

# Cornerstone

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A Voice To The End-time Church

## Be You Separate

by Jim Rector

*CHRIST CLEARLY PREDICTED THAT THE END-TIME CHURCH OF GOD WOULD BE WEAK AND SPIRITUALLY SLEEPY. WE CAN SEE THE EVIDENCE OF THAT CONDITION EVERYWHERE. THE DOCTRINAL APOSTASY AND THE MORAL BACKSLIDING SO PREVALENT IN MUCH OF THE MODERN CHURCH, HOWEVER NEED NOT CAUSE YOU TO STUMBLE AND FALL. GOD IS PRESENTLY AWAKENING AND AROUSING A FEW OF HIS PEOPLE, ALERTING THEM TO THE GRAVE DANGERS OF SPIRITUAL SLEEP AND COMPLACENCY. IF YOU ARE ON THAT WAVELENGTH, THEN YOU SURELY HAVE THE CHANCE TO CHANGE THINGS IN YOUR OWN LIFE AND SERVICE TO GOD. THE ARTICLES IN THIS MONTH'S PUBLICATION ARE AIMED AT MAKING CLEAR THE CHOICES THAT AWARE CHRISTIANS HAVE TODAY, AS THE CHURCH STANDS AT THE MOST CRITICAL CROSSROADS IN ITS HISTORY.*

When John was given the great revelation of end-time events to sweep across this earth, one of the most powerful warnings he received was directed to those who would be true servants of God in the final days. The evil system that John foresaw for our day is already in place. We are living in the middle of it right now. Of that world, he wrote:

*"COME OUT OF HER my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).*

John clearly saw through the deception of the world. He strongly preached against it in his day. We are compelled to take him at his word when he says:

*"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world **PASSES AWAY**, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides forever" (I John 2:15-17).*

We all are a part of the greatest system of evil and cunning the world has ever known. The present world conditions, no matter what area you may wish to evaluate, is full of paganism, appeals to the lust of the mind and leads to sin and destruction. How can we who are mercifully called of God continue any longer in the evil deeds of our former lives. When we come under the saving blood of Christ, that way of life should die in the waters of baptism. Of course, being baptized is not some magical rite that suddenly makes us absolutely perfect. It is, however, symbolic of our desire to become perfect. It certainly does picture the old ways and the old life being buried with Christ and our rising up as a new creature in the Spirit. From that point on, we must submit to Christ's power in our lives, allowing Him to live in and through us more and more. For this reason, our old friends, our old connections, our old clubs and associations all must be seen in a very different light.

The walk of a Christian is not easy. Not only are we tried and tested in a myriad of ways, but the very act of facing up to the facts of our lives is very difficult. We are now required to make firm decisions concerning our conduct, concerning those with whom we choose to associate, concerning what must come first and foremost on our priority list. There are times when these choices are painful, but they must be made nevertheless. Our acceptance of Christ's precious sacrifice for our sins means that we have covenanted with God not to sin anymore, not to break His laws, not to walk in our old way of life. We are called to become new creatures in Christ, laying aside the past. Has this truly happened in your life or are you still compromising here and there, making excuses for yourself? You must do as Paul commanded and **EXAMINE YOURSELF** honestly and carefully.

Paul again gives us the truth of the matter in his usual straightforward manner. Please, I urge you, pay attention to it:

*"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the Temple of God and idols? As God has said, I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people. Therefore **COME OUT FROM THEM AND BE SEPARATE**, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:14-18).*

Separating ourselves from our pasts is absolutely necessary in order to please and serve God. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS!!** That includes our former church groups, our former organizational ties, our former practices in many areas of life. We are not called to merely go on with the routine of our lives, but to powerful, demonstrative, revolutionary **CHANGE** through the power of God's Spirit - a change such as that which occurred in the life of the apostle Peter.

Here was a man who though He walked side by side with the Messiah Himself, yet in His greatest hour of trial denied Him three times with cursings and swearings. Astonishing, isn't it! But within two months, this man was transformed into a flame of fire. When the Spirit was poured out on that remarkable day of Pentecost in 31 A.D., Peter became another man, a new man, a changed man! He stood up and spoke words with such power that he must have truly shocked even himself. The man who was a spiritual coward, who refused to stand up and be counted, the man who abandoned His Lord and Master, was now willing to give up everything for His sake. That is the marvelous transformation that must take place in your life and mine.

