

WORLDLINESS: THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS (I JOHN 2:15-17)

John has just been delineating for these people evidences of saving faith; to obey God (Vs' 3-6) and love the brotherhood (Vs' 7-11). Now he addresses the same issue from the different angle; love not the world (Vs. 15). The parenthetical comfort to the household of faith in the preceding verses is well placed; it shows that John is cognizant of the sensitivity of the problem that he was about to address. The other issues were positive; if we possess saving faith this is what to look for in our lives as evidences - obedience and love. But now John comes to a negative; this is what ought not to be there. It is the natural propensity of every son of Adam to see and magnify what positive evidences, however small, are there and not to see what negative evidences, however large, ought not to be there. The pervasive nature of worldliness renders it a deadly enemy to the soul; it is a snake in the grass! (cf. Matthew 16:26).

1. THE PROHIBITION OF WORLDLINESS

Notice the extent of this prohibition. This is the world that the Lord created, that he said was all very good (Genesis 1:31). But in the inscrutable wisdom of God, Satan has derailed the purpose of God and man has deranged the plan of God and the good of this world. This world as a system (in its philosophies, designs, intents, and manner of living) then is so completely alienated from God, existing in a state of complete hostility to God (John 1:10; 7:7; 14:17; I John 5:19). Satan is referred to as "*the God of this world*" (II Corinthians 4:4), the wisdom of this world God calls "*foolishness*" (I Corinthians 1:20) and the masses of this world God describes in Genesis 6:5.

2. THE PORTRAIT OF WORLDLINESS

In Vs. 16 John gives a 'three-dimensional' portrait; see next study.

3. THE PROBLEM OF WORLDLINESS

In Vs. 17 John moves away from the actual sin of loving the world and identifies an inherent problem in it: the fact that it is temporary and its joys mere vanity. In the end this world will betray its own devotees! It's fashions are transitory (I Cor. 7:31) and in the end it will pass evaporate. This snake in the grass will inflict a deadly wound. The attractions and glitter of this world, the lure of living is, like the proverb that describes the wine that looks attractive in the glass but in the end "*it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder*" Prov. 23:32