

Not of This World

Series 1-12

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# NOT — OF THIS — WORLD

CALLLED OUT. SET APART. HEADED HOME.



## **Not of This World**

### **Series Introduction**

We are living in an age where the word “world” is used so casually that most people never stop to ask what God means when He uses it. To the average man, the world is dirt, oceans, mountains, cities, nations, governments, and the daily machinery of life under the heavens. It is where he works, where he eats, where he raises children, where he buries the dead, and where he tries to carve out some little corner of comfort before his body gives out and his name is forgotten. But when the Holy Ghost speaks about “the world” in the King James Bible, He is often reaching far beyond geography. He is not merely describing the ground under a man’s feet. He is exposing a system, a current, a spirit, a moral atmosphere, and a rebellious order moving in defiance of the Lord Jesus Christ. The world in Scripture is often not just where man lives. It is what man loves when he is alienated from God. It is the organized expression of life without submission to the Creator. It is the stage where pride struts, lust sells itself, lies wear crowns, and sinners learn how to decorate their chains while calling it freedom.

That is why this series matters. A Christian cannot live right if he does not see the world right. If he thinks the world is neutral, he will try to make peace with it. If he thinks the world is harmless, he will start borrowing from it. If he thinks the world is just a collection of unfortunate social problems that can be improved with a little religion and better manners, he will never understand why Jesus Christ spoke so sharply about it, why the apostles warned so strongly against it, and why the child of God is commanded to be in it without being of it. The world is not merely misguided. It is blinded. It is not merely wounded. It is fallen. It is not merely imperfect. It is under judgment. It has a ruler, it has a spirit, it has a wisdom, it has a religion, it has a glory, and every bit of it is passing away. This world system can offer education, entertainment, commerce, power, influence, beauty, and prestige, but beneath the paint there is rebellion. Beneath the glitter there is decay. Beneath the applause there is hatred for the truth. That is why a man who decides to follow Jesus Christ sooner or later feels the strain of living in a realm that does not love his King.

But this series is not written merely to expose darkness. Plenty of men can see corruption without knowing the cure. Plenty of bitter voices can denounce the age without ever lifting up the answer. The purpose of this study is to trace the world as the Bible defines it and then to set that fallen order against the glory of Jesus Christ. We are going to look at what the Bible means by “the world,” how the world was already in view before the foundation of it was laid, how the kingdoms of this world are entangled with satanic power, how the spirit of the world works, how the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life operate, how Jesus Christ entered this world as the Lamb of God and the Light of the world,

how believers are chosen out of it, why the world hates them, why friendship with it is spiritual adultery, how the present order is headed toward the end of the world, and finally how all of this prepares the saint for the world to come. In other words, this series is not just about what we are called out of. It is about who called us out, why He called us out, and where He is taking us.

The phrase **Not of This World** is not a sentimental slogan for a coffee mug, a church banner, or a social media caption. It is a doctrinal statement with teeth in it. It means the believer has undergone a change of belonging. He is still on this earth physically, but he no longer belongs to the spirit of the age, the ruler of this age, the ambitions of this age, or the destination of this age. He still has to work among sinners, speak to sinners, love sinners, and reach sinners with the gospel, but he is no longer supposed to take his values, identity, goals, and loves from the world that crucified his Lord. That makes him a stranger here. That makes him different. That creates conflict. It also creates hope. Because if he is not of this world, it is because he belongs to another one. He has another citizenship, another inheritance, another King, and another future. So this series is not about retreating into fear. It is about gaining discernment, growing in separation, strengthening loyalty to Christ, and fixing the heart on a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

What follows, then, is not a study in mere negativity. It is not a conspiracy chart with Bible verses taped to the corners. It is not a bitter complaint against culture for its own sake. It is a biblical study of the world system in the light of eternity. It is meant to make the child of God wiser, steadier, less easily flattered by the age, less easily frightened by the age, and far more anchored in the Lord Jesus Christ. The world has a beginning and an end. Its fashion passeth away. Its lust passeth away. Its crowns pass away. Its markets pass away. Its proud men pass away. But “he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:17). So as this series opens, the call is plain: do not let the world name you, mold you, own you, or seduce you. Learn what it is. See where it is going. See who rules above it. And once you have seen that, make up your mind to live like a man who belongs to another country and another King.

## **1 of 12: Not of This World - What the Bible Means by “The World”**

### **Introduction**

When a man in this generation hears the word “world,” he usually thinks like a schoolbook, a television documentary, or a science teacher who has spent too much time trying to explain away Genesis. He thinks of dirt, water, mountains, nations, commerce, politics,

weather patterns, and all the visible machinery of life under the sun. He thinks of where he lives, where he works, where he raises children, pays bills, buries loved ones, and tries to make some kind of name for himself before he dies. But when the Holy Spirit uses the word “world” in the King James Bible, He is often doing a great deal more than talking about soil, seas, and populations. Many times He is pointing to an arrangement, a moral order, a spiritual climate, and a rebellious course of life that has set itself against the Lord God Almighty. That is why a man can be standing on the earth God made and yet be completely swallowed up in a world God condemns.

The Bible does not speak loosely. It does not waste words. When it says, “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16), it is not talking about pine trees, rivers, cattle, or clouds under the firmament. It is talking about a system of desire, ambition, vanity, and corruption. It is talking about what man has made of life after the fall. It is talking about civilization organized without submission to God. It is talking about the spirit that drives culture, entertainment, politics, false religion, education, fashion, and the restless appetite to have more, be seen more, feel more, and worship self more. That world is not neutral ground. It is not innocent. It is not merely misguided. It is under a ruler, it has a spirit, and it has an end.

So before we can talk about being “not of this world,” we have to define what the Bible means by the world. A saved man is still on the earth. He still has to walk streets, work jobs, pay taxes, and deal with sinners, devils, disappointments, and temptations. But if he is born again, he is not supposed to draw his identity, his values, his loyalties, his ambitions, or his loves from the present evil world. Jesus Christ said of His own, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:16). That is not poetry. That is doctrine. That is a line in the sand. That is Heaven’s description of the Christian life in relation to the present order. So this first study lays the foundation for the whole series. We are going to find out that the world is not just where man lives. It is what man loves when he has turned his back on God.

## **1. The World as God Made It**

The first thing you have to settle is that the word “world” in Scripture can refer to the created order in a broad sense. The Bible speaks of “the foundation of the world” in passages like Matthew 13:35, Luke 11:50, Ephesians 1:4, Hebrews 4:3, and Revelation 13:8. In that sense, the world is the ordered realm God established from the beginning. It is not chaos. It is not accident. It is not the result of blind chance smashing particles together in a cosmic fairy tale for educated fools. It has a foundation because it had a Founder. It has order because it had an Orderer. “For since the beginning of the world men have not

heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him” (Isaiah 64:4). The world began because God made it begin.

That means we start with God, not with man. We start with revelation, not speculation. The world is not self-existing. It is not eternal in the sense that God is eternal. Acts 15:18 says, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Romans 1:20 says, “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” Notice that phrase, “the things that are made.” The world is made. It is not self-generating. It is not self-defining. It is not its own god. Any definition of the world that leaves out the Creator has already started with a lie.

Now that matters because some people read later condemnations of “the world” and get mixed up, as if the physical creation itself is evil. It is not. “The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof” (Psalm 24:1). The heavens declare the glory of God. The dry land, the seas, the cattle, the herbs, the fruit trees, the lights in the firmament, and the ordered beauty of what God made are not the problem. The problem is what sin has done in the realm where God placed man. So when the Bible uses “world” in one place, you cannot force that meaning into every other place. Sometimes it means the ordered realm God established. Sometimes it means the inhabited earth. Sometimes it means mankind broadly considered. Sometimes it means the moral and spiritual system in rebellion against God. If you do not learn to distinguish those uses, you will wind up preaching confusion with a Bible in your hand.

## **2. The World as Men Inhabit It**

The second thing you see is that “world” often refers to the inhabited realm where nations, peoples, and kingdoms dwell. Psalm 19:4 says, “Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” Psalm 33:8 says, “Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.” Isaiah 18:3 says, “All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye.” In those passages, the world is the realm of human habitation. It is where men live, multiply, rebel, fight, build, trade, boast, and die. It is the stage of human history.

This is why Scripture can speak of “the kingdoms of the world” (Matthew 4:8), “the Saviour of the world” (John 4:42), and “the life of the world” (John 6:51). The world in those contexts includes the peoples and nations dwelling upon the earth. Christ did not come to save rocks and rivers from personal guilt. He came into the world to save sinners living in rebellion upon God’s earth. When John the Baptist cried, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), he was not speaking of dirt under men’s

sandals. He was speaking of the realm of human sin and human need. The world there is man's fallen race living in God's created order.

But even here you begin to see the shadow of something darker. Human habitation is never merely human in the Bible. There are thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. There are kingdoms seen and unseen. There are angels, devils, rulers, and spiritual influences working behind the curtain. That means the inhabited world is not just a collection of innocent villages and family farms. It is a battleground. It is contested ground. It is the arena in which man's will, Satan's temptations, God's mercy, divine judgment, prophetic fulfillment, and redemptive history all move together. So even when "world" means the inhabited earth, the Bible never lets you imagine that life here is spiritually neutral.

### **3. The World as a Fallen System**

Now we come to the meaning that drives this whole series. In many of the most important New Testament passages, the world is a moral and spiritual system alienated from God. Jesus said, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). That is not geography. That is not topography. That is not weather or agriculture. That is a system with affections, loyalties, and hatreds. It loves its own. It hates Christ's own. It operates like a family with a father, a culture with values, and a city with citizenship.

John nails it down with a blowtorch in 1 John 2:15-16: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." There it is. The world is not just scenery. It is an organized rebellion built on lust and pride. It appeals to appetite, appearance, and arrogance. It pulls on fleshly cravings, visual temptations, and self-exalting ambition. It is what man builds when God is unwanted except as a mascot, a ceremony, or a curse word.

That system can dress itself in a thousand outfits. Sometimes it looks filthy and obvious, like drunkenness, pornography, greed, and public blasphemy. Sometimes it looks respectable, polished, and admired, like academic arrogance, political pomp, religious theater, and success worship. The world can put on a tuxedo or a leather jacket. It can sit in a cathedral or a casino. It can wave a flag, sing a hymn, quote a scholar, carry a cross, or sell a vice. But if it is operating on the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, it is still the world. A snake in a silk pillowcase is still a snake.

### **4. The Spirit Behind the World**

The world is not just a collection of bad habits. It has a spirit. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:12, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God." That

verse destroys the lazy notion that worldly living is just a matter of poor taste or weak discipline. The world has a spirit to it. It thinks a certain way, reacts a certain way, admires a certain way, and mocks a certain way. It has a mood, a current, and a breath. It forms what men call normal. It sets the tone of the age. It tells people what is desirable, what is embarrassing, what is outdated, what is progressive, what is sophisticated, and what is laughable.

John says, “They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them” (1 John 4:5). That means the world recognizes its own language. It knows its own accent. When a man talks from worldly wisdom, worldly desire, worldly values, and worldly assumptions, the world hears him just fine. Let him flatter their pride, affirm their lust, justify their rebellion, and smooth over divine judgment, and he will get a crowd. He will get applause. He will get a platform. But let a man speak with the sharp authority of Scripture against sin, self, compromise, and counterfeit religion, and the world will begin clearing its throat and sharpening its knives.

The Christian, then, is not merely supposed to avoid worldly acts. He is supposed to reject the spirit of the world. That is deeper. That is harder. A man can quit a few outward things and still be eaten up with the spirit of the world. He can still measure success the world’s way, envy the world’s heroes, chase the world’s applause, fear the world’s rejection, and dream the world’s dreams. He can still be worldly in mind while pretending to be separated in appearance. That is why Romans 12:2 says, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The battle is not just over what you touch. It is over what is shaping your inner man.

## **5. The Ruler of This World**

A system like this does not run on fumes. It has leadership. Scripture reveals plainly that Satan has real power in relation to the present world order. In Matthew 4:8, “the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.” Luke 4:6 adds, “for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.” The devil is a liar, but lies work because they parasitize truth. He was offering something real in terms of present worldly dominion and influence. That is why Jesus calls him “the prince of this world” in John 12:31, John 14:30, and John 16:11.

Now if Satan is the prince of this world, then stop talking about the world as if it were some innocent playground that only occasionally goes wrong. The world system is wired in a direction. It leans somewhere. It has a bias. It does not drift toward holiness, humility, truth, purity, and worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Left to itself, it drifts toward vanity, self-exaltation, false religion, sensuality, and rebellion. Why? Because it is energized by an

adversary who hates God and hates man and especially hates any testimony that exalts the blood, deity, authority, and exclusive saving power of Jesus Christ.

That is why the world can be religious and still be satanic. A lot of people think the opposite of Christ is atheism. Sometimes it is. But often the opposite of Christ is religion without regeneration, morality without new birth, ceremony without truth, and spirituality without the Holy Ghost. The devil does not care if men are refined, cultured, educated, patriotic, and devout, so long as they remain alienated from the Son of God. He is perfectly happy to let them be “good” if he can keep them lost. He is perfectly happy to let churches grow if he can keep Christ outside the door. Once you see that, you understand why the world system can talk so much about peace, compassion, unity, and progress while marching straight to hell with a smile on its face.

## **6. The Believer In the World but Not of It**

Here is where doctrine turns personal. Jesus did not pray for His disciples to vanish off the earth the moment they got saved. In John 17:15 He said, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” So the Christian remains in the world physically. He still lives in neighborhoods, shops in markets, works among sinners, and carries out his course on the earth. But Christ says in the same prayer, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:16). There is the dividing line. Presence is not participation. Location is not identity. Residence is not allegiance.

A Christian, then, is a stranger in the deepest sense. He is not a stranger because he floats around in a mystical fog and cannot tie his shoes. He is a stranger because the new birth has altered his citizenship. Philippians 3:20 says, “For our conversation is in heaven.” That word “conversation” carries the thought of citizenship and manner of life. The saved man still has feet on the ground, but his hope, loyalty, and inheritance are elsewhere. He may be mocked, outnumbered, slandered, or ignored, but his values are not supposed to be drawn from the crowd. His pattern is not Hollywood, Wall Street, academia, politics, or even dead formal religion. His pattern is Jesus Christ.

That is why the Lord says in Matthew 5:14, “Ye are the light of the world.” He does not say the world is your light. He does not say study the world until you can blend in with it. He says you are to shine in it. Light is useful because it is different from darkness, not because it imitates darkness. Salt is useful because it resists corruption, not because it joins it. So when a church tries to win the world by acting like the world, sounding like the world, dressing like the world, craving the world’s approval, and trimming its preaching to fit the

world's tastes, it has ceased to function as light. A lantern painted black does not help anybody.

## **7. What the World Loves and Why God Warns Against It**

Once you understand what the world is, the warnings against it stop sounding extreme and start sounding sane. James 4:4 says, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" That is not a suggestion. That is not a mild caution from a nervous preacher. That is God's verdict. Why? Because friendship with the world means sympathy with a system that is fundamentally opposed to Him. You do not make peace with a current trying to sweep you over the falls. You do not flirt with a cobra because the scales shimmer in the sunlight. You do not cozy up to a system built on lust and pride and expect to keep clean hands and a hot heart toward God.

The world loves what feeds the flesh. It loves what inflates the ego. It loves what dazzles the eyes. It loves what makes man feel independent, important, entertained, and justified without repentance. It rewards image, not integrity; performance, not truth; charm, not character. It teaches men to market themselves, curate themselves, defend themselves, indulge themselves, and worship themselves. It can package that self-worship in rebellion or in religion. Either way, self sits on the throne. That is why 2 Corinthians 7:10 says, "the sorrow of the world worketh death." Even its tears are poisoned. Even its grief is bent inward. Even its remorse is often self-pity because consequences arrived, not godly sorrow because God was sinned against.

So when God says, "Love not the world," He is not trying to deprive His people of joy. He is trying to preserve them from spiritual adultery. He is trying to keep their hearts from being glued to a sinking ship. He is trying to save them from becoming conformed to a system that crucified His Son. The very world that men are told to admire is the world that cried, "Away with him, crucify him" (John 19:15). The world system did not improve when Christ showed up. It exposed itself. It showed what it thought of perfect truth, perfect love, perfect holiness, and perfect light. It nailed Him to a cross. So do not tell me the world is harmless. Its finest hour was Calvary, and it chose Barabbas.

## **Conclusion**

What the Bible means by "the world" is larger than most people imagine and darker than most people admit. Sometimes it refers to God's ordered creation. Sometimes it refers to the inhabited earth and the nations dwelling upon it. But in its most piercing moral and spiritual sense, it refers to an organized system of lust, pride, rebellion, and alienation from God. It has a spirit. It has a ruler. It has values. It has loves. It has a language. It has a direction. And that direction is away from the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why a man can gain

the whole world and lose his own soul (Mark 8:36). The world offers plenty, but it never offers peace with God.

The child of God must learn this early or learn it the hard way. If he mistakes the world for a harmless environment, he will start borrowing from it. He will borrow its methods, its definitions of success, its tone, its entertainments, its ambitions, and eventually its loves. Once that happens, his prayer life dries up, his discernment dims, his appetite for Scripture weakens, and his testimony starts smelling like the room he has been sitting in. The world never stops at companionship. It wants conformity. It does not merely want to be near you. It wants to shape you. That is why the command is not “manage the world carefully.” The command is “Love not the world” (1 John 2:15).

So this first essay lays down the rail for everything that follows. We are going to study the world not as sociologists, talk-show hosts, or armchair philosophers, but as Bible believers. We are going to let Scripture define the battlefield. And the first truth to settle is this: the world is not merely where man lives. It is what man builds, loves, and serves when he turns from God. Thank God there is deliverance. Thank God there is a Saviour of the world (John 4:42). Thank God there is a people chosen out of the world (John 15:19). And thank God there is a day coming when “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Revelation 11:15). Until then, a Christian had better remember who he belongs to, because if he belongs to Jesus Christ, he is here, but he is not of this world.

## **2 of 12: Not of This World - Before the Foundation of the World**

### **Introduction**

One of the greatest mistakes a Bible reader can make is to think God is reacting. Men react. Politicians react. Pastors react. Parents react. Nations react. Devils even react. But the Lord God Almighty does not sit in heaven wringing His hands, biting His nails, and trying to figure out what to do next after man messes something up. He is not a nervous chess player staring at the board because Adam made a move He did not expect. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, “which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8). Before there was a sinner, He knew sin would enter. Before there was a serpent in the garden, He knew the serpent would speak. Before there was a cross raised outside Jerusalem, He knew exactly where the nails would go. The Lord never learns. He never adjusts. He never improves His understanding. He never says, “Well, I didn’t see that coming.”

That is why the phrase “before the foundation of the world” is so important. It shows up like a great doctrinal anchor in the Bible because God wants His people to know that His plan did not begin after the fall. It was not improvised after Eden. It was not patched together after Cain murdered Abel, after Babel rose in rebellion, after Pharaoh hardened his heart, after Israel failed under the law, or after Rome nailed Jesus Christ to a tree. The Lord’s redemptive purpose was already established in His eternal counsels. Ephesians 1:4 says, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” First Peter 1:20 says Christ “verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.” Revelation 13:8 speaks of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Whether a man fully untangles every thread in those verses or not, one thing comes through like a trumpet blast. God had the whole matter in view before history started ticking.

That truth will steady you if you let it. This world-system looks loud, proud, organized, and powerful. It struts across the stage like it owns the theater. It boasts through its governments, its banks, its entertainment, its false religion, its propaganda, and its military pride as if it were permanent. But the whole thing is temporary, measured, bounded, and already under the eye of the God who “declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done” (Isaiah 46:10). The world may look like it is spinning out of control to men on the ground, but it is not outside the sovereignty of God. Before the first foundation stone of this present order was laid, the Lord already knew its rise, its rebellion, its corruption, its climax, and its collapse. That is where this essay begins.

## **1. The Foundation of the World Was Not the Beginning of God**

When the Bible speaks of “the foundation of the world,” it is speaking about the beginning of an ordered realm that God established, but you must never confuse the beginning of the world with the beginning of God. The world had a beginning. God did not. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” It does not say God began. It says the beginning began. Before the beginning, there was God. Before light, before earth, before seas, before stars, before angels shouting for joy, before Adam’s first breath, there was the living God in the fullness of His being, needing nothing, learning nothing, lacking nothing.

That alone puts a believer on solid ground. The world is not ultimate. History is not ultimate. Man is not ultimate. The devil is not ultimate. Your problems are not ultimate. God is ultimate. He is not one actor inside the universe trying to control competing forces. He is the One who made the stage, wrote the script, appointed the actors their place, and will shut the curtain when His purpose is complete. Moses said, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to

everlasting, thou art God” (Psalm 90:2). That is not just good poetry. That is doctrinal dynamite. The world is younger than God’s wisdom by eternity itself.

This matters because modern man is intoxicated with time. He thinks whatever is current must be final. He thinks whatever is visible must be decisive. He thinks because the world-system surrounds him it must therefore define him. But the world is a late arrival compared with the everlasting God. It is a temporary arrangement. It is a measured order. It is not self-existing. It is not eternal in the divine sense. So when you read “before the foundation of the world,” you are stepping into a realm where God’s mind, God’s purpose, and God’s will existed prior to the stage on which man now acts. That humbles the flesh right away. You are not dealing with a deity trying to keep up. You are dealing with the eternal Lord.

## **2. God Knew the Whole Story Before Man Fell**

The fall of man was tragic, but it was not surprising to God. Adam’s sin brought ruin into the human race, but it did not introduce uncertainty into the divine mind. The Lord was not caught unprepared by the serpent’s entrance into the garden. Acts 15:18 says, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Not some of them. Not most of them. All of them. Isaiah 46:9-10 says, “for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning.” That is not how men operate. Men guess from the present. God declares from the beginning what the end will be.

