

### **WHY WERE THE APOSTLES NON-POLITICAL? (Part-five of a ten-part study)**

The apostle John establishes an even more pointed contrast between this present world system and the building of Christ's Church, than that of the apostle Paul. He seeks to say the same thing, but appeals to the Christian's love for God, instead of our need for embracing His wisdom. Notice what he says in this very familiar passage recorded for us in 1 John 2:15-17 –

**“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”**

John's point is obvious. If our love for God is to be at its very best, producing in us all those necessary changes for the better in our lives, we must resist the temptation of falling in love with this present evil world. But John doesn't leave us wondering about what comprises this evil system run by Satan, since we as Christians must function within it. He also doesn't speak of abstract concepts or institutional entities. Instead, he describes the people who occupy it.

First, we have the person who is living in self-sufficient independence from God and others (the lust of the flesh). Why? Because he has convinced himself he doesn't need God. And his need of others is only for the purpose of using them for his own personal benefit. Second, this individual doesn't need God and uses others due to his bondage to the sin of greed (the lust of the eyes). His desire is to continually acquire that which he deems to be most important to him. As a result, he has become a self-important fool (the boastful pride of life). Over the course of many years, he has developed a personality derived from the lust of the flesh and of the eyes, and can't wait for the opportunity to let you know how great he is.

Perhaps you thought of a specific individual who fits the above description exactly. I know I did. These lost and fallen people embody the evil world system in which the Christian lives. They have been manipulated into such a pathetic existence, unknowingly, by “the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:1-3; cf. Luke 4:5-7). The Christian, prior to his conversion, may have resembled such a person. But now, that previous identity cannot continue to exist, if he is to become everything God wants him to be; in conformance to the image of our Savior. That change for the better will only occur if we shun the wisdom of the world and a love for it, and fully embrace the wisdom of God and a love for Him.

But the great irony of this contrast presented to us by the apostle John occurs in v17. He uses the same word here that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 7:31. He tells us that this present world system and all that is in it, including its governing authorities, is “passing away.” Yet so are we! We are just as temporary and transient as the world we live in and the people we rub shoulders with. The difference is that our transience leads us into the permanence of eternal life. Theirs leads them into the ruin of eternal death. We are on an upward spiral, while they are on a downward one. Except for one monumental point in time where the two will confront one another, as Satan's world system will be replaced by the Kingdom of God on earth, when Jesus Christ returns to rule and reign. Nowhere in redemptive history do we see the stark incompatibility between the Christian and the world in which he lives, on display, as what is described by the apostle John in a specific passage of Scripture, found in the book of Revelation, which we will consider, next.