

DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION

September 25, 1991

I. Preliminary considerations.

- A. The Doctrine of Separation (i.e., the necessity to remain aloof from certain types) is clearly advocated by the Word of God (cf. Ps.1; Prov.14:16; 16:17; 23:17-21,26-28; 24:1,2).
- B. Doctrine in the brain/soul gives the believer the necessary discernment to separate from reversionists (Prov.2; 4:10-27; 5:1-14).
- C. Failure to separate denies the realities which govern the Angelic Conflict as seen in the five rhetorical questions of 2Cor.6:14,15a.
- D. Failure to separate drags the believer down to the level of the reversionist he associates with (cp. Prov.22:24,25).

II. Israel was responsible to stay aloof from their Gentile neighbors as God's priest nation, Ex.19:5,6; Neh.9:2; Lev.20:7 "*You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the Lord your God.*"

- A. When they separated from pagan culture, religion, and practices they were blessed (Deut.28:1-14), but when they did not separate, they brought on themselves cursing (Deut.28:15-68).
- B. The doctrine was taught in the ceremonial code of the Mosaic Law, where physical association with designated items rendering one ceremonially unclean shadowed spiritual defilement (Lev.15:31).
- C. Under the spiritual code (ritual), they had the law of the clean versus the unclean, which further taught the need to separate (Lev.20:24-26).
- D. Capital punishment was used to separate reversionists from the nation (Lev.20; human sacrifice, sexual perversion, and occult practices).
- E. They were prohibited from marrying pagan wives (Ezr.10:11).
- F. Ultimately, failure to separate led to expulsion (separation) from the land of promise (Lev.20:22,23; 26:27-30; Deut.28:63-68; 29:22-28; 31:15-22; cp. Deut.32, a song of Israel's history).

III. Israel will be challenged to separate during the third restoration, 2Cor.6:16b-18 "*I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord. 'And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. And I will be a Father to you. And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' Says the Lord Almighty.*"

- A. Biblical prophecy projects a Zionist state in the Middle East prior to the Rapture of the Church.
 - 1. In fact, the presence of an Israeli state is the control sign of the Rapture generation (see Doctrines of the Rapture and Fig Tree).
 - 2. Prophecy pictures a gradual restoration of scattered Jewry to their land during an era of international antagonism (cf. Ezek.34:11-31; 36:16-21; 37:1-14; Jer.16:16).
 - 3. Ezekiel makes it quite clear that the return will begin in unbelief (Ezek.36:22).
 - 4. He further teaches that the physical restoration of the land (Ezek.36:1-15) and the people (Ezek.36:16-21) will precede their spiritual restoration (Ezek.36:22-32).
- B. Following the Rapture of the Church, Jews will convert to Christianity, and the restoration process (already in progress) will take on a new impetus and complexion.
 - 1. Jews (and Gentiles) left behind will receive evangelization by an angel (Rev.14:6,7), the 144,000 (Rev.7), and the two witnesses (Rev.11).
 - 2. Those who make the salvation adjustment to the justice of God (SAJG) are to migrate to Zion to join the Jews already there (Rev.18:4; Isa.52:11; Jer.50:8; 51:5,6,9,45).
 - 3. The principal nation they will exit is America, since most of world Jewry resides in the U.S.A., known in Biblical prophecy as Babylon (see Doctrine of the U.S. in Prophecy).
 - 4. Gentile converts will also have to separate from America or die in the nuclear holocaust.
 - 5. So wherever Jews are, it is God's will for them to separate from their geographical

environs, like Russia. (Zech.2:6) or the U.S.A. (Zech.2:7).

6. They are also responsible to separate from the spiritual uncleanness that characterizes the last days (2Cor.6:17; Rev.16:15).

7. Jews who fail to make the SAJG in the Tribulation will be forcibly separated from the Earth by the Messiah (the Lord Jesus Christ) at the Second Advent (Mt.25:1-13).

