***The Gold of Doctrine

RV221-01***

Our subject is "Political Babylon." This is number seven in Revelation 18:1-24.

**Worshiping Idols**

From ancient Babylon on the Euphrates River (in modern Iraq), two major anti-God concepts came from Satan which have contaminated all of mankind to this very day. The first was the evil concept of worshiping idols as gods instead of the Creator God. This is what is done by most of mankind today. Most of the human race worships idols, including the ultimate idol of man himself, and the concept of their own potential deity.

**Government Domination**

The second evil concept that came out of Babylon under Nimrods leadership was the evil of government domination over the people of a nation which restricted the personal freedom under an economic system of socialism, and created a dependency upon government for personal needs.

**Liberalism**

In our day, that concept of dependency upon government provision is called liberalism. So, these two concepts were totally anti-God, because God says, "You will not worship anyone else but Me, the Creator God." So, it's wrong to worship idols, which, in fact, are empowered by demons. Secondly, God says, "It is wrong for government to provide for the needs of the people, because the institution was designed in Noah's days to preserve order in a society, and freedom for people to exercise their personal liberties. Therefore, this is an anti-God concept. Dependency upon government is a very great evil.

Of course, the man who wrote the Constitution of our country knew that. That's why they wrote a constitution that said that the government can never provide for the people, except certain things that all the people together need: post offices; roads; conduct of war; and, things like that.

So, these tables have, over the centuries, brought enormous suffering to the human race. God put the thing together in a right way, and man came along and distorted it and ruined it. At the end of the tribulation era, God is going to express His wrath against these two evil concepts by obliterating Babylon as the fountainhead of these two concepts, which have resulted in opposing God's authority and His divine institution of government. Babylon, Revelation says, has piled up sin against God like a tower reaching to the heavens. God's wrath is so great that He orders a double portion of physical pain and emotional grief for Babylon in comparison to what she has done to mankind with these two evil concepts. Babylon is to be punished by God, in fact, we're told, to the degree of her self-glorification and sensual lifestyle.

Babylon, in her mind, sees herself as a queen who deserves honor and obedience. Babylon, in fact, views herself as a goddess who is invincible, and will never be brought down. Babylon rules as the world's religious; commercial; and, political center beyond, she thinks, all suffering, and enjoys enormous wealth which reinforces that idea.

**A Queen**

So, in Revelation 18:7, we read, "To the degree that she (the harlot of Babylon – the religious and political system) has glorified herself and lived sensually, to the same degree, give her torment and mourning. For she says in her heart, 'I sit as a queen.'"

**A Widow**

Then she says one thing more, as if to really thumb her nose at God. She says, "I am not a widow." And she uses the Greek negative "ou," which is the strong word of great conviction: "I am *not* a widow." A widow is a woman whose husband has died. In biblical imagery, a widow represents the epitome of helplessness – usually, a person who is poor; and, usually a person who is ignored by the rest of the people around her. In biblical imagery, it is a great tragedy to be a widow. Babylon, in contrast, luxuriates in her wealth; her prestige; and, her power over all humanity, which is the opposite of being a widow. But in reality, Babylon is a widow, since God has forsaken her because of her spiritual adultery. Consequently, she is the widow of the most pathetic kind. In place of God, Babylon's lovers are the political rulers on the earth, as we read in Revelation 18:3: "They have drunk of the cup of her immoralities and the cup of her abominations.

Babylon liberalism has caused her to lose touch with the real world, and her true condition and the imminent judgment of God, which is going to fall upon her. Babylon does not sit as a chaste widow, but as a vulgar harlot.

**Pride**

Furthermore, she's proud of it. Not only does she say, "I'm not a widow," but she also says, "I will never see mourning." In the Greek language, the word "never" is made up of two words. First it takes the ordinary negative "ou," then it adds the second negative "me" ("ou me"). This is the strongest negative in the Greek language. It’s emphatic, and that's why it's used here. This widow that absolutely, under no condition, will I ever have emotional grief: "I'll never see mourning."

