

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtminc.org Today's Date: October 15, 2023

NOT the Same Spirit!

by Dan Trygg

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are out-from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world...⁵ They are out-from the world; therefore they speak out-from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are out-from God; the one who experientially-knows God listens to us; the one who is not out-from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”
1 John 4:1,5-6

“I am jealous for you with God’s jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. ³ But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds might be corrupted from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. ⁴ For if one comes and preaches another (similar) Jesus whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit which you did not receive, or a different gospel which you did not accept, you condone it easily.” 2 Corinthians 11:2-4

“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷ which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to (more than; alongside of) what we have preached to you, let him be accursed!”
Galatians 1:6-8

THIS is the issue! The Spirit of Jesus and the spirits of this age are NOT the same! They are as different as truth is different from error! **They are NOT from the same source, ...and they are NOT leading our minds and hearts in the same direction!** 2 Corinthians 11 says that false teachers will proclaim “another Jesus”, or a “different gospel”, or even offer a “different spirit.” On the surface, they may seem to be the same, or similar, but they are *not*.

The various “Jesus” figures being presented by the spirits of this age are NOT the same as the *real Jesus*. The differences may seem *subtle* or *minor*, but in reality they are *critical*. The Jesus may seem similar, but, upon closer examination from the light of God’s word, there are clear and essential differences. It is NOT the same Jesus. **And the “gospel”, ...the good-news message of what Jesus accomplished, how to become a child of God, and what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ..., is TOTALLY DIFFERENT, ...not even close!** Moreover, the spirit that accompanies the preaching of a distorted Jesus and an erroneous “good news” is NOT the Holy Spirit. How could it be? Jesus said that He was given to us to lead us into the truth. **It is the Holy Spirit’s desire and delight to magnify the true Jesus, ...to take what He has done and what is the truth about Him, and honor Him by making that known (Jn. 16:13,14). He cannot bless and advocate a false teaching about who Jesus is, or what it means to follow Him. This is NOT the Spirit of Truth; it is the spirit of error.** These “other” presentations of Jesus, and the various teachings are often inspired by a false, deceptive spirit.

People have taught that Jesus was only a man, and His followers made up wild stories about him. One so-called Bible scholar thought he intended to be a **revolutionary**, but the Jewish leaders killed him before he could take action (*The Passover Plot* by Hugh Schonfield). Some thought he was a **magician**, who could fool the crowds into thinking he did miracles, but they were mere trickery. Others taught that he went off to the Far East, to China or India, and learned unusual abilities there. His strange manner, witty sayings, and apparent miracles are explained by this influence. Some teach that he is the **archangel Michael**, the first creation of God, and all other things were created by him (Jehovah’s Witnesses). To them, he is a god, but not *the* God. The Mormons teach that Jesus was the **spirit-brother of Lucifer**, and was born through a sexual union between Adam-god and Mary. **He is one of many gods, ...in fact**, Mormons believe that all Mormon men will one day be gods (like Jesus), and have their own planets to rule over. Islam teaches that he was a **mighty prophet, but not God**. Some have taught that he was a **man who had unusual revelation, and spiritual experiences**, and could therefore lead others to come to know the spiritual mysteries that he knew. Some even say that he is available to be a **spirit-guide** to others who want to learn what he learned. These are just some of *many* different interpretations and presentations of who Jesus was or is. They pick and choose *parts* of the gospel accounts, and twist them to fit their own agenda or narrative. **Who is the real Jesus? The gospel accounts are based upon eyewitness testimony.** They have been scrutinized and tested in numerous ways, by critics and historians, and their reporting has been demonstrated to be amazingly accurate. **They are the best source of information regarding who Jesus was, by those who knew Him, and those who heard His claims and teachings, and those who saw Him after His resurrection. Any Jesus who does not match up with the Jesus of the NT is a false Jesus.**

The apostle Paul said that if anyone proclaimed a different gospel message, “Let him be *accursed*.” The Greek word is “anathema”, which means “set apart for ruin and destruction; a recipient of God’s wrath.” This is not something to take lightly! **In Galatians, the “gospel” that was being preached was “Jesus plus”, ...in this case, it was Jesus plus keeping the Jewish law.** But it could be a number of different things. Jesus *plus* church tradition, ...or

Jesus *plus* joining our particular group, ...or Jesus *plus* a certain spiritual gift, or religious practice. It could be Jesus *plus* some secret knowledge, ...or Jesus *plus* some kind of esoteric spiritual experience. It could be Jesus *plus* religious classes, or Jesus *plus* a certain lifestyle, or Jesus *plus* a financial commitment. It could be Jesus *plus* door-to-door evangelism, or Jesus *plus* raising money for the cause (e.g., selling flowers on street corners). **Inevitably, when the so-called “gospel message” of any group is “Jesus plus”, the attention quickly focuses on whatever the “extra ingredient” may be, and Jesus Himself is not the focus. If Jesus is not the focus, then whatever this person or group may be teaching, is NOT about the real Jesus.**

