

HANDLING THE DOCTRINAL CORRUPTION OF GOD'S PREDESTINATION

III. Christ's Clarification Of The Corruption's Spread And Its Solution

(Revelation 2:24-25; 3:1-3, 8b, 11, 14-17)

I. Introduction

- A. A huge debate afflicts evangelicals on the doctrines of election and predestination, with Augustinian-Calvinists saying God author's man's faith opposite Pelagian-Arminians who claim man helps save himself.
- B. Remarkably, as we will learn in this lesson series, both schools are impacted by errant beliefs, and Christ predicted this doctrinal corruption's development in Revelation 2:24-25; 3:1-3, 8b, 11, 14-17. We view His prophetic overview of that corruption's spread in history and its solution for our insight and edification:

II. Christ's Clarification Of The Corruption's Spread And Its Solution, Rev. 2:24-25; 3:1-3, 8b, 11, 14-17.

- A. We before learned that Christ's messages to the 7 churches in Revelation chs. 2-3 address Christians in the 7 eras of Church History – Ephesus the Apostolic Church (Rev. 2:1-7; Acts 2 [Pentecost] to A. D. 100), Smyrna the Persecuted Church (Rev. 2:8-11; A. D. 64-311), Pergamum the Compromising Church (Rev. 2:12-17; A. D. 300-800), Thyatira the Apostatizing Church (Rev. 2:18-29; A. D. 800-1517), Sardis the Post-Reformation Church (Rev. 3:1-6; A. D. 17th & 18th centuries), Philadelphia the Fundamentalist Church (Rev. 3:7-13; A. D. 19th & 20th centuries) and Laodicea Today's Evangelical Church (Rev. 3:14-22; A. D. 1950 to the Rapture).
- B. After the era of Pelagius and Augustine of the Pergamum Compromising Church, Martin Luther and John Calvin of the Thyatiran Church era opposed the errant works gospel of the Roman Catholic Church that had come from infiltrating pagans in the Pergamum era. However, the Pelagian and Augustinian errors on divine predestination were not yet solved. Nevertheless, Christ knew the stress caused by the stand the Reformers had taken were so great, He said He would not put any more burden on them (Rev. 2:24), but to hold fast to what they had until He came, Rev. 2:25. So, opposing the self-help Pelagian salvation of the Catholic Church, Luther and Calvin relied on Augustine's paganistic Neo-platonist view of predestination, that God gives one an immediate gift of faith to be saved, James Atkinson, The Great Light, 1968, p. 181-182.
- C. In the Post-Reformation Church era, Christ directed that believers of this era finish what was not completed by the Reformers, Rev. 3:1-3. Jonathan Edwards, John and Charles Wesley and George Whitfield were all used of God to produce the Great Awakening revivals in America and Great Britain, but John Wesley held to the Arminian position that man freely believes so God elects him to be saved based on His foreknowledge of that will while George Whitfield held to Calvinism, that God eternally predestined certain ones to believe to be saved. The Pelagian view was promoted in the Arminian system held by Wesley and the Augustinian view in the Calvinist system held by Whitfield, these two views still not being corrected from the ancient pagan corruption in them. (A Skevington Wood, The Inextinguishable Blaze, 1968, p. 231-234)
- D. With this problem still not addressed, Christ's words to the Philadelphian Fundamentalist Church at Rev. 3:8b, 11 indicate that this group still had a little spiritual strength though it had not denied His Scripture's divine inspiration or His deity, that they should hold fast that which they had that no man take their crown. The implication is that the unsettled Neo-platonic error of Augustine and the unsettled Stoic error of Pelagius that had been carried forward unresolved ever since the era of the Pergamum Church was hindering a complete reliance on the Holy Spirit's power for effective life and service for 19th and 20th century Fundamentalists!
- E. Viewing our era, we see the Stoic and Neo-platonic errors have blossomed, leaving us spiritually destitute:
 - 1. Today's Laodicean evangelical Church is "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked" (Rev. 3:14-17b), what we have noted in our series on "Revisiting Church History" (Rev. 2-3) critiques both the five points of Calvinism and the five points of Arminianism with the false spiritualities each set of points produces.
 - 2. In all, Pelagian-Arminians have tried to create a spirituality by a meritorious kind of faith, resulting in a futile, spiritually powerless life, and Augustinian-Calvinists have relied on God's predestination for spiritual vitality versus responsibly relying on the Holy Spirit's power for effective life and service.
- F. Christ's solution is for believers to ask Him to arrange for trials to occur in their lives that drive them to part company with their respective false spiritualities and rely on the Holy Spirit for life and service, Rev. 3:18-22.

Lesson: *Though Arminianism is corrupted with pagan Stoicism and Calvinism with pagan Neo-platonism, what has hindered true spirituality for centuries in the history of the Church, by relying on Christ to allow for trials of our faith to rise, we can be purged of false spirituality and rely on the Holy Spirit for effective life and service.*

Application: *May we look to God to purge us from long-term pagan error that we might live in holiness and power.*