

## Secession (Part One): Is Separation Wrong?

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We live in a world where diversity is promoted as something good and unity as something bad. Immigrants to the United States are encouraged to maintain and promote their individual cultures and even their languages as they settle here.

We know from Scripture that as mankind became increasingly more obstinate toward God's laws in building the tower of Babel, it was necessary for God to separate the people into smaller groups by introducing different languages. Without a common language people were unable to unify—and stay unified—although that is just one factor, but a very important one.

For example, in Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia under the British Empire), there were over 70 different languages or dialects spoken there. However, because English is the official common language, the tribes have remained more or less unified, since their independence from British colonialism. Common language has helped them unify.

It is also interesting that they (Zambia) are the only country in South Africa that declares itself a Christian nation. No one else has that type of commitment to Christianity, and they are a very wonderful, nice, friendly, loving people.

On the other hand, in the United States, there are also over 70 languages, and although the thirteen original colonies started out predominately speaking English, immigrants, up until the middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, learned English as soon as they could upon arrival. But this is no longer the case, as you well know.

Today many immigrants arrive here in the United States, they do not learn English, they keep their non-Christian religions, including humanism and atheism, and they continue their cultural distinctions and perversions, such as dishonor killings. This multi-language, multi-religion, multi-cultural diversity has helped produce this United States of America, with some states talking of seceding.

Now given this sociopolitical climate in America these days, the subject of state separation and independence is becoming a more serious subject with every passing month. Since President Obama was placed in office in 2008, the threat of secession had grown from mere contemplation to real considerations and full blown threats.

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Now the silent, but not so peaceful, coup that has given United States citizens this present United States government has been rapidly moving toward a type of irreconcilable differences with many of its citizens. Now the day may come that American citizens may be forced to choose whether to secede or not.

We have a good platform for this sermon to be built on, as John mentioned yesterday. We are not of this world, we do not get involved in the politics and that type of thing. So I am very appreciative of him giving his sermon in that way and the things that were in that, because it is a wonderful background and platform for this sermon.

Whether there is enough time left for this to happen, I do not know. There are any number of things that God could do to change, stop, or even encourage things to progress.

Secession is the act of withdrawing from an organization, a union, especially a political entity, or even any religious group. Secession and separation go hand-and-hand and are inseparable in the sense that people cannot secede without separating from one another.

The secession movements today may or may not come to anything but in the near future there will be an attempt to carve up the nations of the world. We are already seeing this with Iraq, how they are carving it up and making multiple territories instead of one. This kind of thing is happening around the world and especially in the Middle East. I will give you examples of how common it is to have secession throughout history as we go on in the sermon.

Now God may or may not allow people to secede but He has total control whether they do or not. In a sense this is already happening and everything behind the scenes are in full implementation, but they will only happen if God permits it.

I would like to make it clear at this point in my sermon here that I am not endorsing secession and I am not desiring it. We are not of this world so it is not for us to be involved in, but I think this will help you to understand the future of the world and the future of this nation.

I am going to give you an overview of secession and separation here and how they affect us in these last days. I have narrowed it down to two sermons: the first will give you both the secular and the biblical historical background of secession and compare that with the millennial setting. The second sermon will deal with the principal of spiritual separation now and preparation for the soon coming Kingdom of God and the

Millennium.

Please turn to Luke 21 where Luke records Jesus' admonition to prepare. He emphasizes the importance of watching and praying always. I would like you to keep this passage in mind throughout the rest of this sermon.

**Luke 21:34-36** "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, [most of us are not afflicted with the carousing or drunkenness, but the cares of life certainly do affect us and we want to avoid them. Avoid being interested in entertainment to the point of obsession and spending too much on those types of things.] and that Day come on you unexpectedly. [Obviously it is warning us here not to be distracted by the things of the world.] For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

So in preparing in what is coming, we certainly should all be on a regular basis asking God in prayer to help us to be worthy to escape these things. Consider what preparation must be made for the right kind of separation now, so that we may be worthy to escape the horrible things that are coming upon this nation if it does not repent of its sins. As of right now, it does not look like anything but a miracle from God can turn this nation around.

Now let us briefly touch on some examples of state secessions, both here in America and overseas in the last hundred years. This will help put worldly secessions in perspective. Christians are affected by worldly secessions but we should not be involved in trying to bring them about.

