

THE EPISTLE OF FIRST JOHN

"The Essence of Separation"

1 John 2:15-17

Introduction

1. To get at the core of anything is really a project well worth undertaking. To understand the basic concepts in the idea of moral separation is absolutely necessary for the born again believer.

2. Let it be stated in no veiled terms: the very kernel of moral separation is discernable by a careful reading of the Word of God. Make no mistake about it—you can know the will of God in this debated arena of truth.

3. Take time in this study to see the argument of the apostle John and you will discover that he offers two items which clarify the entire situation:

1. PRESENTED. v. 15.

A general statement of the entire idea of separation is given by the apostle. It is:

a. Global "love not the world."

It is clear from a cursory study of the Bible that the term used for "world" here is one which is related to the system which the Evil One, Satan, rules. Read Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:2., etc. Hence, the crux of the matter lies with one's feelings and attitudes about a system which is opposed to the Lord and His divine purpose for redeemed people!

b. Total "neither the things that are in the world."

Yes, this is debated and thousands of words about what the term extrapolated "things" actually means. It is obvious

and needs no debate. Anything which is in association with the system opposed to the Lord has no place with a redeemed life! The widest possible application is therefore determined for separation!

2. SUPPORTED vv. 15-17

Whether one accepts the verses in this section as amplifications of verse 15 or not, it is certain that here is a clear and definitive word which all can understand and on which everyone may lean for operative principles.

a. Affectionately.

The key thought here is "love." By the use of the verb, the apostle points to a discriminating love. Love controls one's relationship to the world and the Father! To have the one is to exclude the other. How then shall we try to establish a middle ground?!!

b. Relatively.

Relative to three major areas of human behaviour, God has laid down definite instructions. Here they are:

1) That which absorbs the mind. This is what is meant by "lust of the flesh." It is that which breaks through the limitations and correct evaluation of things.

2) That which absorbs the senses. This is that which relates to aesthetics. The world of art, culture, fashion, and dress—all for their own sake.

3) That which absorbs the abilities. This is what includes subtle arrogance of knowledge, conceit of wisdom, pride

of possession, and vainglory of success. It all relates to pretentious ostentation. How this cuts at the quick of self!

c. Temporally.

In a summary fashion, John notes that these matters are related to time. Mark his words:-

1) Ephemerality of the world. To hold on to something which is in process of passing out of the picture is indeed folly. The present tense of the verb shows this to be true about the world and everything classified with it as "lust."

2) Eternality of the Lord. The one who practices the will of God and separates himself unto the Lord has an extended and protracted situation unto eternity! The prudence of choosing the Lord is without any contradiction.

Conclusion

To the born again believer the issue is clear. He has been saved from a system with which he is not to be linked any further. This is not a polemic, but a statement of explanation for those who really want to know the blessed and sweet will of the Lord. For one who is not saved, let us remark that here is the answer which you have been looking for: what does God do with a system which is entirely inconsistent with His purposes? How does a person who gets saved deal with it? Turn from your path of following something which only will end in transient horror. Purse with purpose that which extends itself unto eternity. Amen.