



**Talmid תלמיד** a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

*Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)*

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STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY  
DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15



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## Justification by Grace through Faith Part 3

### The Legacy of Adam

#### *The Question of Covenant*

There were two parties in the garden—God and man. Of course, the Serpent is there too, but he is not part of the particular relationship between God and Adam. It is not an equal partnership; God is superior and Adam is inferior. God is independent and Adam is dependent. God provides everything that Adam and Eve need for life and happiness, but this is not a relationship with-

out specific stipulations. God, the Creator and provider, establishes rules for maintaining the relationship. Adam is ordered to carry out his work of subduing and ruling the creation over which God has placed him.

There is, however, a condition—there is one tree, and one tree only, from which Adam may not eat. The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is forbidden with a warning. God tells Adam that he can eat from all the other trees, but if he eats from the one forbidden tree, “... **for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die**” ([Genesis 2:17 NASB](#)).

Implicit in the warning (and symbolized in the Tree of Life) is the promise that if Adam does not eat from the one tree, he will live. God sets life and death before Adam, as he will later with the Israelites in their covenant context: “**See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity**” ([Deuteronomy 30:15 NASB](#)). If Adam wants to live in his relationship with God, he must keep God’s command. These words apply to Adam: “...**So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants**” ([Deuteronomy 30:19 NASB](#)). Here in the garden, before the fall, yet another biblical pattern is established. Later on, this kind of relationship gets a specific name: **covenant**.

There is much debate over whether the relationship between God and Adam can properly be called a covenant; after all, the word *covenant* does not appear until [Genesis 6](#). Given the number of times the word will appear later, what stopped Moses from using the word

here? After all, God tells Noah that he is making a covenant ([Genesis 6:18](#)) and likewise tells Abraham explicitly that he is establishing a covenant ([Genesis 17:7](#)), so why not here?

Although it is not much of a stretch to think that the first people to hear and read [Genesis](#), themselves living in a covenant, would have recognized a covenant when they saw one, it is a fair question. Perhaps formal covenants, like the **Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and new covenants**, are fitted for a redemptive context. That is, they are specific relationships between God and people, at times established on the basis of or formalized in blood, that aim at reestablishing the relationship broken in Eden. Perhaps it is enough to say that the relationship between God and Adam foreshadowed what would later be called a covenant. **John Murray**, for instance, opted for “**Adamic Administration**,”<sup>6</sup> which ties together the idea that there is indeed a special relationship between God and Adam with the fact that *covenant* does not explicitly appear. In spite of the difficulties, are there good reasons for thinking that God and Adam were in a covenantal relationship? There are at least **four reasons** that suggest a covenant in Eden.<sup>7</sup>

### *Covenants Are Not Just Redemptive.*

The absence of the word *covenant* is not necessarily as strong an argument as it appears. True, there is no sacrifice to establish or commemorate the relationship between God and Adam; on the other hand, nothing like that was needed. In the **Mosaic and new covenants**, blood was required to bring God and man together because humanity stood under God’s wrath due to their sin. Only the blood of a sacrifice, and ultimately only one sacrifice, could fulfill God’s justice.

With Abraham, God establishes a covenant in which he makes an oath, symbolized in sacrifices ([Genesis 15:9–18](#)), to keep his promise to make Abraham a great nation. These covenants contain sacrifices because they are redemptive, but the fact that they are redemptive *is not what makes them covenants*. They are special types of covenantal relationships between God and man connected to the Bible’s big picture of reestablishing a people set apart for God so that they will be his people and he will be their God.<sup>8</sup> They are, at heart, covenantal relationships because they contain agreements, promises, and warnings between the two parties involved in each relationship. Although God has something greater than Eden in store for humanity,

the relationship in Eden is the model for the goal of redemption and the restoration of the relationship between God and humanity.

