

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 ἔγὼ 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 ἔγὼ 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.