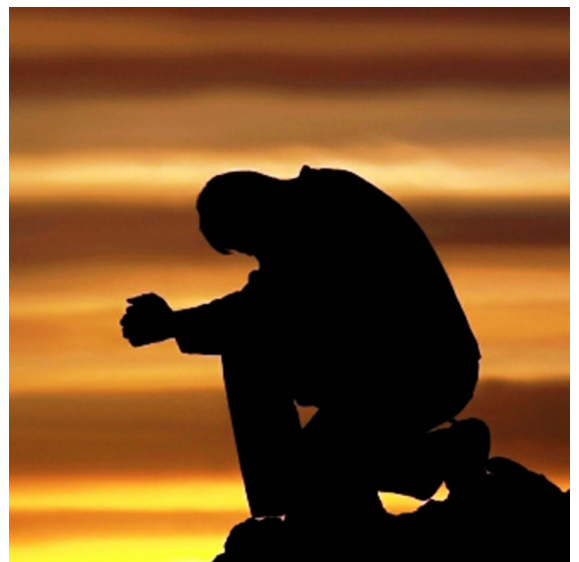


God's Message to Churches Today



William Marrion Branham

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Introduction

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Revelation 3:14,

"These things saith the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God."

My, isn't that the most wonderful description of the attributes of our lovely Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ? These words just make me want to shout. They bring such a spirit of reality into my heart. Just reading them without even waiting for a thorough revelation of the Spirit upon them thrills me.

Jesus is giving us this description of Himself in relation to the last age. The days of grace are winding up. He has looked from the first century right through to the twentieth, and told us all things concerning these ages. Before He reveals the characteristics of the last age to us, He gives us one final look at His own gracious and supreme Deity. This is the capstone revelation of Himself.

Thus saith the "AMEN". Jesus is the Amen of God. Jesus is the "So Let It Be" of God. Amen stands for finality. It stands for approval. It stands for prevailing promise. It stands for unchanging promise. It stands for the seal of God.

I want you to watch this carefully now and see something really sweet and beautiful. I said this is His end-time revelation of Himself. When the day of grace closes, then the millennium comes very shortly thereafter, doesn't it?

Well, read with me Isaiah 65:16-19.

"That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are

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forgotten, and because they are hid from Mine eyes.

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind.

But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying."

This is about New Jerusalem. This is the millennium. But as we go into the millennium, hear what He says about being a certain kind of God, Verse 16,

"That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth."

Yes, that is true, but the real translation is not "God of truth". It is "God of the AMEN". So we read it, "shall bless himself in the God of the AMEN, and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of the AMEN; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from My eyes. For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create, for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her; nor the voice of crying," Hallelujah. Here is Jehovah of the Old Testament, "the God of the Amen". Here is Jesus of the New Testament, "the God of the Amen". Hear, Oh Israel, the Lord thy God is ONE God. There it is again, the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New. "Hear, Oh, Israel the Lord thy God is ONE God." The New Testament

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and does not know it. There is only one answer—he is out of his mind. He is already deep in oblivion. His faculties are gone, spiritual amnesia has set in. What else can it mean? Can it mean that the Holy Spirit has taken His leave of this last day church? Can it mean that men have put God out of their minds to such an extent that it is happening even as stated in Romans 1:28.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

It surely appears that something like that has happened. Here is a people who say that they are of God and know God and have His Holy Spirit, and yet they are naked and blind and don't know it. They are ALREADY DECEIVED. THEY HAVE THE WRONG SPIRIT. THE ELECT CANNOT BE DECEIVED, BUT IT IS EVIDENT THAT THESE OTHERS ARE. These are they who have become blind because they refused the Word of God. These are they who have stripped themselves naked by leaving God's care and protection and sought to build their own way of salvation, their own tower of Babel by organization.