However, God has spoken otherwise. In verse 7, God has already said that she is going to get an enormous amount of comparison to what she has done. But this is the ultimate in human depravity – man's self-sufficiency, and his smug self-confidence, which always expresses an arrogant optimism about his future. No matter what Scripture says, and do matter how in conflict with the Word of God the person is, there is this self-confidence (this optimism) that all is well. Liberalism from Nimrod, to this day, is always confident that it can build a stable society by government edict and government provision for human needs. It isn't as if we just thought of this idea last month. There have been years and years of this.

The most dramatic example was Soviet Russia. They had almost 75 years of trying to demonstrate this concept of government dependency as the way to care for human needs. It was a total disaster. And all these nations are fleeing that system of Nimrod. They hate it. They realize that it was a very great mistake. And the result of that mistake was a great emotional trauma for these people. They have enormous mourning in many directions.

We, as biblical Christians, know that all social schemes of this sort are doomed because they simply ignore God. This principle of being doomed is enunciated in Galatians 6:7, for example, where the apostle Paul, "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

Verse 8 says, "For the one who sows to his own flesh shall, from the sin nature, reap corruption; but, the one who sows through the Spirit shall, from the Spirit, reap eternal life."

Jesus Himself dealt with this concept of man's capacity to provide for the needs of the human race. In Matthew 6:2-23, Jesus says, "The lamp of the body is the eye. If, therefore, your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in in you is darkness, how great is the darkness?" What Jesus is saying is that if you do not follow biblical principles, and you try to come up with social schemes that the Bible forbids or condemns, the result going to be failure.

So, Babylon of the tribulation era, like the original Babylon on the plains of Shinar, is determined to reach heaven and the good life in spite of God.

Now, we have a great deal to learn from this attitude on the part of Babylon: "I'll never see sorrow. I'll never see morning." Why is she saying that? She said that because she has great wealth. She has great prestige. She has great power. When she speaks, people listen. She has her way. She experiences the good life.

Could that ever be for us as Christians? One of the saddest passages of Scripture in the Word of God is to be found in Revelation 3. ... Here is a letter to a Christian church. Here, in New Testament Times, this church exactly reflects what the condition will be of Babylon. It's a repeat performance. In Revelation 3, we have a group of Christians who have known the Word of God, and they are positive toward the deep things of the Word of God, and something happens to them.

**Be Ignorant of Evil**

Revelation 2:24 describes that believer in the Thyatira church: "But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira who do not hold this teaching (one of the teachings of Satan), who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them, I place no other burden on you." Here is a group of believers who know the deep things of God, and they don't know the deep things of Satan. That's the way the Bible says you're supposed to be. You're supposed to be ignorant of evil.

You're not supposed to watch Oprah Winfrey, and Jesse Rafael, and Geraldo, and all the other scum talk shows, because what they do is teach you about evil. ... The apostle Paul says, "Do not learn about evil." Be innocent about evil, but be greatly, in-depth knowledgeable about what is good. When you sit and listen to those programs, you are internally enormously contaminated. Pictures are placed in the gallery of your mind (that hang on the wall of your mind), and they're not easily erased. They are there, and they come up with you don't realize it. Those programs, including Donahue, are a vileness, and usually they're not worth listening to. Once in a while, a subject comes up that might be informative, but mostly it's digging out of the barrel of filth that the human nature is capable of.

So, here these people were Christians. They were out of the circuit of the deep things of Satan. They were a local church who were suddenly out of temporal fellowship of God the Father. They were in revisionism. It's not unusual to have people in the church who get out of step with God, but to have a whole congregation mutually reinforcing each other? They're out of step with God, and they're so smugly pleased with themselves. They are a gang of people who get together, and they just love each other because they're all out of step with God. That's pretty serious business.

**Reversionistic Christians**

In Revelation 3:15, the Lord Jesus said to this group of believers in this congregation, "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth." These were Christians who were not clearly indifferent to God. They were interested in God, and they attend the church. But neither were they very zealous in serving God. And they weren't too keen on obeying him. They weren't too keen on some of the doctrines that they were being taught. They were lukewarm. In other words, they were insipid to the taste. And God says that it makes Him sick. God is disgusted with their lukewarm carnality. He finds them nauseating. He spits them out, indicating that He has no fellowship with them. The worst people in the world, from God's point of view, are these reversionistic Christians.

