

## Not of this world

It is surprising that the Lord Jesus in His great prayer for His disciples, and for all of His people, to His Father of which we can read in John Chapter 17, mentions 'the world'. It could be expected that 'the world' was the last thing on His mind. The prayer includes His comment to His Father *"Now I come to you"*, Yes, His mind was on going to be with His Father and all that involved but He was still very caring and thoughtful of His people and the risks to them in 'the world' in which they were to remain after Jesus' death. *"I pray not that you take would keep them out of the world but that you would keep them from the evil"*. Jesus was very much aware of the evil in 'the world' and the dangers to human souls of being in 'the world' and yet they, and all God's people have a work to do in this world and must remain for the time allotted for each for our lives. Paul says to be with Christ is far better but for the sake of the people of God he would remain to do the work to which God had called him. At the end of his life Paul says I am now ready to be offered, and I have kept the faith. But in the book of Galatians mentions 'this present evil world' and states that Demas *"Had forsaken him, having loved this present world"*. John in his first letter not only mentions *"Love not this world"*, but that many false prophets had gone out into 'the world'. They the anti-Christ, 'the world' in one sense is the anti-Christ and therefore opposed to the people of Good. *"In 'the world' you will have tribulation but fear not I have overcome the world"*.

In John chapter 14 Jesus says, *"The prince of this world comes and has nothing in me"* and in chapter 12 of John's gospel, *"Now is the judgement of this world and the prince of this world is cast out"*. Jesus was very much aware of the spiritual realities of 'the world', the battles in which He, and subsequently we now are involved, and that there is a prince of this world. Jesus faced Satan for 40 days and nights in the wilderness, Jesus knew the enemy but says that in His death, that is the context of the scripture in John chapter 12, 'the world' would be judged and the prince of this world cast out. Paul describes Satan as the god of this world (2 Corinthians chapter 4) and the prince of the power of the air the spirit which now works in the children of disobedience (Ephesians chapter 2). The children of disobedience are those who disobey but who are the fruit of Adam's disobedience, *"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners"*. That is, they were sinners by nature, sin having passed unto all human beings through Adam and Eve's sin, Romans chapter 3 versed 23 says, *"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* and why all need the forgiveness of their sins and redemption from their sin.

Therefore, the prince of this world, the enemy of human souls, will work in the children of disobedience in this evil world. Jesus, in His prayer and very much aware of evil, says *"Keep them from the evil"* and this wonderful statement, *"They are not of this world as I am not of this world"*, He put his disciples and all His people in the same place spiritually as He was. This even though at that time they had not received the Holy Ghost and were about to forsake Him and flee and Peter to deny Him three times. John in His letter says, *"As He is so we in this world"*. We see Jesus' faith in the calling of God upon these

disciples and for us also, and the place into which they, we all, would come through His death. *"You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you"*

Jesus prayer, *"Sanctify them through the truth, your word is truth"* and later *"I sanctify myself that they may be sanctified through the truth"*. Sanctification: separation FROM the world and separation UNTO God, It is hugely positive, sanctification making us holy and therefore wholly belonging to God. The prince of this world is the 'father of lies and all that is in this world is contrary to the truth of Almighty God, so Jesus prays that all His people should be sanctified through the truth. Jesus the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus prayed that the prince of this world would have nothing in the disciples and be spiritually in the same place in this world as our Lord Jesus. He prayed for them 'to be kept' until the Holy Ghost came on the day of Pentecost and thereafter as servants of God in their calling. John, as previously quoted, in first letter chapter 4 verse 17 writes, *"As He is so are we in this world"*. Paul says, *"That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love"*.

For Jesus to say the prince of this world had nothing in Him, this meant nothing of this world or of the kingdom of this world. He had already stated *"My kingdom is not of this world"*. We have stated in John 17 *"I am not of this world"*, and we can conclude that included nothing of the evil of this world or of the culture and traditions and elements of this world. He was of and from His Father in heaven and did not follow the traditions of the 'fathers', the culture and traditions, belief and thinking of this world. As we can read in the gospels Jesus often found Himself in conflict with such traditions and those who gained from them and the ways in which the world organises itself. For Jesus *"Seek you first the kingdom and God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you"*. The ways of this world being contrary to the kingdom of God and, of course, Jesus came to bring the kingdom of God to human beings.

The prince of this world had nothing in Jesus' death. It was a death unto life, no power of death here for satan, but the power of God. Jesus laid down His life that He might take in up again. When we are joined in Jesus death it is the place in which the prince of this world had nothing. He has no place here and therefore we are safe and free in Jesus' death to go through the death into life.