The real Jesus is the Eternal Word, who was with God, and was in fact God, Creator of all things (Jn. 1:1-3). He is above all things, and holds all things together by the word of His power (Col. 1:16-18). Because He is God, who became a man, He could offer Himself as a satisfactory sacrifice to pay for the sins of the entire world (Heb. 2:14-17; 1 Jn. 2:2; Rom. 3:21-26). His bore our sins in His body, and His death as our atoning sacrifice purchased the eternal redemption of all who come to Him (Isa. 53:4-6; Heb. 9:12). His sacrifice set us apart to God once for all, and His offering perfected for all time those who trust themselves to Him (Heb. 10:10-14). **There is no need for another sacrifice. Christ did it all. As we humbly change our minds about God and our life’s purpose (repent), and choose to trust Him as Lord (believe), God applies His redemptive work to us, the Holy Spirit makes us new, and puts His law and desires upon our hearts** (Tit. 3:5-7; Heb. 8:8-10). **Now, it for us to draw near to God, and allow Him to change us through our relationship with Him.** His Spirit has come to dwell in us, and He will lead us to do His will, as we endeavor to walk with Him. **This is the good news, the gospel.** God loved us, and sent His Son to die on our behalf, so that if we would trust in and follow Him, He would give us new life, make us His children and transform our lives to honor Him.

The Holy Spirit reveals to us more and more about who Jesus is for us, and strips away the erroneous thinking and distractions of our world. He calls us to meet with other believers to support, encourage and help one another in Christ, so that we could discover and display the love and reality of Jesus in practical, visible ways, so others may be drawn to Him, as well. He equips us to speak truth with love into one another’s lives, so that we help one another grow in grace, deepen our understanding, and learn to serve others by His indwelling leading and power. He has been sent to teach us, and help us to discover and carry out God’s will. **He will lead us into life, into freedom and into joy, ...even as we go through the dying to self, struggle against sin and spiritual strongholds, and as we weather the difficulties, sorrows and suffering involved in following Jesus.**

Here is another area of spiritual warfare: What does Christian maturity look like? What can we expect, if we are following Jesus? Here, again, **we see numerous interpretations of what the “successful Christian life” would be like.** Some teach that a mature, obedient Christian will not suffer, or get sick, or experience hardship. Some teach that mature Christians should expect to be wealthy, healthy, have success, and even have dominion over others. Some teach that Christians should become “the head” and not “the tail”, which means prosperity, power and prestige among people. Some think that those who are poor just do not have enough faith, and may even deserve their circumstances. Pastors with expensive homes, fancy cars, jet planes and luxurious tastes claim that these are the blessings of God, and they are available to any who would believe.

The question is: Where do these ideas come from? Are these the values and teachings that come from Jesus and His apostles? No, not at all! In fact, these are diametrically opposed to the message and example of Jesus. Where do these values and ideas come from? The apostle John warned about the source of such teachings. He said, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world” (1 Jn 2:15-16). **These values are from the spirits of this world, the spirits of error. If we will take the time to examine what the teachings and examples of Jesus and His apostles were, we will easily discover that these ideas are not consistent with what it means to follow Jesus.** Jesus taught us *not* to lay up treasures for ourselves on earth (Matt. 6:19-34), *not* to be enamored with the riches and pleasures of this life (Lk. 8:14), but *instead* to use our financial resources to develop relationships for the kingdom (Lk. 16:9-13). He did not enrich Himself, or accumulate property, possessions, or live a life of luxury. He said, “The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Lk. 9:58). His example was that He *had everything*, but was *willing to give up anything*, in order that He might serve and benefit others (Phil. 2:5-8; 2 Cor. 8:9). His apostles learned from His example. They were willing to leave all that behind, and endure hunger, thirst, poverty, hard work, homelessness, and ill-treatment by others (1 Cor. 4:9-13). Like Paul, they were willing, out of love, “to spend and be expended” for the souls of other people (2 Cor. 12:15). **If we are following Jesus, we can expect to walk and live as He did** (1 Jn. 2:6). **It will lead to love, sacrifice and service to others, not to self-comfort, self-exaltation or self-importance. It will lead to the cross. We will bear in the body the dying of Jesus (out of love) so that the life of Jesus could be revealed through our lives** (2 Cor. 4:10). And, we will do it *gladly!* That “other lifestyle” is not Jesus, ...it is prompted and promoted by the spirit of this world.