

# The Three Great Enemies – Part One

## The World

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Adapted from John Herbert's notes; Read by Jeanne Alley

1). In Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 we find the entire 'Church' (all Christians from this dispensation) standing before the Lord in judgment, with determinations being made with respect to positions of rulership with Christ in the coming Kingdom –

Revelation 3:21

"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

- And at this point of Judgment, all Christians will be divided into two categories – those who are overcomers and those who have been overcome....those who will have been the friends of God, like Abraham—

James 2:23

And the Scripture was fulfilled which says,"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

--and those who have been friends to the world –

James 4:4

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- Those who are overcomers will have produced works corresponding to gold, silver and precious stones and will receive a reward – the reward of the inheritance, the salvation of their soul.
- And those who *have been overcome* will have produced works corresponding to wood, hay and straw and are described, as we see in James, as adulterers and adulteresses. These adulterers will not only fail to realize a reward, but that which is still in their possession, their soul, will be lost for the age to come (although their eternal salvation of course will be totally secure) –

1Corinthians 3:11

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.<sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- One of these two outcomes awaits each one of us, and each of us in this room today will find ourselves in that day in one or other of these two camps.

- Which one it is will be dependent on the choices that we make each and every day of our life until either we physically die or are raptured.

2). Although the choices that we need to make are on one level very simple, summed up for us here in the Book of Joshua-

Joshua 24:15

"And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

- On another level these choices are far from simple because they don't exist in a vacuum and aren't made in a neutral environment. Rather, they have to be enacted within an extremely hostile environment, an environment that is most often not blatant in its hostility, but subtly deceptive.
- Casualness, carelessness and most dangerous of all, complacency on our part with respect to the reality of this will inevitably lead to our downfall -

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

- The enemy of our soul will not relinquish his dominion over the earth lightly and although we may know with absolute certainty that in the end Christ and His coheirs will be victorious, Satan still entertains the thought of thwarting God's plans by disqualifying those who would seek positions of rulership with Christ.
- Please be under no illusion. There is not one of us who is not subject to his attention.
- And remember, if Satan is successful against us, the consequences for us are dire. This is not a game of tag where we will go and sit on the sidelines; our failure in this race of the faith will bring the full weight of God's wrath upon us—

Colossians 3:5

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience...

- And so, arranged against us in this ongoing warfare are the three great enemies that are inextricably connected and demonically orchestrated – the world, the flesh and the Devil.
- If we are to stand before the Lord as an overcomer at His Judgment Seat, we will have to have overcome each of these three *consistently*.
- And perhaps it's worth stating the obvious here – overcoming this unholy trinity is not a onetime event, but a lifetime of faithful obedience, a lifetime of patient endurance.
- Each of these three is to be overcome after a different but clearly stated fashion, and this will be the topic of our study over the next few weeks.

3). Today we will start by looking at ‘the world.’ Let’s first understand what we are talking about. We are not referring to the globe on which we live as a physical entity, nor are we talking about humanity in a general sense, but rather the present system of rulership over the earth, and all that would be associated with that. Everything encompassing all of this age – from Adam to the Kingdom.

We are told—

1John 2:15

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

- The reason for our not loving the world or the things of the world would be twofold:
- Firstly—

1John 5:19

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

- Satan is of course rightly described in scripture as “the ruler of this world” and “the god of this age.”
- And therefore everything connected with the present world system, with this age, is under his control and finds itself to be diametrically opposed to everything that is of God. Hence the reason for us being described as aliens and strangers during this present time. We are living in enemy occupied territory –

John 18:36

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world.

- And then secondly –

1John 2:17

And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

2Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

- The present world system is passing away – we know for sure that it has an expiration date that date was set at the beginning of Genesis, and the clock is counting down.
- We just have to grasp the reality that in the very near future the Church, all of us, will be resurrected or raptured to the Judgment Seat, and from that point onwards nothing will be the same again for us...and therefore, nothing that we look to in this world has any lasting value.

