***Reversionism

Mixed Motives in the Lord's Service

No. 5 - PH21-01

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:15-18***

We have been looking at the fact that in the city of Rome, there existed a group of Christians who were actively witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ. However, they were motivated in that witnessing by the inspiration that came from the old sin nature rather than that which came from God the Holy Spirit who indwelt them. In other words, these Christians were in a carnal state. A continued state of carnality, however, sets into motion spiritual retrogression. A former word that was used for this, that many of you are acquainted with, is backsliding. A more recent word is retrogression--going backwards. Here is what happens:

As you continue taking in the Word of God, the time will come when you will be an adult Christian. You will have built in your soul a structure of spiritual maturity. That structure of spiritual maturity will be reflected in several facets that we have referred to in various places in the Scriptures. When you get to this place, you have developed in your life, in effect, a container into which God may now pour His grace. James 4:6 tells us that to some Christians, God provides abounding grace. This means that when the container of spiritual maturity is filled, God doesn't stop pouring. He just keeps pouring, and then it begins overflowing. Then you have a status called super grace, or excessive, overflowing, abounding grace. You may use whatever terms you like to convey to yourself these particular scriptural concepts. God keeps pouring grace, and things then enter the stage that is the maximum blessing; the maximum happiness; and, the maximum effectiveness in your life. Everything about your life then begins clicking. You enjoy success and prosperity in many realms: socially; in business; and, in school. In all the facets of your life, things fall together in a way that is to be summarized under the plan of God.

However, the time may come when here you are at spiritual maturity; you are an adult Christian; you are enjoying the overflowing abounding grace of God; and, you have come to the point where you not only have the grace of God, but God's grace is overflowing in a super way. Then you go negative toward something the Lord wants you to do. He guides you into something that He calls upon you to do, and you say, "No." You resist Him. Or, you're sitting in church and you hear something explained from the Word of God, and that isn't the way your sainted grandmother explained it to you when you sat upon her calloused knees--calloused from her many hours of prayer, and then you couldn't believe that she could be wrong with all those calluses on her knees and praying. So you went negative. Whatever the reason was, you bucked the instruction in the Word of God. That immediately closed the door to you for the instruction of the Holy Spirit. That door was slammed shut. You have in effect slammed the door against the Lord Jesus Christ and against fellowship with Him. That's what you did. You slammed the door. Anytime you go negative, you close the door of fellowship with the Savior who indwells you.

Now you start down a different road. I call this the carnality road because now you are in the status of cardinality. You move on down until pretty soon you have lost your ability to enter into the deep things of the Word of God. You find yourself an adolescent Christian reflecting many of the qualities of an adolescent. You continue on this road, resisting God, until you come to the babyhood stage. Then you enter the disaster land of reversionism. In reversionism, you have completely come to super backsliding. Where once you stood at super grace, you have now come to the point of super backsliding. In reversionism you are in a very tragic condition.

Here's the comparison. Once you were at the super grace level with a spiritual maturity structure, and you had five main expressions of maturity:

**Spiritual Maturity**

1. You were oriented to the **grace** of God.
2. You had **a relaxed mental attitude** so you had a mind that was free of bitterness and antagonisms--these mental attitude sins.
3. You had **a mastery of the details of life**. You knew how to be a godly person when you were poor, but you also knew how to be a godly man and woman when you were prosperous. You had a sense of value of doctrine no matter what your state was.
4. You had a capacity to **love**. You were able to love God--really love Him; to love your husband or wife; and, to love the friends that you had.
5. You had **inner happiness**--a happiness that was not contingent upon circumstances; upon people; or, upon something that you had or didn't have. You had a real happiness.

**Reversionism**

Then negative volition destroyed all of this gradually in your life. You come to a point where, instead of these five magnificent things being true in your life, you have become:

1. Miserable
2. Pitiful
3. Beggarly
4. Blind
5. Naked

That's a fivefold contrast to a fivefold state that you previously once possessed.

This is Satan's game. This is the objective in Satan's warfare. We have been noticing these Christians here in the city of Rome that they had come to the point where, apparently, they were on this reversionistic trail. They were on the cardinality trail. Some of them, perhaps, farther up the line have not gone too far. Others of them have gone, perhaps, all the way down to the bottom. But that's the trail they were on because of the negative response that was possessing their souls.

