

Mid-Atlantic Gospel Camp

General Subject: Where are You?

Mid-Week Gathering 3: Without Hope in the World

Scripture Reading

Ephesians 2:12

That you were at that time apart from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

John 12:31

Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.

1 John 5:19

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the evil one.

Genesis 6:5-6, 11-14

- 5 And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
- 6 And Jehovah repented that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him in His heart.
- 11 And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.
- 12 And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.
- 13 And God said to Noah, The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and now I am about to destroy them with the earth.
- 14 Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make rooms in the ark and shall cover it within and without with pitch.

Matthew 24:37-39a

- 37 For just as the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.
- 38 For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day in which Noah entered into the ark,
- 39 And they did not know *that judgment was coming* until the flood came and took all away...

1 Corinthians 1:30a

- 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus.

Mark 16:16

- 16 He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned.

Weekly Reading

According to our status before we were saved, we had no hope. All God's blessings are contained in Christ; all the civil rights are related to the nation of Israel; and all good things are promised in God's covenants. Since we were apart from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of God's promise, we had no hope whatever.

As Gentiles in the flesh, we also were without God (v. 12). God is in Christ; He rules and moves in the commonwealth of Israel; and He bestows His blessings according to His covenants. When we were apart from Christ, the commonwealth of Israel, and the covenants of God's promise, we were without God. We did not have God as our enjoyment.

Verse 12 also points out that we were “in the world.” The world, which is the system of Satan, is in contrast to the commonwealth of Israel. The commonwealth of Israel was the kingdom of God, whereas the world is the kingdom of Satan. Before we were saved, we lived in the world, where we had no hope, no expectation, and no God for our enjoyment. That was the reason we pursued worldly entertainments. The worldly people today hunger after entertainment because they do not have God as their enjoyment. But now that we are in Christ, we have God as our enjoyment. How satisfying this enjoyment is!

A number of years ago some of my unsaved friends asked me why I did not indulge in certain gambling games. I told them that I was busy enjoying the Bible and had no time for nor interest in such games. When I was asked why I did not go to movies, I replied that I had a heavenly movie theater, the church life, where I saw the heavenly vision. Because I have such a full enjoyment of God, there is no room in me for worldly entertainments. Today we are no longer in the world; we are in Christ, in the Spirit, and in the heavenlies.

Now we have a clear picture of our status before we were saved. We were in the position of being the Gentiles in the flesh, the uncircumcision, who were apart from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise. We had no hope, and we were without God in the world. According to our nature, we were in death; and according to our status, we were aliens to God, Christ, God's promise, God's kingdom, and everything related to God. Because we were in such a position, we had no hope, and we did not have God as our enjoyment. In the world we pursued sinful entertainments in the attempt to find satisfaction. Nevertheless, the church has been brought forth out of such a deplorable condition and position. God has saved us out of that condition and has made us members of the Body of Christ. Now we are God's masterpiece, and we have a new condition, a new position, a new nature, and a new status.
(*The Life Study of Ephesians*, Message 22, pp. 192-193).

Discussion:

1. In what way might you be under the influence of the world?
2. Discuss how the tide or current of the world is so strong, for you, your friends, and the other young people in the church.
3. How can we be protected and preserved from taking the way of the world?
4. Are you concerned for some of your friends who need to be saved?