- *This world is passing away* – governments, political systems, education systems, financial institutions, the military, the internet, TV, the film industry, the auto industry, bank loans, mortgages, credit cards, our house, our car, dare I say even football, basketball, and baseball – it's all going. And at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom the physical earth and the heavens, and all the works that are in them, will pass away with a great noise and fervent heat and there will be a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness will dwell.
- Now all the things we have just listed are an everyday part of our present experience, but in them is neither our security or our hope or our future or that with which we are to be preoccupied. And if we elevate any of them to this status, or put them before the truth of the word of God, then James says we are adulterers and adulteresses. We will in fact have become idolaters.
- During the present world financial crisis we all experience uncertainty and instability in our day to day life, but the solution for us is not the economic bail-out or a new president, but a correct mindset –
  - Hebrews 13:6
  - So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"
- This is where our hearts and minds need to be.
  - Matthew 10:28
  - "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [Gehenna]."

4). Now as we continue to consider our enemy 'the world,' we find that scripture provides its own commentary for us on what we should expect –

1John 2:16

For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

- According to our scripture then, all that is in the world is described as, 'the lust of the flesh', 'the lust of the eyes' and 'the pride of life'...and these are not of the Father, but of the world and therefore of the god of this world.
- So as we look at these it would be helpful to understand the word 'lust'. Lust = Greek – 'epithumia'= from 1937; a longing (especially for what is forbidden):--concupiscence, desire, lust (after). It comes from the Greek word 'epithumeo'= to set the heart upon, i.e. long for (rightfully or otherwise):--covet, desire.
- We can see then that 'lust' is by no means restricted to sexual sin but would apply to setting our heart upon anything, with an attitude of covetousness. In other words, this would translate into, 'I must have', 'I can't do without' – normally with the idea that once I have whatever it is, then I will be happier –

Luke 12:15

And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

Proverbs 28:16

.....he who hates covetousness will prolong his days.

- And the first reference to lust that we see in our scripture is that of the flesh: Flesh = Greek – ‘sarx’ = as the symbol of what is external, or as the means of kindred, or (by implication) human nature (with its frailties (physically or morally) and passions), or (specially), a human being (as such):--carnal(-ly, + -ly minded), flesh(-ly).
- And being carnally minded would inevitably bring us to the wisdom of this world, as opposed to the truth of the word of God –

Romans 8:7

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

- So we could understand the ‘lust of the flesh’ to be setting our heart upon something which is other than God’s word, in the delusion that in having this something is our happiness and security, rather than the truth of the word. Now this is not necessarily a conscious and premeditated turning away from the word – this may well be our experience without us even realizing it.
  - The more stocks, the more shares, the more bonds, the more houses, the more cars, the bigger, the better – if I just have this I’ll be OK.

Luke 12:16

Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 "And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 "So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" 20 "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21 "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." 22 ¶ Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. 23 "Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.

- Then secondly we have ‘the lust of the eyes.’ Eyes = Greek – ‘ophthalmos’ = the eye (literally or figuratively); by implication, vision; figuratively, envy (from the jealous side-glance):--eye, sight.
- Now whereas the lust of the flesh has to do with covetousness with regards to material things, the lust of the eyes seems to deal with covetousness with regards to people –

Deuteronomy 5:21

'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife;

- We can of course be dealing with inappropriate sexual desire as seen here in Deuteronomy, but we can also see this as envying someone because of who they are or what they have – ‘If

only I could have what he has, or be like she is, then my life would be so much better.’ And again, such thinking would be played out in our *carnal* thinking.

- Whatever we lust after with our eyes now, with regards to what we see in others, is of no consequence. All that is going to matter is what we have remaining at the Judgment Seat after our works are tested by fire. In that day and in that day alone will the true worth of any of us be revealed.
- There is no point in giving the side glance of ‘if only.’ God has given each one of us our own circumstances and within those circumstances, as we would be faithfully obedient and as we would patiently endure, lies our pathway to glory. And please do not be deceived into thinking that someone else’s pathway is easier than our own. Such thinking would be contrary to the evidence of scripture –

#### Revelation 2:10

"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

#### Acts 14:22

...strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

#### 1Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man;

- And finally we have ‘the pride of life.’ Pride = Greek – ‘alazoneia’ = from 213; braggadocio, i.e. (by implication) self-confidence:--boasting, pride. Life = Greek – ‘bios’ = a primary word; life, i.e. (literally) the present state of existence; by implication, the means of livelihood:--good, life, living.
- So we would understand this as having a prideful, self-confidence in who and what we are right now, apart from any reference to who we are in Christ. To get a good idea of what this looks like we can use Revelation 3 as an example -

#### Revelation 3:17

"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked...