Oh, how lovely and beautiful dressed they appear in their own eyes as they formed their general assemblies, and their councils, etc. But now God is stripping it all away and they are naked, for these organizations have but led them into the camp of antichrist, into the field of tares, right up to their binding and burning. Objects of pity indeed they are. Yes, pity them, warn them, beseech them, and still they go their way headlong to destruction, wrathfully turning away any and all attempts to save them as brands from the burning. Miserable indeed they are, yet they know it not. Calloused and beyond hope, they glory in what is actually their shame. Defiant against the Word, yet one day they shall be judged by it and pay the price of its awful

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does not reveal ANOTHER God, it is a further revelation of the ONE AND SAME GOD. Christ did not come down to make Himself known. He did not come to reveal the Son. He came to reveal and make known the Father. He never talked about two Gods; He talked about ONE God. And now in this last age, we have come back to the capstone revelation, the most important revelation of Godhead in the whole Bible, that is, JESUS IS GOD, HE AND THE FATHER ARE ONE: THERE IS ONE GOD, AND HIS NAME IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

He is the God of the Amen. He never changes. What He does never changes. He says it, and it stands fast. He does it, and it is done forever. None can take from what He says or add to it. So let it be. Amen. So let it be. Aren't you glad that you serve that kind of a God? You can know exactly where you are with Him at any time and all the time. He is the AMEN God and won't change.

"These things saith the AMEN."

I like that. It means that whatever He said is final. It means that whatever He said to the first age and to the second and to all ages about His own true church and about the false vine is exactly right and it won't change. It means that what He started out with in Genesis, He will finish in Revelation. He has to for He is the Amen, SO LET IT BE. Now we can see again why the devil hates the Books of Genesis and Revelation. He hates the truth. He knows the truth will prevail. He knows what his end will be. How he fights that. But we are on the winning side. We (I mean the believers of His Word, only) are on the Amen side.

The Faithful and True Witness

"These things saith the Faithful and True Witness." Now I want to show you what I find in the thought of "faithful". You know we often talk about a great unchanging God, Whose Word does not change. And when we speak of Him after that

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manner we often get a view of Him that makes Him seem very impersonal. It is as though God made the whole universe and all the laws that pertain to it and then stood back and became a great impersonal God. It is as though God made a way of salvation for lost mankind, that way being the cross, and then when the death of Christ has atoned for our sins, and His resurrection gave us an open door to Him, God just folded His arms and stood back. It is as if we majored in believing in a great Creator, Who having created, lost personal interest in His creation. Now I say that is how too many people are apt to think. But that is wrong thinking, for God is GOVERNING IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN RIGHT NOW. HE IS BOTH CREATOR AND SUSTAINER.

Colossians 1:16-17.

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him:

And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

He is a Sovereign God. By His own counsel He purposed the plan of the salvation of His own elect which He foreknew. The Son died upon the cross to establish the means of Salvation and the Holy Spirit carefully executes the will of the Father. He is working all things at this moment according to the purpose of His own will. He is right in the midst of it all. He is in the midst of His church. This great Creator, Saviour-God is faithfully working amongst His own right now as the great Shepherd of the sheep. His very existence is for His own. He loves them and cares for them. His eye is ever upon them. When the Word says that "your lives are hid with Christ in God" it means exactly what it says. Oh, I am so glad that my God abides faithful. He is true to Himself, He

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John 9:40-41.

"And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also?"

Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

The attitude of this age is exactly what it was then. People have it all. They know it all. They cannot be taught. If a point of truth from the Word comes up and a man tries to explain his view to one with an opposing view, the listener is not at all listening that he might learn, but is listening only to refute what is being said. Now I want to ask a fair question. Can Scripture fight Scripture? Does the Bible contradict the Bible? Can there be two doctrines of truth in the Word that say the opposite or oppose the other? NO. IT CANNOT BE SO. Yet how many of God's people have their eyes open to that truth? Not even one percent, as far as I know, have learned that ALL Scripture is given by God and ALL is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, etc. If all Scripture is thusly given, then every verse will dovetail if given a chance. But how many believe in predestination unto election and reprobation unto destruction? Those who don't, will they listen? No, they will not. Yet both are in the Word, and nothing will change it. But to learn about it and reconcile the truth of those doctrines with other truths that seem to oppose, they will not take the time. But they stop their ears, and gnash with their teeth, and they lose out. At the end of this age a prophet will come, but they will be blind to all that he is doing and saying. They are so sure they are right, and in their blindness they will lose it all.