### *Christ the Head of the New Covenant.*

**Second**, the relationship established by and on Christ the second Adam is a covenant. It is the “**new covenant in my blood**,” as he told his disciples on the night that he was betrayed ([Luke 22:20](#)). The apostle Paul presents Christ as a second Adam who stands as the head of God’s people ([Romans 5:12–19](#); [1 Corinthians 15:21–22](#)). As Adam represented humanity, and as the consequence of his actions flowed to his race, so Christ stands as representative for those who believe and are counted righteous as a consequence of his actions. The writer to the Hebrews speaks at length of the new covenant, promised by the prophets (e.g., [Jeremiah 31:33](#)) and mediated by Christ ([Hebrews 8:13](#); [Hebrews 9:15](#); [Hebrews 12:24](#)).

#### *[Hosea 6:7](#).*

[Hosea 6:7 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> “**But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant; There they have dealt treacherously against Me.**”

In the context of [Hosea 6](#), the prophet is speaking against the sins of Judah and Ephraim. In the midst of it we read these words: “**But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me**” ([Hosea 6:7](#)). Readers of the **ESV, NASB, and NIV** might wonder why there is a question about this text since it says plainly, “**like Adam**” (*ke’adam*). The issue is how to translate the Hebrew behind “**like Adam.**” The **Septuagint translator** of [Hosea](#) chose the Greek for “**as man**” (*hws anthropos*), which is followed in English by the **KJV** and the **NKJV**.<sup>9</sup> There is also the possibility, which some Old Testament scholars prefer, that the word refers to the geographical location mentioned in [Joshua 3:16](#). When the feet of the priests carrying the ark touched the Jordan River, its waters “**...stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho**” ([Joshua 3:16 NASB](#)).

Taking “**Adam**” to be the place mentioned in [Joshua 3:16](#) is not impossible, although we then have to assume that there was a well-known, serious breach of the covenant that is not recorded in the Old Testament. That fact in itself does not rule out this interpretation—it is not hard to imagine that there were significant acts of rebellion on Israel’s part that are not mentioned in the

Bible. It also fits with the inclusion of the word *sham* (“there”) in the text ([Hosea 6:7](#)). It is worth noting, however, that in the *one text* where this place is named ([Joshua 3:16](#)), the focus is all about God’s faithfulness in bringing Israel to the Promised Land and his miraculous work of dividing the Jordan, not about Israel’s covenant breaking.<sup>10</sup>

Reading it as “like man” or “mankind” is also possible.<sup>11</sup> The problem with this interpretation, however, is that it makes the word “there” difficult to understand. “**Like man (or mankind) they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me.**” The questions that remain unanswered in this interpretation are, **Where is there?** and **How does there fit the context?** The [KJV](#) and [NKJV](#) take it this way, but it is vague, to say the least.

Taking this verse to refer to Adam best fits the context of [Hosea](#). True, this interpretation is not without problems, and it is certainly not accepted by everyone, but it does have the advantage of (1) referring to a known entity in the Bible, and (2) fitting the context of Hosea. There is still a problem with the word “there” referring back to a person, but it is not a great leap to infer that after mentioning the person Adam, [Hosea](#) refers to Eden. **Second**, the context of [Hosea](#) is all about Israel’s unfaithfulness to the covenant in spite the “**abundant generosity of God, who had loaded Israel down with all manner of good things.**”<sup>12</sup> Like Adam, God gave Israel everything they needed for life and well-being, including his own presence; yet, also like Adam, they chose their own way over God’s good gifts and thereby transgressed the covenant.<sup>13</sup>

### *Covenantal Testing.*

The testing of Adam is the fourth thing that suggests a covenant in Eden. There is no need to repeat the discussion above, but like Abraham the covenant man, Israel the covenant nation, and Christ the covenant head, Adam’s loyalty to God and his willingness to honor the relationship God established with him were tested.

The relationship established in Eden was covenantal. The evidence for it spans the Bible. At the very least the relationship between God and Adam in Eden suggests a covenant. In my view there is more than a suggestion—there is a sound biblical-theological conclusion. No doubt some people will remain unconvinced that an actual covenant is found here in [Genesis](#) because the word does not appear.

