

# THE WORLD, THE FLESH and THE DEVIL

## A BRIEF FORWARD

This is the last addition to my Biblical collection that focuses on biblical precepts. In it I will offer what I believe the Holy Bible reveals about the age-old questions of; “Who are we? Where did we come from and Where are we going? I am fully aware that philosophers, theologians and psychologists have written volumes to answer these questions in a studied, intellectual way.

“How, some may say, can a person without earned formal degrees, without religious credentials, robes of vestiture, or any emblems of authority, understand God’s secret things?” The answer is the same as that given by the first disciples, “- they took notice that they had been with Jesus.” God, in His wisdom decides who He will choose to reveal himself and to speak on His behalf. He then proceeds to prepare them according to their calling.

*(1 Corinthians 1:23) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (1 Corinthians 1:24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Corinthians 1:26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: (1 Corinthians 1:27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (1 Corinthians 1:28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: (1 Corinthians 1:29) That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

Psalm 91 reveals there is a secret place where God hides himself from the scrutiny of the ungodly. *“We who dwell in the secret place of the most high, abide under the*

*shadow of the Almighty.*” The chosen have discovered this secret place. In another place Paul writes: “We see through a glass darkly. *1Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.*” Again, the apostle Paul reminds us that God’s ways and abode are hidden and secret.

Those who He calls he justifies or redeems. This action provides that we who are *of His Body* may participate in His Divine Nature. We are granted this provision by the *power* of a supernatural benefactor. It is not gained by human intention or effort.

## **The Called Out People of God (*The Ekklesia*)**

Who does God call? The noble, strong, crafty, wise and rich or important persons in the eyes of the world are mostly passed over. Why? Because there is a strong tendency that such are equipped enough to be self satisfied and seek nothing more to find fulfillment.

The *eyes of our understanding* must be opened before the ways of God can be discerned. The veil of blindness must be removed. The provision of *the new birth* was given first to the disciples who followed *The Way* of Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah. The outpouring of supernatural grace happened at Pentecost fifty days following Christ’s resurrection. From that day and immediately following, God’s rich, provision of power and grace was lavished upon each believer.

(Acts 4:32) “*And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. (Acts 4:33) And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*”

There are a few key concepts that unlock the present nature of humanity and the state of the planet upon which we dwell. I believe that most legacy church denominations have failed to understand and teach these concepts right.

### **The Prince of This Fallen World**

This world has for six thousand years been under the control of a spiritual ruler. He is not a human entity but is in fact the powerful head of a fallen host of angelic beings. Humankind and the earth itself exists in a *fallen state* under the control of these spiritual powers. (Here is where we lose the hard scientists and atheists.) While the lost millennia of our primordial past is largely hidden to religious scholars who argue that the creation of the world and the universe itself was done in *six literal days*. There is a sufficient evidence I believe, to address an older creation followed by a re-creation of a disturbed, chaotic world. The present cosmos now approaches the end of six thousand years of prophetic millennia since “The Fall.” Yes, we are speaking of the Book of Genesis and the story of Eden. Six millennia accords to the prophetic measure of one day equaling 1000 years. Jesus gives this reference to ministering to the Samaritans in John Chapter 4. It holds a prophetic clue that twice foreshadows the church age outreach to the gentile nations.

*(See John 4:40-43.. Jesus in Samaria) and (2 Peter 3:8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.)*

Following is an online graphic that I have drawn to illustrate **the fallen world** and the world after its redemption and renewal. Here is a link to that page from a previous discussions on that matter.

[https://friendlyarts.net/Book\\_Titles/3-mystery Captives of the-World.htm#graphic-the%20fallen%20world](https://friendlyarts.net/Book_Titles/3-mystery_Captives_of_the-World.htm#graphic-the%20fallen%20world)

Since the fall, the world's *earth-dwelling* humanity have lived under the spiritual control and disillusionment of the *God of this world* and the *rulers of spiritual wickedness in heavenly places*. (Ephesians 6) These are the authors of humanity's troubles and self delusion.