We illustrated this in Revelation 3 which is the passage that we're going to look at here. There we find that these believers in Laodicea, instead of being in super grace, were in super backsliding. Their condition is described as being lukewarm toward Jesus Christ. This is a term for reversionism. Remember that reversionism begins with being negative to doctrine. This gives demons their chance. The Laodicean Christians were on this reversionistic road. They viewed themselves, however, as needing nothing because they were very prosperous in material things. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ has described the condition of this church in Laodicea as being miserable, pitiful, beggarly, blind, and naked instead of what they once were. This is Satan's purpose in a very cunning and a very subtle way--to destroy your spiritual maturity. It is to bring you to this position.

**The Exorcist**

Now what are you saying? You're saying, "Well I won't cooperate with him. I certainly won't have anything to do with him. I am not going to go to this kind of a Laodicean condition. A recurring question has come up several times to me, particularly since we were on that radio panel discussing the book The Exorcist and the movie that was made of it. One of the questions that has come up again and again has been, "Why did Satan allow a film like that to be made of him. Everybody is entirely revolted. We're reading about people leaving the theater nauseated; people who are offended; and, people who are frightened. The whole thing is so grotesque. Why would Satan do something like that?

**2 Corinthians 11:14**

Well, I think there is a key to this. There is a very important answer to this because Satan is working in the cunning subtle way that is his in order to bring this about with you, and in order to con the unbeliever concerning himself. His plan is described for us in 2 Corinthians 11:14 which I think is the answer to why a movie like The Exorcist should get such a popular hearing: "No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." Satan wants to present himself as an angel of light. If you say the word "Satan" or "devil," what kind of an image comes into the mind of the average person. A very evil image. If you talk about what the devil is like, it's always something bad. Satan knows that he does not have a very good reputation. Even people who are not believers expect him to be bad.

Therefore, what does he do? He sees a book like The Exorcist and he says to his demons, "Boys, this book can really help us. We'll get somebody to make a film of this. It will be a really good film. It will vividly portray all of these things, and we won't try to be false. We'll present the thing like it really is." The movie is not false. The book is not false in what it presents. That which is portrayed in picture concerning the demonic operation is very accurate, and it's very revolting. Therefore, when people finish reading that book or seeing the film (which I'm not encouraging you to do), they report one thing in common. They are not very enthusiastic concerning the demonic world. The question comes up, "Can this happen to me?" The question comes up, "How can I keep this from happening to my children?" People are concerned about having anything to do with this kind of a person.

Now do you see how that works into Satan's hands? When anybody thinks about the devil, they think about him in that gross evil way. What does he do? He turns around and comes as an angel of light. He comes along and he does things that you would have to say are such good things and such fine things, they must come from the Lord. The whole charismatic movement is an example of Satan conning them by coming as an angel of light. Therefore, they are portraying themselves as those who give God the credit.

A very popular speaker this past week on the radio station said that he had observed Kathryn Kuhlman in action and saw nothing wrong with what she was doing. Katherine Coleman, as a woman in a place of religious spiritual leadership, is wrong enough, let alone all the healing bit and everything else that accompanies it. What Satan is doing is the old Matthew 7:22. He is getting people to say, "Well, we give God the credit for all these things," and they didn't realize that Satan was the one who was behind it.

**Edgar Cayce**

Sometime soon, I want to review with you a very important personage on the scene of what Satan is doing today--a man named Edgar Cayce. I'm just going to briefly mention to you that Edgar Cayce spent his life putting himself into a self-hypnotic trance, and through obviously demonic spirits, he was able to explore what was wrong with a person who was sick, and then he would speak in his sleep. He would always use the word "we." He would say something like, "We have examined this body, and we find that this is what is wrong with it." Then he would prescribe. I want to tell you that every time Edgar Cayce made a prescription and the person followed it, that person got well--without fail. He read the Bible once for every year of his life. He gave God the credit and the glory. Of course, he began showing where the source of this power came from. He could never stop doing this. Every time he stopped doing it, he lost his voice. He would have to call for one of his friends to put himself into a hypnotic trance to get his voice back. He was hooked into the spirit world.

He saw visions of a lady as a little boy when he was reading the Bible one time. She came to him with her wings behind her, and said, "What do you want to do?" He said, "I want to help children get well, and to help people." She said, "Your wish has been granted." He had a vision. D.L. Moody sat by a stream one day. Edgar Cayce came along chasing a cow. He was about 18 years old. He saw that the man was reading the Bible. He asked the man, "Is that a Bible?" He said, "Yes." He started talking to him and found that he was D.L. Moody and he had come to Hopkinsville, Kentucky to run an evangelistic meeting. He asked D. L. Moody, "Has God ever spoken to you in a vision or dream?" Then he told his experience of seeing this lady and what she had said to him.

