

Text: John 1:9-13
Title: "The World"
Time: 9/3/2023
Place: NBBC

Introduction: We have begun our study together of a book of the Bible called *The Gospel of John*. *Gospel* means *good news*. Everywhere in the New Testament, *gospel* is singular. There is only one gospel, only one saving good-news message, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scripture (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

We first find the word *gospel* in the plural in Justin Martyr's second century *First Apology*. Justin was born around the time the Apostle John died. He established a school in Rome, where after a heated debate with a pagan philosopher, he was reported to the authorities and executed for his faith.

Commenting on The Lord's Table, Justin wrote: "For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them" (66.1). And so, by the middle of the second century, some fifty years or so after John's death, the books of the Bible – *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John* – were being called *Gospels*. All our Greek manuscripts containing these books call them *The Gospel According to _____*, including *The Gospel According to John*.

While all four Gospels declare the same good news about salvation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, we have noticed that John's Gospel, likely the last one written, supplements the other three with some unique features and emphases. Some of these, which we have noted already, include truth and witness, light and glory, eternal life and saving belief, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and the importance of our love for one another.

This morning we have come to one last major unique emphasis of the Gospel of John, the world. The Greek word John uses to refer to the world is *kosmos*. We get our word *cosmology* from this word. John uses the term 78 times in his Gospel and another 23 times in the five chapters of his First Epistle, 1 John. Together, those usages total 56% of the entire usage count of the whole New Testament (in just 2 of the 27 books).

For our purposes this morning, I would like to organize those 78 usages into three simple categories as we study together what the Lord wants us to know from John's Gospel about the world. First, Jesus is the Creator of an inhabited world. Second, Jesus is the Savior of a sinful world. And finally, and tragically, Jesus is the King of a rejecting world.

I. Jesus is the Creator of an inhabited world (v. 10, "the world was made by Him"; see also v. 3).

Illustration: John's word for *world*, *kosmos*, is also the word from which we get our term *cosmetics*. It is a term that refers to *something well-ordered*, just like a lady uses cosmetics to put in order what may be out of order when she looks into the mirror. Elsewhere in our New Testaments, the word refers to the well-ordered apparel of a Christian lady (1 Tim. 2:9) and the well-ordered life of the qualified pastor (1 Tim. 3:2).

The related verb means *to put in order* or *to adorn*. It is used for sweeping a room (Matt. 12:24, Luke 11:25), trimming a lamp (Matt. 25:7), and decorating a grave (Matt. 23:29), a temple (Luke 21:7), and even the doctrine of God with a life of good works (Tit. 2:10). For John and the rest of Scripture, when God made the world, the cosmos, He made something well-ordered and beautiful, not something chaotic and random.

Illustration: In August of last year, Eric Lerner, the President and Chief Scientist of LPPFusion, a company that is working for NASA on building nuclear fusion generators that do not

produce nuclear waste, published an article he titled, “The Big Bang Did Not Happen: What do the JWST images really show?” JWTS stands for the newly launched James Webb Space Telescope.

The article said in part: “Just as there must be no galaxies older than the Big Bang, if the Big Bang hypothesis were valid, so theorists expected that as the JWST looked out further in space and back in time, there would be fewer and fewer galaxies and eventually none—a Dark Age in the cosmos. But a paper to be published in *Nature* demonstrates that galaxies as massive as the Milky Way are common even a few hundred million years after the hypothesized Bang. The authors state that the new images show that there are at least 100,000 times as many galaxies as theorists predicted at redshifts more than 10. There is no way that so many large galaxies can be generated in so little time, so again-- no Big Bang” [<https://iai.tv/articles/the-big-bang-didnt-happen-auid-2215>].

Application: Big Bang theorists, of course, expected to look back in time and find the chaos that results from an unimaginably massive first explosion. As they look back, they thought they would see less and less order, fewer and fewer galaxies, which are well-ordered and formed. Biblically, the universe is not the result of a chaotic bang, but rather the well-ordered creation of Jesus Christ. “The world was made by Him” says our text, and John’s Gospel repeats the truth of creation.

The blind man, who was healed by the Creator of his eyes, told the skeptical Pharisees of his day: “Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind” (9:32). Modern science only recently figured out that the universe began, what the blind man knew here.

And before the world began, its Creator, God’s Son, enjoyed glory and love with His Father. Jesus prayed, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory

which I had with thee before the world was" (17:5). "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (17:24).

Illustration: On Thursday I spoke with a man who seemed to know little about this glory and this love of our Creator. He said he had put religion behind him years ago and had become a man who believed in science only now. Undoubtedly at that time, his rejection of our Creator meant adoption of big bang cosmology. And now, a lie that helped destroy his faith is being exposed. In the words of today's science: "The Big Bang Did Not Happen." We will never have to say this about what John says here: "The world was made by Him" (v. 10).