Now that does not make God the author of sin. Men love to get twisted up right there because they cannot keep basic distinctions straight. God’s foreknowledge does not make Him guilty of man’s rebellion any more than a judge’s knowledge of a crime makes the judge the criminal. The Lord knew what man would do, but man did it willingly. Adam chose. Eve chose. Cain chose. Pharaoh chose. Judas chose. Sinners choose every day. God’s omniscience does not cancel human accountability. It simply means that none of those choices ever rose above His knowledge or escaped His government.

This is why the Bible can speak so calmly and majestically about events that look chaotic to us. To men, the cross looked like disaster. To devils, it looked like victory. To frightened disciples, it looked like the end. But Acts 2:23 says Christ was delivered “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” In other words, the greatest crime in human history took place under divine foreknowledge and within divine purpose, though the wicked hands that committed it were still wicked hands. That is the pattern. God knows. Man acts. Sin is judged. Redemption advances. Heaven is never panicked.

## **3. Christ Was Foreordained Before the Foundation of the World**

One of the strongest verses on this whole subject is 1 Peter 1:19-20: “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was

foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” That means the Son of God did not become Plan B. He was not the emergency patch after Israel failed and Adam fell and Rome got ugly. Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world. Before there was a sinner needing blood, God had already purposed the Lamb whose blood would save.

Now let that sink in. Before sin entered the garden, the answer to sin was already settled in the heart of God. Before man ever tasted the forbidden fruit, Heaven already knew of a tree on which the Son of God would hang. Before there was a curse on the ground, there was a counsel in glory. Before there was the sweat of the brow, the pain of childbirth, the sword at Eden’s gate, and the grave yawning open for Adam’s race, the Lord already had the remedy in view. That does not mean the cross was a mere symbol or a staged pageant. It means the cross was eternally purposed before it was historically accomplished.

That gives you a picture of God that religion rarely shows. He is not merely powerful. He is wise. He is not merely wise. He is purposeful. He is not merely purposeful. He is redemptive. He knew what sin would cost, and He purposed Christ anyway. He knew what Calvary would require, and He purposed it anyway. He knew that the Son would be despised and rejected of men, mocked, scourged, spit upon, crucified, and made sin for us, and yet the Lamb was foreordained before the foundation of the world. That means redemption is not an appendix to the story. It is woven into the eternal purpose of God.

#### **4. The Lamb Was in the Mind of God Before the World Began**

Revelation 13:8 speaks of “the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” However a man handles every detail of that wording, one truth blazes out of it. The death of Christ was not an afterthought in heaven. The Lamb was central to the divine plan from the beginning of the world. Hebrews 9:26 says, “but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Notice the beauty there. What was purposed before the foundation of the world was manifested in the end of the world’s course in Christ’s appearing. What God had eternally ordained, He historically accomplished.

This is where Bible believers have something the whole world-system does not have. We have certainty. The philosopher cannot give it to you. The scientist cannot give it to you. The politician cannot give it to you. The therapist cannot give it to you. They are all stumbling around inside time trying to explain what they do not understand. But the Scripture opens a window and shows you that the center of history is not Caesar, not Babylon, not Wall Street, not the White House, not the Vatican, not Hollywood, not the United Nations, not

the academy, not the market, not the military. The center of history is a Lamb. The world was made by Him, the world rejected Him, and the world will be judged by Him.

That also means the world-system was doomed the moment it lifted its hand against Christ. Calvary was not the victory of the world over the Son. It was the judgment of the world through the Son. Jesus said in John 12:31, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” At the cross, the world revealed its heart and God revealed His righteousness. The world said, “We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). God answered by raising that same Man from the dead and seating Him at His own right hand. So do not ever think the world got the upper hand on Christ. It buried itself by rejecting Him.

### **5. God Chose His People in Christ Before the Foundation of the World**

Ephesians 1:4 says, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” Now there is enough dynamite in that verse to blow up half the seminary systems in America. The verse does not say God chose a man because that man was already holy and without blame. It says He chose us in Christ with that end in view. The center of the choosing is “in him.” Christ is the sphere. Christ is the basis. Christ is the key. The choice is bound up with the Son before the foundation of the world.

Now do not run off into a ditch with that verse, as men are prone to do. The same Bible that teaches God’s eternal purpose also commands all men everywhere to repent and believe the gospel. The same Bible that reveals divine choosing also says, “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). So do not use Ephesians 1 as an excuse to become a theological scarecrow mumbling about decrees while ignoring gospel invitations. The point in this context is not to create a frozen religious fatalism. The point is to show that the salvation of the believer rests in a purpose older than the world.

That should comfort the saint. Your salvation did not begin with your decision alone. It rests in a purpose that reaches back before the foundation of the world and centers in Jesus Christ. That means the believer’s security is not suspended from the weak thread of human merit. It is rooted in the eternal counsel of God. When the world-system howls, when circumstances shake, when governments rage, when your own heart condemns you, you can remember that your standing in Christ is tied to a purpose older than creation itself. The devil showed up late. Your salvation is older than his latest scheme.

### **6. The Mystery Was Hidden in God From the Beginning of the World**

Ephesians 3:9 says, “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus

Christ.” That verse shows something else astonishing. God not only knew the plan of redemption beforehand, He kept elements of that plan hidden in Himself until the proper season. Men read the Old Testament and see promises, shadows, types, sacrifices, priesthood, prophecy, kingship, covenants, and judgment. But the full revelation of the mystery concerning the body of Christ was hid in God until the appointed time. That means not only did God know what He would do, He knew when He would reveal it.

Now that tears the stuffing out of the idea that history is just random motion. There is sequence in God’s revelation. There is timing in His disclosure. There are things He reveals in seed form and things He reveals in full bloom. The law was not the whole story. Israel was not the whole story. The sacrifices were not the whole story. The prophets were not the whole story. All of them pointed, prepared, foreshadowed, and anticipated. Then in the fulness of the times, God unveiled more of what had been in His own mind all along. That is not reaction. That is planned unfolding.

It also means the world-system is operating in blindness. First Corinthians 2:7-8 says, “we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” There it is. The princes of this world, whether human or devilish or both in their coordination, did not understand what God was accomplishing. They moved in their hatred and pride, but the hidden wisdom of God outran them. They thought they were ending the matter. They were opening the very door God had ordained before the world unto our glory.

## **7. The World-System Is Temporary Because God Has Already Declared Its End**

If God knew the whole story before the foundation of the world, then the present world-system is not permanent. It may look stable. It may look entrenched. It may look like it has the money, the influence, the armies, the institutions, the screens, the microphones, and the momentum. But it is living on borrowed time. First Corinthians 7:31 says, “for the fashion of this world passeth away.” First John 2:17 says, “the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.” It does not say the world might pass away if elections go a certain way or if the right party wins or if enough activists march. It says the world passeth away. It is already in the sentence.

This is why the phrase “end of the world” shows up in Matthew 13:39, Matthew 13:49, Matthew 24:3, and Matthew 28:20. The same Bible that speaks of the foundation of the world also speaks of the end of the world. God does not just start things. He finishes them. He does not merely permit the world-system to rise. He appoints its limit. Its ruler is

judged. Its lusts are passing. Its kingdoms will be broken. Its glory will rot. Its pride will be humbled. Its blasphemies will choke in the throat of men standing before the King of kings.

That is why a Bible believer should never envy this world. Pity sinners in it. Preach to sinners in it. Rescue souls out of it by the gospel. But do not envy it. Do not admire its glitter. Do not lust after its applause. Do not think its acceptance is worth anything. The world-system is a condemned building with polished windows. It is a parade marching toward a cliff. It is a banquet served on the deck of a sinking ship. God declared the end from the beginning. So if you know the One who wrote the ending, why would you pledge your heart to a system already marked for fire and judgment?

## **Conclusion**

Before the foundation of the world, God already knew the whole story. He knew the fall, the flood, Babel, Egypt, Canaan, Babylon, Rome, apostasy, Antichrist, tribulation, and kingdom. He knew Adam would fail, Israel would stagger, the Gentiles would boast, devils would rage, and men would crucify His Son. None of that caught heaven off guard. The Lamb was foreordained before the foundation of the world. The believer was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. The hidden wisdom of God was ordained before the world unto our glory. That means history is not a loose thread. It is a woven garment in the hand of God.

That truth gives stability to the saint. When the world-system looks gigantic, remember it is still measured. When wickedness looks organized, remember it is still bounded. When false religion looks influential, remember it is still blind. When the future looks uncertain to you, it is not uncertain to God. He does not need predictions, trends, polling, data, models, or experts. He knows the end from the beginning because He is the One who ordained the course of the ages. That does not excuse sin, soften judgment, or cancel human responsibility. It simply means the throne is occupied, the plan is intact, and the King has never lost control of His world.

So this second essay lays another great stone in the foundation of the series. The world is not ultimate because it was not first. God was first. Christ was first in purpose. Redemption was first in counsel. Grace was in the heart of God before sin ever showed itself in the life of man. That means the world-system, for all its noise and swagger, is a temporary rebel order already under sentence from the God who planned salvation before history opened its eyes. If that does not steady your heart, you have not been paying attention. The child of God is not living in a universe improvised by chance. He is living in a world whose foundation, course, redemption, and end all stand open before the eyes of the everlasting God.

### **3 of 12: Not of This World - The Devil and the Kingdoms of the World**

#### **Introduction**

One of the great lies modern religion tells is that the world is mostly neutral and only becomes dangerous when a man abuses it. That is the kind of soft-headed talk you get from preachers who have spent more time studying public relations than studying their King James Bible. The Book does not present this world-system as a harmless playground that occasionally gets out of hand. It presents it as occupied territory. It presents it as a realm under hostile influence. It presents it as a kingdom structure entangled with darkness, pride, false glory, and spiritual rebellion. That does not mean every brick, every tree, every tool, and every human institution is evil in itself. It means the present arrangement of power in this age has been seized, shaped, and steered by an adversary who hates God and hates truth.

When the devil took the Lord Jesus Christ up into an exceeding high mountain and “sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them” (Matthew 4:8), he was not staging a puppet show. He was revealing something. Luke’s account says, “And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me” (Luke 4:6). Now the devil is a liar by nature, but a good liar always mixes his lie with enough truth to make it dangerous. The Lord did not correct him by saying, “You do not have any of that.” He rejected him because the path to the kingdom did not run through compromise with hell. That scene opens a window. It shows that the kingdoms of this world, in their present form, are deeply bound up with satanic influence.

That truth explains a lot of things a Bible believer sees every day. It explains why civilization can be so polished and so rotten at the same time. It explains why governments talk about justice while protecting corruption, why religion talks about love while denying truth, why culture glorifies filth while pretending to be enlightened, and why the world can applaud what God condemns and mock what God approves. Under the varnish there is a usurped order. Under the flags, crowns, diplomas, robes, cameras, contracts, and microphones there is a prince at work. This essay is about that prince, that usurpation, and those kingdoms. The world is not neutral. It is contested ground, and every child of God had better know it.

#### **1. The Devil Offered What He Actually Influences**

The temptation of Christ in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 is one of the most revealing passages in the Bible on the present world order. Matthew says, "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" (Matthew 4:8). Luke adds the words, "in a moment of time" (Luke 4:5). That is no fairy tale. That is a supernatural unveiling. The devil is showing Christ the visible structure of human power and the glitter attached to it. Kingdoms, power, glory, rulership, pomp, splendor, prestige, influence, and dominion are all laid before the rightful King by a temporary usurper.

Now you need to pay attention to what Satan says. "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me" (Luke 4:6). There is the claim. The devil says these kingdoms, in their present worldly arrangement, are under his authority in a real sense. That lines up with what the Lord later says about him being "the prince of this world" (John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11). It lines up with Paul calling him "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4). It lines up with 1 John 5:19, "the whole world lieth in wickedness." The devil's offer was a crooked shortcut to something Christ will one day possess rightly. Satan was offering a crown without a cross, glory without suffering, dominion without obedience to the Father.

The Lord's refusal is just as important as the offer. Jesus said, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). Christ did not dispute the devil's current influence over the kingdoms in their fallen order. He rejected the method. He rejected the worship. He rejected the compromise. He rejected the idea that divine purpose could be fulfilled by bowing to hell for one second. That is a lesson the church still has not learned. Every time professing Christians try to gain influence by flattering the world-system, trimming the truth, softening doctrine, and bowing to worldly power, they are reaching for the same shortcut the devil offered Christ. The answer is still no.

## **2. Satan Is Called the God of This World**

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." There it is in plain language. Satan is "the god of this world." That does not mean he is equal with God. It does not mean he is deity by nature. It means he is the ruling spiritual power over the present world-system as it operates in rebellion against the Lord. He is the one behind the blindness. He darkens minds. He bends perceptions. He twists values. He leads men to call evil good and good evil. He does not need to own the atoms to dominate the age. He just has to control the minds of the people moving in it.

Notice what that blindness affects. It affects the lost. It affects their minds. It affects their ability to receive light. “Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:4). So Satan’s warfare is not merely political, military, or cultural. It is spiritual and mental. He works to keep men from seeing Christ clearly. He works to cloud the gospel, dilute the truth, muddy the issue, and keep religion active while keeping repentance absent. He does not mind spirituality. He minds the light of the glorious gospel of Christ. He does not mind activity. He minds revelation. He does not mind churches packed with people as long as Jesus Christ is treated like an accessory instead of the only Saviour.

That title, “the god of this world,” also explains why the world seems so devoted to image, spectacle, and false worship. The devil has always wanted worship. He said to Christ, “All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:9). He wanted it from the Son of God, and he still wants it from men. The world-system reflects that craving. It is built on idolatry of one form or another. It may be literal idols, false gods, celebrity worship, political messiahs, national pride, money, self-image, technology, pleasure, or human reason, but it is always worship shifting away from the Creator to something created. That is the devil’s fingerprint. He wants worship detached from truth and directed away from God.

### **3. Satan Is Also the Prince of This World**

The Lord Jesus Christ calls Satan “the prince of this world” three times in John’s Gospel. In John 12:31 He says, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” In John 14:30 He says, “for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” In John 16:11 He says the Spirit will convict “of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” A prince rules under limited authority. He is not the rightful king, but he is a ruler with real influence. That is exactly what Satan is in relation to this present evil world. He is a usurper, not an owner. He is a prince for a season, not a king forever.

Now notice how Christ speaks. He does not say the prince of this world might eventually become judged if things keep going badly for him. He says he “is judged” (John 16:11). That means that while Satan exercises present influence, his doom is already certain. He walks the corridor of power wearing borrowed robes and carrying a sentence over his head. He is active, but he is not secure. He is loud, but he is not ultimate. He is allowed, but he is not sovereign. That distinction is important because some Christians get so obsessed with the devil’s activity that they begin to talk as if God and Satan are equal powers in a cosmic tug-of-war. They are not. The prince of this world is already judged by the One who actually owns the throne.

Still, while that prince remains at work, the kingdoms of this world bear his influence. That is why human power is so often swollen with pride, violence, vanity, and deceit. The devil's character leaks into the structures he manipulates. He was lifted up with pride. So the kingdoms of this world run on pride. He is a liar. So the kingdoms of this world run on deceit. He is a murderer from the beginning. So the kingdoms of this world are drenched in blood. He covets worship. So the kingdoms of this world manufacture loyalty cults, public pageantry, and emotional dependence on leaders, ideologies, symbols, and systems. Once you see the prince, the palace starts making sense.

#### **4. The Whole World Lieth in Wickedness**

First John 5:19 says, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." That verse is not talking about a few rough neighborhoods or a couple of bad governments. It says "the whole world." That means the entire present world-system lies under the sway of wickedness. Not every individual is equally wicked in outward conduct, and not every nation manifests evil in the same form or intensity, but the whole structure is fallen, infected, and under corrupt influence. That is why the Bible believer should stop expecting the world to behave like the church and stop expecting lost men to think like saved men.

The wording is important. The world "lieth" in wickedness. That suggests settled condition. It is at rest there. It is comfortable there. It reclines there. It is not straining to escape wickedness. It is lying in it like a man stretched out in a familiar bed. The world is at home in sin. It may dress it up, rename it, legalize it, decorate it, celebrate it, and study it with scholarly language, but it is still at home in what God condemns. That is why calls for the world to reform itself apart from Christ are mostly theater. Men may adjust laws, shift customs, and rearrange institutions, but the heart remains unchanged. A wicked world does not need polishing. It needs redemption.

That verse also makes the believer's position distinct. "We know that we are of God." There are only two camps. Of God, or of the world. Of Christ, or under wickedness. Men do not like those lines because they prefer fog. Fog gives them room to flirt with darkness while still speaking religiously. But John does not leave room for that. He says there is a people who are of God, and there is a world lying in wickedness. The problem with modern Christianity is that too many churches are trying to lie down in the same bed with the world and still claim to be of God. John would not buy it for five seconds.

#### **5. The Devil Works Through the Pride and Glory of Civilization**

When Satan showed Christ "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" (Matthew 4:8), that word "glory" matters. The devil traffics in glory. Not true glory that belongs to God,

but borrowed glare, painted splendor, polished vanity, and dazzling pretension. He loves crowns, parades, stages, robes, banners, applause, and displays of power. He loves systems that make men feel large while they remain spiritually dead. He loves the architecture of pride. He loves the theater of importance. He loves the kind of civilization that makes man say, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built" (Daniel 4:30), while forgetting that every breath in his lungs belongs to God.

That is why the devil's fingerprints show up in the great boasts of civilization. Commerce without conscience, music without holiness, wisdom without God, religion without truth, education without repentance, and politics without righteousness all fit neatly into his kingdom strategy. Colossians 2:8 warns, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." There is worldly wisdom. James 3:15 calls it "earthly, sensual, devilish." There is worldly music that stirs flesh but deadens the soul. There is worldly religion that talks about peace while rejecting the Prince of Peace. There is worldly power that offers security at the price of submission to lies.

You do not have to look for some cartoon devil in a red suit to find satanic influence. You look for the exaltation of man, the minimization of Christ, the glorification of lust, the normalization of lies, and the craving for power detached from righteousness. That is the smell of hell's cologne. When men boast in culture while despising truth, when they praise tolerance while hating Christ, when they celebrate sophistication while justifying perversion, when they talk about unity while rebelling against the word of God, you are not looking at neutral progress. You are looking at a world being shaped by a prince who hates the light.

## **6. Satan Uses Religion as Well as Politics**

One of the stupidest mistakes people make is to think the devil only works through obviously wicked things. No, sir. If the devil only used bars, brothels, bloodshed, and blasphemy, half the world would spot him quicker than they do. He is much more subtle than that. He works through religion too. Second Corinthians 11:13-15 says, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Notice that. Not an angel of obvious filth. An angel of light. Therefore "his ministers also" transform themselves "as the ministers of righteousness." Satan is not embarrassed to wear church clothes.

That means the kingdoms of this world are not merely political structures. They include religious machinery. False religion is one of the devil's favorite tools because it blinds men while convincing them they can already see. A drunk in a ditch sometimes knows he is in

trouble. A religious man trusting sacraments, traditions, rituals, works, feelings, lineage, or church membership often thinks he is just fine. That makes false religion one of hell's most efficient weapons. It keeps men busy with God-talk while keeping them strangers to the new birth. It lets them feel devout while remaining dead in trespasses and sins.

That is why the most savage opposition to Jesus Christ in His earthly ministry came not from Rome alone but from religious leaders. The Pharisees, scribes, and chief priests had the Scriptures, the temple, the garments, the ceremonies, and the reputation, and yet Jesus told them, "Ye are of your father the devil" (John 8:44). There is a kingdom lesson in that. Satan does not mind religion. He minds truth. He does not mind buildings, candles, choirs, vestments, programs, degrees, and polished sermons. He minds the gospel. He minds the blood. He minds the absolute authority of the word of God. So if you are going to understand the kingdoms of this world, you have to see altars and pulpits as well as palaces and parliaments.

### **7. Christ Will Take the Kingdoms by Right, Not by Compromise**

The devil offered Christ the kingdoms by compromise. God will give Christ the kingdoms by right. Psalm 2:8 says, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Revelation 11:15 says, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." There is the end of the matter. What Satan offered early, Christ will receive later, but not through worshiping the devil. He will receive it through suffering, obedience, resurrection, judgment, and the decree of the Father.

That should teach the church something about timing and method. The devil is always offering premature crowns. He is always offering influence without faithfulness, success without suffering, popularity without truth, power without holiness, and public glory without obedience. He offered it to Christ, and he offers it to Christians, churches, and nations. But every shortcut to dominion that bypasses submission to God winds up under hell's signature. The Lord Jesus refused the glitter because He had His eye on the throne promised by the Father. He would not sell eternal right for temporary spectacle.

So the believer lives now in a world whose kingdoms are presently entangled with darkness, but he does not despair. He does not worship the darkness, envy the darkness, or try to imitate the darkness. He waits on the King. He serves the Lord Jesus Christ. He remembers that this present world is not the final arrangement. The devil has influence now, but not forever. The prince of this world is judged. The god of this world blinds minds for a season, but the gospel still shines. The kingdoms of this world swagger now, but one

day the rightful King will speak, and every crown not laid at His feet will look like costume jewelry in a burning house.

## **Conclusion**

The devil and the kingdoms of this world are tied together far more deeply than modern religion wants to admit. Scripture does not present the present age as neutral territory. It presents it as a usurped realm under hostile influence. Satan is called the god of this world. He is called the prince of this world. The whole world lieth in wickedness. The kingdoms of the world and the glory of them were shown to Christ by a tempter who clearly had present influence over their fallen order. Politics, commerce, religion, culture, wisdom, spectacle, and power all bear the marks of that corruption when they are cut loose from the Lord Jesus Christ.

That does not mean every individual ruler is equally wicked in the same way, or that every earthly structure is identical in function. It means the present arrangement as a system is not innocent. Beneath the paint there is rot. Beneath the ceremony there is rebellion. Beneath the applause there is idolatry. Beneath the confidence of civilization there is the hiss of the serpent. That is why a Bible believer must learn discernment. He cannot afford to stare at the stage lights and miss who is pulling ropes behind the curtain. He cannot afford to equate polish with righteousness or power with divine approval.

