

## **E-mail from John Steven Brown, with my response below that:**

### **This is part two:**

It's a great day to serve our LORD!

With all due respect, Brother Townsend, your comments regarding my piece on 1 John 2:1,2 are not "on point." Now we may disagree but let us not become disagreeable. Okay?

While I am pleased to know that you agree with me in the main, you have a few inconsistencies in your reply. I, too, shall be brief in pointing them out.

In reply to your comment that "freewill" "seems like a manmade term used to solicit precious time from people doing the will of God," I would have to again raise the question, that to date no one has answered: Where in the Scripture is "freewill" defined? I would concur that those that promote it waste precious time defending it rather than advancing the gospel in its purity.

I am really glad that you like reading what I have written. We also concur that handling the Word of God is more than "me-ology" as you say. I, too, believe in verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible.

The first part of my piece on 1 John 2:1,2 dealt with audience relevance. John was writing to believers not unbelievers. That was sufficiently established in that article. It is my position that the vast majority of the believers to whom John was writing at the time were Hebrew as indicated. As one interprets the Word "literally" he must be aware of the usage of a given word within its historical, grammatical, geographical, and economic context. I am confident that you will agree. A literal interpretation factors in all of these in order to get the sense of a passage of particular Scripture.

Then you jump to the same phrase in 1 John 5:19 without considering the context in which it was employed. There are seven usages of the word "world" in Scripture. Context determines, as you certainly know, how it is to be understood. For your consideration the following is presented to demonstrate the differences of how "world" is used:

1. In Acts 17:24 "world" is used as **the universe as a whole**. "God that made the **world** and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands[.]"

2. John 13:1 & Ephesians 1:4 use "world" as referring to **the earth**. John 13:1, "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Ephesians 1:4, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love[.]"

3. Then in John 12:31 "world" is used of the **world-system**. John 12:31, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." If you will compare this verse with the one you offered (1 John 5:19), you may see that it is speaking of the world-system.

4. Now in Romans 3:19 it is about **the whole human race**. Romans 3:19, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

5. Another usage of "world" is as **humanity minus believers**. John 15:18, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."

Romans 3:6, "God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?"

6. Then "world" is used as **Gentiles in contrast from Jews** in Romans 11:12. "Now if the fall of them [be] the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" The same is true in 1 John 2:2 as I have previously stated. "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

7. Finally, "world" is used as **believers only**. John 1:29, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John 3:16,17 "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. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

John 6:33, "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

John 12:47, "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."

1 Corinthians 4:9, "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

2 Corinthians 5:19, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

In your effort to refute my premise you supply a list of verses without contextual explanation and many of them with no reference. Not to be mistaken with the above list of seven usages of the word "world."

You used Mark 8:36, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" And then presented a question: **world** (non-Hebrews?). There it is referring to the material aspect of the earth: **the earth** as shown in the second example above.

In the second passage offered by you (Romans 1:8 "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."), again without a reference, it is speaking of **the whole human race** as well as **the earth**.

Your third example, also without a reference (Job 34:13 Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?), it is likewise speaking of **the whole human race** as well as **the earth**.

In Revelation 12:9, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." "The whole world" it is referring to **the whole human race**.

Actually the "problem texts" you supply are not really that problematic, if one grasps what has been presented thus far in this email. Take for example Titus 2:11: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men[.]" Brother Townsend, context must be considered. To whom was Paul writing and why? The "us" in the next verse shows that it was to believers not unbelievers. Within the immediate context the subjects were "masters" and "servants." It is in that context "all men" must be understood. The same principle goes for your next "problem" text. In 1 Timothy 2:4, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." It is speaking of all men regardless of their particular rank or station in society.

Now admittedly 1 Timothy 4:10 could be problematic for some people. It says, "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." Is it speaking of "Saviour of all men" in the sense of all will be saved. If one says, "yes," then that one is universalistic. God is indeed the Saviour of all men (including women folk) in the sense that by HIS mercy and grace that are not yet consumed in the torments of the lake of fire yet.

As for "our" (does that mean you accept the Biblical truth that salvation is of the LORD?) "Achilles heal" as you put it, truly 2 Peter 2:1 causes some concern. That is one of those verses that may require me to say, as you claimed you have had to do, "Wow, that's a tough one." For the time being, I shall leave that verse for another day.

I was not offended Brother Townsend and do not mean to offend you or any one else for that matter. Thanks for expressing your opinion. Please consider what I have said in the spirit in which it is intended. May God be glorified in each of our lives!

