

How Far Will I Go to Break with the World?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. 2Cor. 6:14 - 7:1 - What does this mean for Christians?
- B. In the Old Testament, God physically separated His people from the world around them.
 - 1. Abraham was told to leave his homeland and father's house to separate himself from the growing idolatry there and to walk with God in another land. The Patriarchs lived apart from the world until Joseph.
 - 2. The children of Jacob lived apart from the Egyptians in Goshen.
 - 3. The Israelites drove out the Canaanites and other idolaters before occupying the Promised Land.
 - 4. That is what God required under the first and second covenants, but is that what He wants under the covenant of Christ?
 - 5. God no more requires His people to be physically separated from the world, than He wants them to offer corporeal sacrifices of animals, worship with actual harps, or burn physical incense in prayer.
- C. The Kingdom of God is within our hearts, minds, and spirits, while our bodies that house our souls are in this physical world.
 - 1. Luke 17:20-21; John 18:36; 2Cor. 4:6-7
 - 2. We cannot physically separate ourselves from the world, nor does the Divine wish us to do so - John 17:14-16
 - 3. While our bodies live in this world, and therefore we must interact with the world, we do so conformed to the image of Christ and not the world.
 - a. Rom. 12:1-2
 - 4. In fact, to physically separate from the world defies the Lord's instructions to be in the world as light, salt, messengers of God, et al.
 - a. Matt. 5:13-16; Phil 2:15
 - b. To isolate ourselves from the world, depriving them of these influences, robs them of the opportunity they need to know the Lord and be saved, and undermines God's plan to reach them.
 - 5. Christians who try to distance themselves from the world do so from fear, selfishness, paranoia, or pride, all of which are sins.
 - 6. Christians who hide themselves away from the world will have eternity to get better acquainted with the world, because they will share the same address.
- D. So, what does it mean to "come out and be separate"?

I. NOT SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD; SEPARATED UNTO GOD

- A. Jesus is our pattern in this - Heb. 7:26, 4:14-15
 - 1. Jesus was among the sinners - Luke 15:1-2, 5:29-32
 - 2. But Jesus did not sin - 1Peter 2:21-23 - He was among liars, but did not lie; He was among revilers, but did not revile; He was among prostitutes and tax cheats, but did not fornicate or steal.
 - 3. What religious group isolated themselves from sinners? Pharisees

- B. In the world among sinners, but separated from sin; separated from God in this world, but separated unto God in spirit and in life.
 - 1. Sanctified, holy, set apart for God and His purposes.
 - 2. The lamb, the ram, and the ox were separated unto God for sacrifice, but raised and lived with and among the other creatures who were not.

II. WHAT IS BIBLICAL SEPARATION?

- A. To be separate does not mean giving away all your money, hiding out in the wilderness, and living like a hermit. But it is being fundamentally different from the world around us, sanctified, consecrated, dedicated to God first and only.
- B. Biblical separation is the practice of separating from sin and error so that we can live in truth and righteousness.
 - 1. Failing to separate ourselves from temptation leads to sin
 - 2. Rom. 13:14; 1Peter 2:11
- C. Christians are different, not by accident of physical birth, but by our choice to be reborn with a new nature by God's original design - 2Cor. 5:17
 - 1. God does not call on us to be bizarre, but to be special, enabling us to illustrate and broadcast His plan for humankind - 1Peter 2:9-10, 12
- D. Our difference from the world manifests our new family and Divine heritage.
 - 1. John 8:44; 2Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:9-10

III. WHY MUST WE BE DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD?

- A. Because we are now of God, not of this world - Titus 2:14; 1Cor. 6:19-20
- B. Because God is Holy; therefore, we must be holy in order to be of Him.
 - 1. 1John 1:5; 1Peter 1:15-16
- C. Because we cannot live in two worlds at the same time.
 - 1. Gal. 1:4; Luke 16:13; 1John 2:15

IV. HOW DO WE LIVE SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD WITHOUT GOING OUT OF THIS WORLD?

- A. By choosing to - Deut. 7:11-12, 26; James 4:8
- B. By holding tightly to that choice daily - 1John 1:7, 9