Some Bible readers will continue to think that the idea of a covenant with Adam is a result of dedication to a larger theological system. And others will insist that covenants do not appear until after the fall when the biblical pattern of redemption unfolds—but I hope most will agree that the relationship between God and Adam in Eden sets the pattern for the relationships that will soon be called covenants in the Bible.

### **“You Can Be Like God”: The First and Greatest Temptation**

There is a classic rock song by Fleetwood Mac called “Go Your Own Way.” That could have been the theme song of the first temptation in Eden.<sup>14</sup> God held nothing back from Adam and Eve. Everything, including one another, was theirs to enjoy. There was one thing, however, that they could never have nor could ever be, and that is exactly what Satan dangled in front of them. The Serpent is introduced as “**...more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made...**” ([Genesis 3:1 NASB](#)), and he knew exactly how to tempt the first couple in ways they could not resist.

God’s role as Creator, and the Serpent as both evil and a part of creation (a creation Adam was meant to rule over, not submit to), is emphasized as the temptation narrative begins. The rebellion against God originates with a created being before Adam and Eve ate the fruit. What follows is a thinly veiled attack on God as the Serpent implicitly calls God a liar, “**you will not surely die**” ([Genesis 3:4](#)); a deceiver, “**God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened**” ([Genesis 3:5](#)); and an equal rather than their Creator, “**you will be like God**” ([Genesis 3:5](#)). The created Serpent tells the created woman that she and her created husband can be just like God. The tempter succeeds. Addled (unable to think clearly, confused) by the temptation, Eve skews God’s revealed word and extends the prohibition against eating to include touching. The pace of the narrative hurtles toward the climactic moment that sets the future of the human race in motion: “**When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate**” ([Genesis 3:6 NASB](#)). It takes only six verses to tell the story of the fall and just two verses to interpret what took place.

First, their eyes are opened, but not in the way that the Serpent had promised: “**Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were na-**

ked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves” ([Genesis 3:7 NIV](#)).

Then they find that rather than being God’s equal, they are not even in the position granted to them in the original creation. Rather than enjoying the presence of their Creator, they hide from him when they hear him coming. Everything changes in the biblical narrative from this point.

### *Questions and Incriminations*

“**Where are you?**” God calls to Adam. This is one of the most tragic lines in the biblical narrative. It is not tragic because God somehow cannot find them or does not know where they are; it is tragic because they must hide in guilt and shame. Well before the dialogue begins, Adam and Eve’s position before God is evident. God knows what they have done, and when confronted with it ([Genesis 3:11](#)), the first blame game begins. The last time we heard from Adam about Eve, he was singing her praises and declaring her as his one and only ([Genesis 2:23](#)), but now he turns on her: “**She gave it to me.**” Even worse, Adam not only blames Eve, he first implicates God and by doing so reveals the true depths of his newfound rebellion. He points his finger at God to try to shift blame to the one who is eternally blameless: “**...The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate**” ([Genesis 3:12 NASB](#)). Of course, Eve too shifts the blame: “**...the serpent deceived me, and I ate**” ([Genesis 3:13 NASB](#)). No one takes responsibility; no one is righteous. Hatred of God and neighbor begins.

Evil has a foothold in the world, man is in rebellion against God, and by rights the story could end here. “**In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die**” was the word from God about the punishment for eating the forbidden fruit. Adam and Eve, however, do not die, not immediately at least. God has a plan to make them and their children right again.

### **Bibliography:**

6. John Murray, *The Collected Writings of John Murray*, vol. 2 (Carlisle, UK: Banner of Truth, 1977), 47–59.
7. For an insightful and concise discussion of the question of a covenant in Eden, see J. V. Fesko, *Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 112–22.
8. This refrain, or something similar to it, is found in every covenantal era. For instance, in Leviticus the phrase is used as a promise for what will be fulfilled if Israel obeys (26:12); in Jeremiah it is the reality promised in the new covenant (31:33)—and it is taken up as fulfilled by both Paul (2 Cor. 6:16) and the writer to the Hebrews (Heb.

