

The Christian And The World (Part One)

The World

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Possible Feast of Tabernacles sermons never get very far from my mind, because giving as many sermons as I give in that short period of time is very time-consuming in terms of preparation. More importantly, considering the fact that it is the only time during the year that we all get together in one place at one time, I feel that the messages truly must be "meat in due season."

I take that to primarily mean giving what is needed for the body as a whole as close as possible to the time that it is needed. It was in about June of this year that the series I gave on the general subject of "the world" first began to take shape, and I have not really been able to let it go yet. The reason is because I begin to see different angles that I feel need to be pursued, and things that I have never really gotten into before.

I do not mean that my approach to them is new. They are new to me because I have never developed an angle of that perspective (on the subject) into a full-blown sermon, at least as far as I can remember anyway. Those sections may have appeared in other Bible studies and other sermons I gave in the past. I say that because such is the subject for today.

It is going to be on "the world" and it draws its importance, as far as I am concerned, from what has happened in the church as well as what is happening to religion in the world. I think that we all agree that Laodiceanism, as we call it, came into the church from the world and it has played a major role in the scattering of the church. It is not an attitude that is in the image of God. That is easily seen from Revelation 3:17. He is highly displeased with it being in His people. He threatens to spew them out because of it.

I am going to continue this theme of "the world" in this sermon. I think that one of the first things that is necessary to understand is that the word "world," as it is used in the Bible, is translated from five Hebrew words and

three Greek ones in the New Testament. The only one we are going to be concerned about is the very familiar *cosmos* from the New Testament, because that is the one that is most important in showing the world's relationship to God and to the church. This is because the other words are quite clear in their meaning and they have almost no behavioral applications, and *cosmos* is the one with the most direct spiritual, moral, and ethical applications to us.

Now *cosmos* is among those words that the apostles lifted from the Greek language and gave it a usage in the Bible that was an addition to the way it was used in normal Greek. This does not make *cosmos* unique, because they did the same thing with words like *charisma* and *agape*. *Cosmos* is a word that has many applications in the Scriptures, and this is one reason why we must be careful attending to understanding the context in which the word *cosmos* appears.

In this regard it has much in common with the word *pneuma*, translated spirit, and several other things as well, which according to Bullinger in the "Companion Bible" is used in eight different senses in the New Testament. For example, *pneuma* in any given context might imply the Holy Spirit, the spirit in man, an attitude, a composition ("God is spirit"), an angel, or a demon, or the wind. In the same manner, *cosmos* is used to imply **many** different circumstances, things, or attitudes.

We will see it appearing in a couple of verses and give you some sort of an idea of the broadness of the application of this word before we finally focus in on one application. Paul is speaking before the Greeks there on Mars Hill:

Acts 17:24 God that made the world [*cosmos*] and all things therein, seeing that he is LORD of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands.

There the word is translated "world," but it is implying the whole universe—everything—all the stars and all the moons and all the planets.

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, Go you into all the world [*cosmos*], and preach the gospel to every creature.

Here *cosmos* has been narrowed down to the earth. This sense is used most frequently to indicate the inhabitants of the earth. In other words, you are not preaching to the earth, you are preaching to the *cosmos*, the inhabitants of the earth—mankind—rather than the earth that we all walk upon. In this case, then, it means to appear and go before men.

We will see another place that took place during a Feast of Tabernacles, or just at that time leading up to the Feast of Tabernacles. Here the word *cosmos* is narrowed down even further. It started out "universe" and then all the inhabitants of the earth is implied.

John 7:4 For there is no man that does any thing in secret, and he himself seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world [*cosmos*].

This was spoken by Jesus' brothers to Jesus, and they were urging Him to go before the public there in Judea. So we have come from the universe, to the earth, down to one small country. In fact we might even say one small area where the Feast of Tabernacles was being held.

Its most common application to you and me is its use to indicate the present order of things. This is the one that I am going to be most concerned about. I am not going to get into it yet for a little bit, but this is the one that I am most concerned about. In other words, *cosmos* is used to indicate the various cultures that have developed since Adam and Eve—whether it is a Russian culture, American culture, English culture, Canadian culture, it matters not.

It is used to designate a culture. When it is used in this sense it is *always* used in a negative light. It is seen as transient, worthless, evil, and depending on the context, the evil can be physical or spiritual. It can be seen in this context as the seat of cares, of temptations, of irregular desires.

John 12:25 He that loves his life shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world [*cosmos*] shall keep it unto life eternal.