But the final word is not Satan's. The final word belongs to Jesus Christ. The devil offered the kingdoms for worship. The Father will give the kingdoms to the Son by decree. The prince of this world is judged. The god of this world will not sit on that stolen seat forever. The church's task in this age is not to fall in love with the kingdoms of the world, not to borrow their methods, and not to bow for their favor. The church's task is to preach Christ, walk clean, shine as light, and wait for the King. The world is not neutral. The kingdoms are entangled with darkness. But there is a day coming when the darkness will lose its throne, and the only kingdom left standing will be the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

## **4 of 12: Not of This World - The Spirit of the World**

\*\*Introduction\*\*

There are a lot of people who think worldliness is just a list of outward behaviors. They think if a man avoids a few obvious vices, keeps his shirt tucked in, talks clean around the church crowd, and listens to something labeled “Christian,” he must be free from the world. That kind of shallow thinking is exactly why the world gets so much mileage inside the church. The world is not merely a set of actions. It is a current. It is an atmosphere. It is a spirit. It gets into the way men think, the way they react, the way they admire, the way they desire, and the way they measure success. It shapes their instincts before it ever shows up in their conduct. By the time it gets to the outward life, it has already been sitting in the heart for a while, rearranging the furniture.

The apostle Paul put the thing in plain words when he said, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God” (1 Corinthians 2:12). That tells you two things immediately. First, the world has a spirit. Second, that spirit is not the Spirit of God. So this is not just a clash between good taste and bad taste, or between old customs and new customs, or between country habits and city habits. This is a spiritual conflict. There is a spirit which is of God, and there is a spirit of the world. One leads men into truth, holiness, sobriety, light, discernment, and submission to Jesus Christ. The other leads men into vanity, confusion, self-exaltation, compromise, and eventual destruction, even while making the whole thing look impressive, modern, relevant, or respectable.

That is why this subject cuts so deeply. The spirit of the world is not always loud, vulgar, and obvious. Sometimes it is. Sometimes it walks in with drunkenness, filth, and blasphemy hanging off it like cheap perfume. But a lot of times it comes in bathed, brushed, educated, and polished. It comes in wearing a suit, carrying a diploma, quoting experts, talking moderation, selling sophistication, and smiling with perfect teeth. It knows how to flatter the ego while dulling the conscience. It knows how to make rebellion sound brave, compromise sound wise, and spiritual weakness sound balanced. It even knows how to dress itself in religion. That is the spirit we are dealing with here. It is in the air people breathe every day, and most of them do not even know they are being shaped by it.

**\*\*1. The World Moves by a Spirit, Not Just by Preference\*\***

The first thing that must be settled is that the world does not merely function by human preference. It moves by a spirit. First Corinthians 2:12 does not say we have not received

the customs of the world, the habits of the world, or the entertainment of the world. It says, “not the spirit of the world.” There is something invisible energizing the visible. There is something deeper than culture at work inside culture. There is something beneath trends, slogans, fashions, institutions, and public opinion. Men think they are just making independent choices, but there is a current running under those choices, carrying them toward a destination they did not choose wisely because they never saw the river.

That spirit works by forming a climate. It tells people what is normal, what is embarrassing, what is desirable, what is backward, what is enlightened, what is hateful, what is liberating, and what is worth living for. It teaches them what to laugh at and what to revere. It shapes their reflexes. After a while, men stop asking whether a thing is true or false and start asking whether it is accepted or rejected. They stop asking whether it is holy and start asking whether it is trendy. They stop asking whether it pleases God and start asking whether it will play well in the room. That is not neutral psychology. That is the spirit of the world teaching people to follow a script they never realized they had memorized.

The Bible repeatedly warns about this invisible shaping power. Ephesians 2:2 speaks of “the course of this world” and says men walked “according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” There it is again. A course, a prince, and a spirit. The world has a course because it has a spirit behind it. It is not just a random pile of bad decisions. It has direction. It has drift. It has energy. Men may boast of free thought all they want, but if they are lost, they are moving along a course set by another spirit entirely. A man can think he is steering while being carried by a tide.

## **\*\*2. The Spirit of the World and the Spirit of God Are Opposites\*\***

Paul does not present the spirit of the world and the Spirit of God as two flavors that can be blended into one healthy religious smoothie. He sets them in direct contrast. “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God” (1 Corinthians 2:12). One or the other. Not both. Not a little of each. Not God on Sundays and the world the rest of the week. The Christian life is not meant to be some miserable hybrid where a man prays with one lung and breathes the world with the other. The two spirits move in different directions because they come from different sources and aim at different ends.

The Spirit of God magnifies Christ. Jesus said, “He shall glorify me” (John 16:14). The spirit of the world magnifies man. The Spirit of God leads into truth. Jesus said, “when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). The spirit of the world leads into confusion, compromise, and self-serving lies. The Spirit of God produces “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22-23). The spirit of the world produces lust, envy, pride, restlessness, self-display, and a thousand other forms of inward agitation dressed up as vitality. One spirit sanctifies. The other spirit seduces.

That is why a believer who tries to drink deeply from both wells winds up confused, carnal, and compromised. He loses his edge. He loses his appetite for the Book. He loses his sensitivity to sin. He begins to admire things he once feared and excuse things he once judged. He starts measuring preaching by entertainment value, truth by popularity, and holiness by whether it still leaves enough room for his flesh. James says, “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). The trouble with many Christians is not that they have no mind at all. It is that they have two minds fighting over one body, and one of them smells like the world.

### **\*\*3. The Spirit of the World Shapes What People Admire\*\***

One of the clearest marks of the spirit of the world is how it shapes admiration. It teaches men what greatness looks like. It tells them who matters, what deserves applause, and what kind of life ought to be envied. Under the spirit of the world, people admire the rich, the famous, the glamorous, the powerful, the connected, the smooth, and the self-assured. They bow to image. They worship charisma. They confuse public recognition with real worth. They look at outward appearance the way the Lord warned Samuel not to do, for “man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

That spirit is so effective that it can make people admire things that ought to break their hearts. It can make them celebrate arrogance as confidence, promiscuity as freedom, vulgarity as authenticity, greed as drive, and rebellion as courage. It can make a generation laugh at purity, roll its eyes at modesty, despise plainness, and applaud men and women who are destroying themselves in public. Proverbs 14:12 says, “There is a way which

seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” That is the spirit of the world at work. It makes the deadly seem delightful.

The Spirit of God moves the opposite way. He teaches a man to admire Christ, truth, holiness, humility, faithfulness, patience, and eternal things. He teaches him to esteem what heaven esteems. He reminds him that “the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18). Once the Spirit of God gets hold of a man, he begins to see the world’s trophies as tin badges handed out on a sinking ship. He starts valuing meekness over swagger, substance over shine, and faithfulness over fame. That is how you know which spirit is training you. Look at what you admire when nobody is watching.

#### **\*\*4. The Spirit of the World Is Subtle, Flattering, and Educated\*\***

A lot of Christians are on the lookout for obvious evil and never suspect anything that sounds informed, measured, or intelligent. That is one reason they get picked off so easily. The spirit of the world is subtle. It is educated. It is flattering. It can use polished language to smuggle corruption into the room without setting off the alarm. Colossians 2:8 says, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Notice that worldly corruption can come through philosophy. It can come through intellectual packaging. It can arrive in a classroom, a lecture hall, a conference, a panel discussion, or a glossy article with footnotes all over it.

The world’s spirit loves sophistication because sophistication gives sin a disguise. A thing sounds safer when it is expressed in technical language. Adultery becomes liberation. Pride becomes self-actualization. rebellion becomes authenticity. Covetousness becomes aspiration. Vanity becomes branding. Murder becomes choice. Sodomy becomes identity. Blasphemy becomes bold art. The devil has always known that if he can rename sin, he can lower people’s defenses. He does not have to make hell smell like smoke if he can make it smell like expensive cologne. He does not have to march in carrying a pitchfork if he can arrive with credentials and a clean haircut.

That is why James 3:15 describes certain wisdom as “earthly, sensual, devilish.” There is wisdom that is not from above. There is brilliance that is wicked. There is scholarship that is rotten. There is education that darkens instead of enlightens. The spirit of the world can quote authors, cite studies, master languages, and still be dead wrong because its first principle is man instead of God. A polished liar is still a liar. A learned fool is still a fool. A fashionable heresy is still heresy. So do not assume a thing is clean because it is clever. A sewer line painted gold still carries sewage.

#### **\*\*5. The Spirit of the World Shows Up in Polished Religion\*\***

One of the most dangerous forms of the spirit of the world is polished religion. People expect the world to show up in bars, strip clubs, casinos, filthy songs, and open blasphemy. Sometimes it does. But some of its finest work is done in church clothes. Second Corinthians 11:14 says, “Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” Verse 15 says, “Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.” That means the world’s spirit can preach. It can sing specials. It can organize ministries. It can sell devotionals. It can wear a smile and carry a Bible while quietly pulling hearts away from the authority of God’s word.

That spirit loves religion that is polished, impressive, and harmless. It loves churches that are successful in the world’s eyes and powerless in heaven’s eyes. It loves sermons with no edge, worship with no reverence, doctrine with no spine, and programs with no unction. It loves a Christianity that is stylish enough for the world to tolerate because it has stopped being dangerous to the world’s values. It loves a religion that uses Jesus like a brand name while carefully avoiding the parts of Scripture that offend the flesh. The spirit of the world is perfectly content to let men talk about God as long as they do not bow to the Lord Jesus Christ in truth.

You see that spirit any time a church begins to judge itself by attendance, applause, image, comfort, and influence instead of truth, holiness, and fidelity to the Book. You see it when preachers are more worried about being called loving than about being faithful. You see it when compromise is sold as balance and conviction is mocked as extremism. You see it when the service starts feeling like a performance and the people start acting like customers. The spirit of the world will gladly let religion keep its vocabulary if it can take

away its backbone. That is why some churches are full of activity and empty of power. They have inhaled another spirit.

#### **\*\*6. The Spirit of the World Trains People What to Laugh At and Excuse\*\***

A spirit can be tracked by what it normalizes. The spirit of the world trains people what to laugh at and what to excuse. It turns shame into comedy and wickedness into entertainment. It makes impurity look amusing, rebellion look harmless, and blasphemy look clever. It conditions the conscience by repetition. Laugh long enough at something wicked and you will stop trembling at it. Watch enough corruption presented as normal and eventually your outrage will grow tired. The world's spirit knows that if it cannot get a man to approve of evil all at once, it can often get him to chuckle at it until his resistance softens.

Isaiah 5:20 says, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil." That woe is hanging over this generation like a storm cloud. The spirit of the world teaches people to reverse moral categories. It tells them that conviction is hatred, restraint is oppression, holiness is repression, and divine order is cruelty. At the same time, it tells them that indulgence is health, self-expression is sacred, and any appetite that feels strong enough must therefore be legitimate. Romans 1 lays that thing out in plain language. When men do not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gives them over, and the whole moral framework begins to disintegrate. The spirit of the world speeds that process along.

The Spirit of God does the opposite. He sharpens the conscience. He makes sin bitter. He makes truth sweet. He makes holiness attractive and compromise grievous. He teaches a man to "abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9). He does not numb the saint. He wakens him. He does not teach him to laugh with darkness. He teaches him to walk in the light. If a Christian spends enough time soaking in the world's humor, media, slogans, and emotional climate, he will find himself laughing at things that once troubled him and excusing things that once made him blush. That is not maturity. That is drift.

#### **7. The Believer Must Resist the Atmosphere or Be Formed by It**

Nobody lives in a vacuum. If a man does not resist the atmosphere of the world, he will be formed by it. Romans 12:2 says, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Conformed means pressed into a mold. The world has a mold. It has templates for masculinity, femininity, success, beauty, power, intelligence, fulfillment, and spirituality. If you do not let God renew your mind by His word, the world will happily shape it for you. It has schools, screens, songs, headlines, conversations, fashions, and influencers doing that work all day long. The pressure is constant because the atmosphere is constant.

That is why a believer cannot treat spiritual disciplines like optional accessories. Prayer is not decoration. Bible reading is not sentimental routine. Preaching is not a hobby. Fellowship with strong saints is not a luxury. These are means by which the Lord renews the inner man against the pressure of the age. Psalm 1 says the blessed man does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly but delights “in the law of the LORD” (Psalm 1:2). Why? Because counsel is always coming from somewhere. If a man is not being shaped by God’s counsel, he is being shaped by another voice. There is no neutral zone where the mind just stays clean on its own.

The Christian is told, “keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21), “abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22), and “come out from among them, and be ye separate” (2 Corinthians 6:17). That separation is not merely physical. It begins inwardly. It is a refusal to let the world write the script for the soul. It is a refusal to call good what God calls evil, or wise what God calls foolish, or admirable what God calls vain. The saint who does not resist the world’s atmosphere will slowly begin to speak its language, borrow its assumptions, and defend its values without realizing what happened. That is how compromise works. It rarely arrives as open surrender. It usually comes as slow adaptation.

**\*\*Conclusion\*\***

The spirit of the world is one of the most dangerous realities a Christian faces because it is so easy to miss and so easy to breathe. It does not always announce itself with wicked slogans and open filth. Sometimes it does. But many times it arrives dressed in scholarship, sophistication, popularity, moderation, and polished religion. It shapes what

people admire, what they excuse, what they laugh at, what they fear, and what they call freedom. It teaches them to think in the wrong categories and feel in the wrong directions. It does not merely influence behavior. It forms the inner climate out of which behavior comes.

That is why the contrast in Scripture is so absolute. “We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God” (1 Corinthians 2:12). The believer cannot live off both springs without becoming unstable. If he drinks deeply of the world, he will grow confused. If he breathes its atmosphere unchecked, he will grow carnal. If he keeps flattering its values, he will become compromised. The spirit of the world and the Spirit of God are not allies. One magnifies Christ and leads to truth. The other magnifies man and leads to corruption, even when it does so with a smile and a vocabulary full of respectable words.

So the Christian had better learn to discern the air he is breathing. He had better ask himself what is shaping his instincts, what is training his affections, what is setting his standards, and what is teaching him what matters. If he belongs to Jesus Christ, he is not here to inhale the spirit of the age until his soul goes numb. He is here to walk in the Spirit, keep his mind under the Book, judge everything by the word of God, and refuse the mold this world is trying to press him into. The spirit of the world is real, subtle, flattering, educated, fashionable, and deadly. But greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

## **5 of 12: Not of This World - The Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life**

### **Introduction**

There are some verses in the Bible that do not merely describe man, they dissect him. They do not stand back at a distance and make polite observations about the human condition. They cut him open and show him what is writhing around inside. First John 2:16 is one of those verses. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” That is one of the clearest divine X-rays ever taken of the fallen race. God takes all the glitter, noise, philosophy, pleasure, ambition, and pageantry of the world, boils it down under inspiration, and says the whole diseased thing runs on three channels. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. That is the engine. That is the circuitry. That is the poison in the bloodstream.

Now notice how the verse starts. “For all that is in the world.” Not some of it. Not the rough part over in the red-light district while the respectable section stays clean. Not just the bad neighborhoods while the elite zip codes remain polished and holy. All that is in the world. The whole arrangement of fallen human society, whether dirty or sophisticated, religious or profane, educated or crude, fashionable or vulgar, runs through those three pipes. If you are looking at a world-system built on Christ, you are not looking at this world. This world, the present evil world, is built on cravings and pride. It is built on appetite, attraction, and arrogance. It is built on what man wants to feel, what man wants to have, and what man wants others to think of him.

This is where the subject gets personal. Up to this point in the series, we have looked at the world as a system, a spirit, a kingdom order under hostile influence. But now the thing comes home and knocks on your front door. The world is not only out there in governments, corporations, false religion, entertainment, and culture. It has hooks that reach right into the old nature of every believer still dragging a body of flesh through this life. The world does not have to force its way in if it finds something on the inside willing to open the door. That is why this verse is so vital. It tells you how the world works on you. It shows the exact points where the enemy presses. The lust of the flesh is the craving to feel. The lust of the eyes is the craving to possess. The pride of life is the craving to exalt self. If you do not understand those three, you do not understand your enemy, and if you do not understand your enemy, you will lose ground while quoting verses about victory.

### **1. The World Enters Through the Old Nature**

The first thing to understand is that the world gets leverage through the old man. It does not appeal to the new nature. It does not court the Spirit of God. It does not make its bids to the inner man created in Christ Jesus. It works on the flesh. Paul says in Galatians 5:17, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.” The world system knows exactly where to knock because it is built to harmonize with the fallen tendencies still present in a believer’s body. That is why a Christian can be genuinely saved and still find himself pulled toward worldly thinking, worldly appetites, worldly admiration, and worldly vanity. The problem is not with the new birth. The problem is that until glorification, there is still old Adam hanging around in the basement wanting a vote.

James makes it plain where temptation gets traction. “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:14). The bait works because there is hunger somewhere. The world does not tempt a man in abstract. It meets something in him that responds to the scent. If there were no inward corruption, the outward pressure would have nothing to latch onto. The world is not powerful merely because it is loud. It is

powerful because the flesh is willing. That is why the saint must stop acting as if the danger is only external. There is no point in cussing the darkness outside if you are secretly feeding the darkness inside.

This is why Paul says, “make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14). Provision means supply. Fuel. Opportunity. Accommodation. A Christian who pampers the flesh and then wonders why the world keeps getting traction in his heart is like a man pouring gasoline on his porch and then praying against fire. The world has a message for the flesh. The flesh understands its language. The believer has to decide whether he is going to strengthen the inward man by the word of God and the Spirit of God, or keep handing ammunition to the very nature that the world uses as an ally. The old nature is the landing strip, and the world is constantly circling overhead looking for a place to come down.

## **2. The Lust of the Flesh Is the Craving to Feel**

The first line in the verse is “the lust of the flesh” (1 John 2:16). That is the craving to feel, to indulge, to satisfy bodily appetite without reference to God’s order, God’s boundaries, or God’s purpose. It is the demand that sensation be served. It wants taste, touch, thrill, release, stimulation, comfort, ease, and immediate gratification. It says, “I want this now, and I do not care what obedience, wisdom, holiness, or future consequence has to say about it.” The flesh is not patient. It is urgent. It does not like waiting, denying, fasting, enduring, suffering, or submitting. It wants a shortcut to pleasure and a padded path around pain.

You can see that line running all the way back to Eden. Genesis 3:6 says of the forbidden tree, “the tree was good for food.” There is the lust of the flesh. The fruit appealed to appetite. It appealed to consumption. It appealed to bodily desire. Eve did not start by saying, “I want to destroy the human race.” She started where temptation often starts, with something that looked pleasurable to take in. The devil knows how to work that channel. He does not begin by advertising damnation. He begins by advertising gratification. He says, in effect, “This will feel good. This will satisfy. This will fill a craving.” The flesh votes yes before the conscience finishes clearing its throat.

That same lust drives every form of sensual corruption in human society. Fornication, adultery, drunkenness, gluttony, drug abuse, laziness, indulgence, softness, luxury worship, and every sort of bodily pampering all run off that line. Paul lists “adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness” among “the works of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19). The lust of the flesh does not have to be gross to be destructive. It may be the worship of comfort. It may be the inability to endure hardship. It may be the need to be constantly

entertained and soothed. A man may not be passed out in a ditch and still be ruled by the lust of the flesh if he has trained himself to live like his body is master and his soul is the servant.

### **3. The Lust of the Eyes Is the Craving to Possess**

The second line is “the lust of the eyes” (1 John 2:16). If the lust of the flesh says, “I want to feel,” the lust of the eyes says, “I want to have.” It is the craving to possess what is seen. It is awakened by appearance, image, display, comparison, and visible allure. The eyes are a gateway. They pull desire inward by sight. The heart reaches for what the eye admires, and the hand eventually tries to close around what the eye has already made an idol of. That is why Scripture is constantly warning about what a man looks at, because sight has a straight line into desire.

Again, Genesis 3:6 lays it out. Eve saw that the tree was “pleasant to the eyes.” There it is in the first temptation. The fruit was not merely edible. It was attractive. It had visual appeal. The devil knows how to package rebellion. He knows how to make destruction sparkle. He knows how to paint poison in appetizing colors. That is how advertising has worked for centuries. It takes discontent, polishes it, gives it a soundtrack, adds some attractive faces and strategic lighting, and tells you that peace, power, beauty, significance, romance, or success is just one purchase away. The lust of the eyes is big business. Whole industries are built on teaching people to covet.

Achan is another clear example. In Joshua 7:21 he says, “When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold... then I coveted them, and took them.” He saw, he coveted, he took. That is the pattern. The eye takes hold, the desire rises, and the hand follows. David’s fall with Bathsheba also begins with sight. “From the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon” (2 Samuel 11:2). You do not have to be a pagan king or a thief in a war camp to know what that is. That same line runs through online lust, envy, shopping addiction, status-chasing, image obsession, and the constant comparison culture of this age. The screen in a man’s hand can become a pipeline for the lust of the eyes every hour of the day.

### **4. The Pride of Life Is the Craving to Exalt Self**

The third line is “the pride of life” (1 John 2:16). This is the craving not merely to feel or to possess, but to be somebody in the eyes of men. It is the hunger to exalt self, enlarge self, advertise self, defend self, and enthrone self. It wants recognition, deference, status, applause, superiority, and control. It wants to matter in a way that makes other people notice. It does not simply want blessings. It wants bragging rights. It is not content with

sufficiency. It wants significance. It says, “Look at me. Notice me. Praise me. Fear me. Envy me.”

Once again, Genesis 3:6 has it. The tree was “to be desired to make one wise.” That is the pride of life. The temptation was not merely physical and visual. It was aspirational. It offered elevation. It offered self-advancement. It offered the possibility of being more, knowing more, rising above one’s assigned place, stepping over God’s boundary, and becoming something grand in one’s own right. That is Satan’s old religion. Isaiah 14:13-14 gives the vocabulary of the original rebel: “I will ascend into heaven... I will exalt my throne... I will be like the most High.” Pride is the devil’s native language, and when it speaks fluently through man, you are listening to hell’s accent.

