

What Is "The World"?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction:

- A. Matt. 16:21-23 - Peter let his own thinking lead him; did not know God's plan
 - 1. His thinking was according to "the things of men."
- B. What are the "things of men"?
 - 1. They tend to be physical in nature
 - 2. They tend to be carnal in character
 - 3. They tend to be the things the world values
- C. The world can be a great stumbling block to faith

I. 1JOHN 2:15-17

- A. "Do not love the world or the things in the world"
 - 1. What does John mean: rocks, hills, streams, grass, and trees?
 - 2. Creation was good - Gen. 1:31
 - 3. Rom. 8:19-23 - Creation groans to be clothed in incorruption
 - 4. Sin causes pain; its consequences have shaped this world of suffering and sorrow
 - 5. Matt. 6:24; Rom. 12:2
- B. "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him"
 - 1. John is unequivocal. Why would anyone love something that causes so much pain?
 - 2. The world represents separation from God - Isa. 59:1-2
 - 3. We cannot compromise with the world and expect to be pleasing to God
- C. "All that is in the world: desires of the flesh"
 - 1. John begins with the impulses of the flesh: sexually deviant and damaging behavior, uncleanness, idolatry, sorcery, grudges, fits of temper, drunkenness, embarrassing conduct - Gal. 5:19-21
 - 2. Contrary to the spirit of calm self-control that identifies the Christian - Gal. 5:22-24
- D. "Desires of the eyes"
 - 1. Out of place desires based on what is seen with the eyes: lasciviousness and envy
- E. "Pride in one's self"
 - 1. Many have stumbled because of pride in self
 - 2. Rom. 12:3; Gal. 6:3
 - 3. Works of the flesh like jealousy, rivalries, covetousness - Col. 3:5
 - 4. Runs counter to the humility that identifies the Christian - Phil. 2:3-7
- F. "And the world is passing away with its desires" - 2Peter 3:10-11
 - 1. It is so easy to focus on the physical that is experienced with fallible physical senses, even though the physical within its own structure carries the evidence of its own passing
 - 2. It is harder to focus on the spiritual with the eyes of faith, even though the spiritual cannot be destroyed and cannot die - Matt. 6:19-20

- G. "But whoever does the will of God abides forever" - Isa. 40:6-8
 - 1. The world demands our souls in exchange for pleasing our bodies
 - 2. The will of God demands our bodies in exchange for saving our souls
- H. Illustration: Eve in the Garden of Eden - Gen. 3:6
 - 1. Eve saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food -- lust of the flesh
 - 2. Eve saw that it was a delight to the eyes -- lust of the eyes
 - 3. Eve perceived that it was desired to make one wise -- pride of life
 - 4. And in exchange for the momentary satisfaction of these appetites, she lost her innocence, her peace of mind, her home in Eden, her freedom, her life, and most important -- her soul
 - 5. The world offers so little and charges so much!

II. AVOIDING THE WORLD

- A. How can we avoid worldliness?
 - 1. Not by leaving the world, not by isolation, not by treating the world like a disgusting place filled with hateful people
 - 2. 1Cor. 5:9-10; John 3:16; Rom. 12:9
 - 3. So how can we avoid worldliness?
- B. Biblical information
 - 1. 2Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 5:14; Gal. 5:16-17
- C. Mental transformation
 - 1. It is not sufficient to simply do better; we must also think better
 - 2. 2Cor. 10:5; Rom. 12:2; Phil. 4:8
 - 3. One's actions follow from thoughts; clean up the thoughts and the actions will follow
- D. Spiritual association
 - 1. One must watch out for more than one's thoughts and actions; he must also consider his environment
 - 2. 1Cor. 15:33
 - 3. By whom are we being influenced? With whom do we spend our time? What relationships do we prize more highly? Are they oriented toward the world or toward God?
 - 4. Matt. 10:34-37, 12:46-50

Conclusion:

- A. Matt. 7:13-14