- This would be the same attitude as that of the certain rich man from our Luke 12 parable. And again in this we would see a focus on the here and now rather than having a future day and a future Judgment as our focus –

#### Romans 14:10b

...For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

- And I am sure we will realize that the pride of life is not necessarily expressed through the spoken word (although it can be) but rather through action. A self-check on our attitude to the teaching of the Word would reveal this, not what we think our attitude to it is, but what

we do with regards to it. If Sunday mornings or Bible study is something that we fit into our schedule only if there is time, or if we think that missing the teaching we have here really is not that important, or we don't find time to engage with the word that comes from it in a structured way throughout our week, then we are already walking in the pride of life. And this of course can come about insidiously and subtly over a period of time without our even realizing what is happening. The good news is of course is that we can repent and make a change.

5). Then there is this admonition in the Book of James-

James 1:27

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

- We will focus this morning on the second part of this admonition, keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.
- Now there should be one thing we notice immediately here, 'keep oneself' – who then has the responsibility for doing this? Do you see that there is an individual responsibility for each of us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world?
- The word 'unspotted' is the Greek word 'aspilos' = from 1 (as a negative particle) and 4695; unblemished (physically or morally):--without spot, unspotted.
- And as we read this definition, it will hopefully call a particular scripture to mind –

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

- Keeping ourselves unspotted from the world has an inevitable and glorious connection with a marriage relationship--*and therefore rulership*. And this is a process that cannot be separated from the washing of water by the Word...which, according to our scripture, is made possible by Christ's giving of Himself for us.
- It would not be difficult to realize that a failure on our part to participate in this washing casts scorn and brings shame upon the sacrifice of God Himself on the cross of Calvary.
- And again, it is the word, as a result of our proper engagement with it that makes the washing a reality- not just reading the words printed on the page, but prayerful study of, and application of the Word, in accordance with the way God has put His word together.

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- Conformed = Greek – 'suschematizo' = to fashion alike, i.e. conform to the same pattern (figuratively):--conform to, fashion self according to.

- Here in Romans we see the same thought as we find in Ephesians presented as not being conformed to the same pattern as this world, therefore not engaging in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. All of which are part and parcel of the character of the eternally lost and the carnal Christian.
- But rather, we should be transformed. Transformed = Greek – ‘metamorphoo’ = an inward change by the renewing of our mind. The idea behind this “transformation” is the replacing of the mindsets and thought patterns that are a part of our sin nature (that part of our being that has a direct association with the things of this world and the god of this world) **with the truth of scriptural reality**. In other words, we are to be in the process of not allowing our mind to follow its fallen desire, but rather to follow the unfallen righteousness of the Living God –

2Corinthians 10:5

...casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...

- And what was “the obedience of Christ”? For Christ it was to submit His will to the will of the Father so as to die in the flesh. This is what the washing of water by the word has to do with – submitting our will to the will of God thereby accepting and embracing the truth of scripture.

- And this renewing process in Romans 12 happens after a particular fashion – It happens in knowledge – epignosis

Colossians 3:10

... put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him...

- And then in a companion scripture in Ephesians we see reference to the same thing, which is then followed by examples of what this looks like in practice

Ephesians 4:22

that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. 26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

6). And here once again we can realize that the things of this world have ready access to us through our old man who grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.

(And what would the lusts be? Check back in [1John 2:16](#) “For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.”)

And we see in our scripture the implicit contrast between our ‘old man’ and the action that would give witness to the new.

- So we may conclude that not only are we living in enemy occupied territory, but we share our living space with a suicide bomber whose twitchy finger is constantly on the trigger.
- The morals, the values, the diversions, the distractions, the deceptions of this world crowd in on us from every conceivable direction throughout our day. And the intensity of the pressure that comes from this constant bombardment is to one end alone---to corrupt the purity of our calling so that we should settle for so much less than God intends for us.
- It is in the midst of this sometimes overwhelming plethora of sensory overload that we need to be so careful and guard our hearts and minds lest we become desensitized to the wickedness that surrounds us, resulting in our conforming to the world--as it is sometimes an easier option than walking in the truth.

7). And so to close out for this week, let’s look at some scriptures in which we may find strong encouragement to stand strong in the face of our enemy –

[2Peter 1:2](#)

[2](#) Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, [3](#) as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, [4](#) by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. [5](#) ¶ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, [6](#) to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, [7](#) to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. [8](#) For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9](#) For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. [10](#) Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; [11](#) for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

[John 16:33](#)

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

1John4:4

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

8). If the Lord is willing we will conclude our dealings with 'the world' next week.