

# 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 Depraved***

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1.28-32 NASB)

If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. (1 Timothy 6.3-5 NASB)

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also. (2 Timothy 3.1-9 NASB)

In these three sets of verses, all from Paul, we are introduced to men of depraved minds. Of course, there is context to each of these sets, but the bottom line is that Paul warns us of men with depraved minds. He offers many examples of what he means by this. All one has to do is read the list of descriptors to get a good feel for one that is depraved. Other translations use the expressions *worthless mind* and *corrupted mind*. In the Greek, the word from which *depraved* is translated means "to spoil entirely; to destroy." Thus, a depraved mind is a fully spoiled, as in rotten, mind. We could say it is a destructive mind, probably both to the individual and to others. In the English language, the word *depraved* means "morally bad; corrupt; perverted."

The depraved deny the truth, even oppose it. They act as if they are godly, but they are far from God. They sound as if they are full of knowledge, but they are far from the knowledge of the truth as found in God's Son who is the Truth. They are antichrist as they reject the faith, even as they speak of faith. They may even be called *religious* as they deny God and His Son. This is the condition of the world apart from Christ; it is sick from head to toe.

It has been written before, but God doesn't need to do anything for the depraved to manifest. All He has to do is lift His hand of influence and allow the natural mind of man to take its course. Apart from the influence of the Spirit of God that convicts of the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, the natural man will descend into worthlessness and corruption, resulting in destructive behavior.

Further, as we read Romans 1 as quoted above, we discover that, according to Paul, God Himself gave people over to a depraved mind, along with their lustful and degrading passions. In 2 Thessalonians, in reference to the falling away at the end of this age, Paul tells us that once that which restrains mankind is removed, lawlessness will increase and people will not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. But consider how Paul sums this up.

**For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.** (2 Thessalonians 2.11-12 NASB)

I realize that there are various interpretations of Paul's message that leads up to these two verses, but what is of greatest importance is the principle underscoring this, and that is, God sends a deluding influence or a strong delusion, as some translations put it. God acts! There is precedence of this discovered under the old covenant where **the Lord put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of the prophets** (1 Kings 22.23; 2 Chronicles 18.22).

The point is that God can bring judgment on mankind in one of three ways, either singularly or in tandem: He can remove His influence that causes men to follow their natural path of corruption; He can send a deluding influence that causes men to believe lies and act according to these lies; and, of course, He can act directly, such as in sending forth His wrath.

When we look across the landscape of the world, especially of America, it is obvious that behaviors that once were frowned upon as aberrant are now considered the norm, at least in the world of so-called *political correctness* and *social justice*. Amoralism (no moral norms) is now trying to take the place of morality and ignoring the whole concept of immorality. Judging behavior is touted as unacceptable. Some European leaders are now even saying that terrorism is the new norm and people need to get used to it. People who question such insanity are labeled as out of touch and unwelcomed. Every day there seems to be more and more examples along these lines.

Again, why are we seeing such things? Because God has lifted His hand, so to speak, and men have been given over to their most carnal nature. However, let us not overlook that there are celestial powers of darkness as well as deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4.1) that are the real enemies of mankind, and they lead mankind into much destructive behavior and deception.

Now, as I have inquired of the Lord further on this matter, a thought came to me. Whether this is of the Lord or not, I will let you judge. But keep in mind that what I began to see is in principle; it is not trying to connect doctrinal dots, especially in regard to the lake of fire in Revelation 20. So, please don't go there. Here it is...

The world has been brought into a lake of fire that is tormenting the soul of many. When people are tormented, even to the point of torture, they are likely to say anything and to act irrationally, at least by normal standards. It might even look like a form of insanity. This is the world today. The world system is in its death throes. It is being tormented. After all, Jesus said that **everyone will be salted with fire** (Mark 9.49). **God is a consuming fire**, so we are not looking at literal fire, at least not yet, but something of the spirit. Fire is meant to purge of all that is not of God. The endpoint is a good thing, even if the process is quite destructive. The endpoint is that **the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness** (Isaiah 26.9), something it knows little of today. The world is in judgement. Righteousness will follow in the age to come.

The opening three sets of verses speak mightily of the day in which we live. On many fronts, from politicians to entertainers to the media to globalists to the ideologues, even to those of religions, and to many other groups, we are witnessing a breakdown in the rational and reasoned thinking of man on many levels. It is as if man has lost his mind and is going crazy. As Paul wrote Timothy, their folly will be obvious to all, that is, all that have the mind of Christ. Don't be surprised with what is happening around the world. Don't hate these people; they have been given over to this and they are being driven by **world forces of this darkness** (Ephesians 6.12). Our battleground is not the depraved mind. Have mercy on them. But, most of all, hold to the faith; keep the hope alive; love all, especially the brethren. Speak the truth in love. Walk in love. In your heart, dwell on what is good in Christ. Seek the mind of Christ. Set your mind above where Christ is. **And most of all, look for the Presence of the Lord.**