Now God says they are naked as well as blind. I cannot imagine anything as tragic as a man who is blind and naked

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impending disaster, even as they were when they appeared upon the wall at Belshazzar's feast. Don't you know that many are going to come in the last day and say, "Lord, Lord, have we not done many wonderful works in Thy Name, even to the casting out of devils?"

And He will say,

"Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. I never knew you."

Matthew 7:22-23.

Jesus said they were workers of iniquity. Yet, you get a man that can come and pray for the sick, get oil and blood appearing in the congregation, prophecy coming forth and all manner of the supernatural, and the people will gather round him, and swear that he is of the Lord, even though he is actually making a money racket of religion and living in sin. The only answer they have is the absolutely unbiblical answer of "well, he gets results, so he must be of God." How terrible. How actually poor this age is in the Spirit of God, and the poor poverty-stricken ones don't even know it.

"You are blind and naked." Now this is really desperate. How can anyone be blind and naked and not know it? Yet it says that they are blind and naked and can't perceive it. The answer is, they are spiritually blind, and spiritually naked. Do you remember when Elisha and Gehazi were surrounded by the army of the Syrians? You recall that Elisha smote them blind by the power of God. Yet their eyes were wide open and they could see where they were going. The blindness was peculiar in that they could see certain things, but other certain things such as Elisha and the servant and the camp of Israel they could not see. What this army could see did not avail for them. What they did not see brought on their captivity. Now what does this mean to us? It means exactly what it meant back there in the earthly ministry of Jesus. He tried to teach them truth, but they would not

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won't lie. He is true to the Word, He will back it up. He is true to us, He will lose none of us, but raise us up in the last day. I am glad that I am resting in His faithfulness.

Philippians 1:6.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He Which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ."

"He is the True Witness."

Now this word, true, is the same word we saw back there in Revelation 3:7. You recall that it does not mean 'true' as in contrast with 'false.' It has a richer, deeper meaning by far. It expresses perfect realization in contrast to partial realization. Now back in the Philadelphian Age, the coming of the Lord was drawing nigh. What great love that age manifested for Him.

It reminds me of those beautiful words of I Peter 1:8,

"Whom having not seen ye love, in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

With them we rejoice also. We haven't seen Him, but we have felt Him. We know Him now as much as our limiting senses can let us. But one day it will be face to face. That is for this age. He is coming at the end of this age. Partial realization will be made PERFECT REALIZATION, COMPLETED REALIZATION. Hallelujah! We have been looking through a glass darkly, but soon it will be face to face. We have been going from glory to glory, but soon it will be right in the glory; and in HIS GLORY WE'LL SHINE. WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, WONDROUSLY LIKE HIM, JESUS OUR SAVIOUR DIVINE! Isn't that wonderful? We are complete in Him. That is true. He would not lie to us about that. But one day we will be changed in the atoms. We will put on immortality. We will be all swallowed up in life. Then we will

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Now we think of that word, 'witness.' Well, that word is the one we get the word 'martyr' from. The Bible speaks of Stephen and Antipas and others as martyrs. They were martyrs; they were also witnesses. Jesus was a faithful martyr. The Holy Ghost is the witness to that. The Spirit bears record of that. The world hated Jesus. It killed Him. But God loved Him and He went to the Father. The proof that He went to the Father is that the Holy Ghost came. If Jesus had not been received of the Father, the Spirit would not have come.

Read it in John 16:7-11.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Of sin, because they believe not on Me:

Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more;

Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

The presence of the Holy Spirit in this world instead of Jesus being here, proves that Jesus was righteous and went to the Father.

But it also says in John 14:18.

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rather than the rock of the revelation of God's Word. Soon cometh the earthquake. Soon there will come the storms of the wrath of God in judgment. Then comes sudden destruction, and in spite of all their carnal preparation they will still be unprepared for what comes upon the earth. They are those who in spite of all their worldly efforts are actually opposing themselves and don't know it. Objects of pity are they indeed. Pity the poor people who are in this last day ecumenical move, for they call it the move of God, when it is of Satan. Pity those who do not know the curse of organization. Pity those who have so many beautiful churches, such lovely parsonages, such grandly trained choirs, such a show of wealth and such a sedate and reverent form of worship. Pity them, don't envy them. Back to the old store buildings, back to the dimly-lit rooms, back to the cellars, back to less of the world and more of God. Pity those who make their great claims, and talk about their gifts. Feel for them as objects of pity, for soon they will be objects of wrath.