This pride shows up everywhere. It shows up in kings building monuments, scholars sneering at revelation, preachers loving titles, influencers curating an image, and ordinary men and women living for how they come across. Nebuchadnezzar said, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built” (Daniel 4:30). That is the pride of life talking in imperial form. But the same spirit lives in a teenager posing for attention, a businessman needing admiration, a church member needing to be seen as important, or a social media addict counting likes like they are sacramental tokens of worth. The pride of life is not limited to emperors. It can live quite comfortably in anybody who needs self to stay in the center of the room.

## **5. These Three Lines Run From Eden to Every Age**

One of the strongest proofs that 1 John 2:16 is a divine X-ray is that the pattern never changes. It runs from Genesis to Revelation. It runs from the garden to the city. It runs from ancient temptation to modern temptation without missing a beat. The wrapping paper changes, but the contents stay the same. Eve faces it in Eden. Achan meets it at Jericho. David falls into it in Jerusalem. Babylon institutionalizes it in commerce and glory. The devil offers it to Christ in Matthew 4. This is not an old problem that modern people have outgrown. Modern people have simply digitized it, monetized it, and put better lighting on it.

Look at the devil’s temptation of Christ. Stones to bread speaks to bodily appetite. “Command that these stones be made bread” (Matthew 4:3) works the line of the flesh. “All the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them” (Matthew 4:8) works the line of the eyes. The challenge to cast Himself down from the temple in a dramatic display carries the line of pride and display. The three lines are still there because the devil has not had to invent a fourth. Why should he? Fallen man keeps biting the same bait. What worked in Eden still works in boardrooms, bedrooms, classrooms, churches, and online platforms now.

That is why Ecclesiastes can say, “there is no new thing under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Men think they are dealing with cutting-edge temptations because the technology is new,

the packaging is updated, and the language is trendy. But the old serpent is working the same arteries. The lust of the flesh says indulge. The lust of the eyes says acquire. The pride of life says ascend. Everything from luxury branding to pornography, from celebrity culture to vanity metrics, from gluttonous comfort to political self-exaltation, can be traced back to those same three roots. The tree has grown tall, but the roots are ancient.

## **6. Modern Culture Is a Delivery System for These Lusts**

Nobody should be naïve about the fact that modern culture is designed to stimulate these three lines constantly. It is not accidental. It is engineered. The world knows what the flesh likes and feeds it. It knows what the eyes want and floods them. It knows what pride craves and gives it platforms. The whole atmosphere is designed to keep appetite stirred, comparison active, and self-consciousness inflamed. Social media, entertainment, advertising, politics, fashion, even much of popular religion are delivery systems for the same old poison. The world has simply found more efficient ways to inject it.

Think about how this works. The lust of the flesh is fed by constant sensual appeal, convenience culture, instant gratification, and the worship of pleasure. The lust of the eyes is fed by endless scrolling, curated imagery, luxury aspiration, visual temptation, and a nonstop stream of things you are supposed to want. The pride of life is fed by self-branding, personal platforms, public signaling, applause-seeking, image maintenance, and the craving to be visible. Men and women who never would have thought of themselves as idolaters are now carrying shrines in their pockets and checking them every few minutes to see if the priests of public approval have smiled on them yet.

That is why believers cannot afford to be careless with their intake. Job said, “I made a covenant with mine eyes” (Job 31:1). David prayed, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity” (Psalm 119:37). Those are not quaint old lines from another era. They are survival prayers. A Christian who leaves his senses unguarded in this age is walking through a battlefield with his chest open. If the eye is constantly fed vanity, the heart will start craving vanity. If the flesh is constantly soothed, the will grows weak. If pride is constantly fed by image, comparison, and visibility, humility begins to starve. The world is not merely around you. It is trying to catechize you every day.

## **7. Victory Comes Through Walking in the Spirit and Judging the Old Man**

The answer to these three lusts is not merely gritting your teeth harder. It is not self-salvation by determination. It is not legalistic panic. It is walking in the Spirit and judging the old man by the Book. Galatians 5:16 says, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Notice the wording. It does not say the flesh will vanish. It says the lust will not be fulfilled. The battlefield remains, but the power to refuse is supplied through the Spirit of

God. A Christian cannot win this war by flattering the flesh and then praying for sudden purity in the last five minutes of the day. He has to walk in the Spirit, keep close to the Lord, stay in the Scriptures, and deal honestly with what he is feeding.

Paul says, “they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Galatians 5:24). Crucifixion is not beautification. It is execution. The old man is not to be polished, negotiated with, reasoned with, or managed like a temperamental pet. He is to be judged. The believer has to stop talking about his favorite indulgences as if they are charming personality traits. If something feeds the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, it is an enemy to his fellowship with God. Jesus said, “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out” (Matthew 5:29). That is not advice for delicate religious hobbyists. That is war language.

At the same time, the answer is not misery for misery’s sake. The world always lies by suggesting that if you deny lust, you deny joy. But the Bible teaches the opposite. Sin promises pleasure and pays out death. Obedience looks costly at first and yields peace. Psalm 16:11 says, “in thy presence is fulness of joy.” Real joy is not found in constant indulgence. It is found in fellowship with God. The flesh screams like it is dying when denied because in one sense it is being put back in its proper place. The believer has to learn that every no to the flesh is a yes to something better. He is not being robbed when he resists the world. He is being kept from a thief.

## **Conclusion**

First John 2:16 is a divine X-ray of human corruption. “The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” is not just a memorable phrase. It is the operating code of the world-system and the pressure points of the old nature. The lust of the flesh craves to feel. The lust of the eyes craves to possess. The pride of life craves to exalt self. Those three lines have run from Eden to every age since. They worked on Eve. They worked on Achan. They worked on David. They animate Babylon. They saturate modern culture. They are the channels through which the world presses in on the believer every single day.

That is why this issue cannot remain theoretical. The world is not only in governments, false religion, and institutions. It is knocking on the inside of your own ribs through the old man. It is asking your body what it wants, your eyes what they desire, and your ego what it still needs to prove. The saint who ignores that will become worldly while still speaking religiously. He will blame culture, politics, trends, and devils, and all the while he will keep making provision for the very flesh through which the world gains access. The problem is not just out there. The breach is often inside the gate.

But thank God, the Lord has not left His people helpless. The Spirit of God, the word of God, the fear of God, and the cross of Christ give the believer everything he needs to judge the flesh and refuse the world's pull. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). The child of God does not overcome by pretending lust is not there. He overcomes by bringing it under the light, calling it what God calls it, starving it instead of feeding it, and walking in the Spirit instead of flattering the old man. The world's threefold bait is old, but so is the answer. Stay close to Jesus Christ, keep your eyes under guard, keep your body under discipline, keep your pride on a cross, and you will find that what is "not of the Father" loses much of its shine when you stay near the Son.

## **6 of 12: Not of This World – The Lamb of God and the Saviour of the World**

**Key Passage: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)**

### **Introduction**

Up to this point, this series has been dealing with the world as it really is, not as sentimental religion pretends it is. We have seen that the world is more than dirt, oceans, cities, and nations. It is a system. It is a spirit. It is an arrangement running in rebellion against God. It is fallen, blinded, judged, and corrupted. It has a prince, it has a current, and it has a course. It flatters the flesh, feeds the eyes, and inflates the pride of life. It promises glory and delivers bondage. It paints itself in colors of wisdom, progress, freedom, and sophistication, but under the varnish there is rot, darkness, death, and rebellion. If that were the whole story, every man born into this world would be trapped without remedy, chained inside a condemned order with no door out and no light from above. But that is not the whole story, and thank God it is not. The God who judged the world did not leave it without witness. The God who saw the ruin of man did not sit back and let hell have the race uncontested. He sent His Son into the very realm that hated Him.

That is where this series must pivot, because if all a man learns is that the world is bad, he has learned only half the truth. Plenty of bitter cranks know the world is bad. Plenty of suspicious men can smell corruption. Plenty of half-crazy hermits can rant about darkness, governments, commerce, religion, and devils. But unless a man sees Jesus Christ as God's answer to the whole mess, he has not yet landed where Scripture lands. The gospel is not that the world is evil. The gospel is that God sent His Son into the world to save sinners out of it. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). Now the world was already condemned, and

Christ made that plain enough, but He did not come merely to announce doom. He came to provide redemption. He came as the Lamb of God. He came as the bread from heaven. He came as the light of the world. He came as the Saviour of the world.

There is a force in that contrast that ought to shake a man if he lets it. The world system rejected Christ, but Christ entered the world anyway. The world hated Him, but He came anyway. The world was full of darkness, lies, murder, false religion, and pride, and He came anyway. He did not come because the world deserved Him. He came because God is merciful. He did not come because sinners were searching for Him. He came because sinners were lost. He did not come merely to improve society, reform culture, or give the human race a better set of ethical suggestions. He came to die. He came to shed blood. He came to bear sin. He came to provide the only way out of a fallen world for doomed men. So this essay is the redemptive center of the series. The point is not simply that the world is corrupt. The point is that Jesus Christ is the only way out of it.

### **1. The World Was Not Left Without Witness**

The first thing to settle is that God did not leave this world to itself. He did not leave man with only conscience, only creation, or only human philosophy to grope in the dark. He gave witness. He gave light. He gave revelation. He gave promise. He gave prophecy. He gave Scripture. He sent prophets. He showed forth His power in creation, for “the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen” (Romans 1:20). He put eternity in man’s heart in such a way that even the pagan cannot entirely shake the sense that he is accountable to something above himself. He did not leave the nations without rain, fruitful seasons, and providential goodness, as Acts 14:17 reminds us. But above all those witnesses, He sent His Son. The highest witness God ever gave to this world was not a thunderstorm, a starry night, a mountain range, a law code, or a prophet’s rebuke. It was a Person.

John says, “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). Then he says, “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not” (John 1:10). There is one of the great tragedies and one of the great revelations in all the Book. The world was made by Him, and yet the world did not know Him. The Creator stepped into His creation. The One who hung the lights in the heavens walked under those lights. The One who formed man from the dust stood among dust-born men. The One who made the seas walked by Galilee. The One who authored life stood in a graveyard and called Lazarus out. Yet the world knew Him not. That is how blind the world is. It can stare at its Maker and not recognize Him.

Still, that blindness does not erase the witness. If anything, it magnifies it. God's answer to the darkness of the world was not silence. It was incarnation. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). That means heaven invaded the rebel camp. God did not merely throw down commandments from a distance. He came near. He entered the human scene in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no excuse left for the world after that. It cannot say God never spoke. It cannot say God never showed Himself. It cannot say light never came. Jesus Christ is the witness of God standing in human history, and any man who turns from Him is not turning from lack of evidence. He is turning from light because he loves darkness rather than light (John 3:19).

## **2. Behold the Lamb of God**

John the Baptist did not introduce Jesus Christ to Israel as a philosopher, an activist, a reformer, a mystic, or a moral teacher. He introduced Him with sacrificial language. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). That is not accidental. That is not decorative wording. That is doctrinal precision. The first great title held before the public eye in John's Gospel is not just Christ as an example, but Christ as a Lamb. In other words, Christ's mission into the world is tied immediately to sacrifice, blood, death, substitution, and sin-bearing. A lamb in the Bible is not presented for admiration only. It is presented for offering.

That title gathers up a whole line of Scripture behind it. It reaches back to the Passover lamb in Exodus 12, where the blood on the door kept judgment out. It reaches back to the ram on Mount Moriah in Genesis 22, where God provided Himself a lamb. It reaches into Isaiah 53, where the Servant of the Lord is "brought as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isaiah 53:7). It reaches forward to Revelation, where the Lamb stands at the center of heaven's worship and final triumph. So when John says, "Behold the Lamb of God," he is not just saying, "Here is a gentle man." He is saying, "Here is God's sacrifice. Here is the One all the others pointed to. Here is the offering Heaven prepared. Here is the sin-bearer."

And notice what that Lamb does. He "taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Not merely the bad habits of the world. Not merely the social disorder of the world. Not merely the unfortunate mistakes of the world. Sin. The deepest problem in the world is not ignorance, economics, politics, education, or psychology. It is sin. That is why no human program can fix it. The world cannot legislate away guilt. It cannot medicate away guilt. It cannot educate away guilt. It cannot entertain away guilt. It cannot sanitize away guilt. Sin must be dealt with by blood, and God sent the Lamb for that very purpose. The heart of Christ's mission into the world is atonement.

## **3. The Lamb Entered the Realm That Hated Him**

One of the most astonishing facts in all Scripture is that Christ entered the very realm that was in rebellion against Him. He did not enter a welcoming world. He did not come into a clean room prepared by grateful men. He came into enemy territory. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). The world He entered was not neutral. It was religiously corrupt, politically oppressive, morally diseased, spiritually blind, and under the influence of the prince of this world. Yet into that realm came the Son of God, not with legions of angels to burn it down on first arrival, but with humility, meekness, truth, and mercy.

Think about that. The One who had every right to judge came first to save. The One who could have spoken one word and dropped every rebel into hell came in a manger. The One before whom seraphim veil their faces allowed Himself to be wrapped in swaddling clothes by human hands. The One who upholds all things by the word of His power submitted Himself to hunger, weariness, contradiction, and scorn. That is not weakness. That is condescension. That is not helplessness. That is voluntary humiliation. Philippians 2:7 says He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." He did that in a world that would repay Him with mockery and nails.

That should expose the stupidity of the world's slanders against Christ. Men act as if God is cruel for judging sin, when the truth is that God's mercy has already gone farther than any sinner has a right to demand. He sent His Son into the very world that spit in His face. He let the Holy One walk among unholy men. He let the Creator be accused by creatures, the Judge be arraigned by lawbreakers, the Truth be called a liar, and the Life be put to death. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Not when we improved. Not when we cleaned up. Not when the world got religious enough to deserve Him. While we were yet sinners.

#### **4. The Bread Given for the Life of the World**

Jesus Christ is not only the Lamb of God in relation to sacrifice. He is also the bread of life in relation to nourishment and living union. In John 6:33 He says, "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." In verse 51 He says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven... and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." There is the same mission stated from another angle. He came down from heaven for the life of the world. Not to decorate the world. Not to flatter the world. Not to entertain the world. To give life to it.

That means the world's fundamental problem is not merely that it is guilty. It is dead. Sin does not just make man criminal. It makes him spiritually dead. Ephesians 2:1 says, "you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Dead men do not need advice

first. They need life. A corpse does not need motivation. It needs resurrection power. So Christ does not merely arrive as a lecturer explaining how living people can optimize their moral condition. He arrives as bread from heaven for starving men and as life for the dead. That is why all the world's substitutes are so pitiful. Religion offers routine. Philosophy offers speculation. Entertainment offers distraction. Commerce offers acquisition. Politics offers slogans. Christ offers life.

The language of bread also tells you something else. Bread has to be received. It has to be taken in. It has to become personal. A man can admire bread and still starve to death with it sitting in front of him. He can discuss its texture, praise its smell, and debate its history while dying of hunger. So it is with Christ. It is not enough to compliment Him. It is not enough to quote Him. It is not enough to place Him in a lineup of admired religious figures. He must be received by faith. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger" (John 6:35). The world needs more than information about Christ. It needs union with Christ. It needs His life.

## **5. The Saviour of the World**

In John 4, after the woman at the well brings the townsmen out to hear Jesus, they say, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42). That is one of the clearest confessions in the New Testament. Not merely a helper of the world. Not merely an inspirer of the world. Not merely a teacher for the world. The Saviour of the world. That word "Saviour" means rescue, deliverance, salvation. The world is not sick merely; it is lost. It is not bruised merely; it is perishing. It does not need a motivational coach. It needs a Saviour.

That title also reminds you that Christ is the only answer broad enough for the whole world and narrow enough to exclude all rivals. He is broad enough because men from every nation, tribe, and tongue must come through Him. He is narrow enough because there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12). The world loves pluralism because pluralism allows men to remain proud. It lets them pretend that all roads are basically fine and that sincerity matters more than truth. But the Bible shatters that nonsense. If Christ is the Saviour of the world, then there is no other saviour for the world. If He is the Lamb of God, no other sacrifice can do. If He is the living bread, no other nourishment can sustain the soul.

That exclusiveness is exactly why the world hates Him. The world can tolerate a religious figure who offers one path among many, but it hates the Son of God who says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The

offense is not merely His morality. It is His uniqueness. He does not leave room for rival saviours, rival mediators, rival systems, rival paths, rival priesthoods, rival merits, or rival redemptive schemes. That is why the world system always tries to shrink Him. If it cannot erase Him, it tries to reduce Him to a teacher, a prophet, a revolutionary, a moral example, anything except what He is. But Scripture will not let it. He is the Saviour of the world.

## **6. The World Rejected Him, Yet He Died for Sinners in It**

The contrast at the heart of this essay is that the world rejected Christ, and Christ still died for sinners trapped in that world. John 3:19 says, “light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” John 15:18 says, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.” The world system looked at perfect purity, perfect truth, perfect love, perfect wisdom, and perfect holiness, and it did not fall down in repentance. It crucified Him. That tells you everything you need to know about the moral state of the world. If the world could have improved itself by exposure to a perfect example alone, Christ’s presence would have done it. Instead, His presence exposed its hatred.

And yet He died for sinners in that very world. Not after the world apologized. Not after Jerusalem cleaned up its act. Not after Rome reformed its legal system. Not after the Pharisees repented of hypocrisy. While the world was showing what it was, Christ was showing what God is. “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). That does not excuse their sin, but it reveals His mercy. On the cross, the world system reached its ugliest moment and God displayed His redemptive answer in the same event. The cross is where the world’s hatred and God’s love meet face to face. It is where sin comes to full bloom and grace overrules it.

That is why the Christian must never preach the corruption of the world without eventually arriving at Calvary. If he stops at denunciation, he has not yet preached like God writes. The prophets thundered, but they pointed somewhere. The apostles exposed darkness, but they preached Christ crucified. There is a place for showing the world’s evil, and we have been doing that in this series, but the center of the message is not merely that the world is rotten. The center is that Jesus Christ died for rotten sinners and rose again. He entered the world to redeem men out of it. He did not come to help the world decorate its chains. He came to break them.

## **7. Christ Is the Only Way Out of the World**

When all is said and done, Jesus Christ is not one possible escape route from the world. He is the only way out. Men may try religion, morality, activism, education, nationalism, mysticism, philosophy, or self-help, but none of those can transfer a man out of the power

of darkness. None of them can wash sin away. None of them can quicken the dead soul. None of them can reconcile a sinner to God. Colossians 1:13 says God “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” That deliverance is in Christ, not in ceremony, not in human achievement, not in denominational loyalty, and not in self-reform.

This is why the gospel is not merely a message about going to heaven when you die. It is that, blessedly so, but it is more. It is deliverance from this present evil world. Galatians 1:4 says Christ “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.” There is the direct statement. He did not simply come to improve your mood while you remain chained to the same old world system in your mind and affections. He came to deliver you. That means salvation changes allegiance, citizenship, family, destiny, and spiritual environment. The believer is still in the world physically, but he is no longer of it because he has been brought into union with the Son who is not of it.

The tragedy is that many people want the benefits of Christ without the deliverance of Christ. They want comfort without repentance, heaven without conversion, blessing without surrender, and religion without a broken yoke. But that is not salvation. Jesus Christ saves men from sin, from wrath, and from the present evil world. He is not a mascot for a worldly life. He is the Saviour who calls men out. That is why the world hates strong preaching about Him. It does not mind a Christ it can wear like jewelry or quote like poetry. It minds the Christ who demands repentance and provides the only true escape from a condemned system. But He is still the only door. “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved” (John 10:9).

## **Conclusion**

The redemptive center of this whole series is Jesus Christ. The world is fallen, blinded, judged, and corrupted, but God did not leave it without witness. He sent His Son into the world. He sent the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. He sent the living bread from heaven to give life to the world. He sent the Saviour of the world to rescue sinners trapped in darkness, guilt, and spiritual death. That means the final answer to the world’s condition is not suspicion, bitterness, or cultural analysis, though all of those have their place in exposing error. The final answer is a Person. The final answer is Christ.

That makes the contrast all the more glorious. The world system hated Him, but He came anyway. The world rejected Him, but He died anyway. The world was blind to Him, but He was still its light. The world was starving, and He was still its bread. The world was guilty, and He was still its Lamb. The world was lost, and He was still its Saviour. There is no grace like that. There is no mercy like that. There is no gospel like that. Men can mock Him,

minimize Him, and replace Him in their systems, but the heaven of heavens has no other name, no other blood, no other Lamb, and no other Saviour for ruined sinners.

So as this series moves forward, never lose the center. We are not studying the world merely to become experts on corruption. We are studying it so the contrast with Christ becomes brighter, sharper, and more glorious. The point is not just that the world is bad. The point is that Jesus Christ is the only way out of it. If a man has Him, he has life. If a man rejects Him, the whole world cannot compensate for what he has lost. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). The answer is nothing. A man may have the world's praise, money, pleasures, and position, but if he does not have the Lamb of God, he has nothing that will survive the judgment. But if he has Christ, then even in a dark world he has the one thing the world never could give and never can take away.

## **7 of 12: Not of This World – I Am the Light of the World**

**Key Passage: "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)**

### **Introduction**

There is a great deal of talk in this generation about light, enlightenment, awakening, insight, awareness, and understanding, and most of it is smoke from a pit. Men talk about being enlightened while stumbling around in moral darkness. They brag about progress while dragging filth behind them like a bridal train. They talk about higher consciousness while they cannot tell a man from a woman, truth from propaganda, or repentance from self-expression. The world uses the vocabulary of light, but that does not mean it has any. A thief can talk about honesty and still be a thief. A liar can lecture on facts and still be a liar. A dark world can use bright words and still remain black as midnight in its soul. The real issue is not whether men talk about light. The issue is whether they have ever met the One who said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).