Furthermore, you should be aware of the fact that when you run into a reversionistic Christian, that he is among the most dangerous human beings in your circle of contacts. It's very important for you to understand that. This is a Christian who is out of step with the things of God; with the will of God; with the plan of God; and, with the Word of God. I don't care who he is. He's a dangerous person, and he's a potential disaster to your own walk with the Lord. God Himself said, "I'm totally disgusted. I spit them out." The thundering English of the King James Bible says, "I vomit you out." Yet, reversionistic Christians just love one another. They come together, and they smile at each other, and they have social fellowship. And God says, "You make me sick."

That's exactly what Babylon is doing. She's so pleased with herself. She's so smug. The kings of the world with whom she has prostituted herself praised her, and they are enthusiastic for her. She has no use for the things of God. Revelation 3:17 says, "Because you say (and here's the delusion), 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing.' And you do not know that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

When you become a reversionistic Christian, everything is twisted in your eyes. Everything is twisted in your spiritual judgment. Good becomes evil. Evil becomes good. What you should recoil from, with disgust about yourself, you just love. It all gets twisted.

This carnal Christian here, in this congregation, is smug in his status of material prosperity, and he equates that with well-being: "I'm rich. Why do I make the money? Boy, do I have a bank account? You can even call me wealthy. I don't I don't need anything. I'm the kind of a person that if I have six toasters, and General Electric comes out with a super new model, I buy that one too. Now I have seven toasters at home. I don't have need of anything. I don't have to deny myself anything because of the wealth.

Well, obviously, these believers had no mastery of the details of life. Their money was controlling them. Everything they did from morning to night revolved around their money. It was their money that was the directive, not God. These people say they need nothing from God. Of course, that includes instruction in the Word of God. They are self-made successes.

You must remember, while we might recoil from this Babylonian characteristic, that these were humble people. These were Christians who were once very humbly in the status of temporal fellowship. Because they were in that position with God, God gave them money; God prospered them; and, God brought great blessing into their lives. Now they have no time for God's work. They have so much to enjoy of their material things that they cannot put themselves out to exercise their spiritual gifts for the Lord. There's no true picture of oneself when we are in reversionism. We are actually pleased with our grotesqueness. Negative volition to God's truth gives us that distorted vision because of the callous on our mind. We're hard toward God's thinking. And if we move in circles of other reversionistic believers, we reinforce each other in our spiritual disorientation.

In the exciting flush of having that wealth, Satan sells the negative Christian on the lie that he's got everything he needs. But God looks at the people of the Laodicean congregation, and he says, "That's not true. I'll tell you what you're really like. You're wretched." The word "wretched" in the Greek language means you're hard-hearted toward God. You're not really happy. There's a jadedness in you toward God. You're miserable, which means you are to be pitied for your spiritual degeneration. You're a pathetic sight. You may parade around as a great paragon of spiritual insight, but you're a pathetic sight before God. God is disgusted with you. And Christians who have spiritual insight are a little embarrassed when they look at you, because they see you in a miserable condition to be pitied. You're poor. Abject poverty is what is true of you. You're a bunch of beggars.

You say, "How can that be? I have a big bank account." Yes, you do. But you're not even able to enjoy that bank account. You're always worried about what's going to happen to it. You're always maneuvering to see how much you can make it bigger. You never lean back and say, "How nice it is. How sweet it is what God has given me. Now let me see what I can do for Him." You are in abject spiritual poverty. When you are that, no matter what your money is, you're not rich.

**Blind**

One terrible thing is you're blind. You're no longer able to see true spiritual reality. You're no longer able to see the path that God has laid out for you to follow. You're claiming great spiritual insight. Oh, yes, you're opinionated. Boy, are you opinionated? You have all kinds of definite opinions about the things of God, and what's right and what's wrong. But mostly your opinions are wrong because you're blind spiritually.

