



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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1 John 2:15-19 Commentary New International Version

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

(1 John 2:15) Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.

John did not write that people should not appreciate and care for the beautiful world that God has made; rather, no one should love God's creation more than they love the Creator. The world has not remained exactly as God created it, so what God originally made does not point perfectly to the character and wisdom of God. Therefore, Jesus came and taught the truth about God and the world and how to live in the world. In the Bible, "the world" or "this world" can also mean a civilization, culture, fellowship, society, or philosophy that promotes rebellion against God and God's commandments. Rebellion includes lawlessness and unbelief. Worldly people created many of the ideas, religions, groups, and other things in the world to mislead the true followers of God away from God. Those of the world and the true followers of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son also have a spiritual enemy, the devil (also called "the evil one") who does all it can to mislead people, enslave unbelievers, and keep people away from God. Those who love the world regard the things of the world more important than the God of the Bible and obeying God as

revealed in the Bible and through nature. In Romans 1:18-20, Paul described the situation of those who love the world and their worldliness more than they love our Holy God: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” God’s creation is no longer as perfect as God made it due to the damage evil beings and sinful people have brought upon creation for generations. However, enough of God’s perfect creation remains that anyone who loves the world instead of loving God has no excuse for their disobedience and unbelief. By their actions and words, those who love the world demonstrate that the love of the Father is not within them. The love of the Father is not in them because they have rejected God as revealed in nature and the Bible—they prefer to love the world and the things of the world.

(1 John 2:16) For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

“The world” or “this world” (as described above), those of this world, and the devil create and provide more and more opportunities for people to disobey God and gratify the desires of their thoughts and feelings (their flesh), which misleads people away from and further away from the true God. When people sin, most of the time they have chosen to follow their temptations, their emotional and intellectual desires, and their feelings, rather than obey God, God’s commands, and their sound reason. In an increasing variety of ways, the world and worldly people also create evil visual experiences (such as some evil advertisements) to mislead people into doing what will harm others and themselves. In Matthew 6:23, Jesus taught, “But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” If someone loves the world instead of God, then their eye is bad and the light in them is darkness. They will be easily misled by the desires of their flesh

and the evil opportunities to gratify their desires that they see presented before their eyes, which will lead them to behave in evil ways. The “light” within such a person is “darkness,” and such a great darkness that only by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ can the Light of Christ begin to shine into such a person. As John wrote about Jesus in John 1:9, “The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.” The true Light must enlighten people; otherwise, the light within them will remain darkness, which does explain the otherwise inexplicable evil behavior of many who should know better. Furthermore, in John 3:19-20, Jesus declared, “And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed.” Finally, John mentioned the pride that some people can have in their riches and “the boastful pride of life” (NASB) that can lead people to aggressively pursue the things of this world with a single-minded purpose that totally disregards the commands, plans, and purposes of God. In 1 John 2:16, John teaches believers and unbelievers not to blame God for all the evils and temptations that exist in the world that the devil and those of this world have designed to lead people away from God and away from the compassionate love that everyone should have for everyone else. When believers are tempted to do evil, they need to remind themselves that their temptations do not come “from the Father but from the world,” as James also wrote in James 1:13-15, “No one, when tempted, should say, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.”

(1 John 2:17) The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

When they are tempted to sin or return to worldly ways, believers also need to remind themselves that the world, the worldly, the tempter, and the temptations from unholy desires are passing away. The world may seem to be “getting worse” morally and spiritually as evil and sinful behavior remain less hidden; still, the world and the things of this world are passing

away and will someday completely pass away. Doing evil is self-destructive, and if not turned from, doing evil will eventually lead to the just judgment of the King of the universe. However, “those who do the will of God live forever.” Jesus has given eternal life to all who believe in Him, and true belief in Jesus includes doing the will of God. In Mark 3:35, Jesus said, “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” In John 3:36, Jesus taught, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God's wrath.” The Father and the Son have commanded us to obey Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior. We will love to live with the Father and the Son forever if we have learned on earth the joy that comes from doing the will of God; otherwise, we would be miserable in heaven among holy, obedient, lovers of God. No matter what we may say we believe, God knows our actions and our real thoughts and feelings about the Father and the Son.