IV. Unbelievers. The believer is to separate from unbelievers (2Cor.6:14-18). Stop being unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

A. Conditions of being unequally yoked together are evident in:

1. Regular social life with unbelievers.

2. Business partnerships, but not working for or employing unbelievers.

3. Membership in clubs, societies, etc., where either the goals or the activity compromises Bible Doctrine.

B. Whenever a believer is unequally yoked with an unbeliever, he violates the fundamental issues of the Angelic Conflict as seen in the five rhetorical questions of 2Cor.6:14-16a.

1. Being under the principle of righteousness, he ties himself to a person who is under the principle of lawlessness. How can he pursue righteousness and maintain his obligations to his partner whose daily conduct is not so governed?

2. As light and darkness are opposites, how can the unequally yoked believer have any meaningful fellowship with darkness and still remain light?

3. Since One greater than the believer (Christ, the head of the plan of God) has no ground of compromise with His archenemy, Satan (Belial), how does the believer expect to find harmony with one of Satan's own?

4. Being unequally yoked, he violates the fact that the believer and unbeliever have no common part in the plan of God in Phase 3. To so associate in time violates the principles governing the Angelic Conflict.

5. And finally, to intimately associate with unbelievers' leads to a compromise of one's own "temple" by associating it with idols. All the unbeliever can do for you is to bring you into contact with idols.

C. Separation from unbelievers does not involve total dissociation since:

1. To do so, you would have to die and go to heaven (1Cor.5:9-10).

2. To do so, you would cease to be a fragrant aroma to them (2Cor.2:14-17).

D. Conclusions on separation and the unbeliever.

1. When considering if a given situation constitutes being "unequally yoked", first ask yourself if you have to compromise doctrine in order to maintain the association.

2. Secondly, pray about the matter, seeking God's will, and He will bless your desire to please Him.

3. You will suffer ridicule when you separate from them (1Pet.4:4 "*And in all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you*"). Chalk it up to undeserved suffering and rejoice.

V. Believers. The believer is to separate from believers (1Cor.5:9-13 "*I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler-not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves*")

A. You are to sever all social ties with any believers who practice any of the items in Paul's list, including: sexual immorality, monetary reversionism (covetousness), dishonesty in financial dealings (swindler), religious reversionism (idolaters), verbal reversionism (reviler), and addictive reversionism (alcohol or drugs).

- B. Disassociate yourself from all believers who do not adhere to categorically sound Bible Doctrine, including all false teachers (2Thess.3:6 *"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us"*; 2Thess.3:14 *"And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame"*; Rom.16:17,18 *"Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of the Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting"*; 2Tim.3:5,6 *"holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and 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"*)
 - C. The local church is to separate from any member who, by his/her life style, brings public reproach on the local body of Christ (the illustration is Paul's instructions regarding the incestuous Corinthian, 1Cor.5:1ff).
 - D. The separation is designed by God to produce sorrow in the reversionist which, as a result of fellow believers remaining aloof, stimulates reversion recovery (again, the example is the incestuous Corinthian who experienced "Godly sorrow" when believers separated from him, 2Cor.2:6 *"Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority"* [cp. 2Thess.3:14b above]. Also cp. 2Cor.7:8-10; when you fail to separate, you negate this important factor called "sorrow").
 - E. When the reversionist begins reversion recovery, you are responsible to forgive and forget (even if you were personally victimized by him) and to provide comfort and encouragement toward him as he seeks to establish new momentum and ride out whatever discipline remains (2Cor.2:7-11; the incestuous Corinthian is in view here. Corinthians that had failed to separate initially, then separated, were reticent in accepting him back when he initiated reversion recovery).
 - F. If there is any contact with the reversionist during the period of separation, you should warn him (2Thess.3:15 *"And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother"*). A combination of warning and encouragement with respect to Most Pressing Responsibility (MPR) is what he needs.
 - G. Do not separate from believers just for incidental sin (incidental evil).
 - H. Beware of close friends who violate Heb.10:25, MPR.
- VI. Family. The believer is to separate from family members who are negative (compatible with other doctrinal constraints).
- A. Jesus taught this in Mt.10:34-39 *"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of me. He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it."* (The sword is a figure for the Word of God.) Lk.14:25ff.
 - B. Jesus practiced this with regard to His own mother, brothers, and sisters, who sought to interfere with His ministry, Mt.12:46-50 *"While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and His brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. And someone said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.' But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold, My mother and My brothers! For whoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."* (Mk.3:31-35; Lk.8:19-21.)

