

WHICH WORLD ARE YOU LIVING IN?

Which world?

There is only one world: this world! The vastness of our universe staggers the mind. Who needs to think about other worlds?

When the atheist considers his own approaching death, he cannot be certain that Nothingness will swallow him when he expires. He cannot be certain that he won't find himself in another world.

What the atheist missed

We live in a world we can see and measure and weigh. Our technology enables us to explore deep into space. ***What we cannot measure or observe by means of technology is the mysterious connection between our physical universe and the realm of good and evil.***

The atheist overlooks the plausibility of a world where good and evil have consequences. Such a world is beyond the reach of our senses, beyond the reach of technology. But if a world where good and evil are judged, does not exist, our universe is empty of meaning. While science and technology are incapable of discerning good and evil, who can deny that we have to deal with good and evil every moment of our lives?

The prophets have seen what the atheist missed.

From earliest times, prophets and holy men and women have pointed to a world where we reap the consequences of our actions. They speak of a world where good and evil are exposed to blinding light.

Four millennia ago the father of the Hebrew tribe spoke with eloquence about this invisible world. He also described a terrifyingly holy Being who rules, not only our universe, but that other world which we cannot see, where good and evil have consequences. Abraham claimed that this holy Being who sustains our universe,

actually enters this world of time and space, and speaks! Abraham perceived the words of this Being burning like a flaming sword, dividing good from evil, warning us to pursue the good.

The Hebrew descendants of Abraham accepted the words of God as the Law which defines good and evil. They trusted the words of God as Testimony to what is good.

*The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart,
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.
The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.*
Psalm 19

The Hebrews believed that God was watching over them with mysterious mercy. They were also convinced that God was holding them accountable for their actions. When they walked in God's light, doors opened for them. When they rejected his light, they stumbled into confusion.

The Hebrews believed that they were under a call from God to be a "light to the Gentiles." a beacon of truth in a floundering world. But as the centuries passed, their light seemed to falter.

Then, at a time when the Hebrews were reduced to obscurity and disdain among the nations, a prophet appeared in the villages of Galilee. This prophet spoke with such power that no one could remain indifferent to his words.

People were suddenly healed by the touch of the prophet's hands. Blind eyes opened, lepers and the lame were restored. Quietly, and without fanfare the prophet traveled through Jewish villages and taught in their synagogues. To the chagrin of religious officialdom, the prophet entered the Temple in Jerusalem and taught the crowds that gathered to drink in his words.

The focus of Jesus' message was a new world, where good overcomes evil, where light conquers darkness, where it's possible to get a new start. Jesus called this new world the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God. He proclaimed that this Kingdom has arrived to prepare the earth for its Day of Accounting.

“Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!”

When Jesus made his appearance at the Jordan River, he was introduced to the crowds by a man who looked like Elijah himself, as he cried,

“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Those words of John the Baptist were understood only by heaven. But the day came when John's words were fulfilled.

The crisis began when this world could no longer tolerate Jesus' soul-searching words. The religious authorities arranged for his execution, and saw it through.

What these religious officials did not realize was that the execution of Jesus caused a violent earthquake in this world and the world beyond. When the earthquake was over, Jesus stepped out of his tomb as the Firstborn of the New Creation. Suddenly, the invisible world opened its door to all who sought to be free from the evil in their hearts. That obscure crucifixion, in a despised corner of the world became the doorway to the Kingdom of God, where sin-sick souls can have a new start.

When we hear the risen Lord say, “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden,” he's inviting us to enter his world. When he says, “Get under my yoke and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,” he's showing us the way, *the only way*, to enter God's World.

Good and Evil before the Throne

"The kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; when it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad. So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous.

Matthew 13

The Kingdom of God is now at work, quietly gathering human souls into its net. The net itself is made up of people who have chosen to live under their Messiah King, to walk in the light of God.

Jesus proclaims that a day is coming when the new world, God's Kingdom will swallow up our present world of sadness and suffering, lies and death. On that Day all evil will be burned away from this troubled earth and there will be awesome peace for those who remain.

***For the earth will be filled
with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
as the waters cover the sea.***

Habakkuk 2

Until that day we are given a choice as to which world we wish to live in: our world, or God's World.

Of course, as long as we are in these bodies, we cannot escape the material universe. Our very bodies are part of it. Yet it is possible, even while we walk this earth, to live in God's World, where good overcomes evil, where light conquers darkness.

So which world am I living in?

The world where my heart dwells, that's the world I'm living in. If my heart is focused on God, I'm living in God's world. If my heart is focused on me, this world is my dwelling place.

If I love myself with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and see my neighbor as someone to exploit, I'm living in this world.

If I love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and my neighbor as myself, I'm living in God's world.

If we're not sure which world I'm living in, Jesus gives us a simple test.

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Matthew 6

"No one can serve two masters."

I cannot serve God and money at the same time.

I cannot serve God and my ego at the same time.

I cannot serve God and any other idol at the same time.

If my heart is attached to anything except to God, I'm living in the world which nourishes me with anxiety, vanity, and deceit.

If my heart is attached to God, I'm living in his Kingdom, which nourishes me with power to walk in God's light.

If my heart is a branch, abiding in the Vine of the Risen Lord, I'm living in God's world. When I am abiding in the Vine, I cannot help but love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength.

What does it mean to love God?

To love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength means three things:

To be free from self-obsession and joyfully focused on God in my daily life.

To be free from bondage to the Lie, joyfully ruled by the integrity of heaven in my daily life.

To be free from the curse of death, **joyfully** living in the power of the Lord's resurrection in my daily life.

When I live a life free from self-idolatry, deceit, and the curse of death, I'm in God's World, now and forever.

God help us all to find our way into His World!