

REVELATION: CALL TO HOLINESS IN VIEW OF PROPHECY
Part II: "The Things Which Are": Profiting From God's Word To US"
G. Laodicea: Evangelicalism - Calling Evangelicals To True Spirituality
(Revelation 3:14-22)

- I. **As we learned in previous studies, Revelation 2-3 contains Christ's comments for the welfare of believers throughout Church History.**
- II. **Christ's word to the Laodiceans addresses OUR Evangelical era*:**
- A. The word "Laodicea" (v. 14a) along with Christ's attributes to **solve** the group's needs (3:14b) identify it as **post-liberalism's Evangelicals**:
1. "Laodicea" = "judged by the people," L. & S., Gr.-Eng. Lex., 1029
 2. As the "Amen," Jesus causes **godly** laymen to **accept** sermons by God's Spirit-led pastors, 2 Cor. 1:20 with Ryrie St. Bib., KJV fn.
 3. As the "Faithful & True Witness" (Jer. 42:5), God **disciplined** (Rev. 19:11) those who **errantly** felt **Jeremiah** was **NOT led by GOD** as they were **thus burnt** by a **prior** ruler, Jer. 40:5-43:13!
 4. As "Head of creation," Jesus **rules all** beings, human and angelic both within and outside the local church, cf. Colossians 1:15-18.
 5. Decoded: post-Liberal laymen are tempted to think Evangelical pastors are **not** led by **God** since they still smart from being burned by past, errant pastors. **Evangelical** pastors are tempted to **react carnally** to this laity distrust instead of **trusting** Christ's headship.
- B. Jesus exposes the **error** of such **pastors' carnal reactions**, 3:15-17:
1. Lacking water, Laodicea built 2 pipes to bear cold **and** hot water from outside. Yet, these pipes lay exposed to nature, so **both** gave **lukewarm** water fit only as an "emetic," New Bib. Dic., p. 716-717
 2. So, pastors, reacting to distrusting laity, are tempted to manipulate to yield **artificial** results to earn the church's confidence, 3:15-17!
 - a. "I am rich" = Zech. 11:5 as rulers **abuse** God's flock for money.
 - b. "I have become wealthy" = Hosea 12:8 where income gained **wrongly** is called **holy** since it is **gain!** ("**any results = good**")
 - c. "I have need of nothing" = 1 Th. 4:12b's good **external** success (results via external efforts are viewed as **spiritual fulness**).
 3. Yet, such pastoral effort **fails** to gain **God's** approval, 3:16-17, 19:
 - a. The **quenching** works ("cold" **legalism**) of **Fundamentalist** pastors in abusing for external results fails to apply their **beliefs**, so their works = futile ("lukewarm"), 3:16-17: (a) They teach Christ died **for sin** but live by the sin nature ("wretched" = Rom. 7:24!) (b) They teach Christ's deity but live for **this life only** ("miserable" - 1 Cor. 15:17-19!) (c) They teach Christ's miraculous virgin birth but don't **live** by **faith** ("poor" = 1 Pet. 1:7!) (d) They teach Scripture is inerrant but don't understand it ("blind" = Mtt. 13:13!) (e) They teach Christ's return but their works can't pass His bema seat appraisal ("naked" = Rev. 19:8).
 - b. Manipulating to **free** inhibitions ("hot" **license**), **Charismatic** pastors **also** err, 3:19: (a) upstaging "cold" Fundamentalists, these pastors try **releasing** their peoples' **inhibitions!** (b) **Yet**, "Whom I love I chasten" **negates** belief in spirituality via **freed inhibitions!** (c) "Zealous" recalls this group's taking "zealous" in 1 Cor 12:31; 14:1, 39 (Abbot-Smith, A Man. Grk. Lex., p. 195) to be God's urging us to treat **alleged uninhibiting** "sign gifts" as valid! Thus, Christ's call to "be zealous" and **repent** uses this group's favored term to show its **spirituality is false!**
 4. Christ calls **both** carnal Fundamentalist and Charismatic pastors to repent before their **own works expose themselves**, Rev. 3:18-19!
- C. Re: job success ("counsel" = Jn. 18:14), (1) Christ calls pastors to gain **eternal** reward by **arranging** for them be mistreated by carnal men for living by grace and not by the flesh (Rev. 3:18a; Isa. 55:1 & "gold" in 1 Pet. 1:6-7; Mtt. 5:10-12). Christ calls them to (2) let **Him give** them **true** ministries **by grace** ("white garments" = Rev. 19:8) & (3) **gain** Scripture **insight by grace** to **disciple** ("see" & Isa. 8:20-9:2) or be **castaway** from being **used** by the Lord! (3:16-19 & 1 Cor. 9:27).
- D. So, a pastor must counter **Satan's lure to look good** as **man** sees him, 1 Jn. 2:14; Rev. 3:21a. As v. 20-21 = Lk. 12:13-48, if he views Christ as his **Source** of success (Lk. 12:13-40) & faithfully, gently teaches Scripture **without** pressing laymen to give or build externals, **God gives** him true success (12:42-43) and influence over His whole realm (Lk. 12:44; 3:14d)! A pastor thus overcomes like **Jesus** did in being exalted after **similar** leadership trials, 3:21; Ps. 110; Lk. 4:1-13.
- E. The text applies to churches, also, 3:22: thus, believers in the **pew** are to obey **God** in relating to their overseers' ministries to be blessed or experience God's discipline [seen in Jer. 42-43], cf. "II,A,3" above.

