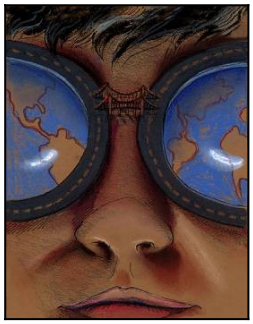
The Christian's Perspective of <u>THE WORLD</u>

(Selected Scriptures)
3/26/06



Introduction:

What is the believer's viewpoint of the world?
What perspective does God want us to have?

I. We are to be <u>good stewards</u> of the World (The physical Earth)

Genesis 1:28 - And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and <u>have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.</u>

II. We are <u>in the world</u> but are <u>not of the world</u> (We don't belong to the world nor will we permanently remain here)

John 15:19 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. (Compare John 17:14; John 17:16)

III. We are <u>not to be conformed</u> to the world (not pressed into it's mold)

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

IV. We are to <u>love the people</u> of the world.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

V. We are <u>not to love the world's system</u> (arrangement and philosophies which are contrary to God's ways)

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.*

VI. We are to <u>use the things</u> of the world but <u>not worship them or love them</u>

1 Corinthians 7:31 - And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

Three Things to Remember:

1. Remember <u>what is coming</u> to this world (Is. 13:6-13; II Pet. 3:10-13)
2. Remember <u>where your citizenship is</u> (Phil. 3:18-20)
3. Remember <u>you can't take it with you</u> (I Tim. 6:7, 17)
   Don't seek to fill your pockets, they will be empty when you leave!

Colossians 3:1-2 - *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

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"Dominion over" - rule over; control over; stewardship over; man was to govern the elements and species of the world.

This dominion expresses God's desire and design that people be regarded as superior to the rest of the animal world and it explains why people have a natural tendency toward fishing, hunting, taming animals, utilizing domesticated animals for man's benefit, etc.

God owns the Earth and everything on it:
Psalms 24:1 - The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
1 Corinthians 10:26 - For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

Since God is Creator, we should:

--<u>Not worship</u> God's creation (but the Creator - cp. Rom. 1:25)

--<u>Respect</u> God's creation
(Don't abuse the earth - be a good <u>steward</u>; God's people should never intentionally harm creation nor it's creatures (Pr.12:10); Littering, wastefulness, marring and polluting God's creation is a sin.)

--<u>Glorify God</u> for His creation
--His <u>power</u> (which created and constructed it so vast and yet so detailed)
--His <u>wisdom</u> (which planned it so well; it is ordered, balanced, and purposeful)
--His <u>authority</u> (which rules over it)

> A steward does not own that which he takes care of, he simply manages it for his Master; Let's manage well.

Psalm 8:4-9 - 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

II. We are <u>in the world</u> but are <u>not of the world</u> (We don't belong to the world nor will we permanently remain here)

- *John 15:19 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 17:14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*
- *John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

John 15:18-19

"The world" – *kosmos* – people devoid of God's Spirit (Jn. 14:17) who are part of a Satanic arrangement, who think and act in a manner which is opposite that of God's standard.

--Their <u>minds</u> are blinded by the "god" (Satan) of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4).
--Their <u>philosophy</u> is that of humanism (man being the measure of all things) (Col. 2:8)
--Their <u>wisdom</u> is considered by God as foolishness (1 Cor. 3:19)
--Their <u>actions</u> are dictated by demonic spirits and are characterized by disobedience (Eph. 2:2) and self-centered lust of the flesh and of the mind (Eph. 2:3)
--They have been injected (as it were) with a Satanic anesthetic and passively <u>lie helpless</u> in the lap of the wicked one (1 John 5:19)

For the comfort that it's worth, the persecuted believer can take encouragement in knowing that he/she is not the first to be wrongly attacked.

"It hated Me before it hated you" – the world's ultimate object of attack is not the Christian, but the <u>Christ</u> of Christians. This prior hatred of Christ is as old as sin. Satan's ultimate attack is made against the Lord Jesus.

"It hated Me" – Perfect, active indicative verb – "has hated and still hates" (Robertson, p. 261).
The precious Lord Jesus has been a target of attack throughout history.
--His holy Name is blasphemed as people use the name "Jesus Christ" as a curse word when angry or upset. His name is constantly uttered in vain.