Overseas, consider the nation-state of Norway. The world accepts the right of Norway to peacefully exist and to be a sovereign country, and I doubt that there are many people willing to denounce, denigrate, or to declare as illegitimate, the nation-state of Norway. Nevertheless it was Norway's parliament that dissolved the union between Sweden and Norway on June 7, 1905.

Now while an attempted dissolution that had taken place in 1814 was quashed by a Swedish military victory, the separation of 1905 was done peacefully and without bloodshed, although Norway was willing to shed blood had it been required. Since Norway's secession in 1905 the two neighboring countries have enjoyed extremely

close, even brotherly relations.

Although God sets up kings and leaders, He has given man a limited freedom to set temporary boundaries, but ultimately it is God who sets permanent boundaries. One of the main consequences of human history is that man's boundaries fail. They may look solid on the map, but they are fluid, and the main problem of the existence of nations is the instability of the human race. We cannot get along without God's help.

Contemporary history shows us that Europe changed dramatically after World War I, and it also changed dramatically again after World War II. Boundaries were redrawn to satisfy the victors. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainstream political theory largely ignored theories of secession until the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Czech states, and Yugoslavia, in the early 1990s through secession. It seemed that there was a new country everyday during that period of time.

On January 1, 1993, the federal state of Czechoslovakia separated into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. This has been called the "Velvet Divorce" in political parlance, due to the amicable and peaceful nature of the separation. Czechoslovakia, itself, came into existence by the breakup of Austria-Hungary at the end of World War I.

So, you see the instability of man's borders and boundaries throughout recent history. There are innumerable historical examples of how nations stayed separated by either violent or nonviolent means. For example, in the American Civil War, the American South's attempt at separation from the Union in 1861. Or how about the 13 American colonies separation from Great Britain in 1776. Colonial America had a king, King George III. Americans hate the fact of having a king, but they will have to get over it because eventually we will have a King. All of Israel will have a King once again.

Now we in God's church know that a great factor for this separation was that the British Isles and American colonies contained at least two different tribes of the tribes of Israel: Ephraim and Manasseh.

Ephraim and Manasseh squabbled and fought like the brothers they were. As a side point here, it is interesting that when the migration began from England over to the colonies, whole villages in England were evacuated and just left and came over to the United States because they were of the same family: Ephraim and Manasseh. God brought Manasseh to these shores.

Did God bless the separation of these two significant peoples? Do these two tribes of Israel, America and Britain, have more peace between them now than they did as one

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nation? They have been close allies through two World Wars as well as multiple regional wars. So obviously God has accepted the separation that happened between these nations.

Still today there are many secession movements in the works, internationally, nationally, statewide, and we have just seen examples from recent history. Now let us see some things that are currently going on in this arena.

In 2012, Venice, Italy held a mass rally to push secession from Italy. Italy actually only became a nation in 1861. Italy (officially the Italian Republic) is a unitary, parliamentary republic in south central Europe. To the north it borders France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia along the Alps. To the south it consists of the entirety of the Italian peninsula, Sicily, and Sardinia (the two largest islands in the Mediterranean sea), and many other smaller Isles.

Now the independent nations of San Marino and Vatican City are fully sovereign enclaves, micro-states within Italy, while Campione d'Italia is an Italian enclave in Switzerland. So you see how confusing all of this gets.

The Venetians were inspired by Catalonia, that is, Spain's economical powerhouse which is also Spain's secession issue. Catalonia is an autonomous community of Spain with the official status of nationality, meaning that it is already officially separate. They have their own passports, but they are still linked to Spain.

South Africa has had secession problems as well for decades and there is not any area around the world that is not having these problems. If that is not enough, just to our north, in 1957 Quebec began a movement to seek independence from Canada. The Quebec sovereignty movement is a political movement as well as an ideology of values, concepts, and ideas that advocate the independence of the province of Quebec from the rest of Canada.

Tensions between the Francophone (the Catholic population) of Quebec and the largely Anglophone (the Protestant population) of the rest of Canada, has been a central theme of Canadian history since its forming.

Internationally, secession has been a common occurrence and I have barely even give you a glimpse so far of how many secessions or movements for secession are going on. I have not mentioned the United States very much except in its past history, so let us delve into that for a moment.