Here it has the sense within the context of **during** this life.

Ephesians 2:1-2 And you has he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world [*cosmos*], according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

Do you see how negative that is? The course of this world is combined with the prince of the power of the air, and these people are seen as being disobedient. And so it is gradually, slowly but surely, as we narrow it down, beginning to indicate more and more an evil system that is opposed to God. It is in this sense that it is used in those very famous scriptures there in I John 2:15-17.

Matthew 16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world [the whole *cosmos*] and **lose** his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Here it is being used to indicate the wealth and enjoyments of this world, or as we might say, life's worldly goods. I think that you can see here that Jesus is implying awfully strongly that this is not something that a man should seek after. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole *cosmos*"—all of life's earthly goods. For a man to do that is not good. In fact, it is evil.

We are going to turn away from that for just a bit. *Cosmos* is used collectively to indicate something. In James 3:6 it is talking about the tongue.

James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, a world [*cosmos*; universe, earth, local habitation, culture. How is it being used there?] of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

Boy! I will tell you, that does not sound very good. I think you are beginning to see *cosmos* has an evil connotation to it. It has a connotation that the Greeks never gave it. *Cosmos* did not mean or indicate or imply in any way anything evil to them, as we will see in a little bit.

But it certainly was evil to the apostles. Now what we have here is the word *cosmos* being used figuratively and symbolically as an aggregate of something: a world of lawlessness. The whole shmeared all bound together, gathered together—a world of unrighteousness, meaning a source. The tongue is a source of a **great** amount, a great collection, a whole assembly of sin. This agrees pretty much with what Jesus said—that "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." The tongue symbolically is used here to indicate the sum total; a world of evil. That is why James said no man can tame it.

Now it also carries other less-used but sometimes meaningful nuances when combined in a phrase. It can mean a majority of people, rather than all the inhabitants—just a majority of the people. In other words, there are minorities, but the majority is *cosmos*. It can even mean a means of livelihood. It is used in the Septuagint to indicate the time before the Flood. It means, at other places in the New Testament, a temporary value. It also means the object of God's judgment, and also the object of God's mercy, too. "God so loved the *cosmos* that He gave His only begotten Son."

Cosmos is a masculine noun, and it appears 188 times in the New Testament. It is used in some sense by every New Testament writer. Now I do not know whether you realize it, but 188 times is much more than the much more famous *agape*, or *charisma*. In fact it is used almost as many times as those three words combined. I tell you this because we are dealing here with no insignificant term to the New Testament church. To the first century church, this word meant—it implied and taught—a great deal. It is derived from the verb *kosmeo*.

Here is how the Greeks defined it. It meant to adorn. It meant to garnish. It means to decorate. It is used one time in the Bible in that sense, in I Peter, where he wrote about women adorning themselves in comely apparel. Now because of what the word literally meant, it came to be used in Greek to mean ordered, systematized, arranged, or regular disposition.

It would depend upon the context in which it was used. As simple as it may seem, it came to mean the world, even in Greek usage, because the Greeks could clearly see that the creation, especially the heavens, were clearly ordered, arranged, and beautifully adorned. To the Greeks it meant

something highly systematized. It meant something beautifully adorned. It did not mean or imply anything evil at all.

But the apostles took that word, that basic Greek application, and they syncretized it with their knowledge gleaned from the Old Testament as to the spiritual origins of the world's cultures. And combined with the teachings of Jesus that the world's cultures are in deadly opposition to God, that syncretized meaning became the primary usage of *cosmos* in the New Testament. *Cosmos* turned into something evil.

Again let me remind you that it is only in the Bible that it is evil.

I John 5:19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world [*cosmos*] lies in wickedness.

Or, "The whole world lies under the control of the evil one." That is a better translation.

For confirmation of that, I want you to turn to Luke 4, when Jesus and Satan had their confrontation.

Luke 4:6 And the devil said unto him [Jesus], All this power will I give you, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

Luke 4:5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

The whole world lies under the control of the evil one. The Old Testament clearly shows two things in regard to this. The first is, thankfully, God retained ultimate control, and Satan is used and restrained by Him for the purposes of His plan. In other words, what Satan said to Jesus was subject to the approval of the Father; but apart from the Father, the whole world is his. If he wants to give it to somebody, as long as God does not object, he could then give it to him.