"They are poor." Now of course that means Spiritually poor. The sign of this age as it closes, is bigger and better churches, with more and more people, with more and more manifestation of what is supposed to be demonstrations of the Holy Ghost. But the filled altars, the gifts of the Spirit in operation, the remarkable attendance is not the answer from God, for those who come to the altars very seldom stay to go on with God, and after the great campaigns are finished, where are all those who came down the aisles? They heard a man, they listened to an appeal, they came into the net, but they were not fish, and turtle-like they crawled back to their own waters.

Then there is all this talk about the glossalalia—it is supposed to be the evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and people are thinking that we are in the midst of a great revival. The revival is over. America had her last chance in 1957. Now the tongues are God's sign of

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in trial as "blessed" and his attitude one of joy whereas this description is phrased as "wretched and miserable". How strange. In this age of plenty, in this age of progress, in this age of abundance, how can there be trials? Well now, it is strange; but in this age of plenty and opportunity, when everyone has so much and there is so much more to be had, what with all the inventions to do our work and so many things to give us pleasure, SUDDENLY, we find mental illness taking such a toll as to alarm the nation. When everybody ought to be happy, with really nothing to be unhappy about, millions are taking sedatives at night, pep pills in the morning, rushing to doctors, entering institutions, and trying to drown out unknown fears by alcohol.

Yes, this age boasts of its tremendous stores of worldly goods, but the people are less happy than ever. This age boasts of its spiritual attainments, but the people are less sure of themselves than ever. This age boasts of better moral values and it is more corrupt than any age since the flood. It talks about its knowledge and science, but it is fighting a losing battle in all fields, for the human mind and soul and spirit cannot comprehend or keep abreast with all the changes that have come upon the earth. In one generation we have gone all the way from the horse and buggy age to the space age, and we are proud and boastful about it; but inside is a dark void cavern that is crying out in torment, and WITHOUT A KNOWN REASON men's hearts are failing for fear and the world is so darkened that this age could well be called the age of neurotics. It boasts, but it cannot back it up. It cries peace, and there is no peace. It cries that it has a great amplitude of all things, but it keeps burning with desire like an unsatisfied fire! "There is no peace," saith my God to the wicked.

"They are miserable." That means that they are objects to be pitied. Pitied? They scorn pity. They are full of pride. They vaunt what they have. But what they have will not stand the test of time. They have built upon quicksand

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come to you."

He sent the Comforter. He WAS THE COMFORTER. He came back in SPIRIT upon the true church. He is the faithful and true WITNESS in the midst of the church. But one day He is going to come back in flesh again. He will prove then Who is the only wise potentate,—it is He, Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory.

Faithful and True Witness, Creator and Sustainer, Perfect Realization, the Amen of God.

Oh, how I love Him, how I adore Him, Jesus the Son of God.

I want to close my thoughts on this part of the salutation with these words of

II Corinthians 1:18-22.

"But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who was preached among you by us, even by me and Sylvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea.

For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Now He Which establisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us, is God;

Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

The Creation Of God

"The Beginning Of The Creation Of God."

That is Who the Lord Jesus says He is. But those words

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don't mean exactly as they sound to us. Just taking them the way they sound has made some people (in fact multitudes of people) get the idea that Jesus was the first creation of God, making Him lower than Godhead. Then this first creation created all the rest of the universe and whatsoever it contains. But that is not right. You know that doesn't line up with the rest of the Bible. The words are, "He is the BEGINNER or AUTHOR of the creation of God." Now we know for a surety that Jesus is God, very God. He is the Creator.

John 1:3

"All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made."

He is the One of Whom it is said, Gen. 1:1

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth".

Also it says in Ex. 20:11,

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day."

See, there is no doubt that He is the Creator. He was the Creator of a FINISHED PHYSICAL CREATION.

