

## An Overview of Enemy #3: The World System

### INTRODUCTION

Roman 1:16 tells us the gospel (I Cor 15:3-4) is the inherent power of God unto salvation. The entirety of this salvation is broken down into three parts (or stages) in the NT epistles:

- 1) Initial, i.e. past tense salvation (how ones gets into God's family today)
  - a. Freedom from the penalty of sin, which is eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire
    - i. Acts 10:43, 13:38-39
- 2) Present tense salvation
  - a. Potential freedom from the power of our yet indwelling sin nature, thus providing the BASIS for victory over the believer's other two spiritual enemies – Satan and the world system
    - i. Eph 2:8 "saved" (perfect tense), Rom 7:24-25, II Cor 2:15 (present passive participle)
- 3) Future tense salvation
  - a. Freedom for the presence of our indwelling sin nature
    - i. I Cor 15:51-52, I Jn 3:2

When we believed the gospel of I Cor 15: 3-4, three 'old friends' of ours became our enemies.

The development of these enemies chronologically:

- 1) Lucifer, becoming Satan (adversary to God)
- 2) The fallen nature, sin nature of Adam and all his descendants
- 3) The diabolical, satanic world system

It is this this third enemy of the believer that we want to examine.

Before we begin, let us remember that God has allowed these three entities of opposition to the believer to exist. His purpose is to allow opposition to our Christian lives (Phil1:27) to exist so that we

- 1) May grow in grace and dependency on His indwelling life, II Pet 3:18
- 2) Become demonstrations of His life among the residents of this world system, Phil 2:15, Jn 1:4
- 3) Bring ultimate glory to God by means of our dependency upon Him, I Cor 10:31

## I. AWARENESS OF THE WORLD SYSTEM

### A. Awareness of the Term 'world'

1. Defining the term
  - a. the verb κοσμεω (cosmeo); 10x in NT
    1. translated "adorned" 5x, 'garnished' 4x, "trimmed" 1x
    2. meaning 'to arrange', or 'put in order'
  - b. the noun κοσμος (cosmos); 186 x in NT
    1. translated in KJV 'world' 185x, "adorning" 1x –
    2. I Pet 3:3
  - c. Note: see Appendix A
2. NT uses of the term
  - a. God's ordered arrangement of the created universe
    1. Jn 1:9, 17:5; Acts 17:24; Rom 1:20; Eph 1:4
  - b. Satan's ordered arrangement over mankind on planet Earth
    1. I Jn 2:15-17, James 4:4
  - c. The unregenerate population of mankind which is under the influence (control) of the world system is also called "the world" in the NT.
    1. Jn 3:16-17, 12:19 (cf. 9-11); II Cor 5:19
    2. The name of the arranged system is also used to name the people belonging to this system: II Pet 2:5

### B. Awareness of the History of the Satanic World System

1. The founder and ruler of this ordered arrangement over unsaved mankind - Satan
  - a. Lk 4:5-6 (cf. Matt 4:8, Satan's authority over the world system)
  - b. I Jn 5:19; 3x "prince/ruler" of the world system - Jn 12:31, 14:30, 16:11
2. The beginning of this arranged system over mankind - Lk 11:47-51
  - a. Established after Cain's expression of his sin nature toward Abel – murder! Gen 4:8; Gal 5:21
  - b. Satan's attempt to direct man's sin nature for his advantage – Eph 2:2; Jn 8:44

### C. Awareness of the Appeals and Purpose of the World System

1. Appeals of the System - I Jn 2:16
  - a. The lust concerning the flesh
    1. designed appeals to certain works of the sin nature in order to subdue other works of the sin nature (cf. Gal 5:19-21)
  - b. The lust concerning the eyes
    1. designed appeals that grab the attention of fallen mankind through the soulish sense of vision (cf Gen 3:6)

