

Separation

As some of you reading this article will appreciate, there are many instances within the pages of the scriptures of separation, and not just of people being separated from other people because of something they've done or others have done to cause it, but also of certain kinds or character types of people being kept separate from each other, and I don't just mean a race of people from a different race of people or a tribe being kept apart from another tribe. No, the kind of separation I'm thinking about runs a lot deeper than any of these because it is far more personal, penetrating and powerfully compulsive, it can and often does separate sons and daughters from their fathers and their mothers, it can separate brothers from brothers and sisters from sisters, and I'm not talking about drug or alcohol abuse or of any other sinful activity being the reason for separation here, I'm talking about the `calling` of the Lord. Although on the surface this kind of separation may appear to be a totally random affair, it is not, the Lord knows those who will answer to His call and has done since before man actually walked this earth as it tells us in **Ephesians 1: 4-5**. `According as He has chosen us in Him before the beginning of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestined us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will`. The calling of the Lord can often lead the called-out one to eventually become separated from their entire family, not because they take any perverse pleasure in this but because they find that they no longer live in the same `world` and have very little in common with them anymore. It does not mean that the love for family has died, it just means that a greater love has pre-eminence, as when a son leaves his mother to go and marry his wife. Let's read the words of Jesus in **Matthew 10: 37**. `He that loves father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me, and he that loves son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me`. and now **Matthew 19: 29**. `And everyone who has forsaken houses or bretheren, or sisters or father, or mother or wife, or children, or lands for My name`s sake, shall receive an hundred fold (more) and shall inherit everlasting life`. The word `forsaken`, that Jesus used in that scripture means that a person has turned his or her back on something or somebody, they have distanced themselves from them or it, they have separated themselves, at least physically, of course letting go emotionally is a lot harder and often takes a lot longer to achieve.

For many newly converted Christians the first big thing to try and begin to separate themselves from is personal sin, (this, as many of us I'm sure appreciate, is a battle that lasts a lifetime!) and not immediately from their family and friends, no matter how un-Christian like their behaviour will start to appear. This separation, if and when it occurs, usually ensues over months or even years, but it should not be like a bad divorce, it should be done gently and with love. (When a person has grown in grace and strong in their faith, communication with their family is usually easier to deal with, although old friends will by now, have probably been replaced with new ones). The new Christian will find that once they have made the conscious decision to try to stop committing sin wilfully, they gradually discover that certain company that they used to keep and places and entertainment that they once used to find so alluring, are no longer of any interest to them. This kind of separation from these things is an inevitability of resisting sin. Let's read **2 Corinthians 6: 14-17**. `Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship with righteousness has unrighteousness? And what communion

has light with darkness? And what harmony is there between Christ and Satan? Or what part has he who believes with a non-believer? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, for as the Lord has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people. Therefore come out from amongst them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and do not touch the unclean thing, and I will receive you`. There is a very sound reason behind the guidance given in the last sentence of that scripture and it can be found in **Haggai 2: 11-13**. `Thus says the Lord of hosts, ask of the priests concerning the law, saying, If a person carries holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and allows that skirt to come into contact with bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it also be made holy because of that contact? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If a person who is unclean because they have been in contact with a dead body was to touch any of those things, would they then become unclean? And the priests answered and said, They shall become unclean`. Can we see by the reading of that scripture that there is far more chance of a Christian becoming contaminated by the evil people who they may choose to associate with, rather than those evil people becoming influenced by his Christianity. Nevertheless, the mature Christian, one who has had time to grow in Christ and who has developed an immovable faith, should not avoid and keep themselves away from the ordinary, everyday people of this world, as the apostle Paul, when he addressed church members in Corinth, tells us in this next scripture, **1 Corinthians 5: 9-11**. `I wrote to you in a letter that you should not keep company with fornicators, but I did not mean every fornicator that is in the world, or every person who is covetous or an idolator or an extortionist, because if that were to be the case then you would have to keep yourself away from almost everybody in the world. What I meant is for you not to keep company with any man who is seen to be a brother within the church who you know is a fornicator or covetous or idolatrous or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortionist, and with such a person not to socialise with`.