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United States citizens are sharing in the frustration commonly felt by others around the world. Immediately following the re-election of President Barack Obama in 2012, petitions from every state began appearing on the White House's "We the People" website respectfully asking for permission to secede from the union. Granted many of these were symbolic, but many were not.

Take for example Texas, it has always been a rogue state. It is the only state that has had its own president. But in 2012, among these growing number of people petitioning the White House to let their states secede from the United States, Republican representative of Texas, Ron Paul, said that "secession was a deeply American principal."

Congressman Paul wrote in a post on his House website: "Secession is a deeply American principal. This country was born through secession, some felt it was treasonous to secede from England, but those traitors became our countries greatest patriots." Jumping down in the quote: "And if people and states are not free to leave the United States as a last resort, can they really think of themselves as free? If a people cannot secede from an oppressive government, they cannot truly be considered free."

Being in God's church we enjoy this spiritual freedom that we have, being brought out of the world and away from the slavery of sin and Satan and the world. People of the world long for freedom but they do not understand that true freedom is only possible through Jesus Christ. We should be so thankful that we can look at these things from afar and see what is happening in the world, what is developing, the stress that these people are going through, and not be involved in it.

Now in a World Net Daily article on September 1, 2013 titled, "Texas Official Preparing for Independence," John Griffing reports: "Barry Smitherman, head of the powerful Texas Railroad Commission, is making waves for his comments about economic collapse, energy policy and the future."

He talks about economic collapse as what will happen to the rest of the United States, not Texas. He talks about energy policy as a way to make sure Texas commerce will continue, without the rest of the United States. And when he talks about the future, he focuses on Texas, because he believes there might not be the rest of the United States.

Griffing says, "We [speaking of Texas] are uniquely situated because we have energy resources, fossil and otherwise, and our own independent electrical grid. Generally speaking, we have made great progress in becoming an independent nation, an 'island nation,' if you will, and I think we want to continue down that path so that if the rest of

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the country falls apart, Texas can operate as a stand-alone entity with energy, food, water and roads as if we were a closed-loop system. In the last year, big names in energy began moving their headquarters to Texas, quietly and without fanfare, including credit affiliates long based in New York. Some have speculated that a coming economic crisis has precipitated the move.”

I want to paint this picture really well in your minds here to show you that this is not to be taken lightly. Whether the secessions happen or not, we do not know, but we do know the mentality of the people and observing what is going on in this way.

Another example in this is regarding Colorado. Another World Net Daily article by Jack Minor on August 24, 2013, titled: “Voter Frustration with Government Hits Critical Mass,” subtitled: “Pent up anger over leaders' actions produce talk of secession”. It states:

On Monday [August 19, 2013], Weld County became the fourth county in Colorado to vote to put the issue of breaking away from the state to voters. Moffat County voted to join their sister counties on the issue. The Colorado secession issue has garnered national attention primarily because of Weld County, which is one of the nation’s largest counties and has been a leader in the secession movement.

The idea of states breaking up is nothing new; in 1863 West Virginia seceded from Virginia to form its own state. While this is the last time a state was actually formed from another state, it was not the last time the idea was discussed.

During the 1980s residents of northern California frequently talked of separating from the southern portion of the state because of it being more liberal than the north.

Two weeks ago, supervisors in a Northern California county, where residents are fed up with what they are seeing as a lack of representation at the State Capitol and over regulation, have voted in favor of separating from the state. The vote appears mostly symbolic since secession would require approval from the State Legislature and the United States Congress. But supporters say it would restore local control over decision making. They want other rural counties in Northern California and Southern Oregon (we see that the desire is spreading), to join them in the creation of a new state called the State of Jefferson.

Residents of Illinois have frequently complained about the influence of Cook County on the rest of the state and have occasionally indicated their desire to separate from

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Chicago. The residents of South Carolina have likewise frequently talked of secession, but that is nothing new in South Carolina because they were the first ones to secede from the union in the Civil war. But it is that mentality that has carried on for the last hundred plus years.

So, we see from these examples that secession is often on the minds of people who perceive themselves to be enslaved, oppressed, and who long for what we all desire, that is, the freedom to live peaceably and securely without fear. Many are willing to die for this. It is an emotionally charged issue that, once it gets going, is very hard to stop.

When we Christians look at issues that affect life, we rightly compare all issues with the inspired written Word of God. We weigh everything with God's law, His statutes, and the principles and precepts of the Bible.