We were *born blind* to our own spiritual deficiencies. We are living in a bubble of sorts, where the things that we regard as real are only a shadow of reality. I believe that few, very few ever come to realize that fact. The "Spirit of Truth" must reveal it.

We are blind to the truth! Every human is trapped in a ***matrix***-like delusion! Only a touch of Christ Jesus Holy Spirit power can remove our spiritual blinders and shackles.

The power and influence of the World, the flesh and the Devil are incessantly at work to force their nefarious influence upon every human life. The many contrived religious systems may intend to offer peace, understanding and righteousness but in an attempt to penetrate the veil of darkness, unwittingly only serve to enhance it.

## THE WORLD

*"The world is so full of a number of things,  
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings,"*

The above lighthearted quotation by the writer Robert Louis Stevenson expresses the innocent idea that the natural world is filled with an abundance of wonders and curiosities that anyone, adult or child, may discover and ponder. I can not disagree.

Children are filled with curiosity as they discover the world for the first time, after all that is what growing up is about. As we become educated or “taught” we exchange wonder and curiosity for the assurance of a mature intellect where facts are cemented and curiosity takes a back seat. Science and established paradigms are what guide our lives. At a certain point our minds are made up concerning worldly matters and resistant to change.

### **Influencers**

Today nothing in the world is more obvious in shaping our thoughts and opinions than the mass media. It is, for most, an incessant blaring barrage of news, advertising, noise, entertainment, or simply distraction. Radio, TV, Internet and social media has a power to inform and forge our opinions. It tells us how to talk, how to think, what to think and what not to think. The modern electronic media influence teaches us how to talk and think! It fuels what we put in our heads; who to exalt as idols; what’s “in,” current, and fashionable, or not. It shapes social norms and popular opinion. It parades before us those who are the current super stars, the whose, who of notable celebrities and how they should occupy our world of thought and purposes.

Vanity and pride are the life-beat of the world today. Is the world different today than in ancient times? You will probably answer, “*Well, dah!* Of

course it is different!” But what if we examine the question in the context of what Jesus told his followers. This is what John the apostle recorded:

*“John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”*

*“1Jn 2:15 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. 1Jn 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

Why does Jesus use such powerful admonitions that point to a **world** that contends against his Spirit and against our calling and our purpose in God?

The Bible among many other revelations, gives us an insight into the world. The times, the players, and places may be different but the world’s the spiritual realities remain the same.

### **Jesus had much to say about the world and the lusts thereof.**

*(1 John 2:15) 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. (1 John 2:16) For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.*

The greatest insights into Christ’s desire for his disciples and their place in the world can be found in John chapter 17. This is an amazing prayer of consecration by Jesus immediately before he went to the cross. The phrase “the world” is found seventeen times in it and bears study.

*(John 17:12) While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. (John 17:13) But now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy made full in themselves. (John 17:14) I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (John 17:15) I pray not that thou should take them from the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil one. (John 17:16) They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. (John 17:17) Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. (John 17:18) As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.”*

Jesus' entire ministry was focused on undoing a millennia-long condition that was wrought upon the whole world. It was planetary and pervasive. It took an eternal plan to be enacted by God to deal with the crisis. The mission of Christ Jesus, the Messiah, was and remains to "reverse the curse."

*(1 John 3:8) he that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (ASV)*

From the time of his baptism by John, there was not a moment in his teaching and preaching that he was not completely aware of this mission that was planned by the Godhead in a time *before the world* was to restore a fallen and blighted world that had fallen into degradation from an angelic rebellion. You see, everything is spiritual and for many, this is where some toss aside anything that hearkens to the supernatural. This darkened dissonance is witness to the heart and mind of fallen humanity. It is descriptive of those who have eyes but see not and have ears but hear not.

*(Jeremiah 5:21) Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; that have eyes, and see not; that have ears, and hear not:*

*(Ezekiel 12:2) Son of man, you dwell in the midst of the rebellious house, that have eyes to see, and see not, that have ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a rebellious house."*

There is a wonderful account of healing a man born blind. The story goes beyond a mere recounting of a messianic miracle.

