worked in us for this same thing is God, who also is giving us the earnest [arrhabon] of the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 5:5 LITV)

The above verses have one word in common, and that is the word *earnest*, which comes from the Greek word *arrhabon*, which is of Hebrew origin and means "pledge, that is, part of the purchase money or property given in advance as *security* for the rest." In Hebrew, the word is *arabawn*, which means "pawn (given as security)," which, in turn, comes from the root Hebrew word *arab*, which means "to braid, i.e., "to intermix" or "to give or be security (as a kind of exchange)." In English, the word *earnest* means "money given as a part payment and pledge in binding a bargain in full," or "something given or done as an indication or assurance of what is to come."

Given the collective meaning of these words, it is apparent that when Paul referenced ***the earnest of the spirit***, he meant that, when we first believe, we receive a partial payment or, if you will, a measure of the spirit of God as a pledge that more is to come. In other words, while we live in bodies that have not been redeemed, we only have an earnest or down payment of the spirit of God. If we only have a down payment of the spirit today, then it means that a full payment of the spirit of God is yet to come in another day. This full payment will come about with the redemption of our mortal bodies, when this mortal puts on immortality. The spirit of God within us will see to it (Romans 8:11).

(20) For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope (21) that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (22) For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. (23) And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (24) For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? (25) But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. (26) In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; (27) and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:20-27 NASB)

If we have it all now, then we have no hope. If we have no hope, then we have nothing for which to persevere. If we have it all now, then why are we still in weakness and in need of the intercession of the Holy Spirit? The answer is very simple. It is because, today, we only have an earnest of the spirit of God. The will of God is to give us the full measure of His spirit when His Son comes to be glorified in His people and His people are glorified as He is glorified. This is our expectation. Let us persevere until that day!