Sincerely,

Pastor John Stephen Brown, an unworthy servant of a very worthy Sovereign LORD.

## My Response to Bro. Brown:

Brother John,

With even greater respect back, it is good to know that you also believe in verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. I knew there was a good reason why I believe much of what you write.

However, I was not discussing the word “world.” Bro. Evans FAR surpasses me with his knowledge in context about this single word. I am NOT that knowledgeable. If you looked closely at my “point,” it was in regard to the phrase “whole world.” Missing my “point” may have been my unclear writing procedures. Making myself clear enough to you was certainly my desire. The many others who responded to what I wrote assured me that I was “on point,” but they could have been as mistaken as I was. Most of them (like me) were only pastors and not true Scholars. Knowing that, I really did not get a big head when I read their critiques of what I had written. I am really not a very good writer, and a really lousy Bible apologist. Just ask anyone. I am even ashamed to admit that at times I use my spell-checker. Please pardon my lack of references for those five verses. Your pointing that out before our audience really humbles me. I apologize and will use the man-made reference helps, and not just the pure word, to be of service to you, although my intention was simply to show the phrase “whole world,” and not to allow you to be able to point out my very insignificant knowledge of where any of these verses were located.

If I came across as being “disagreeable,” again I apologize for the misunderstanding. I desired with what I wrote to fashion a light-hearted way to place nuggets of truth here and there. I did not attempt to do a complete study on each use of the word “world,” and I thank you for your taking the time to enlighten me as to all of its usages. WOW, is Scripture full of wonderful stuff, or what?

In my very narrow and inferior way of interpreting Scripture, I tried to use as many relevant passages as I could without being “off point.” I did use the same phrase in 1 John 5:19 (“whole world”) by the same author (Apostle John), written to the same people (churches in Asia Minor, over which he was given overseership). I did not think that was a “jump” out of context. I sometimes stupidly think that the Word of God is the best interpreter of the Word of God. Some times that really gets me into trouble with people who think other man-made devises (concordances, lexicons, commentators, etc.) are better helps at interpreting a passage. Also, when I included Revelation 12:9 (so sorry you had to look it up), I thought I would stay “on point” with the same phrase (“whole world”), written by the same author (Apostle John), written basically at the same time (late 90’s, boy will THAT get a raised eyebrow), and written to the same people (Seven churches in Asia Minor, with very few Hebrews in sight). Same phrase, same author, same time period, same audience. I am only smart enough to expect that each time the same guy uses the same phrase with the same people that he may mean the same thing when he uses it. Although, I could be wrong.

I also inserted only one verse from the mouth of our Savior, Mark 8:36 (Thanks so much for helping me find it as I rely way to much on my memory). I used this one first, because I want to know how Jesus used the phrase (“whole world”) when He was talking to both saved (“with his disciples”) and lost (“the people”) at the same time. He really defines for me the meaning of words and phrases, as I am sure the Apostle John would say if he had e-mail today. It never escapes my wonder about how the Apostle John was standing right there listening to Jesus define this phrase for him over and over again. I will remember to ask him when I get to heaven if the words of Jesus helped him at all to define his doctrine, or if he just picked up the phrase later in some marketplace by some merchant discussing the “whole world of salesmen”. Makes you wonder, doesn’t it? (Reading Apostle John’s mind: “What did that merchant just say? Wow, so *that’s* how it’s used. So let’s forget how Jesus used and taught the phrase five times in Scripture, I like this one much better. Just wait until those Hebrews get my *next* letter.”)

We know that Jesus taught John for three years, and had him in seminary for 50 days. I wonder if Jesus ever sat them down and said, “Guys, you are all going to be using the word ‘world’ many times to many people. Before I leave, I just wanted you to know the other six ways the term “world” is used, which will have direct bearing on you REALLY BEING EXPLICIT when you use it! ‘Cause if you go and BLOW IT, and use it in just the *only way* I have used it, it would make it FAR TO SIMPLE for anyone to understand! So just FORGET how I used it. Now, go and make the message plain so even a CHILD can understand it.” (Gospel of Ben’s Imagination, chapter 3, verse 16-18)