Every *free* person on this world, Christian or otherwise, has been granted by the Lord God a choice as to whom they keep company with and what they do or who they obey, and this choice has *always* been available to humankind, right from Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. And it was in that garden that the first bad choice by any living human being was made. Adam and Eve *chose* to disobey God! Now whether their motives were innocently child-like or not, it made no difference, because the consequences of their actions, their disobedience (sin), were already laid out and predetermined, just like if a person were to put their hand in the fire *it is* going to get burned whether that person is an innocent baby or an evil mass-murderer. *If the Lord God's laws are disobeyed wilfully or in ignorance then there is a consequence which has to be paid*. The Lord did not forcibly restrain Adam or Eve from making their choice to disobey Him. Satan had convinced them both that the thing that they were to do was indeed that which the Lord God actually expected/required them to do, when in fact it was the thing that the Lord God *knew* that they would and deep down *wanted* to do. A big difference!

Now this act of sin, of disobedience that Adam and Eve committed, was to lead to the biggest and the most `painful` separation that any human being could undergo, and the repercussions, the `pains` of that original sin are still being experienced amongst all of us who walk this earth to this day! Let`s read from **Romans 5: 12**. `Wherefore as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death because of sin, and so it was that death passed upon all men, because all have sinned`. Sin, disobedience, has separated us from our God! Sin is not a physical barrier between us, it is a spiritual one, and because of it we have to pay a price, let`s read about that in **Romans 6: 23**. `And the cost of sin (the price we have to pay) is death. But the gift of God is eternal life,

brought to us and through our Saviour Jesus Christ`. Although we all have to pay the price of having to die in this present life, the *ultimate* separation from *everything*, we have One who is our reconciler, the One who will bring us back together with our God *if* we as individuals allow Him to do so, let`s read from **Romans 5: 17.** and **21.** `For if by one man`s (Adam) offence death reigned because of that one, so much more then shall the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life because of One, Jesus Christ. Just as sin has reigned to cause death, even so grace will reign because of the righteousness of our Saviour Jesus Christ, to promote eternal life`. And so as we know, Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden of Eden, a garden that represented a place that was close to the Lord, a `nursery` for the newly created mankind. It was a garden that was dear to the Lord, He took pleasure in walking in it and He had allowed Adam and Eve to share in that pleasure *and in His personal company*. Imagine that! But, as still happens to most children now, the time came when eventually in their own minds, they had `outgrown` their `nursery`, and they developed a `wanderlust`. Adam and Eve may not have realised it but they wanted more than that which the Lord had already provided for them. They did not understand what security, comfort and leisure-time meant as opposed to danger, worry, fear and hard labour, but they were about to find out. They were to begin to embark upon a very `rounded` education indeed, and not only them but also their children, their children`s children and eventually all who have ever lived, are living and who will ever live upon this earth as human flesh and blood. And so, as many human fathers still do to *their* grown-up `children`, the Lord God `threw them out` of the `family home`. Let`s read from **Genesis 3: 17-19** and **24.** `And the Lord said to Adam, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you saying, You shall not eat of it; cursed is the ground because of you; in sorrow you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground (die), for out of it you were taken, for dust you are and to dust shall you return. And so the Lord drove out the man (and woman) and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims and a flaming sword which turned this way and that to keep the man from finding the way back to (the garden and) the tree of life`. But the Lord God did not abandon them completely, they both knew that He would always be there to help them *and* all of their descendants for all eternity *if* they sincerely called upon Him and strived to obey His commandments. So what happened to the `nursery`, the garden of Eden? well as we have just read in the scripture, the Lord put a guard on it so that Adam and Eve could not go back into it and eat of the `tree of life` and thus obtain immortality. Through the reading of other scripture we can rightly assume that the `tree of life` was moved elsewhere and then the garden of Eden was destroyed because it had served its` purpose.

And so humankind experienced its` first and so far, most `painful` separation, that of being separated from the re-assuring loving comfort and continual `hands on` guidance of our great Creator. Now we have to fend for ourselves, and instead of the actual physical presence of the Lord God being constantly with us, we have now to first believe in Him and then go and find Him. Unfortunately for some people this is too difficult, whilst for the majority of the rest, it is all too easy, because although they think that they have found the Lord God, they have not, they have merely joined themselves to one of the thousands of *false* Christian churches in this world that invent and perpetrate blasphemous idolatries, `commandments` and man-made `holy` days and festivals in His glorious name.

