



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Your Desires and Your Destiny (1 John 2:15-17)

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There's an Italian proverb that says, "Once the game is over, the king and the pawn go back into the same box." Regardless of our status in this life, the game will be over for all of us at some point. Today, we'll see some important teaching that outlines what will happen after each of us pass from earth. Our lives on earth will determine our destinies at that point.

*Maybe you've heard about the gravestone in Britain that said:
Pause my friend, as you walk by
As you are now, so once was I
As I am now so you will be
Prepare my friend, to follow me.*

*After reading this, an unidentified mourner left this note:
To follow you is not my intent
Until I know which way you went!*

I. DIRE ADMONISHMENT (2:15)

1 John 2:15 - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

If you remember, earlier in this chapter John addressed the importance of what we are to love. Namely, in 1 John 2:5, he said that if we obey the commands of God, we show we love Him (or His "love is perfected in us"). Then in 1 John 2:10, he said we are to love other believers ("whoever loves his brother abides in the light"). John returns now with a stern warning about what not to love.

Warnings are crucial to our well-being. We give them to our children well into adulthood, because of our experience with pain and concern for them that they not head down the wrong path. I once read the story of a man who didn't heed a crucial warning.

On September 21, 1938, a strong storm was headed for the East Coast. A certain man on Long Island had bought a barometer a few days earlier. It arrived the morning of September 21, and he was annoyed to find the needle pointed below 29, where the dial read 'Hurricanes and Tornadoes.' He shook it and banged it against the wall; the needle wouldn't budge. He angrily repacked it, drove to the post office, and mailed it back. While he was gone, his house blew away.

Warnings are for our good. God gives us a serious warning here not to love the world. The word here for "world" doesn't refer to nature around us, but rather to the organized system of the world, how it thinks and what its priorities are.

Jesus made this distinction with his disciples as well. Surely as John wrote this letter, the words of Christ were ringing his mind:

John 15: 18-20 - If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

So let's take this admonishment to heart. The world's ways are contrary to God and His thoughts. This is why reading, meditating on and memorizing Scripture are so vital to living with love pointed in the right direction. We all should evaluate this for evidence of what we really love, not what we say we love.

James 4:4 - Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

EITHER ONE IS A GENUINE CHRISTIAN MARKED BY LOVE AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD, OR ONE IS A NON-CHRISTIAN IN REBELLION AGAINST GOD. (John MacArthur)

II. DESTRUCTIVE AFFECTIONS (2:16)

1 John 2:16 - For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

John expands his thoughts from the previous verse by defining more closely the elements that make up the world system controlled by Satan. John refers to three dangerous categories, so let's take them one at a time.

The first description of the worldly mindset is the **lust of the flesh**. This is a wide definition that points us back to the things that are

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natural to our earthly nature. Paul helps here by unpacking the term even further with specific sins.

Galatians 5:19-21 - Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Can these sins be forgiven? Of course, but Paul is saying that people who desire and practice these sins rather than having a desire for God will not be forgiven since no confession, repentance or resulting changed life has taken place.

John's second category is the **lust of the eyes**. For something to be wrong and destructive, it doesn't necessarily have to be repulsive in appearance. In fact, Satan takes pains to make temptations to sin look very good. The first sin, interestingly, is described that way.

Genesis 3:6 - So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Another well-known temptation that began with the eyes is the account of David accidentally seeing Bathsheba, which eventually led to adultery, murder and the loss of a child.

2 Samuel 11:2 - It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful.

The enemy of our souls will not waste time luring us from the right choices with things that we are indifferent to or are disgusting to us. He will make it look desirable and appealing, which is why John sounds an alarm not to love what is contrary to God's ways, even if it looks good on the surface.

Lastly, John uses the phrase **pride of life**. This refers to a worldview that exalts itself over God. Basically anytime we sin we are saying that we know better than God, but there is a particular arrogant attitude that leads our hearts astray from yielding our allegiance in obedience to God and what He has revealed in His Word.

1 Peter 5:5 - Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

III. DESTINY'S ASSURANCE (2:17)

1 John 2:17 - And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

John's warning not to love the world is crucial not just because of what sin is (an affront to a righteous and loving God) but for where it leads (away from God and ultimately to eternal death apart from God.) This is shown in other passages including this one from Paul.

Romans 8:20-22 - For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

There is a great transformation coming to the earth someday, but only after Satan has been removed. Until then, things will continue to deteriorate. As much as we want to believe that things are progressing and getting better in the world, they aren't. All the evidence is to the contrary. John says the world is passing away. For those who buy into the world's system and priorities, they are choosing to love a temporary existence rather than one that will last forever.

I'm told there is a courthouse in Ohio that stands in a unique location. Raindrops that fall on the north side of the building go into Lake Ontario and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, while those falling on the south side go into the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. Just a gentle puff of wind can determine the destiny of millions of raindrops. The destiny of those raindrops will eventually be the difference of more than 2,000 miles, even though they land on the same roof.

During this life, we're all on the same planet, but the desires we have will determine our destiny – one that ends in punishment apart from God or abiding with Him forever. Will you choose temporary gain with eternal loss or permanent gain with eternal blessing? There is no third option.