

Have You Come “Out” of this World?

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Consider, if you will, the life of Jesus Christ while He was here in the flesh. Was Christ a **PART OF** this world? Was He part of this world’s VALUES... part of this world’s WAYS?

Of course, not! Jesus Christ came here to **do** the Father’s will... and to be *about* His Father’s business! (John 4:34; Luke 2:49).

While on earth, Christ maintained a very **close relationship** with the Father (John 10:30; 17:11, 22). Christ did not **ALLOW** the **ways** of the world, to **corrupt** Him! He was *not* “**part of the world**”... He was not “**OF** the world.”

Now, what did Christ say about those who **follow** Him... those who are true Christians? Christ said this: “They [Christians] are **not of the world, JUST AS I [Christ] am NOT of the world**”! (John 17:14).

That is an **INCREDIBLE** statement!! **Think** about it! You and I are not “OF the world,” **JUST AS** Jesus Christ was *not* “OF the world”!!

And this concept is so **important**, that Christ *repeats* it, two verses later, in verse 16: “They are not of the world, **JUST AS** I am not of the world.”

Then, notice what Christ says in the very *next* verse: He asks the Father to “**Sanctify** them [His followers] by Your truth.” “Sanctify” means to “**set apart**.” So, Christ was asking His Father to **set** His followers **apart FROM** the world!

Christ said, “I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18). The inspired Greek word for “church” was *ekklesia*, which means “**called out ones**.” Christ’s followers would be called **out** and set **apart** from Satan’s world!

Yes, Satan the devil is currently “the god of this world”! (II Cor. 4:4; John 12:31; John 14:30; Eph. 2:2)

Jesus Christ told His followers, “you are **not** of the world... I chose you **OUT** of the world (John 15:19).

Notice now, what *Peter* said about God’s people: “But you are a **chosen** generation, a **royal priesthood**, a **holy** nation, His [God’s] **OWN SPECIAL** people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you **OUT** of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Peter 2:9).

Let’s understand. This does **NOT** mean that true Christians are “better” than other people!! Yet, it **does** mean that they are **different** from others! And, it means that God has set us **apart...** as “His **own special** people.”

Notice what else Christ said. He said, “**AS** You [the Father] sent **ME** into the world, I [Christ] also have sent **THEM** into the world” (John 17:18).

Christ sends us *into* the world... as His **representatives**! “Now then, we are **ambassadors for Christ...**” (II Cor. 5:20). What is an “ambassador”? It is a person *representing* a **foreign**

nation. As a Christian, you are a *foreigner* here on earth! You are a foreigner, *representing* God's Kingdom!

As an "ambassador," you are in the *same* relative position, as the American Ambassador in communist China. The American Ambassador lives *in* China, but he *represents* the United States. He is **not** a communist. He does *not* regard China as "his" government. He does **not** enter into the Chinese **military**... nor does he **vote** for Chinese leaders! He is **not** there to try to eradicate the evils in their system. He does *not oppose* the Chinese; he is subject *to* them, *while* living there... and he *conducts* himself so as to be highly regarded *by* them.

Likewise, we, as Christians, live **IN** the world; but we are **representing God's Kingdom!** As scripture says, our *main* citizenship is in heaven (Philip. 3:20). Our *primary* allegiance must be to God's Kingdom!

Yes, we, as Christians, are **foreigners** in this world. We live as "**sojourners**" and "**pilgrims**" during this present life (I Peter 2:11). In fact, that is why God instructs us to dwell in **temporary** dwellings (or tabernacles) *during* the Feast of Tabernacles.¹ God wants it *impressed* upon us, yearly, that we are *not* to be too **attached** to our physical dwellings... nor to the physical *things* of this world!

Again, we are only "**sojourners**" and "**pilgrims**" during this present life. We are *heirs*... *not yet* inheritors... of our **permanent** dwelling, the Kingdom Of God.

Hebrews chapter 11 is known as the "*faith* chapter." It speaks of the "super heroes" of faith. Notice verses 13-14: "These all died in faith, *not* having *received* the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured *of* them, *embraced* them and confessed that they **were strangers and pilgrims on the earth**. For those who *say* such things declare plainly that they *seek a homeland*."

Abraham was *one* of those "heroes of faith." "By *faith* he [Abraham] dwelt in the land of promise as in a **foreign** country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he **waited** for the city which has **foundations**, whose builder and maker is God" (verses 9-10).

Likewise, **our** hearts, must **not** be set on this world... but rather, on passing **through** this world! "**Blessed** is the man... **whose heart is SET on PILGRIMAGE**" (Ps. 84:5).

Is YOUR heart "set on pilgrimage" while here in the flesh? Or... are your **overly** concerned with the things of this world?