(1 John 2:18) Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

Next, John names some of the most misleading “worldly people” of all—“the antichrists.” You can once again feel the tenderness in John’s appeal to his readers when he calls us “children.” As an elderly apostle of Jesus Christ, perhaps the last one of the original disciples still alive, John considered his readers so close and important to him that they were like beloved children. John loved his readers as much as Jesus Christ loved him. In John 6:40, Jesus declared, “This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the *last day*.” And in John 12:48, Jesus warned, “The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the *last day* the word that I have spoken will serve as judge.” A “last day” will assuredly come when Jesus returns and raises from the dead all who believe in Him. Only in 1 John 2:18 did anyone in the New Testament write about the “last hour.” Today, we are still in a “last hour” and we need to live with the understanding that “this very hour” may be our “last hour.” Though our “last hour” may be many days from now, someday everyone will experience a “last hour” and even a “last moment in time.” Our behavior will become

consistently better, and we will become more obedient to God when we think that every hour may possibly be our last hour before we meet Jesus—a believer in Jesus will not spend their last hour or any possible last hour in worldly pursuits. Only John uses the name “antichrist,” though we understand more about such a person or spirit as we read the Bible. An “antichrist” is one who works against and in opposition to Jesus Christ and His followers. Consider all John’s uses of the name “antichrist.” In 1 John 2:22” John wrote, “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.” The antichrist is a liar who denies the truth. In 1 John 4:2-3, John wrote, “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world.” The antichrist rejects Jesus and the truth about Jesus as recorded in the Bible. And in 2 John 1:7-8, John warned, “Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist! Be on your guard, so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but may receive a full reward.” The antichrist will work to deceive Jesus’ followers and lead them away from Jesus. From the beginning of the Church, the followers of Jesus Christ have confronted antichrists. The same as John’s first readers, we too live in “the last hour” before Jesus Christ returns to make all things right.

(1 John 2:19) They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

As John described the antichrists, he recognized them as those who at one time had been in some way involved in the Church, but who had left the fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ. They may have remained active in the visible Church, but morally, spiritually, and intellectually they had departed from faith in Jesus Christ. If they remained active in the Church, then they probably remained to “educate” or mislead the true believers. John explained that these antichrists had never really belonged in the

Church, for if they had they would have never left the Church (physically or spiritually). They would have remained in the Church. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit indwell the true believer in Jesus Christ because the true believer has bowed before Jesus Christ as their Lord; they have repented of (turned from) their sins and have resolved to obey Jesus in all things with God being their Helper. An antichrist has never truly repented and placed their faith in Jesus Christ. The true believer in Jesus Christ loves the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and they know the love of God within them. In John 2:21, Jesus spoke of His human body as His temple, the temple of God. In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Paul wrote about our human body as believers in Jesus Christ: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." The true God never indwelt the one who has left the Church to become an antichrist in thought, word, and deed. By their words and actions, the antichrist makes it plain to the discerning mind that they are not followers of the Lord Jesus Christ or the Bible's teachings. They love this world and the things of this world rather than God. It is plain to the discerning spirit that they do not belong in the Church. The Bible talks repeatedly about unclean spirits, and the antichrists are indwelt by unclean spirits rather than the Holy Spirit, and their behavior demonstrates this in a variety of ways. Paul wrote of a few ways the antichrists can deceive believers. In Colossians 2:8, Paul warned believers, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ." And in 1 Timothy 4:1-2, Paul warned, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron." And in 1 John 4:1-3, John advised, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world." Today, antichrists can deceive in many ways.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How would you define or explain “world” as John uses the word?
2. How would you describe someone who loves the world?
3. How would you describe someone who has the love of the Father within them?
4. What did John say comes from the world and not from the Father?
5. Who does John say will live forever? Do you agree? Why or why not?

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