

Has the world changed? Or is it just me?

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

There are two reasons why you may think that the world is getting worse.

- First, many in the world are increasingly striving for changes in values and policies – striving to undo what has been the status quo. It has gotten to a point that has made things very personally, stressful, even violent. It is not an isolated event. It is increasingly becoming more and more global.
- Secondly, you may be responding or reacting to the things, stated above, and are making choices / commitments that change your former levels of satisfaction and contentment. You may care more about things than you did before. This may be costing you friendships.

Our text reveals two extreme things .

- One thing is that the world is operating under the influence of Satan, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience.
- A second thing is that some people have been given grace to see this world differently by being made alive (quicken) through a spiritual birth. This new birth changes perspectives and gives people new desires. As their understanding develops, people can increasingly discern how bad the world is and respond correctly.

Let's answer the question, "Has the world changed? Or is it just me?"

In essence, the world has not changed.

Ever since sin came into the world and death by sin (Romans 5:12), this world has been assaulted with the influence of evil from Satan (Ephesians 2:2; I John 5:19; Colossians 1:13 cp. Acts 26:18). Because of our sinful natures, we all operated under this influence before conversion (Ephesians 2:3). Even after we have come to know the truth of Christ, we can still be deceived by Satan. Look at Peter's example in Mathew 16:13-18,21-26 cp. I Peter 5:8-9; II Corinthians 11:3.

However, since Christ came and the Gospel has been established, the world's evil has intensified and is overtly anti-Christian (II Corinthians 4:3-4; I John 2:18; 4:3; II John 1:7 cp. Matthew 24:1-14). World-wide, anti-Christian sentiments and activity are perhaps at the highest level ever. Since the enemy is stirring up strife because of Christ and the Gospel, be sure that your responses to the world keep Christ, the Gospel, and eternity in view.

The souls of men will hopefully benefit from your responses to the issues of life in this world (Matthew 5:13-16). But the souls of men will not be delivered from the power of sin and from the darkness of this world unless they come to know Christ (**Again, read – II Corinthians 4:3-4** cp. I John 5:12; John 3:16-21,36; 8:19-24; I Peter 3:15).

Maybe you have changed, too. If you have not changed, you need to do so – now!

It is not enough to say that this world is bad. Almost everyone is saying that. Suffering, frustration, and differing agendas will make anyone complain. But we must truly know **why** the world is bad, so that we can know what we should do about it. When trying to put out a fire, spray at the base of the flames. The work of Satan and the unspiritual, ungodly, sinful nature of man are at the base of the flames in this world. The issues will change, but the source of the problem only has to do with people's relationship with God.

- Ephesians 2:1 – Sin has rendered all men spiritually dead to God and His truth. We need a new birth to change us (I Corinthians 2:14; John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5-7).
- Ephesians 2:2-3 – Satan has been deceiving, intimidating, and manipulating man for all of human history (Hebrews 2:9-15; I John 3:8).
- Ephesians 2:4-9 – We need forgiveness of sin and transformation. Only the grace and mercy of God can deliver us from the penalty and power of sin. Only the power of God's Spirit can overcome the deception and influence of Satan. Our old nature needs to be transformed. We need to be translated to a new sphere of existence, positioned in the family and kingdom of God through the work of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3-7; Romans 5:1-11,17-21; I Peter 2:9-10 cp. Galatians 2:20; I John 4:4; II Corinthians 3:18).
- Ephesians 2:10 – The grace that delivers us is also the grace that builds us up and changes us into the servants of God (Romans 6:17-18; Ephesians 3:14-19; Colossians 2:6-10; John 15:1-16; Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-8).

As you face the trials of life, make sure you know who your father is and follow God as His dear children (John 8:37-47; Ephesians 5:1-21; John 5:21-24; Colossians 3:1-4; I John 3:1-3; 4:1-6).