The Apostle Paul admonishes us to "...**SEEK** those things which are **above**, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **SET your mind** on things above, **NOT on things on the earth**. For you **DIED**, and your life is hidden *with* Christ in God. When Christ **who IS our life** appears, then you also will appear *with* Him in glory" (Col. 3: 1-4).

Again, we are **IN** the world, but **not** part **OF** it! Paul exhorts us to "**not be CONFORMED to this world**"! (Rom. 12:2). Likewise, the Apostle John says this: "Do **NOT** love the world **OR** the things **IN** the world. If anyone **loves** the world, the love of the **Father** is **NOT** in him. For **ALL** that is in the world—the **LUST** of the flesh, the **LUST** of the eyes, and the **pride** of life—is **NOT** of the Father but is **OF** the world" (I John 2: 15-16).

Do **you** love the things of this world? If you **do**, then the “love of the Father” is **NOT** in you! Furthermore, do you realize that God considers it “adultery” if we become **FRIENDS** of the world?! Notice James, chapter 4: “**Adulterers and adulteresses!** Do you not know that **friendship** with the world is **enmity** with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a **friend** of the world makes himself an **ENEMY** of God”! (verse 4).

Let’s now notice II Cor. chapter 6. “Do **NOT** be unequally **yoked together** with unbelievers. For what **fellowship** has righteousness with lawlessness? And what **communion** has light with darkness? And what **accord** has Christ with Belial? Or what **part** has a **believer** with an **unbeliever**? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For **YOU ARE** [notice, “**you ARE**”] the **temple** [or **dwelling-place**] of the living God. As God has said: ‘**I will dwell IN them** and walk among them. I will **be** their God, and they shall **be** My people.’ Therefore ‘**Come OUT from among them** and **BE SEPARATE**, says the Lord...’” (verses 14-17).

Yes, God calls us OUT of this world... out of its *customs, its philosophies, its WAY of life!*
 “Therefore, if anyone is **in** Christ, he is a **NEW** creation; **old** things [i.e., old habits... **old ways of thinking**] have passed **away**...” (II Cor. 5:17).

Not to be Hermits

In light of the preceding discussion, a word of *caution* is warranted. God has indeed called us *out* of this world... out of its wrong *customs, philosophies, and sinful ways!* Yet, He has **not** called us out of the world *itself!*

As Jesus prayed to the Father: “I pray **not** that thou shouldest take them **out of** the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (John 17:15, *KJV*). So, although Christians should separate themselves from the wrongful **ways** of this world, we must **not** go so far as to physically separate ourselves from society and become social “hermits”!

Christians should still function *within* society and serve as a “**light**” and **example to others**. Christ said: “As You [the Father] sent Me into the world, I also have sent **them into** the world” (verse 18). He said that “You [the Christian] are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works** and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. 15: 14-16; cf. Phil. 2:15).

We, as Christians, are to love *everyone!* Paul said that, “as we have opportunity, **let us do good to all**, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). And, as shown in the parable of The Good Samaritan, **we are to go out of our way to HELP others!**

Questions to Ask Yourself

How can you and I *know* whether we have really “come out” of this world?

Well, here are some *questions* that each of us should ask our self. Questions that will help us determine the **degree** to which we have come out of the world:

(1) Do I sincerely hate sin?

There is **much** in this world that is evil! The Apostle Paul spoke of “this present **evil** age” (Gal.1:4). Christ Himself said, “...what is **highly** esteemed among **men** is an **abomination** in the sight of God”! (Luke 16:15). Again, the Apostle John said, “For **ALL** that is in the world—the **lust** of the flesh, the **lust** of the eyes, and the **pride** of life—is not of the Father but is **OF the world**” (I John 2:16).

God wants us to learn to **recognize** sin... and to **hate** sin! Paul instructs us to “**abhor** what is evil” (Rom. 12:9). In Ps. 97:10 and in Amos 5:15, we are instructed to “hate evil.” Clearly then, we should hate and abhor sin!

Consider, now, this quote from Dr. Roderick C. Meredith. He stated that it is **vital** that we “fully learn to **hate** evil— **not** to hate the *people* who *perpetrate* evil, but rather to hate those evil **actions** themselves... it is important that our hearts and minds be **sensitive** to **WHAT** evil **IS**. It is vital that we do *not* become ‘desensitized’ and begin to **conform** to the attitudes, words or actions of this modern world, which is becoming more and more **abominable** in the sight of Almighty God.” (Dr. Roderick C. Meredith, “Do You HATE Evil?” *Living Church News*, Nov. 2010)

Yes, we are to *hate sin... but love the sinner!*

God wants us to walk in *humility... and to NOT have a “holier than thou” attitude!*

However, He does want us to **recognize** sin... and to **hate** sin!

