

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 1 of 12

As we resume our study of the Biblical doctrine of separation today, let me call your attention once again to the theme passage of Scripture for this series, which is found in Colossians chapter 3 beginning at verse 16.

As always, if you are able to do so, I hope that you will open your own copy of God's Word and follow along as I read this passage. We are also going look at a number of other passages of Scripture today, mainly from the book of First John. But we begin today in Colossians chapter 3 at verse 16.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

In this series of messages, we are focusing upon the great facts that we find not only in these verses, but throughout holy Scripture. The first great fact of the Biblical doctrine of separation is the supreme authority of Scripture. The Word of Christ, the Word of God, must be the sole authority of the Christian. The second great fact of the Biblical doctrine of separation is the lordship of Jesus Christ. Everything that the Christian thinks and says and does must be worthy of the name of the Lord Jesus.

With those two great facts in mind, we have been considering ten vital truths directly concerning the doctrine of separation that we find in the pages of Scripture.

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 2 of 12

The Truths of Biblical Separation

The first of those great truths is that those who have now been saved from sin were once aliens from God and from the kingdom of God. Before anyone becomes a Christian, he is the enemy of God. We are born in sin. We are born into this world in a position of separation from our creator God, a position of condemnation because of the sin of Adam. We inherit Adam's sin nature when we are conceived, before we are even born.

The second great truth is that the status of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ changes as soon as you are converted. A true believer in Christ is no longer alienated from God and from the kingdom of God, but is now an alien in this present world.

The third great truth is that we have been redeemed from alienation from God and made aliens in this present evil world for an eternal purpose. We are, Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10 tells us, God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before the foundation of the world that we should walk in them.

The fourth great truth of Biblical separation is that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the God-man, was an alien Himself while He was in this world in a human body. He was in this world, yet He was not of this world. As Hebrews chapter 7 verse 26 tells us, Jesus the perfect God-man, is "holy, harmless [that is, completely innocent of sin], undefiled, [and] separated from sinners."

The fifth of the ten great declarations of Scripture concerning separation, is that the

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 3 of 12

Christian's alien status in this present world demands that we become increasingly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

These five great facts concerning the Biblical doctrine of separation have led us to the sixth of those great declarations – the fact that Christians, as aliens in this present world, are not to love this present world. Scripture commands us to have a radical change in our attitude toward this present evil world.

Stop Loving the World

This great truth is stated most directly for us in the book of First John, in chapter 2 beginning at verse 15. If you are able to do so, please turn with me in your copy of God's Word to First John chapter 2, beginning at verse 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. 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. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

In the original Greek of the New Testament, First John 2:15 actually reads like this: *Stop loving the world*. It is a strong imperative. "Stop loving the world." Love for the world is a pitfall that every Christian continually faces. And so we are commanded to stop loving it. And these verses explain why we must stop loving the world.

Now as we have seen in previous messages, the consideration of these verses brings

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 4 of 12

us to a critical question: How can it be that Christians are told to stop loving the world here in the epistle of First John, when we are told in the third chapter of the Gospel of John that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"? Is there a contradiction here?

Well we have seen clearly in previous messages that there is no contradiction between these two passages. The true meaning of John chapter 3 is that the world that God loved – loved to the extent of sending His own Son to die – encompasses far more than mankind or any segment of mankind. God's concern is for His entire created order. The salvation that God has wrought in Christ is truly cosmic salvation, the redemption of His entire created order from the curse of sin. We saw this clearly in a number of passages of Scripture in a previous message.

The Bible's Words Have Meaning In Context

I have also stressed to you many times that we need to humbly ask questions about the Scriptures in order that we may, by God's grace, more fully understand His Word. But we need to ask our questions in a proper way. Our thinking must be controlled by the principles of Scripture. We need the illumination of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God, because He is the Author of every word of Scripture.

One of the ways in which we must approach any question that we have about Scripture is to carefully understand the meaning of the words that are used in the original languages. And, we need to understand how those words are used in context.

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 5 of 12

And so, with these things in mind, we can ask questions about the verses that we have just read in First John chapter 2.