8:10). The last time these words are heard in the Bible is when John sees a vision of the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:3). The idea in the refrain is implicit everywhere in the Abrahamic covenant, with God promising to be with Abraham and his children and make them into a great nation (Gen. 12:2; 18:18).

9. The Septuagint, sometimes abbreviated lxx, is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.
10. Another thing often brought up against the view that Hosea refers to the place mentioned in Joshua 3:16 is that the Hebrew preposition *ke* rarely means “at.” This is not a very strong argument, however, because as long as it is possible for it to mean “at” (and it is possible), then the fact that it is rare is only suggestive and certainly not decisive.
11. Calvin, notably, read it this way. See, *Hosea*, Calvin Translation Society 13 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 235. Cited in Fesko, *Justification*, 117n21.
12. C. John Collins, “Adam and Eve in the Old Testament,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 15, 1 (Spring 2011): 16. Collins cites the following texts in Hosea as some examples of Israel’s covenant breaking: 2:8–13; 7:15; 11:1–4; 13:4–6.
13. Choosing one’s own way over against the way God provides and commands is also known as “works righteousness.” More of that in later chapters, but like so many other biblical themes, works righteousness begins in Eden.
14. For some, “My Way,” made famous by Frank Sinatra, might be a better analogy.

*Continued in next edition...*

# CORAM DEO (Before the face of God)

*The New Testament is in the Old concealed;  
the Old Testament is in the New revealed.*

—Augustine

(Continuation from last edition)

Please remember that in this study I am concerned with the big picture of Hosea, not the minute details. Our interest is in why and how the parts fit together to advance the revelation of the Christ and the gospel, rather than a technical exegesis to interpret all the specific parts. There are commentaries for that. So while I acknowledge that all the problems of interpretation may not be resolved, it is my prayer that throughout this study the Lord Jesus Christ will be evidently set forth and that the Holy Spirit will lead into truth by showing Christ and glorifying Him.

## HOSEA: A MESSIANIC MAN HIS PROFESSION

*An Appointed Position.*

*An Authoritative Position.*

*An Energized Position.*

*A Messianic Anticipation*

## HIS PROPHECY

Called by God to be a prophet, Hosea was given a message to preach and a people to whom he would preach it. What he preached, both symbolically by his life and directly through his sermons, is the principal concern of the theological survey in **Parts 2 and 3** of this teaching. My intention now is simply to identify his congregation, the overall scheme of his prophecy, and its place in the canon.

## HIS PARISH

Hosea is unique among the writing prophets in regard to his nationality and parish. He was a citizen of the northern kingdom, and he directed his message principally to the northern kingdom. He was a northerner preaching to the north. In typical prophetic style, he introduced his prophecy by identifying the kings during whose administration he ministered ([Hosea 1:1](#)).

**Hosea 1:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> “The word of the LORD which came to Hosea the son of Beeri, during the days of

Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.”

His reference to Jeroboam, the king of Israel, hints at this northern heritage and concern. Interestingly, notwithstanding his northern connection, he lists all the kings of Judah from Uzziah to Hezekiah while ignoring the successors to Jeroboam whose reigns would have coincided with the Judah regents. Given the chaotic nature of the successions, marked by power struggles, political intrigue, assassinations, dynasty shifts, and brief tenures, it is of little wonder that Hosea disregarded naming the final kings of Israel.

Jeroboam II had already put the nation on the slippery slope, and everything went quickly downhill after him. On the other hand, Hosea’s specific inclusion of the Judean kings may say something of his theological, if not political, allegiance to the Davidic dynasty in view of what had to be his prophetic understanding of the Davidic covenant, which set the course for the coming of the Ideal King, his Savior. He anticipated His coming when he predicted the day in which Israel would return to the Lord their God, even David their king ([Hosea 3:5](#)). We’ll get to that later.

