

"THE GOD OF THIS WORLD"

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 *If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. ⁴Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. [NLT]*

This revelation of the Apostle Paul to the Church at Corinth helps us to countenance the relentless advance of ungodly secularism in the world, the public opposition to the gospel of Christ in our society and the progressive deserting of Christian churches.

The world is in the grip of its god — *the god of this world* — and is therefore completely blinded to the truth: it cannot altogether perceive it.

In particular, the world is dismissive of the overwhelming power inherent in the gospel of the cross: the shedding of Jesus' blood and His resurrection, which the world judges as foolishness, because it is hidden from it.

1 Corinthians 1:18a *For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, [NASB]*

The unbelieving world simply cannot understand the gospel, because their minds are trapped in blindness by its god and the world is therefore perishing and on the way to ultimate perdition.

However, in the same sentence, the Apostle continued that the "word of the cross":

1 Corinthians 1:18b *..... to us who are being saved it is the power of God. [NASB]*

The cross of Christ is unparalleled and perfectly unique in the history of the world. It is the only means for sinful humans to be spared from perishing, as Peter, "filled with the Holy Spirit," taught Caiaphas, the high priest, and his kindred, who had arrested and jailed Peter and John the previous day:

Acts 4:12 *"Jesus is the only One who can save people. No one else in the world is able to save us." [EXB]*

notwithstanding our previous wayward ways,

Ephesians 2:2 *in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. [NASB]*

Christ — sacrificed and resurrected — is the very power of God, who by the Cross made it possible for us to find complete obliteration of sins, wholehearted forgiveness and full reconciliation with the Almighty God,

2 Corinthians 5:19a *that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them. [NRSV]*

Instead of obliterating sin by punishing sinners and obliterating them altogether by the Flood, as at the time of Noah:

Genesis 6:13 *And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth." [ESV]*

Christ does obliterate sin by suffering the punishment Himself.

The statement, at the head of the page, that the rejection of the gospel is caused by a veil cast over the mind by the god of this world means that the matter is not that of one opinion against another opinion, or of a preference, or of a considered judgment of what is true or important: rather — those, who choose to reject belief in the Gospel, do so simply because their minds are blinded so that they may not see the reality and the truth — as it happened at the beginning:

John 1:5 *And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. [NKJV]*

In conclusion: **1]** the world has its god ("*the god of this world*"), who blinds people and **2]** we are assured that the Lord has power to overcome the world:

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." [KJV]*

What are we, as disciples of the Lord, to do?

First, deny self:

Luke 9:23 *Then He said to them all, "If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me." [HCSB]*

Second, trust the Holy Spirit for convicting the world of sin:

John 16:8 *"And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment." [NLT]*

Third, bring forth the message of reconciliation; since — as in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself (**2 Corinthians 5:19a**) — he was also:

2 Corinthians 5:19b entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. [NRSV]

and finally,

Ephesians 6:16–19 *Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: ¹⁸Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; ¹⁹And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, [KJV]*

Hence, we are thus encouraged — at the start of a new year:

2 Corinthians 4:1 *Therefore, since God in his mercy has given us this new way, we never give up. [NLT]*

because,

Psalms 40:8 *I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart. [NLT]*