

Come out of her, My people

by: Hugo Bouter

Revelation 18:4

The principle of separation from evil, or the return from Babylon (a picture of a false religious system) can be found all through the Bible. It starts with the calling of Abram from Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen. 11 & 12), and it ends with the call of Revelation 18, 'Come out of her, My people.'

Coming out of that which is not in accordance with God's will is the negative aspect of the matter. Separation unto, or the return to God and His Word, is the positive aspect. In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, this meant going up to the Promised Land and to Jerusalem as the centre of worship as established by God.

This principle is also true for us as New Testament believers, but we have to apply it in a spiritual way. What is important to us is a genuine spiritual revival; a return to God's revealed word and will. Often, however, this cannot continue without consequences from a collective point of view. Luther in his time spoke about the Babylonian captivity of the Church and called for a return to the Scriptures alone. All Scripture is given for our instruction, including those portions that describe the return of the remnant of the two tribes from Babylon.

The call for separation in 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 is, in fact, a citation from Isaiah 52:11 and an allusion to the remnant's departure from Babylon and their return to Jerusalem with the vessels of the Lord (the holy articles from the temple). In connection with this subject, the application of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah to ourselves is obvious. The truth of the Church as the house of God, the temple of the living God, has to be

practiced again. Christ Himself should be the Centre of His own. The holy vessels of the temple speak of Him. He is to be the focus of our assembly gatherings.

There are several other Scriptures that bring up similar thoughts about coming out to meet Him where He feeds His flock. Compare the following passages:

- (1) As Christians we are gathered together in or unto His name (Matt. 18). There He is in the midst of His own. He calls us to Himself as the true Centre of gathering.
- (2) The going out of the virgins in the parable of Matthew 25. We should go on our way to meet the Lord with burning lamps: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'
- (3) The Good Shepherd leads His sheep out of the Jewish sheepfold (John 10). In His presence we find security, food, freedom and life to the full.
- (4) We should go forth to Him outside the camp of Judaism (cf. Heb. 13). Christ is the true Sacrifice and the true Altar; the spiritual Centre of Christian worship. This is the reason for the call: 'Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.'
- (5) The need for cleansing from the vessels for dishonour in Christendom [by separating ourselves from them] in order to be a vessel for honour, sanctified and useful for the Master (2 Tim. 2).