

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 9- Love Not the World

69. Part 4

WAOY Wednesday 08/15/07; WOSM Thursday 01/05/23

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about not loving this present world. So, let's turn in our Bibles and let's read **1 John 2:15-17** again together:

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Now in these three verses, John ignited a fire storm even in his day about the issue of loving the world and the things that are in the world. Worldliness was not a popular subject in John's day, and it certainly is not a popular subject in our day- but it is in the Bible- so we must confront it. And as I discussed with you on the last broadcast, John was not saying that we cannot love life; nor was he saying that we cannot love God's Creation. No, John knew that all that God had made was good.

What John was warning his first century readers and us about was loving the *system* of the pagan world- that system which was invented, built, empowered, and sustained by fallen Man. John is referring to the ungodly *ways* of lost mankind; the *attributes* of sinful systems put in place and kept in power by unsaved and unconverted people.

You see, when John used the word, "world"- he wasn't talking about Nature- he was talking about the *ways* of lost man which promote wickedness; the viewpoint of fallen man which glories in greed and

covetousness; the perspective which upholds and sustains sin; and which magnifies iniquity.

When John used the word- “world” he was using it in the same way that the children of Israel referred to “Egypt”. The word “Egypt” did not simply mean that geographical nation in upper Africa to the Jew. No, to the children of Israel- “Egypt” represented bondage, slavery, beatings, and a political and religious system which was corrupt and unholy and pagan.

The Jew also referred to “Babylon” in the same way. “Babylon” represented any system; or any way of life; or any viewpoint which was in opposition to Biblical holiness.

Also, when the nation of Israel divided into two nations- Judah looked at Assyria in the same way. So, an “Assyrian” was not just a person who was a citizen of that northern nation- but when someone from Judah referred to someone as being an “Assyrian”- he was referring to a person who was promoting a way of life that was contrary to that which the God of the Jews had sanctioned.

For example- the Babylonians would enslave people from other nations and make them serve the gods of the Babylonians. Assyrians and Babylonians would prostitute their own daughters and sacrifice children at the altar of their gods. Euthanasia- the killing of old and weak human beings was common in these cultures. Homosexuality and other sexual perversions was also commonplace. The one true living God forbade the Children of Israel from living like this and He defined godliness by giving them the Ten Commandments which were written with the very Finger of God Himself.

So, anyone- any individual or any nation or any viewpoint which promoted a lifestyle which was in violation of these Commandments was referred to as a “Babylonian” or as “Assyrian” or as “pagan” or worldly. So, this definition was reserved for someone who was more than just sinful- he was more than someone who had fallen short of that which God demands- but this person was promoting and sanctioning and establishing a way of life which was in violation of what how God said to live.

A Jew was forbidden to build temples to the gods of these people and he was forbidden to allow his children to marry them because God did not want their pagan way of life to eventually win over that of the chosen people.

As God moved mankind from the Old Covenant into the New- several changes took place. For example- the Old Testament Jew had very little understanding of Heaven as a place where the redeemed go when they die. The Jew's interest was in the geographical nation of Israel- the "Promised Land". So, to many Jews, the physical location of Israel was the only "Heaven" they understood. So, when anything; any individual; any nation; any system attacked the nation of Israel or tried to subvert Israel national sovereignty- they were attacking all the Heaven that these people knew, and it was almost impossible for the Jew to comprehend.

So, God began to move the heart of His people away from the natural and onto the spiritual; away from the temporary and onto the permanent; away from the terrestrial and onto the celestial. God moved the heart of His people in the New Covenant away from the geographical nation of Israel and onto Heaven itself; away from the physical temple in Jerusalem and onto a temple whose builder and maker is God; away from animal sacrifices and unto the sacrifice of the Lamb of God; away from a high priest who first had to offer sacrifice for himself before he could ever offer sacrifice for the people to a High Priest who was sinless and holy; away from the city of Jerusalem and onto the city of New Jerusalem; away from the Sabbath and onto making every day as the Sabbath; away from committing the act of adultery and onto not looking and lusting; away from simply not stealing to a life of giving; away from a life of not killing and to not even being allowed to hate.

The partial, temporary, signs and symbols and shadows of the Old Covenant were replaced with the true and the permanent and the eternal realities of the New Covenant. But there was a still a danger to the people of God- even under the New Covenant. There was still a competing voice in the earth; another "gospel" which was in direct opposition to the true Gospel; which waged war for the souls of men. This danger didn't come from Egypt or from Babylon or Assyria- but it came from the very heart of sinful, evil Man.

This "other" system was concocted and manufactured and established and sustained by lost and fallen human beings which sought to win the hearts and mind and souls of people just like Nimrod the mighty Hunter had done nearly 5,000 years earlier.