It is sobering to think about that, about the power that Satan has at his disposal. It begins to give us an understanding of why John said that the whole world lies under the control of the evil one, and why the apostles wrote so frequently that the world **is evil**. That the whole world and its cultures are in disobedience and rebellion to Almighty God, because Satan is running the show as far as God will permit him. He is a dupe in God's hands, being used as God pleases, but I think you are beginning to learn that he has a great deal of latitude. Look at the world! Is it a fun place to live? It certainly is not.

Secondly, the Old Testament shows by example after example, through the brief biographies of the kings, that as the leadership went, so went the whole nation. If the leadership was evil, the nation seemed to blindly follow its leadership into evil as though what the leadership did was a stamp of approval.

Now what does that say about the whole world lying within the embrace of its leader Satan? John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, made this comment in regard to I John 5:19:

In this short expression, the horrible state of the world is painted in the most lively colors, a comment on which we have in the actions, conversations, contracts, quarrels, and friendships of worldly men.

Their actions are opposed to the law of God. Their conversations shallow and false. Their contracts forced, interested and deceitful. Their quarrels puerile, ridiculous and ferocious, and their friendships hollow, insincere, capricious and fickle—all the effect of lying in the arms of the wicked one; for thus they become instinct with his own spirits.

Is Satan evil? Then the world is evil. Is Satan evil? Then the world's cultures are evil. It is not hard to see why, with the background of the apostles, they took that word and changed its meaning. We have to live in this world, and we need to be forewarned, to be forearmed in what we allow the world to impress on us. It is there, and the warning becomes very clear—"Handle With Care"—because Satan is far wiser in an **evil** way than you are **pure** in a good way.

He succeeded in deceiving the whole world, and we were among them. The world may be attractive and appealing to the senses, but its spiritual reality is that it is in deadly opposition to God and to His way. The world is very much like the sparkingly beautiful apple offered by the wicked witch to Snow White: beautiful on the outside, but putting one to sleep spiritually when it is imbibed and becomes part of the inside. Are Laodiceans asleep at the switch? Does the parable in Matthew 25 say that we all went to sleep—all the virgins?

Do you know what put us to sleep? **The world did**, because that is where Laodiceanism comes from. It does not come from God. This is the cause of the scattering of the church because the effect of it was to destroy our faith. Once our faith began to wane, we began to drift away from God further and further and finally went to sleep at the switch almost totally, until God, in His mercy, began to shake us awake.

Romans 8 tells us a little bit about the spirit of the world.

Romans 8:5-8 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is **death**; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace, because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Now the spirit in man is capable of great material accomplishments. We have gone to the moon and back, and man out there in the world offers science and technology as evidence of man's constant improvement. They prophesy of an unlimited and glorious future, because man is **always** able to find the solutions. Right now the big idea is the globalization of commerce and politics and religion. But God says this spirit is deceitful above all things, and incurably sick (Jeremiah 17:9).

It is so diseased that it cannot be salvaged. It is **incurable**. Can Satan repent? He cannot. The spirit that he sends out that becomes the spirit that drives and motivates all who are unconverted (including us when we were walking

according to the course of the world), is also incurable as confirmed by God's Word. It is, according to verse 7, not subject to the law of God, and neither indeed can be.

In order for us to be saved, we have to be given an entirely **different** spirit. But that old spirit remains, and it keeps on driving as well. It is this spirit that has created this world as it now is. This spirit has been operating in the same evil and corrupt manner for six thousand years, and these people who are pushing the greatness of man and the greatness of human potential expect us to believe that it is going to suddenly change and produce a tranquil and productive paradise. All we need to do is globalize.

But brethren, Ephesians 2:1-2 says that we all walked—we all lived our lives—according to the course of this world. This spirit must not have dominion; we must be converted. That spirit is still driving and motivating this world. If it is not evil, immoral, and unethical, why does God demand that we change? None of it is in the image of God, nor will it **ever** be in the image of God.

There are religions out there, the New Age types, and it has crept into Protestantism and is probably creeping into Catholicism (in fact I am sure it has), that proclaim to us that all of us have a spark of God in us. Not true, brethren. Not until God calls us, we repent, and are converted and receive His Spirit. There is no spark of God in unconverted man. That spirit is wholly evil and has its source in Satan the Devil.

Now Paul's major point in this section here in Romans 8 is to make it clear that we cannot have both at the same time, because they are unalterably opposed to each other. We cannot have the world and God's Kingdom at the same time. The spirit that we are to be converted from *minds*—I want you to look at that word *mind*: "For they that are after the flesh do **mind**. . ."

We might say today "focuses on." But do you know what it literally means in the Greek? It means "sides with." It takes sides with, because it is oriented in that direction. It does not side with God. That is why it cannot obey the law of God and cannot be subject to it. By nature it sides with the world.