Why is He the object of ridicule, rejection, and slander? Because He is the "way, the truth, and the life," and Satan knows it and demons know it. "We know who You are [they said], the Holy One of God." Therefore, Satan's ultimate attack is against the Lord Jesus Christ and anything connected to Him.

v. 19

“If ye were of the world” – if you belonged to the world; if you were on the same side or same team as the world, you would be loved by the world.

“I have chosen you out of the world” – out of the millions of people in the world, Jesus Christ has selected a remnant by grace to belong to Himself.

Believers have been “called out” from the world; therefore, the world “church” (*eklesia*) literally means “the called out ones.”
When someone believes in Christ, they are “translated out of the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of His dear Son."” There is immediately a change of lifestyle, love, and lordship. This change of allegiance, this change of sides is what makes you a target of attack. “All who live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

“Therefore the world hateth you” – the world knows that a born-again Christian is “not one of us” anymore. In most cases, they will leave you like the plague;

III. We are <u>not to be conformed</u> to the world (not pressed into it’s mold)

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

"Be not conformed" - stop allowing yourselves to be put into a mold or form (present, passive imperative).

Evidently, some of the Roman Christians were being influenced by the pagan Roman society, hence the present imperative calls for a stopping of a lifestyle already in progress.

"Conformed" - cookie cutter or mold

"This world" - lit. this "age" (aion) in contrast to the coming one.

This age is called an "evil age." (I Cor. 2:6, 8; Gal. 1:4)

Beware of the New Age Movement.

Is your thinking like this age?

If all of our calculations, plans, ambitions, decisions, etc., are determined by what falls within life here, then we are thinking like children of this age.

God is calling on us to not allow ourselves to be cloned into the spiritual and moral characteristics of the <u>times</u> in which we live.

Whether you realize it or not, the world (instigated by spiritual wickedness & demonic forces) is specifically trying to mold (structure) your mind (your way of thinking) - via the media (TV, radio, movies, magazines, books, etc.)

Don't be deceived into thinking that you have to match the world's fashions, thinking, planning, speaking, etc.

We are not to be like the world - READ Eph. 4:17-19

Love not the world (Cosmos) - I John 2:15-17

Being salt and light (Mt. 5:13-16), we are to be distinct from the world.

Don't be like a chameleon, which takes its color from its surroundings.

Believers must learn to swim against the tide (drift) of this age.

We must be willing to cut across the grain of this contemporary world-view. Even if it means standing alone.

IV. We are to <u>love the people</u> of the world.

John 3:16
For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Mark 6:34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

Galatians 5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Love others the way the good Samaritan loved his neighbor
(Luke 10:33–f)

Love people enough to share the Gospel with them (Mark 16:15-16)
Love people enough to do good unto them (Gal.6:10)

V. We are <u>not to love the world's system</u> (arrangement and philosophies which are contrary to God's ways)

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.

"<u>Love</u> not" - (*me agapate)* - Make a decision to stop your allegiance to and dedication to this old *cosmos*.

The New Testament uses two primary words translated "world."

1. *Aion* - this world's present *<u>time</u>*. The present age (with its degenerate moral characteristics) as opposed to God's future kingdom.
2. *Kosmos* - This world's present <u>program</u>. The Satanic inspired, humanistic system that is alienated from and in opposition to God.

Kosmos - used 79 times in John and 23 times in I John.

What *"Love not the world"* does <u>not</u> mean:

1. John is <u>not</u> saying that we should despise the <u>planet</u> (globe) upon which we live (that which God created was called good; we should not worship the creation, however.).
2. John is <u>not</u> saying that we shouldn't love <u>people</u> (mankind) (God loves the world in this sense and so should we - John 3:16).

"World" - *Cosmos* (cp. Cosmetics) - speaks of an adornment or an arrangement of things.
The "world" of which he speaks is <u>not</u> of the world order as God originally established, but of the world order which has been twisted and perverted by sin and Satan.