**Naked**

Then, worst of all, you're naked, lacking the spiritual clothing of experiential righteousness. That's what that means. The clothing is our divine good works. God looks at this congregation, and they are wealthy. They really did have money. And here they are – naked. They do not have divine good work production. So, while they put on a style show outwardly every Sunday when they gather her church, they're lacking in divine good works.

As some believers are taken from our midst, their ministries are missed. Mr. Rouch, at our Thanksgiving Day service, ran through the names of some believers that were our contemporaries who sat among us. A couple of days before that, I had been doing the same thing, and I was thinking about this person; this person; and, this person, and the great heritage and the great contribution that they had left behind to God's work through the Berean ministries. They're not forgotten by us. Whereas, there are other people such that I couldn't even remember their names. I couldn't even remember their faces. I couldn't even bring them to my memory. They were people who had great means in life, and great capacities, but they were naked in divine good production. And suddenly, nobody misses them. How sad!

This same disoriented view of oneself is held by Babylon the harlot. She thinks she's a royal personage of great dignity and power. She doesn't think that she's some helpless widow. In reality, Babylon is a harlot woman. She's calloused toward God. She's a pathetic creature. She is a spiritual beggar. She is blind to spiritual truths. She's devoid of the clothing of divine good works. But God says, "Always, there is a way back." That's grace.

**The Gold of Doctrine**

Verse 18: "I advise you to buy from me gold, refined by fire, that you may become rich." God says, "I'll sell you what you need. If you need garments, I can get you those garments. I get you that divine good production, and I can get it to you by selling you gold." This is recovery from your reversionism. The gold that they're to buy is the divine viewpoint from God – God's perspective, that's the real gold. And there is only one way to get it. That's the way you're doing it now: sitting here listening, in the privacy of your priesthood, instructed in the Word of God, from the Word of God, not from human opinion, and then doing with it what you want – enriching yourself; or, blowing it off. It is doctrine, the truth of God, that produces the gold of divine viewpoint.

I suspect that the pastor-teacher of the Laodicean church had failed to do his job of explaining Scripture to the Christians there, so they had gradually slipped away from their spiritual values. That was a very bad thing for him to do in a congregation that had a lot of money. The more money people of a congregation have, the more they have to be pressed toward a knowledge of the Word of God, because that's the only protection they have against that money corroding them. But that was probably unpopular teaching in that church. Somehow these people had slipped away from the goal of God's viewpoint. They did not have that spiritual maturity structure in their soul which reflected the glory of God. So, they could not go out into the world and have that glory of God tested by the fire of the evil of Satan's world system.

The reversionistic Christian, however, can become rich with the gold of doctrine. Psalm 19:7-11 actually points out that very principle to us. A backslidden Christian can become rich. You can return to the gold of doctrine: "The law of the Lord is perfect." That's doctrine: "Restoring the soul." Doctrine is perfect because it comes from a perfect God. It restores the soul to temporal fellowship with the Father. Furthermore, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. That word "simple" is a nice word for the "dumb" – the spiritually dumb. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise those who are spiritually dumb. It takes the foolish believer out of reversionism. Doctrine will do that.

Verse 8: "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." Doctrine is right. There are rights, and there are wrongs. When you do the things of the Word of God, it's fun. It makes your heart glad. You're at peace and at joy with yourself because you're doing what's right: "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. Doctrine is pure, so it gives spiritual insight to the reversionist.

Verse 9: "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever." Respect for God's integrity has eternal blessing. That's a very dramatic, significant statement: "The fear of the Lord is clean, and it endures forever." There's nothing that will clean up a person's life like being afraid of God. A little fear of God will clean up a lot of things in our lives. And He is there – just look over your shoulder. He's there: "The judgments of the Lord are true. They are righteous all together." God's doctrine is pure. It has respect for His integrity. And it has eternal blessings, or it has eternal loss, because God's judgments are true, and God is fair. He acts in justice.