Now that statement of Christ is one of the most sweeping claims ever uttered by human lips, because those were not merely human lips. He did not say, "I am a light." He did not say, "I bring some light." He did not say, "I reflect part of the light." He said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). That is absolute. That is exclusive. That is final. That means the world is not just somewhat uninformed and in need of better educational policy. It means the world is in darkness, and the only true light for it is Jesus Christ. Not religion. Not

philosophy. Not science falsely so called. Not politics. Not psychology. Not scholarship. Not human reason at its best. Jesus Christ. The world is not merely misguided. It is blind. It does not need better wallpaper on the walls of its prison cell. It needs light from another realm.

That is what makes this subject so powerful. The world cannot illuminate itself because darkness does not cure darkness. A blind man cannot lead a blind man out of a ditch without both of them ending up in the mud. Jesus said exactly that in Matthew 15:14, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." The reason the world keeps producing new forms of old corruption is because it keeps trying to solve spiritual blindness with human cleverness. It tries education, reform, policy, activism, systems, and religious cosmetics, while the central problem remains untouched. Men do not merely need more information. They need revelation. They need the Light. And once that Light shines, the believer becomes a secondary light in this dark order, not because he generates light of his own, but because he reflects the One who does. That is where this essay is going. Christ first, then the Christian in relation to Him. The Light first, then the lamp.

## **1. The World Is Not Just Misguided, It Is Blind**

One of the first truths a Bible believer has to settle is that the world's condition is deeper than confusion. It is blindness. Second Corinthians 4:3-4 says, "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." There it is in black and white. The problem is not merely lack of data. The problem is blindness. The devil has blinded minds. That means the world's condition is not simply intellectual deficiency. It is spiritual incapacity. Men do not merely fail to see the truth because it is difficult. They fail to see it because something has happened to their sight.

That explains why the world can look directly at truth and still reject it. When Jesus Christ stood before men in the flesh, healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils, fulfilling prophecy, speaking as never man spake, they did not all fall on their faces in repentance. Many of them hardened up, got angry, and started plotting His death. Why? Because blindness is not cured by proximity alone. A blind man can stand in a sunlit field and still see nothing. The presence of light does not benefit him unless his eyes are opened. That is why John 1:5 says, "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." The darkness did not master it, and it did not understand it.

This is exactly why the world's self-confidence is so dangerous. It is bad enough to be blind. It is worse to be blind and bragging about your vision. That is where modern civilization lives. It celebrates its insight while its moral and spiritual eyesight keeps collapsing.

Romans 1 says men became vain in their imaginations, “and their foolish heart was darkened” (Romans 1:21). Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. There is the whole modern world in one verse. The problem is not simply that men need a better viewpoint. The problem is that the heart is darkened and the mind is blinded. No system generated inside that darkness can produce light. The room cannot light itself by admiring the furniture.

## **2. Jesus Christ Is Not One Light Among Many**

When Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12), He was not offering Himself as one religious option among a buffet of spiritual possibilities. He was declaring Himself to be the singular light for the whole world. That is why His claims are so offensive to a pluralistic age. The world can tolerate spiritual teachers, moral influencers, therapeutic gurus, and inspirational figures by the truckload, provided none of them claims to be final. But Jesus Christ does not fit into a comparative religion textbook as one example among many. He stands alone. “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). “I am the door” (John 10:9). “I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25). “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). Those are not suggestions. Those are declarations of absolute sufficiency and absolute exclusiveness.

John’s Gospel opens with this truth in majestic language. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). Notice that life and light are tied together in Him. He does not merely show the way to life. He is life, and that life is the light of men. Then John says, “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). The true Light. That means other lights are false, partial, borrowed, or deceptive. Men may call them lights. Religious systems may advertise them as lights. Philosophers may polish them until they shine in a lecture hall. But if they are not Jesus Christ, they are not the true Light.

That is where a Christian must not soften up. Christ is not improved by being lumped in with others. His glory is not magnified by being treated like one candle in a room full of equal candles. He is the Sun. Everything else is either a created reflection or a counterfeit flicker. The world hates that because it loves options that leave self in control. But the Lord Jesus does not leave room for competitors. If He is the Light, then all rival lights must be judged by Him and will be found wanting where they differ from Him. The world may call that narrow. Heaven calls it truth.

## **3. Darkness Cannot Cure Darkness**

One of the most basic truths in all of Scripture is that darkness has no power to cure itself. It does not evolve into light. It does not educate itself into light. It does not hold a conference and vote itself into light. It needs light from outside itself. That is why John says,

“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Light belongs to God in an absolute sense. Fallen man does not manufacture it. At his best, left to himself, he can rearrange shadows, label them, and congratulate himself for the improvement. But he cannot generate the kind of light that brings life, truth, holiness, and saving knowledge of God.

This is why the world’s wisdom always bottoms out. First Corinthians 1:21 says, “the world by wisdom knew not God.” It had wisdom of a sort. It had systems. It had schools. It had philosophers, poets, traditions, and speculations. But by wisdom it knew not God. Why? Because fallen human wisdom operating in darkness cannot break out of the room. It can decorate the darkness, classify the darkness, and write long papers about the darkness, but it cannot turn itself into light. There has to be revelation. There has to be an intrusion from above. There has to be a word from God.

That is why all the world’s attempts to fix itself without Christ eventually become variations of the same old corruption. You can change the slogans, update the branding, and digitize the rebellion, but the heart of man remains dark until the light of Christ shines in. Religion without Christ is darkness in a choir robe. Politics without Christ is darkness holding office. Education without Christ is darkness with a diploma. Entertainment without Christ is darkness singing harmony. None of those things can save because none of them are the Light. They may have their place in earthly order, but they cannot regenerate the soul or reveal the Father. Darkness does not cure darkness.

#### **4. Christ Shines Into a Dark Order From Another Realm**

Jesus Christ is not a product of the world trying to rise above itself. He is light from another realm. That is why John 8:23 is so important. Jesus said, “Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.” There is the dividing line. He is not a better specimen of worldly humanity. He is not the highest flower of human evolution, the finest expression of religious consciousness, or some mystical teacher who discovered insights available to all. He is from above. He is not of this world. That is why He can light it. A prisoner born in the cell cannot unlock the prison from inside by his own native resources. Deliverance has to come from outside.

This is why the incarnation matters so much. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Light came into the dark order. The world did not climb up to God. God came down into the world in the person of His Son. That destroys every proud religious system in one stroke. Men love systems where they can climb, earn, merit, discover, purify, and ascend. But the Bible shows a world so blind and so dead that its only hope is divine

visitation. Christ did not come as an assistant to human religion. He came as heaven's answer to human ruin.

This also means that when Christ shines, He does more than comfort. He exposes. Light does not just make men feel safe. It reveals what is there. That is why men react so violently to Him. John 3:19-20 says, "light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light... For every one that doeth evil hateth the light." The same light that guides the honest also exposes the liar. The same light that comforts the repentant disturbs the rebel. Christ does not merely make the world feel better about itself. He reveals it for what it is. That is why darkness hates Him. He tells the truth too clearly.

### **5. The Light of Christ Gives the Light of Life**

The Lord does not merely say He is the light of the world. He adds, "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). There is more than exposure here. There is impartation. The light Christ gives is tied to life. The world offers information without regeneration, stimulation without transformation, and movement without direction. Christ gives the light of life. That means His light is living, saving, transforming, and sustaining. It does not merely show a path on the ground. It gives a man new capacity to walk it.

That is why the blind man in John 9 is such a tremendous picture. Jesus heals a man blind from birth and then says, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). The miracle is not random. It is a sign. Christ gives sight because Christ is the Light. The man's eyes are opened physically, but behind the sign stands a spiritual reality. That is what Christ does for sinners. He opens what was shut. He gives sight where there was darkness. He makes a man see what he could never have seen left to himself. Salvation is not man borrowing a few noble ideas from Jesus. It is God opening the eyes of the blind.

This is why following Christ changes the way a man sees everything. Once the light of life comes in, he begins to see sin as sin, vanity as vanity, false religion as false religion, and the world as the passing shadow it really is. He also sees truth, mercy, grace, judgment, eternity, and the glory of God in Jesus Christ. The light is not theoretical. It is practical. It changes the path. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). The man who follows Christ does not merely carry an opinion. He walks in another light.

### **6. Believers Are the Light of the World in a Secondary Sense**

After establishing Himself as the Light, Christ turns to His disciples in Matthew 5:14 and says, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Now that does not contradict John 8:12. It depends on it. The disciple is not the light in the same original,

absolute, self-existent sense that Christ is the Light. The believer is light in a secondary, derived, reflective sense. He shines because he has been lit. He reflects because he has been illuminated. The moon is not the sun, but it can reflect the sun's light into the night. So it is with the Christian in relation to Christ.

That is why the Lord immediately moves into the imagery of a candle. "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel" (Matthew 5:15). A candle does not generate the fire that first lit it. It receives it. Then it bears it. That is the believer's calling. He is not the source of truth. He is a bearer of truth. He is not the fountain of life. He is a witness to the One who is. He does not improve on Christ's light, and he must never try to replace it with his own charm, cleverness, or personality. His job is to let the light given by Christ shine through his words, works, convictions, and testimony.

This makes the Christian's witness both humbling and serious. Humbling, because he has no light of his own to boast in. Serious, because if he hides the light entrusted to him, darkness is left less confronted than it ought to be. The church is not here to blend into the darkness like religious camouflage. It is here to shine. Paul says believers are to be "blameless and harmless... among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15). Not because the world is worthy of light, but because Christ is worthy of witness. The saint's life is supposed to make the darkness more obvious and the truth more visible.

## **7. Light and Darkness Cannot Be Mixed Without Corruption**

This brings us to the practical knife-edge of the subject. The light of Christ and the darkness of this age cannot be mixed without corruption. Second Corinthians 6:14 asks, "what communion hath light with darkness?" The answer is none. Not some. None. Light reveals darkness; it does not partner with it. When light is mixed with darkness, what you actually get is not a beautiful compromise. You get dimness. You get confusion. You get blurred edges where people cannot tell what is holy and what is unholy, what is truth and what is theater, what is Christ and what is the world painted with gospel words.

This is exactly where modern Christianity has made such a wreck of itself. In an effort to be acceptable to the age, it has tried to blend light and darkness into one religious package. It softens doctrine, mutes conviction, trims sharp edges off Scripture, and borrows the world's methods, aesthetics, ambitions, and measurements of success. Then it wonders why the power is gone. It wonders why the preaching has no authority, why the people have no discernment, why the churches have no backbone, and why the world is not impressed except when the church imitates it badly. That is what happens when a lamp starts envying the dark instead of exposing it.

The New Testament never tells the church to become dim so the darkness will feel more comfortable. It tells believers to “walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8), to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11), and to shine. That means a Christian cannot be faithful and worldly at the same time. He cannot keep Christ’s light blazing and still flirt with the moral darkness, doctrinal confusion, and spiritual compromise of the age. The more clearly he reflects Christ, the less comfortably he will fit the world. That is not failure. That is the nature of light.

## **Conclusion**

Jesus Christ is the light of the world. The world is not merely uninformed. It is blind. It does not need improved slogans, better management, polished religion, or another round of human cleverness. It needs light from above, and that light is found only in the Son of God. He is not one light among many. He is the true Light. The world cannot cure its darkness because darkness does not cure darkness. Left to itself, it only learns how to name its shadows more elegantly. But when Christ shines, He reveals, exposes, guides, and gives the light of life.

That puts every sinner in a crisis. Light has come into the world. The question is whether a man will come to the light or flee from it. Christ is not content to remain a decorative figure in the corner of a religious room. He stands in absolute authority as the Light by which all else must be judged. Every philosophy, every religion, every movement, every idea, every institution, and every personal life must be measured by Him. What agrees with Him stands in the light. What opposes Him is darkness, no matter how polished, educated, successful, or admired it may appear to be.

It also puts every believer under a solemn responsibility. The Christian is called to be the light of the world in a secondary sense because he belongs to Christ and reflects Christ. He is not here to blend in with the age, borrow its darkness, or soften his shine to keep rebels comfortable. He is here to bear witness. He is here to let the life and truth of Jesus Christ be seen in a dark order. That is impossible if he tries to mix light with darkness. So let the world have its shadows, its smoke, its glitter, and its counterfeit enlightenment. The saint has something the world cannot manufacture and cannot understand apart from grace. He has the Light. And if he follows the One who said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12), then however dark the age becomes, he does not have to walk in darkness.

**Key Passage: “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (John 15:19)**

## **Introduction**

This is where the title of the series starts hitting like a hammer instead of sounding like a slogan. Up to this point we have seen the world for what it is: fallen, blind, corrupted, dark, hostile to God, and organized in rebellion under the spirit and power of this present evil age. We have seen that the world is not merely scenery. It is not just dirt, nations, cities, trade routes, music, institutions, and cultures rolling along harmlessly while men occasionally misuse them. The world in the Bible is a moral order, a spiritual current, a hostile arrangement that loves its own and hates the Lord Jesus Christ. But now we come to the believer’s place in relation to that world, and this is where the doctrine gets uncomfortably clear for half the religious crowd. A saved man is not merely improved in the world. He is chosen out of it.

That means salvation is not just forgiveness of sins, though thank God it is that. It is not just a change of destination, though thank God it is that too. It is not just peace of mind, better habits, and a slightly cleaned-up life with a few religious interests stapled onto the same old heart. Salvation is a transfer of belonging. A saved man changes families, citizenship, allegiance, ownership, and spiritual identity. He is still here physically. He still walks the same roads, breathes the same air, pays the same bills, works the same kind of job, and suffers in the same kind of body. But spiritually speaking, he is no longer from the same crowd, no longer animated by the same spirit, no longer under the same ruler, and no longer headed to the same destination. The world can still see him, but it cannot claim him.

This is exactly the kind of truth modern religion hates because it draws a line. It does not leave everything hazy and sentimental. It does not let a man pretend he belongs equally to Jesus Christ and the present evil world. It forces a division. Jesus said, “ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world” (John 15:19). There is the line. That does not mean isolation from lost people, as if a saint is supposed to crawl into a cave and congratulate himself for not being near sinners. The Lord Jesus ate with publicans and sinners, and if you are going to win anybody, you have to be where lost people are. But being among them is not the same as being of them. Biblical separation is not self-righteous isolation. It is belonging to another King. It is being bought, called, marked off, and kept for Jesus Christ while still walking through a world that no longer defines you.

### **1. Chosen Out of the World Means a Change of Belonging**

The first thing to settle is the wording itself. Jesus did not say the believer is improved by the world, accepted by the world, or adjusted within the world. He said, "I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15:19). That means the very act of Christ's choosing involves separation from a prior sphere of belonging. A man is not left in the old crowd with a small devotional patch sewn onto his jacket. He is taken out. Not physically removed from the planet, because that is clearly not what the Lord means, but spiritually transferred out of one order and into another. The saved man has been relocated in terms of spiritual identity. He is still on earth, but he is no longer owned by the same realm.

That is why the New Testament language is so strong. Colossians 1:13 says God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." There is no way to weaken that without mutilating the text. Delivered from. Translated into. That is transfer language. Kingdom language. Authority language. It means one dominion has been left behind and another dominion has been entered. A man may still have the same name on his driver's license and the same shoes on his feet, but spiritually speaking he has crossed a line that Heaven itself recognizes. He belongs somewhere else now.

This is why so much shallow preaching produces such shallow Christians. Men are told to ask Jesus into their hearts so they can feel better, cope better, sleep better, and maybe go to heaven when they die, while hardly a word is said about ownership, allegiance, or kingdom transfer. The result is a generation of churchgoers who think salvation is an upgrade package for worldly living instead of a rescue out of a hostile order. But the Lord's language will not allow that. If He chose you out of the world, then the world is no longer your native spiritual environment. It is not home anymore. You may still pass through it, but you do not belong to it.

## **2. The Christian Has Changed Families**

When a man is saved, he does not merely adopt a new set of moral preferences. He changes families. Jesus told some very religious men, "Ye are of your father the devil" (John 8:44). That was not poetic exaggeration. That was spiritual diagnosis. Men outside of Christ are not spiritually neutral. They belong to a lineage, a moral order, and a fatherhood that traces back to rebellion. But when a sinner receives Jesus Christ, something radical takes place. John 1:12 says, "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." That is not cosmetic religion. That is new family identity.

This family change is one reason the world cannot understand a born-again believer. First John 3:1 says, "therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." Why not? Because the saint now bears a different family likeness. There is a new Father, a new life, a

new birth, and a new seed operating in him. He may still have old habits to mortify, old wounds to carry, old battles to fight, and old weaknesses to drag around in his flesh, but the root of his identity has changed. He is no longer merely Adam's child in ruin. He is a son of God by faith in Christ Jesus. The world may see his face, but it cannot read his birth certificate in heaven.

That is why the believer cannot ultimately feel at home in the world's household anymore. The speech sounds wrong. The values feel foreign. The laughter rings hollow. The ambitions smell off. The whole moral furniture in the room belongs to another father. A Christian may wander, backslide, compromise, and grieve the Holy Spirit, but even then there will be a conflict in him because his deepest identity is no longer of that house. The prodigal may go to the far country, but he does not cease to be the father's son. The new birth introduces a family rupture with the world that no amount of cultural pressure can fully erase.

### **3. The Christian Has Changed Citizenship and Allegiance**

The believer has not only changed families. He has changed citizenship. Philippians 3:20 says, "For our conversation is in heaven." That word carries the idea of citizenship, commonwealth, and manner of life. A saint is still geographically present on earth, but spiritually and politically, in the highest sense, his citizenship is somewhere else. Heaven has already claimed him. His King is already enthroned. His law is already settled. His inheritance is already reserved. The fact that he lives under the governments of men for a while does not cancel the fact that his deepest allegiance is no longer earthly.

This is why the Christian must be very careful never to let patriotism, culture, tribe, movement, or public identity outrank Jesus Christ. There is nothing wrong with loving one's people, caring for one's land, or honoring lawful authority in its place. The Bible commands believers to pray for rulers and submit where conscience before God allows. But once any earthly allegiance starts demanding what belongs only to Christ, the line has been crossed. Acts 5:29 still stands: "We ought to obey God rather than men." The saint is not anti-earthly order. He is simply no longer under ultimate allegiance to this world's order.

That is why the world becomes irritated with real Christians. It can tolerate religious people who use faith as a cultural accessory. It can tolerate churchgoers who are loyal to God only so long as that loyalty does not interrupt their loyalty to the age. But a believer whose allegiance truly belongs to Christ is another matter. He cannot be fully bought, fully intimidated, or fully absorbed into the world's mold. His citizenship keeps pulling against the age. He has another flag over his soul. He may submit to earthly structures where Scripture commands, but his knees finally bow elsewhere.

### **4. The Christian No Longer Belongs to the World's Ruler or Spirit**

A man chosen out of the world no longer belongs to the world's ruler. He no longer belongs to the prince of this world, the god of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Ephesians 2:1-3 says that before salvation believers walked "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air." That was past tense for the saint. It was once true, but it is not his present identity. He may still feel the pull of the flesh and the pressure of the age, but he is no longer under the same mastery. The ruler has changed.

That is tied directly to the spirit of the world. First Corinthians 2:12 says, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God." There is the distinction. The believer cannot honestly say, "I am still basically animated by the same spirit as the world, only now I sprinkle some Christianity on top." No, sir. If he is saved, he has received another Spirit. That does not mean he always yields to that Spirit as he ought. It does not mean he never acts carnally. But it does mean the animating principle that defines his true life is no longer the spirit of the world.

This is why worldly Christianity is such a monstrosity. It is a contradiction trying to live in one body. It is a man with one foot in the kingdom of God and the other foot in the spirit of the age, trying to walk without splitting himself in half. If you belong to another ruler and another Spirit, then eventually that fact has to show up in what you love, what you tolerate, what you admire, what you excuse, and what you fight. The world's ruler and the saint's ruler are not allies. The world's spirit and the Spirit of God are not drinking companions. One of them will grieve the other every time.

## **5. Separation Is Not Isolation**

Now this is where a lot of people go stupid in both directions. On one side, you have the worldly crowd who hear separation and think it means legalistic isolation, joyless withdrawal, and a cold-blooded contempt for lost people. On the other side, you have people so frightened of appearing extreme that they throw away separation entirely and call every compromise love. The Bible does neither. Biblical separation is not isolation from sinners. Jesus prayed, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). There it is. Not out of the world physically, but kept from its evil.

The Lord Himself moved among sinners. He was called "a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matthew 11:19), not because He joined in their sin, but because He came near enough to call them out of it. If separation meant physical avoidance of lost people, then Christ violated His own doctrine, which of course He did not. The issue is not proximity but participation. A Christian may work beside lost men, speak with them, eat with them, help

them, weep with them, and preach to them without becoming of them. The doctor can enter the plague ward without becoming a lover of disease, provided he remembers why he is there.

So separation is not snobbery. It is not the saint standing off at a distance polishing his halo while muttering about how much better he is than the unwashed masses. The Christian is not better by nature. He is not cleaner by merit. He is not superior by origin. “Such were some of you” (1 Corinthians 6:11). Whatever difference now exists is due to grace, blood, and new birth. Biblical separation is a matter of belonging, allegiance, and moral shape, not self-exalting isolation. The saint is separated unto Christ so that he can represent Christ in a world that needs Him.

## **6. Separation Means Refusing the World’s Mold**

The real issue is not whether a Christian ever stands near lost people. The real issue is whether he takes the shape of the world around him. Romans 12:2 says, “And be not conformed to this world.” Conformed means pressed into a mold. The world has a mold for everything: success, masculinity, femininity, beauty, strength, influence, humor, freedom, intelligence, and spirituality. It wants to shape the Christian into something manageable, diluted, stylish, and harmless. It does not mind religion if religion will take the same shape as the age. What it hates is a believer who refuses the mold altogether.