John and Jesus and Paul and Peter and James and the other New Testament writers called this new danger “worldliness” and although the term may sound innocent to us today- worldliness is no less a threat to Biblical Christianity than Babylon, Egypt, and Assyria was to the Jew.

So as the Holy Ghost moved upon the Apostle John- he write down these inspired words that sound so strange to us today to warn God’s children to keep their hearts and minds free of evil influence and reserved solely for the Lord as he said,

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

What is so fascinating to me is that after nearly 2,000 years of these verses being right here in black and white in the Epistle of **1John**- there are probably fewer people alive today that even understand what worldliness actually is than ever before and as far as I can hear and see- we have less sermons; less teaching about the danger and damage that worldliness brings to God’s children today than at any point in Christian History.

Now I want to remind all of us about a few things before I proceed with this issue. First of all- God the Holy Ghost inspired the Apostle John to say- **“Do not love the world”**. This is not something that I concocted because I have a bone to pick with somebody. As I have mentioned several times- I didn’t write this Book and many today would be glad if I would just skip over the issue of worldliness and get to a more juicier topic like the antichrist rather than deal with this issue. But I am going verse by verse through a letter from an Apostle of God which just so happens to be inspired, inerrant, infallible, and authoritative, and relevant to us today and so I am forced to deal with this issue.

Secondly, can we all agree that John actually had something very specific in mind when he said, **“Do not love the World”**? John meant something when he said this and then he went on to show us how important this issue was when he said, **If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** So, this is not just something that would

be better if we don't do but no big deal if we do- is it? No, John says that if the love of the world is in us- then the love of God is not in us – and that's pretty important- wouldn't you say?

Now one thing you can always count on when you read Scripture- God gave us this Book precisely because He expects us to obey it. Since that is true- He also expects us to understand what He said in this Book so that we will do that which He says to do and so that we will refrain from doing what He says not to do. We need to know that we are going to be held accountable to God for what is written in this Book.

Let me take just a moment and give you an example of what I am talking about here. We need to remember that all during the time that Jesus walked the earth- the group of Jews called the Pharisees were trying to trap Him in some indiscretion on a particular point of Law or some action that our Lord did or did not do.

When they asked Jesus a question- they were not asking that question so that they could get the correct viewpoint from God- they were asking Him so that they could trap Him so that they could accuse Him and have Him removed.

Many times, Jesus responded to their question with statements like this, **“Have you not read?”** or **“You err because you do not know the Scriptures”**. Now the “Scriptures” that Jesus was referring to was the 39 Books of the Old Testament which were finished and compiled into one source over 200 years before He was born. Over and over, Jesus said that all 39 Books of the Old Covenant were actually all about Him- and yet the Pharisees who spent an average of 12 hours every day reading them didn't know them or understand them.

Notice also that Jesus said that the *reason* that the Pharisees were off base and the reason that they did not accept Him as being God in the flesh was because they did not know the Scriptures. They didn't understand them the way that they were written; They didn't recognize God Almighty when He stood right before them because they didn't understand Moses and all the prophets- who spoke clearly of Him.

And notice also that Jesus never gave them an “out” because they didn't understand what the Scriptures had said. He rebuked them for not knowing the Scriptures. He was brutal against their ignorance. He denounced the fact that they were unaware of what the Scriptures taught.

Not one time did Jesus say, “*Yea, I know what you mean- I don’t understand that verse either.*” He never said that did He? No, Jesus held them accountable for what the Scriptures said.

This *proves* that Jesus operated under the assumption that since God had so graciously and carefully moved upon 31 writers on three continents over a 1400 year time frame to give them all 39 Books of the Old Covenant- that God *expected* His people to read the Scriptures and understand what they meant. As far as Jesus was concerned ignorance was no excuse.

This is the same assumption that we must operate under today, beloved. God has now added 27 Books of the New Covenant to the 39 Books of the Old to give us 66 Books which are the only source on earth of Divine Revelation about God, Salvation, Heaven, and Eternal Life. The Holy Bible alone defines for us what is and what is not acceptable to God and what is and what is not sin and who is and who is not saved and it is the Holy Bible which tells us that worldliness is a sin and that if anyone has the love of the world in their life- then they do not have the love of the Father in them.

God has graciously and carefully given this precious Book to us, and we must assume that the reason that He went to such great lengths to give it to us is so that we all may read it and study and believe it and love it and obey it and know what it says and know what it means so that we may honor God in all that we do.

So please- think about this issue and go with me as we continue our discussion on just what worldliness really is and the great danger that it poses to the children of God.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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