**A Good Reputation**

Verse 10 says, "They (the doctrines of Scripture) more desirable than gold; yes, than much fine gold." Bible doctrine is compared in value to gold; "and, in sweetness to honey." That's why we teach our children that the most valuable thing they have is their personal honor, and their personal good reputation. They shouldn't cheat. They shouldn't lie. They shouldn't steal. They shouldn't be vindictive. They shouldn't be all the things that people hate, or anything that will make their classmates distrust them. The most valuable thing they have is a good reputation: "Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb." You people know very well that there is nothing as sweet as the doctrines of the Word of God – coming to an understanding of a doctrine; metabolizing it into your spiritual life; and, connecting it into your experience.

Then verse 11 says, "Moreover, by them (the doctrines of the Word of God), Your servant is warned." Doctrine warns us of error: "In keeping them, there is great reward." When you obey them, God is able to reward. It's just that simple. So, this is an old idea here in the Old Testament. Doctrine will bring you back to God.

One of the things that I find fascinating in the Word of God is the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ carried Himself through at the moment of His death on the cross. The God-Man was now going to hand over His humanity in death, who had suffered unimaginable horrors, and physical pain, and emotional trauma, and mental distress. How can you carry yourself through that when you're in physical agony, and at the same time, mental distress, and your life is going out over the hill? What can carry a person through? What can give you stability? And Christ was totally stable all the way to the very end.

As background for this, I want to read Psalm 31:5: "Into Your hand I commit My Spirit down. You have ransomed Me, O Lord, God of Truth."

Hold your hand in that psalm, and turn to Luke 23:46. The Lord Jesus Christ is on the cross. Remember that we're talking about the gold of doctrine – that which makes you really wealthy. I'm trying to get you so enthusiastic that you'll think twice not to attend a service of instruction here at Berean Church. You'll really think twice, because the loss will be so great to you.

In Luke 23:46, the end has arrived. Christ has now, in His deity, decided to yield the life of this humanity. Jesus quotes from some 31:5. That's where that statement came from: "Jesus, crying out with a loud voice said (and He quotes David), 'Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit,' and having said this, He breathed His last. What was on the mind of Christ at the moment that He gave up His life? Doctrine: the principle of doctrine. And what was the doctrine that was encouraging Him? You have to go back to Psalm 31:5, because Jesus didn't quote the rest of the verse. In Psalm 31:5 says, "You have ransomed Me, O Lord, God of Truth" (God of Doctrine).

David's statement indicates that the basis of the supreme confidence of Jesus Christ, at the point of giving Himself up to death, was that He believed the doctrines of Scripture. Jesus committed Himself to whom? To the Lord (deity), the God of Truth: "I have committed Myself to you, the Lord of Truth." Because of that, Jesus went out happy. His happiness; His stability; and, his humanity went right to the end, because He knew that the God of truth was going to raise Him back to life. He went out knowing that when He was raised back to life, the sin question would no longer be an issue in the human race. All sins would have been totally covered, and Jesus was the instrument that had accomplished His mission in doing that. That's what Christmas is all about. He was born to die. His happiness; His stability; and, His humanity, during His crucifixion; His suffering; and, His death, was because of the doctrine in His human spirit. That brought Him in touch with reality. He needed that in His humanity. He needed to know the Word of God. If He needed it, do you and I need it? And if it worked for Him, it will certainly work infinitely more for us, because it was designed for us.

What Jesus knew was that He was trusting in the promise of a God whose Word is settled in heaven. Psalm 119:89: "Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in heaven." Is that the side of our table this morning? Is that what's out? That's where it comes from.

**Doctrine Stands Firm**

Tonight we're going to turn it around at the Lord's Supper: "And do this in remembrance of Me." We keep this side out constantly to remind you of Psalm 119:89: "Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in heaven." And that means that it stands firm. The word "settled" means "stands firm:" "Your Word, O Lord, stands firm in heaven." That's real wealth. It is the Word of God. Nothing is greater gold in your account than the gold of doctrine.

So, Jesus Christ wants church-age believers to exploit His victory of the cross, in our behalf, as His royal family, to enrich ourselves by purchasing the gold of doctrine with a coin of positive volition. Any Christian can become rich spiritually through the Word of God if someone teaches him, and if that believer is present to be taught.

