

Separate

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One can believe in the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ, the triune Godhead, the out-poured Holy Spirit and the imminent return of Christ. But as soon as one begins to speak out against the ills and evils of “church” and organized, institutional “Christian” religion, then that one simply cannot possibly be a brother in Christ. Though most individual “churches” or sects (“denominations”) only demand nominal agreement with its own particular list of creeds and dogmas from its members (a list fairly similar to the above list), as soon as one speaks about the non-Scriptural nature of modern “church” buildings, “pastors” behind pulpits, inoculated prisoners and corpses in pews, etc., why, such a one is a heretic of the worst sort, worthy only of being run out of town (or at least the “church”!) on a rail or, if possible, burnt at a stake. Or he must have been “hurt” – by whom no one will ever discuss – so he can be safely ignored. This is only proof that the “church” – and not Christ – is the standard by which one is considered a “true Christian brother.” Put simply, anyone who supports the “church” is “in” but anyone who confronts or exposes its sin and error is “out.” But this is only a human interpretation and not a divine one.

Unless one is born again of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (Jn. 3:5) Unless one has Christ’s Spirit, he does not belong to Him. (Rom. 8:9) – if one does not follow His Spirit, he is not a son of God. (Rom. 8:14) Without the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), any “Christian” life one claims to have is only a mere form of godliness devoid of God’s power. (2 Tim. 3:5) Far too much of modern churchianity has abandoned these truths and “Christianity” is too often just another lifeless religion where man-made rules and legalisms replace and displace the abundant life that Christ gives (Jn. 10:10) or where the requisite spirituality is neglected, confused or replaced with emotional or soulish excesses. (2 Cor. 11:4) As a result, “church” is a place characterized by *dual streams* of spiritual power – divine and demonic – and discerning which is which (a function of genuine spiritual maturity, a trait not normally encouraged or cultivated at many “churches”) is not an easy task.

Against this backdrop of spiritual superficiality and even apostasy stands the Lord’s command to “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” (2 Cor. 6:17) The “church,” being entirely unable to even recognize or admit that there are two streams of spiritual power routinely present and at work, must reject the need to obey this command and must therefore concoct “theological” reasons to enforce submission to “church” policies and practices and find personality flaws and weaknesses to attack in those who seek to criticize or abandon the “church.”

It is not to be supposed that most “churches” begin as demonically-driven spiritual abortion clinics and spiritual baby mutilation factories. Rather, many assemblies are indeed founded upon a pursuit of some aspect of God’s Spirit or truth or upon some practice that draws men toward God. But over the years (usually achieving demonic domination after about 25 years), human traditions replace divine leading and then demonic doctrines and fables become accepted “truth.” (Mt. 15:3, 2 Tim. 4:3-4) Often, as these traits become more prominent, attendees face the choice of staying and tolerating these evils and, because “church” is perceived as the only way to seek God, presume their only choice is to find another “church.” These are often disappointed as the new “church” they choose proves to be only more of the same. And totally ignored – except perhaps at deep levels where there is only a partially perceived dissatisfaction – is the Holy Spirit’s call to “Come out.”

Why does the Holy Spirit call us to come out from among the “Christian” idolaters, fornicators, liars and hypocrites? (see 1 Cor. 5:10-11) Because He is holy (pure, righteous, truly good) and because He lives within those who have repented and believed in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:9-11), we must either put away our sin or we will quench His work or even drive Him from our midst. (1 Ths. 5:19-22, etc.) There is no alternative and those assemblies that embrace sin of one sort or another who yet experience spiritual “blessings” will one day find out what spirit they were trafficking in. If we find ourselves assembled with some group who refuses to separate themselves from some sin, we will have to choose whether to obey God or obey men. (Acts 5:29) If we intend to genuinely participate in God’s grace (His power by which we are enabled to overcome sin, self and Satan), we must depart from all expressions of unrighteousness. (2 Tim. 2:19) We must come out from among those who claim to belong to Christ but who cling to their sin, their carnality, their lawlessness (what is right in their own eyes – Jdgs. 21:25) or their worldliness or else we will lose *Him!*

The “church,” with its lawless “theologians,” has, of course, concocted its doctrines of “eternal security” with which it can promise its sinful, carnal, lawless and worldly members that they can never lose their “salvation.” These need never fear neither quenching the Spirit of God nor of ever experiencing again God’s wrath. And, if they faithfully attend “church” and financially support “the work of God” (the building and its professional staff), why, their salvation is all the more assured and secure! Of course, these same “theologians” would balk and denounce with scorn and derision anyone else who puts forth such a “gospel of works” but the “church” must have something to dangle before its volunteer victims.

When a group begins to quench and resist and turn from the work of God’s Spirit in their midst, the Holy Spirit will withdraw those people who are truly His. Works begun in Him will not receive funding from its usually faithful supporters and workers will find themselves simply and inexplicably “unable to do this anymore.” The life has departed from that work and then those who have the genuine life of Christ and God within them must also depart. A “ministry” or “church” can exist on momentum and coast on for years or even generations, well polished and well greased but completely without the power of God’s Spirit, coasting along on the momentum of their traditions or on the eloquence and drawing power of the man they have placed over and before them – but it is only a dead work that will need to be repented of. (Heb. 6:1) The apostasy, the great falling away from the faith that occurs before Christ’s return (2 Ths. 2:3, Mt. 24:10), will be the accumulation of many such dead works. Modern churchianity is well on its way in fulfilling these prophecies.

