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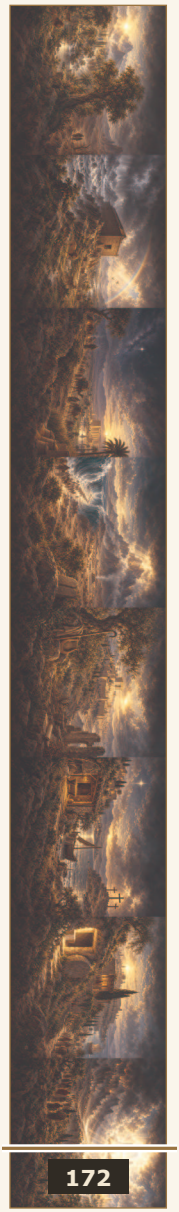
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



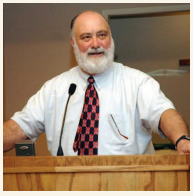
Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

1 JOHN 2:15, EXCERPT

What the world desires may differ from what Scripture requires. John Weaver considers appetite, approval, and the standards by which people pursue satisfaction. These messages ask readers to examine their own expectations and to distinguish the attraction of an offer from the truth and consequences of accepting it.

"The world wants that which it can never have: a Christ who will conform to its will and a salvation it desires."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

What the World Wants

Part One of Two

SCRIPTURE READING - Matthew 21:33-46 (KJV)

Introduction and Scripture Reading

Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will

> miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

Defining the Word 'World'

> In asking the question, what does the world want? We have to explain our definition of the word "world." Usually when anyone hears the word "world," what they automatically think of in their mind is every single individual that is in the world. If you assume that is what the word "world" means, then may I tell you that your assumption is drastically wrong. Because the word "world" is used many different ways in scripture, and you have to depend upon the context to show you what the real meaning of the word "world" is.

Now I want you to hold Matthew chapter 21, but I want you to turn very quickly to the book of John chapter 1 and look, if you would please, at verse 10. Let me show you what I'm talking about when I say that you have to understand the word "world" has many different meanings in the Bible. In John 1 and verse 10 we read, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." Here, in one simple sentence, the word "world" is used three times, and in each instance it means something entirely different. "He was in the world" would refer to the inhabited world, or the earth as you and I would know it. The next phrase says, "and the world was made by him." There the word "world" would refer to the entire universe. "The world knew him not" would refer to natural man, unsaved man, or the inhabitants of the world. Here you have

the word "world" meaning three different things in one particular sentence.

The word "world," from which you and I normally think of that word, is translated most often from the Greek word kosmos. The word kosmos literally means an orderly arrangement. Hence, we now have in our English language the word "cosmetics," which is supposed to be an orderly arrangement on a lady's face. Sometimes it's not so orderly, but that's where the word "cosmetics" comes from.

Before I get started in Matthew 21, I want to show you how the word "world" is used throughout Scripture. This is not an exhaustive listing; there are many more. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Acts chapter 17 and look at verse 24. Notice, first of all, the word kosmos, or the word "world," is used to refer to the universe as a whole. In Acts chapter 17 verse 24, Paul says, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Here the word "world" refers to the entire universe: God made the world and all things therein. Turn back in your Bibles to John 13 and look at verse 1. Here the word "world" is used of simply the earth. Notice John chapter 13 and verse 1.

Because the Word of God says this concerning Christ, John 13:1 says, “Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” Notice the phrase, “when it should come his time to depart out of the world.” Here “world” very obviously means earth, as it does in “having loved his own which were in the world.” Thus, kosmos sometimes refers to the universe as a whole and sometimes only to the earth; its meaning must be understood from its context.

Sometimes “world” refers to the world system. John 12:31 says, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” Here it refers neither to the universe nor to the earth, but simply to the world system. Many other passages make these distinctions as well.

In Romans 3:19, “world” refers to what you and I would call the entire human race: “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” The law speaks to those under the law, with the result that every mouth is stopped. How many are guilty before God? Every single individual, very obviously, without exception.

“World” also refers to humanity minus believers. In John 15:18, our Lord says to His disciples, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.” He is speaking to believers. There is a world that exists minus believers; in this usage, “world” does not include those to whom Christ is speaking, but refers to humanity minus believers.

So here is a world that hates believers. Romans 3:6 says, "God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" So once again it is a world minus believers, because we who are believers are not going to be judged by God the Father. We have already been judged in Jesus Christ our Lord. Then notice Romans chapter 11, in Romans chapter 11, just one more. Look in Romans chapter 11 and notice verse 12. In fact, let us go back and read verse 11. Here the word "world" is used in reference to the nations minus Israel, please. Paul writes in verses 11–12, "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" Verse 12, then, speaks of Israel minus the world.

In John 1:29, "world" is sometimes used simply of believers. When John the Baptist saw Jesus Christ, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Now let me ask you a question. Has Jesus Christ taken away the sin of every individual that has ever lived in the world? No, because He is going to judge some of them. Our Lord Himself tells us that many are going to be lost: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is

the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." So very obviously, "world" does not refer to every single individual.

Look in John chapter 6, verse 33. "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Has Jesus Christ given spiritual life to every single individual? The answer is no. He's given it to the world of believers. Let me ask that you look in John 12, verse 47.

Our Lord said, “And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.” What world is He going to save? He is going to save the world of believers. He is not saving the world of unbelievers.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 9, the apostle says concerning himself and other believers, “For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” Here, believers are separated from the world.

Second Corinthians chapter 5, verse 19, shows that there is a world of believers: “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” The world that God has reconciled to Himself is the world whose trespasses He did not impute to them. That is, He did not impute their sins or their iniquities to them. So here then is the world of believers. Sometimes, therefore, the word “world” refers only to the world of believers.

