

REVISITING CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO TODAY'S EVANGELICALS

Part II: Christ's All-Sufficiency For Evangelicals Presented

C. Christ's All-Sufficiency For Evangelizing The UnsavEd

(Revelation 3:14b(c))

I. Introduction

- A. In prophetically addressing us believers in our *current Evangelical* era of Church History, our Lord implied a great lack exists among **Evangelicals** on effectively *evangelizing* the **unsaved**.
- B. Revelation 3:14b(c) shows us Christ's all-sufficiency for meeting this need of **today** as follows:

II. Christ's All-Sufficiency For Evangelizing The UnsavEd, Revelation 3:14b(c).

- A. In **preparing to comment** on today's *Evangelical era*, Jesus gave a threefold description of *Himself* in Rev. 3:14b KJV as "The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."
- B. The **third title**, "the beginning of the creation of God," reveals Christ's all-sufficiency for *evangelism*:
 1. The Greek word for "beginning" is *arche*, "ruler" NIV, and only in Rev. 3:14 and Col. 1:15-18 does *arche* with *ktisis*, "creation," show Christ's relation to creation, M. & G., A Con. to the Grk. Test., p. 110f, 564.
 2. Col. 1:15-18 is also bordered before and after in the context by verses that refer to believers' conversions.
 3. Col. 1:15-18 then presents Christ as having the Preeminence and as being the Source and Ruler in conversions: (a) In verse 15 He is the "Firstborn" of all creation and (b) in verse 18 He is the *arche*, Ruler. (c) Since the Col. 1:15 title "Firstborn" expresses Christ's **preeminence** and if Col. 1:15-18 pictures Him as the **Creator** and **Ruler** of all creation in the context of **conversions**, then Rev. 3:14b(c) implies that **Christ** has the *preeminence* as the **Creator** and **Ruler** in the *conversions* of *every person* who is *saved*!
 4. Colossians 1:15-18 also depicts Christ as Creator and Ruler over all visible and invisible thrones, powers and rulers, so He is sovereign over Satan and the demons who oppose evangelism, 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 6:12.
- C. This insight in view of evangelical history reveals *how today's evangelicals* have *erred* in *evangelism*:
 1. John Wesley's *errant* Arminian view in the 18th century Great Awakening that man contributes his faith to help save himself (as in Charismatic-Arminianism) *led EVEN many LATER theologically conservative fundamentalists* to *use experience-based, coercive means* to *convert* the *unsaved* (Joshua Zeitz, Lincoln's God, 2023, p. 23-51; Lewis S. Chafer, True Evangelism, 1911). [Chafer, the founder of Dallas Seminary, began to criticize such methods in 1911, but John R. Rice, Bob Jones, Sr. and others greatly opposed him!]
 2. Fundamentalists typically did not promote intellectual progress and they separated from the secular culture and mainline churches, what Neo-Evangelical leader Harold Ockenga claimed hurt outreach. So, around 1950, Neo-Evangelicals began to "engage" unsaved intellectuals by using Reformed Theology, thinking it was more respected by unsaved intellectuals than fundamentalism (J. H. Armstrong, gen. ed., The Coming Evangelical Crisis 1996, p. 31, 33). [Billy Graham's crusades began in 1947 in fundamentalist circles, but Neo-Evangelicals influenced Graham to team up with Liberal Theology leaders to increase his audiences!]
 3. However, unsaved intellectuals *rejected Reformed Theology's view* that *God chose who can even believe* in Christ, what has led *many* evangelicals, and *some* in the *Reformed* camp, to adopt *Arminian* or *Liberal Theology views* such as critiquing an alleged "all-determining and manipulative transcendent (male) ego" in God [Arminianism] or holding to "a wrathless deity and an unnecessary cross," rejecting an "eternal hell" or claiming that "non-Christian religions" can be "redemptive." [Liberal Theology] (Ibid., p. 34-35)
- D. The *solution* to these problems in *Evangelical evangelism* is to *rely on Christ's all-sufficiency to evangelize*:
 1. We must hold to belief in **Christ's Preeminence** as **Creator** and **Sustainer** of the *universe*, and thus His *all-sufficiency* in *evangelism* over *all opposing Satanic powers* and over *all saved* and *unsaved humans*!
 2. We must thus align with Scripture by (a) sticking with those efforts that utilize **God's spiritual gifts to us** for *service* (Rom. 12:1-6a), (b) by staying at **God's geographically** assigned ministries (Acts 16:6-10; James 4:13-15), (c) by **trusting** in **God** to function *effectively* before the *unsaved* (Gal. 5:16-23; Col. 4:5-6), (d) by **praying** for *opportunities* to *witness* (Col. 4:3), (e) by **praying** for **God's enabling** to *voice* the *Gospel*, the **power of God unto salvation** (Col. 4:4; Rom. 1:17), (f) and by **trusting God** to *convict* the *unsaved* (Jn. 16:8-11) and to *convert* them *without either coercion or compromise*, Col. 1:18.

Lesson: *Evangelicals have greatly erred in evangelistic efforts by human efforts that rise from errant Arminian-Charismatic or errant Calvinist beliefs and practices, so we must heed Christ's supremacy to evangelize effectively.*

Application: *May we cease our self-help efforts and follow Christ that He might make us to become fishers of men.*