- c. The pride (empty boasting) of things pertaining to physical life (cf Job 2:4).
  - 1. Note the spiritual NT believer's view of physical life – James 4:14; Phil 1:23; Jn 21:18-22
- 2. Purpose of the World System:
  - a. To distract mankind from using their fallen nature contrary to Satan's design
  - b. To direct aspects of man's fallen nature in order to attempt to fulfill Satan's ultimate plan of unifying all mankind under the leadership of his "man of sin" with goal of undermining God's plan and purpose – II Thess. 2:3-9

#### **D. Awareness of the Design of the World System – Genesis 4:16-22**

- 1. Urbanization – Gen 4:17
  - a. Contributes to the ease of controlling the direction of the sin nature collectively
  - b. Enhances the desired Satanic direction of the works of the flesh - idolatry, religious superstitious awe, hatred, strife, zeal, divisions, self-centeredness, and heresies.
  - c. Urbanization implies government
    - 1. Matt 4:8; Dan 10:5-7, 13, 20-21
    - 2. Government defines what society needs that only government can supply, thus resulting in control
    - 3. Thus, urbanization is designed to provide for all three appeals of the World System mentioned in I Jn 2:16
- 2. Commerce – Gen 4:20
  - a. Raising cattle for skins, milk products, transportation, and farming power
  - b. Commerce is designed to directly, or indirectly, provide for all three appeals of the world – I Jn 2:6
- 3. Music – Gen 4:22
  - a. The forerunner of all entertainment
  - b. Cf. I Sam 16:14, 23
- 4. Education – Gen 4:22
  - a. Beginning with the study of metallurgy; leading to the inquiry of other realms of knowledge which may be
    - 1. empirical demonstrable, or
    - 2. Imaginary in theory (purely speculative)
- 5. Manufacturing – Gen 4:22
  - a. Implements,
  - b. Statuary

- c. Eventually machines and all material products

#### **E. The End of the “Old World” by Means of the Noahic Flood**

1. II Peter 2:5, 3:6
  - a. The total population of the World System died in the flood, therefore the system by necessity “perished”

#### **F. The Future End of the Post-Flood World System**

1. Ps 2:6-9; Rev 19:11-16
  - a. The system will not be reformed but destroyed by Christ at His Second Coming!
  - b. \*Note: see Appendix B

## **II. ALERTNESS TO THE WORLD SYSTEM**

### **A. Alert to the Distinction Between the Citizens belonging to the World and Those who are Strangers and Pilgrims in the World**

1. NT believers are no longer citizens of this World System - Jn 15:19, 17:16
2. NT believers are “citizens of heavens” - Phil 3:20
3. NT believers are positionally seen by the Father to have been “placed into” His Son\* - Jn 14:20; Gal 3:27; I Jn 4:17b
  - \* Holy Spirit baptism places the believer into the glorified, ascended Christ, in the Father’s opinion. Therefore, we are no longer seen to be a member of the World System even though we are physically in it – Jn 17:18
4. NT believers are promised tribulation in the world – Jn 16:33; Phil 1:27
5. NT believers are not experientially known by the citizens of the world because they did not experientially know God the Father – I Jn 3:1, cf I Pet 4:3-4
6. NT believers are hated by the citizens of the world – I Jn 3:13; Jn 15:18-19; cf Lk 6:26
7. Spiritual NT believers will be persecuted by the world – Jn 15:20-21

### **B. Alert to the Dangers of the World System**

1. The World System is to be wisely used by the NT believer
  - a. I Cor 3:22 “(a quality) of the world (system) is yours”
  - b. Cf. Eph 1: 22 “all things are put under Christ’s feet to/for (the advantage of) the church”
2. The world is not to be over-used (“abused” KJV) by the NT believer – I Cor 7:31
  - a. Warning to believers that *determine* to be rich - I Tim 6:9-10
  - b. Instruction to believers that possess material riches – I Tim 6:17-19; cf Philemon 7, 20-23