There are examples of separation and secession in the Old Testament. Some separations are instigated by humans, some orchestrated by God, but nevertheless, since God sets up kings and overthrows them, He, at the very least, allows separations and secessions by humans.

Nimrod was the first to attempt to put together a one world government. It was at Babel that the goal of global union was first attempted, at least as far we know from biblical history.

**Genesis 10:8-10** Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. [We have had sermons and sermonettes on what "mighty one" means but it was greater than just an average person who was a hero. He was ultra-mighty, so to speak] He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord." And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

At this point it was God Himself who was the sponsor of separation. He confused the language, as you well know. God separated the nations at the Tower of Babel, as mentioned in Genesis 11, because they were becoming increasingly more defiant against Him, having the same arrogant attitude that Satan had when he wanted to usurp God's throne many thousands of years before that.

**Genesis 11:5-9** But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now



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nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them [another word for separation or even secession] abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

So the sins of the people of the earth had separated them from God already. He had to separate them from each other so that they would not destroy themselves from the face of the earth. Today the world is headed in the same direction of self destruction as the people of Nimrod's day.

Now let us continue with more biblical examples of separation and secession. Adam and Eve separated themselves from God, they seceded from Him when they disobeyed Him in eating the forbidden fruit. Their sin separated them from God and in a sense they made a choice to secede from God's way of life. God ushered them out of the abundance of the Garden. Their choice was to secede from God's government, from His sovereignty, and our choice was to secede from the world, the very opposite of Adam and Eve.

Another example is Cain. Cain separated himself from Able with violence.

**Genesis 4:8** Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Any time someone rises up against someone else it is very likely that there is going to be a separation. Cain's was a permanent one.

To secede or separate ourselves from something, we must rise up against it. This can be a positive or a negative act depending on what we are rising up against. As Christians we rose up against the world and we continue to stay risen against the world because our citizenship is in heaven. But many of these worldly secessions are of a negative and violent nature.

Now the pattern of separation and secession began very early in man's history, because as soon as a human sinned, his separation from God began, and without God in a

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person's life there cannot be complete peace and unity among living creatures. That is a major reason for separation, secession, scattering, etc. Sadly, sin did not stop and secession continued to be necessary. God helped Noah and his family to secede from the world. Why was Noah saved by secession from the world? Hebrews 11 gives us the answer.

**Hebrews 11:7** By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Notice the subject there that has been going through quite a few of the messages already, that he prepared an ark for the saving of his household. Are you preparing for what is coming? Are you preparing spiritually, and even physically?

Faith produces righteous living.

**Psalms 4:3** But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly; the Lord will hear when I call to Him.

Noah was motivated by godly fear to prepare to help God save his family. His preparation was part of the works of his faith. Faith without works is a dead faith, as you well know.

This brings us to the father of the faithful, Abraham. Remember how God allowed Abraham and Lot to choose their boundaries and separate themselves peacefully. Although God allowed Abraham to allow Lot to choose his portion of land, God was very involved in that. He blessed Abraham for his faithfulness and giving attitude. Let us read part of this here in Genesis 13.

**Genesis 13:6-11** Now the land was not able to support them [speaking of Abraham and Lot], that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land. So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife [meaning let there be peace] between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left,

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then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.” And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other.

A very cordial, a very friendly and brotherly separation or secession here. Abram relied on God's will and Lot chose poorly for himself. God, later, also separated Abram and his descendants from other people, through Isaac and Jacob, to be His covenant people.

Man's infrastructure of boundaries, nations, governments are just that—man's choice. But that is only as God allows or inspires it to happen. Obviously God chose ancient Israel's boundaries according to each tribe and no doubt God has blessed the descendants of the Israelites with special territories.

All one has to do to see this is consider the territorial blessings of the Israelitish nations today. Here in the United States we have the best waterways, the most productive farms, the rich mineral deposits, as well as an abundance of natural gas and petroleum, and the list goes on, yet most of it we have misused or polluted.

When man sets boundaries, they eventually change or fail, so do not think that the United States cannot become more and more disunited. It can, even to the point of separation. And do not think that the world will continue on as it always has, or the idea of a united Europe lasting for decades. Powerful nations and empires have always degenerated and disintegrated because of sin. It has happened since Adam and Eve took of the forbidden Tree.