Surely we can see what these words mean now. To have any other interpretation would mean that God created God. How could God be created when He, Himself, is the Creator?

But now He is standing in the midst of the Church. As He stands there revealing Who He is in this last age, He calls Himself the "Author of the creation of God". This is ANOTHER CREATION. This has to do with the church. This is a special designation of Himself. He is the CREATOR of that church. The heavenly Bridegroom created his own bride. As the Spirit of God, He came down and created in the virgin Mary

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Now they know I am telling the truth about them, for not one of their manuals say any different. They wrote it all out just so nice and put their names to it and finished it all up. God just doesn't have any more. And there are those who just don't want any more. They do not believe in healing and would not want it, although it is in the Word. There are those who would not take the Holy Spirit if God opened the heavens and showed them a sign.

Now they are all saying, and trying to prove that they have it all, or they have enough. Yet is that the truth? Compare this twentieth century church to the first century church. Go ahead. Do that. Where is the power? Where is the love? Where is the purified church that withstood sin and walked with faith toward Jesus? Where is the unity? You can't find it. If this church has all it needs, why were they crying out for more of God in the Book of Acts as though they didn't have it all, and yet they had far more than they have today?

God's Diagnosis

Now what God saw was entirely different from what they said they saw. They said that they were rich in goods and Spiritually wealthy. They had arrived. They had need of nothing. But God saw it otherwise. He said, "You don't know this, but you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." Now when a people are that way, especially naked and DON'T KNOW IT, there has to be something awfully wrong. Surely something must be happening. Is it not that God has blinded their eyes as He did to the Jews? Is the Gospel going back to the Jews? Is history repeating itself? I say it is.

God says this church of the Laodicean Age is "wretched". That word comes from two Greek words which mean 'endure' and 'trial.' And it has nothing to do with the trials that come to a true Christian for God describes a Christian

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When you cut your hair you signified that you left the headship of your husband. Like Eve you walked out and went on your own. You got the vote. You took men's jobs. You left off being females. You ought to repent and come back to God. And if all this wasn't bad enough, a whole lot of you took the idea that you could invade the pulpits and the church offices that God reserved for men and for men only. Oh, I touched a sore spot then didn't I? Well, show me one place in the Bible that God ever ordained any woman to preach or take authority over a man, and I will apologize for what I have said. You can't find that I am wrong. I am right, for I stand with the Word and in the Word. If you were Spiritually rich you would know that is true. There is nothing true but the Word. Paul said, "I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man." You can't possibly take a place amongst the five-fold ministry of Ephesians 4 and not take authority over men. Sister, you had better listen to that Word. It was not the Spirit of God manifesting in a Spirit-filled life that told you to preach because the Spirit and the Word are ONE. They say the same thing. Somebody made a mistake. Somebody was fooled. Wake up before it is too late. Satan fooled Eve, your mother; he is fooling the daughters now. May God help you.

"I have need of nothing."

Now when anybody says, "I have need of nothing," he could very well be saying, "I have everything", or he could be saying, "I don't want any more as I am full now". You can express this any way you want, and it all adds up to the fact that the church is complacent. She is satisfied with what she has. She either figures she has it all or has enough. And that is exactly what we find today. What denomination is not claiming that IT has the revelation and the power and the truth? Listen to the Baptists, and they have it all. Listen to the Methodists, and they have it all. Listen to the Church of Christ and everyone is wrong but them. Hear what the Pentecostals say and they have the fulness of the fulness.

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Colossians 1:18,

"And He is the head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence."

II Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away, behold all things are become new."

There you can see that though man was of the OLD ORDER or creation, now in UNION WITH CHRIST, he has become the NEW CREATION of God.

Ephesians 2:10,

"For we are His workmanship CREATED IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS unto good works."

Ephesians 4:24,

"And that ye put on the NEW MAN which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

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This New Creation is not the old creation made over, or it could not be called a new creation. This is exactly what it says it is, "NEW CREATION". It is another creation, distinct from the old one. No longer is He dealing by ways of the flesh. That was how He dealt with Israel. He chose Abraham, and of Abraham's issue through the godly Isaac line. But now out of every kindred, tribe and nation He has purposed a new creation. He is the first of that creation. He was God created in the form of man. Now by His Spirit He is creating many Sons unto Himself. God the creator, creating Himself a part of His creation.