It is no small thing that preachers have opted for popularity and size and prestige positions, and their preaching is designed for that purpose. If, over the long haul, you keep a record, and you keep track of what service-by-service is of some of the greatest, most popular preachers, you will find that, after all is said and done, there is a small residue of hard-core, categorical, doctrinal instruction. There's not the kind of knowledge of the Word of God that could carry a person through the experience that Jesus went through on that cross. It was doctrine in His human spirit, and His believing that He was dealing with a God of truth, that He went out into death, completely happy, knowing that He had already been the victor.

**Christians are Winning**

We have to be awfully dumb if we cannot understand that the Scripture says, "We are more than conquerors to Him that loved us and gave Himself for us." We are the winners. Furthermore, we biblical Christians are winning. I don't care whether you call yourself a conservative, or what term you use, but there is a philosophy of life, and it begins with the Word of God. The biblical Christian, and the biblical concepts, are winning in our society. The evils of Nimrod's liberalism are being exposed left and right. Any Christian can become rich through doctrine if someone teaches him, and his preacher is supposed to be doing that.

You shouldn't give the back of your hand to the pastor-teacher who is doing his job, even if you find that he is not perfect. Fortunately, thank God, that is not our problem here in this congregation. Here we are never concerned with his making a judgment that misses the beat. It is not easy to live and to always be right. Sometimes I may be mistaken, but I'm never wrong. You should not give the back of your hand to someone that is no more perfect than you are. Instruction in the Word of God, when faithfulness has been performed, is what (you should recognize) carried Christ through on the cross. That's what I've been trying to tell you. And if He can be carried through that trauma, then there is nothing in your life that you can't be carried through if you stay serious about knowing the Word of God. And it starts with being in this room when we're teaching it. Any Christian can really accumulate true gold.

It happens to be a fact of life also that when you accumulate the gold of spiritual doctrine, very often you accumulate material gold as well. That's part of it. You'll always have what you need. That's logistical grace. But I've noticed that the more serious people get about the Word of God, and the more they invest themselves in God's work, the greater are their financial resources. Then comes the problem of your not falling into Babylon's deceit of hanging onto those resources, instead of saying, "Good. Now I can do more," and releasing them to the Lord's work.

**Serving God**

Revelation 3:18: "Buy gold, refined by the testing of fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed." Here's the other thing that you need when you have fallen into revisionism. "White garments" refers to experiential righteousness: super grace living; and, serving God. These are the divine good works that the apostle Paul speaks of in Ephesians 2:10, when he says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."

**Experiential Righteousness and Eternal Rewards**

The first reason that Christ died was to prove God's integrity. He had promised that He was going to cover your sin. Got covered your sin as He promised to do. Secondly, it was for your benefit to escape hell, but He had in mind for you a mission of good works: "Which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." It is that statement about which Paul later says, "I have fought the good fight. I have run my course." What's he talking about? He's talking about this. He says, "I know I came into the world as a born-again believer, finally, with a mission that God has prepared for me, and I'm happy to tell you that that's the mission I walked in. I didn't waste my life. I didn't lose my life." What should it profit a man (a Christian man) if he gains the whole world, and he loses the impact of his life in eternal rewards? I'm telling you that those rewards are going to be big things in heaven. And investing in those eternal rewards is the smart thing to do. You have nothing to lose. These are the garments in which we are clothed. This is our experiential righteousness.

God sees these Laodicean Christians in filthy rags of their human good works that Isaiah 64:6 speaks. Here we have a shame because of nudity. Remember that, by the Bible's standard, public nakedness (whether it is physical or spiritual) is always shameful. Do you understand that? Public nudity is always shameful? Spiritual nudity is always shameful. A believer is to clothe himself with the experiential righteousness (his godly living as he moves through Satan's world), and to cover himself, and to cover his shameful condition here of revisionism which is seen by God and man. How humiliating it is for a Christian to stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ in spiritual nakedness just because you didn't live right! White garments are good works. Our experiential righteousness now clothes us, so that we stand before God with our nakedness covered by the experience of our righteousness in our service to God.

