

**Monday – The Power and Influence of “the World” System**

Revelation 18

**Today’s Class Objective/s:**

Recognize the underlying, subtle, powerful forces that drive the World we live in

**Today’s Quote:**

- “I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but ... keep them from the evil.” – Jesus (John 17:15)

**Today’s Lesson:**

1. The World consists of its inhabitants who want to “build themselves up” and make a name for themselves. Behind the alluring façade of building up, many human lives are corrupted, consumed and destroyed.
  - A. What fuels the World System’s “engine”? Where does this engine drive us? (2 Pet 1:4; 1 John 2:15-17; Jam 1:14-15)
  - B. If lust was a pharmaceutical drug, how would you write the contraindications? Advertise the positives? De-emphasize the negatives?
2. There ARE portions of the World System that appear to be good and wholesome (humanitarian causes, etc.)
  - A. Who is ultimately glorified with these noble pursuits?
  - B. Discuss how these causes might distract us from serving the Lord. (Heb 12:1-2; Col 3:1-2; Luk 10:38-42)
3. Satan packages worldly values, philosophies and pursuits in a way that seems to promote honor and “progress” but undermines God’s Word and will. (Col 2:8; 2 Pet 2:18-20)
  - Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
  - Human rights movements, Equality inclusion, LGBTQ+, etc.
  - Political Alignments or Christian Nationalism (e.g. we have rights, entitlements, etc. vs. denying ourselves)
  - Many paths to “salvation” or “higher planes” of existence
  - Global peace efforts and Co-existence
  - Tolerance for all beliefs
  - A. Discuss how the above causes, philosophies, rights movements are repackaged to make them appealing. (Gen 3:4-5; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2 Tim 3:5, Mat 24:24-25)
  - B. What are the dangers in viewing the current state of the world through a humanistic lens (e.g. the problems in our society are directly linked to, say, a political party)?
4. Our enemy works to keep a deteriorating world looking “new” and inviting. Throughout history, the World System constantly seeks to define “new and improved” notions of what is good, righteous, honorable, and true.
  - A. How can we recognize the prevalence of demonic powers at work in the surrounding world? (1 John 4:3, Eph 6:12)
  - B. How can we avoid becoming numb to the World System’s impact? (Prov 30:5; Eph 6:17; Ps 119:11; Heb 4:12, 2 Tim 3:16; John 17:17; 2 Thes 2:7-10)
  - C. Compare and contrast the world’s view of truth to the truth as defined by God. (Rom 1:18, 22, 25)
  - D. It can be difficult to see the dangers of the world. How can we uphold 1 John 2:15-17?

**Tuesday – The Power and Influence of God to Make Truly New**

Ephesians 1: 19-23, Revelation 21:5

**Today's Class Objective/s:**

- Understand the main nuances of the concept of “new” in the New Testament
- Recognize that only God has the desire, will, and power to make things truly new

**Today's Quote:**

- “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory...” – Apostle Paul (Ephesians 3:20)

**Today's Lesson:**

1. The Greek New Testament uses two main words to denote the concept of “new”:
  - **Neos**- A more recent version of something; renovating or repairing an existing thing
  - **Kainos**- Something fresh and of a different nature, in contrast to that which existed before; a new kind
2. The world is flooded with self-help guides that teach us to rely on our own abilities to improve ourselves, or to discover new, untapped potential within ourselves. By contrast, God's Word is:
  - Eternal, inerrant, infallible, enabling us to connect with the One who created us (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:19-21)
  - Simple, illuminating, providing wisdom, assurance and hope (Ps 119:105, 114; Mat 7:24; Jam 3:17)
  - Immunization against distortions and falsehoods (John 17:17; 1 John 4:1-6)
  - A. Give examples of how the world tries to define its versions of “new”, “truth”, “goodness”.
  - B. Why are we drawn to Self-Help guides?
  - C. Our minds are limited. How can we distill all the “noise” around us and identify what is really important?
3. Only God has the desire and capacity to renew and revitalize us in the kainos sense. (Eph 1:18-23)
  - His Holy Spirit makes this opportunity for a new life known to all by His Holy Love Letter to man (His Word). (John 6:63; 1 Tim 2:4-6; 2 Pet 3:9)
  - The Spirit of God is mightier than our spirit and all worldly influences. (1 John 4:4)
  - He does not force His will upon us. (Deut 30:15)
  - A. Since the Holy Spirit is greater than he that is in the world, why are we sometimes tempted to rely on our own power instead of God's power?
  - B. Can anything limit God's power? (Ps 78:41)
  - C. Why is the reconciliation of man so important to God? (2 Cor 5:18-21; Eze 18:32)
  - D. If God desires good and is all-powerful, why does He allow bad things to happen?