This is the true revelation of God. This was His purpose. This purpose took form through election. That is why He could look right down to the last age when all would be over and see Himself still in the midst of the church, as author of this New Creation of God. His Sovereign power brought it to pass. By His own decree He elected the members of this New Creation. He predestinated them to the adoption of children according to the good pleasure of His will. By His omniscience and omnipotence He brought it to pass. How else could He know that He would be standing in the midst of the church receiving glory from His brethren if He did not make sure? All things He knew, and all things He worked out according to what He knew in order that His purpose and good pleasure be brought to pass.

Ephesians 2:11

"In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

Hallelujah! Aren't you glad that you belong to Him!

The Message To The Laodicean Age

Revelation 3:15-19

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claiming how fine is this generation, how full are the churches and how responsive are even the natives on the mission fields. The church has turned the people over to the doctors, especially the psychiatrists. How it can prate about being rich Spiritually is more than I know. It isn't true. They are bankrupt and don't know it.

Take a good look around you. Examine the people as they walk by. In the multitudes you see, can you pick out those that have the appearance of Christians? Watch how they dress, watch how they act, hear what they say, see where they go. Surely there ought to be some real evidence of the new birth amongst all those we see go by. But few there be. Yet today the fundamental churches are telling us they have millions saved and even Spirit-filled. Spirit-filled? Can you call women Spirit-filled who go around with frizzy bobbed hair, shorts and slacks, halters and briefs, all painted up like Jezebel? If these are adorned in modest apparel as becometh Christian women, I would hate to think what it would be like if I had to witness a display of immodesty.

Now I know that the women don't set the styles. Hollywood does that. But listen ladies, they still sell yard goods and sewing machines. You don't have to buy what's in the stores and then use that as an excuse. This is a deadly serious matter that I am going into. Have you not read in Scripture that when a man looks on a woman and lusts after her in his heart, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart? And suppose you dressed in such a way as to cause that? That makes you his partner in sin, even though you would be absolutely unaware of it, being a true virgin with no such desires. Yet God holds you accountable and you will be judged.

Now I know you ladies don't like this kind of preaching, but sister, you are dead wrong in what you are doing. The Bible forbids you to cut your hair. God gave it for a covering. He gave a command for you to wear it long. It is your glory.

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There are paid preachers, paid assistants, paid ministers of music and education, paid choirs, paid custodians, programs, and entertainment—all costing great sums, but for all that, the power is decreasing. Yes, the church is rich, but the power is not there. God moves by His Spirit, not by the amount of money or talent in the church.

Now I want to show you how diabolical this urge for money has become. The churches have gone all out to get a membership, especially of the wealthy. Everywhere there is the cry to make religion so attractive and appealing that the rich and cultured and all who have worldly prestige will come in and be active in the church. Can't they understand that if wealth is the criterion of spirituality, then the world already has God, has all of God, and the church has nothing?

"Thou sayest I am increased with goods."

This literally means 'I have Spiritual riches.' This sounds like the millennium with streets of gold and the presence of God. But I wonder if this is so. Is the church truly rich in the Spiritual things of God? Let us examine this Twentieth-Century Laodicean boast in the light of the Word.

If the church were truly Spiritually rich, its influence would be felt upon community life. But exactly what kind of lives are these so-called spiritual and influential men of the community living? Out in suburbia, out in the better class districts, there abounds wife-swapping, prostitution, and bands of children crashing parties, exacting a terrible toll in property damage. Immorality has reached an all-time high in promiscuous sex acts, narcotic addiction, gambling, stealing, and all kinds of evil. And the church goes on

millions of dollars. Wealth pours and pours into the church, the membership increases along with the money, yet the work is not being done as it was done when there was no money, but men rested solely on the ability given them by the Holy Ghost.

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Now I want to show you how diabolical this urge for money has become. The churches have gone all out to get a membership, especially of the wealthy. Everywhere there is the cry to make religion so attractive and appealing that the rich and cultured and all who have worldly prestige will come in and be active in the church. Can't they understand that if wealth is the criterion of spirituality, then the world already has God, has all of God, and the church has nothing?

