

PASSING AWAY

“Passing away”, as you know, is a euphemism for death. Rather than say someone “died” it sounds nicer to say they “passed away”. There is a sense, however in which this is not true for the child of God.

Please consider: **“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. 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 and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.” (1 Jn. 2:15-17).**

Several things are obvious from this passage of Scripture.

- We are not to love the world or anything in it.
- If we love the world the love of the Father is not in us.
- The world is the source of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
- **THE WORLD AND ITS DESIRES PASS AWAY BUT WHOEVER DOES THE WILL OF GOD LIVES FOREVER!**
- There is obviously a difference between the “world” and “whoever does the will of God”.
- The world and its desires will pass away, but those who do the will of God won’t!

MOTIVATIONS TO SIN

Los Angeles homicide detective J. Warner Wallace has an excellent track record in convicting criminals. His successful prosecutions have been featured on *Dateline* (NBC) and *North Mission Road* (truTV), Etc. As a founding member of the Torrance Police Department Cold-Case Homicide Unit, Wallace earned the Sustained Superiority Award from the South Bay Police and Fire Medal of Valor committee. He also won the 2015 California Peace Officer Association COPSWEST Award for best solved cold case.

Although Wallace was once an atheist, he dared to examine the claims of Christ using the same techniques and skills he used to solve crimes as a homicide detective. The evidence he discovered convinced him to become a Christian. He is now a best selling author, and a popular lecturer defending the Christian faith.

Wallace insists that there are only three motivations for murder. They are:

- Financial greed.
- Sexual – or relational – lust.
- Pursuit of power.

This, of course, is precisely what John by inspiration described as the “world”

- The lust of the flesh. (sexual or relational lust)
- The lust of the eyes. (Financial greed)
- The pride of life. (Pursuit of power).

These three were also all embodied in the forbidden fruit in Eden (Gen. 3:6).

- It was “Good for food”.

- Pleasant to the eyes.
- Desirable for gaining wisdom.

REMEMBER! THESE THREE MOTIVATIONS ENCAPSULATE “THE WORLD”. PLEASE ALSO REMEMBER THAT **THE WORLD AND ITS DESIRES PASS AWAY BUT WHOEVER DOES THE WILL OF GOD LIVES FOREVER!**

JESUS AND “THE WORLD”

Jesus was in the world but not of the world. He told Pilate: **“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.” (Jn. 18:36).**

IT CANNOT BE EMPHASIZED TOO STRONGLY THAT JESUS NEVER APPEALED TO THE “WORLD” AS AN INCENTIVE FOR ANYONE TO FOLLOW HIM! NO ONE FOLLOWS JESUS FOR GREED, SEX, OR PRIDE!

Please consider how the life of Jesus is not of this world:

- Jesus divested Himself of Deity and condescend to become a man (Phil. 2:5-11).
- He did not come with riches and power but was born in poverty in a stable (Lk. 2:1-20).
- He did not seek for fame or fortune but made His living as a lowly carpenter (Mk. 6:3).
- When a man wanted to follow Him, Jesus warned: **“Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head” (Lk. 9:58).**
- Jesus promised no one money, sex, or power. He did not even promise a life of ease and luxury. Quite to the contrary, He said: **“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk. 9:23).**
- Consequently, **“He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem” (Is. 53:2,3).**

JESUS AND THINGS INVISIBLE

- Everything, as you know, was made by Jesus. **“Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made” (Jn. 1:3).**
- God is invisible, and some of the things Jesus created are also invisible. **“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (Col. 1:15-17).**
- The things we see are temporal. As our text indicates, they will “pass away”. Eternal things are invisible and do not “pass away”. Note: **“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18).**
- When Jesus comes again the things we “see” will “pass away”. Please consider: **“But when the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare” (2 Pet. 3:10).**

- We don't have to wait for the Second Coming of Christ to know that physical things are temporary. Even today our clothes wear out and our bodies grow old. Even today our houses deteriorate and mechanical things wear out and quit working. Remember! The things we see are temporal!
- The devil tempted Jesus by "showing Him" all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus could "see" these kingdoms in their splendor (Lk. 4:5-7). Today, however, everyone of those kingdoms that Jesus could "see" has already disappeared into the dust bin of history!
- Remember! **"Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Heb. 11:1).**

THE "SEEN" AND THE "UNSEEN"

Jewish worship focused on physical things that could be seen. Christianity focused on spiritual realities that could not be seen by human eyes. Please note this contrast between Jewish worship and Christian worship in the Hebrew letter.

The Hebrew letter describes Jewish worship as physical. Note that it involves physical things you could see, hear and feel. **"You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." (Heb. 12:18-21).**

Now note the contrast with Christianity: **"But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel." (Heb. 12:22-24).** Note that Christianity goes beyond what we can experience with our five senses.

There is a sense in which you must be born again in order to see the Kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3).

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

- Jesus, as you know, was on the cross for six hours. It was the third hour of the day when they crucified Him (Mk. 15:25). He died at about the ninth hour (Matt. 27:46).
- Two robbers were also crucified with Him (Matt. 27:38).
- Initially, both robbers "heaped insults on Him". (Matt. 27:44)
- Later, one robber changed his mind. The Gospels record seven sayings of Jesus while He was on the cross. It is quite possible, however, that Jesus said other things that are not recorded. Perhaps this teaching led one of the robbers to repent. Note: **"One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your**

kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” (Lk. 23:39-43).

This is absolutely remarkable. Jesus had been teaching His disciples for three years yet not one of them understood the true nature of His Kingdom. This criminal saw it in less than six hours.

- When Jesus was arrested “all the disciples deserted Him and fled” (Matt. 26:56).
- Only John was present at the cross (Jn. 19:26,27).
- Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (Jn. 19:38-42). Not one of the twelve was there to help.
- When Mary Magdalene and the other women told the apostles that Jesus had risen from the dead “they did not believe the women because their words seemed to them like nonsense” (Lk. 24:9-11).
- Yet this ungodly criminal understood the nature of Christ’s Kingdom in only a few hours.
- Their hopes of the Kingdom had been shattered, but his hopes were just being born.
- They thought that Jesus had failed to establish His Kingdom, but the thief understood that He had not failed at all but was just coming into His Kingdom! He said: **“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom”**.
- Jesus knows our thoughts. He understands what is in a man (Jn. 2:25). That’s why He said to the thief: **“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” (Lk. 23:43)**

Remember! **The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.**” The thief on the cross was able to “see” this, do you “see” it?

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