

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 Word

The last issue titled *The Omissions* dealt with a few teachings that are accepted by many believers but which are not found in the epistles of **Paul, the apostle of the nations**.

Here is the link to the last issue: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/tuc/tuc682.pdf>

Some might, and most likely would, argue that Paul was only one teacher of the gospel and that we must look to all the other writings to get a full understanding. I won't argue the point, for there is truth to this, but I am reminded of something I once read: ***All truth has its appropriate place; take truth out of its place and it becomes the most insidious error because it seems to have support of scripture.*** I agree and believe that much church teaching today is a mixed bag of truths that apply to various groups at various times of history that are strung together into a systematic template. Paul called it, at least according to one translation, **the systematizing of the deception** (Ephesians 4.14 CLV).

I suggest and strongly believe that we must look to Paul for the truth of the gospel of Christ and see all else through his lens. This does not mean we ignore or discard all that is found in what we call the *Bible*. When we consider the entirety of the Bible, we will discover many good lessons and general truths; however, this does not mean that everything directly pertains to us, even some of the teachings of Jesus as He sought out the lost sheep of the house of Israel. We must divide scripture properly and Paul is our guide. Dividing scripture does not mean cutting and pasting to create a template that supports our position. It means dividing it by context, people, time, author, etc.

Unfortunately, today, much of the church has not done this, resulting in a gospel that is more closely aligned with the first order, based on ancient Judaism, than with the second order, based entirely on the Person of the Lord Jesus. The first order is a religion of do's and don'ts and of war, vengeance, self-righteousness, and intractable positions on endless subjects; the second order is a relationship of life, love and peace, and of God's righteousness, grace, and mercy that transcends all positions on endless subjects. The first is organized and taught by man; the second is organically raised up and inspired by the Spirit of God. God has taken away the first order to establish the second order (Hebrews 10.9). So, why do we continue living according to the first order?

If you aren't yet convinced, here are a few examples. Why does a majority of the church hold to old covenant tithing and ignore circumcision? Why does a large segment of the church, especially among what are called *evangelicals*, support guns and war to establish peace and democracy by destroying nations, including the killing of innocent civilians, and ignore being peacemakers and expressing love to those who are not like us? To add to this, why do churches hold courses on concealed weapons? Why do believers want to see the ancient Jewish Temple rebuilt and animal sacrifices performed once again in accordance with the law of Moses, when Jesus, the ultimate Sacrifice, has done away with all sacrifices and has a new temple made up of people, not bricks and mortar? Why do so many seem to idolize the present-day Jerusalem when, in an allegory, Paul said it must be cast out? Why? Because there is a New Jerusalem. Why does every church building that many call the *church* have a pulpit and pews with a pastor as the pulpiter that is modeled after an ancient synagogue? There is nothing new about the way a majority of local churches meet and are taught. The pastor has become the center of the church and replaced Christ as its center. O, I can hear the counter argument that this is not so because they worship the Lord every Sunday with songs and a message from the pastor. This point is supported by observation. When you encounter a believer, ask them what "church they go to" and what they like about it. By the way, asking what church one goes to in itself points to a lack of understanding of the true nature of the church. In my experience, the most prevalent first response is: *I like the*

pastor; he gives a good message. The second most likely response is: *I like the songs (or worship).* The third response might be: *I like the people.* I have never heard anyone say, without hesitation, that Christ Jesus is manifested among the brethren. In other words, Christ is seldom, if ever, the center. He is part of it to be sure, but He is one among many things. As I have written before, **Jesus becomes encrusted with many things and ceases to be the only thing, the only One.**

Now, back to the word. Without doubt, many would quote Paul in stating all scripture is inspired by God; therefore, everything we read in the Bible is inspired. Even if this were true, which I do not believe it is, we would still need to divide it correctly. For example, how does one account for Job's friends or many other men in scripture who spoke falsely? Can we say that their words were inspired by God? Probably, not! Only that which proceeds out of God constitutes the word (*rhema*) of God or, as Paul called it, ***the sword of the Spirit*** (Ephesians 6.17).

Many quote 2 Timothy 3.16 as rendered in most translations: **All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.** However, many of these same translations italicize the word *is* to indicate it is not in the original language, which would read ***all scripture inspired by God,*** meaning a word must proceed from God to be profitable, etc. Why not insert *is* in a different order that reads ***all scripture inspired by God is...***? Perhaps, the Greek won't allow this. I don't know. At any rate, we need *rhema* from God, not words from men. This applies to even the written words in the Bible that are ascribed to the Spirit of God. God-inspired scripture means it is ***divinely breathed.*** **For words to be of any value to us, they must be divinely breathed into our spirits. Anything less is simply words without effect, regardless of the source.** This is explained further in *No Word from God is Void of Power*: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/tuc/tuc654.pdf>

This is why you are challenged to study Paul's epistles in light of all that you have been taught from the pulpits and through other sources. Week after week, the Lord's people are fed the same line of teachings without much growth in what they are hearing. Some groups have been taught the same messages over and over again for many decades with hardly any change or growth in the messages. Over time, and it doesn't take much time, every group develops a group-think that crystalizes into a systematic mindset or theology that no one can or dares to challenge. In time, pretension sets in and all is set in institutional concrete, so to speak, that must be defended at all cost. If you don't believe this, then try challenging the pastor some time. Better yet, during his sermon, try interrupting the pastor to ask a challenging question. One who is open and not offended is a rare find.

For those who have followed my writings for many years, I trust you have seen that my views have changed on a number of subjects. In the last issue, I shared on one of them, that is, being *born again*. I once held to the mainstream view until very recently, even though for over 30 years I have seen the glory of the new creation and the one new man. We need to be challenged, for in this way we come to the truth as revealed by the Spirit of the Lord within us. And, this challenge is a personal one. Everything we are told to be the truth in this day, even secular truth, must be brought under the scope of the Spirit of Truth to see if it is, in fact, the truth of God. Nothing short of this will see us through the days of turmoil and chaos that are coming.

We need to be reminded that **the Son of God, Jesus the Anointed of God, is the WORD OF GOD.** He is the letter and language of God. **He is the TRUTH!** So, although Paul is our apostle, we need to take all that he wrote and have the eyes of our heart enlightened through the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. We need His *rhema* word. We need Him!

People, it is time to wake up. Mankind has been asleep for about 6,000 years. Unfortunately, much of what we call the *church* is still asleep as well, even though it has been called to awaken from its sleep. Even worse, much of the visible church has fallen away from Christ, all the while holding to His name and claiming to have the truth that is packaged in doctrines, teachings, creeds, statements of faith, causes and emphases, interpretations, theories, religion, letters of the word, and old-covenant theology that has been made obsolete by the Spirit of the New Covenant. The at-large-church hasn't left Judaism and, worse, has adopted the ways of the world; it is wed to a Babylonian-Beast system that is destined to fall. There are those who believe they must infiltrate this system to inject their religion into it in order to clean it up. This is folly! Much could be said along these lines, but this won't solve anything. We must leave it and press on to the matter of waking up to who truly lives inside of us and what this means, a topic to be taken up in a subsequent issue.