

CHRISTIANS AND THE WORLD

THE BIBLICAL RELATIONSHIP OF CHRISTIANS TO THE WORLD

By Arlen L. Chitwood

“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.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [‘the evil one’].

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth” (John 17:14-17).

Christians live in a world governed and controlled by Satan and his angels. It is a world in which Satan and his angels continue a rule which they have held since time immemorial, since a time preceding Satan’s fall, along with one-third of his original contingent of angels ruling in lesser positions of power under him. And this, in turn, would date back to the time following the creation of the heavens and the earth when God appointed and placed Satan and his angels in the positions of power which they, since that time, have occupied (*cf.* Ezek. 28:14ff; Dan. 4:17ff; Rom. 13:1).

Then, since man’s creation and fall 6,000 years ago — an individual created in God’s image, after His likeness, created to take the sceptre in the stead of Satan and his angels (Gen. 1:26-28 [though the fall, requiring redemption, has delayed man from occupying this position]) — Satan and his angels, continuing to rule, have carried out this rule *through fallen man, through rulers among the nations* (Dan. 10:12-20).

And since the bringing into existence of the nation of Israel over two millenniums following man’s creation (descendants of Jacob, a special creation, separate from the nations), the rule of Satan and his angels through fallen man has been restricted to the Gentile nations. Israel’s ruling angel is Michael, with undoubtedly a large contingent of angels ruling under him. And Michael, with his angels, is not part of Satan’s kingdom (Dan. 10:21).

(*Ref.* the author’s book, “The Most High Ruleth,” for a more complete, overall picture of the preceding.)

A World Which Hates Christians

The preceding, according to John 17:14, describes *a world which hates Christians, for a revealed reason — a world presently governed and controlled by Satan and his angels.*

Something though is evidently wrong in today’s world, for there is no presently existing hatred between the world and Christians. The world and Christians appear to get along with one another just fine. The conflict described in Scripture, for all practical purposes, simply doesn’t exist in today’s world.

So, what is this all about?

The answer is simple. All a person has to do is read the first part of John 17:14, then take a look at Christendom in the world today. And doing so, that person can know, solely from a Scriptural standpoint, what is wrong. He can know, solely from a Scriptural standpoint, why Christians are not hated by the world today.

Note the verse again:

“I have given them thy Word; and the world hath hated them...”

The world either hates or does not hate Christians, the world either gets along with or does not get along with Christians, *on one basis alone — the Word.* Christians holding to the Word, proclaiming the Word, will not find the world to be their friend. On the other hand, Christians not holding to the Word,

not proclaiming the Word, will have no problem with the world. The two can walk hand-in-hand.

Stated another way, there can be no such thing as Christians holding to, proclaiming the Word, and, at the same time, being loved by the world. And the inverse of that would have to be equally true. The world would have no basis for hating Christians not holding to the Word, not proclaiming the Word.

The base for the whole of the matter is *singular.* It’s *the Word, the Word, the Word,* nothing else. It’s not aids to devotions, it’s not so-called Christian music, it’s not anything connected with any type so-called Christian activity. Rather, it’s *the WORD,* with that being the end of the matter.

Why?

The “why” of *the world’s hatred for Christians holding to and proclaiming the Word* is very simple. Satan could only have an extreme hatred for what the Word reveals about where matters are headed. Satan is *the god of this age* (II Cor. 4:4), he and his angels rule through and control the nations, and the nations could only follow suit concerning what the Word has to say about that which the future holds for Satan, his angels, and unsaved man under his control and sway.

But, if *the Word is removed, then nothing is left.* Apart from the Word, there would be no basis for an existing enmity between the world and Christians.

Again, it’s *the Word, the Word, the Word,* nothing else.

So, What Has Happened?

The Church and the world find themselves today at the very end of a 2,000-year dispensation in which God has been dealing with *the new creation* “in Christ.” *Israel* was set aside for a dispensation, *a new creation* was called into existence, and the Spirit of God has been performing a special and particular work throughout the dispensation. He has been calling out a bride for God’s Son, who will reign as consort queen with Him — co-heir over all things — following Satan and his angels being put down.

Satan and his angels know these things, which form the heart of the message to be proclaimed by and heard in the Churches of the land today. But how many Christians know anything about or have ever even heard these things proclaimed?

