

The Great and Final Separation



David Wilkerson November 14, 2016

We love to quote Jesus' words about the victory he has promised to his church: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Paul says Christ loves his church, and that it will be presented to him in the last days sanctified and washed by the Word, a glorious bride without spot, wrinkle or blemish of any kind (see Ephesians 5:25-27). Simply put, the church of Jesus Christ at the end of time will be a glorious, prevailing, overcoming body of believers. And we can stand on this as a promise from the Lord himself.

Yet the enemy has come to try to destroy this glorious last-days church. Paul warns that God's people will endure a falling away from the true doctrines of Christ, turning instead to gospels of lust and greed: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

So, what message are we to preach in these last days? Paul spells it out clearly in this passage: a message of sound doctrine. This entails the cross, the second coming of the Lord, holiness, suffering, self-denial, the forsaking of sin—all things that Paul says many will forsake in that day. He even tells us how we are to deliver such doctrine: "Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine" (4:2).

Why was Paul compelled to deliver such a solemn word? It was because tragedy was already coming upon the church in the last days, in the very congregations Paul addresses here. These congregations had refused the reproof and rebuke of a sound gospel and were giving themselves over to greed and the pleasures of this world. They had developed "itching ears" to hear a gospel of materialism and smooth preaching. So there arose among them the need for a new breed of preachers, fleshly men who would scratch their ears with a cost-less, cross-less, reproof-less gospel.

Like Paul, Peter also writes of those who flock to hear soothing sermons from false teachers offering a flesh-appealing gospel. "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?... All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:3-4).

Who are these scoffers who'll say such things? It's not the secular crowd nor the atheistic or agnostic crowd. It's not Hollywood, or the drunken or drugcrazed. And it's not Jews or Islamics. None of these are concerned with such questions because Christ's coming has no meaning to them.

No, Peter is speaking of the masses of so-called Christ-followers who have rejected sound doctrine and embraced a gospel of greed. The only way such people can give themselves over to a gospel of flesh is to put out of their minds that Jesus is coming. It's their only means of ridding themselves of the guilt that comes with their mindset and lifestyle. These are the very ones of whom Peter says, "(Because of them) the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2:2).

Consider the condition of the church today, with all its worldly influences, its worldly entertainment, its lightness and frivolity, its focus on success and money. And think of the absence of godly sorrow over sin, the lack of self-denial and devotion to Christ. It's clear that the church today has lost its authority, drained of its spiritual power long ago.

Christ isn't coming for a church that has become a den of robbers. He's not coming for a church that's led by CEOs but by the Holy Ghost. The church he's coming for has rejected all foolishness and every false gospel. It's a church where pulpits are filled with fearless prophets and watchmen who preach as oracles of God and not from borrowed messages. And it is filled with sanctified saints who shun the love of this world and have not let it take hold of their hearts.

What is God's answer to the many doctrines of covetousness?

How will the Lord bring out of this situation a prevailing, victorious, mighty church, one that's prepared and longing for his coming? The Spirit of God is going to raise up spiritual Nazarites, men and women of Holy Ghost power, a wholly separated people who have renounced the world and all the things of the world.

What is a Nazarite? This was someone in Israel who took a vow at birth to be separated from the world. Nazarites wouldn't drink wine, which represented to them the passions and lusts of the world. They wouldn't touch or come into contact with any dead thing or person, which represented spiritual death. And they wouldn't shave their hair as a sign of commitment to their life of separation. Nazarites were fully in the world but they were not of the world, being separated unto God for his purposes alone.

The prophet Samuel was a Nazarite. So was John the Baptist, a man who was wholly separated unto God and obviously full of the Spirit. Samson, who lived in the period of the Judges, also was called to be a Nazarite. The world recognized each of these men as different, saying, "This powerful man doesn't talk like we talk. He doesn't live the way we do. He is set apart for God."

Around the world, God still has a remnant of spiritual Nazarites in pulpits and pews. The Lord has an entire body of preachers, teachers, evangelists and lay servants who haven't been touched by the lusts and ambitions of this age. These separated men and women of God are moving in the Spirit, preaching a fired-up gospel that is whole and sound and witnessing the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus started the church in Jerusalem after his resurrection, he didn't instruct them to poll sinners, asking them what kind of church might attract them. He never told them to preach a non-offensive gospel so that people could be comfortable. Instead, he gave his followers one simple command: "Wait for the outpouring, the moving of my Spirit."

