

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XVIII

November 8, 2009

No. 45

Me Against The World

Jerry Fite

John writes, “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. . . (I John 2:15)*. The Christian must develop a healthy attitude towards the world. It is negative: “*love not the world*”; but it is positive for our spiritual well-being. John is not saying we should not love people who live in the world. Certainly John, led by the Holy Spirit, would not contradict God who “*so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son*” so all the people of the world could be saved (*John 3:16*). The “world” denotes other concepts than people who make up the world

John has two other facets of the world in mind. First, we are not to favorably regard the world’s *philosophy*. For example, we must not get caught up in thinking that this life is all there is. If so, we will “*eat, and drink, for tomorrow we die*” (*I Corinthians 15:32*). We will compromise morals for convenience. Second, we are not to love “*the things*” that are in the world. John does not focus on specific “things” such as money, jewelry, or cars, but on our attitude toward things that are in the world: “. . . *The lust of the flesh and the lust of*

the eyes and the vainglory of life” (*I John 2:16*). Any thing that attracts our desirous eye, glitters with the promise of satisfying fleshly lusts, or strokes our pride in order to make us feel important are not the things we should love. If one does, “*the love of the Father is not in us him*” (*John 2:15*)

James puts it this way: “. . . *Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God*” (*James 4:4*). In the context of following the worldly philosophy of warring or killing in order to obtain, or desiring to obtain things to spend it in one’s own pleasures, James labels those who have bought in to this world’s philosophy as “*Ye adulteresses. . .*” (*James 4:4*). The Christian cannot be faithful to God and be friends or love the world.

Refusing to love or have a favorable regard for the world, we will be stronger to fulfill two other responsibilities regarding the world. We are “*not be fashioned according to this world*” and are to “*keep oneself unspotted from the world*” (*Romans 12:2, James 1:27*). We must have a healthy respect for this present world. It

provides and enticing mold to conform us to its own thinking. As it molds our thoughts, it blemishes our souls. A big red warning sign reading: “*Beware of the world*” should always occupy a prominent place in our minds, so we do not wander too close to the staining grasp of this world.

We must do more than just love “not”, we must fill our minds with the wisdom of God. We must “*renew*” our mind (*Romans 12:2*). We must think daily on that which is *pure, lovely, of good report, and virtuous (Philippians 4:8)*. As a caterpillar changes into a beautiful butterfly, the Christian manifests a beautiful change from this world’s mold.

We must not sit back thinking the Holy Spirit will take over living our life for us, for God expects us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. The Spirit offers to lead through his word, but we must follow His wisdom (*cf. Romans 8:14*). “*It is written. . .*” was on the Lord’s mind when he faced temptation. It should be on ours as we strive to keep unblemished.