We know that not all separation is grievous for us. Being separated from pain, sickness, fear etc., is something that I think that we all want to achieve, whilst on the other hand we do not

want to be separated from loved ones or friendly people or familiar places for a long period of time, or have the knowledge of never seeing or experiencing these things again. We all need our `comfort zones`, but there are and there will be times when the Lord requires every true Christian to move out of those comfort zones as we have previously read of in Matthew 19: 29. Of course as we know, the final separation from each other, loved ones and the things of this world for us human beings is death, but as the scriptures tell us, true Christians do not fear death, because we know that it will only have a momentary reign over *us*, let`s read from the book of **1 Corinthians 15: 24-26**. `Then comes the end, when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to His heavenly Father, when He shall have established all rule and authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet, and the final enemy to be destroyed is death`. Still in the same book and chapter let`s read **verses 51-55**. `Behold, I show you a secret, we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, because the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. For this to happen, the corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when the corruptible has put on incorruption and the mortal put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is your sting? O grave where is your victory?`

Even so, we do not like the idea of having to die, we do not have any respect for death and neither, given the option, would we elect to have to undergo it, we have no power or control over it, and this being the case it is just one more reason that we should all give thanks to our Creator Jesus Christ, who has made Himself death`s conqueror. Our Creator has not only created all life but He has now also become the destroyer of the very opposite of it! So why do we die? well let`s read **Romans 6: 23**. `The wages (outcome/product) of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord`. And so, laying aside our ancestors Adam and Eve, who should we realise is the real originator and creator of sin and therefore the originator and creator of death? It is of course that chief demon, Satan. And this being the case it stands to reason that if death is to be totally destroyed forever by our God Jesus Christ, then *he* who is very death must also be destroyed totally and forever. *Yes, Satan can and will die, and will remain dead and utterley destroyed . . . forever!* (See the article: Can Satan Be Destroyed?)

After Satan has been destroyed, sin and death will no longer be present to create the barrier that has been separating us all from being able to have *constant* contact with our Lord God. Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, has not only created all life on earth but now He has overcome and defeated death, the very opposite of life. After the resurrection there will still be separation in the shape and form of things being the exact opposite to one another such as right and left, dry and wet, hot and cold etc. But let`s bear this in mind, *temporary* separation is hardly ever harmful or evil, more often than not it is even beneficial, especially in this lifetime, to bring people closer together either with one another or with our God. Think on this old saying, `you don`t know what you`ve got until it is gone`, and oftentimes the Lord will restore that which has been lost or taken. As we all know, one day we will have to experience our own death, and as previously mentioned this is the biggest separation that we can experience in this our present lifetime. At the moment, because of humankind`s sins, death is a pre-requisite of our life on earth, there is no escape. Unfortunately for some, their *continuing willingness* to sin, to rebel against the laws of the Lord God, will also prevent them from obtaining the chance of eternal life. Our Lord God detests death, which is an ugly form of separation just as He detests divorce, another form of ugly separation, and we can read of His hatred of divorce in the book of **Malachi 2: 16**. `For the Lord, the God of Israel says that He hates divorce. . .` Our God is so abundantly full of life, it

just flows out from Him, it is life that He is all about, not death, death is Satan`s all consuming `passion`, let`s read from **Matthew 22: 32.** `I Am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, God is not the god of the dead, but of the living`. So, in order to abolish the sentence of death that still hangs over us because of our sins (*but even now has no more authority* over us because of what God has done in the shape and form of Jesus Christ,) God/Jesus suffered death Himself in order to take on the enemy face to face as it were. And now, because of having experienced fleshly life and the pain and separation of death, there is none who can honestly approach our God and accuse Him of not knowing what it was like to suffer as a human being! **Through the act of living and dying as a human being, our God has created with us a family bond that no angel or other spirit being can ever achieve!** Let`s read **Hebrews 2: 9-10.** `We see Jesus, who was created a little lower (flesh and blood) than the angels, in order to be able to suffer death, crowned with glory and honour; so that He by the grace of God (the Father) should experience death for the sake of every man. For it became Him, who created all things, and by whom are all things, to bring many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect because of the things that He suffered`. Very soon now, there will no longer be any death for *anybody* who is considered to be worthy to receive the gift of eternal life to have to suffer. Even the angels and other spirit beings who have `immortality`, *can* at this present time be destroyed by our Lord God, if this were not the case, then Satan could not be destroyed and neither could death. Immortality is not the same as eternal life, it means that you have the capability of being able to live forever just as long as it pleases the Lord God to allow you to do so. A big difference between the two! At the moment only God the Father and God the Son possess *true* immortality as this next scripture tells us, **1 Timothy 6: 15-16.** `Which He will make known in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, (ruler) the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light whom no man can see or who has seen, to whom be honour and everlasting power, Amen`. With sin no longer existent and everlasting life finally bestowed upon His children, there will be no more separation for us from our heavenly Father or from our Creator Jesus Christ. Let`s read the words of Jesus Christ from and between **John 5: 21-29.** `For as the Father raises up the dead and makes them alive, even so the Son makes alive those whom He will. Truly, truly, I say to you, He that obeys My word and believes on Him that sent Me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life. Just as the Father has life within Himself. (is Life!) Likewise, He has given to the Son to have life within Himself. Marvel not at this, because the hour is coming when all who are in their graves shall hear His voice. And they shall come forth, they who have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of judgment`. And let`s couple that last scripture with this one, **1 Thessalonians 5: 9-10.** `For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that, whether we wake or sleep, we may live together with Him`.