John tells us *"Love not this world nor the things of this world"*. He tells us that they are. 'The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. John like Jesus and Paul very much aware of the evil of this world. These things of 'the world' are the outworking in human lives of the disobedience of Adam and Eve when they ate of the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. They saw it which was good to taste (lust of the flesh), good to look at (lust of the eyes) and to make one wise (pride of life). All the three temptations which Jesus endured in the wilderness were to attempt to cause Him to fail/sin in these three areas of the things of this world and therefore, to love the world and give the god of this world 'something in Him'. The failure was on behalf of the tempter and our Lord Jesus,

had clean hands, a pure heart, told no lies and never was proud, rather He was meek and lowly in heart. The prince of this world had nothing in our Lord Jesus through all the temptations and it continued that way through His whole life, even through His death on the cross.

It is clear that there is a 'spirit of the world' which is contrary to the Spirit of God. Paul tells us *"We have not received the spirit of this world but the Spirit which is of God"*. The Spirit of God corresponds to the wisdom of God and the spirit of this world to the wisdom of this world. The world by its wisdom cannot know God but the Spirit of God reveals the things of God. New birth, being born again of the Spirit of God, brings us into the kingdom of God, for us to know and see and understand the things of God. These cannot be known by the 'natural man', Paul tells us, *"They are foolishness to him"*. Jesus Himself learned by the Spirit of God and not the spirit of the world which is why He says, *"I am not of this world"*; this even though He lived and moved and worked in the world. He never took on Himself the ways of the world.

In Ephesians chapter 2 verse 2 we read of those who walk according to 'the course of this world'. The word 'course' is the word 'age', this time, these times, the traditions and ways of the thinking of the conventions of the world. They change as the politics change and the promise of 'this world' tries to dominate the lives of those in the world promising them freedom and yet all the time ensnaring them and keeping them away from the Lord Jesus. *"The god of this world has blinded the eyes"*. The prince of this world is at the root of **all** culture, tradition and politics which does not look to the Lord Jesus for its authority.

Jesus had the mind of Christ, a completely different thinking. In the world it is the prince of the power of the air, satan, who is the spirit which works, as said, in the children of disobedience. The Lord Jesus was a life-giving spirit, with a different way of thinking and this allowed the Spirit of God to work in Him. He was a child of obedience, even His mother Mary obeyed saying, *"Be it unto me according to your word"*.

The people of God of God are to think like the Lord Jesus, to have the mind of Christ, they are to be taught by the Spirit of God and to know the things of God. The Lord Jesus spent much time at the end of His life explaining the coming of the Holy Spirit to His disciples and said, *"They are not of this world even as I am not of this world"*. And when the Spirit of God came upon them on the day of Pentecost they were truly not of this world. They immediately knew the wisdom of God and the things of the kingdom of God. They knew that God had raised Jesus from the dead and made Him Lord and Christ. They no longer lived according to the ways of this world and age but according to the Spirit of God.

*"If the world hates you, you know it hated me before it hated you. If you were of this world the world would love his own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you"*. These are Jesus words when speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit, they can be read in John chapter 15. The reality suddenly

becomes clear as we understand that the 'spirit of this world' and the Spirit of God are totally contrary. *"You cannot serve God and mammon (money but really the systems of managing and provision of this world within all cultures).* Pauls writes *"Come out from among them and be separate, touch not the unclean thing and God will receive you (us)".* We will be His sons and daughters, children of the kingdom in whom the Spirit of God works. The Holy Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God crying 'Abba Father'. Truly the people of God, the children of Jesus' obedience, are not of this world as Jesus was not of this world. God's people know Him as Father and call upon Him for their needs, He is all to all to them and the prince of this world has nothing in them.

How do we become 'not of this world'? It is quite clear that there has to be a change for that to take place. A very radical change, from light to darkness, from death to life, from sin to righteousness. It is a different spirit which is at work in our lives, it is the same Spirit who was in the Lord Jesus making Him 'not of this world'. For the change to take place there should be a recognition in all people, but individually, of what Paul said to the Ephesian church. We must accept that we have walked, lived, behaved, according to the ways of this world and out of that way of thinking has come wrongdoing. We have not done the things which are pleasing in the eyes of God. This comes not only from our sinful nature, but from the upbringing we have received from the culture in which have grown up which in many ways has been passed down through the generations according to the traditions of our fathers. Many love their culture and put their trust in such ways, it is their security and the basis of their provision and family structure. However, *"The ways of this world are death"*. When we come to Jesus, we begin to see how wrong those things are, and they are of the world and that the prince of this world has something, usually lots or things, in us and controls our believing thinking living and behaviour.

Paul found the problem of sin in himself and whatever he did he could not stop coveting, being covetous and motivated totally by self-interest. It was probably the covetousness which made him a persecutor of the church, seeking by all means to gain position within the religious hierarchy in Jerusalem through the deeds that he did showing his devotion to Judaism. His heart cry *"O wretched man (human being) that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death"*. The awful spiritual state in which he was which brought about constant sin and therefore 'spiritual death' in his life. Such behaviour in his heart and life killed off any possibility of a true relationship with God. Judaism, what Paul called the 'religion of the Jews' promises such a relationship. God being God to them and they being His people. What the law said which should have brought him to life only demonstrated the depth of sin in Paul which led him to spiritual death. Romans chapter 7 *"For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me"..... "But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful"*.

