

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God

IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

#14-2006

by – Stuart H. Pouliot

June 1, 2020

Isms of Man

The people of the world often divide themselves along many different lines, whether certain emphases, issues, movements, theories, politics, ideologies, doctrines, religions, or world-views, to name a few, and each line is labeled with a name that often ends with the three letters *ism*. The English dictionary defines *ism* as "a system or theory." In relation to an *ism*, a *system* is "a group of interacting, interrelated, or interdependent elements forming a complex whole." *Theory* can be defined in several ways, but the one that seems most appropriate through the word *ism* is this: "a statement of an opinion or an explanation of an idea (including ideology) that is believed to be true (and used to convince others it is fact, as if it works), but it might be wrong and doesn't work as it is sold to do." Thus, we discover communism, socialism, capitalism, corporatism, liberalism, conservatism, environmentalism, humanism, feminism, and the list goes on and on, almost without end. We could say that the world is divided along the line of *isms*.

Of equal importance is the fact that Christianity is never described as an *ism*. There is no such thing as *Christianism*. Why? Because Christianity is not like the systems or theories of man; it is not a movement, an ideology, an emphasis, a doctrine, or even a religion. Christianity is about a person—the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Creator, and the Savior of the world—and a **living relationship** with Him and His Father. As believers in the Lord Jesus and His finished work, we should never lose sight of this fact. Yes; Jesus is a fact! He is not fashioned around an *ism*. And by the way, neither is the ecclesia (church), which is His body that is based on and built up in **organic life**. In a sense, it meets one of the other definitions of a system: "an organism as a whole, especially with regard to its vital processes or functions." However, we must add something to the definition that is not found in the world—the body is organized based on **divine life, the very life of the Son of God**.

The divine body (that which Christ is building in love) cannot be divided, and yet Christians unwittingly do so, not on a divine level (for this is not possible) but on a worldly one, especially when the public church joins forces with the *isms* of the world that are destined to pass away. John saw a similar danger in his day and warned his "children" about it.

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 of the flesh, and the desire of the eyes, and the ostentation 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. (1 John 2:15-17 CLV)

In John's day, the world order that he grew up in was passing away; it was the order or age of Moses. In 70 AD, it came to an end with the total destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple. A new world (new heaven and earth) came into view as the Christian order was firmly established and set free from Moses and the law (no longer viewed as a sect of Judaism). The Christ-order was inaugurated through the cross and announced in John's day: **The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign for the eons of the eons** (Revelation 11:15).

Our generation is now on the cusp of something very similar, for the world order of *isms* that we have grown up in is passing away. The time has come for the new order of King Jesus to openly manifest for all to see and to live by. It is time for God's way to rule (no longer man's way that has dominated).

Be not loving the world! The word *world* in the Greek is *kosmos*, which refers to an orderly arrangement, or, we could say, a system. To paraphrase John: **Be not loving the systems, the *isms*!**

Regarding this end, which is truly a new beginning for this earth, we must guard ourselves, especially from joining forces with the political *isms* of our day, whether *conservatism* or *liberalism*. From a Christian perspective, we might see some good in one or the other (or both), but they are still *ideologies* that will pass away. Why? Because their source or origin is of the world and not of the kingdom of God. **A word of caution: Ideologies can act like viruses that infect the mind with dangerous ideas.** They don't have to take on the label of an *ism*; they can go by a variety of names that, on the surface, project as something good, but they are not. **We need to test the spirit behind what the world attempts to feed our minds in this day.**

We need to be reminded of Jesus' words as He faced the cross. The Jews were looking for a political leader to lead them out of the rule of Rome; however, what they needed was a king who would serve them and die for their sin. Consider what Jesus said to Pilate in answer to his inquiry of Jesus' kingly stature.

"My kingdom isn't the sort that grows in this world," replied Jesus. ... So, then, **my kingdom is not the sort that comes from here.**" (John 18:36 Kingdom-NT [bold added])

Those of us who believe in Jesus need to be ever mindful that **God has rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son** (Colossians 1:13). We have been begotten of God the Father into His spiritual kingdom, and He **seats us together among the celestials (heavenlies), in Christ** (Ephesians 2:6). He **blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ** (Ephesians 1:3). If this is not enough to make the point, then consider another word from Paul.

Therefore, since you were raised together with Christ, be seeking the [things] above, where Christ is, sitting at [the] right hand of God. Be setting your minds on the [things] above, not [on] the [things] on the earth. For you died, and your life has been hid with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, [who is] our life, is revealed, then also we will be revealed with Him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4 ALT)

If you know that your life is hid with Christ in God, where are you today? Christ is seated at the right hand of His Father. Consequently, you are seated among the celestials in Christ. Naturally, we do not see this with our physical eye; we are to discern it *in spirit* and hold to it *in faith* **until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts** (2 Peter 1:19).

Dear beloved in Christ, let us not get caught up in the *isms* of the world that are passing away and will be no more when our beloved king presences Himself in a glorious way, manifesting His kingdom of righteousness and justice and peace and, most of all, love. Today, the realm of the king dwells in us in spirit. Soon, the realm of the king will openly manifest upon this earth for all to see and to experience. Then, all the nations will be ruled by the ways of God.

Let us not embrace the causes of the world! Let us not be loving the world of *isms*! Let us live according to the kingdom that does not come from the systems and *isms* of man. It is of divine origin. Let us embrace King Jesus our Lord and not be moved from proclaiming Him and Him alone!