

1 John Series

Charles Clough

www.bibleframework.org

SESSION #19 2/16/14

The Purpose: The Indirect Strategy of Envelopment Controls True Progress in the Church Age

I. Review & Introduction: (Slide 2)

1:1–4	Prologue—call to sharing eternal life with God through the apostles
1:5–2:11	Preamble—daily interacting with the Triune God
	1:5–2:2 fellowship with God the Father at His Holy Integrity
	2:3–8 fellowship with God the Son at His Commandments
	2:9–11 fellowship with God the Holy Spirit at His work in believers
2:12–27	Purpose—call to resist the doomed world system and its Christ-denying teachers
	2:12–14 resistance begins with confidence in the Spirit’s work in one’s life
	2:15–17 resistance utilizes the strategic envelopment of the world-system being accomplished by the Father
	2:18–27 resistance adheres to the Spirit-confirmed, once-for-all time apostolic doctrine that renders innovation unnecessary and contradictory

(Slide 3)

SELF-EVALUATION: Am I responding to an inner feeling in order to violate God’s design? Separate that from legitimate feelings—hunger, thirst, pain, sorrow? Am I managing my flesh or is it managing me?

SELF-EVALUATION: Am I responding to some external attractive object I see that I want intensely enough that I am willing to disobey God’s Word? Am I managing my sense of aesthetics and beauty or has it been taken over by a covetous spirit?

SELF EVALUATION: Am I so immersed in my plans for the details of life that I’ve forgotten my creature status—that I brought nothing into this world and shall take nothing out?

2:17

“Strategic Envelopment”

World and its lusts is passing away

“Progress” in the Church Age—see chapter 10 in *An Introduction to the New Covenant*

(Slide 4) **1 John 2:8, 17; Rev. 5:9–10**

“The darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. . . . And the world is passing away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

1 John 2:8, 17

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation and have made us kings and priests to our God and we shall reign on the earth.”

Revelation 5:9–10

- On earth we see only ever-changing locations where the gospel flourishes for a time and then declines.
- In Heaven, however, we would see an ever growing body of believers with increasing diversity so as to include representatives from every tribe, language, gatherings, and defined groups.

II. THE “INDIRECTNESS” OF GOD’S CHURCH-AGE STRATEGY

(Slide 5) Indirect strategy in operation (B. H. Liddell-Hart, *Strategy*, p. 25) as seen in Christ and Christian life

*“Effective results in war have rarely been attained unless the approach has had such indirectness as to ensure the opponent’s unreadiness to meet it. The indirectness has usually been physical, and always psychological. In strategy, the longest way round is often the shortest way home. . . . The aim is to weaken resistance before attempting to overcome it; and the effect is **best attained by drawing the other party out of his defenses.**”*

Examples:

- Jesus **John 12:31–32** (Slide 6)
- “Unlearned” believers **1 Cor. 2:6–8**

“Now is the judgment of this world, now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. . . . After the piece of bread, Satan entered into [Judas]. Then Jesus said to him, ‘What you do, do quickly.’ . . . He then went out and it was night.”
John 12:31–32; 13:27, 30.

“We do not speak the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God . . . which none of the rulers of this age knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

1 Corinthians 2:6–8

- Christian soldiers **Eph. 6:11–17** (Slide 7)
- Vulnerable believers **1 Pet. 3:15–16**

“Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the [cunning trickery] of the devil. . . . Take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day. . . . Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth. . . . And above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. . . .”

Ephesians 6:11-16

“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you. . . . that when they defame you as evildoers. . . . they may be ashamed.”

1 Peter 3:15-16

There is coming a separation of good and evil with evil put into an eternal quarantine: (Slides 8 & 9)

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it from whose face the earth and heaven fled away. . . . And I saw the dead—small and great—standing before God . . . And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. . . . And anyone not found in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”
Revelation 20:11–15

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . . but the . . . unbelieving . . . murderers, sexually immoral, . . . idolaters . . . shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire . . . the second death.”

Revelation 21:1–8

To avoid this apocalyptic end of history, unbelief has constructed counterfeits: (Slide 10)

1. Western Culture’s Enlightenment centering on human reason: Bertrand Russell’s version

“That Man is the product of *causes which had no prevision* of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hope and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the *outcome of accidental collocations of atoms*; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can *preserve an individual life beyond the grave*; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius are *destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system*, and that the whole temple of Man’s achievement must inevitably be *buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruin* – all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy that rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation henceforth be safely built.” Bertrand Russell, “A Free Man’s Religion” (1903) essay in *Mysticism and Logic* (1917) pg. 45–46.

2. Pre-Christian Paganism lacking confidence in human reason: Hinduism best example by belief in a supra-rational mysticism. (Slide 11)

“There is no plurality and no change. Nature which presents the appearance of plurality and change is mere illusion (maya).” Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, trans. A. S. Geden (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1906), 237.

but he that does the will of God abides forever (Slide 12)

Our eternal identity is being shaped here and now in time—this identity goes unaltered into the eternal Kingdom of God whereas whatever is connected with the fallen cosmos is discarded.

“Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them. . . . And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. . . . Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold I make all things new,’ and He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’ ”
Revelation 20:11–15

John’s argument:

1. The Church lives within fallen creation that is now under limited control of the Evil One (**1 Jn. 5:19, “the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one”**).
2. We must understand that we constantly face a choice to **either** align ourselves with this “evil order” **or** align ourselves with our Creator-Savior-Judge and Father (**1 Jn. 2:15**). There is no “neutral zone” because there can only be one ultimate authority at a time that we follow.

Only two ultimate authorities:

1. Creator as our Judge to Whom we are responsible/accountable.
2. Autonomous thinking and irresponsibility. Hard to become aware of one’s ultimate authority to interpret the facts at hand since modern education tends to suppress discussion at these deeper levels:

- a. Not readily visible for trivial disputes like the price of gasoline at the SHELL station
- b. Now think of 9/11, abortion, homosexual behavior—interpretation of the facts relies increasingly upon one’s worldview
- c. Then think of creation vs. cosmic evolution—both theories explain the available facts so our interpretation of the facts relies entirely upon our worldview.

Biblical examples:

Rom. 4:17–21 “God who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did . . . [Abraham] contrary to hope in hope believed according

to what was spoken . . . and not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old) and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform."

So we have:

Prov. 1:7, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge [not the end of knowledge] but fools despise wisdom"

Rom. 3:4, "Let God be true and everyman a liar"

Col. 2:3, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"

3. If we follow the "evil order" we invest our life in choices that have no eternally productive consequences.

4. Therefore to preserve our rewards, we must not allow the "evil order" to seduce us (**1 Jn. 2:28 "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming"**).