- C. Jesus promised to more than repay those who forsook father, mother, brother, and sister for the plan of God (Mk.10:28-31 "*Peter began to say to Him, 'Behold, we have left everything and followed You.'* Jesus said, '*Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life. But many who are first, will be last; and the last, first*'").
- D. Abraham is an example of a believer who separated from family; look at his blessings (Gen.12:1-3 "*Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I shall show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families on the earth shall be blessed*'"; Gen.13:11). He gave up nation, family, etc.
- E. Jonathan is an example of a believer who failed to separate from his father (Saul) and it cost him dearly. (He was otherwise a great believer.)
- F. Separation does not negate the responsibility to honor your father and mother (cp. Jn.19:27 "*Behold, your mother!*")

VII. Marriage and separation.

- A. Never marry an unbeliever or a negative believer. (The example is Abraham's intervention in the selection of a wife for his son Isaac from his family, which indicates they were believers, unlike the general Canaanite population, Gen.24.)
- B. If you are waiting on the Lord to provide the right woman, remember Prov.11:22 "*As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, So is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion*"; Prov.21:9 "*It is better to live in a corner of a roof, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman*"; Prov.21:19 "*It is better to live in a desert land, Than with a contentious and vexing woman*"; cp. Prov.19:12; 27:15.
- C. And remember Prov.19:14 "*House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the Lord*", and Prov.16:13 "*Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And he who speaks right is loved.*"
- D. If you are married to a spouse who is negative and permits you to fulfill Heb.10:25, then remain married (see 1Cor.7:10-16 for the details).
- E. But if the negative party makes it impossible to fulfill 2Pet.3:18, then you are free to separate and not incur guilt before the Lord. (Get the tapes on 1Cor.7 if this applies to you, before you make any decisions!)

VIII. Concluding applications and observations.

- A. Failure to separate neutralizes your ambassadorship and the witness of the life.
- B. Separation sometimes entails geographical relocation in order to get with the best face-to-face teaching.
- C. Avoid all associations that compromise Bible Doctrine.
- D. In questionable situations, pursue God's will through prayer and divine guidance. He will bless your mental attitude to please Him.
- E. When separating from people under the influence of evil, remember Prov.24:19,20 "*Do not fret yourself because of evildoers, Or be envious of the wicked; For there will be no future for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked will be put out.*"
- F. When you separate, remember the promises you come under (Ps.1:1-3; Mk.10:28-31; 2Cor.6:16-18 "*Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, And they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord. 'And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me', Says the Lord Almighty*").

IX. Concluding observations.

A. Reasons to separate.

1. To protect yourself from bad influences (1Cor.15:33).
2. To set in motion the *lupe* (sorrow) factor in the maladjusted (1Cor.2:7).
3. To fulfill the commandment of Scripture (1Cor.9ff; 2Cor.7:14).

B. Objections to this doctrine.

1. Separation is only from unbelievers.
2. Answer: Abraham finally separated from Lot (a believer) who was not openly hostile, but who held no interest in the plan of God as centered in the promises to Abraham (see Gen.13:5-18).
3. Separation is only if the association hurts you.
4. Answer: the example above indicates otherwise.
5. We should not separate over doctrinal differences.
6. Answer: Rom.16:17 and 2Thess.3:14.

Finally, remember Jam.4:4 "*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*"

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