If there is a world of the godly, then very obviously there is a world of the ungodly. Second Peter 2:9 says, “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” Peter speaks of the godly whom the Lord delivers and of the unjust whom He reserves for judgment. Verse 5 says, “And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.” Thus, the old world is identified as the world of the ungodly.

There is a world of the ungodly, a world of believers, a world that is the universe, a world that is just the earth, the world minus believers, and the world minus Israel. These are distinct uses of the

word “world” in Scripture. The word “world” is used in many different ways. There is also the world system.

A World Without Accountability

The World Wants a World Without Accountability

A World Without Accountability

When I speak about what the world wants, let me define what I mean. I am talking about what the world of the ungodly, what the world system, wants—not what we as Christians want. Go back to Matthew chapter 21, because there we will see what the world genuinely wants. In this parable, we find two main truths that demonstrate what the world genuinely wants.

The first is this: The world of the ungodly wants a world without accountability. Look at verse 33. Our Lord said, "Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country."

When you and I hear that, we have to scratch our heads a little and say, What in the world did all this mean? Anyone who heard our Lord speak those words knew exactly what He meant. How did they know? The account, or parable, of the vineyard is given in Mark 12, verses 1 through 12, in Luke 20, verses 9 through 19, as well as here in Matthew chapter 21. The reason those who heard our Lord knew exactly what He was talking about is that this is an Old Testament illustration. Go back in your Bible, first of all, to Psalm 80, beginning with verse 8. Everyone would understand: Psalm 80, verse 8.

SCRIPTURE READING - Psalm 80:8-16; Isaiah 5:1-7 (KJV)

> Psalm 80, verse 8: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass

by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it."

And look down to verse 15: "And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance."

So here is a parable that is spoken concerning Israel, what God has done.

Isaiah chapter 5, beginning with verse 1: "Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

"And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."

If you will go back to Matthew 21, here is why I am telling you that everyone understood His terminology. Everyone understood the hedge, the winepress, the tower, and the servants. The parable was given very plainly to these people.

The householder in Matthew 21 refers, of course, to the sovereign God of heaven and earth. The family refers to Israel. The vineyard points to Jerusalem. The fence refers to the divine protection that

God had placed around them. The tower points to the temple and the tabernacle, where the divine presence was manifested. The husbandmen were the priests and the doctors of the law. Our Lord is the owner of the vineyard, who left it in the hands of others and sent forth His servants—that is, His preachers and prophets—to collect the fruit thereof. This was a very common thing in the days of our Lord. Everyone understood this parable. Here is the question: What happened to those individuals whom He sent to collect the rent?

We read it. Some were beaten, and some were stoned. Why were they beaten and stoned? Because those who were in charge and had control over the vineyard did not want to be responsible and accountable to the owner. They were unwilling to recognize His ownership and their stewardship. They believed that they had an absolute right to use, and even abuse, His property as they pleased. They did not think that they were required to answer to Him.

Now, God is patient. He has been patient. He is patient. The Bible says in James 5 and verse 7, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

God then is giving us this parable against Israel and against Judah and Jerusalem particularly. What advantage did Judah and Jerusalem and Israel in general have over all the other nations? They had the law of God. God gave them His law. They not only had the law of God, they had the teaching priests, the temple, and the sacrifices. God did not give that to the Assyrians or the Babylonians or anyone else. He gave it only to Israel. The Bible tells us very pointedly in Romans 9, verses 4 and 5, that to them belong the glory and the covenants and the giving of the law and the service of God and the promises—all of this, of whom Christ came, who is God blessed forever.

In Matthew 21, He talks about this householder, who is God, who planted this vineyard, digged it about, built a hedge there, built a winepress, and built a fence. In other words, the householder, the owner, God, did every possible thing that He could for the benefit of His vineyard. Why in the world did these people then beat and

murder the servants? The owner had provided everything necessary for the vineyard and had surrounded it with protection.

It was God who was the owner. He made the vineyard. He made the fence. He dug the winepress. Everything that Israel had, everything that Judah had, God gave them. If it had not been for God, they would not have had a vineyard to work in. If it had not been for Him, they would not have had an existence. They would not have had anything.

When He sent those servants—the preachers and prophets—they did not want to listen. They did not want to be instructed as to their duty and the performance of that duty. They did not want to be called to repentance over their slothfulness, wickedness, and obstinacy. They did not want to be held to account for their sins. They did not desire repentance. They did not want repentance. When the Bible talks about how they beat and killed the servants, that demonstrates the maltreatment, the various forms that they inflicted on the servants of God. Those to whom the vineyard was leased were traitors to God, treasonous to the people, and did violence to the messengers of God. They did not want to be accountable and responsible.

Look in your Bible to John chapter 15, verses 20 and 21, and notice what our Lord said. This demonstrates why God's true preachers are hated and despised today. He told His disciples, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

The servant is not greater than the Lord. If they persecuted Christ, they will persecute His servants. Is it any wonder, then, that when our Lord sent His servants, they beat them and killed them? Matthew 21 says that they beat some. Interestingly, the word "beat" means more than simply beating; it means flaying—flaying alive. This was done with a whip, with a cat of nine tails. The cat of nine tails usually had pieces of metal tied at the ends. When it struck the body, it not only stung and cut, but, when jerked back, ripped the flesh and made long lacerations. Thus, when the Bible says that they

beat some, it means literally that they flayed them and beat them very painfully. Then the Bible says they killed another: "And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another."

Hold Matthew 21, but look in Hebrews chapter 11, verse 37. God tells what some of His people went through: "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:)" They wandered "in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Go back to verse 37: "They were stoned, they were"—what?—"Sawn asunder."