God divided the nation of Israel into 12 independent tribes, each tribe had its own individuality, leaders, territory, and they each had their own characteristics and gifts given by God. Now remember when Israel crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land, the two and a half tribes—Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh—chose to stay on the east side of Jordan. This was halfway allowed by Joshua and the other nine and a half tribes.

The book of Judges is a redundant account of tyrannical powers enslaving God's people and the subsequent rise of deliverers directed and empowered by God to separate the nation, thus providing His people with freedom and independence. But that was ancient Israel, they were a physical nation. We are the spiritual nation of Israel and our

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citizenship is in heaven.

God's covenant people were to remain holy by distinguishing themselves from ungodly nations and by avoiding intermarriage with those who are not a part of the covenant community of faith. Some outsiders, such as Rehab and Ruth, trusted in the Lord and joined His separated people.

In I Kings, Solomon's prayer of the dedication of the Temple referred back to God separating out Israel from Egypt.

**I Kings 8:53** "For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You spoke by Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God."

So you see there God having done the separation of the twelve tribes. That is why they will again remain as twelve separate tribes in the Millennium, because it is God who has ordained that to be. Furthermore, the divided kingdom of Israel provides the classic biblical example of the rights of secession and I use that term loosely. Right, in terms that the nation of Israel was worldly. They were God's people that He worked with as a physical worldly nation.

As a result of Solomon's sin, God allowed the nations to be divided. Israel was the name of the northern kingdom comprised of ten tribes. Its first king was Jeroboam and the capitol was Samaria.

**I Kings 11:11-13** Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

God had to do this because Solomon had sinned and God had to discipline Solomon, as well as the whole nation, to make a point.

Judah was the name of the southern kingdom and it absorbed Benjamin. Rehoboam was Judah's first king and its capitol was Jerusalem. Now these two new nations which

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shared the same history, heritage, ancestry, language, culture, religion, engaged in friendly and sometimes not so friendly commerce and trade, participated in mutually beneficial dialog and diplomacy and even sometimes allied themselves together in times of war against the common enemy. They also occasionally became mortal enemies against each other.

Between the two, the southern kingdom enjoyed far more of the favor of God. It had, for the most part, better leaders and had a more vibrant and healthy spiritual life and was afforded more peace. In fact, God through His prophets, often warned Judah against the propensity to become entangled with the idolatrous affairs of the northern state of Israel. In general, as Judah remained separate from Israel, they remained successful, at least some what compared to Israel.

Conversely, the more entangled Judah became with Israel, the more dreadful the consequences became, because, although both nations were sinful, Israel was farther degenerated.

Judah's separation, because of Israel's secession, gave it not only a more peaceful and productive existence but it extended its liberty. Israel went into Assyrian captivity in about 721 B.C. while Judah went into Babylonian captivity about 586 B. C, more than a hundred years later.

The northern kingdom of Israel and the Southern kingdom of Judah had been one nation once under David and his successor, Solomon. But, after Solomon's death, the unwise policies of young king Rehoboam quickly pushed the northern tribes to rebellion.

Solomon had taxed the people heavily. The northerners asked Rehoboam to grant relief from the burdens of taxation and he replied that rather than to lighten their load, he would increase it. He said that his father Solomon had lashed them with whips, but he would lash them with scorpions. This ignited the rebellion. From that time on the ten northern tribes were known as Israel and the two southern ones as Judah, and at their own pace and according to their own individual sins they each went their own course to destruction.

There is nothing in Scripture that would prohibit states from seceding, separating, or declaring independence from one another for the right reasons, but again it is a worldly decision made by worldly nations. There is no separation or secession from heaven.

There are plenty of examples in the Bible to make us understand that the God of the universe has given mankind the individual and collective choice to non-violently reject

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the foolish leader and or corrupt government, or to choose a wise leader or an honest government.

As I said earlier, Christians must not involve themselves in the affairs of the world. We are ambassadors of the heavenly realm and we are never to forget that. Members of God's church have separated themselves, we have rejected the authority of secular leaders to force us to do things that are against God's commands, and on that spiritual level we are citizens of heaven. That is where our allegiance lies. We have already seceded from the world as a church, called by various names: the elect of God; the saints; the holy people. But that is of a spiritual nature, the physical side of the secession from the United States we are not to get involved in.