*John 9:32 Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. John 9:39 And Jesus said, For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind.*

When our eyes are opened to Spiritual realities we are filled with the desire to help others to regain sight and deliver them from the veil of deception which grips the world and has held it in darkness. This reality lies at the heart of the Gospel of Grace which was made known to the apostles two thousand years ago but has been obscured by religion and religious enterprises.

The world we live in is a mysterious place. The reality of a world peopled by invisible spiritual entities around us is not obvious though it is a Biblical fact. Our understanding is limited. The machinations of spiritual forces in this world are veiled just as the proverbial workings of that unseen “*man behind the curtain.*” Paul makes this statement:

*Ephesians 6:11* “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. *Ephesians 6:12* For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

The people of this world are under a spiritual veil of deception. We are in spiritual bondage to the prince of this world. This bondage was typified by the children of Israel and their bondage under the King of Egypt. The pharaoh typified “*The god of this world.*” It was Moses who brought them out of the house of bondage. In similar fashion it is Jesus of Nazareth who has come to destroy our bondage under the power of the prince of this world. Jesus the Messiah proclaimed his mission in Nazareth as he quoted from the prophet Isaiah.

## **Christ’s Prophetic Mission**

*Isaiah 61:1* The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; *Isaiah 61:2* to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor - -”

Here is where Christ’s mission statement concludes. Jesus omits the portion dealing with wrath and judgment because his calling addresses the year of God’s favor, the acceptable year of the Lord. The day of judgment and coming wrath upon the ungodly is reserved for a time deferred to a future time after the church age concludes. This *Age of Grace* is a time in which there is an in-gathering of souls including the gentiles from outside of God’s covenant

people. A supernatural Redemption is offered to any who accept the offer of righteousness without any other obligation other than to believe in the “gift of God.” The church age and in-gathering is foreshadowed in the gospel of John where he ministers to those outside of Israel for two days in Samaria.

I should add this detail which serves as a model and typology of the world. Jesus tells his disciples in Luke Chapter 8 to beware of two things which mitigate against the kingdom of God:

*Mar 8:15 And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”*

Herod Antipas was the tetrarch, a regional ruler of Judea when Jesus ministered in Israel. It was he who had John the Baptist killed and later had a brief audience with Jesus before the crucifixion. Herod exemplified everything worldly. He was ruled by his passions, loved luxury and excess and was blind to anything that was truly Spiritual except as a mere novelty. When Herod asked Jesus the kind of questions the spiritually dead ask, Jesus answered not a word. “- for what communion has light with darkness or the temple of God with Belial.” See 2 Corinthians text below.

*(2 Corinthians 6:14) Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:15) And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believes with an infidel? (2 Corinthians 6:16) And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*

# Jesus Confronts the God of This World

## THE FLESH

Before Jeshua, Jesus began his ministry at or around the age of thirty he had a divine appointment with John the Baptist, the last Old Testament prophet. John was called to herald the coming Messiah and his ministry. When John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan, The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus as a dove. From that time forward Jesus is given (anointed and possessed with) the Holy Spirit in full measure. It is the Holy Spirit who drives Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil.

The Devil is most often imagined and portrayed by artists in caricature as ugly, deformed, and frightfully wicked creature, an image of pure evil. People forget that the Devil can appear as an angel of light. The Devil has many names including the Tempter. Jesus is tempted in 3 modes, The flesh, his divine nature and his divine calling pertaining to the rulership of this world. (*Matthew Chapter 4.*)

### Jesus' Temptation in the Wilderness

Jesus with his human frailty, had fasted for forty days and became weak and hungry. He is first tempted to use his divine authority to satisfy fleshly needs. Jesus is weak and hungry. Satan tempts Jesus saying that as the Son of God he has the power *to turn stones into bread*. This was certainly a real possibility. Jesus answers the tempter with scripture. "*Man shall not eat from bread alone but by every word the proceeds from the mouth of God.*" (Deuteronomy 8:3)

In the next temptation Jesus he is tempted to display his abilities to interact with heavenly beings whenever he may desire their aid. Satan tempts Jesus to throw himself down from the temple to demonstrate that angels will

come to his rescue, Jesus quotes scripture again, "*You shall not tempt the Lord the God.*" (*Deuteronomy 6:16*)

Satan's final test is an attempt to destroy the entirety of God's plan to redeem the earth through the seed of the woman. (Genesis 3:15) This would have the effect to leave Satan to have dominion over the planet and continue his role as "the god of this world." He tempts Jesus to a great temptation that he Jesus, can have the rule of this world and its kingdoms without going to the cross and paying the sin debt and the redemption of the world by shedding his own blood. He would in effect, be a vice regent under Lucifer.