Tradition has it, though it is not recorded in the Bible, that this is how the prophet Isaiah died: he was put in a hollow log and sawn in two. That is what the Scripture means by being sawn asunder. They were killed in the most vicious ways imaginable.

Matthew 21:35 says, "The husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another." Our Lord said in Matthew 23:37, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee." Whether you read the Old Testament or the New Testament, you find various ways in which the preachers and prophets of God were killed. King Saul, in 1 Samuel 22, had the priests of the Lord slain with a sword. Ahab and Jezebel, in 1 Kings 18 and 19, had many of them killed.

Stoning was a common form of punishment in both the Old and New Testaments. Most of the time it resulted in death, though not every time. In Joshua 7:26, Achan was stoned to death. In Deuteronomy 13:10, stoning was the punishment for individuals who tried to entice, lure, and seduce the people away from worship of the one true and living God. Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, was stoned to death by order of the king in 2 Chronicles 24:21. Stephen, the first martyr in the New Testament, was stoned to death in Acts 7:58. The Apostle Paul was stoned and left for dead in Acts 14:19.

Some scholars say that Paul actually died and that God raised him up. I do not know whether God did that or whether Paul was almost

dead and God healed him, but he did not die. Twice, in John 8:59 and John 10:31, the Jews attempted to stone Christ.

Whether we are speaking of beating, killing, or stoning, all this maltreatment demonstrates one thing: the absolute, utter contempt that the world has for God, His Word, and those who represent Him. They hate Him; they despise Him. Preaching the truth of God is no way to win friends and influence enemies. It is the way to get enemies, because men hate and despise the truth. Our Lord said in Luke 6:26, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

When our Lord sent His servants, some were beaten, some were killed, and some were stoned. What did He do? Verse 36 says, "Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise."

Let me give you an additional thought. When the Bible says that He sent more servants, we normally think of “more” as more numerous, more in number. He did send servants to replace those, and He may have sent a greater number as well. But “more” also carries the thought of additional rank—higher rank, more important, more dignified, more qualified. In other words, it was not just numbers; He sent those greater in power and authority. What did they do to them? The same as they did to the former. It did not matter to them. As verse 37 says, “But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.”

The World Wants Christ’s Inheritance

This parable is also given to us in Luke and in Mark. Mark 12:6 says, “Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.” Matthew simply says, “They will reverence my son.” I do not think I need to explain who His Son, or who His wellbeloved Son, was. Of course, it was none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

Judah, and Israel as a whole, had despised and held God in utter contempt. They refused to obey His law, honor Him, worship Him, or give Him the fruit that was His due. He sent His servants, declaring that they were accountable, responsible, and answerable,

but they did not want to hear it. Finally, after they had killed and slew His servants, He sent His wellbeloved Son, saying, “They will reverence my Son.”

The World Wants the Inheritance of Christ

This brings me to the second point. The world of the ungodly wants the inheritance that belongs to Christ. Verse 38 says, “But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.”

Mark 12:7–8 gives the account this way: “But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.” What does the world want? It wants a world without accountability, without responsibility, and without answerability; and it wants the inheritance of Jesus Christ. The very action of these wicked individuals demonstrates that they knew the inheritance belonged to Jesus Christ.

He was the true owner. In fact, look in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 and 2: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, the Messiah, and the Mediator, is the heir of all things. He is the natural, essential, and only begotten Son of God. As Mediator, He is the heir of all things natural, spiritual, and eternal. He uses those things for the benefit of His church and His people, and we also are His portion and inheritance. He is also heir to the throne of David.

Now note what they said: “Come, let us kill him, and his inheritance will be ours. Let us seize upon his inheritance.” What they wanted was what Jesus Christ had and what He was to inherit. Stop and think about this. They were willing to murder the Son of God in order to benefit themselves financially and temporarily. They were willing to deny, denounce, denigrate, and crucify the Son of God for their own personal benefit.

Do you think for one minute that that same world of the ungodly will hesitate one moment to destroy Christians who represent Jesus Christ? What did our Lord say? “The servant is not greater than his master. If they've hated me, they'll hate you. If they've persecuted me, they'll persecute you.”

Go back to John 11. Here it is, plain and simple, beginning with verse 47: “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.” If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him, and the Romans will come and take away both their place and nation. What were they concerned with first and foremost? Their place. They would lose their authority, their program, and their party. Caiaphas said, “Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” In other words, “We’ll kill Him that we may keep our place.”

The Jews figured that if they killed Christ the Messiah, they could seize upon His inheritance. They would be rid of Christ and have what they wanted: their power would remain intact, their nation would be at peace, the temple would stand, and they would continue in their office uninterrupted and undisturbed. They would maintain absolute control over the people.

Do you realize the position of the Pharisees and the Sadducees? The Sadducees had control of the temple; the Pharisees had control of the people. They were saying, “If we can get rid of Christ, we keep control.” The whole thing is over inheritance and control.

To whom does this world belong? You know the answer: “The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” What does the world of the ungodly desire? Not only a world without accountability and responsibility; they want the Lord’s inheritance. They want the earth so that they may have the people on the earth and use them for their benefit.

The world system believes that we are sheep to be fleeced, lambs to be slaughtered, slaves to be commanded, and mindless objects to be controlled for our own good and for the benefit of our handlers. That is what the world wants. The world of the ungodly wants control; they want the earth and the people on the earth, so that

basically we will be their servants. In other words, they want the Lord's inheritance. What did they get?

The Consequences of Rebellion

In their rebellion, they brought death and destruction upon themselves. Look at verses 40 and 41 of Matthew 21. Our Lord asks, "When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" They answer, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons."

To whom is He speaking, and who answered? Look at Matthew 21:23: "And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" He was speaking to the chief priests and the elders.

