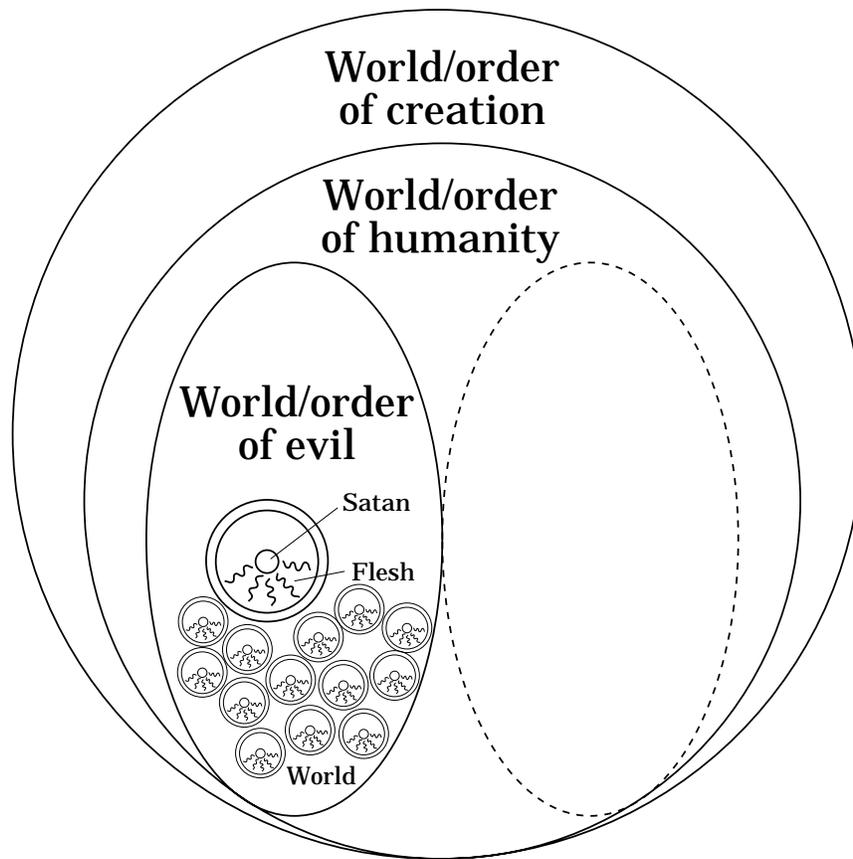


## THE WORLD

- I. Greek words for "world" used in New Testament
  - A. Greek word *kosmos*
    1. Root word *komeo* means "to take care of"
    2. Originally meant "order" or "arrangement"
    3. Later came to mean "world"
      - a. Greeks considered the physical world to be "ordered" and "arranged"
      - b. This later became basis of the "cosmological" argument for God's existence
        - (1) created order demands a Creator
        - (2) design demands a Designer
    4. Different meanings of "world" used in New Testament
      - a. world/order of creation
      - b. world/order of humanity
      - c. world/order of evil
  - B. Greek word *oikoumene*
    1. Root word *oikeo* means "to dwell"
    2. Meaning in New Testament: "human inhabitants of the world"
      - a. thus very similar to "world/order of humanity"
      - b. note parallel usage in Matt. 4:8 and Lk. 4:5
- II. Representative Biblical references to different usages of "world"
  - A. World/order of creation
    1. Universe  
Matt. 13:35 - "the foundation of the world" (cf. Matt. 25:34; Lk. 11:50; Jn. 17:24; Eph. 1:4; Heb. 4:3; 9:26; I Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8; 17:8)  
Acts 17:24 - "the God who made the world and all things in it"  
Rom. 1:20 - "since the creation of the world..."
    2. Earth, geographical location or place  
Matt. 24:21 - "since the beginning of the world"  
Jn. 1:10 - "the world was made through Him"
    3. Material objects  
Matt. 16:26 - "if he shall gain the whole world" (cf. Mk. 8:36; Lk 9:25)
  - B. World/order of humanity
    1. Mankind in general  
Jn. 3:16 - "God so loved the world that He gave His Son..."  
Jn. 4:42 - "the Savior of the world"  
I Tim. 1:15 - "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"  
Matt. 24:14 - "gospel preached in whole world" (*oikoumene*)
    2. General public  
Jn. 7:4 - "show Yourself to the world"  
Jn. 12:19 - "look, the world has gone after Him"  
Jn. 18:20 - "I have spoken openly to the world"  
Acts 17:6 - "these men have upset the world" (*oikoumene*)
  - C. World/order of evil
    1. Unregenerate mankind; mankind as affected by the Fall  
Jn. 1:29 - "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"  
Jn. 16:8 - "He (H.S.) will convict the world concerning sin"  
Jn. 17:9 - "I do not ask on behalf of the world"  
II Cor. 5:19 - "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself"