**Isaiah 62:11-12** Indeed the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.' " And they shall call them The Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord [That is us, we are a special people]; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.

Now please turn to Nehemiah 9. After the captivity of Nehemiah, the children of Israel seceded from the foreigners of the land, representative of the world.

**Nehemiah 9:1-2** Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads. Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

Then a little later on, when a covenant was sealed, the rest of the Israelites also seceded.

**Nehemiah 10:28-30** Now the rest of the people—the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Nethinim, and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding— these joined with their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes: We would not give our

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daughters as wives to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons.

So you see there a physical example of what we have done in the church. We have separated ourselves away from the people of the land—the world—to the law of God. So if we are a separated people to the law of God, we certainly should be keeping the every word of the law of God and every law of God.

Now all the members of the community acceded to the agreement thus signed by the princes of the people, the heads of the priests, the Levites, and bound themselves by an oath to walk in the law of the Lord, to separate themselves from the heathen. Then they joined others like themselves who were keeping God's law. In Isaiah 59, Israel was to be God's holy people, separated to Him, but their sins would separate them from Him.

**Isaiah 59:1-2** Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

Oftentimes, when the people were cut off, they had first separated themselves from God by sinning. Though the Lord could save them, the nation's sins had separated them from God and though He could hear them, He chose not to. Sins prevent prayer from being answered. Those sins included: murder, lying, injustice, planning evil, idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, and many more sins that this nation were committing.

As you read on in this chapter, you find that their actions were like those of a deadly poisonous snake because they were harming each other. Just as people can see through cobwebs so can God see through their evil deeds and judge them. Our sins *will* find us out.

In a hurry to do evil things, they were bringing ruin to others and constantly traveling down evil paths. As a result, they knew no peace. They were a fearful people.

Now let us shift gears here and answer a valid question. How does Romans 13 apply to submission to government in this subject matter?

**Romans 13:1-7** Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are

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appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

To the unconverted mind this is very confusing and you can understand why. We have just gone through secession and what the world believes and even what Israel, through their history, believes about secession.

Now do these verses teach that we should not disobey our nations political leaders and that civil magistrates have unlimited authority to do anything they want without opposition? What if our President passed a law stating that we could no longer meet together and worship God on the Sabbath? Would we be wrong to oppose him and meet anyway? Absolutely not.

What if you were required to work on Saturday instead of Sunday by federal law? Does it sound far-fetched? Leaders in Europe are already in the process of drawing up laws that will require this very thing. The Catholic Church is all for it, the trade unions love it, and the anti-Semites of Germany are ecstatic. It has tremendous support and it is just a matter of time before it is passed. If it is happening there it will eventually come here, if God allows it.

Sometimes government leaders seek to destroy people who do not believe as they do, as Haman attempted with regard to the Jews.

**Esther 3:8** Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain.

So in this case God intervened using Queen Esther. Other times God removes people



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from the land as He did the Israelites from Egypt.

The apostle Peter had to deal with the same issue of obedience to authority and he expressed the biblical principal regarding this succinctly. Secession is the key to understanding and obeying God, because we should obey God rather than men. When it comes to down to whether we should be involved in the world's secessions or not, remember that we should obey God rather than men even to death.

**Acts 5:25-29** So one came and told them, saying, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

What a powerful statement from Peter here. What if the United States government passed a law where your children could be taken away if you teach them about Jesus Christ? Dave Barnes mentioned to me that in England, they are afraid to mention the name Jesus Christ outside of their homes because it is illegal to mention anything about Jesus Christ or the Christian religion in public. They are afraid that even their neighbors will turn them in. That is how scary it is getting.

Under both Obamacare and the United Nation's Codex Alimentarius, there are provisions for taking children from their parents if the parents do not follow the establishment's accepted treatment for disease and sickness. This has already begun and these same agencies have provisions for removing children from parents who are homeschooling their children. Germany is already employing this law and some Germans are coming over to the United States to seek refuge from that, but the Obama administration seems to be refusing to give them asylum.

The point is that there are many nations that are already implementing these things and any nation that agrees or signs on to the United Nation's Codex Alimentarius, or the rights of the children, will be forced to enforce those types of laws.