When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spoke of them. They knew exactly what our Lord was saying. When our Lord asked the question in verse 40, the answer came in verse 41: "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons." That answer came from the priests, the elders, and the leaders. Our Lord made the chief priests, leaders, and rulers of the people pronounce their own condemnation. You remember that is exactly what happened in 2 Samuel chapter 12, when Nathan went to David and gave him the little story. Nathan said, "The man that hath done this thing shall surely die." Then Nathan said, "Thou art the man."

Our Lord, in Luke 7 and verse 43, also made Simon the Pharisee pronounce his own judgment upon himself. Here, our Lord allows these wicked individuals to pronounce judgment upon themselves. When they answered, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men," in 70 A.D., He did. He wiped them out.

Our Lord is also teaching that what they did to Him is part and parcel of biblical prophecy. In verse 42, He said, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is

marvellous in our eyes?" The leaders rejected Christ and tried to seize the inheritance. Our Lord says that, in doing this, they were fulfilling prophecy. They were supposed to be priests and doctors of the law, and to know these things. Psalm 118 verse 22 says, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."

Because of their rejection of the Messiah and their rebellion against Him, He said in verse 43, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." In other words, they would have nothing. The kingdom was taken from them and given to someone else, bringing forth its fruits. There is now nothing left to Judaism but an empty shell: a religion without Christ, a husk without a kernel.

It is a broken cistern that can hold no water. It is worthless, useless, and cannot save or do anything. Our Lord said to the leaders, "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." The Jews, in attempting to reject Christ and crucify Him, lost the very thing they wanted—the kingdom. They ran into the stone, and the stone fell upon them.

Isaiah 8:14, speaking of Christ, says, "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." He is a stone of stumbling. First Peter 2:8 says, "And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." They ran into the stone, and the stone fell upon them and ground them to powder.

When you run into a stone wall, you are the only one who is hurt; the stone wall feels no pain. When you run against Christ, you are the only one who is hurt. You remember what He said in Proverbs 8? "All they that hate me love death." I do not care how wicked the world becomes, or how it lashes out against Christ, Christians, and His Word. The world is still His, and He is still the inheritor of everything. It still belongs to Him.

What they lost by rejection and rebellion, they could have had by submission and repentance. The Bible teaches that we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ, which means we inherit whatever He inherits. First Corinthians 3 says, “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.” They could have had everything simply by bowing and submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ. What the world wants, it can never have—not in the way it wants it. The world of the ungodly will never have a world without accountability or responsibility.

God ordained only three institutions: the family, a ministry of education; the church, a ministry of grace; and the state, a ministry of justice. God ordained all three, and each is answerable, accountable, and responsible to Him. Just as the family is responsibly Christian, the church is responsibly Christian, and the state is responsible to be Christian, all things belong to Christ, and all are answerable and accountable to Him. Let me make a couple of applications. First, listen carefully to what I am about to say.

Applications for Today

The immediate application in light of the context is simple. If Christ prevailed, then Judaism must fall. It is a clear-cut distinction: it is either Christ or Judaism. Christ did prevail, He is prevailing, and He shall prevail.

There is no such thing as a Judeo-Christian heritage. It is only a Christian heritage. We would agree that there is an Old Testament heritage that came through Israel. But in the New Testament, it was the Jews who fought against Christ, crucified Christ, and rejected Him. Judaism only gives you a history of rejection, rebellion, and unbelief. It has nothing to do with Christianity, not in any sense of the word.

Paul said it plainly in Galatians 1:13-14: “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.”

Notice that he talks about the Jews' religion. While Paul was in the Jews' religion, he was persecuting Christ and Christians. It is not a Judeo-Christian heritage. It is a Christian heritage. Period.

The second application concerns an old song: “What Lola Wants, Lola Gets.” It may be true that what Lola wants, Lola gets, but it is not true that what the world of the ungodly wants, the world of the ungodly gets. They will never have a world without accountability, and they will never have the inheritance of Jesus Christ.

Paul said in Acts 17, “the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.” Why? “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” Just as surely as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, there will be a judgment and accountability. What the world wants, the world can never have. Here is the third application.

It not only seems—but is actually true—that all religious (using that term very loosely) and civil power are against Christ and Christianity. They must deny His rightful authority and ownership in order to establish their usurped authority and pretended ownership of this planet. Why is everything seemingly against Christians today?

Because the world wants His inheritance. If they admit that Jesus Christ is God, the Son of God, Messiah, Lord, and Savior, they must also admit that they are answerable, accountable, and responsible to Him, obligated to repent and submit to Him. That means they are under His control and authority, which they do not want and will not want.

What the world wants, it will never have. But what we as children of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, want, we shall have, because Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father, inherits all things. And we are in Him.

I do not watch many movies, but last night I watched Secondhand Lions. If you have not seen it, you need to see it. At the end, when Walter is with the sheriff, the sheriff hands him the will. Old Walter reads it and says, “The kid gets it all.”

I have news for you. In Christ, the kids get it all. We have it. We do not need the world. We have Christ.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your love, grace, and mercy. Help us, dear Lord, to love Thee, praise Thee, and glorify Thee. Help us understand where we are in time, history, and the world. But help us also understand that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us and gave His life for us. We give Thee praise, worship, and glory. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.

CHAPTER 2

What the World Wants

Part Two of Two

Review of Part 1: The World's Rejection of Accountability and Inheritance

We are looking in our Bibles to the book of Luke, chapter 23. I am going to take a few minutes and review because I preached the first part of this message last week, and I am going to continue. This is the second part of the message entitled "What the World Wants." We will begin reading with verse 20 and read through verse 25.

