

CHRIST'S SCRIPTURE PROPHECY ON CONTEMPORARY EVANGELICALISM

Part III: Christ's Appraisal Of Evangelicalism As Two, Offensive, Judging Factions

A. Christ's Evaluation Of Evangelicalism Illustrated

(Revelation 3:14a, 15-17)

I. Introduction

A. If Jesus Christ predicted our current Evangelical era of Church History, we should expect Him to provide a **spiritual evaluation** of **OUR** era's believers and their churches with their **unique** needs.

B. Revelation 3:14a, 15-17 **illustrates** Christ's spiritual evaluation of Evangelicalism as a movement.

II. Christ's Evaluation Of Evangelicals Illustrated, Revelation 3:14a, 15-17.

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ introduced His address to Evangelicalism by calling it "the **Laodicean** Church."

B. The name, "Laodicea" means "the judgment of the people," cf. G. H. Pember, The Great Prophecies, p. 279 as cited in J. D. Pentecost, Things To Come, p. 152, and reveals the **key feature** of Evangelicalism.

C. Christ then **illustrated** how Evangelicals **ACT errantly** as **judges** as follows:

1. Where Christ as the divine Judge in each of the seven churches **says** "These things saith" and "I know thy works," **only** the messenger of the **Laodicean** Church among these churches **also** acts as a **judge**, but an **errant** one where Christ complains "thou sayest" and "thou...knowest not" (Rev. 2:1-3:33 KJV).
2. To illustrate how the typical (Laodicean) Evangelical thus errantly judges, Christ likened the state of the Laodiceans (Evangelicals) to the water conduit investment folly of ancient Laodicea as follows:
 - a. Laodicea had no water source as the city developed as a financial center, New Bible Dict., p. 716f.
 - b. Accordingly, its inhabitants laid bored out stone blocks cemented end-to-end to transport overland hot water from nearby Heliopolis and cold water from neighboring Colossae, *Ibid.*, p. 717.
 - c. However, as both conduits lay exposed to the elements, they yielded only lukewarm water, *Ibid.*
 - d. Note: opposite most commentaries that see Laodicea's lukewarm water as representing compromise between good and evil so that Laodicea is identified even as the apostate Church of the Tribulation (*Ibid.*, Pentecost, p. 212-213), the product **Christ and the Laodiceans desired** was **EITHER** cold **OR** hot water -- not the lukewarm water that arrived, Rev. 3:15b. The key failure of the Laodiceans is not that of compromise so much as a **failure** to achieve **two GOOD goals!**
3. We apply this illustration to today's churches to discern Christ's evaluation of today's Evangelicalism:
 - a. Around 1950, some Evangelicals wanted to improve their outreach, so they abandoned the separatist stance against the world held by Fundamentalists (Rev. 3:7-13's Philadelphia Church) and planned to be winsome to the world (Laodicea's plan to improve its water situation), *Ibid.*, Armstrong, p. 29.
 - b. Their plan was **twofold** (Laodicea's **two** pipes): (1) to promote Reformed **THEOLOGY**, assuming it was more palatable to the lost, and (2) **EXPERIENTIALLY** reach intellectuals, *Ibid.*, p. 29-31.
 - c. Well, **Arminian Charismatic** Evangelicals and Liberal Theology intellectuals who **oppose** Calvinistic predestination **in** Reformed Theology **reacted negatively**, so Evangelicals divided into **two camps** competing to dominate Evangelicalism by self-vindication (as judges) -- **Calvinists** who exalt **DOCTRINE** versus **Arminians** who magnify **EXPERIENCE**, *Ibid.*, p. 32-36; Richard Quebedaux, The New Charismatics, p. 30-31. (This is reflected in the Greek text at Rev. 3:17 where Christ says " . . . and you do not know that (it is **you** [emphatic] who) are the wretched and pitiable and poor and blind and naked **one** [versus **your** charge regarding your **opponent**]").
 - d. Christ's view of Evangelicalism, then, is **alarming!** (1) He could wish Evangelicals were **either doctrinally OR experientially** sound, but He finds **both** such respective wings only lukewarm, meaning **BOTH** are **theologically AND experientially OBJECTIONABLE!** (2) **Worse**, while **BOTH** are thus entirely lacking, neither even **perceives** it, and then each **sinfully** elevates itself above the other in **sinful** judgment for **sinful** supremacy (Rom. 14:9-12), and Christ finds it all very **INTOLERABLE!** (3) Jesus Christ then stands ready **suddenly** to **expel** these factions from usefulness by Him, Revelation 3:16b!

Lesson: *Christ illustrates how Evangelicals have ERRED theologically AND experientially into two factions, and have ERRANTLY JUDGED one another for DOMINANCE -- an INTOLERABLE move!*

Application: *WE Evangelicals must REPENT of our THEOLOGICAL and EXPERIENTIAL errors!*