

QUESTION COLUMN.

Ques. – Since Jesus taught in the Jewish synagogues, should not we remain in and use what opportunities we can find for advancing truth in and with the various sects of today. Paul was a Pharisee, should not we be joined to the sects also?

Ans. – The Jewish Church was composed in God's sight of Israelites indeed, but the Nominal Jewish church included the whole nation and embraced various factions or sects. The SECTS were not the Jewish Church, nor did Jesus or the apostles ever belong to those factions. Paul was indeed a member of the sect of the Pharisees, but from the moment of his conversion to Christ, he never affiliated with them, and only once owned the name when his life was *apparently* in danger, and his faith must have trembled. Then he did not *lie*, since the membership in the Pharisee sect was not so "tight" an affair as is membership in modern sects. He needed not to formally disconnect himself, and might without untruth refer either to his birth, or as in this case, he did refer to one feature of the doctrine of the Pharisees which was noted, and which agreed with the truth of the Gospel, viz., the doctrine of "the resurrection," and as touching this question, Paul held the views of Pharisees, though in a wider and more positive degree than they.

The Lord's mission was twofold, viz., to Israel and to the World; to Israel first was he presented to give the true Israelites the privilege of becoming "Sons" (spiritual), and to as many as received him, to them gave he liberty to become the sons of God – as many as believed on *His name*, which the Pharisee and Sadducee sects REJECTED.

As a matter of fact, the Nominal Jewish church was flourishing and wealthy in Jesus' day, and the members many, while the TRUE Jewish Church, as God regarded it, was small – few, poor and despised among them. Thus, "wheat and chaff" were together until their age was fully ripe and Jesus came to reap it. John, his forerunner, preached this "harvest message," saying, Repent! Reform! to the false and chaff-like. He

added, *Now*, also, the axe is laid to the root of the tree, and every tree not bearing good fruit must be cut down and cast into the fire (of trouble and dissolution). He added, "There cometh one after me" (a Reaper and Garnerer) "whose fan is in his hand. He will thoroughly purge his floor. He will gather the wheat into his garner and burn up the chaff," etc.

John's prophecy was fulfilled. Jesus and the disciples did a reaping and harvesting winnowing and separating work never done in that nominal system before, because only then were the *fields white* and the reapers sent forth to do their work.

The truths which Jesus uttered were the sickle and fan, and did effectually separate a people prepared of the Lord – a remnant, the true Church as God regarded it though but a little flock.

For a little while Jesus was able to enter the synagogues as a real Jew, but of none of the sects, but the synagogues being in the hands of sectarians, this soon ceased, and he not only could no longer teach the people in the synagogues controlled by sectarians, but he dared not walk (travel) in Jewry except at certain times when "the people" outnumbered and somewhat overawed the rulers and sectarians. Neither were Jesus' disciples allowed synagogue privileges. (See John 9:34. Compare v. 22.)

When the blind man *was* CAST OUT for confessing Jesus, then it was that Jesus "found him" and graciously revealed himself more and more unto him, while the blind sectarians who retained control of the synagogues were the more blinded by their own prejudices. See verse 39.

This result was but what Jesus had predicted *early* in his ministry. See Luke 6:22. The favor during which the trial or harvesting was to last was "one week" of years as predicted by the prophet Daniel and as fulfilled. Seven years from the beginning of Jesus' ministry in the midst of which he was cut off and the work "cut short." It was three and a half years so far as the *Nominal* Jewish Church was concerned, for the remaining three and a half were used merely for the benefit of Israelites indeed who were appealed to SAVE THEMSELVES FROM [out] that perverse generation. Acts 2:40.

Yes, it was just five days before his crucifixion that Jesus formally rejected the Jewish Church Nominal. See Matt. 23:32-39, especially 36-39. In sending forth the Apostles after his resurrection, the Law and the Jewish Church was ignored. "Go ye into all the *world* and preach this gospel to every creature." But he bade them begin at Jerusalem because three and a half years of Israel's *favor* time was yet unexpired.

Now for the facts in application of this to your question:

Jesus and his disciples were not at all OF THE SECTS, but they WERE THE TRUE CHURCH, JEWISH, and obeyed the *Law* until Jesus fulfilled its requirements and released his followers from its conditions.

The Pharisees were born sons of Abraham, but Jesus and the Father recognized them as controlled by the devil in their sectarian blindness and prejudice and hypocritical maneuvering, praying, etc. He denounced them, and warned all their sectarian followers that they were being blinded and led astray by blind leaders of the blind. And Jesus and the Apostles did not fellowship these wolves. No sane man will claim that Jesus held communion and fellowship with such whited walls and sepulchres full of all manner of uncleanness. Nor were they really members of the *Jewish Church* though they controlled the synagogues. Jesus, the Apostles and followers and the man blind from birth, were members of the REAL Jewish Church "separated" from the company of the sectarians in the "harvest" by their advocacy of the TRUTHS THEN DUE. They were not separated from the *real* TRUE Jewish Church, but merely from the Nominal sectarian systems. They continued to be the real Church, and because obedient to truth to the extent of being "cast out" they were finally ELEVATED a step higher and became the gospel or Christian Church.

Now let us draw the comparison between the harvest of that age and of this.

During this age wheat and tares grow together UNTIL the "harvest" – the end or closing period of this age. And *here*, NOW, in this harvest greater and more important changes are to take place, inasmuch as this is

the higher or antitypical age of which the Jewish was but the foreshadowing.

Here, as at the former harvest, separation is the "*harvest*" WORK in order. But the Lord does not call on us to come out of THE CHURCH. Oh, no; ALL consecrated and obedient saints ARE THE CHURCH and we must not come out of it. It is "HIS BODY" and we must and do retain our membership in it. From *what* then do we separate? We separate from the Nominal sectarian systems which now rule the synagogues and stifle (even more than did their prototypes, the Pharisees and Scribes), and hinder free expression or examination of truth – all not in accordance with the "doctors of the Law."

From these all will be *driven* if obedient to the truth. The truth makes evident their untruth – so that which we are out of, separate from, is not from the *Head*; hence, not from the true body, but from false systems and sectarian bodies who, while acknowledging Jesus and his doctrines, really put (as did the sects at the first advent), the traditions (creeds, etc.) of men in place of God's word, and thus make void the word of God.

In harmony with these thoughts is the command of Revelation, "Come out of HER my people," not out of the *real* but out of the *Nominal* Church, the mystery of error and iniquity, Babylon the great, the *mother*, of harlots and the daughters as well.

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