That refusal is where real separation shows up. It shows up in speech, not because the saint is trying to perform holiness, but because his mouth no longer wants to sound like the sewer the world treats as wit. It shows up in affection, because he no longer loves what Christ died to save him from. It shows up in ambition, because he no longer measures success by applause, money, or status alone. It shows up in worship, because he no longer needs the world’s entertainment package to stir what only the Holy Ghost should stir. It shows up in doctrine, because he is no longer willing to trim truth just to stay acceptable.

This is why so many professing Christians are miserable. They are trying to keep Christ and the mold at the same time. They want to belong to Jesus while still being admired by the world for not being too much like Jesus. That cannot last without inward confusion. If the Lord chose you out of the world, then the world’s mold is no longer your pattern. Christ is your pattern. The saint is not called to become weird for weirdness’ sake, but he is called to become unlike the world wherever the world stands in defiance of his King. The more Christ shapes him, the less the age will know where to place him.

## **7. The World’s Hatred Proves the Believer’s Difference**

Jesus gave one of the most searching tests of spiritual identity in John 15:19: “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.” That means the world has a built-in recognition

system. It knows its own. It may not agree on every detail. It may have factions, tribes, parties, denominations, and rival brands, but when it comes to fundamental spiritual belonging, it recognizes family resemblance. If a man is thoroughly of the world, the world feels at ease with him. It may not like his personality. It may not enjoy his style. But it understands him, approves his native assumptions, and senses that he is one of theirs.

But Jesus continues, “because ye are not of the world... therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19). That hatred may show up as persecution, mockery, exclusion, condescension, or polite marginalizing. It may come from secular men, religious men, academic men, political men, or even carnal church members. But the friction is there because the identity is different. The saint’s presence, if he is walking with God, exposes something. He does not have to be obnoxious to create that tension. Merely living under another King, with another set of loves, threatens a world built on self-rule. Light irritates darkness just by being light.

Now that hatred should never be confused with a license for the Christian to act like a fool. Some men are not hated for Christ’s sake. They are hated because they are rude, proud, reckless, insensitive, and then they baptize the whole mess as persecution. That is nonsense. But when a believer is walking clean, speaking truth, loving sinners, and refusing compromise, the world’s discomfort with him is not always a sign he has failed. It may be evidence that he really is chosen out of it. The world does not naturally warm to people who remind it, by life and testimony, that another kingdom is coming and another King is already enthroned.

## **Conclusion**

A saved man is not merely improved in the world. He is chosen out of it. That is the thunder of this title and the weight of this doctrine. Salvation is not just the cancellation of guilt, though blessed be God it includes that. It is not just escape from hell, though thank God it includes that too. It is a transfer of belonging. The believer has changed families, citizenship, allegiance, ruler, spirit, and destination. He is still physically present here, but spiritually he no longer belongs to the world’s crowd, the world’s ruler, the world’s spirit, or the world’s end. He is marked off for another King.

That separation does not make him better than the lost. It makes him bought. It does not make him superior by nature. It makes him indebted to grace. It does not require self-righteous isolation from sinners. It requires refusal of the world’s mold. The saint still goes where lost people are because that is where the gospel must go. But he does not go there to become like them. He goes there as one sent by another kingdom. He is in the world, but not of it. He does not belong to the darkness he is trying to reach with light.

So let the title of this series ring out now the way it ought to. Not of this world. That is not poetic sentiment. That is not mystical fog. That is blood-bought identity. If Jesus Christ has chosen a man out of the world, then that man must stop trying to find his home in the very system his Lord says he no longer belongs to. The Christian is a stranger here, not because he is confused, but because he finally knows where home is. He has been bought, called, and marked off for another King. And the sooner he stops apologizing for that, the stronger his walk, his witness, and his peace will become.

## **9 of 12: Not of This World – Why the World Hates You**

**Key Passage: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.”**  
**(John 15:18)**

### **Introduction**

One of the quickest ways to discourage a believer is to let him think that tension with the world means he must be doing something wrong. If he expects loyalty to Jesus Christ to be greeted with applause, understanding, and warm admiration, he is going to spend half his Christian life confused. The Lord never promised that. In fact, He promised the exact opposite. “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18). That is not an unfortunate exception in the Christian life. That is a built-in feature of it. The world and the child of God are not marching to the same drum. They are not animated by the same spirit, loyal to the same ruler, or headed toward the same destination. Friction is not strange. Friction is inevitable.

Now that hatred from the world is not always dramatic. Sometimes Christians read persecution passages and imagine the only real hostility is prison, bloodshed, open violence, or the kind of public brutality you can photograph and put in a history book. That kind of hatred certainly exists, and many of God’s people have paid in blood for naming the name of Jesus Christ. But hatred from the world often works in quieter ways. It comes through mockery, exclusion, pressure, misrepresentation, career cost, family tension, social cooling, and religious opposition. It comes when you stop laughing at what the world laughs at. It comes when you refuse its idols. It comes when you will not flatter its lies. It comes when your very presence, without your even trying to be abrasive, reminds people that there is a standard above them and a Judge beyond them.

That is why this subject matters so much. A believer needs to know that the hostility is not proof that Christianity has failed. It is proof that the line is still there. The world loves its

own, but it has no lasting affection for truth that exposes it. It can tolerate religion that entertains it, blesses its ambitions, and keeps its conscience sedated, but it cannot stand a life that quietly says by its very existence, "This world is not all there is, and you are not the center of it." That is the real issue. The problem is not that the saint is doing something strange when he walks with Christ. The problem is that the world cannot stand the presence of a life that points beyond itself. So this essay is meant to steady the believer, strengthen his hands, and teach him not to be shocked when the world's smile turns tight the moment he stops bowing to its gods.

## **1. The World Hated Christ First**

The first and most important thing to remember is that the world's hatred of the believer is secondary. Its hatred of Christ is primary. Jesus said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). That means a Christian never suffers in isolation from his Lord. He is walking a road already marked by the footsteps of Jesus Christ. The world's quarrel is not fundamentally with your personality, your upbringing, your accent, or your style. Its quarrel is with the Christ you belong to. If you are joined to Him, that quarrel spills over onto you because you carry His name and reflect His light.

Now think about what that means. The world looked at perfect holiness and hated it. It looked at truth without mixture and hated it. It looked at mercy without corruption, wisdom without error, love without compromise, and righteousness without hypocrisy, and it still hated Him. That ought to cure a believer of the foolish notion that if he just explains himself a little better, tones things down a little more, and comes across a little smoother, the world will finally warm up to the Lord Jesus Christ. No, sir. The world crucified the sinless Son of God. Its problem was never that He was unclear. Its problem was that He was light.

John 3:19 gives the reason: "light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." That is the root of the hatred. The world is not offended merely because Christ is morally upright. It is offended because His presence exposes what men are. A thief does not like a light in the room because it assists his victim. He hates the light because it reveals him. That is why a believer should stop treating the world's hostility as a mysterious riddle. The world hated Christ first because Christ told the truth about God, sin, righteousness, and judgment. If you belong to Him, you should not expect the darkness to applaud the lamp.

## **2. The World Loves Its Own**

Jesus explains the built-in nature of this hostility in the next verse. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own" (John 15:19). There is a whole sermon in that sentence. The world has an instinctive affection for what belongs to it. It recognizes its own values, its

own spirit, its own goals, its own language, and its own idols. It may fight internally over methods and factions, but it still knows what is fundamentally one of its own. A worldly man may not agree with every other worldly man, but there is a shared atmosphere between them. They breathe the same air. They move by the same general assumptions. They keep self on the throne, even when they decorate that throne differently.

That is why the world can so easily celebrate people who are wildly different on the surface but identical at the root. One man may be filthy and vulgar, another refined and polished. One may be secular, another religious. One may be intellectual, another emotional. One may stand at a podium, another on a stage, another behind a pulpit. But if each of them is driven by the spirit of the world, committed to self, hostile to the absolute claims of Jesus Christ, and loyal to the values of the age, the world can make room for all of them. It loves its own. It senses the common bloodline.

This also explains why Christians sometimes get such a chilly reception even when they are not doing anything outwardly offensive. A saint may be courteous, honest, hardworking, compassionate, and calm, and still there is a tension. Why? Because he is not of the world. He does not respond at the right cue. He does not worship the right gods. He does not laugh at the same filth, covet the same prizes, or bow to the same pressures. He may speak kindly, but the world feels the difference. It is not always reacting to your volume. Sometimes it is reacting to your belonging. It senses that you are not one of its own, and that alone can make it restless.

### **3. Hatred Is Not Always Loud or Violent**

A great many believers get blindsided because they have too narrow a definition of persecution or hatred. They imagine that unless somebody is screaming in their face, dragging them into court, threatening jail, or physically attacking them, the world must still basically be on good terms with them. But the world is often far more sophisticated than that. Hatred can smile. Hatred can be polite. Hatred can come in a professional tone, a raised eyebrow, a strategic silence, a lost opportunity, a whispered rumor, or a cold shoulder at the family table. It can come in a thousand respectable forms while still being the same old hostility to Christ.

The New Testament shows a range of opposition. Sometimes it was open beating and imprisonment, as in Acts. Sometimes it was mockery, as when Paul preached the resurrection and some “mocked” (Acts 17:32). Sometimes it was pressure from religious men who could not tolerate truth upsetting their system. Sometimes it was abandonment, as Demas walked away “having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10). Sometimes it was social shame. Hebrews 11:36 speaks of “mockings and scourgings,” putting mockery

right alongside physical suffering, because contempt can cut deep when it is aimed at a man's faithfulness to God.

That matters because Christians need discernment. Not every form of hostility announces itself with sirens. Sometimes the world's hatred shows up in career ceilings, doors that quietly close, friends who suddenly keep their distance, relatives who become edgy whenever Christ is mentioned, or church people who start treating conviction like a communicable disease. Sometimes the punishment is not pain but pressure. The world wants you to feel the cost of being out of step with it, even if it never raises its voice. If a believer only expects hatred in its dramatic form, he may miss the quieter ways the age tries to wear him down.

#### **4. Truth Itself Is a Rebuke to the World**

The world's hostility is not always triggered by harsh delivery. Sometimes the truth itself is the offense. Jesus said in John 7:7, "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." There is the issue in plain words. Christ testified that the world's works were evil. That is enough to stir hatred all by itself. The world can tolerate many things, but it cannot tolerate being morally exposed. It can put up with religious ceremony, spiritual language, even vague references to God, provided none of it nails down the issue of evil and guilt before a holy God.

That means a believer can be hated even when he says very little, simply because his life, loyalties, and refusal to bow are a standing contradiction to the world's self-justifying narrative. If a man refuses the idol, the idolater feels judged. If a woman refuses the vanity, the vain feel exposed. If a Christian will not laugh at the filth, flatter the lie, join the compromise, or celebrate the rebellion, his refusal becomes a silent testimony that there is another standard. He may not have preached a full sermon in the room, but his very nonparticipation is a rebuke. The darkness does not need to hear a thunderclap to resent the light. It resents the light because it is light.

This is why some believers get accused of being judgmental when they have merely declined to join in. The accusation is often a defense mechanism. The world wants permission from everybody in the room. It wants unanimous applause for its idols because unanimous applause helps soothe the conscience. The one person who will not clap ruins the illusion. He reminds the room that not everyone has agreed to call evil good. So the world retaliates. It says the Christian is hateful, narrow, arrogant, strange, or extreme. But often all he has done is quietly refuse to baptize the lie.

#### **5. The Pressure Often Comes Through Relationships and Reputation**

One of the sharpest forms of the world's hatred comes through relationships. The world knows how to use family, friendship, reputation, and belonging as pressure points. Jesus warned plainly in Matthew 10:36, "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." That does not mean every Christian home will erupt into warfare the moment someone gets serious about God, but it does mean that loyalty to Christ can cut across the most intimate human bonds. Family tension is not always a sign that the believer is doing something wrong. Sometimes it is the cost of refusing to let blood ties outrank truth.

The same thing happens with friends and reputation. A believer who once fit in easily may suddenly become difficult to place once he starts taking the Lord seriously. The old jokes do not land. The old plans do not appeal. The old compromises do not go uncontested. People who once felt affirmed by his presence begin to feel unsettled by it. Sometimes they pull away. Sometimes they mock. Sometimes they attempt to shame him back into the fold. Proverbs 29:25 says, "The fear of man bringeth a snare." That is exactly why the world works so hard through relationships. If it can make a Christian fear losing approval, it can often make him trim the truth.

Reputation pressure can be especially strong in religious circles. Some of the sharpest hostility a serious believer will ever face may come not from open atheists, but from respectable church people who have made peace with the age. They do not like a Christian whose convictions threaten their arrangement with the world. So they label him unbalanced, divisive, unloving, or immature. That is often easier than dealing honestly with the fact that they have accommodated themselves to things Scripture condemns. Religious opposition hurt the prophets, dogged the apostles, and finally helped nail the Lord Jesus to a cross. It has not gone out of style.

## **6. The Cost Can Be Social, Financial, and Professional**

The world also knows how to punish through practical cost. It can make discipleship expensive in visible ways. A believer may lose business because he will not cheat, flatter, lie, or participate in corruption. He may lose advancement because he will not bow to ideological idols or pretend darkness is light. He may be passed over, sidelined, frozen out, or written off because loyalty to Christ has made him unusable to a system that demands moral surrender. That is not paranoia. That is the normal way a world-system protects itself. It rewards compliance and pressures dissent.

The Bible does not hide this. Moses is praised because he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" and esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Hebrews 11:25-26). There is always an Egypt willing to pay for compromise. There is always a palace ready to reward

silence. There is always some treasure attached to the world's approval. And there is always a cost attached to siding openly with the Lord. The issue is not whether there will be a price. The issue is which loss matters more to you.

This is where believers need steel in their backbone. If a Christian expects the world to reward unwavering obedience, he is still thinking like a child. Sometimes faithfulness costs money. Sometimes it costs invitations. Sometimes it costs comfort. Sometimes it costs reputation. Sometimes it costs position. But the Lord never told His people to count only the immediate cost. He told them to count the eternal one. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26). A man can protect his career and wreck his testimony. He can preserve his social standing and grieve the Lord. That is too high a price to pay for temporary ease.

## **7. Do Not Be Surprised or Ashamed**

Because this hostility is built in, the believer is repeatedly told not to be shocked by it. First Peter 4:12 says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." There it is. Stop acting like something abnormal has taken place when the world pushes back against loyalty to Jesus Christ. You are not the first one. The prophets were treated that way. The apostles were treated that way. The Lord Jesus was treated that way. Why should the servant expect better treatment than the Master? "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).

That does not mean the believer should go looking for hostility like some religious masochist. It does not mean he should cultivate an abrasive personality and then call the reaction persecution. It means that when he is walking clean, speaking truth, loving people, and refusing compromise, he should not be surprised if the world grows uneasy around him. Nor should he be ashamed. Second Timothy 1:8 says, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." The world's disapproval has a way of making timid saints feel like they ought to apologize for being too serious, too clear, or too loyal. They should not.

Instead, hostility should drive the believer back into fellowship with Christ. When the world's favor cools, the saint is reminded whose approval matters. When the pressure rises, the line grows clearer. When the world resents the rebuke, even the silent rebuke of a faithful life, the Christian has an opportunity to stand as witness. That is not comfortable, but it is meaningful. The problem is not that the saint is strange for belonging to Christ. The problem is that the world cannot stand being reminded that it is not final, not righteous, and not God.

## **Conclusion**

The world hates the believer for the same fundamental reason it hated Jesus Christ. Light exposes darkness, and truth rebukes lies without having to shout. The world loves its own, but it has no lasting affection for a life that points beyond itself. That hatred may come in open persecution, but often it arrives in quieter forms: mockery, exclusion, cooling relationships, career cost, religious suspicion, family strain, and subtle pressure to soften, edit, and blend in. The friction is built in because the believer belongs to another world and another King.

That truth should steady the saint instead of frightening him. He is not doing something strange when loyalty to Christ creates tension. He is stepping into the normal conflict between two orders that cannot be reconciled. The world resents the rebuke not always because the Christian has spoken harshly, but because he has refused to bow. His life, if it is faithful, becomes an unwelcome reminder that there is a truth above public opinion and a kingdom above the present age. That alone is enough to stir hostility in people who want darkness left undisturbed.

So do not be surprised when the world's smile slips. Do not be ashamed when faithfulness costs something. Do not imagine that you can follow Jesus Christ closely and still be warmly embraced by a world that crucified Him. The issue is not whether the world approves. The issue is whether the Lord does. If the world hates you because you belong to Christ, take comfort in this: the hatred proves the line still exists. And if the line still exists, then your life is still saying, however imperfectly, that this world is not home and Jesus Christ is still worth losing things for.

## **10 of 12: Not of This World – Friendship with the World**

**Key Passage: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” (James 4:4)**

### **Introduction**

There are some verses in the Bible that hit like a rifle shot and leave no room for a man to pretend he misunderstood what was said. James 4:4 is one of them. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” That is not a soft pastoral suggestion to be a little more careful with your entertainment choices. That is not a gentle nudge to stay balanced. That is a divine accusation. Spiritual adultery. Enmity with God. Those are war words. Those are covenant words. Those are not the kinds of words you use for harmless balancing acts or innocent cultural flexibility. The Holy Ghost is

not describing some minor overcorrection in style. He is describing treachery in affection. He is describing a people claiming to belong to God while courting the very world that crucified His Son.

That is exactly where modern Christianity has gone rotten. It has tried to turn friendship with the world into a ministry strategy. It has called compromise relevance, imitation evangelism, and worldliness wisdom. Churches court the world for acceptance, influence, applause, style, and a seat at the table, and then they stand around bewildered when the power of God disappears like smoke in the wind. They decorate the sanctuary like a nightclub, shape the music like the world, market the message like a product, smooth every sharp edge off truth, flatter the flesh with entertainment, and then ask why conviction is gone, discernment is gone, holy fear is gone, and the presence of God feels like a memory from another century. The answer is not hard. Friendship with the world is enmity with God. You do not get Heaven's smile by chasing hell's methods.

Now this essay needs to fire a warning shot because compromise has eaten the guts out of modern Christianity. The issue is not whether the church should be loving, compassionate, or accessible to sinners. The Lord Jesus Christ was full of grace and truth, and any church that forgets grace has forgotten its Master. But the New Testament pattern is not seduction by resemblance. It is conviction by difference. The church is not told to become as much like the world as possible so the world will finally feel comfortable enough to listen. It is told to be holy, separate, truthful, and filled with the Spirit of God. The world is not converted because it sees a religious version of itself. It is convicted when it comes face to face with something it cannot explain in natural terms. So this essay is going straight at the compromise, the flattery, the mimicry, and the spiritual adultery that pass for ministry in an age drunk on relevance.

### **1. Friendship with the World Is Spiritual Adultery**

James does not say friendship with the world is unwise, immature, or slightly dangerous. He calls the people involved "adulterers and adulteresses" (James 4:4). That is covenant language, and it tells you immediately what kind of sin is in view. Adultery is not merely bad judgment. It is betrayal of a relationship of exclusive loyalty. In the Old Testament, Israel was repeatedly accused of spiritual whoredom when she went after other gods and sought alliances that betrayed her covenant relationship with the Lord. In the New Testament, the church is espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2). So when professing believers start courting the world for its approval, admiration, or methods, the Bible does not call that clever strategy. It calls that infidelity.

That means compromise is first an affection problem before it is ever a style problem. Worldliness is not mainly about aesthetics, though aesthetics can certainly reveal it. Worldliness is about where the heart is trying to find favor. A church can talk about Jesus while inwardly craving the world's applause. A preacher can carry a Bible while secretly measuring his success by how acceptable he appears to the culture. A singer can mention God while shaping the whole atmosphere around fleshly stimulation. A congregation can keep Christian vocabulary while quietly shifting its emotional center of gravity from pleasing God to attracting the world. That is the beginning of spiritual adultery. The lips still say Christ, but the heart has started flirting elsewhere.

The Lord takes that personally because He purchased His people with blood. He did not die to create a people who would then spend their lives trying to impress the very system that nailed Him to a cross. He did not call the church out of the world so she could run back to it wearing a white dress and asking if it likes her better this way. He called her unto Himself. That is why friendship with the world is so serious. It is not a neutral relationship between unrelated parties. It is the bride of Christ leaning toward the enemies of the Bridegroom and asking for style advice. No wonder the Spirit of God burns over it.

## **2. The World's Friendship Always Comes at the Price of Truth**

The world never offers friendship without terms. It may smile, flatter, platform, and applaud for a while, but eventually it demands surrender. The world's friendship always costs truth. It always costs sharpness. It always costs distinctiveness. It always costs some part of the believer's or the church's willingness to say what God says plainly. The world does not mind Jesus as an inspirational figure, a moral mascot, or a therapeutic symbol. It minds Jesus as Lord, Judge, exclusive Saviour, and the incarnate Truth who condemns sin and rules over conscience. So if a church wants the world's friendship, it must either mute that Christ or repackage Him until He no longer sounds like Himself.

That is why Galatians 1:10 is still explosive. "For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." There it is. The line is that simple. Not that a servant of Christ should be needlessly rude or thoughtlessly offensive. Not that he should ignore wisdom in communication. But if pleasing men becomes the governing principle, then servanthood to Christ is already compromised. The world's friendship is purchased by strategic silence on the very truths that make Christ offensive to rebellious flesh. Blood atonement, repentance, hell, judgment, biblical holiness, male headship, female modesty, the exclusivity of Christ, the authority of Scripture, the reality of sin, the necessity of the new birth—those things are always first on the chopping block.

Once that begins, the rot spreads fast. A church trims one doctrine to seem reasonable, softens one command to seem compassionate, tones down one warning to seem gracious, and suddenly finds itself reengineering the whole message so that the world can digest it without choking. But truth that has been chewed up for the world's palate is no longer preaching with apostolic teeth. It is religious baby food. It may keep crowds comfortable, but it will not shake hell, convict sinners, or strengthen saints. The world's friendship always demands a price, and the price is nearly always paid in truth.