**Hosea 3:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> “Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days.”

Hosea was not the only prophet that God ever raised for a northern ministry. Like Hosea, Amos preached to Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II ([Amos 1:1](#)), but he was a missionary from the south. Jonah was from the north and also preached during the days of Jeroboam II ([2 Kings 14:25](#)), but his prophecy is biographical, recounting his reluctant mission to Nineveh. Elijah and Elisha, perhaps the most famous of the northern prophets, preached a century earlier, but were not counted as writing prophets.<sup>3</sup> Hosea’s uniqueness, then, is the fact that he was a northerner who not only preached in the north but also wrote his message that was primarily directed to the northern kingdom. Yet as the inspired Word of God, borders do not restrict its authority and relevance.

One thing stands out in the light of the prophetic activity in the northern kingdom: in times of crisis, God sent a man with a word. At the inauguration of the kingdom, God sent a bold, yet naively disobedient, unnamed prophet to deliver a word against Jeroboam I when he set up what was to become the state religion of Israel ([1 Kings 13](#)). When Baal worship attained official status

during the “**co-regency**” of Ahab and Jezebel, God raised up Elijah and then Elisha to affirm the one, true, and living God ([1 Kings 17–2 Kings 13](#)). At the beginning of the end when Jeroboam II ruled, God had His prophets—including Hosea—to sound the warning. Hosea’s parish was ecumenical in the worst way: the state religion of Jeroboam I was entrenched and Baal worship lingered. Per the Lord’s assurance to Elijah, it would be safe to assume that there was also a remnant according to grace ([1 Kings 19:18](#)).

The very fact that God raised up Hosea to minister to a people living in such a day of “**religious mess**” should give us hope. It doesn’t require much spiritual insight to recognize the religious mess of our day. Religious pluralism plagues society, and true Christianity, which necessarily is exclusive, is at odds with the majority. Let it be our prayer that God would raise up ministers today with a prophetic boldness to declare His Word. In His grace, God has given His Word as the answer to any crisis.

3. There are a couple of books on these other northern prophets that you should read: Raymond B. Dillard, *Faith in the Face of Apostasy: The Gospel According to Elijah & Elisha*, The Gospel According to the Old Testament (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1999) and Bryan D. Estelle, *Salvation Through Judgment and Mercy: The Gospel According to Jonah*, The Gospel According to the Old Testament (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005).



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## Introduction to 1 John

### Part 5

This study will continue with the Introduction to the book of [1 John](#) and continue looking at the word “**world**”. The word “**world**” is the Greek word “*kosmos*” from where the English word “cosmos” or “cosmetics” is derived. The word “cosmetics” may seem like a strange derivative, but in actuality the word “*kosmos*” primarily means order, arrangement, ornament, and adornment. So, in reality, it may seem more related to the word “cosmetics” than it is to the word “cosmos” or “world”. In fact sometimes it is often translated as an “**adorning**” or “**to adorn**”. However, it came to denote the world, the physical earth, or the universe as that which is divinely arranged. Sometimes it denotes the human race as in [John 3:16](#) where it states that “**God so loved the world...**” Obviously, that verse is not saying that God loved the physical earth, but rather that He loved the people on the earth.

Now, all of that is the basic, root meaning of the word “**world**”, but there is much, much more associated with this word in its relationship to [1 John](#). Over half of the usages of the New Testament word for “*kosmos*” are found in [John](#), [1 John](#), and [2 John](#). The underlying meaning in [1 John](#) is consistently represented not just as people, but as humanity in its fallen and rebellious state. [Galatians 1:4](#) says it this way,

