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# All that is in the world

## *Notes on 1 John 2:15-16*

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We must distinguish between the world (Gr. kosmos) as:

1. the created reality of heaven and earth (John 1:10),
2. the world of peoples and men (John 3:16), and
3. the world system that has been hostile to God since the fall of Satan and of the first Adam and is controlled by the ruler of the world and his powers.

We must not love this world system, which is in the grip of the evil one (1 John 5:19). God's commandment is: Do not love the world! In principle, the world and its ruler have already been judged at the cross (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Gal. 1:4; 6:14; Eph. 6:12; Col. 2:15). But only after the coming Kingdom of Peace is the final judgment meted out to Satan (Rev. 20:10). After the judgment of the dead before the Great White Throne, a new heaven and a new earth will follow, in which there is no more sin or curse (Rev. 21:1-8).

In 1 John 2:15a we are dealing first with the world as a whole, and then with the world in its elements and their attractiveness for ourselves ("what is in the world"). This is elaborated in verse 16, where all that is in the world is described in its threefold and comprehensive nature:

1. the lust of sinful flesh;
2. the desire of the eyes;
3. the pride of life.

There is a parallel with Genesis 3:6 and Luke 4:1-12, where we see respectively the fall of the first man Adam and the perfection of the second Man, when they were tested in these three areas of life.

Three examples are known of people who were punished with leprosy after their failure in one of these areas: Miriam's rebellion (Num. 12:10), Gehazi's greed (2 Kings 5:27), and Uzziah's pride (2 Chron. 26:19). Perhaps these cases are primarily about the pride of life, although the lust for money and goods also played a role in Gehazi's case.

The pride of life is certainly seen in the vain glory of Haman in Esther 3 and 6:6, of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:30, and of King Herod in Acts 12:20-23. In this expression, the word "life" (Gr. bios) in itself has a neutral meaning. It refers to earthly goods, material things, or our sustenance (Mark 12:44). The question, however, is how we want to use these things: Do they serve to exalt and glorify ourselves, or are they used for a life in dependence on the Creator?

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