Now, as we all know, in this our present lifetime we will always experience separation in one shape, form, or another. Throughout the scriptures we can read of how the Lord has used the act of separation wisely and to the eventual advantage of an individual and/or to those associated with that individual whom the Lord recognizes as belonging to Him. So, with all of humankind mixed together, how is the wheat to be (or is being) separated from the chaff and the tares from the barley, those who are the Lord`s from those who are not the Lord`s, without causing damage to both? Well if we read from the book of 2 Kings we can appreciate by looking at just one example of how this has been done in the past. In this instance the Lord made a clear distinction

between those who *really* were worshipping Him and those who were *really* worshipping the `god` Baal, by using His servant Jehu to trick them. We break into the scripture at the point where Jehu had convinced the worshippers of Baal that he was probably one of them and `on their side` and he had won over their confidence, **2 Kings 10: 21-25.** `And Jehu sent word throughout all Israel that the worshippers of Baal were to meet in the house of Baal, and there was not left any man who did not come, so that the house of Baal was full from one end to the other. And Jehu had instructed those in charge of the vestry to bring garments for all of the Baal worshippers to wear. So Jehu and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, went into the house of Baal and said to the worshippers of Baal, Search and look and make certain that there are none here who are really the servants of the Lord God, so that only true worshippers of Baal remain here. When the time came for the Baal worshippers to offer sacrifices and burned offerings, Jehu positioned eighty men outside and told them that if any of the Baal worshippers were to escape from them, then the lives of those who let them escape would be taken in place of the one`s who escaped. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burned offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, go into the house of Baal and slay them all, don`t let any out. And so they killed them with the edge of the sword, and the guard and the captains cast out their bodies`. There is a lesson for us all to learn from this scripture which we may find very useful in times to come, and it is this; stay loyal to and be resolute in that which you have come to know is the truth and also to the one true God, no matter how dire the circumstances may be. Bear in mind that last scripture and of the true worshippers of the Lord in that house of Baal who were sought out and `betrayed` by the genuine Baal worshippers, they probably thought that they were being taken outside to be executed, but how the `tables were turned` in their favour! The Lord will never separate Himself from us, it is always we who separate ourselves from Him. Let`s read **Jude 17-21.** `Beloved, remember the words which were foretold by the apostles of Jesus Christ. How that they forewarned you that there would be those who will mock you in the latter times, and will walk after their own ungodly lusts. These are they who separate themselves, they are sensual and do not have the spirit of the Lord dwelling within them. But you, beloved, build up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life`. The Lord can use separation or merely the threat of it to make certain distinctions or to make distinctions certain, as in the case of king Solomon`s judgment between the two women who were in dispute as to who was the *real* mother of a surviving child, let`s read from the book of **1 Kings 3: 23-27.** `Then the king said, This one says this is my son that lives and that her son is the one that died, and the other says but no, yours is the dead son and this one that lives is mine. And so the king said, Bring me a sword, and so they brought a sword before the king. and the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to one and half to the other. Then spoke up the real mother whose living son it was, because she yearned for him, and so she said, O my lord, give her the living child and do not kill him. But the other women said, Let it be neither mine nor hers but divide it. Then the king spoke and said, give her (the real mother)the living child, for she is the true mother of it`.

The world in which we now live is being governed and ruled over in such a way that we, because of our *true* Christian belief, (especially in countries that call themselves `Christian`) are in danger of actually being branded as non-Christian! This is because all of the recognized, mainstream so-called `christian` churches of this world are in fact practising the Babylonian mystery religion which has the arch demon Satan as its` leader. As a result of this, most professing `christians` in this world are in fact (if not anti-Christ`s themselves) following an

anti-Christ, usually in the shape and form of their minister, priest, bishop etc.!