Brethren, we are headed not for the glory of this world, but of the world to come. Do you really believe that? Is that just a faraway hope in your mind or a profound reality? The things of this world that are so appealing, that we often find so hard to give up, are utterly **NOTHING**, if we are walking in the Spirit. Paul came to this very same conclusion in his own life. Notice how he put it:

*"Whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus (Yahshua) my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish ('DUNG' - KJV!!), that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing*

*in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:7-11).*

Yes, Paul was willing to give up everything for Christ - and he did so, counting it all as dung on the ground. The past association Paul had with the Jews, his high social standing, his position of power - he rejected it all in favor of humbly serving Christ. So must we, brethren, so must we.

Take a good long look at your life right now. Ponder on just how you spend your time, on what your real priorities are, on how much of your life is still "in the world." God absolutely expects and commands us to come out of those things of the past, to put them away and turn to Him as a little child. That is why we must be willing, for instance, to suffer loss in order to obey God. That is why we oft-times put our jobs on the line when it comes to observing the Sabbath day or in arranging to keep the annual Holydays. The attitude is that we must obey **GOD RATHER THAN MEN!!** That is why we sometimes subject ourselves to criticism and ridicule when we resist keeping the religious festivals of the worldly churches around us. Pagan rituals like Christmas and Easter and Hallowe'en must be scrupulously avoided by true Christians. The trend today is, unfortunately, to drift back into harmony with the world. You and I must resist this deceptive course of action in our lives, no matter what the cost in friendships, no matter how embarrassed it may make us feel, no matter how great the pressure to go along may be. Turn from it with all your might and get on your knees to God in heartfelt prayer for the strength to press on in going the right way. You will never regret it. God will bless you for it. Don't be satisfied with straddling the fence of doubt and indecision. Get with the plan! Your time of judgment and mine is right now - not some later, more convenient time! Remember what Peter said:

*"For it is time for **JUDGMENT** to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? For if it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" (I Pet. 4:17-18).*

You and I are being judged by Almighty God right now, day in and day out. Our lives absolutely must reflect that fact. Do not be guilty of neglecting the presence of God. Just because He is invisible to our limited eyes does not mean that He is not awake and fully aware of what is going on in our minds and lives. Be on guard. Be alert. Examine yourselves before God and know where you stand with Him. Many of you have heard me say that time and time again. I don't think that it is possible to say it too often or too strongly.

Let's start taking our calling seriously, brethren. **GET REAL WITH GOD!!** Put Him absolutely first in your life on a daily basis. Whatever He commands us to do, let's do it with all our might. Put everything into His hands and lean upon Him for the strength to overcome and press on in this great calling. The times ahead are not going to be easy for any of us. Soon Satan will unleash his greatest fury against God's people. Are you truly yielding to God that He might prepare you to stand strong in the evil day? Courting the world around us, watering down the truth of God to make it easier on ourselves, making all kinds of

excuses for our conduct, associating with the wrong crowd of people, compromising God's Word in order to avoid confrontation, embarrassment or persecution - these are the things that bring us down spiritually. Doing any of them greatly displeases God. If you are guilty in any of these instances, please I beg you to go to God immediately and confess your sin and deeply repent. God will forgive completely. Receiving His forgiveness enables us not only to remain in good standing with the Father, but also empowers us to get up and go the other way, the right way!

Focus upon just how your life impacts others in the world and in the Church. Is the thrust of your life toward helping others, toward encouraging and uplifting others, toward serving others, toward building one another up, toward forgiving each other and forbearing with each other, just as the Scriptures command? You must be the judge of your own personal situation. Paul said that if we are willing to honestly judge ourselves, it may be that we will not fall under the condemnation of the Lord. Please take his wise advice to heart.

The Christmas season used to present no temptation to God's Church, but today things have sadly changed. For a goodly number, this time of the year is a problem for them. There are the ever-present Christmas parties and New Year's Eve blowouts. There are family pressures, especially with children. Brethren, either we are going to obey God and go all way with Him, or we are going to compromise and fall short. Isn't it time we all took our stand, along side such great men and women of God as Abraham and Sarah, Moses and Deborah, David and Anna the prophetess? Be strong in the Lord and of good courage. Put your trust in Him and don't worry ever again about what other people think of your obedience to God. They are not your judges, God is!! Let's start acting like we appreciated the incredible sacrifice of our God and Saviour, by living by every Word that proceeds out of His mouth. I urge you all to reject the things of this world, the traditions and customs of paganism, the organizations and rituals connected to fleshly, carnal and pagan ways. **COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE!!**