

2 Corinthians 6:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

Analysis

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord (διὸ ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν καὶ ἀφορίσθητε, λέγει κύριος, dio exelthate ek mesou autōn kai aphoristhēte, legei kyrios)—Dio ('wherefore, therefore') grounds this command in the preceding identity: because you are God's temple. Exelthate (aorist imperative of exerchomai) commands decisive departure—'come out!' Aphoristhēte (aorist passive imperative of aphorizō, 'separate, set apart') recalls Israel's call to be a holy nation (Lev 20:24-26). This isn't social isolation but spiritual distinctiveness—refusing partnerships and practices that compromise covenant loyalty.

And touch not the unclean thing (καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἅπτεσθε, kai akathartou mē haptesthe)—Akathartos (unclean) evokes Levitical purity laws (Lev 5:2; 11:8; Isa 52:11). Haptomai (touch, handle, cling to) suggests intimate contact. Paul applies ceremonial uncleanness metaphorically to moral and spiritual defilement—primarily idolatry and its associated immorality. The present imperative with mē means 'stop touching' or 'do not continue touching.'

And I will receive you (κἀγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς, kagō eisdexomai hymas)—Eisdechomai means to receive favorably, welcome, accept. The future tense promises God's responsive reception when His people obey the call to separation. This echoes God's acceptance of Israel after they separated from Egypt (Ex 19:5-6) and anticipates eschatological acceptance into God's presence. Separation from

the world is the pathway to intimacy with God—we cannot embrace both simultaneously.

Historical Context

Paul quotes loosely from Isaiah 52:11 (LXX), originally commanding exiles to leave Babylon ceremonially clean as they carried temple vessels back to Jerusalem. Paul applies this exodus/exile typology to Christians: we are to 'come out' from spiritual Babylon (worldliness, idolatry, compromise) and maintain covenant purity as we journey to the heavenly city (cf. Rev 18:4).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. From what specific entanglements is God calling you to 'come out' and 'be separate' in order to maintain covenant purity?
2. How do you discern the difference between biblical separation (maintaining spiritual distinctiveness) and sinful separatism (Pharisaic isolationism)?
3. What promise of divine reception motivates your willingness to accept the cost and loneliness that sometimes accompanies separation from worldliness?

Interlinear Text

διὸ	Ἐξέλθετε	ἐκ	μέσου	αὐτῶν	καὶ	ἀφορίσθητε
Wherefore	come out	from	among	them	and	be ye separate
G1352	G1831	G1537	G3319	G846	G2532	G873
λέγει	κύριος	καὶ	ἀκαθάρτου	μὴ	ἅπτεσθε·	κάγὼ
saith	the Lord	and	the unclean	not	touch	thing and
G3004	G2962	G2532	G169	G3361	G680	G2504
εἰσδέξομαι	ὑμᾶς					
I will receive	you					
G1523	G5209					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 52:11 (References Lord): Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

Revelation 18:4 (Parallel theme): And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (Parallel theme): Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Numbers 16:26 (Parallel theme): And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.

Ezra 10:11 (References Lord): Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

Proverbs 9:6 (Parallel theme): Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

Acts 2:40 (Parallel theme): And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Jeremiah 51:6 (References Lord): Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.

Ezra 6:21 (References Lord): And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat,

Numbers 16:21 (Parallel theme): Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.

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