First of all, what does God the Holy Spirit, writing through the pen of the Apostle John, mean by the word "world" in these verses? What is the "world" that we are commanded to stop loving? And, what is the meaning of the word "love" in these verses? And therefore, what does it mean to "stop loving the world"? And what does the Holy Spirit mean when He speaks of "the love of the Father" in verse 15? And what does the Holy Spirit mean by the word "lust" in verses 16 and 17? These questions are vital to the doctrine of separation.

The Greek Word *Kosmos*

I want to begin to address these questions in order today. So first of all, let us address the question of the meaning of the word "world" in these verses. You may recall that we have said before that the word that is translated "world" in both the Gospel of John chapter 3 and in the epistle of First John is the Greek word *kosmos*. You may also recall that this word can have several different meanings depending upon the context in which it is used.

The Greek word *kosmos* can speak of the physical world, the created order, the universe. The word *kosmos* can refer to mankind. The word *kosmos* is also used many times in Scripture to make a distinction between those members of the human race who are in Christ, and the mass of humanity that is alienated from God and hostile to Christ and His Word. The word *kosmos* is also used many times in the Greek New

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 6 of 12

Testament to speak of this present world-order under the control of Satan. We are told in First John 5:19 that the "the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one."

And so, in order to understand the passage before us, in order to understand what the Holy Spirit means when He commands us to stop loving the world, we must be clear about the meaning of the word that is translated "world" in this verse.

***Kosmos* in First John as God's Created Order**

We find the answer to this question by looking at the way in which the Holy Spirit through the Apostle John uses the Greek word *kosmos* each time in the epistle of First John. We also need to compare the way the word is used here in First John with the way the word *kosmos* is used in similar contexts in other parts of the Word of God, especially in the Gospel of John chapter 3. We find that the word *kosmos* appears 22 times in 17 different verses in First John. And we find that there are two main categories of usage of the word *kosmos* within this letter.

First of all, there are three occasions in which John by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit uses the word *kosmos* in the same way that it is used in the Gospel of John chapter 3. In First John chapter 2 verse 2 we read this: "and He [Jesus] Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

Here the Apostle John echoes the great declaration of John the Baptist that he has recorded for us in the Gospel of John chapter 1, verse 29: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" The word "sin" is singular there, and this great

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 7 of 12

statement of John the Baptist declares the fact that Jesus Christ came into the world for the purpose of redeeming the entire created order, as well as man as the pinnacle of God's created order. Jesus came into the world not only to deal with men's sins, plural, but to deal with the world's sin, singular – the fact that the entire created order was plunged into condemnation under the curse of sin when Adam fell.

In a previous message we saw that Romans chapter 8 declares to us that Christ came into the world not only to deliver the children of God from their sins, but to deliver the entire created order "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." That is what the Apostle John is speaking of here in First John chapter 2 verse 2 when he says that Jesus is "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." We find the same thought in First John chapter 4 verse 14, where John by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says this: "and we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world."

There is a third use of the word *kosmos* in this same sense in the first epistle of John. 1 John 4:9 echoes the great statement of our Lord Jesus Christ in John 3:16. 1 John 4:9 declares that "in this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world [into His created order], that we might live through Him."

***Kosmos* in First John as The World-System Under Satan**

And so we have dealt with three of the seventeen verses in the first epistle of John in which the word *kosmos* is used. Those three places speak of God's created

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 8 of 12

order, which He is in the process of redeeming and restoring through Christ. But what about the other fourteen verses? As we examine those passages, we find that the Holy Spirit through the Apostle John uses the word *kosmos* in each case to refer to this present world under the sway of Satan. Let me briefly put those passages before you, and if you are able to turn to the book of First John, I hope you will do so and follow along.

1 John 3:1 – "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world [this present world-system under the sway of Satan, and the mass of humanity who are under Satan's control – the world] does not know us, because it did not know Him [God the Father]."

1 John 3:13 – "Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world [the mass of humanity who are under Satan's control] hates you."

1 John 3:17 – "But whoever has this world's goods [in other words, the physical resources of this present world under the sway of Satan], and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

1 John 4:1 – "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world [this world that is under the sway of Satan]."

1 John 4:3 speaks of the fact that "the spirit of Antichrist... is now already in the world [this world under the sway of Satan]."

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 9 of 12

1 John 4:4 speaks of the fact that "He who is in you" – that is, He who is in the Christian, the indwelling Spirit of God – "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world," referring to Satan.