So, what does it mean for us this morning that my new friend is wrong, that we have a Creator and are not the product of billions of years of a massive explosion's random chaos and natural processes? The answer boils down to one word in verse 11 - *own*. As creatures of our Creator, we have an Owner. We are His own. He made us, so He owns us. But like my new friend, by nature we sinners seek to disown this Owner, which brings us to our next point from John about the world.

II. Jesus is the Savior of a sinful world (vv. 9, 12-13).

Application: This is the theme that caused John's Gospel to be called *good news*. John the Baptist summarizes the news well in verse 29. Jesus, as God's Lamb, was sacrificed on the cross of Calvary bearing the world's sins and taking them away.

Jesus told Nicodemus the news: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (3:16-17).

The Samaritan woman's neighbors told her of their faith in the good news she had shared with them: "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world" (4:42).

The good news says that Jesus is the world's Bread of Life: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (6:51).

And like the good news of our passage says (v. 9), He is the saving Light of the world: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (8:12).

And so, we sinful worldlings have a decision to make about Jesus, the Savior of our sinful world. Will we receive Him as our Savior? Will we believe on Him to save us from our sin? Will we act on the promise of verse 12: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on His name"?

To the degree we are tempted to answer, "No, I will not believe," we have succumbed to the destructive influence of this world. Jesus warns about this influence: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (12:25). We have to choose between the life we have lived in the world as an unbeliever, and a new life of salvation that will be difficult in this world but is also eternal in its promised reward. That is the choice. Which will we love? How have we chosen? Tragically, John's Gospel teaches that many in the world make the wrong choice.

III. Jesus is the King of a rejecting world (vv. 10b, 11b).

Illustration: I came across a road sign on Thursday that displayed prominently the colors of the LGBTQ+ political agenda, along with other symbols, under the claim, "Hate has no home in New Boston." New Boston is my home, and I do not believe that anyone with heterosexual anatomy is a homosexual, nor that anyone with male anatomy is female, nor that anyone with female anatomy is male. At one level, it is obvious science, a little like my unwillingness to believe that the Honda CRV I drive is really a bicycle, or that my dog is a cat, or that $2+2=5$, as George Orwell has put it.

More importantly, our church believes what it does about human sexuality because we believe in the well-ordered universe of our Creator, which includes His creation of human sexuality (Gen. 1:27-28, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.'" And then verse 31 assures us, "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.").

Application: My neighbor's sign says that there is no home in my hometown for what the Bible teaches about homosexuality and transgenderism. I think this neighbor means well. He simply wants to stand against hatred of other people, and we certainly agree on that.

But a second sign stands next to this one with the verse, "Love your neighbor as yourself." That verse comes from the Book of Leviticus. Jesus quotes it as the second greatest commandment of all Scripture, showing how highly Jesus regarded the Book of Leviticus. That same Book of Leviticus tells us that homosexual acts are an abomination before the Lord, meaning He hates them as much or more than our other sins (Lev. 18:22). These acts are the opposite of loving your neighbor as yourself according to the Book Jesus quotes about that love. The sign disallows the hatred for our sin, which God wants us to have.

When a sign says that New Boston is no home for hatred of our homosexual sin, it is basically telling us what these verses tell us about the world in which New Boston exists. The world is no home for the true Jesus Christ of the Bible or His true followers. Most of the Apostle John's references to the world in his Gospel and his Epistles are dedicated to this truth. Jesus is the King of a world that rejects Him.

In John 3:19, Jesus told Nicodemus, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

In John 7:7, Jesus explained to His unbelieving brothers, "The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."

In John 15:18-19, Jesus assured His disciples, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you";

and in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Finally in John 17:14-16, Jesus prayed to His Father, "I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." The *evil* is Satan, whom Jesus called *the prince of the world* (12:31, 14:30, 16:11).

Conclusion: How may we face this prince of the world, which says New Boston is not our home? First, understand that they have a point. This world is not our home. We believers are subjects of Jesus's kingdom, and Jesus told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (18:36).

But did you notice that Jesus said specifically, “But now”? That means *presently* or *for the time being*. On the island of Patmos, Jesus would explain to John why he told Pilate “But for now”: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11:15). New Boston may be no home for my Lord’s hatred of sin for now, but soon it will be.

And in the light of the truth of that promise, Jesus emboldens us with a final word of assurance as the One who has sent us into the world to minister His truth in the face of its hateful and destructive lies: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). “Do not be afraid” says the Creator of the world, the Savior of the world, and the coming King of the world.

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching