

John 17:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Analysis

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world (οὐκ εἰσὶν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου καθὼς ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου). Jesus repeats this declaration from verse 14, emphasizing the parallel between His own relationship to kosmos and that of His disciples. The preposition ek (out of, from) denotes source and origin—believers do not derive their nature, values, or ultimate allegiance from the world system.

This is not geographical separation but spiritual distinction. Jesus's disciples remain physically in the world (v. 11, 15) but are no longer of it in identity and citizenship. The double negative (οὐκ... οὐκ) creates emphatic parallelism: **even as I am not** (καθὼς ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ) establishes Christ's own otherworldly origin as the pattern for believer identity. We share Christ's alien status in a fallen world order hostile to God (15:18-19, James 4:4, 1 John 2:15-17).

Historical Context

Jesus prayed this in the Upper Room on the eve of His crucifixion (John 13-17). The 'world' (kosmos) in Johannine theology often refers to human society organized in rebellion against God—not God's creation per se, but the fallen system under satanic influence (12:31, 14:30, 16:11). First-century disciples would soon face persecution from both Jewish and Roman authorities, needing assurance of their true identity.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. In what specific ways does your citizenship in heaven (Philippians 3:20) conflict with the values and priorities of the surrounding culture?
2. How does sharing Christ's 'not of the world' status both comfort you in trials and challenge your conformity to worldly patterns?

Interlinear Text

ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκ εἰσὶν καθὼς ἐγὼ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου
of ^{G3588} **the world** **not** **They are** **even as** **I** **of** ^{G3588} **the world**
G1537 G2889 G3756 G1526 G2531 G1473 G1537 G2889

οὐκ εἰμὶ
not **am**
G3756 G1510

Additional Cross-References

John 17:14 (Parallel theme): 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.