### **3. Worldly Religion Is Still Worldliness**

One of the most deceptive forms of friendship with the world is worldly religion. This is where things get slippery because everything still wears Christian labels. The building may still say church. The preacher may still quote verses. The songs may still mention Jesus. But beneath the vocabulary, the whole operation is being driven by worldly instincts—image, performance, market appeal, brand management, emotional manipulation, crowd retention, and the constant need to remain acceptable to the surrounding age. In that case, the religion may be clean enough for conservative people and trendy enough for progressive people, but it is still worldly because its deepest loyalties are not fixed on pleasing Christ.

Paul warned about this kind of corruption in 2 Timothy 3:5 when he spoke of people “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” There is the issue. Form without power. Shape without substance. Religious outline without divine reality. The world does not always want the church gone; sometimes it simply wants the church weakened, prettied up, and taught to perform. A church stripped of power but full of polish is no threat to anybody except maybe sound doctrine. It can be invited to public events, praised in local media, commended for being community-minded, and appreciated for never making anybody uncomfortable with God.

This is why some of the strongest denunciations in Scripture are aimed not merely at pagans but at religious compromise. Jesus did not reserve His severest words for the harlots and publicans. He reserved many of them for scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites. Why? Because false religion is worldliness with church clothes on. It gives men enough spirituality to numb conscience without enough truth to save the soul. It offers respectability without repentance, ceremony without holiness, and crowd approval without Heaven's approval. That is still friendship with the world; it is just dressed for Sunday.

### **4. Worldly Entertainment Cannot Produce Spiritual Power**

Another major point of compromise in modern Christianity is entertainment. Churches are acting like the lost are so emotionally spoiled, so screen-trained, and so sensation-

addicted that they cannot possibly sit still for preaching, doctrine, or reverent worship unless somebody first hooks them with spectacle. So the service gets built around stimulation. The platform becomes a stage. The music becomes performance-driven. The sermon becomes a talk calibrated for attention span instead of conviction. The whole meeting is designed to hold the crowd the way the world holds a crowd. Then the same people wonder why reverence is gone and why nobody seems to tremble at the word of God anymore.

But worldly entertainment cannot produce spiritual power because flesh only begets flesh. It may stir emotion, trigger nostalgia, create atmosphere, or produce excitement, but it cannot substitute for the Holy Ghost. First Corinthians 2:4 says Paul's preaching was "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." That does not mean preaching should be sloppy or lazy. It means the confidence of the ministry is not in human stimulation techniques. The church does not need a better smoke machine. It needs the fear of God. It does not need louder flesh. It needs more of the Spirit.

This is where churches have been badly deceived. They think if they can borrow enough from the world's energy, music, pacing, production, and visual grammar, they can make Christianity feel compelling again. But the result is usually the opposite. The people trained on entertainment begin to require more of it, while their tolerance for stillness, holiness, conviction, and doctrinal weight keeps shrinking. Then the church has to keep escalating the spectacle to hold attention. That is not revival. That is addiction ministry. The Lord did not tell the church to seduce the world by resembling it. He told it to preach the word (2 Timothy 4:2), and there is still more converting power in Spirit-filled preaching than in ten thousand cleverly choreographed productions.

## **5. Worldly Ambition Has No Place in Christian Service**

Worldly ambition is another form of friendship with the world, and it is one of the most respectable. A preacher may never touch open scandal, but he can still be eaten alive with worldly ambition. He can crave platform, influence, reputation, reach, and recognition until ministry becomes another ladder for the flesh to climb. The same thing can happen to churches, ministries, authors, singers, and teachers. They start out wanting to help people, and before long they are calculating how to grow the brand, widen the base, avoid offense, position themselves well, and maintain prestige. The name of Jesus stays on the brochure, but self has taken over the steering wheel.

That spirit is the exact opposite of Christ. Philippians 2 says of Jesus, "he made himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7). Modern ministry often does the reverse. It makes itself a reputation and then asks Jesus to bless it. But the Lord is not in the business of building

self-exalting religious empires for men who want the world to think they are impressive. James 3:14-15 warns against bitter envying and strife in the heart and says such wisdom “descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.” Some ambition in ministry is not zeal. It is simply baptized vanity.

This is why so many ministries lose unction as soon as they gain image-consciousness. Once the preservation of status becomes central, truth begins to get edited and obedience begins to get negotiated. You cannot keep one eye on the judgment seat of Christ and the other eye on how the world ranks you without going cross-eyed spiritually. The servant of Christ is called to faithfulness, not worldly prominence. If the Lord grants reach, praise God. If He grants obscurity, praise God. But the minute a man starts courting the world’s admiration in order to feel significant, he has already stepped into friendship with the world, and enmity with God is not far behind.

## **6. The Church Does Not Reach the World by Imitating It**

This is the point that needs to be hit with a sledgehammer. The church does not reach the world by imitating it. That notion has done incalculable damage. It sounds practical to the flesh because the flesh always thinks resemblance is the shortest road to influence. If the world likes this sound, borrow it. If the world likes this aesthetic, use it. If the world likes this tone, adopt it. If the world dislikes that doctrine, downplay it. If the world is impressed by this method, baptize it. But the New Testament pattern is not seduction by resemblance. It is conviction by difference. The church’s power lies precisely in the fact that it is not the world.

Jesus said believers are “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). Light helps darkness by being different from darkness, not by blending into it. Salt helps corruption by resisting it, not by becoming more corrupt so it can relate better to the rottenness around it. When the church starts imitating the world, what it actually gives the world is a poorer version of what the world already has. The world can always out-entertain the church, out-produce it, out-market it, out-style it, and out-flesh it. Once the church enters that competition, it has already forgotten what made it distinct. It has traded spiritual authority for imitation.

The book of Acts never shows the apostles trying to make the gospel feel more Roman, more Greek, more trendy, or more culturally flattering. They preached Christ. They preached repentance. They preached resurrection. They preached judgment. They preached the word of God in the power of the Holy Ghost. Sometimes crowds gathered. Sometimes riots broke out. Sometimes churches were planted. Sometimes preachers were beaten. But nowhere do you find the apostles studying pagan culture in order to copy

its methods and win its applause. The church shook the world because it was not of the world, not because it learned how to mimic it attractively.

## **7. Compromise Explains the Loss of Power**

If a man wants to know why so much of modern Christianity feels hollow, powerless, and theatrically busy while spiritually barren, the answer is not hard to find. Friendship with the world has eaten the guts out of it. Churches have made peace with the age, and once they did that, the power began to leave. Samson is a good picture of it. He lost his separation, and then he lost his strength, though he did not know it at first. Judges 16:20 says, “he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.” There is modern Christianity in one sentence. Still moving, still shaking, still talking, but the power has gone and many do not even know it.

God does not anoint compromise. He does not pour His power on spiritual adultery. He does not bless a people who are trying to hold His hand and the world’s hand at the same time. You can have crowds without Him. You can have noise without Him. You can have programs without Him. You can have money, property, branding, media presence, and constant activity without Him. But you cannot have real Holy Ghost power while courting the world for approval. The two things cannot live together peacefully. “What concord hath Christ with Belial?” (2 Corinthians 6:15). None. Not some. None.

That should put the fear of God back into any ministry with sense enough to listen. The issue is not whether worldly compromise “works” in a temporary numerical sense. Of course it can attract people. So can a circus. So can a concert. So can any number of flesh-feeding attractions. The issue is whether God is in it. The issue is whether the truth remains sharp, whether Christ remains central, whether sin is still named, whether saints are still strengthened, whether sinners are still convicted, and whether Heaven still recognizes the thing as its own work. If not, then no amount of outward success can cover the fact that friendship with the world has brought enmity with God right into the camp.

## **Conclusion**

Friendship with the world is not a harmless balancing act. It is spiritual adultery. That is the Bible’s language, and it is meant to sting. It describes professing believers and churches courting the approval, methods, values, and aesthetics of the age while still claiming loyalty to Christ. The result is always the same. Truth gets trimmed. Conviction gets softened. Entertainment swallows reverence. Ambition replaces faithfulness. Worldly religion flourishes. And the power of God quietly leaves while men keep the machinery running and pretend nothing important has changed.

The church does not help the world by becoming a religious version of the world. It helps the world by being something the world cannot manufacture. It helps the world by preaching the truth, bearing witness to Jesus Christ, walking in holiness, and depending on the Spirit of God instead of the techniques of men. The New Testament pattern is not imitation. It is separation with compassion, holiness with love, truth with tears, and conviction by difference. Lost people do not need a church that resembles the age. They need a church that knows God.

So let this stand as a warning shot in the middle of the series. Once a believer or a church starts craving the world's acceptance, influence, applause, style, and relevance, the slide has already begun. And unless there is repentance, the power with God will keep draining out until all that remains is a well-packaged shell. "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). That verse is still in the Book, and it still means exactly what it says. If the church wants power again, it will not find it by running closer to the world. It will find it by getting back to the Lord it has been trying so hard not to embarrass in front of the world.

## **11 of 12: Not of This World – The End of the World**

**Key Passage: "The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels." (Matthew 13:39)**

### **Introduction**

One of the biggest lies this present world tells itself is that it is permanent. It talks as if the machinery will just keep rolling, the towers will keep standing, the markets will keep humming, the governments will keep posturing, the pleasure industry will keep feeding lust, and the proud kingdoms of men will go right on strutting across the stage without interruption. The world-system loves the illusion of permanence because permanence gives sinners courage in their rebellion. If men can persuade themselves that this order is stable, final, and here to stay, then they can sink their roots deeper into it and mock anybody who talks about judgment as if he were a medieval crank standing on a street corner with a cardboard sign. But the King James Bible cuts straight through that delusion with a blade sharp enough to split bone from marrow. The world had a beginning, and it will have an end. The same Book that speaks of "the foundation of the world" also speaks of "the end of the world" (Matthew 24:3; Hebrews 9:26). God did not begin history without already knowing where He would bring it down.

That truth ought to shake a man awake. The present order is not permanent no matter how secure it looks. Men build empires and speak like gods. Nations parade their power. Cities glitter. Industries roar. Armies boast. Bankers calculate. Politicians posture. Scientists theorize. Religious leaders stage their pageants. Entertainers bask in the lights. The whole thing carries on like Babel with Wi-Fi, as if man finally has enough technology, enough wealth, enough propaganda, and enough nerve to hold the roof up over his own rebellion indefinitely. But all of it is living on borrowed time. Every skyscraper is standing by divine permission. Every throne is occupied by divine permission. Every breath in every king's chest is borrowed air. The world-system is not marching toward triumph. It is marching toward reckoning.

That is why this subject is not gloomy; it is clarifying. It turns the believer's eyes forward. It reminds him not to anchor his heart in a realm God has already marked for judgment. It reminds him that this world's pleasures are seasonal, this world's cities are temporary, this world's crowns are tin, and this world's applause dies in the throat the moment God says enough. The end of the world is not a fairy tale for unstable people. It is a doctrine of Jesus Christ. It is tied to the harvest, angelic judgment, tribulation, and the collapse of man's proud order under the wrath of Almighty God. If a Christian forgets that, he will start decorating a sinking ship. If he remembers it, he will hold this world loosely, walk soberly, and keep looking for the coming King.

### **1. The Bible Speaks of the End of the World as Plainly as the Foundation of the World**

Modern religion likes to talk about beginnings because beginnings feel academic, distant, and manageable. Men can debate origins over coffee, write papers about creation, and argue about chronology as if the whole matter were just an intellectual exercise. But the same Bible that speaks of the world's beginning speaks just as plainly about its ending. Jesus said in Matthew 13:39, "the harvest is the end of the world." He said again in Matthew 13:49, "So shall it be at the end of the world." The disciples asked Him directly in Matthew 24:3, "what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" That phrase is not obscure. It is not accidental. It is repeated because God wants it in the mind of His people.

That means the end of the world is not some later theological embellishment added by excitable preachers. It is built into the very teaching of Christ. The Lord did not present history as an open-ended process of human improvement stretching on endlessly while civilization slowly irons out its moral wrinkles. He presented it as a field moving toward harvest, an age moving toward closure, and a rebellious order moving toward divine intervention. Hebrews 9:26 says, "but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The phrase is there again. The end of the world.

That tells you history has a doctrinal shape. It is going somewhere because God is taking it somewhere.

This ought to rebuke the smugness of an age that talks as if continuation were guaranteed. Men look at the durability of systems and forget the fragility of divine permission. They see routine and mistake it for permanence. They see another sunrise and assume the whole structure is self-sustaining. But the Lord who founded the world also set the bounds of its present course. He is not a spectator waiting to see what humanity manages to build. He is the Judge who already declared the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). So if Scripture is this plain about the end of the world, only a fool roots his heart as if this present arrangement were the final home of man.

## **2. The End of the World Is Tied to Harvest and Separation**

One of the clearest images Christ uses for the end of the world is harvest. In Matthew 13, the world is pictured as a field where wheat and tares grow together until the appointed time. Men look at the field now and often cannot tell one from the other with certainty, at least not outwardly. The righteous and the wicked inhabit the same world, walk the same streets, work the same jobs, buy from the same markets, and breathe the same air. But that coexistence is temporary. Jesus said, “the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels” (Matthew 13:39). That means history is not a tangled mess with no final accounting. It is a field heading toward separation.

That image alone destroys a thousand modern illusions. The world is not a random ecosystem of moral diversity that God will simply allow to keep sprawling forever. It is a field under supervision. The enemy sowed tares, yes, but the field still belongs to the householder. The wicked may look entrenched. False religion may look prosperous. The world-system may appear to thrive and spread and root itself like a mighty tree. But harvest time is coming, and harvest time is always God’s answer to long seasons of apparent mixture. He does not separate everything instantly, but He does separate it finally.

This is why a believer should never confuse delay with indifference. Just because God has not yet cut everything down does not mean He has changed His mind about what belongs and what does not. At harvest, the wheat is gathered and the tares are bound. At harvest, the appearance of shared permanence vanishes. At harvest, what looked intermingled is sorted under divine authority. So the Christian must stop envying what will be burned and start valuing what God will gather. The field is not the final state. The harvest is.

## **3. Angelic Judgment Is Real and Terrible**

Modern Christianity has become so sentimental and soft that if you preach on angels, half the room imagines watercolor paintings, greeting cards, or some glowing creature hovering

over a nursery crib smiling gently at a sleeping baby. But in the teachings of Jesus, angels are not just decorative beings assigned to make religious people feel warm. They are active agents in divine judgment. Christ says in Matthew 13:41, “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend.” In verse 49 He says, “the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.” That is not the language of sentimentality. That is the language of terrifying execution of divine justice.

Think about it. The end of the world is not merely a philosophical transition. It is not merely the fading out of one era and the emergence of another by gradual cultural drift. It involves angelic intervention. Holy beings under the authority of the Son of man will move in judgment and separation. The same Christ who let sinners mock Him, scourge Him, spit in His face, and nail Him to a cross will one day send angels to gather out offenders from His kingdom. The meek Lamb is also the enthroned Judge. The One who came first in grace comes later in wrath.

That ought to burn the last scraps of swagger out of the rebel’s heart. Men strut now because they mistake mercy for weakness. They imagine that because judgment has not yet fallen, it will not. They mistake the patience of God for the absence of God. But when heaven moves in open intervention, the jokes will die. The mockers will not smirk then. The philosophers will not shrug then. The entertainers will not distract then. The politicians will not negotiate then. The world will discover that the invisible realm it treated like a myth has more military force in it than all the armies of earth put together. Angelic judgment is not symbolic decoration in prophecy. It is part of the terrifying reality of the end.

#### **4. The Great Tribulation Will Shatter the Illusion of Human Security**

If a man wants to know what the end of this present order looks like as it intensifies, he has to go to the words of Jesus in Matthew 24 and the prophetic revelations tied to that time. The Lord said, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). That is not routine trouble. That is not another difficult decade in human politics. That is not just the ordinary cycle of war, famine, and unrest that has marked fallen history all along. That is a period of tribulation so severe that Christ says nothing before it matches it and nothing after it will exceed it. That means the world’s security blanket is going to be ripped off in public.

The tribulation is where God begins collapsing the illusion that man can run the planet without reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything men trust starts shaking. Power structures, economic structures, religious structures, military confidence, and social normality all begin to crack under divine judgment. Revelation describes seals, trumpets, vials, cosmic disturbances, plagues, bloodshed, famine, darkness, demonic activity, and

the rise of the Beast. This is not the world getting better by education. This is the world coming apart under judgment. The age of proud human management gives way to the exposure of human helplessness before the wrath of God.

That is why believers should be very careful not to read prophecy like spectators at a fireworks show. This is not material for entertainment. This is warning material. It is designed to strip the glamour off the world system now. The cities people worship, the technologies they trust, the economies they depend on, and the leaders they idolize will not be able to stabilize the age when God begins to tear into it. The tribulation is Heaven's answer to the arrogance of man. It is proof that the world is not self-sustaining and that rebellion does not end in progress. It ends in pressure, terror, and judgment.

### **5. The World System Is Living on Borrowed Time**

One of the biggest spiritual mistakes a believer can make is to treat this world system like it has long-term stability. It does not. It is living on borrowed time. First Corinthians 7:31 says, "for the fashion of this world passeth away." First John 2:17 says, "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." Notice the wording. It is not merely that it will one day maybe pass away if history reaches the right threshold. It passeth away. It is already in motion toward disappearance. Its fashion, its current arrangement, its visible configuration, its lust-driven structure is not built to endure forever. It is already under the sentence of transience.

That means every boast the world makes is a temporary boast. Every empire is temporary. Every stock exchange is temporary. Every entertainment machine is temporary. Every social media kingdom is temporary. Every celebrity, every president, every billionaire, every military coalition, every glittering tower, every pleasure palace, every propaganda network, every false religious throne is temporary. Men behave as if the age belongs to them, but the lease is expiring. They may renovate the room, repaint the walls, and brag about the address, but the eviction notice is already in the hand of the Judge.

This is why Christians are fools if they envy the world's glamour. The whole thing is a parade moving toward a cliff. The fashion changes, the faces change, the technology changes, the slogans change, but the sentence remains. What kind of idiot would chain his heart to a collapsing structure just because the lights are bright tonight? The saint must learn to see the age as passing, not permanent. If he does not, he will keep grieving over losses that are actually mercies and lusting after gains that are actually traps. Borrowed-time systems always look stable until the Owner arrives.

### **6. The Collapse of Man's Proud Order Will Be Under Divine Wrath**

It is important to say this plainly. The end of the world as this present order is not an unfortunate accident of history. It is not a natural cooling of human civilization. It is not the

tragic malfunction of otherwise noble progress. It is divine wrath. Revelation 6:16-17 speaks of men crying to the mountains and rocks and saying, "Hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come." There is no softening that. The collapse of the proud order of man happens because God judges it.

That phrase, "the wrath of the Lamb," ought to stop a man cold. The Lamb is the same One who came in grace, shed His blood, opened His arms to sinners, and offered mercy freely. But mercy rejected does not erase judgment. It stores it up. The world imagines Christ only in sentimental categories because it wants a harmless religious figure it can hang on a wall or quote at funerals. But the Bible presents the Lamb as both Redeemer and Judge. The One who saves all who come to Him is the same One under whose wrath the rebellious world will finally collapse. Grace ignored does not nullify wrath. It intensifies accountability.

This gives the doctrine its prophetic force. The world is not drifting toward neutral dissolution. It is heading toward a collision with God. The arrogance of man, the blasphemies of nations, the murders, the idolatries, the sexual corruption, the trafficking in souls, the false religion, and the pride of kings are all accumulating against a day when Heaven answers. Revelation 18 shows Babylon falling with violence, and the kings and merchants of the earth lament because the system they loved is being ripped down. That is not merely poetic imagery. It is the collapse of a world-order under divine sentence. So when you look at the world now, do not merely see activity. See accumulated guilt headed toward wrath.

## **7. Believers Must Not Anchor Their Hearts in a Judged Realm**

Because the end of the world is certain, the believer is commanded again and again not to set his heart on what is passing. Colossians 3:2 says, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." That does not mean neglect your earthly responsibilities, ignore your family, despise honest labor, or pretend material life is meaningless. It means do not anchor your heart in a realm God has already marked for judgment. Use what must be used. Steward what must be stewarded. Labor where God puts you. But do not mistake stewardship for permanent investment of the soul. The Christian is a pilgrim, not a settler in the deepest sense.

This is where prophecy becomes practical. The end of the world is not given merely to satisfy curiosity about timelines. It is given to purify affection. Peter ties future judgment directly to present holiness when he says, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Peter 3:11). In other words, the coming collapse should change how you live now. A man

who knows the house is marked for demolition does not sink his life savings into polishing the wallpaper. He prepares to leave. So should the saint.

That also gives courage. The believer need not panic when the world flexes its muscles, because he knows those muscles will wither. He need not bow before cultural swagger, because he knows it is temporary. He need not envy the wicked in their prosperity, because he knows how their story ends. Psalm 73 straightens a man out on that point. Asaph nearly stumbled when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, until he “understood their end” (Psalm 73:17). That is still the cure. Understand the end, and the glamour loses its spell. Understand the end, and you can walk through this world without letting it own your heart.

### **Conclusion**

The world had a beginning, and it will have an end. That is not the guesswork of alarmists. It is the doctrine of Jesus Christ and the plain witness of Scripture. The same Bible that speaks of the foundation of the world speaks of the end of the world. It ties that end to harvest, angelic judgment, tribulation, and the collapse of man’s proud order under divine wrath. The world system is not permanent, no matter how confidently it advertises itself. Its pleasures, cities, empires, and boasts are all living on borrowed time. They are not moving toward triumph. They are moving toward reckoning.

That truth ought to sober the saint and terrify the rebel. It ought to cure envy, loosen the grip of covetousness, and expose the stupidity of staking everything on a passing age. The world wants men to think in quarterly reports, election cycles, media trends, and technological upgrades. God tells His people to think in terms of eternity, judgment, kingdom, and the coming of the King. A believer who forgets the end of the world will start building as if this age were final. A believer who remembers it will hold the age lightly and Christ tightly.