When any true Christian in this world practices true Christianity, for example by performing true witness in the name of Jesus Christ and by keeping the Sabbath day, they will stick out like a `sore thumb`, like a tall poppy in a field of grass, and this unwillingness to conform to the traditions and religious dogma of men will upset many people and authorities! Why? because we are seen to have separated ourselves from the evil ruling power of the Satanic governance of this earth, they notice that it has no power over us and that we will not betray our God and throw away our eternal inheritance for the ultimately worthless pittance and the *miserable* amount of time which this present materially driven life and world has to offer! The true Christian will experience separation and persecution, and some of us will be put to death for our faith(fulness), let`s read **Revelation 20: 4.** `I saw thrones and those who sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and I saw the souls of those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years` (the millenium rule). Being separated from this world only serves to bring us nearer to our loving God, the further we move away from sin and the tugs and pulls of this earth`s fleshly temptations the closer we get to the Lord because He and they are at the extreme opposite ends of a spectrum. By living as a true Christian we cannot help but offend people just as Jesus offended the people of *His* own country when He went back to visit them with His disciples preaching to them wondrous things and revealing to them hitherto unknown truths. And what was the reaction to Him of His own people? let`s read **Mark 6: 3.** The people said, `Is not this the carpenter`s son, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and of Juda, and Simon? and are not His sisters here with us? And they were offended because of Him`. Yes, despite all of the miracles and glorious revelations of the now grown-up Jesus Christ, these, His own people, only saw in their own minds somebody who they knew in His/their childhood and who had now visited them with what they thought of as pretensions way above His position in life. As Jesus told them in the next verse, **Mark 6: 4.** `And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honour *except* in his own country and amongst his own relatives and in his own household`. Remember, if anybody is living a lie, then the truth is going to be offensive to them.

Now, whilst I have written about the fact that a true Christian should become *spiritually* separated from the world, there is a scripture that informs us that we should not *physically* separate ourselves from the world. That is to say that we should not lock ourselves away in safe, walled communities that are more or less isolated and protected from the harsh realities suffered by the ordinary people who we dwell amongst. We know that there are certain mainstream `christian` religions and other religious sects who shut themselves away in splendid isolation (more often than not occupying prime real estate sites or beautiful countryside locations) in grand buildings which they call monasteries or nunneries or `retreats` or even palaces. Others, such as the Amish, like to exist in our modern world by *supposedly* shunning the use of modern machines and amenities and avoiding those of us who do, well, for one thing, until I see them riding their horse-drawn buggies on the grass verges and over the muddy fields instead of using the well-maintained highways and roads which are paid for by `ordinary folk` driving their cars and paying their appropriate taxes, and they start relying on and using medical and dental technology from the distant past, then I`m going to treat their *supposed* total aversion to the *physical* benefits of this modern world with a whole lot of scepticism. Any *true* Christian should be living in amongst the rest of the people of this world but at the same time be separated from it and them because their higher spiritual awareness creates this separation, it cannot be

avoided, as the apostle Paul states in **Romans 12: 2**. `Do not be conformed to this world, but allow yourselves to be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may show (to those around you) that which is the good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God`. The apostle Paul also instructed those of the church in Corinth to avoid fornicators and the like, but he was referring to those fornicators who were brothers within the church who practised such things and not to the general public outside of the church as we can read of in **1 Corinthians 5: 9-11**. `I wrote to you in a letter not to keep company with fornicators, but I did not specifically mean with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or with extortionists, or with idolaters, because this would mean that you would have to keep yourselves away from the everyday people of this world. So now I write to you again telling you not to keep company with any brother within the church who is known to be a fornicator, or is covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortionist, and with such a person not even to eat`. If the Lord God`s holy spirit truly dwells within us then we cannot help but be seen by others to be separate from the ways of this world, but, and this is important, *we must never be seen to be separate from people by not being able to empathise with them or by us adopting a `holier than thou` superior attitude towards them.* The true Christian *has* to be in amongst all of the rottenness of this world and yet at the same time not to be allured and/or contaminated by it, this can only be achieved by keeping in *constant* contact with our great God by daily praying to Him for guidance, better understanding of the scriptures, (which should be read daily) protection, healing and forgiveness of personal sins. Just like any loving parent, our God, our heavenly Father likes to hear from His children on a daily basis, so make that `phone call` through prayer even if most of what we have to tell Him is about our personal failings and of our lapsing into committing sin once again. Don`t be `embarrassed` about confessing your sins to Him, He knows what you`ve done anyway! Let`s read from **1 John 1: 9-10**. `If we confess our sins to Him, then He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, then we (for ourselves) make Him out to be a liar, and His Word is not in us`. Our heavenly Father and his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, both greatly desire to help us through this testing time that we know of as life. By the regular reading of the scriptures of both the new and the old testaments we can get to know our God and what He sincerely expects of us during our constant battles against personal sin and the tugs and the pulls of this Satanically corrupted world in which we have to, quite literally, survive. Some people may study the scriptures for hours each day whilst others may just `top up` their knowledge with twenty minutes or so, either way, vital information is being input and as may be noticed, almost every time scripture is read, new knowledge is revealed that was not revealed to the reader before. Such is the *living word* of God! So do not fret about the amount of time that you spend reading the scriptures, it will vary from individual to individual and from day to day. **Ecclesiastes 12: 10-12**. `The preacher (king Solomon) sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as challenges, and as nails positioned by master craftsmen, which are given by one shepherd. And further, by these words of truth, be admonished my son. Of reading many books there is no end, and too much study promotes weariness of the flesh`. Importantly, although we may not *always* spend a lot of time reading the scriptures on any given occasion, we should *always make time to read them!* We, as true Christians, are battling to survive on more than just one front, not only do we fight to survive physically as does almost every `normal` human being, but we also have to fight to survive spiritually, because with spiritual knowledge comes spiritual responsibility, we have to

