

REVISITING CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO TODAY'S EVANGELICALS
Part IV: Christ's Offer To Wean Us From Evangelicalism's Factions To Himself
A. Christ's Counsel Of His Cross-Before-The-Crown Solution
(Revelation 3:18a)

I. Introduction

- A. Christ's intense critique of the beliefs and harmful effects of Evangelicalism's Calvinist and Arminian factions in Revelation 3:17 can leave us feeling overwhelmed with the errors and spiritual problems that we face.
- B. However, our Lord is the God of all grace (1 Peter 5:10), so He introduced His advice on handling these problems on a hopeful note, but one that involves a "crucifixion" solution patterned after His own sufferings:

II. Christ's Counsel Of His Cross-Before-The-Crown Solution, Revelation 3:18a.

- A. In starting to offer His solution to today's doctrinal and resulting spiritual problems caused by Calvinism and Arminianism, Jesus said, "I counsel you to buy from Me . . ." in Revelation 3:18a NIV.
- B. The Greek New Testament verb for "counsel" here is *sumbouleuo*, and it is used *elsewhere* in **Scripture AS HERE of one party's advice to another party ONLY** in **John 18:14** (Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 785). John there summed what he had reported in John 11:47-53, that Israel's high priest Caiaphas advised the Sanhedrin to kill Jesus to save their temple and nation from being destroyed by Rome!
- C. However, John added that **God used** Caiaphas' wicked advice to *salvage* and **unite God's people worldwide**:
 - 1. God the Father had sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to die as the Substitutionary Atonement for the sins of the world that He might save all who believed in Christ (John 2:29; 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
 - 2. Thus, Caiaphas's *evil advice* that the *Sanhedrin put Jesus to death* was *used* by **God in God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge to save and unite His people worldwide**, Acts 2:23 ESV, NIV; John 11:51-53.
- D. In addition, the word "you" in Christ's Rev. 3:18a statement is **singular** in person (*soi*, *U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*, 1966, p. 845), meaning that His advice is to the **messenger** of the Laodicean Church, namely, its *pastor!*
- E. In *applying* this insight **to us today**, Christ advises the Evangelical local church's pastor to ask God to arrange for him to be mistreated by Calvinist and Arminian factions like God arranged for Christ to be mistreated by the Sanhedrin that God might use it to disciple the pastor to be used of God to edify His people, Rev. 3:18b:
 - 1. Christ called the pastor "to buy from Me . . ." (Rev. 3:18b), and to "buy" anything from God means to gain something freely by God's grace (cf. Isaiah 55:1)!
 - 2. By then uniting the phrases "I counsel you" and "to buy from Me" in Revelation 3:18a, we find that Christ offers **sovereignly to arrange** for a pastor to be *mistreated* by **errant Calvinist and Arminian factions** like God arranged for Christ to be mistreated by Israel's Sanhedrin that resulted in His crucifixion to provide God's Substitutionary Atonement for the sins of the world that **Christ might USE** such trials for the pastor to disciple him so that God might use him to unify and edify God's people in the truth!
 - 3. As in Christ's crucifixion, such a path includes the pastor's suffering a "crucifixion": ***it involves his "crucifixion" to the Calvinist and Arminian factions' errant beliefs, to participating in those factions' works, and to associating ecclesiastically with those factions in his life and ministry***, cf. Galatians 6:14b.
 - 4. However, such a path is necessary to purge a pastor's beliefs, works and associations from errors that have been developing for many centuries in Christendom that God might use him to edify the people of God.
- F. In effect, God graciously calls today's pastor to follow Christ's path of a-cross-before-the-crown on behalf of His people, a stunning privilege that will elicit a pastor's great joy in the end (Acts 5:40-41; Hebrews 12:1-2)!

Lesson: *The solution to the Calvinist and Arminian factions' errant beliefs and harmful effects requires a pastor's heeding Christ's call to follow in His footsteps of His "crucifixion," 1 Peter 2:21. This involves a pastor's relying on God to arrange for the factions to afflict him to wean him from their errant beliefs, from joining in their errant ministries and from associating with the factions. God can then use that pastor to edify His people in the truth.*

Application: *(1) If a local church pastor has taken Christ's "crucifixion" path (as has this lesson's author), he can joyfully minister to edify and unify God's people in that church that its people not need to face a "crucifixion" themselves! (2) However, Revelation 3:22 applies Christ's Revelation 3:14-21 message to the Laodicean Church to "the churches," and many believers in Evangelical realms have Calvinist or Arminian pastors and leaders. Thus, pastors, leaders and people in the pew who are not yet informed of the truth will need to take the "crucifixion" path themselves. (3) Nevertheless, our hope is that uninformed pastors, leaders and laymen might learn from sources like our Church website the truth and heed it that they might not need to face "crucifixion" events!*