"Thou sayest I am increased with goods."

This literally means 'I have Spiritual riches.' This sounds like the millennium with streets of gold and the presence of God. But I wonder if this is so. Is the church truly rich in the Spiritual things of God? Let us examine this Twentieth-Century Laodicean boast in the light of the Word.

If the church were truly Spiritually rich, its influence would be felt upon community life. But exactly what kind of lives are these so-called spiritual and influential men of the community living? Out in suburbia, out in the better class districts, there abounds wife-swapping, prostitution, and bands of children crashing parties, exacting a terrible toll in property damage. Immorality has reached an all-time high in promiscuous sex acts, narcotic addiction, gambling, stealing, and all kinds of evil. And the church goes on

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot."

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth."

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;

I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent."

As we have read this together I am sure that you have noticed that the Spirit has not said one kind thing about this age. He makes two indictments and pronounces His sentence upon them.

Spiritual Lukewarmness

(1) Revelation 3:15,16

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot:

I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth."

We are going to look at this carefully. It says that this Laodicean church age group is lukewarm. This lukewarmness demands a penalty from God. The penalty is that they will be spued out of His mouth. Here is where we

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don't want to go astray as a lot of folks do. They very unwisely say that God can spue you out of His mouth and that proves that there is no such thing as any truth to the doctrine of the perseverance of the Saints. I want to correct your thinking right now. This verse is not given to an individual. It is given to the church. He is talking to the church. Furthermore, if you will just keep the Word in mind you will recall that nowhere does it say that we are in the MOUTH of God. We are engraved on His palms. We are carried in His bosom. Way back in the unknown ages before time we were in His mind. We are in His sheepfold, and in His pastures, but never in His mouth. But what is in the mouth of the Lord? The Word is in His mouth.

Matthew 4:4

"But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

The Word is supposed to be in our mouths, too. Now we know that the church is His body. It is here taking His place. What will be in the mouth of the church? The WORD.

I Peter 4:11

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles (Word) of God."

II Peter 1:21

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Then what is wrong with these people of the last day? THEY HAVE GOTTEN AWAY FROM THE WORD. THEY ARE NO LONGER FERVENT ABOUT IT. THEY ARE LUKEWARM ABOUT IT. I am going to prove that right now.

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Talk about wealth in the church—why there never has been such a show of wealth. The beautiful sanctuaries are multiplied in number as never before. The various groups vie with each other to see who can build the biggest and the loveliest. And they build education centers worth unestimated millions, and those buildings are used only an hour or two a week. Now that would not be such a terrible thing, but they expect this little time spent by the children in the education plant to take the place of the hours of training supposed to be given in the home.

Money has poured into the church until different denominations own stocks and bonds, factories, oil wells, and insurance companies. They have poured money into welfare and retirement funds. Now this sounds good, but it has become a snare to the ministers, for if they decide to leave their group for more light or the love of God, their pensions are lost to them. Most can't stand this and stay with their pressure groups.

Now don't forget that this is the last age. We know that this is the last age because Israel has gone back to Palestine. If we believe that He really is coming, then there must be something wrong with those who are building so vastly. It makes one think that these people plan on staying here forever, or that the coming of Jesus is hundreds of years off.

Do you know that religion today is known as big business? It is an absolute fact that they are placing business managers in the churches to take care of finances. Is this what God desires? Did not His Word teach us in the Book of Acts that seven men full of the Holy Ghost and faith served the Lord in business matters? You can surely see why God said, "YOU say you are wealthy; I never said so."

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of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Now look at the first phrase of this verse, "because thou sayest". See, they were speaking. They were talking as the mouthpiece of God. This proves exactly what I said verses 16-17 meant. But though they say it, that does not make it right. The Catholic Church says she speaks for God, saying she is the assured voice of the Lord. How any people can be so spiritually wicked is more than I know, but they produce according to the seed which is in them, and we know where that seed came from, don't we?

The Laodicean church is saying, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." That was her self-estimate. She looked at herself and that is what she saw. She said, "I am rich," which means that she is wealthy in the things of this world.