D. L. Moody said he'd meet with him the next day and he'd tell him about an experience that he had. So, he did. Moody told how he was in Cincinnati running a series of meetings that was mounting in impact. He had a dream one night, and in the dream he was told to close the meetings in Cincinnati and to go to London, England. Therefore, he did. His managers were appalled because of the impact that was being made on Cincinnati. They said, "Mr. Moody, you have won the people. You have a fantastic open door here as we have not had in quite a while. Why would you close this?" But he closed the meetings where the opportunity was very fruitful and right and went to London England.

Then Moody said to him, "God in the Old Testament many times has spoken to his saints in visions and in dreams. So don't you be afraid of what God has said to you." Now, evangelists have a way of being pumpkin poor students of doctrine. I thought it was rather interesting, and I have been able to verify that this story is true. It is interesting that D.L. moody should have attributed something from a previous dispensation (God working in the Old Testament under dreams before we had a canon of Scripture completed) to our dispensation, and that he works now in this age as if he would speak to us in any way but through His Word. That was a very serious mistake.

It was also a mistake to encourage Cayce who eventually went into the idea of reincarnation--that every one of you sitting here was once here in another life, and that you had the feeling that you were someone else. A lot of you feel like you should be someone else. You would like to be someone else. And many of your friends wish you were someone else. But he had the idea that in a former life he was someone else, and he could kind of feel and imagine himself. No, this is very disastrous.

Therefore, along comes Cayce who gives God the credit for everything he does in the way of healing. He gives God the credit for these ideas like reincarnation. Here comes a great evangelist like D.L. Moody, and it causes you to wonder, doesn't it? It causes us to wonder whether Mr. Moody should have continued in Cincinnati where the door was open or whether Mr. Moody made a mistake in closing that meeting and going to London.

What I'm getting at is that Satan wants you to think that he's as bad as the devil. That's what Satan wants you to think. He wants you to recognize that he is a real grotesque evil person because then he can work upon you in the way he really can get to you, as an angel of light. The road from spiritual maturity to reversionism is the road of people who are listening to what they think is light. It all begins with going negative to the Word of God. So Satan wants to convince us that he is a real bad person, and that all of this which is being credited to him as an angel of light is being credited to God. What Satan is doing is crediting these things to God. It is his working as an angel of light.

Therefore, I think that's what The Exorcist, in part, is doing for Satan. It is helping him to establish in people's minds what they already believe about him. He can't cover this up. This is the problem in Hal Lindsay's book on Satan. Everybody knows that everything that he said in that book is true about Satan. Everybody knows that Satan is a bad seed. But then all of a sudden Satan takes a chapter and gets Lindsay to say that gibberish speaking is tongues, and he gets Lindsay to say that it is God re-authenticating His Word, and that's why God is permitting the new tongues movement--to prove that the Word is the Word of God.

Apparently he has forgotten that when the rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to life to tell his five brothers that it was true that there was a place like hell; there was a place of torment; and, there was a life after death, Abraham said, "No, we won't send this man back. We have the Scriptures. That is the final word. We do not authenticate the Scriptures once they have been written." When the Scriptures were being written, they are authenticated. Therefore, we had these supernatural temporary gifts to authenticate the Scriptures. But once the Scriptures are written, you never have any further authentication. God's word is God's word. You believe it or you don't. It doesn't change the fact that it is God's Word, but that's how it works.

Therefore, Satan is playing his game of getting you under the guise of bringing you enlightenment to resist God and to go down the road of reversionism. He is cunning; he is subtle; and, his demons are constantly working on you.

**Revelation 3:18**

In Revelation 3:18, we have given to us the road to recovery for those who have fallen into this backslidden land of reversionism. Verse 18 says. "I counsel you to buy of me gold, tried in the fire, that you may be rich, and white raiment that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear, and anoint your eyes with salve that you may see." The word "counsel" here is the Greek word "sumbouleuo." "Sumbouleuo" means "to advise," and it means particularly a strong advisement. I strongly advise you to do this relative to your condition. The advisement is in the present tense which means that the Lord is constantly making this appeal to those who are on the backsliding trail. It is active voice which means that the Lord Himself is speaking to you. This isn't just coming to you as some good friend giving you advice. The Lord Himself is advising you strongly to make a change because if you persist in this reversionism, it can cost you your life. Therefore, he is doing it. It's indicative. It's a statement of fact.