My other verses were used precisely and carefully also, at least I thought I was using them precisely and carefully. I was trying to point out that Paul used the phrase in Romans 1:8. I recall Paul getting ALL of his doctrine directly from Jesus Christ, too. And the only time Paul uses this phrase (“whole world”) was to mostly Gentiles and a few Jews at the Church at Rome. It may take someone far more intelligent than I will ever be, but just maybe this phrase is what eventually changed the church at Rome into the Roman Catholic Church when they got a copy of John’s first epistle, compared it with Romans, threw up their hands, and said: “‘Whole world’? What in the ‘world’ is John doing contradicting Paul’s usage? And did they use it like Jesus used it? We don’t know. Know one can know. You see, that’s why we can’t let these little peons determine what the Bible is saying. It’s far too deep for them. We need a Pope.” (Eusebius, IV: The Forgotten Writings, Vol. 6, Pg. 45)

The last verse (without reference) I supplied was simply the first usage of the phrase (“whole world”) in the Word of God. I was trying to help determine my “point” by using, and I know it’s probably not a credible way with some, “The Law of First Mention”. The first and only time the phrase “whole world” is used in the Old Testament was in Job 34:13 – “Who hath given him a charge over the **earth**? or who hath disposed the **whole world**?” Now, I will try very hard to not be “inconsistent” here. I really want to point out the similarities here between the parallels of Job 34:13 in the usage of the words “earth” and “whole world”. The last two times this same parallel is used is in Revelation 12:9 and Revelation 16:14. For argument sake, let’s call it “The Consistency of Parallel Usage Between the Law of First Mention and the Law of Final Mention.” (I made that up, so don’t try to find it anywhere.) Revelation 12:9 – “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the **whole world**: he was cast out into the **earth**, and his angels were cast out with him.” Revelation 16:14 – “For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the **earth** and of the **whole world**, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

The “point” I am trying to make here is that in at least three passages of the Word of God, “whole world” is a phrase equivalent of “earth.” To clarify: They mean exactly the same thing and are used exactly for the same identifying purpose.

Now, IF Scripture defines Scripture, and we take our eyes off of men, then I believe that if you replace “whole world” with “earth”, at least in each of Jesus’ verses, the sense will stay the same. Do you agree with that assessment of Jesus’ using the phrase “whole world” and each time He uses it making sense with the word “earth”? If not, please define for my pea brain, which usage of Jesus’ “whole world” does not simply mean “earth”. (I would supply a list of references, but fear of reprisal – “Aha, so you don’t KNOW the verses!” – hinders me, so go look them up yourself.)

Now, the one time Paul uses the phrase “whole world”; is it the equivalent of the word “earth”? I say it is, but I would like to know what you think.

Now, the only two times left in the Scripture where the phrase “whole world” is used that I have not covered with my “point” are the two times John uses the phrase in his first epistle. I digress just enough to

remind you that the other two times the same John used the same phrase to the same people was in Revelation. Those I would call “defining texts”, using a word repeatedly in the same verse to let even a DUMMY LIKE ME know what it means (“Great dragon = old serpent = Devil = Satan” making my belabored point of what a defining text is also found in Revelation 12:9).

I would say 1 John 5:19 the phrase “whole world” could easily be replaced by “earth”. It makes sense. Does this make sense to you?

This leaves us with only 1 John 2:2. Now, I let you know the Book I go to in order to define my phrases (Bible). I let you know the commentators I go to in order to define my phrases (Jesus, Paul, Job, John). I have shown you my “definition texts” (Law of First Mention and Final Mention) used consistently in at least (work with me here) ALL BUT THIS ONE verse.

Can you stand just one more digression? Please, for time sake, don’t nit-pick the term “earth”, thinking you will score any points with anyone you have sent your e-mail to. I know many of these men, and they can with one swift click of the mouse search the 28 times the phrase “whole earth” is used. “And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech,” (sorry no reference, it’s in the Bible... somewhere...) does not mean dirt speaks. Oxford English Dictionary (It’s not a commentary) says the primary meaning of “earth” is “The inhabitants of the world.” I really didn’t think you would nit-pick, but I wanted to cover some of my bases anyway.

Finally, I still say that the Apostle John was not primarily writing to Hebrew Christians. I could be wrong, but I just don’t see it. I could only find one person who said so, and I think he had to go that route pragmatically, and without any contextual or historical basis. And there SURE is no *grammatical* basis.

Therefore, and realizing that no one’s mind will be changed by my simpleton procedures of Bible study, I still disagree with your interpretation of 1 John 2:2. Hopefully, I have tried to clarify my position and stay on the “point”.

In Jesus Name,

Ben

P.S. Thanks so much for hearing me out in my inimitable way. It was really kind of you.