Gal 1:4 **who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,**

In the NKJV Paul calls the period of time in which Christians live as an “evil age”. In the KJV it is translated as “evil world”, but the word is not “kosmos”, but “aion” and so it should be translated as “age” – which most of the translations actually do. The word “aion” means an age or a period of time that has both moral and spiritual characteristics. This is a very important point simply because that is primarily what the word “world” is referring to – an age which reflects both ungodly moral and ungodly spiritual characteristics. However, it is important to note that the goal of Christ’s coming in [Galatians 1:4](#) is to “**deliver us from this present evil age**”. The word “deliver” means to **rescue** believers from this present evil period and from the wickedness and ungodliness that is its primary characteristic. It is a very strong Greek word. It comes from a root word that literally means to “tear out”. It is the idea that this world is so strong and has such an impact on people’s lives that God sees His work as having to tear them away from it – and that one point should be very obvious. Even as Christians, the “world” system and all of its ideas and values has this amazing pull, attraction, and appeal on every person. That is why Paul states in [Romans 12:2](#),

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

It is like a person’s flesh and their mind are constantly being drawn into the “world” and the way that the “world” thinks and acts. It is grieving when the church adopts methodologies, approaches, and tactics that are merely mimicking what the world does. In essence, believers are not of this world! They are in the world, but not of the world – and all of their life needs to reflect that position.

When John uses the word “world” it is important to think of it as that which is in total opposition to God. In an ethical sense, the “world” represents all that is alienated from and hostile to God. It represents all of those earthly and demonic activities and actions which seduce people away from God. Jesus describes the world this way in [John 7:7](#),

Jn 7:7 **The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.**

In [James 4:4](#), James issued this stern warning when he said,

Jas 4:4 **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.**

James is saying that believers are committing spiritual adultery when they develop a “**friendship with the world**”. The word “friendship” refers to being fond of the world and of adopting the interests of the world to be their own. In the current day and age, it is not only individual Christians who are often in love with the world, but also the church. How out of character for the church to so often be forming and shaping its ideas about the Christian life based on the culture in which it is a part. Often the church has it all backwards. The church is supposed to shape the culture, not the culture shape the church. The word “friendship” comes from the Greek word “phileo” which is another Greek word for “love” which means to befriend, to love, and to kiss.

Now, there are several characteristics of the “world” that need to be identified.

First, the “world” is incapable of discerning spiritual truth. Unbelievers simply do not have any spiritual capacity whatsoever. [Romans 3:10-18](#) makes this point perfectly clear. [John 14:16-17](#) says,

Jn 14:16 **And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.**

Intelligence has nothing, absolutely nothing to do with spiritual truth, and that is what so confounds the world. They think that knowledge and learning and intelligence is the basis for everything meaningful in life, but it has nothing to do with having a meaningful life. To just piggy back on that, it could be said that living a “happy” life has never been God’s goal for the believer – not at all. Jesus was a “**man of sorrows, acquainted with grief**”. Every disciple except John lost their life for the sake of the gospel. The goal of the Christian life is not to live a fulfilling life, but to glorify God with our life,

and that may be very costly at times. Spiritual truth is something that has to be revealed by God and by the Holy Spirit, and because of that those in the “world” simply have no internal capacity in and of themselves to understand anything related to the truth of God’s Word. They are offended that believers would even mention this. [1 Corinthians 1:21](#) says,

**1Co 1:21** For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

Secondly, the “world” is declared to be ruled by the devil. The one entity in the universe that hates God the most is the one who is controlling and dominating all that transpires in the world. Think about that for a minute. The world in which believers live is being “ruled” by the devil himself. Just think of all of the people who think that the idea of a devil is silly, childish, and unintelligent, when in reality it is their very ignorance of him that actually validates his controlling influence. He is called a “deceiver”, a “liar”, actually the “father of lies”, and has come to “kill, steal, and destroy”. In [John 14:30](#) Jesus states the following,

**Jn 14:30** I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.

The word “ruler” means first in rank and power. He has more power, more influence, and more impact on people’s lives than any other single entity or event on the planet – and still people do not believe in him. His deception is utterly amazing. [Ephesians 6:12](#) says,

**Eph 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

[Revelation 12:9 and 20:8](#) speak of his deceptive abilities,

**Rev 12:9** So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

**Rev 20:8** and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.

Thirdly, the “world” is portrayed as a place of sin that is passing away. In light of eternity, life on planet earth will be short-lived, but will have grave eternal impacts on people’s lives. [1 John 2:17](#) says it this way,

