

# "Come Forth, My People" – No. 5

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The mandate of the Lord to those who are in organizations that oppose the Lord is clear: **"Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"** (Rev. 18:4). This surely applies to one who wants to serve God faithfully, but who is in a congregation that has drifted into liberalism and apostasy. The text gives two reasons why this separation should be made:

1. To avoid fellowship with the sins of an apostate church.
2. To avoid the plagues the Lord will eventually visit upon such a church, to which we now give our attention.

Certainly, the Lord will not forget those who reject and despise His Word and His authority. Those (whether individual saints or congregations of them) who do not fear God but add to and/or subtract from His Word, will bring His wrath down upon them (Rev. 22:18-19). One may object by saying that it is the elders and/or preacher of the apostate church that are/is to blame and that will be condemned by God in such congregations. While their responsibility is greater because they are leading people astray, those who follow them (by remaining in such a church and supporting its errors) will go down with them. The Lord strictly charged even the apostles to have nothing to do with "blind leaders," lest they be "rooted up" or "fall into the ditch" with them (Mat. 15:13-14).

There are grave dangers to the soul of one who wants to be faithful but finds himself in an unfaithful congregation:

1. **One shares in the guilt of apostasy.** By remaining in a digressive church, one is supporting it and bidding it "Godspeed," like it or not, and the certain condemnation of God upon the apostates rests upon him also. When one helps and supports false doctrines and practices and those who advocate them, he becomes guilty of those very sins with them (2 John 9-11).
2. **One can become "desensitized" to error.** Even though at first one might strongly object to the gradual departures from the Truth he sees in a church that is gravitating toward denominationalism, if he stays there, he runs the very real risk of being lulled into complacency toward error. Many have apparently rationalized: "These things are really not so bad," or "I have made my objections known and that's all I can do," or "The elders approve, and I must submit to them." One may come to excuse error and to exalt sincerity.

Lot and his family were warned to flee Sodom lest they be destroyed with the wicked city (Gen. 19:12-17). So also, the Lord calls upon those faithful to Him to "come forth" from corrupt congregations to escape the condemnation that must come.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, May 24, 1990, of which I was editor.]

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