

Isolating the Saints

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. By the close of the book of Genesis, God had chosen a small, relatively insignificant people to become a teaching nation.
 - 1. The descendants of Heber at the Tower of Babel.
 - 2. Abraham left home to become a nomad herdsman; Lot in Sodom.
 - 3. Israelites made to live in Goshen north in Egypt.
 - 4. Israelites kept in wilderness, required to drive out all Canaanites.
 - 5. Judah required to make no treaties with any other nation.
 - 6. The returning exiles required to separate from pagan mates.
- B. Why did God isolate His people in Old Testament times?
 - 1. Rechabites - Cities were where one found alcohol, forced idolatry, droit a signor, increased opportunity and pressure to sin - Jer. 35
 - 2. Neighboring nations rife with idolatry - Judges
 - 3. He wanted a nation to be a living example of His goodness, protection, and providence.
 - 4. He wanted to teach His people to depend on Him - Deut. 4:32-39
- C. But it was a lonely way to live - Psalm 38:9-15
 - 1. Like all things that God wills, does, and commands: when the conditions change and the purpose ceases to be relevant, He changes His command; He can do this because He is God.
- D. Does God want His people to live in isolation today?
 - 1. Some scriptures seem to imply this - 2Cor. 6:14, 17
- E. But Jesus and His apostles taught that we are not to be isolated.
 - 1. "In the world, but not of the world" is not found in scripture in that form, but it is there in principle.
 - 2. John 17:14-18; Matt. 5:13-16; Phil 2:15; 1Peter 2:12

I. WE NEED INSULATION, NOT ISOLATION

- A. Difference makers - Acts 17:6
- B. Christians who have moved from membership to discipleship.
- C. Matt. 16:24 - Who consider their difference as a blessing.
- D. John 17:3 - Who are not impacted by this world because they know the Lord, and they have eternal life.
- E. A church was established in Corinth; in spite of its problems, it thrived. But the Christians lived in a horrendously evil place. The city of Corinth was so vile, that to be called a Corinthian meant that you were a person of low moral standards. They invented vile forms of fornication that were perfected and exported throughout the empire. Paul never admonished Christians to leave the city. He gave them the means to defend themselves against temptation and to press forward with the Gospel - 1Cor. 10:13

II. WE NEED DISTINCTION, NOT DISTANCE

- A. 2Cor. 6:14-16 - A life that manifests contrast.

1. Contrast in our walk - righteousness, purity of life, pleasing to God.
 - a. Phil. 1:27; Rom. 13:14
 2. Contrast in our wisdom - Light and dark can have no fellowship. Even the tiniest bit of light has the power to dispel the most oppressive darkness - John 3:20
 - a. A life governed by the word of God has no common ground with a life governed by the flesh.
 - b. 1John 1:7; Matt. 5:14; 1Peter 4:1-4
 3. Contrast in our worship - John 4:24; Matt. 15:9
 4. The word "concord" or "accord" in verse 15 connotes harmony. (Symphono - to be harmonious, to accord, be suitable, concur, stipulate by compact, agree together, with -- Strongs - 4856)
 5. It refers to musicians who play the same piece of music the same way at the same time. We get the word symphony from symphonesis. There is disharmony between Jesus and everything evil.
- B. 2Cor. 6:16 - 7:1 - Distinction in fellowship.
1. Deut. 22:10 - The ox and donkey were two vastly different animals. The ox was clean, the donkey was not. They possessed two different natures. To yoke them together was to invite trouble.
 - a. Walking with the world often results in walking like the world .
 - b. 1Cor. 15:33
 2. In as much as our relationships with those in the world do not involve sharing in their sins, we may maintain relationships.
 - a. 1Cor. 9:19-23 - Paul didn't change to suit the crowd; he lived to please Jesus.
 3. We maintain steadfast convictions - Gal. 2:20
 - a. How did Christ live in the world without being part of the world?
 - b. Luke 7:34; Heb. 7:26
 - c. But even in this present world, we are to shine as lights reflecting the glory of God - Phil. 2:15; 1Cor. 10:31