The word "world" refers to the world's organized system (in its lust for material possessions and personal status) as headed by Satan ("the god of this world". . . "the prince of the power of the air"); a system which ignores God, glorifies the temporal, and opposes God's righteous ways.
The "world" is simply that system of man which has God left out (the worst thing about TV and movies is that they depict life without God as normal).

When John speaks of not loving the world, he is referring to a world order and mindset that is at enmity with god, lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine.

Various World-Views

- Humanism (Man is the measure of all things)
- Materialism (Money & Possessions are the number one pursuit)
- Pragmatism (If it works, it must be right)
- Atheism (There is no God)
- Agnosticism (There is no way of knowing for sure whether God exists)
- Relativism (There are no absolutes)

Worldliness is a "radical individualism" that displays a kindly attitude toward Satan's evil world system and manifests itself in self-centeredness, self-advancement, and autonomy (Jon Trainer citing Chuck Colson).

"Neither the things that are in the world" - speaks of a materialistic mindset.

All believers must use the things in this world, but when we love them in place of God (when they become the center of our attention), we abuse their use (I Cor. 7:31 - "And they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away").

God promises to meet our needs for certain "things" when we seek first the kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33).

We ought to seek the "things" which are above (Col. 3:1-2 - "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth").

In the 1990's America had approximately 40,000 missionaries on the foreign field (over half were over 60 years old!). America had approximately 40,000 students in "Bible colleges" and less than 400 would go to the foreign mission field. The greatest major in Bible colleges and universities today (sad to say) is Business not Bible! (Ron Brooks, Baptist World Mission).

What is the reason for such worldly priorities? They learned it at home.
Many times we are worldly and don't even realize it.
--We adopt worldly standards
--We adopt worldly views of husband and wife roles
--we adopt worldly views on child discipline
--We adopt worldly views on dating and marriage
--We adopt worldly views on church growth
--We adopt worldly views on handling problems
--We adopt worldly views on planning our future

Why should believers not love the world?

1. **Worldliness is <u>INCONSISTENT</u> for anyone who is saved (v.12-14)** *Love for the world's system & things is <u>unfitting for someone who knows God and His Word</u>)*

2. **Worldliness is <u>DANGEROUS</u> to your closeness to God (v.15)**
   (Love for the world's system & things <u>forfeits your capacity to love God as you should</u>)

3. **Worldliness is a <u>VANITY</u> that does not have it's origin in God (v.16)**
   (Love for the world's system & things stems from a worldly (satanic) deception)
   A. The lust of the <u>flesh</u> - The world's vain <u>pleasure</u>
   B. The lust of the <u>eyes</u> - The world's vain <u>possessions</u>
   C. The pride of <u>life</u> - The world's vain <u>prestige</u>

4. **Worldliness is <u>FOOLISH</u> because of the transient (temporary) nature of the world (v.17)**
   (Love for the world's system & things is <u>unwise because the world and it's things are here today and gone tomorrow</u>)

VI. We are to <u>use the things</u> of the world but <u>not worship them or love them</u>

1 Corinthians 7:31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

When you "use" the things of this world, do you seek to fully use them to the utmost, to the point that they absorb all your time, thought, and energy?

We ought to use the resources God gave this world, but we must never become obsessed (engrossed) with material things so that we abuse them.

*How much are your distracted by the STUFF of this life?

EX: Being in India and seeing poor Christians who --because of their poverty-- were not as distracted in serving Christ as we are in America.

--Drive your car; don't worship your car
--Wear your clothes; don't worship your clothes
--Comb your hair; don't worship your hair (I Pet. 3)
--Mow your lawn; don't worship your lawn
--Clean your house; don't worship your house

This *kosmos* in its present form (***"fashion"***) is going to pass away!

The Lord (through Peter) addressed the transiency of this world in II Peter 3:10-13).

Our affection must be set on things above (Col. 3:1-2 - *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth."*)

Question: What does it mean to be Worldly and how can I overcome the temptation to be Worldly?

WHAT IS MY RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD?

(Why am I in the world?)

