

REVISITING CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO TODAY'S EVANGELICALS

Part I: Identifying Revelation 3:14-22 As Christ's Message To Today's Evangelicals

(Revelation 3:14-22)

I. Introduction

- A. Though all Scripture is God-breathed and equips us unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17), it would be important that we **heed God's** comments *ESPECIALLY to US* in *OUR era WERE* He to have **made** them!
- B. Christ actually *DID* this in Revelation 3:14-22, and we validate this claim in this introductory lesson:

II. Identifying Revelation 3:14-22 As Christ's Message To Today's Evangelicals, Revelation 3:14-22.

- A. God has a personal message in the book of Revelation for every believer between John's era and the rapture:
 - 1. Rev. 1:1, 3 states that Revelation is God's message to His servants on what will occur in the **near term!**
 - 2. Since John wrote the book of Revelation over 1900 years ago (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1785), for the book's message to be **near term** for **each** of God's servants, there **must** be **sections** of **prophetic messages** in the book that address **each Christian's ERA** in **Church History**.
- B. The Rev. 2-3 churches can be seen as successive eras of Church History (B. K. C., N. T., p. 932; J. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come, p. 151ff). In our "Thru the Bible Synthesis" series, we identified 7 eras: (1) Rev. 2:1-7 - **Ephesus**, Apostolic Church (A. D. 33-100); (2) Rev. 2:8-11 - **Smyrna**, Persecuted Church (64-311); (3) Rev. 2:12-17 - **Pergamum**, Compromising Church (300-800); (4) Rev. 2:18-29 - **Thyatira**, Catholic Church (800-1517); (5) Rev. 3:1-6 - **Sardis**, Reformation Church (1517-1890); (6) Rev. 3:7-13 - **Philadelphia**, Fundamentalism (1890-1950); (7) Rev. 3:14-22 - **Laodicea**, Current Evangelicalism (1950-Rapture).
- C. Each Rev. 2-3 message starts with the Greek expression **Tade legei** that elsewhere in the N. T. appears only in Acts 21:11 for a **prophetic** message of a **near term** event. (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 844; Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 396; Moul. & Ged., A Con. of the Grk. Test., p. 683) The messages are thus of 7 successive, near term events.
- D. The phrase "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear" appearing in **each** Rev. 2-3 message, according to Matthew 13:9-17, signals that **each** message is in **parable form** to be **Biblically clarified** by and for **God's** servants.
- E. Using this Biblical clarification as a guide, we identified the 7 eras listed in "II, B" above as correct in our "Thru the Bible Synthesis" series, with Fundamentalism (Rev. 3:7-13) being the 6th era that ended with WWII.
- F. In viewing Rev. 3:7-13 in that series, we learned that God punished mainly Europe for heeding 20th century Liberal Theology's use of Darwinian uniformitarian evolution to deny the divine inspiration of Scripture and the truth of the 2 Peter 3:4-10 prediction by **Fundamentalists** that uniformitarian evolution was false, and that the universe would pass away with fervent heat. God allowed the explosions of two atom bombs to end WWII publicly to vindicate Fundamentalism's theological accuracy and to validate the truthfulness of 2 Peter 3:4-10!
- G. Then, about 1950, "new evangelicals" tried to **boost outreach** by **abandoning Fundamentalism's separation** from the world by **asserting** a presumed **more marketable** Reformed Theology **posture** before the lost world and by interacting intellectually with unsaved scholars. (Armstrong, The Coming Evangelical Crisis, p. 29-31)
- H. The **result** of this effort has been an **unedifying advance** of the old **Calvinist-Arminian divide**, Ibid., p. 32-33:
 - 1. Arminian Charismatics reacted to Augustinian-Calvinist predestination in the push for Reformed Theology by stressing **false experience** (Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics, p. 30-31; Ibid., Armstrong, p. 179)
 - 2. A preoccupation with pagan philosophy by "New Arminian" evangelicals in their interacting with unsaved intellectuals led them to react to Calvinism like **old Liberal theologians**, creating deep error, Ibid., p. 33f.
- I. Thus, Christ's Rev. 3:15-16 complaint that the Laodiceans were **neither** the **desired** "cold" nor the **desired** "hot" water fits this twofold classification of today's evangelicals who come after the Fundamentalist era:
 - 1. Laodicea piped in cold water from Colossae and hot water in from Heliopolis via conduits laid **overland**, but their **exposure** to the elements left **both** pipes producing only **lukewarm** water. (New Bib. Dic., p. 717)
 - 2. Similarly, **Calvinists** try to advance **doctrinal accuracy** (desired "cold" water) and **Arminians** try to advance **experiential vibrancy** (desired "hot" water). However, as we will display in coming lessons in this lesson series, Christ exposes **grave deficiencies** in **both theologies** and their **effects** on life and ministry due to these theologies' having been corrupted by pagan ideologies of the world! [That things are very wrong in Evangelicalism is clear to 14 **key Evangelical leaders** who have called for a **great change** in evangelicalism to avoid a "potentially lethal" crisis for the entire movement, Ibid., Armstrong, p. 18.]

Lesson: Christ's words to the Revelation 3:14-22 Laodiceans is His message to each of us believers in our era!

Application: May we all heed Christ's message in Revelation 3:14-22 for our lives and ministries for His blessing!