Therefore it sides with the temporary things of this life, in contrast to eternal

things of the Kingdom of God, and that is why Jesus said, "What does it profit a person if he gain the whole world?"

If the person spends his efforts trying to gain the whole world, he is taking sides up with the world. He is not with Christ. He is not with God, and it does not matter if he gains the whole world. It is going to do him no good eternally, because that which is out there is, in the eyes of God, totally evil and needs to be delivered and rescued from. What Paul wrote here in Romans 8 is in perfect accord with what John later wrote in I John 2. We are not to set our affections on the world, because it is passing away, and the lusts thereof.

In addition to that, Paul adds that this spirit is at war with God, as shown by its lack of obedience to God. Both this section by Paul here in Romans 8 and the other by John in I John 2 make it clear that God is forcing us to make a choice between two alternatives much as He did with Israel in Deuteronomy 30. Remember that? "*See, I have set before you this day life on the one hand, death on the other.*" That is what Paul is doing here. You cannot have **both**, and that is what John said. He said, "*Do not set your affections on the world, because it is passing away.*"

These two spirits—the Spirit of God, and the spirit of Satan that is in man—are opposed to one another. Therefore the instruction here in Romans 8 and in I John 2 is very clear. "Choose life."

I think I might touch on this a little bit more in my next sermon:

James 3:11-12 Does a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? Either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

Now just taking that principle and applying it to what you now know and understand is the source of the spirit in this world (Satan), does that not answer the question? Although there are things that we might consider to be materially good and attractive, as far as God is concerned, that spirit is totally evil.

Jesus had a number of things to say about the world:

John 8:43-44 Why do you not understand my speech? Even because you cannot hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own [or from his own resources]: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Jesus had just claimed that these Jews were of their father, Satan. Jesus said that, for He rejected their claim that God was their Father on the basis of their day-to-day conduct, as well as the immediate question before them during their discussion here in John 8.

"Children" is being used here in the sense of "one who shows the characteristics of." Get the picture here—the people confronting Jesus were part of, they were members of, what was supposed to be, at that time, the true church. They were the nation that had made the covenant with God, and here Jesus was telling them that they were in reality the children of the Devil because they were showing the characteristics of Satan in their conduct.

It is good I think for a minute here to reflect on what Paul later wrote about to the Corinthians. Those people were church members, were they not? They were converted. They were Christians. And yet here in I Corinthians 3 he tells them that they are yet carnal.

I Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

Now he does not doubt the fact that they are converted. They are "in Christ," but they are still carnal.

I Corinthians 3:2-4 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able, For you are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you

envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men? For while one says, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are you not carnal?

Is he not using the same sort of judgment that Jesus used on the Jews back in John 8? Judging by their conduct, these people were showing the characteristics of Satan the Devil rather than the characteristics of our Father in heaven. The image of their father Satan so dominated their lives that the image of God was not shining through. The very fact that they were a congregation in which people were envying establishes that. Is envy in the image of God?

Is fighting amongst ourselves in the image of God? Is splitting all over creation and being scattered in the image of God? This is pretty revealing in terms of why the church is scattered all over the place. Brethren, we are pretty carnal, and the image of Satan is showing right through our conduct. We are still very worldly, or the image of God would be showing through.

Now these people had made the covenant with God, and it is the same covenant that we have made—the New Covenant. You can see that New Covenant Christians—people who have the Spirit of God—can still be dominated by the spirit of this world, which the apostles indicated all over the New Testament is evil to the core. So, each one of us must be individually responsible for coming to recognize it in ourselves, or I might say, asking God to help us recognize it in ourselves, and then overcoming it by the power of God's Spirit.

Back in John 8, those people had chosen to believe the deception of Satan, his lies, rather than the simple truths of God. Their conduct and attitudes were the defining issues, because Jesus reasoned that if they were really the children of the true God they would accept and believe His Word. That is what He said. "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are of your Father the devil."

It does not take a rocket scientist to understand that. Instead, there was antagonism in these people so strong that they were plotting to kill Him. Later they denied it, and then later they proved what He said when they picked up rocks to throw at Him. See how deceived they were? They thought

they were pretty good Joes. They thought they were pretty good citizens. They thought they were children of God, and were so deceived. They were anti-Christ.

Notice the confidence that is here in John's writing:

I John 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sins not.

Or rather does not continue sinning, or does not practice sin. It does not mean that a Christian will never sin, but they will not practice it.