**Recovery from Reversionism**

1. What he is advising us is to "**buy** of me **gold**." The word "to buy" is the Greek word "agorazo." "Agorazo" is in the aorist tense, and that means that there comes a certain point where you decide to turn back. It is active which means that you have to decide. The infinitive indicates that this is what God's purpose is for us. God's purpose is for you to buy real wealth. These people in Laodicea had nothing but material things, and they thought that they were rich. God said, "You're poor. You're a bunch of beggars. I'm going to tell you how to really become wealthy." This refers to securing divine viewpoint through doctrine, and the way you buy this is through the grace system of perception. This buying, He says, is from Me, that is, from Jesus Christ. The Bible, in other words, is what he's asking you to buy. It is the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). When you listen to your right pastor-teacher, you secure or you buy the Lord's thinking. The Laodiceans chased all kinds of bargains all over town. However, the most important bargain and the most important thing they did not purchase which was God's viewpoint through the learning of doctrine.

This admonition here is reminiscent of Isaiah 55:1 where Isaiah says, "Everyone that thirsts, come to the waters; and he that has no money, come buy, and eat. Yea, come and buy wine and milk without money and without price. Come and buy something that has really great value. What is that? He calls it gold ("chrusion"). "Chrusion" is gold in an ornamental form. Gold in Scripture represents the glory of God. He's asking us to buy God's glory; that is, to learn through doctrine that which builds the spiritual maturity structure in our souls which is reflecting the glory of God. This gold is the capital for the business of Christian living. Doctrine is the thing. That's what he's referring to here again. This is doctrine which has been tried in the fire ("puroo"). This is perfect tense which means it's been tested in the past. That is, the Word of God has no dross in it. It has stood under the fires of testing and the experience of believers, and it has been demonstrated to be that which does work. It is passive. The Word of God receives this action of testing in our experience. It's participle. It's a statement of fact.

He says, "I want you to buy this particular kind of truth which has been tried in our experience." What's the purpose? "That" is the little Greek word "hina" indicating purpose here. Here is the purpose for all of this. Why should we seek this kind of purchase? "So that you may be rich," and the word "may be rich" is "plouteo." A lot of you people in Laodicea thought you were plutocrats and that you really had something, but you are poor and beggars. If you really want to be rich, this is the way to do it. It's aorist tense which means there is a point when you start receiving the Word of God. It's active. You decide that doctrine has to be number one in your life. Audio recordings don't substitute. They are of use when the church service is not being conducted. But when it is church service time, that's when you are there to start purchasing the Word of God, and that's God's way.

"So that you may be rich," and it is subjunctive. Remember that subjunctive is the mood that indicates potential. It's up to you. Some of you will purchase this kind of spiritual wealth. Some of you will not. But it is the duty of your pastor, wherever he may be, to teach you and to constantly stress to you this divine appeal, that you should pursue the prosperity of doctrine. If you've got doctrine, you've got everything. Therefore, a Christian with spiritual wealth will enter a state of well-being which evolves into material prosperity and blessings throughout all areas of life.

You can think back. Some of you have been Christians for quite a while. Think back when things really began maybe clicking for you. Maybe you're in a state now where things are clicking for you in your business, or clicking for you in your social life. Maybe you are more prosperous now than you have ever been before. Can you think back a short time back maybe when suddenly you caught a new vision for the value of doctrine; you began devoting yourself to the taking in of the Word of God; and, you began rustling yourself out to church so that you were listening to the Word of God and paying attention? Can you maybe also notice that that's the time that things started looking up for you. There is a connection. The person who seeks doctrine is the person who prospers in every area of his life. That's point number one. He says, "Come and buy gold so that you may have real wealth." The first point is to buy the gold of doctrine. You buy it by learning it.