2. World-system opposed to God; activity of mankind affected by Fall  
 I Cor. 1:20,21 - "the wisdom of the world"  
 Gal. 6:14 - "the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world"  
 Col. 2:8 - "elementary principles of the world"  
 James 4:4 - "friendship with the world is hostility toward God"  
 I Jn. 2:15 - "do not love the world..."
3. Dominion of the devil; Satan's activity in mankind affected by Fall  
 Jn. 12:31 - "prince of this world cast out" (cf. Jn. 14:30; 16:11)  
 I Cor. 2:12 - "the spirit of the world"  
 I Jn. 4:4 - "he that is in the world"

III. Illustration of Biblical usages of "world"



IV. Our perspective of and attitude toward the "world"

- A. Difficulty of identifying what concept/context of "world" being referred to  
 John 16:28  
 John 17:11,14,15,16,18  
 John 18:36  
 I Cor. 5:10  
 I John 2:15,16
- B. The dangers of overemphases and misemphases of concepts of "world"
  1. Overemphasis of "world/order of evil"
    - a. dualism - spiritual = good; physical, material = evil
    - b. dichotomies - sacred/secular; spiritual/worldly
    - c. exploitation, desecration, pollution, abuse of created natural resources. If "world" is evil and all is going to 'imminently' perish anyway, then why be concerned about natural world?

- d. lack of concern for social and humanitarian endeavors. If the "world" is evil and going to hell, why "polish brass on a sinking ship"? (JVM); "it's a total loss; write it off"
- e. no hope for this world - pessimism, despair
- f. otherworldliness, mysticism, preoccupation with 'interior life', spiritualizing
- g. futurism - world will be overcome in the future.
- 2. Overemphasis on "world/order of humanity and creation."
  - a. environmentalism - deify and worship created world
  - b. materialism - preoccupation with material things
  - c. humanism - man is the chief end of things
  - d. adaptation to the ways of the "world of evil"
    - (1) compromise, appeasement, collaboration, justification
    - (2) enculturation, civil religion, nationalism, patriotism
    - (3) acceptance and acquiescence to pluralism
  - e. attempts to Christianize human society by moral reform
    - (1) implementation of values, virtues, ethics, morals, principles, precepts, God's laws
    - (2) activism of political "right," "Moral majority"
  - f. participation in the power-plays and violent conflicts of the world-system
- C. Varying theological interpretations developed on basis of emphases of concept/context of "world"
  - 1. Premillennial Dispensationalism/Fundamentalism tends to emphasize "world of evil"
  - 2. Postmillennial Theonomy and Reconstructionism tends to emphasize "world of humanity"
- D. To what extent should a Christian be involved in the "world"?
  - 1. Disengagement, detachment
    - a. separatism - cf. I Cor. 6:17
    - b. aliens and strangers - I Pet. 2:11
    - c. called out - *ecclesia*
    - d. escapism, evasion, withdrawal
    - e. marginalization, fringe group, ghetto, enclave, closed group, bombshelters
    - f. iconoclastic - repudiation, rejection, attack
    - g. avoidance of living out Christianity in "world" is a denial of the incarnation
  - 2. Engagement, involvement
    - a. awareness, discernment, evaluation, questioning, challenging, exposing the ways of the "world of evil"
    - b. concern, compassion, love for plight of man - poverty, hunger, disease, abuse - human rights, civil rights, spiritual condition
    - c. If Christianity can have no effect on the "world," then it is just "pie in the sky, bye and bye"
    - d. we are called to serve, minister, witness
    - e. sent into the world - Jn. 17:18
    - f. salt of the earth - Matt. 5:13
    - g. light of the world - Matt. 5:14
    - h. leaven - Matt. 13:33; Lk. 13:21
    - i. "in the world, but not of the world" - Jn. 17:11,14
    - j. social and political involvement?
    - k. attempts to legislate morality?
    - l. live out the life of Jesus Christ to the glory of God