I John 5:18 But he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked [the same one mentioned in verse 19] touches him not.

I John 5:20-21 And we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

John said that we know that we belong to Him. Now how? How did he know? Well, we would actually have to read the whole book to get the context, but as you would go through the whole book you would find that it is not on the basis of boastful claims—you know, "I am a son of God," like the Jews said in John 8, or like the false ministers were doing in Paul and John's writings. But John was certain, based on their lives, that they were "in Christ"—it was substantiated by their conduct. He **knew** that they were obeying God.

To *claim* to belong to the family of God, to be a child of God, is one thing. But to exhibit the characteristics of God's family by means of obedience, love, and perseverance is another thing altogether. That is what is going to separate "the men from the boys." The children of God identify themselves by their conduct. They do not keep sinning.

They may sin, but they do not live sin as a way of life, and they guard themselves, and in turn are guarded by Christ so as not to be confronted with

a temptation greater than their strength. That is God's reward. God rewards those who are really making an effort to obey by protecting them from Satan. And so the children of God know God, and they keep themselves from idols.

John 8:45-47 And because I tell you the truth, you believe me not. Which of you convicts me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do you not believe me? He that is of God hears God's words: you therefore hear them not, because you are not of God.

There is a plain clear simple declaration of who is of God and who is not. Those who are of the same spirit as God will hear. They will believe. And that will in turn produce obedience. In order to confuse things, Satan will attempt to bring false doctrines before people, but I will not go into that. That is another subject.

John 15:18-23 If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hates me hates my Father also.

I think this is significant where it appears, because it is in Christ's final message to His disciples, and it includes these ominous words of solemn warning to those who choose to be like Christ rather than the world. If you read through the whole chapter, you will find that there is a very abrupt turn in the subject material right there at verse 18, because up until that time He is talking about things that are very positive and uplifting and good and encouraging.

He talks about how we are in union with Christ. "I am the vine and you are the branches," and He said you will glorify your Father if you bring forth much fruit. He talks about love, and He talks about friendship, and then

suddenly He drops this bomb on them: They are going to be hated, because the world hates them. The warning brethren—because we are bound to Him, it will separate us from those who do not share His approach to life.

Now how wide will the gulf be? Did you notice the word hate? That is pretty wide. Now why is this so? It is because of what He said earlier—because of our union with Him; He is the vine, we are the branches. We are in union with Him. According to God, this union is so close, we are perceived, in other places, as actually being a part of Christ's body (as if we are a cell within it). We are a cell within Christ's body; we are fed, nourished, strengthened, and protected by that body, by Christ's body.

The same is true here, but with less specifics in terms of the vine and the branch. But because we become part of that body, it will produce two communities in the world. There will be the church, and there will be the world, and as these verses are showing that the antagonisms between them is deep, it is fundamental, and it is perpetual.

Undoubtedly what Christ said here in John 15 is aimed primarily at the disciples, but He is also, at the same time, laying down a universal statement of the permanent condition of things once the church is formed and becomes Christ's body. The world will be in antagonism to the church until the world ceases to be the world. In other words, it is going to continue this way until Christ returns, and then there will be a different spirit that will be the fountainhead of the spirit of this world. Now Christ gives two closely related reasons for this hatred. The first one is stated in verses 18 and 19.

John 15:18-19 If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own.

The very language there carries the implication of a necessary and continual antagonism, and what He is showing is, that because He forms the church, there will be two very distinct bodies formed. The problem, brethren, is not just the spirit, but the fact that they are both vying for the same, shall we say prize, or thing: possession of this earth.

Now what happens, brethren, among nations when one nation invades the other? War results and the invaders become hated by those who are in possession of their own land. That is part of the approach that Satan and the demons take. "Hey! We were here first! God gave it to us." So never forget the source of the antagonism, the fountainhead that is producing the antagonism.

That antagonism was formerly directed solely at the Father and Son to the extent that the antagonist mounted up his army and went to heaven to make war against God. And so Jesus Christ is warning that once He formed the church, antagonism is going to be turned against the church, because the church is the inheritor of the earth. It is very similar to what happened when Israel came into Canaan: The Canaanites resisted.

Now the second reason is given by connecting the common thought in verses 16 and 19.

John 15:16 You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

John 15:19 Because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

"I have chosen you out of the world." Why? **To bring forth fruit; to share.** The reason we have been called out of the world is to share in the love and the life—eternal life, the way of life of Jesus Christ. And so we have two groups, and the fundamental principles that underlie each are in deadly antagonism. In the measure that you and I are Christians, we are in direct opposition to all the principles which rule the world and make it what it is, and what we believe to be the fundamental truth is passed off as being of little importance.