Does Romans 13 require that we submit to a government that takes children from parents at will? Absolutely not, and would any of us respect any man who would submit

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to such a law? Now let me caution us here on this, it would be better if were thrown in prison with our families than it would be to resist the government in way of secession or violent way. We, as member of God's church, do not have that option of being involved in the world's secession movements.

There are limits to authority. A father has authority in his home but does this give him power to abuse his wife and children? Of course not. An employer has authority in the job, but does this give him the power to control their private lives? No, it does not. A pastor has overseer authority in the church, but does that give him power to tell employers in his church how to run their businesses? Of course not.

Now back to Romans 13. All human authority is limited in nature. No man has unlimited authority over the lives of other men. Lordship and sovereignty is the exclusive domain of God the Father and Jesus Christ. They are the Ones who empower with limited authority those individuals who are the leaders of the world.

Leaders are appointed by God and He is the one who has the authority to remove them. God's church is of another realm and must not yet get involved in secession movements and they are of the worldly realm. Christians are to be separate people, they are not get involved in with secular issues of government and policies. We should not waste our time obsessing over the policies and the politicians and all of the politics going on in the news. We should listen and know what is going on in the world around us, but we are not to get in involved.

Now a civil magistrate has authority in civil matters but his authority is limited and defined. Observe that Romans 13 limits the authority of civil government by strictly defining its purpose.

**Romans 13:3-4** For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

Notice that civil government must not be a terror to good works. That is the qualifier there, it has no power or authority to terrorize good deeds or good people. God never gave it that authority and any government that oversteps that divine boundary has no divine authority or protection to force anyone to go against God's commands. This is a basic principle of natural law.

The apostle Paul states that civil government is a minister of God to you for good, it is not a minister of God for evil. Civil magistrates have a divine duty to execute wrath upon him who does evil. They have no authority to execute wrath upon him who does good, unless God gives him the specific authority. Now God has used nations to punish Israel, for example the Assyrians and the Babylonians, but He gave them that authority and inspired them to do so. Romans 13 limits the power and reach of civil authority.

Did Elijah violate God's principle of submission to authority when he openly challenged Ahab and Jezebel? Did David violate God's principle of submission to authority when he refused to surrender to Saul's troops? Did Daniel violate God's principle of submission to authority when he disobeyed the king's command to not pray audibly to God? Did John the Baptizer violate God's principle of submission to authority when he publicly scolded King Herod for his infidelity? Did Simon Peter and the other apostles violate God's principle of submission to authority when they refused to stop preaching on the streets of Jerusalem?

Did Paul violate God's principle of submission to authority when he refused to obey those authorities who demanded that he abandon his missionary work? In fact, Paul spent a great deal of his time in jail or under house arrest. We, in God's church, must be willing to go that far and be arrested and spend time in jail, if necessary, to obey God rather than man. Hopefully that will not have to happen, but we know there will be martyrs in the tribulation. We do not know if we will be arrested for keeping the Sabbath, but we have to obey God rather than men. That is all that matters.

Now remember that every apostle of Christ, except John, was killed by hostile civil authorities opposed to their witnessing. Christians throughout church history were imprisoned, tortured, or killed by various kinds of civil authorities for refusing to submit to their various laws and prohibitions. Did all of these Christian martyrs violate God's principle of submission to authority?

Even the great prophets, apostles, and writers of the Bible, including the writer of Romans 13, understood that human authority, even civil authority, is limited. They understood that God is supreme to any of man's authority or leadership. Civil authority on earth is limited.

Paul makes it clear that our submission to civil authority must be predicated on more than fear of governmental retaliation.

**Romans 13:5** Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.

Meaning, our obedience to civil authority is more than just because they said so, it's also a matter of conscience. This means we must think and reason for ourselves regarding the justness and rightness of our government's laws. Obedience is not automatic or robotic, it is a result of both rational deliberation and moral consent. However, we must avoid doing what is right in our own eyes, it must be based on God's law.

Have you been preparing yourself through watching, praying, and submitting to God's commands so that you are ready at all times to obey God rather than man? A person who is not close to God will not be able to do that because it takes quite a bit of God's Holy Spirit and faith to be able to stand before an accuser who has the power of life and death over you.

The reason I have emphasized so heavily that we are not to get involved in these worldly secessions and that our citizenship is in heaven is because mainstream Christianity is teaching, in many cases, that it is okay to form a secession movement even if it requires violence. I do not want any of us to be deceived by that type of thing as it starts to take over the mainstream Christian community.