*(Matthew 4:10) Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." (Matthew 4:11) Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.*

After being tempted, the Devil left him until a more appropriate season. These came at various times and through words spoken by various mouths including Simon Peter and later in other taunting mouths at the crucifixion.

### **The World and The Flesh That Affects Each of Us**

Here is where we can identify the blindness into which each person is born. Here I speak of Spiritual blindness. It is a condition which most religious people called being *born in sin*. I prefer the expression "**a sin nature**" because that is inextricable from every soul born regardless of degree.

We are caught in a trap that we did not choose. It is and was a condition of our inheritance as an heir to the first man and woman. Yes, the story of the "Garden of Eden" is part of the curse that we are born into. If that seems stupid or zany so be it. It is a foundation pillar of God's cosmology and mystery of redemption. We are under Adam's curse from which came death, misery and strife and separation from God.

# THE FLESH

## Sin, Sinners, and The Fallen Nature

The Bible is clear we are ALL sinners. Sin is something that can be measured and quantified by OUR thoughts and our deeds. Sin is defined as “*missing the mark.*” The gift of salvation is often described as being rescued from sin. I am going to stress the point that our propensity to sin results of our *fallen nature*. It is an inescapable reality regardless of our degree of degradation. Regardless of whether we are small sinners or great sinners we are destined to pay the sin debt which is death! That is unless there is someone who could rescue us. This is the need for a Redeemer!

*(Romans 2:12) For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.*

*(Romans 3:22) the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: (Romans 3:23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

*(Isaiah 53:5) But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:6 - OT) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Most protestant churches and evangelistic outreaches speak of the human race being comprised of sinners. That is true. They also teach and conclude that we all need to “saved”. That too is true. But, **how do we actually deal with this sin matter?**

This is where we may hear a message that suggest that we must try not to sin in order to please God. Human will would then need to be the answer or the remedy of our living “sin free.”

Now we must ask, “**Do we ourselves earn the right to have our names written in the Book of Life?**” Christ died for our sins. What does that mean?

Do we follow the teachings of one religion or another that says “*yes, or yes, but?*”

Among the entire spectrum of humanity and through history there appear to be *greater sinners and lesser sinners*. Some imagine their list of offenses to be less severe than others. Thus one may think of differences in terms of degrees of punishment, or *levels in hell*. Roman Catholic priests give “last rights” to absolve those who are at death’s door. They believe they have the authority to absolve sins by virtue of their priestly office.

I spoke with one elderly fellow to share the gospel many years back. When I said we need a Savior to save us from our sins he replied, “I never had much interest in sinning.”

If we look at sin as a measured commodity then we miss the greater truth of the “Sin Nature” that saddles, shackles and blinds every soul that comes to breath air on this planet.

### **Blindness of our Sin Nature and its Ramifications**

As the blind man in John Chapter 9 was blind from birth so are each of us born with a fatal spiritual condition. We are all spiritually blind to the fact that we are fallen and bear the mark of “sinner” and the sentence of death. No church or religious authority has the power to open our eyes. But he who formed us in the womb is able to make us altogether new again. It is the act of a supernatural, Almighty God who is above any human institution or office. Study and knowledge give insights but does not have the power to open our spiritual eyes. The natural man or woman can not receive from God even when gifted with intellectual brilliance.

*(1 Corinthians 2:13) Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Spirit teaches; combining spiritual things with spiritual words. (1 Corinthians 2:14) Now the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.”*

When men or women, and here we speak of natural-minded people, whether priests, imams or shaman, purpose to approach the realm of heavenly things through a route other than the Gospel of Christ, they indeed come into the domain of spiritual powers. These however, are the elemental forces of this world and are under the dominion of the Prince of the Power of the Air, another name for the deceiver, Satan. Paul speaks of there being gods many. Indeed in Hinduism it is said there are millions.