He also says, "And to anoint your eyes with eye salve so that you may see." We are to rub our eyes with the status of spirituality. Eye salve is spirituality – temporal fellowship, so that you can see reality. You can see yourself as you really are.

These lukewarm spiritual Christians in Laodicea couldn't see themselves because they are out of temporal fellowship. They were blind to the will of God, and they were blind to what they were. But a Christian's spiritual eyes can be restored so easily: you just confess; admit; and, rub the salve on the eyes, and suddenly you'll see things straight.

Revelation 3:19: "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore, be zealous and repent." God says, "You're going to be My child, and I'm not going to let you get away with this. I'm going to call it to your attention one way or another. God is eager for reversionistic Christians to return back to temporal fellowship with Him. God loves His children because they bear His absolute righteousness. God loves His righteousness in them. So, He judges and chastens them to do right, as Hebrews 12:5-8 tell us. God the Father reproves His carnal children so to bring them back, under the conviction of their sinfulness, or He imposes discipline to wake them up. A carnal believer has to confess and repent. You can only make that decision yourself. It's a personal decision. Thus you rub the eye salve on your eyes, and you change your mind about your position. You get things straight.

Then we have Revelation 3:20. This is a verse that is so often misapplied, because people use Revelation 3:20 and talk as if it was talking about salvation. This is a verse where Jesus Christ is knocking on the heart's door of backslidden, reversionistic believer: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. He's knocking on the heart's door. He's appealing to the carnal Christian: "Come back to temporal fellowship with Me. Let Me back into your life." The Lord Jesus Christ is not welcome in the life of a reversionistic Christian any more than he is in the Babylonian unbeliever. Jesus says, "If anyone (third-class condition – maybe you will, and maybe you won't) hears My voice, and opens the door." If the reversionistic Christian will pay attention to the Word of God, to the appeals of the Lord, and he repents (he changes his mind), and he confesses (that's the way you open the door – by confessing), Jesus says, "I'll come into him. I will dine with him, and he with Me." This is the highest expression of Christian fellowship – sharing a meal together.

It is sheer madness for a Christian to be out of touch with God so that God is sick of him. That brings a lot of difficulties: "I'm standing at your heart's door. I'm knocking if anyone is willing to listen. You hear Me knocking, but are you willing to open the door by repenting and confessing? I'll come in then, and I'll sit down, and we'll have fellowship together, and I'll start guiding your life again."

Revelation 3:21 says, "He, who overcomes: I'll grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." Jesus Christ says, "In the millennium, I'm going to bring you Christians who have walked with Me in fellowship. And you're going to sit on My throne, and you're going to rule this earth with Me." The antichrist thinks that he's going to reign supreme and invincible, and that he can't be destroyed. The truth of the matter is that you people, who take God seriously, are the ones who are going to share His throne, as He now shares the Father's throne, because He was obedient to the will of the Father for Him.

Verse 22 says, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." A spiritual Christian has ears to hear the Holy Spirit truth. Any believer can recover from reversionism.

It's a terrible condition to be in. Babylon, the harlot woman, should not be our example: "Oh, I sit as a queen. I have wealth, and I have prestige, and I have recognition. My word is a command. I'm not a poor, helpless widow that does not impress anybody. I'll never have an unhappy day. I will never see mourning. There'll never be any sadness for me." What arrogance! What blindness!

The Laodicean letter makes it clear to us that you and I can do the same stupid thing. We can be exactly what Babylon became, and what God is going to totally destroyed her for. May God help us to see the wonders of the gold of doctrine, and the marvels of applying it to our experience. Nothing is sweeter than the Word of God, and nothing is more powerful than a Christian who is in temporal fellowship and acting on doctrinal principles. That person is a joy to all of us. That person is one that we honor. That person is one who will never have to worry about the Thessalonians discipline of delusion – the most serious judgment that God can impose upon a believer in reversionism, so that he believes the lies of Satan. Thank God for the gold of doctrine.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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