"Pilate, therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why? what evil hath he done? I found no cause of death in him. I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified, and the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

"And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired. But he delivered Jesus to their will."

Last week, by way of introduction, when I began this message, "What Does the World Want?", I took the time to distinguish for you seven different ways the word "world" is used in the Bible. Actually, the word "world" has about thirteen different meanings. I want to review that distinction because the word does not always carry the same meaning in Scripture.

If you will turn to John chapter 1, verse 10, the word "world" occurs three specific times in one sentence, and each time, the word "world" means something entirely different. I used this verse last week, but let me demonstrate it for you again. When we think of the word "world," we think of every single individual in the world.

It is not like that at all. The context has to determine the meaning. So John 1:10 says, "He was in the world"—that is, the earth—"and the world was made by Him"—that is, the universe—"and the world"—that is, the inhabitants, or the men—"knew Him not." The word "world" is used at least three different ways in one verse.

I pointed out the many different ways that the word "world" is used. The Bible speaks of a world of believers and a world of the ungodly. In fact, He said in 2 Peter, "Bring the flood in upon the world of the ungodly." Our Lord said to His disciples, "If the world hate you, you know that it hated Me before you." The believers, then, are set apart in distinction from the world. As I pointed out last week, and am just emphasizing here, there is a world of the godly and a world of the ungodly.

There is also the world system, because in John 12:31 our Lord said, "the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." Whether you speak of the world of the ungodly or the world system, each one is absolutely against Jesus Christ. They are against the truth of God and the Word of God. It does not matter whether you use the term "the world of the ungodly" or "the world system"; they are always in opposition to Jesus Christ.

Last week we saw two major points in the message. First, I pointed out how the world—that is, the world of the ungodly—wants

a world without responsibility and accountability to God. We saw this in the parable of the vineyard. They simply stoned to death and killed all the servants that the owner, the sovereign God of heaven and earth, sent to them. They did not want to be accountable and responsible to God.

In fact, that is the way it is in this day and time. No one wants to fess up or own up to anything. We blame-shift and blame anything and everyone else for our own sins and problems. We do not want responsibility or accountability. Yet the Bible says in Romans 2:6 that God will render to every man according to his deeds. If God is going to render to every man according to his deeds, that means each one is answerable and accountable to God.

Secondly, I pointed out last week in the parable of the vineyard that Scripture tells us the world of the ungodly wants to seize the inheritance of Jesus Christ. What did they say? "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours." What in the world is the inheritance of Jesus Christ? It is not just the world. It is that, but more: it is the individuals who are in the world. The world of the ungodly not only wants control of the world; it wants control of everyone individually as well. They want to use us as sheep to be sheared and cannon fodder for their wars. In other words, they want absolute control over everything and everyone.

These two truths were very evident in the lives of the rulers of Judah according to the book of Matthew. But they are also clearly evident today in the rules of America and of the world.

Pilate's Political Use of Christ

When you look in our text today, in Luke chapter 23, it tells us about the trial of Jesus Christ—or, I should say, the lack thereof. I have preached in times past on the illegality and unlawfulness of the trial of Jesus Christ. It took place at night, among other things. Interestingly, as we read in Luke chapter 23, Pilate personally knew that Jesus Christ was innocent. We are told twice in the Bible, once in Matthew 27:18 and once in Mark 15:10, that Pilate knew the chief priests had delivered Christ for envy. In other words, he knew Christ was personally innocent, and that Christ stood before him only because they were envious.

Look in John 11, verses 47 and 48. The Bible says, “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees of counsel, and said, What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and our nation.” Notice what they said: “If we do not do something, we are going to lose our place, our party, and our power.” If they did nothing, all men would believe on Him, and they would lose their party, position, and platform.

Unhappily, politicians have not changed. You can see the thought patterns of our modern-day politicians exposed in the politician of our Lord’s day. They would sell Christ and His people down the river for their personal benefit, and they will still do that today.

Pilate’s wife sent him a message in Matthew 27 and verse 19: “Have thou nothing to do with this just person, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.” Since Pilate knew that Jesus Christ was innocent, and since he knew that the high priest had delivered Him for envy, how in the world could Pilate condemn an innocent man?

The answer is very simple. Pilate was a politician. He didn’t care about truth, principle, or even individuals. The mere fact that Pilate, in Matthew 27 and verse 24, took water and washed his hands, saying, “I’m innocent of the blood of this just person, see you to it,” did not release him from his condemnation. Yea, it added condemnation to him, for he did not free Christ when he knew Christ was absolutely, totally innocent.

Pilate was using Christ. He had previously used Jesus Christ, and now he was using Him again. In Luke 23, beginning with verse 6, we read: “When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged into Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad, for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words, but he answered him nothing.”

"And the chief priests and the scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war said of it not, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together, for before they were an enmity between themselves."

When Pilate heard that Jesus was a Galilean, he was glad and sent Him to Herod, who had authority over that region. "Oh, I'm glad to hear that. I'm going to send you to Herod because he's over that." Herod had been wanting to see Jesus, but the only reason he wanted to see Christ was because he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. When Herod mocked and ridiculed Christ, Pilate and Herod were made friends again. Notice what Pilate did: He used Christ for political advantage.

Let me say this again. Politicians have not changed. They still use Christ for political advantage. How do I say that? They parade themselves as Christians and say they stand for Christian and biblical values. But just as quickly as poor, gullible, and foolish Christians vote them into office, they immediately turn and rend Christ and Christians with their unfaithful lives, their ungodly laws, and their unwillingness to stand for anything that is biblical and Christian. So Pilate used Christ, and people today use Christ.