- c. Overuse limits a believer's fruit-bearing – Lk 8:14; cf Eph 2:10
- 3. The World System is not to be loved (trying to fix, adjust, or improve it) by the NT believer – I Jn 2:15-16
  - a. God loved the people of the world – Jn 3:16
  - b. God does not love the World System – James 4:4

### **C. Alert to God's Provision of Victory over the World System**

1. NT believers have been placed into an imputed position in Christ (by HS baptism at initial salvation) – I Cor 12:12-13
2. Being in Christ, we are now positionally separated from the World System as He is actually separated from the World System (being seated at the Father's right hand in the third heaven) – I Jn 4:17b; Jn 16:33
3. By Christ's indwelling of the NT believer, we now possess a quality of His Eternal Life – I Jn 5:11-12
4. By possessing this Life, we have the potential to overcome (have victory over) the lusts from the World System – I Jn 5:4a
5. By using Eternal Life, we can in actuality (in practice) experience victory over the lusts that come from this World System – I Jn 5:4b (cf 2:16)
6. We experience victory over these lusts by
  - a. Focusing our thinking upon things above, not on things upon the earth – Col 3:1-2; Phil 3:19
  - b. Then, by "denying" KJV (literally, 'say no to') the worldly lusts – Titus 2:11-12

## **CONCLUSION**

The Christian's Response to the World System is to

- 1) Recognize and understand
  - a. its purpose
  - b. its founder
  - c. its content
  - d. its allowance by God
  - e. its failure and destruction
- 2) Recognize and understand our relationship to it
  - a. We are in it, but not of it – Jn 15:19, 17:18
  - b. Use it as God desires you to use it, but don't overuse it – I Cor 7:29-31
  - c. Don't try to fix, improve, or to 'christianize' it – I Jn 2:15
  - d. Don't try to escape from it or isolate yourself from its presence and its citizens – I Cor 5:9-10; Jn 17:18

- 3) Recognize, understand, and utilize God’s provisions to experience victory over it. “Set your (focused) mind on things above, not on things on the earth” – Col 3:2, then, say “no” to its strong desires (lusts) when allured by its designs
- 4) Shine as lights in this world – Phil 2:15
  - a. This World is Not My Home
  - b. Take the World, but Give Me Jesus
  - c. Jesus is All the World to Me

## APPENDIX A

### Confusion of the Term “World” in the KJV

1. γη (gay) - 248x in NT “earth”, “land”, “country”, “ground”; 1x “world” (Rev 13:3)
2. αιωνιος (ionios) 71x in NT- “eternal”, “everlasting”, “forever”; 3x “world”
3. οικουμενη (oikumena) 15x in NT “world” KJV, literal meaning- ‘inhabited earth’
4. αιων (ion) 126x total in NT- “forever”, “ever”, “evermore” 75x, “never “7x,” eternal” 2x, “course” 1x, “world” 39x, “age(s)” 3x
  - a. The proper understanding of [αιων) comes from the 3 verses that the KJV uses word “age.” Eph 2:7, 3:21; Col 1:26
  - b. An age is a segment in time, eternity past, or eternity future where God allows or causes an activity to exist, in order to reveal an aspect of His character and/or abilities.
  - c. The ‘Present Evil Age’ (Gal 1:4) is designed to demonstrate God’s quality of Life (Eternal Life) by contrasting that Life during this present age (of which Satan is called “the god of this age”- II Cor 4:3-4) with Satan’s efforts to blind the minds of “them which believe not”, and try to control and acceptably direct unbelieving men’s sin nature for his own purposes- II Thess. 2:2-12 . cf. Mk 10:30.
  - d. (αιων) can and should always be translated “age(s)!”

## APPENDIX B

### The Differences Between the Circumstances of the Pre-Flood World and Today’s Post-Flood World

1. The length of an individual’s life span is greatly shortened – Ps 90:10
2. Pangea (the one land mass) is divided – Gen 10:25
3. Human languages have been confounded – Gen 11:5-7
4. These differences have a limiting effect on the World System