



Living in the good of
what we believe:
practical pointers from
James

Alan Cottenden, Christ Church Bedford, Jan/Feb 2021



Session 6:
In the world but
not of the world

Living in the good of what we believe:
practical pointers from James



James: New life is for new living

“Do not merely listen to the word... Do what it says.” (James 1:22)



Aim of the series

... to encourage and equip us to live more and more in the good of what we believe.

In his letter, James *earths* his exhortation to be “doers of the word” into his readers’ lives (us included!) on such topics as: **living wisely; maturing through trouble; training the tongue; living humbly** and being **in the world but not of the world.**



The **world** in the scriptures

- Geographical: eg, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the **world**, and all who live in it;” (Psalm 24:1)
- The universe after the fall, hostile to God: eg, Jesus said to his disciples “If the **world** hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.” (John 15:18)



The **flesh** in the scriptures

- The soft parts of our bodies eg, “The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and **flesh** of my **flesh**; she shall be called “woman”...’” (Genesis 2:23a)
- Our ordinary human constitution without our mental and moral qualities. eg, “The spirit is willing, but the **flesh** is weak.” (Matthew 26:41)
- Human nature deprived of the HS and dominated by sin. eg, “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the **flesh** with its passions and desires.” (Galatians 5:24)



James: in the world but not of the world

- “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the **world**.” (James 1:27)
- “Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the **world** to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?” (James 2:5)
- “You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the **world** means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the **world** becomes an enemy of God.” (James 4:4)



Jesus: in the world but not of the world

- “You are the salt of the **earth**...You are the light of the **world**...” (Matthew 5:13-16)
- “(Jesus) said to them, ‘Go into all the **world** and preach the gospel to all creation’”. (Mark 16:15)
- “Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this **world** will keep it for eternal life.” (John 12:25)
- “If the **world** hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the **world**, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the **world**, but I have chosen you out of the **world**.” (John 15:18&19a)
- “I have told you these things (what would happen after Jesus’ death) , so that in me you may have peace. In this **world** you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the **world**.” (John 16:33)



Jesus: in the world but not of the world

- “I will remain in the **world** no longer, but they are still **in the world**, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.

I have given them your word and the **world** has hated them, for they are **not of the world** any more than I am of the **world**. My prayer is not that you take them out of the **world** but that you protect them from the evil one. They are **not of the world**, even as I am not of it. As you sent me into the **world**, I have sent them **into the world**... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the **world** may believe that you have sent me. I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the **world** will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (John 17:14-18,21&23)



Other NT: in the world but not of the world

- “Do not conform to the pattern of this **world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 12:2)
- “Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still **worldly** – mere infants in Christ... For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not **worldly**? Are you not acting like mere humans?” (1 Corinthians 3:1&3)



Other NT: in the world but not of the world

- “Now ... our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the **world**, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on **worldly** wisdom but on God’s grace.” (2 Corinthians 1:12)
- “... the grace of God... teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and **worldly** passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for...the appearing of ... Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.” (Titus 2:11-14)

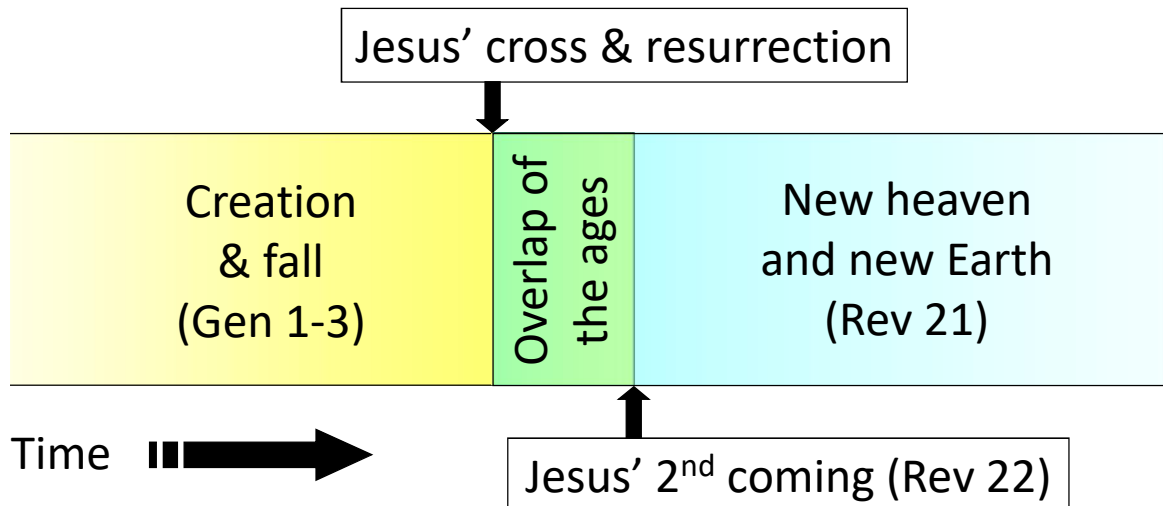


In the world but not of the world

Some key pointers from Session 1:

- **Purpose & Perspective:** Motivation, incentive.
- **Partnership:** Not all down to God, nor all down to us.
- It’s a **Process:** No quick fixes.
- **Perseverance:** It takes intention, time and effort.
- **Paeon:** (Thanksgiving for deliverance!). Grateful joy.

Purpose and perspective



Purpose and perspective

- “I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world...” (John 17:14)
- “(Jesus) said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation’”. (Mark 16:15)
- “You are the salt of the earth / light of the world...” (Matthew 5:13-16)
- “... keep (your)self from being polluted by the world.” (James 1:27)
- “...anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.” (James 4:4)
- “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2)
- “...while we wait for...the appearing of ... Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13)

Purpose and perspective

Two strategies to avoid:



Acting like a chameleon, adjusting to blend in with the behaviour, values and priorities of those around you.



Adopting a siege mentality, minimising interaction with the world, retreating to the Christian *ghetto* ASAP and “pulling up the drawbridge” to shut the world out.



Purpose and perspective

- “Those who live according to the **flesh** have their minds set on what the **flesh** desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires... Those who are in the realm of the **flesh** cannot please God.” (Romans 8:5&8)
- “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the **flesh**. For the **flesh** desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the **flesh**. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want... Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the **flesh** with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:16&17, 24&25)

Partnership



Process & perseverance

- “... I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly – mere infants in Christ...” (1 Corinthians 3:1)
- “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2a)
- “(have your) minds set on what the Spirit desires” (Romans 8:5);
“live by the Spirit... and keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25)
- “...say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions” (Titus 2:11)
- “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)



Paeon

- “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ... In him we were ... chosen.. in order

that we... might be for the praise of his glory. For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know (= *live in the good of*) him better. (Ephesians 1:3,11-12,15-17)



Some response questions:

- What grabbed your attention in this series? Did something particularly excite, challenge, encourage, enlighten or surprise you?
- How might you live more in the good of it?

Session 6: Panel