So, what about you? Do you *hate* sin? Do you **recognize** the sinful *thoughts* that enter your *own* mind?

“Well,” some might think, “it’s only *rare* that sinful thoughts enter *my* mind.” Yet, for those who believe that to be the case, then such person is either failing to *recognize* his sinful thoughts ...or, that individual apparently has thoughts which are *more pure* than the Apostle Paul’s!

In Rom. 7: 14-25, Paul vividly describes the continual *spiritual warfare* going on in his mind. “O **wretched** man that I am!” he exclaimed! Yes, Paul had to *fight* against sinful *thoughts* that entered his mind.

So, again, do you and I **recognize** sinful thoughts? Do we actively *struggle against* those thoughts? Do we *ask* God, throughout each day, to help us to *overcome* those thoughts?

Let’s now proceed to the *second* question that helps us determine the *degree* to which we have come out of this world.

(2) Do I spend too much time on “earthly distractions”?

Time IS your life! What you and I do with our time, *shows God* what is most **important** to us!

Yes, we all need to spend a significant amount of our time earning a living and caring for our families. Yet, even when it comes to earning a living, there are *some* who become “workaholics”—allowing little or no time for the things of God.

Much more *common*, however, is the case where the individual spends most all of his *spare* time in things which have no lasting value... such as watching hours and hours of television every day... or constantly being on Facebook or other social media... or spending all their spare time on hobbies or fishing, etc.

None of those things are wrong in and of themselves. And it's certainly proper to periodically relax and enjoy some leisure moments.

Yet, do we spend *so much* of our time on such things, that it *detracts* from the time that we *should* be spending on the things of **God?!** Things such as Bible-study, prayer, meditation, fasting, and serving?

Let's understand that *Satan wants* us to be constantly distracted with worldly pursuits—the *more* the better—just so long as God is *crowded out* of our daily lives!

Regarding the things of this world, Paul said, "...I have suffered **the loss of all things**, and [yet] count them as **RUBBISH**, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8).

(3) Am I too attached to other people?

Just as we can be too attached to material things and to material pursuits, it is also possible to be too attached to other people.

Some people feel that they must *constantly* be in the company of other people... either "in person" or via their cell-phone. Some individuals seem to spend practically *all day* on their cell-phone or on social-media, sending photos and telling people everything they are doing all day! It becomes an obsession!

God does want us to have *tremendous* love for our *family* members! Yet, even there, it is possible to allow our love for family members to **crowd out** the spending of *sufficient time* in prayer and Bible study!

Jesus Christ emphatically stated that "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate [or love *less*] his **father** and **mother**, wife and **children**, brothers and sisters, yes, and his **own life** also, he **cannot BE** My disciple"! (Luke 14:26).

Yes, we as Christians must love Christ **MORE** than our own family members!

What did Christ say is the "First and **Great**" Commandment? "You shall love the LORD your God with **ALL** your heart, with **ALL** your soul, and with **ALL** your mind"! (Matt. 22: 37-38).

Accordingly, Jesus *concluded* His statements in Luke 14, by saying this: "...whoever of you does not **forsake** [that is, whoever is not '**fully WILLING and READY**' to forsake] **ALL that he has** cannot **BE** My disciple"! (verse 33).

(4) How much is "God" a part-OF my routine thoughts?!

Are *your thoughts* "**God-CENTERED**"? Do you have God at the very **center** of your life and thoughts? Or, is He merely on the *periphery* of your life?

David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). And he said that God's word... God's Law... was his "**meditation ALL THE DAY**"! (Ps. 119: 97). David had the attitude of *wanting* his daily actions to be **led BY** God's word. He implored God, "**Direct** my steps **BY Your word**"! (Ps. 119: 133).

Jesus Christ *likewise* tells us to **live-BY, every word** of God (Luke 4:4). And, how are you and I going to *DO that*, unless we are continually **thinking ABOUT** God and His Ways?!

The *only* way that we **can** come to continually have our mind *filled* with the things of God, is by immersing ourself daily in Bible-study and prayer. By *meditating* on what we study, and by *applying* those principles to our actions throughout each day.

So... are you filling **your** mind with the things of God... **or** with the things of this world? **“Set your mind** on things above, **not** on things on the earth. **For you died**, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When **Christ *who is our life*** appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory” (Col. 3: 2-4).

In Conclusion

Let's all *take to heart* Christ's admonishment: “seek **FIRST** the kingdom of God and His righteousness”! (Matt. 6:33). Let's all *strive*... to come **OUT** of this world!!!

Footnotes:

1. For information on “The Feast of Tabernacles,” see the booklet *The Holy Days: God's Master Plan* <https://www.tomorrowworld.org/booklets/the-holy-days-gods-master-plan>