**1Jn 2:17** And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

What this verse reveals is that not only is the world “passing away”, but so is the lust and desires that are associated with it. The world system promotes those ideas and values that are associated with it, and since the “world” is temporary, so are all of the things that people want from it. Just think for a moment of all of the things that a person will actually lose in eternity because they sought hard after what the world had to offer. [Mark 8:36](#) says it this way,

**Mk 8:36** For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

I.e., a person could have everything that their heart could possibly desire, but it most likely will cost them everything of any eternal value and they will lose everything that God had planned for them. They lose everything when they lose their soul and they are cast into the Lake of Fire with the devil and all of his angels.

Fourthly, the “world” is characterized by the absence of salvation and a meaningful knowledge of God. Lost people have no power over sin, but are ruled by it and brought into full opposition to God because of it. Then, to make it worse, those in the world cannot even perceive the opposition that they have to God – one of the very things that brings them into the judgment of God. How tragic that the created do not recognize their Creator. To the contrary, they live in what John calls the “darkness” and refuse the “light”. [John 1:5](#) says,

**Jn 1:5** And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

[John 3:19](#) says,

**Jn 3:19** And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.



It is a gross insult to God to think that He has not done enough or that He has not done His part. It is arrogance of the highest degree to blame God for personal stubbornness and unwillingness to come to Him.

So, it is very important to have a full and complete definition to this idea of the “**world**”. (1) It is a life that is alienated from and hostile to God. (2) It is a life that that is alluring and enticing men and women away from God. The world is extremely adept at making itself look incredibly attractive and the things of God incredibly unattractive. (3) It is an ordered system in which Satan is its head, his fallen angels and demons are his emissaries, and the unsaved human race are his subjects. (4) It is both fallen and corrupt and is composed of all of the pursuits, desires, practices, circumstances, and places where God is not wanted – which constitutes the majority of the world’s focus and attention. To make all of these even more debased and degrading is the fact that (5) much in the world system is religious, cultured, refined, and intellectual. (6) It is all anti-God and anti-Christ. How bad is all of that?

Dr. Trench defines the “**world**” as follows, and this may be the best of all definitions:

*“All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale.”*

*Every worldly system is utterly corrupt and completely alienated from God. There are religious systems – The Catholic Church, Mormonism, Jehovah Witnesses, Islam, Buddhism, Animism, Hare Krishna, Humanism, New Age, Mysticism, Satanism, Scientology, Wicca, Voodoo, and Witchcraft to just name a few. There are political systems – Communism, Socialism, Dictatorship, Republics, Federations, and Democracy. There are economic systems, recreational systems, entertainment systems, and educational systems, and every one of them is corrupt and alienated from God and doing their best to dilute the believer’s faith, their commitment, and their resolve in the things of God. All of this “floating mass” of thoughts, opinions, systems, and ideas are specifically designed by Satan to aggressively diminish, weaken, and mitigate any love that the believer has for Christ, His church, and the Word of God – and if they do not know*

*that, recognize it, and understand it, they will simply be its next victim. This is the “**world**” that believers live in and this is the “**world**” as John sees it.*

## **ENDNOTES**

- <sup>1</sup>Vine’s, 24, 1245.
- <sup>2</sup>Harris, World, electronic page.
- <sup>3</sup>Vine’s, 1245.
- <sup>4</sup>Strong’s, 1088.
- <sup>5</sup>Vincent’s, 45.
- <sup>6</sup>Zodhiates, 1446
- <sup>7</sup>Renn, 1065.
- <sup>8</sup>Strong’s, 992.
- <sup>9</sup>Balz, World, electronic page.
- <sup>10</sup>Harris, 379.
- <sup>11</sup>Balz, World, electronic page.
- <sup>12</sup>Wuest, 125.
- <sup>13</sup>Wuest, 126.


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