

CHRIST'S COMMENTARY ON CHURCH HISTORY
"Philadelphia: God's Help For Biblical Conservatives"
(Revelation 3:7-13)

Introduction: (To show the need for the message...)

What should a member do when his mainline denomination church denies basic truth -- what then?

Republican-American expressing concern about the relaxed standards of mainline denominations in America. He said, "For two millennia, Christians have agreed on the basics of sexual morality, the universal standard being monogamous heterosexuality. What about ...homosexuality, lesbianism, cohabitation? The apparent answer, from major committees of two major American religious bodies, is: Who can tell?...Some may call this religion. Religion never has." What does a believer in such a denomination do to please God?

Stay and **support** such ideology?

"Do you believe the Bible is God's Word in any unusual sense?" 82% of the Methodists, 89% of the Episcopalians, 81% of the United Presbyterians, 57% of the Baptists and 57% of the Lutherans all answered, "**NO!**" (James Montgomery Boice, Does Inerrancy Matter?, p. 9) If someone is in a mainline church that denies the Bible is God's Word in any unusual sense, what should he do about it? After all, we are talking about the **Bible!**

If one speaks up, he may lose his membership -- and a pastor who speaks up may lose his job and his retirement! This pressure was put on two pastors in our county -- one in Thomaston and one in Torrington!! For their stands, they ended up working side-by-side on the assembly line at the Torrington Company!

(We turn to the "Need" section of the sermon...)

Need: "When significant error overtakes a church group, should its members ignore the error and foster loving unity anyway?! After all, taking a stand for beliefs may cost in long-term relationships, financial investments, positions and being a 'loving' Christian!"

- I. **As we learned in previous messages, Revelation 2-3 contains Christ's comments for the welfare of Christians in Church History.**
- II. **Christ's message to believers in the Church of Philadelphia unveils His help for those in the Conservative Bible Movement:**
 - A. The name "Philadelphia" means brotherly love, depicting a group who put their love for fellow Christians on a high priority.
 - B. As we view Christ's needed attributes presented in Rev. 3:7-8, we identify this group as the 20th century Bible Conservatives:
 1. Jesus is "holy," a word meaning separate. This attribute is crucial for those needing to withdraw from apostasy, Rv. 18:4.
 2. Christ is "true," a picture of the need to defend the existence of God. Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' theory gave anti-supernatural explanations to all existence, spawning anti-supernatural Liberal Theology, Packer, Fundamentalism and the Word of God, p. 27.
 3. Christ's having the "keys of David" to control 'opening and shutting' relates to Isaiah 22:22, speaking of this theological battle:
 - a. Shebna, a high official in Israel, sinfully sought Egypt's help to preserve his retirement and burial in order to stay famous, v. 16.
 - b. Accordingly, God replaced Shebna with Eliakim, the latter obtaining God's authoritative "keys" to rule in Israel, v. 20ff.
 - c. Applied to the Liberal - Conservative battle of the 20th century, (a) Shebna pictures those who failed to trust God for fame and financial security and who thus stayed in apostate groups; (b) Eliakim represents those who entrusted their retirements for God to supply and left apostates. **They put true love for God's flock above personal gain!**
 - C. For those who separated from apostasy in accord with Rev. 18:4 and 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1, Christ promised the following:
 1. He promised ministry opportunities that offset the losses suffered for taking a stand, Rev. 3:8a. This promise is for trusting the Lord ("a little strength") and for the standing in favor of Scripture's inerrancy and Christ's virgin birth, 3:8b.
 2. Those who 'say they are Jews but lie' depict unsaved liberals who say the Church is Israel, becoming anti-dispensational, 9-10. God will make them witness God's blessing of Conservatives!