**Wednesday – The New Self, Now**

John 3:1-9

**Today's Class Objective/s:**

- Recognize that desiring a new self by re-furbishing our old self doesn't work; we need help from above to be truly "kainos" new
- Understand how the new life can be nurtured while starving/abandoning the former life

**Today's Quote:**

- "And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles." – Jesus (Mark 2:22)

**Today's Lesson:**

1. God gives each person a reasoning intellect and freedom of choice. (Deut 30:15)
  - A. How do we tend to use these "gifts" of intellect and choice from God? (Gen 3:6; Jam 4:3)
  - B. We are asked to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. The second part of this commandment is natural to us. Then why is the first part of this commandment so difficult?
  - C. How do we develop empathy and love for others? (Rom 12:15; 1 Pet 3:8; Eph 4:32; Gal 6:2; Joh 13:34-35; Heb 13:3; Rom 15:1; Phil 2:2-4)
2. When comparing our lives with the World System's ideals or standards, most naturally desire a better quality of life. We may try to achieve this by:
  - Seeking out self-help disciplines as discussed yesterday.
  - Emulating the lives, methods, and philosophies of successful people.
3. Encountering God's truth brings us to a crossroads. (Deut 30:15-18; John 5:24) Through His Word, the Holy Spirit teaches us:
  - Each person will either inherit condemnation and eternal separation from God or inherit eternal life with Him. (Rom 2:6-8)
  - Our sins condemn us and we are unable to save ourselves. (Rom 3:23)
  - There is a way out of this impossible prison: we can be made new through repentance and faith (Rom 5:1; Mark 1:15)
    - A. If God is willing to give the gift of salvation to all, why do people find it difficult to receive it?
    - B. What exactly makes us "brand new"? What is new about our new identity? (Rom 12:1-2)
4. A new birth is required for new life in Christ, involving a "putting on" and a "putting off". (Eph 4:22-24)
  - The new life can only come if the old life is abandoned. (Gal 2:20, 5:24; Rom 6:6, 8:13)
  - The new life must be nurtured; otherwise, it can be weakened, diseased, and even die. (Deu 4:9; Col 3:10, 16)
  - The old man can revive if it is fed. (Mat 26:41; Gal 4:9, 5:16)
    - A. What brings strength to the new life? What weakens the new life?
    - B. Do you find it difficult to "let go and let God have His wonderful way" in your life? (Rom 7:22-25)

**Thursday – The Church of the New, Now**

Ephesians 4: 1-25

**Today's Class Objective/s:**

- Remind ourselves of our vocation as members of Christ's body
- Discuss ways members can help the church be more effective in the great "work of the ministry."

**Today's Quote:**

- "...all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." – Apostle Paul (Ephesians 3:21)