one day give account for ourselves to our God and how we have used the knowledge that He revealed to *us* during our lifetime. The more scriptural knowledge that we acquire then the more the Lord expects us to make use of it as best that we can, just as in the parable of the `talents` in Matthew 25: 14-30. It is important that we do not approach the reading of the scriptures as a chore, and it will usually only become such if we try to study beyond our `attention span` which of course varies from person to person. But if we have God`s holy spirit dwelling within us we should find over time that what we intended to spend say half an hour studying has suddenly and effortlessly increased to a couple of hours! Read the scriptures daily, pray to our God daily, keep His commandments, and we will break down that barrier of sin(s) that so often on a daily basis, separates us from Him. Fail to do this and He may well decide that He no longer recognizes us any more, and this can happen to an individual or group of individuals as we can read of in the parable of the ten virgins found in the book of **Matthew 25: 10-13**. `And while they left to buy more oil, the bridegroom appeared, and they who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast and the door was shut behind them. Later on the other virgins who went off to buy more oil returned and started to cry out saying, Lord, Lord, open the door to us. But he answered and said, Truly I say to you, I do not know who you are. Watch therefore, because you do not know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man shall come`. And for another example we will again read the words of Jesus in **Matthew 7: 21-23**. `Not everyone that says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father that is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not spoken in Your Name? and in Your Name have cast out demons? and in Your Name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess to them, I never knew you, depart from Me you who work evil`.

I realise that it is not getting any easier for us true Christians to practice our faith in these ever increasingly bawdy, lawless, lewd and Godless latter days in which we now live. There will be those of us who will feel increasingly isolated because we have made the choice to accept and follow the life-giving commandments of our Lord God instead of `going with the flow` of this Satanically driven world, and that this choice has often meant us having to separate ourselves from close family and friends because we recognize that we have fewer and fewer things in common with them and they in turn have noticed that they have fewer and fewer things in common with us. Let`s read from the book of **1 Peter 4: 3-4**. `For in times past it was convenient for us to act as others acted, walking in lasciviousness, in lust and in excess of wine, revelling and eating to excess and to commit detestable idolatries. But now these people think it strange that you no longer associate yourself with their ways of indulging in excess of riot, and so they begin to speak evil of you`. Because it is not easy for every one who aspires to be a true Christian to `complete the course`, the Lord`s true church is beginning to diminish, the end time has finally come upon this world! But for those of us who remain loyal to the `faith once delivered`, it is all part of our testing, because separation from worldly people and things, although it will be `painful` for many of us, only serves to bring us closer to our God. **Zechariah 14: 8-9**. `And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, says the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried, and they shall call on My Name, and I will hear them, I will say; It is My people, and they shall say; The Lord is my God`.

And so to sum up. Although we as true Christians will experience separation from many people, friends, family and things in this life because of our unyielding willingness to try to follow in the footsteps of our God Creator, Jesus Christ, we can continue to do this in the utmost

confidence that we will never be separated from Him or our heavenly Father either in this life *or in the next!* And so for one final piece of scripture let`s read the words of the apostle Paul in **Romans 8: 38-39.** `For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things yet to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other thing or creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord`.