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

There are times that you, along with me as your Pastor, would just love to get on an 800 number to Almighty God in heaven and ask

His input on **current** Church related matters. Here are some reasons:

(1) I have talked with many of our congregation who have reported to me of all sorts of spiritually abusive situations in churches you know, or from which you have come. Some have seen pastors politically "muscle" out of their jobs and left churches, disillusioned and wondering if you'd ever go back again. Some have shared me tales of pressure gimmicks by other pastors to get people to give, to attend all the services of the Church during a given week, etc., etc.

Ron Enroth's book, Recovering From Churches That Abuse, has an ad for in a Christian Book Distributor's flyer promoting his work that says: "...Enroth points the way to spiritual and emotional recovery for Christians hurt by legalism, manipulation, excessive discipline and spiritual intimidation. You'll learn to cope with feelings of disorientation, anticipate backlash after exit, make decisions...and relate to friends still trapped in spiritually abusive environments."

One man who once attended our Church and has since moved to another state for job reasons, when he had left a Church in our area for its legalistic problems, was so hounded after he left that he sold his house and moved to Canaan to get away from it all!

(2) Even within our own body there occasionally rise crises and needs become painfully apparent! For me to try to enumerate some of them would not be necessary, for you probably know a lot more about them than I do!

Well, In view of the problems existing in Bible churches like Nepaug, churches that have made a clean break with Liberal Theology, WHAT message might GOD have for US for us to be spiritual overcomers in OUR era of Church History?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "Pastor, we all KNOW even Gospel-preaching churches like NEPAUG have spiritual needs, so, what are God's words to US so WE can be overcomers in God's program in OUR era of history?"

Lesson Application: (1) ALL of us must trust in Christ to be saved, Jn. 3:16. (2) Then, (a) I as Pastor must REFUSE to try to AIM to look good carnally even if some doubt I am led by God. I must trust God to work in us all to support and develop ministries as I teach His Word. (c) Since Rev. 3:22 applies this text to churches, so you as a body will be blessed if you heed God.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

(1) As many of you know, our Church's financial situation has been rather tight in recent months, but the Church Board members and I have tried to avoid pressing you for more donations. We have merely informed you of our budget needs so God could lead us in the matter.

This attempt to live and minister by grace has been blessed of the Lord. Last Tuesday on my way to the office, I was in prayer about our Church's finances. As I got to the office, I opened my e-mail to find a message from our Church Treasurer, Oma Jean. She revealed we had received a large offering last Sunday which also included an undisclosed amount to be used to buy a frig for Fellowship Hall! (I later learned from Don Ereminas that the offering was \$9,000!)

I was aware Don Ereminas, our Board Chairman was told of a refrigerator someone wants to **donate**, so I e-mailed Don & Oma Jean about all of this for the fun job of figuring how to handle God's gifts!

What is even more special about that offering is that, prior to last Sunday's service, the Board had decided NOT to announce our financial needs AGAIN as they felt doing so might unduly press you as a congregation to give more! Some may already be flat out in their ability to give, and we wanted to avoid being legalistic. So, in keeping with their wish to avoid any such manipulation, the LORD had ALREADY moved in our body to meet to the needs! We can only praise GOD in this!