At Pentecost, here was the message that brought thousands to their knees: "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up" (Acts 2:23-24). What was the response among those who heard?

"When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (2:37). The answer from Peter and the others was clear: "Repent!"

Beloved, without the moving of the Holy Spirit—without his presence and power upon us—we have absolutely nothing. All of us would simply be wasting our time. He has to be the power that moves us and stirs the hearts of a sinful world.

Satan's plan was to rob Samson of that very power and strength through Delilah. Her name means to "slack off, ease up, lose intensity." Samson had started out strong, living a life separated unto God as he judged Israel. Then, for a period of twenty years, we read nothing of the Spirit moving upon Samson. There were no more exploits, no more mighty victories over Israel's enemy. Why? He grew weary of the separated life, thinking, "I've been too intense, living too strictly. What's wrong with some relaxation? Why can't I taste a few pleasures of the world?" So he went down to the Valley of Sorek, which was Philistine territory, where he found the prostitute Delilah and spent the night with her.

The next morning, Samson realized that despite his wanton actions he hadn't lost his strength. His hair hadn't fallen out, nor had the Spirit left him. Evidently, he thought, "I can have forbidden pleasures after all and still keep my anointing." He began to love the easy life. No more worrying about the safety of Israel or the welfare of widows and orphans. Instead, Samson declared, "I've put in my time. Now I'm going to indulge myself a little."

This same lie is deceiving many followers of Christ today. They're telling themselves, "Oh, a little pornography on

the internet won't hurt me. And these R-rated movies won't take away my spiritual life. The little bit of drinking I do isn't affecting me." Yet as Samson eased off his separated life, the enemy was working behind the scenes. The Philistines urged Delilah, "Entice him. Find out the secret to his power so we can prevail against him. Use your charms, and we'll bind him and take him captive."

Samson's tragedy wasn't his fornication with Delilah, though that sin was grievous enough to disqualify him from God's service. No, Samson's tragedy was that he no longer valued the work of the Spirit in his life. The presence of the Lord was no longer the most important thing to him. This once-mighty man of God now took the Lord's power and blessing in his life completely for granted.

Of course, Samson woke that morning in Delilah's lap, his hair having been shorn off. He told himself, "I've gotten away from them before. This is no big deal." Yet this time, as the Philistines closed in, Samson found he was as weak as a kitten. He hadn't realized that the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him. Most tragic is that God's people went back into oppressive bondage under the Philistines.

Thousands of Christians today sit in dead churches never realizing God's Spirit has departed.

The spirit of Delilah has succeeded in putting many in the church to sleep in her lap. All the while, their spiritual life and strength are being drained from them. I ask you, will Christ's church end up in the hands of their enemy, bound and captured by the devil? Will it live out its days a bloated, prayerless, uncaring body of so-called believers?

No, never! Thank God, our deliverer is not a mere man like Samson. And the Delilah spirit is no match for the Son of the living God, Jesus Christ. She's going to fall on her knees and bow before him. In fact, right now Christ is dealing with the spirit of Delilah in his church. He has instructed the Holy Spirit:

"Destroy this spirit of Delilah, and chase out everyone who's been seduced by it—every preacher, every lay person, anyone called by my name. Convict them, woo them and tell them I want to give them another chance to see my glory, just as I did with Samson. Tell them this house of ease they have sneaked into—a house of enticement that has ruined so many—is going to be shaken to its foundation. The roof will cave in, and it's all going to come down."

Yet we are also given a hopeful word. God told the prophet Haggai he promised to fill his last-days church with his glory. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:6-7).

Simply put, Christ is the desire of all nations, and he is coming again. But first there will be a great shaking. Everything that can be shaken, Jesus says, will be shaken. This means there will be a great separation, and whatever cannot be shaken will remain. So, what will that remaining part be?

It will be a people running back to the arms of Christ—a church intensely on fire, on its knees, contrite, wide awake and looking for his coming. It will be a church that has turned away from all flirtation with sin, and is separated unto the Lord, with clean hands and a pure heart. In such a church, the Holy Spirit is free to move and work in mighty ways. Nothing hinders his anointing and flow, and the glory of God becomes clear for all to see.

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