1. He also says that you would "**buy a white raiment**." "White raiment" is a symbol of divine righteousness in action. It is the spiritual maturity structure, God's glory enveloping us. The best-dressed Christians are those with a super grace spiritual maturity structure in their soul. In Laodicea they made a glistening black wool cloth which was famed throughout the ancient world. Perhaps here in contrast to this cloth, which was very popular in the empire from Laodicea--this glistening black wool material, the Lord says, "I'll give you a glistening white garment." In Scripture, this represents the righteousness of God. "So that you may be clothed," and "may be clothed" is the Greek word "periballo." "Peri" means around, and "ballo" means to throw. Therefore, it is what you throw around which is describing the way they put their clothes on which was in the form of a toga. This is in the aorist tense which means at a point where you are spiritually naked and you decide to do something about it. It is middle voice because if you clothe yourself with this, you are the one who will be benefited. It is a benefit to yourself. Again, it is subjunctive. It's potential. Maybe you want to walk around in your spiritual nudity. But if you don't, here's a way to change it. "So that," he says, "you may cover your shame. I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that you may be rich."

"And white raiment that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear." What shame is he talking about? Well, he's talking about the shame of finding your life in the spiritual disaster zone of reversionism. It's no credit to any Christian that people can look at you and say, "There goes a reversionistic Christian." They see certain signs and certain indications, and this is no credit at all. Therefore, he says, "So that you may cover this particular shame."

Do you remember the story of the emperor's garment? This emperor loved clothes. One day he had some fellow that came along and said that he could fashion him the most magnificent garment that he had ever seen. So he proceeded to do this. He sat in his room, and he sewed the garment. The emperor would look in on him, and there was nothing in his hands, but it looked like he was sewing; he was laying out the cloth; he was cutting it; he was threading his needle; he was putting the knot in; and, he was sewing this thing. The emperor said, "What kind of cloak is this?" The tailor said, "My dear emperor, this is clothing which only the pure in heart can see. Only those who are really pure can see this clothing."

So, he's sewing this, and then the day came for the great festival, and the emperor walked in to have his new gown put on him. So, he walked in there stark naked, and they put the clothes on him. The tailor is fixing the thing; he's arranging the collar; and, he says, "Oh, magnificent, your Majesty, magnificent." They guy doesn't have anything on. Then he gets on his horse and he's riding through the square. The word had been passed through all the people that only the pure in heart can see the emperor's clothes. Of course, they all wanted to show they were pure in heart. So here is this guy stark naked on his horse and everybody is saying, "Wonderful. What a beautiful set of clothes. Never have we seen anything more magnificent."

That's your reversionistic Christian. He's sitting up there on his horse spiritually stark naked, and he doesn't know his condition. Then suddenly somebody gave it away, and the whole populace exploded in laughter because they saw this poor emperor the way he really was. The Word of God says go ahead and ride around in your spiritual nakedness. People are not going to be conned by that fact. You're a reversionistic Christian, and you will be something to be pitied. Cover the shame of your nakedness. So, recovery from reversionism requires good doctrine. Doctrine will provide you with the spiritual maturity structure, the "Shekhinah" glory of God to cover your soul.

1. Then he advises us to "**anoint your eyes with salve**" that you may see. The word "anoint" here is "egchrio." The word means "to rub in." It is a medical term. It is aorist active infinitive. Aorist means the point at which you recognize that you have lost your spiritual insight. Active means that you have to do something about. Infinitive means this is God's purpose. What you rub in is a salve which is "kollourion". "Kollourion" was something that was well-known in Laodicea. Laodicea produced and manufactured a powder which was in the form of a tablet. What you did was you crushed this tablet into powder form; you put it in water; and, you would use it as an eyewash. It was kind of an ancient Visine, just an eyewash type of thing. Or, you would crush it into a powder and mix it with olive oil and make a paste out of it. This was a salve, and you would rub it on the eyes, and it had very effective therapeutic qualities to it.

So, this was again famous in the ancient world. This particular tablet for the eyes was made in Laodicea. That is why the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking to the apostle John in this way, to make this comparison with what everybody in Laodicea would be able to catch on to immediately because they were all using this sort of thing on their eyes. They were out there to make their eyes beautiful. They were trying to make themselves look beautiful.

So, here they were taking care of themselves all over Laodicea, and the Lord says, "You pathetic creatures. Why don't you get something that is really important? Here you come to church looking like clowns sometimes with all the stuff you put on yourselves in order to enhance your beauty, and you don't take the thing that really makes you beautiful. Whether you're a man or a woman, beauty lies in the Word of God. This is what makes a woman's inner beauty shine forth--when she knows the Word of God. This is what makes a man's manliness stand forth--when he knows the Word of God.

