

Message Five

The Vision of the World

Scripture Reading: 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; Eph. 2:1-3, 12b; Gal. 1:4; Rom. 12:1-2

I. The Greek word for *world* in 1 John 2:15-17 and James 4:4 denotes an order, a set form, an orderly arrangement, hence, an ordered system (set up by Satan, the adversary of God), not the earth; the world is an evil system arranged systematically by Satan:

- A. God created man to live on the earth for the fulfillment of His purpose, but His enemy, Satan, in order to usurp the God-created man, formed an anti-God world system on this earth by systematizing men with religion, culture, education, industry, commerce, entertainment, etc., through men's fallen nature, in their lusts, pleasures, and pursuits, and even in their indulgence in necessities for their living, such as food, clothing, housing, and transportation.
- B. The whole of such a satanic system lies in the evil one (1 John 5:19; cf. Eph. 6:12); not loving such a world is the ground for overcoming the evil one (cf. 1 Pet. 3:3-4; Rev. 2:12-13a, 17); loving it just a little gives the evil one the ground to defeat and occupy us.
- C. Satan is utilizing the material world, the men of the world, and the things that are in the world to eventually head everything up in the kingdom of Antichrist; at that hour the world system will have reached its zenith, and at that hour every unit of it will be revealed to be anti-Christian; eventually, the kingdom of this world will become "the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ"—11:15; 2 Thes. 2:3-12; Dan. 2:44-45.
- D. All the things on the earth, especially those related to mankind, and all the things in the air have been systematized by Satan into his kingdom of darkness to occupy people and frustrate them from accomplishing the purpose of God and to distract them from the enjoyment of God; the world is Satan's mask that he uses to deceive us and cheat us.
- E. The world is against God the Father, and the things in the world are against the will of God (1 John 2:15-17); the world is against God, and those who love the world are enemies of God (James 4:4).
- F. "If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15); ultimately, when we touch the things of the world, the question we must ask ourselves always is, "How is this thing affecting my relationship with the Father?"
- G. This evil system, the kingdom of darkness, was judged when its ruler, Satan, was cast out by the Lord's being crucified in the flesh—John 12:31-32; 16:11.
- H. Galatians 6:14 reveals that the world has been crucified to us and we to the world; this has taken place not directly but through Christ, who was crucified; verse 15 proves that the world here is mainly the religious world (cf. 1:3-4).

II. After leaving God's presence (Gen. 4:16), Cain constructed a city for his protection and self-existence; within this city he produced a worldly culture without God (v. 17):

- A. In the garden God was everything to man—his protection, maintenance, supply, and amusement; when man lost God, he lost everything.
- B. Man's loss of God forced man to invent a worldly human culture, the main elements of which were cities for existence, cattle-raising for making a living, music for amusement, and weapons for defense—vv. 20-22.
- C. The godless culture invented in Genesis 4 will continue to develop until it climaxes in the great Babylon—Rev. 17—18.

III. The book of Exodus reveals that God desires to rescue His chosen people from every form of usurpation and preoccupation in the world so that they may have nothing besides God Himself—Gen. 50:26; Eph. 2:1-3, 12b; Gal. 1:4:

- A. To be saved is to be brought to a place where there is nothing but God—cf. Mark 9:7-8.
- B. In the wilderness, especially at Mt. Horeb, the mountain of God, God was His chosen people's center, their purpose, their life, their home, and their everything—Psa. 90:1.
- C. God's intention in giving His chosen people a revelation of the true nature, meaning, and issue of life in Egypt (the world) is to cause His people to hate and become disgusted with Egypt, to leave Egypt behind, and to be separated to God for His dwelling place—Exo. 5:1; 40:34; Rom. 12:1-2:
 - 1. The plague of the water becoming blood throughout the whole land of Egypt portrays that the nature and result of life in the world with its entertainment and amusement is death—Exo. 7:14-25.
 - 2. The plague of frogs portrays that life in the world is a life of nuisance and unending trouble—8:1-15.
 - 3. The plague of the dust becoming lice throughout all the land of Egypt portrays that the source of the supply of our living in the world eventually becomes a great discomfort and a cause of extreme irritation—vv. 16-19.
 - 4. The plague of swarms of flies portrays that the moral atmosphere of the world has been polluted, having been filled with all manner of unclean and evil things—vv. 20-32.
 - 5. The plague of a grievous pestilence that came upon all the Egyptian livestock portrays that the means of transportation and the way of eating in the world are judged by God and that His righteous judgment deals with the implications of a sinful situation—9:1-7.
 - 6. The plague of the ashes becoming fine dust to cause boils to break forth upon man and beast portrays that anything remaining of our fallen human life must be dealt with by God—vv. 8-12.
 - 7. The plague of hail mingled with fire damaging the produce of the earth portrays that if we are stubborn or rebellious, our relationship with God is destroyed, and He alters the spiritual function of the rain by sending hail upon our spirit and fire with the hail to cause severe damage—vv. 13-35.
 - 8. The plague of the wind bringing in locusts portrays that Satan eats up the supply of man's life and of everything related to man as he lives in the world under God's condemnation—10:1-20.
 - 9. The plague of thick darkness over all the land of Egypt portrays that the worldly life outside of God's presence is filled with terrible darkness—vv. 21-29.
 - 10. The plague of God's judgment upon all the firstborn in Egypt portrays that everything that is related to Adam, the first man as the firstborn, is condemned by God—11:1-10.
- D. It is only by receiving a revelation of the nature, significance, and result of life in the world and a revelation of God's attitude toward such a life that we can truly become detached from the world and hate the worldly life—1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4:
 - 1. To God, worldliness is worse than sinfulness; sinfulness is against God's righteousness, whereas worldliness is against God's holiness, which is higher than His righteousness.
 - 2. If we have a detailed vision of the world, we shall know God's attitude toward it, and we shall spontaneously cease to love it.
 - 3. If we would be God's dwelling place on the earth, we must know the world in a thorough way, and the element of the world must be purged out of our being—Rev. 2:12-13a, 17.