*“Who can help me? Thanks be to God”*. There was a way and there is a way not to be ‘of this world’. It is very radical and yet very wonderful; it needed to be. The way required the death of the Lord Jesus and us going through that death, His death.

We have three Bible verses which are Paul's testimony of God's working in Him which helps us to understand how to become not of this world. Galatians chapter 2 verse 20, *“I am crucified with Christ”*, Romans chapter 8 verse 2, *“The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death*, and Galatians chapter 6 verse 14, *God forbid that I should glory (boast) except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world is crucified to me and I unto the world”* We find in the last quotation ‘the world’ and the ‘power of the world’, and the need to be free from the world. and though living in the world not to be ‘of the world’

The first scripture is only part of Galatians 2.20 and is there to state and to show that when Jesus died Paul, indeed all of us who believe, were included in that death, We were joined to Jesus in His death, we were crucified with Christ. *“The love of Christ constrains us because we thus judge that if one died for all then all were all dead”*. (2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 14.) We have gone through death in the Lord Jesus into life, eternal life and the judgement which was upon us because of our sin had been taken by Jesus in His death. We have gone through death, Jesus death, in the one in whom the prince of this world had nothing. We have been joined into the one in whom the world had no place and being crucified with Jesus we find the world has been crucified unto us and us unto the world. We have died in Christ and therefore dead to all that was part of our previous life in the world, we are crucified unto the world. But also, as Jesus died to ‘the world’, He really died and went to be with His Father, ‘the world’ is dead to Him, it has no communication with Him, and as we are in Him that ‘the world’ is dead to, ‘the world’ is dead to us. The world is crucified to us and we unto the world. That is God's complete answer to the world and why Jesus could say, *“They are not of the world as I am not of the world”*. Again *“As He is so are we in this world”*, in other words as Jesus is existing eternally with the world having nothing in Him, so even in this world, we live with ‘the world’ having no place in us.

Romans chapter 8 verse 2: *“For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me freed from the law of sin and death”*. A new spiritual law applies in our lives. It is the law of the life in Christ Jesus. Like the law of gravity which means everything comes to the earth, this law means that everything will live and live unto God. That is the principle of this life, Jesus life, and the prince of this world had nothing in the Lord Jesus life and therefore has nothing in us and our lives. We are free on the inside. We are made free, a new creation in which the prince of this world has no part. We are free from the law of sin. The spiritual law which entered the first man when Adam sinned, and which give the prince of this world something in human beings. It allowed the prince of the power of the air to be the spirit which works in the children of disobedience. As mentioned by one man’

disobedience sin entered into the world and therefore death. So, the prince of this world has something in the children of that one man's disobedience but nothing in the sons of God who are the fruit of Jesus' obedience and have the law of His life in the Spirit working in them *"As He is so are we in this world"*. *"By one offering He has perfected for ever those who are sanctified"*.

We find that if the Spirit which raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us, He will make alive even our mortal by His spirit which dwells in us. Life, resurrection life in our bodies and the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus being the power of God working in our spirits. The prince of this world has nothing in us. We can therefore, by the mercies of God, present our bodies as living sacrifices holy and acceptable (pleasing) to God which is our 'reasonable worship'. It is the only sensible spiritually logical thing to do. Nothing of this world in our living sacrifice to God. No death, just life, love out of a pure heart for the Father and the Son with whom we have fellowship.

Therefore, *"Don't be conformed to this world"*, this prince of this world has nothing in you. The Prince of Peace is your life. *"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind to prove (or test) the good acceptable (pleasing) and perfect will of God"*. Here is worship in spirit and truth, not only with lips and voice but with life in body and spirit. We glorify God in our body and spirit which are God's. We belong not to the of the prince of this world but of the Prince of Peace and Lord of Lords and His name is Jesus. *"For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"*. Put to death your members on the earth, yield or present them to God as those who are alive from the dead. Then we live by the Prince of Peace who has something in us, He even is our life, He is our all in all. *"We have our fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life"*. Romans chapter 6.

John tells us *"Love not the world neither the things of the world"*. If we love the world the love of the Father is not in us. The things of the world are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. We have seen how Jesus overcame the temptations to follow such things and why the prince of this world had nothing in Him. The place which satan sought was denied him and Jesus did the will of the Father and denied Himself. That overcoming life is in the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which has made us free, made us new and in that re-creation where there is no place for the prince of this world. Paul tells us *"The fulness of Him (The Lord Jesus) fills all in all"*. We are filled with the Spirit of God and no place for the prince of this world. That is every member of the church of Jesus Christ, He is the head, and we all are to live unto Him. We live unto God,

*"Greater is He that is in us than He that is in the world"*. *"This is that which overcomes the world, even our faith"*. No place in us for the world or for the prince of this world, only for the Lord Jesus. Let us live into God and fulfil the words of the Lord Jesus *"They are not of the world as I am not of the world"*. Amen.



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