### **The Way of Salvation, Saved Once and Forever?**

There is a great debate over the question of “once saved always saved.” Can those whose sins God has pardoned and given the free gift of eternal life have that gift removed? It has been my experience that the majority of Bible training schools and seminaries who graduate religious professionals hold the belief that salvation is very fluid. One day we are in good standing with our Redeemer and the next day, through some infraction, are on the outside looking in.

We were blind and now see. We were dead in trespasses and sins but are now “made alive.”

*(Ephesians 2:5) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—*

*(1 Corinthians 15:22) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

*(Colossians 2:13) And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,*

Theology directs us in studying and gaining knowledge of God. Theological training however may actually enable becoming a tool of **religious enterprise**. By this I mean that they produce a product along with a plan to

market that product. These denominational, religious entities contrive outcomes like any corporate entity to enrich and to prosper in their outreach.

This is the way of world. A friend once said, “Roman Catholics have one Pope, protestants have a pope in each church.” This comes across as cynical but contains a large measure of truth. I believe we have lost sight of **The Way** that was first presented to the apostles of Jesus.

*(Jude 1:3) Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.*

The apostle Jude says a lot in his brief letter. Jude provides a measuring tool for all churches that followed the apostles through the centuries up to the present day. How much have we altered the perfect message of the *good news* and the *power of the gospel*? In this modern day church are we under law or under grace? Have we become new creations, seated with the Lord in heavenly places or are we still living in unbelief, half blind and following blind guides who possess a form of godliness but deny the power of God? Are we sharing in the ministry of the Body of Christ or are we merely the sheep that can only hear stories of a God of the past and fables of saints and sages long ago? Are we each ministering with our gift that was provided to inspire and mature our brethren in the faith and others who are yet to have their eyes opened?

Those who are born of the Spirit can not be unborn. We are called out of darkness into *the marvelous light* by the Grace of God, which is the gift of Christ Jesus. We who *have tasted of the good things of the world to come* can not be dissuaded regarding God’s great and precious promises.

Today he still stands at the door and knocks and beckons us to draw near to him in assurance that we shall not face the wrath which is yet to come.

The flesh is weak but our heavenly Shepherd comes to rescue us and lead us into paths of righteousness. The man Christ Jesus gave us the Spirit of Truth and eyes to see while the world remains in blindness partaking of the false and fatal promises of its ruler who remains in control for just a little while longer.

### **Attributes of Those Who Have Been Redeemed**

Those who God calls and rescues from this present world begin to bear the resemblance of our Heavenly Father who called us. It happens little by little, to some more quickly than others depending upon our Spiritual nurture.

I would state that certain things should be in evidence. First an interest and an eagerness to study, to hear about and investigate the Word of Truth which is The Bible. The wonders of the Word and Excellence of Christ Jesus are subjects from which we earnestly seek and desire to share.

Next I think we will have a desire to gather with others who have experience the gift of God. We gather with them and hold them in esteem and we recognize their importance to ourselves. These make up God's family. The family of God is worthy of true, *unfeigned* affection. We are spiritually in touch with their joys and their sorrows. We *rejoice with those who rejoice* and weep with those in sorrow.

The old life filled with coarseness, depravity, self-centeredness, sensual excesses and addictions begin to fall away as the Holy Spirit does his work of renewal. The "fruits of the Spirit" are a byproduct of redemption as we read in Galatians:

*(Galatians 5:21) envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (Galatians 5:23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:24) And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."*

The fullness of redemption awaits those whose names are written in the Book of Life. What we enjoy now is described as an *earnest* or down-payment of our heavenly future. This we know, that those who are “In Christ” are brand new creations and heavenly things are quickly manifesting. We know we have passed from death into life and from spiritual blindness into light. We are alive because He is Alive! The things of this world are coming to an end.

If you have found value in this writing, I would ask you to share with others who might also gain knowledge from it. Thank you.

C. Pinkney, 1/03/2025