So He says we are to anoint with this particular salve, and this is the anointing again of doctrine. He tells you what the result will be. Again he uses the little word "hina" which introduces purpose. The purposes is that you may see ("blepo"). That means to be able to see spiritual things once more. Again it is present. You will constantly see. It is active. It is your responsibility as a priest to see that you see spiritual things. It is subjunctive. It is potential. If your pastor-teacher is instructing you, and you are receiving the instruction, then you will see.

So if you want to recover from reversion, point number one is to start buying up the gold of doctrine. Point number two is to start building up spiritual maturity within your soul and clothe yourself with that kind of garment. Point number three is to start applying doctrine in a positive way on your eyes so that you have spiritual insights and spiritual understanding. You will start back up the road out of the disaster garbage pile of reversionism.

Verse 19 gives us the divine appeal: "As many as I love." It may also be, "As much as I love." It is "hosos." It's a great number in quantity. In any case, the word "love" here is "phileo." This is the word of divine emotional type love. God constantly has this emotional love for us based on propitiation that has freed this love. It is His choice. It is His desire. It is His divine concern.

"Those that I love, I rebuke." The Greek word is "elegcho." "Elegcho" means to judge a case. Here it means to reprove the Christian who is in a backslidden state. "All of you, as I love, I constantly rebuke you." This again is the present. Therefore, the Lord constantly does this. It is a statement of His actions. The point is to chasten. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." The word "chasten" is "paideuo." "Paideuo" means "to punish" like we would spank a child. It is the discipline of the Lord for correction. He is actively seeking to train us and constantly seeking to correct that which is leading us down the trail from maturity into immaturity.

Instead, He says, "I want you to be zealous, therefore, and repent." "Be zealous" is "zeleuo." This is present active imperative. It means to get hot. This is recovery from reversionism. He says, "I want you to start with confession of your sin and keep moving." It is present tense. Keep moving. "I want you actively to be learning doctrine. It is imperative, so it is a command. God never says, "It's okay if you want to stay in your reversionistic condition." He says, I want you out of that place. I want you moving back up."

I want to tell you something. It takes time to go back up. Don't think that you will come and say, "Lord, I played the fool long enough. I have resisted you. I've been wandering around here--a maverick, from church to church. I'm getting back to my right place and my right instructor, and now I'm back up there where I'm super grace." No, you won't be. A person can go so far that his time will run out. The days of his life that God has allotted him may run out before he ever reaches back up to that super grace status again. He may die before he can rebuild the structure. It is a great loss, in the meantime, to you personally to be working your way back up to that which you once possessed. So while he says get zealous and get hot, you might do that, but you might not have time to get back up there.

He wants us therefore to repent. The word "repent" is "metanoeo." "Metanoeo" means simply to change your mind. This is the start of the recovery. It is aorist--that point where you go positive. It is active--you take the decision. It is imperative--it's a command of God to a fallen believer. This means recognizing your condition; changing your mind about it; and, moving back up.

**Revelation 3:20**

Now we come to verse 20. This is one of the most abused verses in the Bible. Here is the summary: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and will dine with him and he with Me." What does this verse mean? Well, I think if you have followed the context so that you know that the Lord is speaking to Christians who had backslidden into a reversionistic condition, that you will understand that this is not a verse to unbelievers. This is not a verse to appeal to somebody to open his heart's door so Jesus Christ can come in and he can be saved. This verse is constantly abused by certain organizations and certain evangelistic thrusts to suggest that that's what this is talking about--that this is an invitation for you to become a believer.

The word "behold" is "idou." It is a little particle which means "wake up." This is a bad condition that you're in. Wake up because here is what is happening. This is addressed to the Christians who are in reversionism. "I stand." The "I" means the Lord Jesus Christ. The word "stand" is "histemi." It is perfect active indicative. Perfect means that the Lord Jesus Christ, from the time in the past where you went negative and started down the road, has been approaching you and approaching you and approaching you, and he still does it. Perfect means it starts in the past and it continues right to the present, and he is still knocking at the door, seeking entrance into your life as long as you are negative. The Lord is actively pursuing you. He lives in you. He wants to have fellowship with you. What you have created is a condition where you have a guest in your home and you're ignoring the person. Here is this guest that has come to live with you, and you never talk to him; you never have any relationships with him; you never have any fellowship with him; and, you've ignored him. Now that's what you're doing to Jesus Christ in a reversionistic condition.