God’s command has three elements: come out, be separate and do not touch what is unclean. When we examine the New Testament, we find that these elements have serious implications for our lives in Christ.

The word for “come out” in the Greek is *exerchomai*> [1831] and is the word from which we derive the English word and idea of “exorcism” as the command to “come out” was what Jesus and the apostles gave to the demons they encountered in others. (Mt. 8:32, etc.) It is also the word used of the sower who *went out* to sow seed (Mk. 4:3) and of the disciples who *went out* and preached repentance and the kingdom of God (Mk. 6:12) – pointing toward Christ’s command that we should “Go and make disciples of all the nations...” (Mt. 28:19) We also find this word used in the parable of the wedding maids “who took their lamps and *went out* to meet the bridegroom... And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; *go out* to meet him.’” (Mt. 25:1, 6) And the writer of Hebrews exhorts us, “Therefore let us *go forth* to [Jesus], outside the camp, bearing His reproach.” (Heb. 13:13) This is the same command given

in The Revelation: “Come out of her [Mystery Babylon], My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.” (Rev. 18:4) Yet Paul also instructs, “Yet I certainly did not mean [that you should not keep company] with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to *go out* of the world. [Rather, I referred to those named a brother who practice these sins.]” (1 Cor. 5:9-11) And John warns, “They [those of the spirit of antichrist who took some place of Christ, God or His Spirit] *went out* from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us [in our unity with Christ and God]; but they *went out* that they may be made manifest, that none of them were of us.” (1 Jn. 2:19) Obedience to this command is a two-edged sword – if we come out from among those who truly follow Christ and God, we have separated ourselves from Him just as surely as we will separate ourselves from Him if we remain joined together with those who persist in their sin while claiming His name!

The Greek word for “separate” is *aphorize* [873] and we find an equally clear picture. The word derives from two Greek words – “from” (*apo* [575]) and “limit or boundary” (*horizo* [3724], “horizon”) – it refers to being on one side of a line or the other, to being other and different than what is found on the other side or condition or state. It is closely related to the idea of holiness, “being set apart or separated” for God’s use and purposes, a condition without which no one will even see the Lord. (Heb. 12:14) The word *aphorize* is used of Christ when He *separates* nations or peoples as a shepherd *divides* sheep and goats (Mt. 25:32), of angels who will *separate* the wicked from the just (Mt. 13:49), of Paul who *withdrew* the disciples from the synagogue of the Jews who spoke evil of the Way (Acts 19:9) and was the instruction given by the Holy Spirit to “*Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.*” (Acts 13:2) As is true with “come out,” however, one can wrongly separate oneself as Peter did when he *withdrew and separated* himself from the Gentiles because he feared those men of “the circumcision” who had come from James. (Gal. 2:12)

The third element of God’s command is not to touch what is unclean. This does not refer to foods and created things that enter a man from outside but rather to the thoughts and intentions of the heart that come from within. (Mk. 7:18-23) The way of following Christ is not found by subjecting ourselves to regulations – “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle” (Col. 2:20-21) but by being led by the Spirit of God and actually *being* His children, His sons. (Rom. 8:14) We cannot please the flesh and the Spirit of God at the same time. (Gal. 5:17, 6:8, etc.) “[We] cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of the demons; [we] cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons.” (1 Cor. 10:21) Those who partake of and give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines (teachings) of demons are those who will depart from the faith. (1 Tim. 4:1)

When we come out from among “Christian” wickedness, separate ourselves to God’s plan and purpose for our life and refuse to touch what God has declared spiritually unclean, *then* He will receive us, becoming our Father as we become His sons and daughters. (2 Cor. 6:17-18) Until we meet these qualifications, however, all our claims to sonship are merely noise and wind, the right words but utterly devoid of truth and substance in our lives.

But because we have these promises, Paul exhorts us, “let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor. 7:1) *Everyone*, John wrote, who truly hopes to be changed into the likeness of Christ in eternity will purify himself just as Christ is pure. (1 Jn. 3:2-3) Paul instructed Timothy to “pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord *out of a pure heart*” (2 Tim. 2:22) but to turn away from those who have a form of godliness without God’s power. (2 Tim. 3:5)

The message is loud and clear for those whose hearts are turned toward God. Those who do not love truth (2 Ths. 2:11-12) or who follow some agenda other than the will of God (Jn. 7:17) will not be able to hear, understand or obey what the Spirit is saying. Only those who repent, believe and obey are those who are led out of all lies and into all truth (Jn. 16:13) and able to follow the Lamb wherever He leads (Rev. 14:4), a leading that certainly includes departing from needing the approval of men at the expense of seeking God's approval. (2 Tim. 2:15, Gal. 1:10) Until the way of Christ is restored to being the way of partaking of God's Spirit by living only in His light and truth, "Christianity will continue its plunge into lethal apostasy and only those who come out of this darkness and deception will be those who endure to the end so as to be saved. (Mt. 24:13)

Let he who has ears hear.

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