Now it is implied in Revelation 18:4 that by remaining in Babylon they would lend their sanction to its sins by their presence and would, in all probability, become contaminated by the influence around them. This is a universal truth in regard to sin, and therefore it is the duty of those who would be pure to come out from the world, and to separate themselves from all the associations of evil. Christians must secede from the world, mentally and spiritually.

**Revelation 18:4** And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

There are two reasons for coming out of her, as shown in the same verse. 1) that they would not participate in her sins; and 2) that they would not be involved in the ruin that would come upon her. The language here seems to be derived from such passages in the Old Testament as Jeremiah 51.

**Jeremiah 51:6** Flee from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance;

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He shall recompense her.

**Jeremiah 51:45** “My people, go out of the midst of her! And let everyone deliver himself from the fierce anger of the Lord.

In pronouncing judgment on Babylon, Jeremiah warned his people, who were supposed to be at home there in the short term, to flee from the city's midst because God would destroy it. Even the presence of some of the righteous would not survive the judgment.

There is a difference there between fleeing and seceding or getting involved in a political situation. We are to flee if the city is going to be overrun, attacked, or destroyed. As you remember, Lot was told to get out of Sodom before its destruction for its wickedness, and the church of God in Jerusalem fled to Pella just months before the A.D. 70 destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Consider what preparation must be made for the right kind of separation now so that we may be worthy to escape the horrible things coming upon this world. And even more importantly, what preparation is needed for leadership in the Millennium and God's Kingdom? We will get into more of that in my next sermon.

Luke recorded Jesus' admonition to prepare. Watching and praying always are two important ways we must prepare.

**Luke 21:34** “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.

Now those saints who are counted worthy to escape will go somewhere. Will they flee the country? Perhaps, but I do not know where the elect of God will go or how God will protect us, but He knows and He will reveal it at the right time. In the meantime we are expected to have faith, do the right thing, watch, and pray that God will help us to be worthy to escape the things that are coming.

Providentially and thankfully, the Millennium will be the opposite of the human tendency, the ordeal, and difficulty of secession. Unity and peace will be the norm of the Millennium and God's Kingdom. Old Testament millennial visions emphasize the peace of millennial life. It will be marked by freedom from the terrors of “ordinary” life. One level at which this tranquility exists is the natural arena, so to speak. Isaiah illustrates this

strikingly as he describes his vision of the millennial setting.

**Isaiah 11:6-9** “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. [This is telling us that even the animals will have their nature changed.] The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

I wanted you to see that description knowing that animals’ natures will be changed and there will be more people on earth with God’s Holy Spirit because our human nature will be changed as well. In fact, God will make a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land. This condition of peace extends also to people and nations as universal peace reigns. Satan and his demons will not be around to stir up contention that we have today.

In contrast to a world in which oppression from hostile nations threatens human security, Ezekiel explains that in the Millennium people will live securely in their land with none to make them afraid; even able to dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.

Isaiah records from his vision that the people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. The single most famous image of this peacefulness pictures it as a transformation of war into peace: “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.” In fact, God will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land. A fitting summary of the kinds of security that prevail in the Millennium is this here in Ezekiel 34.

**Ezekiel 34:28** And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid.

God’s care and protection will result in peace for His people. He says: “I will make a covenant of peace with them.” The peace that people have always longed for will be experienced. The uncertainties associated with desolate places, wild animals, other

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nations, and unpredictable weather will be alleviated. The land will enjoy peace and prosperity. Trees will bear fruit and the ground will yield its crops, and the people will be secure in their land, living in safety. What a wonderful life! We will be there to help Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, rule those people and they will not feel the need to reject their leaders.

As the Millennium continues there will not be a need to secede from rogue leaders and evil governments. God will separate nations at the beginning of the Millennium for one last time and, then peace between nations will remain.

I hope this has helped give you a right perspective of what we are facing here watching things disintegrate around the world and even in our own nation, that we are separate from the world, our citizenship is in heaven. What a wonderful blessing that is!

In my next sermon I will show you what you can do to make sure you have prepared spiritually as the world's secession movements continue to increase until they eventually become an epidemic, unless God intervenes to stop them. We will also look at the spiritual separation required by individuals in God's church.