It is interesting to note that the only man in the entire New Testament to whom our Lord would not even speak was King Herod. You know why? Herod's only interest in Christ was entertainment value. He wanted to be entertained, and Christ refused even to speak to him. The Bible says that they mocked Him and sent Him back to Pilate. The same day, the Bible says, Pilate and Herod were made friends.

There was also a group in the New Testament known as the Herodians, who were for King Herod. In Luke 13:31, notice the subtlety of King Herod and how little our Lord thought of him. Let me show you how little our Lord thought of King Herod.

"The same day there came certain of the Pharisees saying unto him, Get thee out and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee." And Christ said, "Go you and tell that fox, behold I cast out devils, and I

do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." Christ called Herod a fox. A fox indicates a sly and crafty man; the epithet demonstrates Herod's cunning and craftiness. Herod showed his real character when he sent the Pharisees to Christ, saying, "You better get out or I'm going to have you killed." Later, in Luke 23, Herod still wanted to see Christ. Because of his superstition, he thought Christ was John the Baptist resurrected from the dead, yet he had no regard for Him except for entertainment value.

A fox is an emblem of slyness, cunning, and mischief. The word is also used in the Bible to denote a dissembler. Herod was indeed wicked, but Christ's reference to him as a fox concerned his cunning and the strategies he tried to use against Christ. Adam Clarke, in his commentary on this passage, said, "A fox among the Jews appears to have been the emblem of a wicked ruler who united cunning with cruelty and was always plotting how he might aggrandize himself by spoiling the people." Christ knew that, and therefore referred to Herod as a fox. Our Lord did not trust Herod and would not even speak to him.

Pilate and Herod were enemies, but they came together to persecute Jesus Christ, and therefore became friends. Enemies, whoever and wherever they may be, will always come together to stand against that which is right, biblical, godly, and holy.

A Society Where Sin Is Unpunished

Pilate not only used Christ to gain reconciliation with Herod; he was now using Christ in Luke 23 to gain popularity with the religious rulers. In Luke 23:21, we read, "But they cried." Who were the "they"? They were the chief priests, the religious people and leaders, and the people they had stirred up. They "prevailed."

Watch what Pilate did. He gave the religious leaders exactly what they wanted, although he knew that he was wrong and that they were wrong as well. Pilate was a spineless, cowardly, and wicked man, but at the same time, he was a shrewd politician. When he gave Jesus Christ to the religious leaders and the religious establishment of his day, he knew that from then on they would owe him. He would be collecting on their favors, because he had given them what they wanted, and later they would have to give him what he wanted.

There is a lesson we need to learn: to the world of the ungodly, the world system, and those who run that system, Christ is expendable. So are His people. They will use Christ, use us, and discard us as rubbish. As you are going to see in this text, they are interested only in temporary pleasure, power, and their own position.

The World Wants a Society Where Sin Is Unpunished

What does the world want? I showed you last week that the world of the ungodly wants a world without accountability and responsibility. Secondly, it wants to seize the inheritance that belongs to Christ. Thirdly, it wants a society where sin is unpunished. Watch verse 25: "And he," that is, Pilate, "released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison." Who did Pilate release? A man named Barabbas. Matthew 27:21 says, "And the governor or pilot said unto them, Whither the twain that I shall release unto you? And they said, Barabbas." Verse 25 says, "He released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison."

Luke 23:25 says, "And He released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired." They wanted Barabbas. They desired Barabbas. Matthew 27:16 says, "and they had a notable prisoner called Barabbas." Note that word notable. In Mark 15:7, "And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection." In John 18:40, "they cried out all again saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber."

In each of these passages, Barabbas is called a notable prisoner. That is, he was someone of note, someone famous—or, as we should say today, someone infamous, someone notorious. Barabbas was a thief. He was an insurrectionist. He was a murderer. He was a seditionist. Barabbas deserved the death penalty on more than one charge. Murder would have been sufficient, but insurrection and sedition were death-penalty charges as well. Pilate asked, "whether of the twain will you that I release unto you?"

He may have faintly hoped that somehow they would have answered Jesus Christ. But the answer was Barabbas. Barabbas.

They wanted Barabbas. Everybody knew that this man was an insurrectionist, a seditionist, a robber, and a murderer.

Why did the religious establishment and the rulers in Judea want Barabbas and not Christ, whom they knew was innocent? Here is why they wanted Barabbas: Barabbas did not stand in their way. He did not challenge their usurped authority. He did not confront them, rebuke them, seek to overthrow them, or shame them. He may have been guilty of murder, insurrection, sedition, and theft, but what were those in comparison with upsetting the establishment or the status quo?

What is a little sin and a little criminal activity as compared to challenging illegal, usurped, and abused authority? That is why they wanted to get rid of Christ. In Acts chapter 3, Peter states it very plainly as he preaches. Look in Acts chapter 3, beginning with verse 13, and see what Peter says.

He says, "...the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom you delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he, Pilate, was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One in the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you." How much plainer can you get? You desired a murderer to be granted unto you.

Has the world changed? Have politicians changed? Look today in our country at the political prisoners, the people who are in prison for challenging the system. Did you know that the United States of America has more people in prison than China? The United States basically has more people in prison than any nation in the whole wide world.

Look at the murderers, the rapists, and the kidnappers who are walking around free, while anyone who challenges usurped and abused authority will spend twenty years in the slammer, in a federal pen somewhere.

I was preaching in Iowa, and the pastor said, "There's a fellow I'd really love for you to talk to. He's a very bitter man. Maybe if you would go with me and invite him to the meeting, he might at least come out and listen to the Word of God." I said, "Sure, I'll go with you."