The answer to that question will explain the “why” of the problem presently existing throughout Christendom.

1) *In Christendom*

In the chronology of Church history, as depicted in the first four parables of Matthew chapter thirteen, or in the letters to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three (the only two places in the N.T. where this complete history is revealed), *the Church at the end of the dispensation is seen in two descriptive ways:*

- 1) *As completely leavened* (Matt. 13:33).
- 2) *As wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked* (Rev. 3:17b).

In the latter, the Church has been deceived into believing that it is “rich, and increased with goods, and have [has] need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17a). Yet, the state of the completely leavened Church at the end of the dispensation is seen by God in a completely opposite respect.

Why is this the case? The answer, part and parcel with the working of the leaven, is very simple. *The Church has progressively strayed from the pure, unadulterated proclamation of the Word (John 16:9-11), the Church has progressively gone the way of the world, and the world has won the Church over.*

Accordingly, the world has disarmed the Church, stripping the Church naked of the armor which God has provided (Eph. 6:11-17 [again, note the end result of this “naked” condition in Rev. 3:17b]).

If a person doesn’t believe that this is the case, all he has to do is open his eyes and look around. There is no hatred between the world and the Church; and it is difficult to know whether we have a worldly Church or a Churchly world—probably both. Equally difficult is to know where one begins and the other ends in the world today.

2) *In the World*

The world though, by disarming the Church, has sealed its own fate. In a respect, the nations comprising the world, through disarming the Church, have committed genocide.

The Church, possessing the Word, believing and proclaiming this Word, is in possession of a restraining power for all which exists among the nations. But a disarmed Church, having ignored the Word, is another matter entirely.

Note how such a Church is aptly described in Matt. 5:13-16.

The Church, in this passage, can be seen as the “salt of the earth” which has “lost his savour” and is now “good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” The Church can be seen as the “light of the world,” though now “put under a bushel.” And, occupying this position, there is no longer a shining light which can glorify the “Father which is in heaven.”

The restraining power of such a Church is gone. And apart from this restraining power, there is nothing withholding *the god of this age* from taking the nations under his control and sway to heretofore unseen depths of degradation — *e.g.*, homosexuality and same-sex marriage running rampant, uprisings in nations worldwide, etc.

The Church has allowed this to occur on the one hand; and the world, under Satan, has brought it to pass on the other. And the end result will be far from anything that anyone might desire.

3) *The End of the Matter*

The principle pertaining to the whole of that which exists is seen in II Thess. 2:3-12. This passage, dealing with an already working “mystery of iniquity,” has to do with things which will occur, yet future, after an existing restraining power has been removed.

Once this restraining power has been removed, the man of sin (the Antichrist) is going to be revealed, one “whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” This man, seated on Satan’s throne, will take the nations of the

earth, including Israel, to the very brink of complete destruction (Matt. 24:22; Rev. 13:2).

And, leading into this man’s rise, paving the way for him to put the finishing touches on all seen happening in the world today, is the worldly Church no longer holding to or proclaiming the Word, *opening the door for the world under Satan and his angels to become fully engaged in the madness seen all around us.*

The world, spiritually speaking, is *dead*; and the Church, the only means through which the world could possibly find life, for all practical purposes, has become like the world. And the same fate awaits both (I Cor. 11:31, 32).

Note from the preceding two verses that it is possible for Christians who do not judge themselves during the present time to one day be judged by the Lord after a fashion that they will be “condemned with the world.” For *the Christian*, this would have to do with his calling, with millennial verities in view; but for *the world*, without life or a calling, this could only have to do with eternal verities.

And that brings matters back to the existing problem. *The Church*, by forsaking the Word (progressively brought about by the working of the leaven), *has allowed a friendship with the world to ensue* (cf. James 4:4; I John 2:15-17), sealing its own fate in one respect; and *the world, having disarmed the Church, has sealed its own fate in another respect.*

How much worse will it become on both fronts before the Lord steps in and removes the Church? Only time will tell. But when the Church is removed, and the existing flicker of light, though under a bushel, is gone—with nothing but *darkness and death* remaining — *things will begin tumbling completely out of control.*

And you don’t want to be here, but you will be if unsaved; and you don’t want to be among Christians at Christ’s judgment seat, “condemned with the world,” but you will be if...