"We" and "it" stand in diametrical opposition of thought about God. The world does not think about God the same way that we do. The world does

not think about themselves in the same way that we do. They do not think about life in the same way that we do. They do not think about death in the same way that we do. We do not think about the future in the same way that they do. In every important area of life there is a deep and fundamental difference. Our perspectives and our approach to life are diametrically opposed. So we have the two factors. A way of life that is opposed to the world, and in a major way we are both striving for the same thing. They want to retain the earth; we want to inherit it.

II Timothy 3:10-12 But you have fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

The war between God and Satan is over, and God has clearly won. Jesus Christ fought His battle with Satan, and it is recorded there very briefly in Matthew 4 and Luke 4. He won that battle. Now it is our turn, because we have been chosen out of this world and are striving to live the way of God. The opposition appears on the surface to be men, but in reality it has its source in the spirit world **using** men. Now this does not mean that men are completely not responsible for what they do. There are choices that can still be made by them, and they can resist Satan the Devil if they so choose to. But we need to understand that the real enemies in this battle are the principalities and powers that Paul mentions there in Ephesians 6.

II Timothy 4:9-11 Do your diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with you: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

I wanted that verse, because here is a brief note on a converted man who caved in to the world's allure, and God recorded it for us. I think if we were saying this today, we would say this was a man who was really in a privileged position. Would you not like to have gone with Paul where he

went, and watched what he did, and listened to him preach, and see people converted, experience the experiences that he had? Paul had a difficult life, but it was an exciting life.

There is no doubt about it. It was a very rewarding life by his own terms. Here was a man (Demas) who had that opportunity to be with one of the greatest figures that ever lived in all of history, and to walk with him and talk with him and sit with him and talk about the Bible, pray with him, experience the sermons that he gave, and on and on.

But the world was such a powerful allurement to him he could not resist it. Being next to a great man or woman does not mean that their greatness is transferable. In that sense, everybody stands alone. It is interesting to compare Demas with the others there. There is no indication that Crescens or Titus had turned their backs on Paul, only that they had gone about their responsibilities in other areas. They were not with him, that is all. I think if they had done something evil, Paul probably would have said something, as he did about Demas.

Then there is Mark. He had formerly been dismissed by Paul as being unfit to be with him because he had not gone forth to do the work he was supposed to do in assisting Paul, and so an argument took place between Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas went off with Mark, but Mark was no longer with Paul. So they parted company. But now, in this letter to Timothy which is among the last that Paul ever wrote, he was now profitable to Paul, and Paul wanted Mark to be with him. So here we have a success story of one who repented and overcame his former weakness.

Luke, on the other hand, was steady as a rock, serving Christ by assisting Paul in his labors. Tradition says that he died in Greece at the age of 84, still steadfastly faithful to Christ. You see Demas is another story. In Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24, both of which were written earlier than II Timothy, it lists Demas as one of Paul's fellow workers, and I think that if there had been any change in Demas' status, that this grim warning would not have appeared to mark him for **all time** as being a victim of the world's allure.

I doubt very much whether Demas was a monster, but rather he was just a weak person who could not resist the constant attractions and distractions

and seductions of the world, because he loved it. Remember John's warning: "Love not the world." "Do not set your affections on the world." I do not know what it was with Demas, whether he wanted wealth, or comfort after all the difficult times with Paul. I do not know whether it was sex, I do not know whether it was escaping persecution, or escaping martyrdom. Maybe he wanted the preservation of his reputation.

Whatever it was, he loved it, or them, more than he loved Christ, and so he turned his back on principle, on duty, on friendship, on honor. **Everything** that is truly noble, as far as eternity is concerned, was buried with him in Thessalonica. Now all of us are exposed to the same danger, because the world envelopes us. But this one—Demas—this "too-weak-to-resist soul" is marked out in Scripture as a solemn warning to all of us that it can happen.

But it does not have to happen. It apparently did not happen to Luke, to Crescens, or to Titus, and most assuredly it did not happen to Paul, because they fixed their course and they exercised their faith in Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God, and they **chose** to stay the course by choosing the spiritual reality rather than the physical one.

Brethren, the world is in **deadly** antagonism against God—against the way of God, and the people of God—because of the spirit generated by the unseen prince of this world. It is essential that we always be aware and that we keep our guard up.