

Bible Separation

Not only does the Bible graphically demand separation from sin, apostasy – sinners and apostates, it also teaches it by example. You see, separation is not a fanciful pastoral plot to make Christians' lives miserable, nor is it a matter of congregational jealousy to keep their new converts from becoming other church's new converts. It is clearly taught, generally and specifically, in the pages of God's Holy (sanctified – separated) Book.

It is possible to write volumes analyzing the unmistakable demands of God about separation, but in this article let's note a couple of actual cases – Noah's ark, Lot's house arrest in Sodom, and the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. Each was separation but vastly different in several areas, so let's tie them together with four simple questions.

Who Ordered This Separation?

Pastors are often accused of preaching separation arbitrarily. They condemn shorts, bathing suits, ungodly hair styles, fraternal groups, movies, political entanglements, religious mixed marriages, etc., and people sometimes accuse them of 'lording' over the people – arbitrary meanness. But it's God's Word that demands that people who call themselves by God's name must live holy lives.

Who ordered Noah's isolation from society? Jehovah! Who came to the house of Lot in wicked Sodom with murderous homosexuals at the door? It is God who says, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world...*" It is Jehovah who says, "*...Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness...*"

In the case of the Jews in Shushan the situation was different. God didn't order their arrest and furnace fling. No, but it was a result of their obedience to God's Second Command, "Thou shalt not bow to false gods." They obeyed God and separation from the ungodly came automatically. Noah choose to separate; Lot was forced to depart; and the three in Shushan found it came automatically, but all these lived the life of pleasing to God, no matter how temporarily.

The responsibility for the results of Bible separation lies on God's shoulders, just as does the authority.

What Was The Separating Substance?

Silly question? Not at all! In each case, God's servants were separated from the unbeliever by a door – a very real, substantial, heavy barrier, telling us that separation is as real and tangible as a two inch mahogany door with a dead-bolt and chain.

Bible separation is not a notation in Heaven, a membership card in some religious club or an imaginary line in someone's mind. Noah was in and the unbeliever was out, dying to get in; the Sodomites were locked out and so were the Babylonians. You may know that you are different from the lost man, God knows this too, but the worldling probably won't unless there is **real** separation in your life.

What Was Outside That Door?

In each case there were two kinds of people outside – the ungodly and the unspiritual – lost and backslidden.

Also outside that separation was the judgment of Jehovah. Outside is the anger of God (James 4:4). If you hear the call for separation and you refuse – you better brush up on your dog-paddling, because the rain will probably soon fall. Stand outside the door of Lot's house and you may be raped or murdered. What was outside the door of separation at the First Passover? What was outside the temple door for the boy-king Joash? It is infinitely safer inside Bible separation than outside!

Oh, but what about the other example? Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? There was no immediate judgment on Babylon! The key word is "immediate." Just chalk that up to God's longsuffering. Lack of fire from heaven is not proof that separation from sin is outdated. God still says "*...come out from among them and be ye separate...*"

What Was In That Separation? What Effect Does It Have?

For Noah it was salvation – deliverance. Salvation itself is a kind of separation, although not physical. Was Noah saved by separation or was he separated because he was saved? The latter. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord before ark construction ever began. And of course, the New Testament says, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith...*" If you are not a Christian, there is only one way to be saved.

Noah was saved bodily by separation, and so it was with Lot.

For Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, it was their testimony that was saved. When they willingly were tossed into the fire, they were telling the world: "Jehovah is the only true and living God. He is worth living for and dying for. Your ungodly religion is not worth a backward glance." These Jews were in all the papers – so to speak. This is what Christianity needs today – righteous testimony empowered by lives of real Bible separation.

And there was something else inside that separation – I should say Someone else. God invited Noah inside the ark to be with Himself. God's angels were inside Lot's house when he separated from the filthy. And there was One like the Son of Man with the three Hebrews in that furnace.

Dear Readers, if there was no other benefit in separation than this alone – it would be enough. I want to be where Jesus is – in Bible separation.

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