3. Viewing Scripture as inerrant and literal, Bible Conservatives countered Darwin's uniformitarianism to believe in Christ's literal return, Rev. 3:10a's "patience" **equals** 2 Pet. 3:3-11. Christ thus promised to preserve them from a coming judgment, v. 10b.
4. This preservation is not from the Great Tribulation or the promise would be errant Partial Rapture. It means keeping America (where Conservatives lived) out of war ravages that hurt **Europe** for its pushing of Liberalism via Darwin's errant theory!
5. Hitler used **Darwin's** 'survival of the fittest' idea to justify war against 'unfit' peoples, Davidheiser, Evol. & the Chr. Faith, p. 352! Thus, **WW II** became Liberalism's own bitter pill to take, and the atom bomb sampled the end time **warning** of 2 Pet. 3:3-11's "patience" passage held by 20th c. Biblical Conservatives.
6. Overcomers are promised fame and security by God, v. 12:
 - a. To become a "pillar" in the Church (cf. Gal. 2:9) means to become influential with others in the flock of God, 12a.
 - b. Such overcomers would "go no more out," **not losing** their fame and positions **again** as when they left apostate groups, 12b.
 - c. God would give them fame as (a) men of God, (b) of God's being with their works **outside** of apostate groups, v. 12c,d with Ez. 38:35; Rrv. 21:2-3, (c) of God starting new church groups **through** them (cf. He. 11:8-10 with 12c) and (d) giving them world fame, 12e and Phil. 2:9ff.
 - d. This has been fulfilled by **many**, of whom Machan is a prime example. He left Princeton for his stand, and his writings still deeply affect Bible students since.

Application: *If we are in a mainline Protestant church that denies the inerrancy of Scripture or Christ's Person and Work, (1) we must believe on Christ for salvation from sin, Jn. 3:16. (2) Upon realizing the apostasy about us, God urges us to stand no matter the cost, leaving that cost for Him to compensate, for true love for others who are watching us demands a witness for truth regardless of cost, Rv. 3:7-13! (3) If after taking our stand the church still defends its errors, we should leave it! (Rev. 18:4)*

Lesson: *God expects godly people in mainline Protestant denominations that foster Liberal Theology (non-supernaturalism) to trust Him with personal, temporal welfare, and separate from apostate denominations out of true love for the true brethren! (Rev. 18:4)*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson...)

However, Pritchard's A. N. E. T. (Princeton U. Press, 1969), p. 32-36, shows the Egyptian Mortuary Text (2,400 B.C.), "The Conquest of Death," found inside the pyramids of Unis and of Pepi II which was never intended to be seen by other humans, had carefully recorded messages to the gods! Thus a mentality of canonicity via written words existed in the days of Moses! Liberalism's Traditio-Critico Theory has failed!

Repeatedly edited to contain corrupted versions (Form-Critico Theory). However, Albright in The Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions and Their Decipherment, p. 20, records a prayer written on a steliform rock panel near a turquoise mine in which the words used show it to be at least 1,500 B.C. Since this writing implores a goddess for help, a theology of canonicity existed in Moses' era, if not long before him. Liberalism's Form-Critico Theory fails via archaeological evidence, and Liberalism has had to retreat before Biblical Conservatives!

Scientific problems. The paleontologists of the Museums of Natural History in London, New York City, Chicago and Boston were all interviewed on the viability of the evolutionary theory by Luther Sunderland, an aerospace engineer with GE. Sunderland reported that input from these scientists made him conclude that the "geologic column was not deposited by uniform gradualistic processes...A number of different types of living organisms first appeared abruptly on Earth in completely functional forms... All life did not have a common ancestor. The fossilized organisms were buried rapidly in catastrophic events, some of which were on a worldwide scale. Furthermore, it appears that greatly different conditions existed in the past, when a tropical-like climate extended to the polar regions..." (Darwin's Enigma, p. 152) Thus, the Biblical record is safer than Darwin's theory according to input from scientists at the world's major museums of natural history. God fulfilled Rev. 3:9, making Theological Liberalism lose to Bible Conservatism!