The man was bitter because he had gone through a very nasty and ugly divorce and evidently had been taken to the cleaners. I do not remember the whole story, but I will tell you his exact words. He rehearsed everything to me, and when he reached the end, his fists clenched and his face wore a grimace. He said, "I should have killed her. I should have killed her. I should have killed her like I started to. I could have been in and out in seven years."

Those were his exact words, because a life sentence does not mean a life sentence in this day and time. That is what he said: "I should have killed her. I should have killed her. I should have killed her." The point is this little couplet: "No one escapes when freedom fails. The best men rot in filthy jails."

"And those who try to appease are hanged by those they tried to please." That is certainly true. The world of the ungodly—not the world of Christians—would rather have a society where sin, criminal activity, sodomy, fornication, theft, and murder abound than choose Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They would rather live by their standard of sin and rebellion than submit to the Word of God.

They prefer injustice to justice, unrighteousness to righteousness, and damnation to salvation. It is that simple. The world of the ungodly prefers a society of sin and death. Do you know what the sovereign God of heaven and earth did? He allowed the Jews to choose between Christ, who is life, and Barabbas, who is death. They chose death. Do you realize that we have done exactly the same thing in America?

We have chosen our own delusion and our own destruction. As a nation, we have chosen a government, a society, and an economic structure entirely and completely contrary to God and His Word. Therefore, we have chosen death, and it is an inescapable death. One of my favorite passages is found in Proverbs 8, verses 35 and 36. Our Lord said, "For whosoever findeth Me, findeth life, and obtaineth favor of the Lord."

You find Christ, you find life, and you obtain favor of the Lord. But listen to verse 36: "All they that hate Me love death." All they that hate Me love death. I said it last week, and I will say it again this week: the only thing the world can produce without Jesus Christ is a

society of death. Look at abortion. Look at euthanasia. Look at the merciless society in which we live. All the world of the ungodly can produce is death.

The World Wants a Religion They Can Control

You remember the name of the man who said, "if you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face forever." Perhaps it was Orwell. That is what society is without Christ and without the Word of God. Notice what Pilate said: he delivered unto them whom they desired. Is it not amazing how the world desires everything but Christ, righteousness, and holiness?

A Religion They Can Control

You never have to teach your children how to sin, how to be in rebellion, or how to make wrong choices. Is it not amazing that even as adults, without Christ and without His Word, we still do the same thing? The world of the ungodly wants a society of sin and death.

Look back in Luke 23 and verse 25, because here is the fourth thing that the world of the ungodly wants: “And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into the prison, whom they had desired.” But he delivered Jesus to their will.

The world of the ungodly wants a religion that it can control. They could not control Christ, and they could not stop Christ. That is why Caiaphas said, “Know ye nothing at all? How is it expedient that one man should die for the nation, and that the whole nation perish not?” They would kill Christ, get rid of Him, and maintain control.

There is nothing wrong with religion as long as it fits their desires, conforms to their will, and remains under their control. They want to be the determiners of death and hell, salvation and damnation. They want to decide what Christ can and cannot do, what Christ can and cannot be, and who lives and who dies. They want a salvation in which Jesus Christ does not reign and rule—a salvation that conforms to their thoughts, their way of thinking, and their life. They want a salvation that they control.

Have you noticed the two most popular religious symbols in America, particularly, and probably in the world? What are they?

The nativity scene—Christ in the manger—and Christ on the cross. Why is the nativity scene so popular even among ungodly people? Why is Christ on a cross so popular? I have seen people who have no idea who Christ is wearing a cross on a gold chain around their neck. The nativity scene and Christ on the cross are popular because they present a Christ whom the world believes it can control.

First, who's afraid of a baby? I'm not. I'm not afraid of a baby. They can look cute, make you smile, and make you act and talk like a fool, as all grandparents and grandmas do. We use all kinds of little sweet expressions to them. But who's afraid of a baby? Who's afraid of a dead man? A dead man can't hurt you or harm you. They're lifeless and harmless.

The world—the world of the ungodly—loves Christ in a manger and on a cross because He's no threat to them: not to their persons, positions, or power. But when you begin to proclaim a living, resurrected, ascended, enthroned, glorified Lord who rules and reigns and demands that men submit to Him, all of a sudden they don't like that Christ or that Lord. He's no longer the cute little cuddly baby or the dead man hanging on the cross. He's a threat. He condemns their sins, abhors their wickednesses, punishes their iniquities, challenges their authority, reproves, and rebukes them.

He threatens them with death and hell, and they do not like that. Christ as a baby is acceptable, and Christ dead on the cross is acceptable. But Jesus Christ is not dead, and Jesus Christ is not a baby. Jesus Christ is the resurrected, ascended Lord of glory, who now rules and reigns. He is the sovereign God of heaven and earth.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was preaching on Matthew 20:15, where Christ said, “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?” Spurgeon summarized it this way:

“The householder says, ‘Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?’ And even so does the God of heaven and earth ask this question of you this morning. ‘Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?’

“There is no attribute of God more comforting to his children than the doctrine of divine sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe troubles, they believe that

sovereignty hath ordained their afflictions, that sovereignty overrules them, and that sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children of God ought to more earnestly to contend than the dominion of their Master over all creation, the kingship of God over all of the works of His hands, the throne of God, and His right to sit upon that throne.

"On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by worldlings, no truth of which they have made such a football, as the great, stupendous, and yet most certain doctrine of the sovereignty of the infinite Jehovah. Men will allow God to be everywhere except on His throne. They will allow Him to be in His workshop to fashion the worlds and to make the stars. They will allow Him to be in His almonery to dispense alms and bestow His bounties."