ANSWER: We are here to glorify God (I Cor. 10:31; I Pet. 4:11)

A. We are here to make a difference in the world, for the glory of God the Father (Mt. 5:13-16)

We glorify Him by being:

1. Salt (Mt. 5:13)
*Don't let your life become tasteless.
Get out of the salt shaker!

2. Light (Mt. 5:14-16)
*Don't let your light be turned off (or dimmed)
Run on full current!

B. We are here to be a conviction to the world, for the glory of God the Son (John 17:15-23)

We glorify Him by being:

1. Sanctified (Jn. 17:15-19)
*Don't let your life become typical (of the world)
Remember: Don't wash whites with colors! (the whites will change, not the colors)

2. Unified (Jn. 17:20-23)

*Don't let our oneness be torn apart

United we stand, Divided we fall!

The purpose for our unity is so that:
a. The world may believe (v. 21)
b. The world may know (v. 23)

HOW CAN I OVERCOME THE WORLD?

A. Three Be's

1. Be Born Again (I John 5:4-5)
   (We need a regeneration of our nature)

2. Be Transformed, not conformed (Rom. 12:1-2)
   (We need a transformation of our thinking)

3. Be Friendly, not friends (I Cor. 5:9-11)
   (We must practice separation in our associations)
   a. Beware of whom you team up with! (II Cor. 6:14-17)
   b. Beware of spiritual adultery! (James 4:4)

B. Three Don'ts:

1. Don't be fooled by the glitter (glamor) (Luke 4:4-8)
   (Watch out for deception)

2. Don't abuse it, simply use it (I Cor. 7:31)
   (Practice moderation)

3. Don't, if there is the slightest doubt (Rom. 14:13-23)
   (Don't do it, if it may conflict with a conviction)

C. Three Remember's:

1. Remember what is coming to this world
   (Is. 13:6-13; II Pet. 3:10-13)

   The world (system) is under condemnation
   (cp. Is. 24:1-4; Jn. 12:31)

2. Remember where your citizenship is
   (Phil. 3:18-20)

   This world is not our final habitation

   Cp. Jn. 18:36-37 - Testimony of Jesus
   Cp. Gal. 1:14 - Testimony of Paul

   a. We have different plans (James 4:13-17)
      (We don't plan the way the world plans)

   b. We have different priorities (Lk. 12:30)
      (We don't live for what the world lives for

3. Remember you can't take it with you (I Tim. 6:7, 17)
   (This world's goods last for a short duration)

   Don't seek to fill your pockets, they will be empty when you leave!

Colossians 3:1-2
If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

"Seek" - to live zealously for something. (present tense - to keep seeking, every day).

"Above" = the Heavenly, the spiritual, the eternal

"To seek those things which are above" means to center your life on your ascended (Eph. 4:10), glorified (Jn. 17:5; Phil. 2:9) Christ! (SEE: Walvoord, Bible Knowledge Commentary, Vol. II, p. 680)

"Things above" - our # 1 priority affection is to be toward God! (SEE: mark 12:29-30)

The point is: If you are one with Jesus and if you share His life (v. 4), then you should live for Him and seek to please Him.

We need to look at our values in light of our oneness with Christ.

What is important to us and what should be important are not always the same.

"We seek those things which are above when in heart and spirit we are truly sojourners in this world and are not bound to it" (Calvin, cited by Vaughan, p. 90).

"Set your affection" - lit. Focus your thoughts; put your mind.

What you spend your time thinking about reveals where your priorities are.

"The sure safeguard against seeking things below, is not to set the mind upon them" (Eadie, Colossians, p. 91).

To set our thoughts on things above does not mean that we are to withdraw ourselves from all of the activities of this world and do nothing but contemplate eternity and heaven . . . But as Barclay explains, "There will be this difference-- from now on the Christian will see everything in the light and against the background of eternity. He will no longer live as if this world was all that mattered; he will see this world against the background of the larger world of eternity" (Vaughan, citing Barclay, p. 91).

"Not on things on the earth" -

When your affection is on things above, you will have time for God.

You will have time to read His Word; you will have time to do His work; You will have time to seek His face in prayer; you will have time to assemble with His people, etc.

Some professing believers are so worldly minded, they are no heavenly good.

The world (for many) has become a playground instead of a battle ground.