**Today's Lesson:**

1. The church is made up of born-again believers who have renewed hearts to serve God. (Eph 2:19-22, 1 Pe 2:4-5) They understand the ministry of God is bigger than any individual member. (Rom 12:4-5) The church is:
  - A fellowship of those who have been made (kainos) new, drawn to those of like precious faith, looking unto Christ, the Author and Finisher of that faith. (1 Pe 2:9; Heb 10:24-25, 12:1-2)
  - A "glasshouse", displaying God's love and offering the fruit of God's Holy Spirit to a watching world.
  - A. Compare and contrast the difference between a worldly organization and the body of Christ.
  - B. Compare and contrast your local congregation with the early Church described in the Bible.
2. The church of "the new" faces the opposition of "the old". (Mat 10:22; 1 Tim 3:12; Rev 2:10)
  - One of the great temptations facing the Church is the pull for its members to return to the old life. The enemy applies this pressure from both within and without the church body. (Mat 26:41; 1 Tim 6:9; 2 Tim 4:10; 2 Pet 2:18-22)
    - a) In a healthy church, each member must ward off the old man and nurture the new man.
    - b) It is ironic that the "old life" can be made to look new while the "new life" can be made to look old.
  - The church may be tempted to initiate revival and growth by relying on secular wisdom and methods. The real, deeper work of revitalizing the church comes by returning to the Word and being led by the Holy Spirit.
  - The church must guard itself against becoming exclusively focused on internal needs.
  - A. The points listed above are only a partial list of difficulties. What other challenges from an encroaching, opposing world can impact us as a church?
  - B. What is spiritual "growth" in the church?
  - C. Can anything guarantee our growth, or increase, as a church? (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)
3. The Church's Mission?
  - To obey Christ's commands and keep itself unspotted from the world. (Eph 5:27; Jam 1:27)
  - To shine the light of hope in Christ as a living witness for the Lord. (Act 1:8, 13:47)
  - To do the "work of the ministry" to which each must contribute. (Ephesians 4:12)
  - To "go forth" into the corrupt world to "seek and to save that which is lost". (Mat 28:18-20)
  - A. Suggest some reasonable, corrective courses of action for the church to draw closer to the "measure of the stature of the fulness" of Christ's image.
  - B. Which of these ideas fall into the "neos" category and which into the "kainos" category?
  - C. What is the right balance between the church being inwardly focused vs. outwardly focused? Are there seasons of focused attention?

**Friday – The New Eternity Beyond**

Revelation 21: 1-8

**Today's Class Objective/s:**

- Get motivated about the kainos new aspects of the eternal kingdom
- Remind ourselves that oneness with God is the ultimate aim of our vocation here on earth

**Today's Quote:**

- “Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.” – Isaiah 60:20

**Today's Lesson:**

1. We may often think of heaven and eternal life as a kind of “spiritual retirement plan”, but it is more than that.
  - A heavenly “putting off” of old things (Revelation 21:1, 4) that will no longer be:
    - a) This current earth and heaven, tears, sorrow, crying, pain, crime, lies, persecutions
    - b) Death, evil, curse, sun, moon, night
  - A heavenly “putting on” of new things that will be forever:
    - a) A new body, a new name, a new Heaven and Earth
    - b) A new song, hidden manna, a new kind of light
  - A New Jerusalem, where:
    - a) The city is four-square, whose L x W x H = 12,000 furlongs cubed
    - b) The jasper wall is thick, with 12 pearly gates, and the city and streets are pure gold (3:12, 21:2)
    - c) The throne of God is the centerpiece, from which a pure crystal river flows
    - d) The Fountain of Water of Life flows freely, and the Tree of Life yields monthly fruit and leaves for healing
  - A. If “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man” about the heavenly realm (Is 64:4), then what exactly do the descriptions of the new heaven and eternal life tell us?
  - B. Is the description of eternal life enough of a motivation (in itself) to become a child of God?
2. The Father will take pleasure in rewarding His faithful children.
  - A. What rewards will God the Father give to Overcomers? (Rev 2, 3)
  - B. Is eternal life in the future?
  - C. What happens to our identity when we enter eternal life? Does it also become new?
  - D. Why do God's promises seem to be so distant at times? (where is the promise of His coming? 2 Pet 3:3-4)
3. Ultimately, the reason for eternal life is experiencing oneness with God (John 17:3, 22-24) Sin and hindrances that separate us from God are removed forever!
  - A. Will there be anything we miss in the former life?
  - B. How can we “stamp eternity” on our eyeballs?