So let this eleventh essay point the eyes forward. This present order is not home, not final, and not safe to love. It is headed for harvest. It is headed for wrath. It is headed for the day when Heaven tears the mask off man’s proud civilization and shows it for what it has been all along—a rebel order living under temporary mercy. Therefore do not anchor your heart here. Do not envy what is about to burn. Do not fear what is about to fall. Lift up your eyes. The end of the world is coming, and beyond it stands the One who will outlast every city, bury every empire, judge every lie, and reign when the smoke clears.

**Key Passage: “And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.” (Hebrews 6:5)**

**Introduction**

This world is not the end of the story. Thank God for that, because if this present order were the final draft, the whole thing would be a bleak joke written in blood, lust, lies, and graves. If all a man had to look forward to was the continuation of what he sees now—governments swollen with pride, religions full of hypocrisy, commerce built on covetousness, pleasure bought with corruption, truth mocked, saints pressured, children poisoned, and death stalking every family line—then the best a believer could do would be to grit his teeth and endure until the lights went out. But the King James Bible does not leave the child of God trapped in that atmosphere. It opens a window beyond this age and lets in air from another country. It speaks not only of the world that is, but of “the world to come” (Hebrews 2:5). It speaks not only of the kingdoms of men, but of the kingdom of Christ. It speaks not only of the curse, but of restoration. It speaks not only of rebellion, but of righteousness reigning.

That means the command to be “not of this world” is not deprivation. It is preparation. God is not robbing His people when He teaches them not to set their affection on the present evil world. He is detaching them from a condemned order because He is bringing them into a better one. He is not merely calling them out of something. He is calling them unto Someone and toward something. The Christian is not just a man who says no to Babylon. He is a man heading for Jerusalem. He is not just refusing the spirit of this age. He is waiting for the rightful King. He is not merely separated from a fallen world. He is joined to a coming kingdom. That is why separation is full of hope when it is understood biblically. It is not empty denial. It is expectancy.

This closing essay must change the atmosphere of the series. We have traced the world’s fall, its spirit, its darkness, its hatred, its compromise, and its end. We have seen enough corruption to sicken any man with sense. But now the curtain lifts on the world to come. Now the eyes move forward to the reign of Jesus Christ, the restoration of righteousness, the setting right of all that sin twisted, and the final triumph of the One this world rejected. The believer is a stranger here because he belongs to another country, and one day that country will break into this world in power, glory, and righteousness. The world to come is not built on lust, pride, politics, corruption, and death. It is built on the authority of the Son of God. So this is where the series ends—with victory, hope, and a Kingdom that cannot be moved.

**1. The Bible Speaks of the World to Come as a Real Order**

Hebrews 2:5 says, “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.” There is the phrase plainly stated: “the world to come.” That means the Bible does not present the future merely as an endless continuation of the present order with minor improvements. It speaks of another world-order, another administration, another arrangement under divine government. The present world is not all there is. There is a coming world, and it is not left floating in abstraction like some cloudy religious dream. Scripture speaks of it as a subject of doctrine, promise, and expectation. “Whereof we speak,” the apostle says. The church is supposed to speak about it because God has spoken about it.

That world to come is tied directly to subjection and rule. Hebrews says it is not put in subjection to angels, which means authority in that age is being discussed. This is not just a poetic metaphor for vague spiritual uplift. It is an order under rule, and the chapter goes on to tie that rule to man in Christ, the One crowned with glory and honour (Hebrews 2:7-9). The first Adam lost dominion under sin. The last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, secures it rightly. That tells you immediately that the world to come is not built around democratic human swagger, political manipulation, or the temporary arrangements of fallen nations. It centers in Christ.

This matters because it changes the whole emotional tone of the Christian life. The saint is not simply waiting for escape in the sense of disappearing from trouble. He is waiting for the establishment of rightful rule. He is waiting for government without corruption, truth without spin, power without abuse, glory without vanity, and dominion without sin. The world to come is not fantasy. It is the future shape of reality under the Son of God. Once a believer sees that, the cheap glitter of this age starts looking even cheaper than it did before.

## **2. Jesus Christ Is the Rightful King of the Coming Order**

The world to come is not centered in an idea. It is centered in a King. Revelation 11:15 says, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” That is the pivot point of history. The present age is full of usurpers, pretenders, power brokers, and temporary rulers carrying borrowed authority. But the world to come belongs to the One this world nailed to a cross. That is the holy irony of history. The rejected Stone becomes the head of the corner. The crucified Christ becomes the crowned King. The Lamb becomes the Lion publicly. The One who stood silent before Pilate will one day rule what Pilate could never hold.

Psalms 2 lays it out with thunder. The nations rage, the people imagine a vain thing, the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and

against his anointed (Psalm 2:1-2). That is this world in a nutshell. But God's answer is not nervous. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" (Psalm 2:6). That means the future is not hanging on election cycles, treaties, markets, or the latest arrangement of military and cultural power. The future is tied to the decree of God concerning His Son. Christ does not have to campaign for His kingdom. He receives it by right.

This should fill the believer with both peace and fire. Peace, because the throne will not finally be occupied by a liar, a devil, a beast, or a bureaucracy. Fire, because the One who deserves the throne is the One the world despised, and every compromise with this age is therefore an insult to His coming rule. The Christian is not waiting for some generic better world. He is waiting for Jesus Christ to reign openly. That is what makes hope personal. The world to come is precious because He is in the middle of it.

### **3. The World to Come Means the Restoration of Righteousness**

Second Peter 3:13 says, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Even before you get to the final eternal state in its fullest sense, that line tells you what marks the future order of God—righteousness dwells there. Not righteousness visiting occasionally. Not righteousness making cameo appearances in isolated revival pockets. Righteousness dwelling there. That means it belongs there. It is at home there. It is not under pressure there. It does not have to apologize there. It is not voted down, laughed at, litigated against, censored, or marginalized. It dwells there.

Think what that means after life in this present world. In this age, righteousness is mocked, negotiated, diluted, and often punished. A man telling the truth can lose position. A woman walking in holiness can be treated like a stranger. A church standing on the Book can be called hateful, outdated, extreme, or unbalanced. But in the world to come, righteousness is not the awkward guest in the room. It is the atmosphere. It is woven into the order of things because the King Himself is righteous. Isaiah 32:1 says, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness." That is not just a devotional thought. That is a governmental statement.

This is why the saint's longing is not escapist in a cowardly sense. He longs for the world to come because he longs to see things set right. He longs to live in an order where lies do not get the last word, corruption does not sit on the throne, and the innocent are not trampled while the wicked celebrate. Every time a believer grieves over injustice now, that grief is a witness that he was made for a righteous order not yet fully manifest. The world to come answers that grief. It is God's great public reversal of the triumph of wrong.

### **4. The Curse Will Not Define the Future Kingdom**

This present world is cursed. Thorns, sweat, pain, decay, graves, disease, sorrow, violence, and frustration all bear witness to that fact. Romans 8 says the creation was made subject to vanity and is groaning and travailing in pain together until now (Romans 8:20-22). Anybody with eyes can see it. The whole creation is out of joint. Things die that should live. Things rot that should flourish. Men bury what they love. Bodies betray souls. The ground itself resists. But the world to come means the curse will not have the final word. It means sin's damage is not permanent in the face of God's redemptive purpose.

Isaiah 11 and Isaiah 65 give glimpses of a restored order tied to the reign of Messiah. The wolf and the lamb, the earth filled with the knowledge of the LORD, longevity, peace, and blessing all point toward a kingdom where the current dislocations are corrected under divine rule. Revelation 22:3 says in the fullest consummation, "there shall be no more curse." Think of that. No more curse. Not reduced. Not managed. Not hidden. Gone. The sentence that entered through sin does not define eternity. Grace and righteousness do.

That means the believer's future is not endless survival under present conditions. It is restoration under Christ. He is not merely saved from wrath. He is saved unto a world where the curse does not reign. That changes the emotional force of suffering. Trials still hurt. Graves still sting. Losses still cut. But they are temporary witnesses, not permanent masters. The saint can look at a world groaning under the curse and say, truthfully, this is not the final arrangement. The world to come will not smell like the graveyard.

### **5. The Saints Are Not Just Escaping, They Are Inheriting**

One of the errors Christians sometimes make when thinking about the future is imagining salvation only in terms of getting out of something. Certainly the believer is delivered from wrath, hell, judgment, and the present evil world. But that is not the whole story. He is also an heir. He is headed toward inheritance. Matthew 25:34 says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." There is prepared inheritance ahead. That means the Christian life is not merely evacuation. It is preparation for possession under Christ.

Romans 8:17 says believers are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." That is staggering language. Joint-heirs with Christ. The One who reigns does not merely spare His people; He brings them into association with His glory and kingdom. First Corinthians 6:2 asks, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" Verse 3 adds, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" That means the people of God are not being trained merely to hide in a celestial corner forever. They are being prepared for participation in the righteous administration of God under Christ.

This should kill the miserable idea that holiness is deprivation. When God teaches His people to turn from this present world, He is not making them poorer in the final sense. He is readying them for inheritance. Esau sold a birthright for a bowl of stew because he had no vision beyond his appetite. Modern Christians do the same thing every day when they trade eternal perspective for temporary satisfaction. But the saint with understanding knows better. He can give up present applause because he has an inheritance. He can endure temporary loss because he is headed toward a kingdom prepared by the Father.

## **6. The Believer Is a Stranger Here Because He Belongs There**

Hebrews 11 says of the saints, “they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13). Then it says they sought “a better country, that is, an heavenly” (Hebrews 11:16). There is the explanation for the Christian’s strangeness in this age. He is not strange because he is socially awkward, mentally foggy, or culturally incompetent. He is strange because his deepest belonging lies elsewhere. He is a citizen of another order. He is headed toward another country. He feels out of place here because, in the most important sense, he is out of place here.

That truth should rescue believers from the false guilt that comes when they cannot fully settle down in the spirit of the age. Sometimes a Christian starts wondering what is wrong with him because the things the world calls normal feel hollow to him. Its entertainments leave him cold. Its goals feel too small. Its idols feel embarrassing. Its celebrations feel noisy and empty. Its boasts feel forced. Its ambitions feel short-breathed. That is not necessarily a psychological problem. It may simply be evidence that he belongs to another country. The homesickness of the saint is one of the marks of grace.

And yet that homesickness is not useless melancholy. It is directional. It points forward. It keeps the Christian from fusing with the world permanently. It reminds him that every tent here is temporary. Abraham dwelt in tabernacles because he “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). That is still the right perspective. The believer is not called to despise earthly duty, but he is called to remember that tents are not cities and passing arrangements are not permanent foundations. He belongs there, not here.

## **7. The World to Come Breaks Into This World in Power, Glory, and Righteousness**

The world to come is not merely somewhere else forever, disconnected from this world as if God will simply abandon the whole scene to ruin and start fresh without public vindication. No, the biblical picture includes invasion, manifestation, open reign, and visible glory. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:4). Revelation 19 shows heaven opened and the Rider on the white

horse coming forth in righteousness to judge and make war. This is not hidden influence. This is public kingdom arrival. Another country breaks into this world in power.

That is exactly what this world deserves and exactly what the saints long for. The rightful King returns. The usurpers are overthrown. The beast and false prophet are judged. Satan is bound. The throne of David is no empty phrase. The government is upon His shoulder. The prayer, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10), moves toward open fulfillment. This is not a timid ending. It is triumphant. The meek King comes as the conquering King, and righteousness is no longer merely confessed by a remnant; it is enforced by the throne.

That is why the closing note of this series must be hope. Not shallow optimism about human progress, but biblical hope in the appearing and reign of Jesus Christ. The saint is not waiting for a better politician, a better economy, a better educational theory, or a better media ecosystem to save the age. He is waiting for the King. He is waiting for the world to come to break into this one. He is waiting for glory, righteousness, and power to displace the present darkness. That hope is not fantasy. It is anchored in the promises of God and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## **Conclusion**

The world to come is the great answer to everything this fallen world cannot fix. After all the blindness, lust, hatred, compromise, corruption, and judgment traced through this series, the Bible does not leave the believer staring into smoke. It lifts his eyes to the kingdom of Christ, the restoration of righteousness, the removal of the curse, the inheritance of the saints, and the reign of the rightful King. He is not just called out of something. He is called unto Someone and toward something. The future of the child of God is not emptiness, but kingdom. Not drift, but rule. Not loss, but inheritance. Not darkness, but glory.

That is why being “not of this world” is not deprivation. It is preparation. The Christian is not some poor deprived soul missing out on the world’s pleasures because religion made him afraid to live. He is a citizen in training for another country. He is an heir under discipline for a coming kingdom. He is a stranger here because his home is elsewhere. Every refusal of this world’s idols, every act of separation, every moment of pressure endured for Christ, every loss taken for truth, all of it is tied to a future so much larger than this present age that the glitter of the world starts to look like carnival lights on a collapsing tent.

So let the series end where it ought to end: with the King ahead. The world to come is real. Jesus Christ will reign. Righteousness will dwell. The curse will not define the future. The saints will inherit. Another country will break into this world in power, glory, and righteousness. And when that happens, every saint who felt out of place here will finally

understand why. We were strangers here because we belonged there all along. “And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come” (Hebrews 6:5). That taste is enough to keep a believer walking until the full feast arrives.

## **Not of This World**

### **Series Conclusion**

After walking through this series from beginning to end, one truth ought to stand out with more force than ever before: the command to be not of this world is not a strange side doctrine for extreme Christians. It is part of the very heartbeat of New Testament Christianity. The world is not a harmless backdrop for spiritual life. It is not neutral territory. It is not a playground where a believer can casually stroll, pick up whatever shines, and still remain untouched. It is a fallen order, a present evil world, a system under hostile influence, a realm shaped by lust, pride, blindness, and rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ. It has a spirit, it has a ruler, it has a wisdom, it has a glory, and all of it is passing away. To belong to Christ in the middle of such a world is to live in permanent contrast. The saint is not called to improve the world’s rebellion, decorate it more tastefully, or make it feel comfortable with its own darkness. He is called to see it for what it is, refuse its claims, endure its hatred, reject its friendship, and walk through it with his eyes fixed on another kingdom.

This series has traced that line from several angles. We began by defining what the Bible means by “the world,” and we found that Scripture often uses the term for far more than soil, nations, and geography. It points to a system, a moral arrangement, a spiritual current working in defiance of God. We saw that before the foundation of the world, God already knew the whole story and that Christ was not some emergency measure after man’s fall, but the Lamb foreordained in the counsels of God. We saw that the kingdoms of this world are entangled with the devil’s present influence, that the spirit of the world is real and active, and that the world hooks the old nature through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Then the whole study pivoted where it had to pivot—away from mere diagnosis and toward redemption in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the Saviour of the world, the Light of the world, the One who entered the very realm that hated Him in order to redeem sinners out of it.

From there the line became even sharper. The believer is not merely forgiven in the world; he is chosen out of the world. He has changed families, citizenship, allegiance, and destination. That is why the world hates him. The friction is not strange. It is built in. A life

joined to Jesus Christ becomes an unavoidable rebuke to an age that wants darkness undisturbed. That is also why friendship with the world is such a deadly thing. It is not harmless balancing. It is spiritual adultery. It is the church trying to court the approval of the very system that crucified her Lord. And then we looked forward and saw that the world has an end. The age is moving toward harvest, judgment, tribulation, collapse, and reckoning under the wrath of God. But the final word is not destruction for the saint. The final word is the world to come—the reign of Jesus Christ, the restoration of righteousness, the setting right of all that sin twisted, and the inheritance reserved for those who belong to Him.

That means the whole series comes down to this: the believer is not merely called out of corruption; he is called unto Christ. He is not merely separated from something; he is separated unto Someone. If this study has done its work, then “Not of This World” no longer sounds like a poetic phrase. It sounds like identity. It sounds like conflict. It sounds like loyalty. It sounds like pilgrimage. It sounds like citizenship in another country. The Christian is a stranger here not because he is confused about reality, but because he finally understands it. He sees what the world is, where it is going, who rules over it now in a temporary sense, who will rule it openly in the end, and what God has promised beyond it. That knowledge should take the glamour out of sin, the shine out of compromise, the intimidation out of persecution, and the false weight out of this world’s applause. A man does not sell his soul for trinkets once he has seen the kingdom.

So let this conclusion do more than summarize the material. Let it drive home the call. Do not love this world. Do not envy it. Do not fear it. Do not imitate it. Do not court it. Do not let it disciple your mind, shape your values, flatter your flesh, or dull your loyalty to Jesus Christ. Do not mistake its glamour for glory, its noise for strength, its wisdom for light, or its approval for blessing. The world is passing away, and the lust thereof. Its systems are temporary. Its kings are temporary. Its pleasures are temporary. Its religions are temporary. Its fashions are temporary. Its media storms are temporary. Its idols are temporary. But “he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:17). The child of God must live now in the light of what lasts then.

At the same time, do not treat this calling as deprivation. The Lord is not merely taking things away from His people. He is preparing them for something better. The command to be not of this world is not a prison sentence. It is preparation for inheritance. The saint is being trained to live under another King, breathe another atmosphere, and love another country. Every refusal of the world’s idols, every loss borne for Christ, every misunderstanding suffered for truth, every lonely act of obedience, every step of separation, all of it is not wasted. It is the shaping of a pilgrim for the kingdom to come. We

are strangers here because we belong there. We are out of place here because our home is elsewhere. We are not of this world because we have been bought for another one.

And that is the note this series ought to leave ringing in the heart: victory, hope, and holy resolve. The world is not winning, no matter how loudly it boasts. The devil is not ultimate, no matter how much influence he flaunts. The darkness is not final, no matter how thick it becomes. Jesus Christ is still the Lamb of God, still the Light of the world, still the Saviour, still the coming King, and still the One to whom every knee shall bow. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Righteousness will reign. The curse will not have the last word. The saints will inherit. So walk through this present world with your armor on, your Bible open, your eyes lifted, and your heart anchored above. Be not of this world—not because you are afraid of it, but because you belong to Jesus Christ and because one day the world to come will break into this one in power, glory, and righteousness.

# NOT OF THIS WORLD

## A 12-PART BIBLE STUDY SERIES OVERVIEW

**THIS WORLD**  
FALLEN • TEMPORARY • UNDER JUDGMENT  
1 John 2:15-17  
"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof..."

**THE WORLD TO COME**  
RIGHTEOUS • ETERNAL • UNDER CHRIST  
2 Peter 3:13  
"We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

	1 WHAT IS THE WORLD?	2 BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD	3 THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD	4 THE SPIRIT OF THIS WORLD	5 THE LUST OF THE FLESH, EYES, PRIDE OF LIFE	6 JESUS CHRIST AND THIS WORLD	7 NOT OF THIS WORLD – THE LIGHT	8 NOT OF THIS WORLD – CHOSEN OUT	9 NOT OF THIS WORLD – WHY THE WORLD HATES YOU	10 NOT OF THIS WORLD – FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD	11 NOT OF THIS WORLD – THE END OF THE WORLD	12 NOT OF THIS WORLD – THE WORLD TO COME
<b>FOCUS</b>	Defining the world biblically	God's plan before creation	Satan's rule over the world system	The unseen influence behind the world	The traps that control mankind	Christ came into the world for sinners	Christ is the light that exposes the world	Believers are chosen out for another King	Worldly hatred against Christ's followers	The danger of compromise and imitation	The end of the present world order	The coming kingdom of Christ
<b>KEY VERSE (KJV)</b>	1 John 2:15 "Love not the world..."	1 Peter 1:20 "Foreordained before the foundation..."	Luke 4:6 "All this power will I give thee..."	2 Corinthians 4:4 "The god of this world hath blinded..."	1 John 2:16 "The lust of the flesh... the pride of life."	John 1:29 "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away..."	John 8:12 "I am the light of the world..."	John 15:19 "Ye were not of the world, but I chose you out..."	John 15:18 "If the world hate you, ye know that..."	James 4:4 "Friendship of the world is enmity with God."	Matthew 24:21 "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not..."	Revelation 21:1 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth..."
<b>WHAT WE LEARN</b>	The world is a system of sin against God.	God's plan of redemption was set before time.	Satan has temporary power over the world.	The spirit of this world works in men.	Three lusts that drag men into bondage.	Jesus came to seek and save the lost.	Christ brings truth, light, and salvation.	Believers have changed families, citizenship, and allegiance.	Hatred comes because we belong to Christ.	Compromise brings loss of power with God.	The world is heading toward divine judgment.	Christ will reign in righteousness forever.
<b>WARNING</b>	The world will consume and defile you.	Don't live like this world is ultimate.	Don't be deceived by satan's rule.	The world's wisdom is spiritual death.	Yielding to lust leads to eternal ruin.	Reject not the only Saviour sent by God.	Rejecting light leads to darkness.	Don't blend in with the world's crowd.	Don't be surprised at persecution.	Worldly religion cannot please God.	Do not trust in human systems or security.	Don't set your heart on this world.
<b>PROMISE</b>	God reveals truth to those He loves.	You are part of God's eternal plan.	Christ has already won the final victory.	God gives power to resist the devil.	He provides strength to walk in purity.	Whosoever believeth shall not perish.	Walking in light brings life and fellowship.	You belong to the kingdom of God.	You share in Christ's own sufferings.	God restores power when we repent.	Christ will return to judge and reign.	You will inherit the kingdom forever.
<b>APPLICATION</b>	Examine what you love and follow.	Live with eternal perspective.	Resist the devil and his influence.	Be sober, vigilant, and prayerful.	Mortify sin and walk in the Spirit.	Trust Christ alone for salvation.	Let His Word guide and convict you.	Live as a stranger and pilgrim here.	Stand firm and keep your focus on Christ.	Separate from worldly compromise.	Watch for His coming and be ready.	Set your heart on things above.

**THE BIG PICTURE**

We are not called to love this world, but to be separated unto Christ and His kingdom. This world is passing away, but the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ shall reign forever.

**"FOR HERE HAVE WE NO CONTINUING CITY, BUT WE SEEK ONE TO COME."**  
HEBREWS 13:14

**VERSEQUEST**  
MINISTRIES