

REVISITING CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO TODAY'S EVANGELICALS
Part V - Epilogue: Grasping The Importance Of Overcoming In Our Era
(Revelation 2-3)

I. Introduction

- A. Compared to His messages to the other six church eras in Revelation 2-3, Christ gave a very sharp critique of our "Laodicean Church" era in Revelation 3:14-22, but He also offered a great reward for its overcomer(s)!
- B. Thus, the spiritual dynamics in our era of the Church are both intense and strategic, so we view our Revelation 2-3 Church History context to grasp the significance of our era that we might be motivated to overcome in it.

II. Grasping The Importance Of Overcoming In Our Era, Revelation 2-3.

- A. In fulfillment of Christ's Matthew 13:33 prophecy, the Church has become fully leavened with false teaching:
 - 1. It ***began*** with the Church's Rev. 2:6 Nicolaitan foes, but they are hard to identify as a ***cult*** in that ***Apostolic era*** (B. K. C., N. T., p. 934), meaning their etymology of ***nikao+laos***="conquering of the people" (***Z. P. E. B.***, p. 435) was a ***code*** to ***hide*** their identity as the ***Neo-Platonists*** from John's ***captors*** who ***admired*** them:
 - a. John's ***Roman captors admired pagan philosopher Plato*** who taught that an ***aristocracy*** was better than ***individual liberty***, a "***conquering-of-the-people***" view (Edward M. Burns, ***West. Civ.***, 1963, p. 166-167).
 - b. ***Neo-Platonist Porphyry*** then held that ***Rome's Emperor fit the role of Plato's aristocracy***, so he judged ***Christians*** who held to ***Christ as King*** to be ***enemies of the state*** and wrote the work ***Against Christians, helping to fuel Rome's persecution of Christians.*** (***Camb. Anc. Hist.***, v. XII, 1971, p. 202-203, 630-631)
 - c. Thus, in Rev. 2:6, ***Christ supported the Apostolic era leaders' hatred of the Neo-Platonists' WORKS!***
 - 2. ***However, 2 eras later*** in the Rev. 2:15 ***Pergamum era, Christ critiqued the Neo-Platonists' TEACHING:***
 - a. ***Church Fathers Origen and Clement interpreted Scripture allegorically to harmonize Christianity with Plato's philosophy***, leading to ***amillennialism, posttribulationism*** and ***dominion theology*** that appeared ***later in Reformed Theology's eschatology*** (John Walvoord, ***The Blessed Hope and the Trib.***, 1976, p. 12-15; W. Walker, ***A Hist. of the Christ. Church***, 1959, p. 75-77, 106-107; gotquestions.org/Arianism.htm).
 - b. Also, ***Augustine*** tried to form "a Christian philosophy out of ***Platonic*** materials" (B. B. Warfield, ***Calvin & Aug.***, reprint 1956 (1974), p. 375). Plato held to a lower, imperfect world known by the senses and an upper "World of Being" of perfect knowledge beyond the senses, at the top of which was the "Good" (Carruth, ed. in ch., ***The Vol. Lib.***, rep., 1917 (1974), v. 22, p. 2025). Augustine saw the "Good" as ***God***, inadvertently forming an ***idolatrous pantheism*** where ***God IS creation*** and ***man is an extension of God*** (Ibid., Walker, p. 98, 163f). So, ***resisting Pelagius' Stoic-laced works-salvation error*** (Ibid., Walker, p. 168), ***Augustine readily wrote that God authors faith***, Ibid., Warfield, p. 378, 395f; Ibid., Burns, p. 272.
 - c. Christ then ***critiqued Pergamum's leaders for allowing idolatrous transubstantiation caused by an influx of ancient Babylonian self-help salvation views*** (Ibid., Walker, p. 89-91; L. Boettner, ***Rom. Cath.***, p. 179; Harry I. Ironside, "Babylonian Religion," ***Idolphin.org***; ***Z. P. E. B.***, v. One, p. 358; Rev. 2:14) ***and for tolerating Augustine's idolatrous Neo-Platonism and its related eschatological errors*** (Rev. 2:15).
 - 3. However, ***Pergamum's leaders failed to handle these errors***, leading to ***MORE problems*** in ***LATER eras:***
 - a. In the ***Thyatira era, the Protestant Reformers faced several MAJOR errors – Catholicism's faith-plus-works salvation caused by the influx of ancient Babylonian self-help salvation theology with Pelagian influence, idolatrous transubstantiation and Augustine's idolatrous Neo-Platonism with its errant eschatology.*** ***Christ chose not to add to the Reformers' load by not making them correct every error they faced*** (Rev. 2:24b), ***so they opposed Catholicism's errant salvation but held to idolatrous Neo-Platonism, errant communion views, errant eschatology and other errors.***
 - b. Thus, in the ***Sardis era***, Christ told the ***Reformation CHURCH*** to ***complete*** what the ***Reformers BEGAN*** (Rev. 3:2), ***but it did NOT FULLY do so: it held to idolatrous Neo-Platonic Calvinism and its errant eschatology, what fueled a reactionary Pelagian-Arminianism and moderate Neo-Platonic Calvinism!***
 - c. The ***Philadelphia era leaders left the Calvinist-vs.-Arminian issue unsettled in battling Liberal Theology that was impacted by Darwinian evolution.*** Christ in Rev. 3:8b said that ***Philadelphia's*** believers had "little strength," ***for their era experienced waning spiritual vigor due to long-term, unhandled errors!***
- B. So, ***today, we face a Neo-Platonic-vs.-Pelagian, Darwinian-laced, Neo-Marxist, post-conservative mix that departs from handling Scripture literally in a Church that is spiritually weakened by such false beliefs!***

Lesson and Application: ***Christ's call that we overcome the Calvinist and Arminian factions' errors involves our handling Scripture literally to confront a host of errors in a needy era. May we overcome by God's grace!***