

Doctrine of Separation: Come Out

Revelation 18:4

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues”.

1. There are several eternal truths shouted from heaven to the church.

- It is possible for the people of God to partake of the sins of others.
- It is possible for the people of God to receive the plagues of others.
- It is possible for the people of God to avoid the plagues of others by hearing the voice from heaven and coming out of the sphere of divine wrath.
- Grace always precedes judgment. Grace warns not only the unrighteous but especially the people of God of impending peril.
- It is heaven that is calling for the separation, not the world, not the flesh, and not the devil.
- The call to separation is specific and forceful. “Come out of her.” The people of God do not listen to the call for separation to their own individual peril.
- The call is for the people of God not to practice the same sins of the ungodly.
- The particular cluster of sins from which the people of God are to separate from are known to them. They are known by revelation. They are known by conscience for the law of God is written upon the heart.
- The punishment in which the people of God shall be partakers is known to all.
- Here is a partial answer to the question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?”. Sometimes good people refuse to listen to the voice from heaven and fail to come out and be separate from that which is evil.
- There is spiritual power to obey the heavenly injunction for what God commands He gives grace and the Holy Spirit to comply with.
- The voice that speaks from heaven is a clear voice with a concise message that cannot be misunderstood by the people of God.

- Despite a propensity to side with those who do evil and are about to be judged, so much so that a voice from heaven must speak, God still refers to individuals as “my people” to demonstrate His faithfulness to them while calling for their faithfulness to Himself. *“If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself” (2 Timothy 2:13).*
- In context, the voice from heaven is speaking about the Great Whore, Spiritual Babylon, whom the Christians would understand as Rome. The voice from heaven refers to the unholy city as “her” three times. The reference is feminine in form to indicate the sensual nature of the sins the saints were not only exposed to but warned to not partake of. *“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).*
- The judgment of God is severe for it is not one plague the voice in heaven warns of but plagues in the plural.
- The judgment of God is certain. *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them” (Romans 1:18-19).*
- People of God, you have been warned. You are now without excuse. *Amos 4:12 Therefore ...prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*

2. God has always called His people to “come out” as Dr. William Barclay notes.

- It was the call which came to Abraham: *“Now the Lord said to Abraham, Go from your country, and your kindred, and your father's house, to the land that I will show you” (Genesis 12:1).*
- It was the call that came to Lot, before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: *“Up, get out of this place, for the Lord is about to destroy the city” (Genesis 19:12-14).*
- It was the call that came to Moses in the days of the wickedness of Korah, Dathan and Abiram: *“Get away from about the dwelling of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.... Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men” (Numbers 16:23-26).*
- *“Go forth from Babylon,” said Isaiah, “flee from Chaldea” (Isaiah 48:20).*

- Flee from the midst of Babylon, said Jeremiah, *"and go out of the land of the Chaldeans"* (Jeremiah 50:8).
- *"Flee from the midst of Babylon, let every man save his life"* (Jeremiah 51:6).
- *"Go out of the midst of her people. Let every man save his life from the fierce anger of the Lord"* (Jer.51:45).

It is a cry which finds its echo in the New Testament.

- Paul writes to the Corinthians: *"Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial?"* (2 Corinthians 6:14-15).
- *"Do not participate in another man's sins; keep yourself pure"* (1 Timothy 5:22)" (William Barclay).