He is therefore standing at the door ("thura"). This is the door to your life. It pictures a believer with the Lord outside seeking a place of entrance to temporal fellowship--not to salvation, but restoration to temporal fellowship. Let's look at this for just a moment. Picture this as two concentric circles. The outer circle is the circle of eternal fellowship. The inner circle is the circle of temporal fellowship. You come into the Christian life. At the point of the cross, you enter into temporal fellowship, which is your fellowship day-by-day. When you sin, you step out of that temporal fellowship. You are still saved, and in the outer circle, but you're out of temporal fellowship. You continue in this condition of sin, and that's when you go down into the reversionistic status. This is what Revelation 3:20 is referring to--when you are out of fellowship, and the Lord is knocking at the door and saying, "Let's get back together again." You're standing there listening and have to make up your mind.

The Lord says that He stands at the door and He's knocking. The door is the entrance of fellowship to the life of a believer, and He is knocking. That word is "krouo." It is present. He is constantly knocking. It is active. The Lord Himself is doing it. It is indicative. It is a statement of fact. And here is His promise: "If any man hear my voice." This "if" is a third class condition which means maybe you will and maybe you won't. However, it says that if you decide to go positive; that is, it says if you hear His voice "akouo." That is aorist active subjunctive. Aorist is a point where you decide to listen to the Lord again. You choose to do it (active). It's subjunctive. Maybe you will. It's potential. The Lord is asking you to return to Him, and to start paying attention. Therefore, you start operating under the system of learning His Word again. And what do you do?

You open ("anoigo"). Again it is aorist. There is a point where you just say, "Lord, I was wrong. How do you open your life to Jesus Christ? By using the confession of sin. You confess what the sin was; you confess where you are at odds with the Lord; and, you do it. It's subjunctive again. That's potential. If you choose to open your life to the Lord by restoring temporal fellowship, what's He going to do? He says, "I will come into him "eiserchomai." This is future. When in the future you confess, He'll be in. It is middle. You will benefit by it. It is indicative of a statement of fact. It is His promise. He will come in to him (the reversionistic Christian), and will dine. The word is "deipneo." "Deipneo" is to share fellowship on the Word of God. It is a word to describe social fellowship. What we have upon confession of sin is an active relationship in the future of fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mind you that He is knocking on the door; asking to be restored to temporary fellowship with you; and, asking you to open the door by confession of known sin so that He may come in and now be with you as your guest once more, and one whom you welcome. The alternative to that is to be vomited out of God's mouth. Those are the two sides. Either you open the door of your life and say, "Come in, Lord Jesus," through confession of sin; you restore your temple fellowship; and, you start back up the road toward maturity, or else God says, "I will vomit you out of my mouth" which means extreme discipline in the form of the sin unto death--that God takes your life, and he takes you home to heaven. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door. I will come into him and will dine with him and he with Me." This is an interchange of fellowship.

Verses 21-22 give us the final results. The rewards for recovery are in verse 21: "To him that overcomes (the Christian who goes on to spiritual victory), I will grant to sit with Me in My throne (that is, to administer the earth in the millennium with Christ on His throne), even as I also overcame (Satan and temptation), and sit down with My Father in His throne." The Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven on His Father's throne. Someday Christ will sit on His own throne which is in Jerusalem, ruling during the millennium. As the Father has rewarded Him to share the Father's throne now because He overcame the wicked one, through spiritual maturity and positive volition, so we who through spiritual maturity as a result of positive relation will also be rewarded, and we will share Christ's throne here on this earth administering His millennial world with Him.

Verse 22 is a very encouraging verse because it says that anybody can go back. Anyone can recover: "He that has an ear." Do you see what it takes to recover? It takes an ear to listen to the Word of God. That's all it takes--to listen, and to say, "I believe it." "Let him hear what the Spirit says (positive volition to doctrine--that which God the Holy Spirit is teaching through your pastor-teacher) unto the churches" (all the different assemblies in Laodicea).

So verse 22 says that no matter where you are, there is a road back. All you have to do is start with confession of sins; start being present for instruction in the word; start weeding out the places where you've been resisting and negative; start going positive; and, you're on your way up to the position where you are again a spiritually mature Christian under the abounding grace of God. Now that's worth pursuing. That's what God is asking you to pursue. That's real living. Why would you fall something short of that ideal that he has for you?

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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