1 John 4:5 declares that the unbelieving, and especially false teachers, "are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them." Unbelievers, and unbelieving false teachers, are of this present world-system under the sway of Satan. And so that is the way in which they speak, and that is why those who are under the sway of Satan "hear" false teachers. They give their attention to them, and the things that they have to say resonate with them, they receive them, and they welcome them, and thus they reject God's Word.

1 John 4:17 declares the union of the Christian with Christ. The Apostle Paul declares many times that we have been crucified with Christ, we have been buried with Christ, we have been raised with Christ. The Holy Spirit through John in chapter 4 verse 17 states that "Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He [Jesus] is, so are we in this world [in this world under the sway of Satan in which we presently live our lives]." We have the imputed righteousness of Christ even while we are living in this present evil world.

1 John 5 verses 4 and 5 declare to us that "whatever is born of God overcomes the world [this present world-system under the sway of Satan]. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is he who overcomes the

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 10 of 12

world [this present world-system under the sway of Satan] but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" This is the position of the separated saint of God – overcoming, having victory through Christ over this present world that is under the sway of Satan.

***Agape* In 1 John 2:15**

So now we have a much clearer picture of the meaning of the word that is translated "world" in 1 John 2:15-17: "Do not love [in other words, stop loving] the world"– this present world-system that is under the sway of the wicked one – and do not love "the things in the world" – the things that pertain to and are part of this present world system under the sway of Satan.

Now this brings us face-to-face with a second question: What is the meaning of the word that is translated "love" in these verses? We see the word occurring two times in verse 15. The Holy Spirit through John speaks of not loving this present world which is under the control of Satan. Verse 15 also speaks of "the love of the Father" and says that "if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." What does this mean?

Well, the word that is translated "love" in each case is the Greek word *agape*. There are several words for "love" in the Greek New Testament but the word *agape* is very special and unique. *Agape* love is a love that springs from a sense of the preciousness of the object that is loved. That is the basis of *agape* love. And the way in which *agape* love manifests itself is in self-sacrifice. A good working

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 11 of 12

definition of *agape* love is this: *Agape love is self-sacrifice on behalf of that which you consider to be precious.*

And so God the Holy Spirit through the Apostle John is commanding Christians to stop having that kind of love toward this present evil world, and the things that pertain to this present evil world. Stop considering this present evil world under the sway of Satan, and the things of this present world, to be precious. Stop your self-sacrifice to this present evil world, and to the things of this present world.

"The Love of the Father"

If you are exercising *agape* love – self sacrificial love – toward this present evil world and the things of this present evil world because you consider them to be precious, the Holy Spirit says that "the love of the Father" is not in you. Literally, in the original language, "*the love that the Father possesses* is not in you."

And what is the love that the Father possesses? It is the love that is set before us in John 3:16 – the redeeming love of God in Christ. The love of God that would sacrifice His own Son upon the cross in order to redeem the entire created order from the curse of sin, and to redeem men and women and boys and girls from their sin, so that they may live forever as the citizens of the New Heavens and the New Earth – the redeemed, reconciled, and renovated created order, in which righteousness will dwell under the Lordship of Jesus Christ forever.

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Stop Loving the World" (Colosians 3:16-17, 1 John 2:15-17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/23/2014

Page 12 of 12

The self-sacrificial redeeming love of God in Christ and the self-sacrificial love of sinful man for this present evil world are diametric opposites. The two are totally incompatible. You cannot have God's redeeming love for His created order, you cannot truly long for the deliverance of this created order from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, if you have fallen man's self-consuming love for this present evil world-system.

This is the imperative of Biblical separation, dear friends, and there is much more for us to see in the riches of these verses in the first epistle of John. And so I hope that you will join us again next time as we continue to explore these tremendous truths.

About the Broadcast

The Scripture-Driven Church airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is to obey Christ's Great Commission: preaching the Gospel to all, and equipping believers in Christ to live every area of life by the sole authority of Scripture, to the glory of our Lord and Savior.

For more information, please visit our website, www.teachingtheword.org.

The prayers of our listeners and supporters are vital to all we do. We thank you for bringing this ministry before the throne of grace.

**May the Lord richly bless your personal study
of His inspired, infallible, inerrant Word.**

TeachingtheWord Ministries
Box 2533, Westminster, Maryland 21158 USA
In North America, toll-free 888-804-9655