Men will allow God to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, light the lamps of heaven, and rule the waves of the ever-moving oceans. But when God ascends His throne, His creatures gnash their teeth. When we proclaim and enthrone God, and His right to do as He wills with His own—to dispose of His creatures as He thinks well, without consulting them—then we are hissed and execrated. Men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on His throne is not the God they love. They love Him anywhere better than when He sits upon His throne with His scepter in His hand and His crown upon His head. But it is this God upon the throne that we love to preach. It is this God upon His throne in whom we trust. Men will allow God to be everywhere except on the throne.

Look back to Luke chapter 23 and verse 25: "And he, Pilate, released unto them him, that is Barabbas, that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired, but now watch this, but he delivered Jesus unto their will." Would you like to know what the world of the ungodly would do to Jesus Christ if they could? All you have to do is look at what they did. They laughed, mocked, ridiculed, jeered, scorned, hated, and rejected Him.

The Resurrected Christ's Sovereignty Terrifies the World

They scourged and crucified the Son of God. They inflicted as much humiliation, degradation, and pain upon Him as they could. They

shamed Him in their treatment of Him. Hebrews 12 and verse 1 says, “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” They shamed the Lord and crucified Him. They stripped Him naked and mocked Him. They put a crown of thorns on His head and beat Him with a scepter.

What happened? They had Jesus delivered under their will, and that is what they did to the sinless Son of God. That is what the world will do today. This is why the world loves the baby in the manger and the dead Christ on the cross. Look in your Bibles to Acts chapter 2.

SCRIPTURE READING - Acts 2:32-37 (KJV)

Peter is preaching on the day of Pentecost. Look at the testimony that is given: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses." So God has raised Him from the dead. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which you now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Peter is saying, "This Jesus whom you crucified, He's no longer dead. This Jesus hath God raised up whereof we are all witnesses. And God has glorified Him. He is now the resurrected, ascended Lord. He's sitting on the right hand of God the Father. He is Lord. He is Sovereign. He is Master. He is God."

David himself prophesied this in Psalm 110: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou in my right hand, until I make all thy foes thy footstool."

"Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly," mark it down, this is truth, "that God hath made that same Jesus whom you crucified, both the Lord and Christ."

> Now when they heard this, what did they hear that upset them? That Jesus Christ was not dead. That Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead. That Jesus Christ was Lord of glory. That Jesus Christ is the boss, the owner, the master, the sovereign. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts."
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> And they said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Who was Peter preaching to? The ones who crucified the Son of God. Let me show you what just dawned on them. Pilate delivered Jesus to our will, and we did unto Him as we pleased. Now God has raised Jesus from the dead and resurrected Him. He's ascended. He's the glorified. He's now Lord. He's King of kings and God of gods and Lord of lords—and uh-oh!

We are now in His hands, and He can do with us as He wills. No wonder they were upset and pricked in their hearts: they realized they had messed with the wrong man. Look what they did to Christ. Now Christ holds their souls and their lives in His hand, and He may deal with them whatsoever He pleases, whatsoever He wills. They realized that this great and glorious sovereign God could dash them in pieces if He so pleased.

We have got to realize something: our God is on the throne. He has not abdicated His throne, resigned His position, or abdicated His power. He can still crush His enemies at any moment, at any time, just as He pleases. And He shall do so, because every foe will be brought under the footstool of Jesus Christ. Every individual is in God's hands, and He may now dispose of them as He pleases.

The world wants a religion it can control. That is why it does not want Jesus Christ. He is uncontrollable because He is the sovereign God of heaven and earth.

Applications: The World's Futile Desires and the Believer's Transformation

The world wants that which it can never have: a Christ who will conform to its will and a salvation it desires. The world wants to be saved from the penalty of sin so that it may continue to indulge in sin. It wants the sin, but does not want to suffer for it. The world will

treat Christ merely as a fire escape, or as fire insurance. It truly does not want repentance. It wants a society where sin is unpunished, where there is no accountability, and where it can sin with impunity. But no such salvation exists. The only salvation there is is in Jesus Christ.

The Glory of Salvation

Therefore, He demands that men repent and submit to Him. Those who do not shall perish. It is that simple: “All they that hate me love death.”

The second application is this: How glorious and gracious is the salvation of our Lord, who descends and condescends to save wicked, rebellious sinners. Have you ever stopped to think that, as wicked as the world of the ungodly is, if God had not been merciful to you and me, we would have been right among them, wanting what they want and desiring what they desire? We, too, were sinners, lost and undone; rebels against Christ. But thankfully, God in His mercy has saved us. The Bible says that God has translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. We no longer want what the world wants; we want what God wants. I have heard it said like this: “Since I’ve been saved, I do what I want to do, because God changed my want tos.”

And that is a fact. God does change your want tos. The Bible tells us in 1 John 2: “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. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Let me ask you: Herod and Pilate were consummate politicians. The Pharisees, Sadducees, and chief priests were consummate politicians as well. Where are they today? They were willing to crucify Christ for temporary power and temporary pleasure. This world and everything in it that is wicked and contrary to Christ will pass away. Only those that do the will of God abide forever. What the world wants, it can never have, because the only thing that is holy,

right, and godly is the salvation we have in Jesus Christ. Whatever we have in Him is not temporary; it is permanent.

We need to learn our Bibles. We need to study our Bibles. We need to make sure that we want what God wants. We may be in this world, but, as our Lord said in John 17, we are not of this world. And we are not part of the wicked world system. We belong to the world of belief.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We are thankful that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, that He's ascended into heaven, that He's seated at the right hand of God, that He's the glorified Son of Man, ruling and reigning sovereignly and demanding that all men repent and believe. Father, thank You for choosing us out of the world and bringing us into the Kingdom of Thy Son, and teaching us holiness and righteousness and truth. Enable us to bring our lives into conformity to Your Word, and give us grace that we may serve Thee with reverence and godly fear. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

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