She is boasting in the face of James 2:5-7,

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?"

But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?"

Do not they blaspheme that worthy Name by the which ye are called?"

Now I do NOT suggest that a rich person cannot be Spiritual, but we all know that the Word says very few are. It is the poor that predominate in the body of the true church. Now then, if the church becomes full of wealth, we know only one thing; "Ichabod" has been written over her portals! You can't deny that, for that is the Word.

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The Baptists have their creeds and dogmas based on the Word and you can't shake them. They say the apostolic days of miracles are over and there is no Baptism with the Holy Ghost, subsequent to believing. The Methodists say (based on the Word) there is no water baptism (sprinkling is not baptism) and that sanctification is the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. The Church of Christ majors in regenerative baptism and in all too many cases they go down dry sinners and come up wet ones. Yet they claim their doctrine is Word-based. Go right down the line and come to the Pentecostals. Do they have the Word? Give them the Word test and see. They will sell out the Word for a sensation just about every time. If you can produce a manifestation like oil and blood and tongues and other signs, whether in the Word or not, or whether properly interpreted from the Word, the majority will fall for it. But what has happened to the Word? The Word has been put aside, so God says, "I am going against you all. I will spue you out of My mouth. This is the end. For seven out of seven ages, I have seen nothing but men esteeming their own word above Mine. So at the end of this age I am spuing you out of My mouth. It is all over. I am going to speak all right. Yes, I am here in the midst of the Church. The Amen of God, faithful and true will reveal Himself and it will BE BY MY PROPHET." Oh yes, that is so.

Revelation 10:7

"And in the days of the voice of the seventh messenger, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished as He hath declared to His servants the prophets."

There it is. He is sending a vindicated prophet. He is sending a prophet after almost two thousand years. He is sending someone who is so far from organization, education, and the world of religion that as John the Baptist and Elijah of old, He will hear only from God and he will have "thus saith the Lord" and speak for God. He will be God's

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mouthpiece and HE, AS IT IS DECLARED IN MALACHI 4:6, WILL TURN THE HEARTS OF THE CHILDREN BACK TO THE FATHERS. He will bring back the elect of the last day and they will hear a vindicated prophet give the exact truth as it was with Paul. He will restore the truth as they had it. And those elect with him in that day will be the ones who truly manifest the Lord and be His Body and be His voice and perform His works. Hallelujah! Do you see it?

A momentary consideration of church history will prove how accurate this thought is. In the Dark Ages the Word was almost entirely lost to the people. But God sent Luther with the WORD. The Lutherans spoke for God at that time. But they organized, and again the pure Word was lost for organization tends toward dogma and creeds, and not simple Word. They could no longer speak for God. Then God sent Wesley, and he was the voice with the Word in his day. The people who took his revelation from God became the living epistles read and known of all men for their generation. When the Methodists failed, God raised up others and so it has gone on through the years until in this last day there is again another people in the land, who under their messenger will be the final voice to the final age.

Yes sir. The church is no longer the "mouthpiece" of God. It is its own mouthpiece. So God is turning on her. He will confound her through the prophet and the bride, for the voice of God will be in her.

Yes it is, for it says in the last chapter of Revelation verse 17

"The Spirit and the bride say come".

Once more the world will hear direct from God as at Pentecost; but of course that Word Bride will be repudiated as in the first age.

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Word. You have more Bibles than ever, but you are not doing anything about the Word except dividing and hacking it into pieces, taking what you want and leaving out what you don't want. You are not interested in LIVING it, but debating it. I would sooner you were cold or hot. If you were cold and rejected it, I could stand that. If you would get white hot to know its truth and live it, I would praise you for that. But when you simply take My Word and don't honor it, I in return must refuse to honor you. I will spue you out for you nauseate Me."

Now anybody knows that it is lukewarm water that makes you sick at the stomach. If you need an emetic, lukewarm water is about the best thing to drink. A lukewarm church has made God sick and He has declared He will spue it out. Reminds us how He felt just before the flood, doesn't it?

Oh, would to God the church were cold or hot. Best of all, she should be fervent (hot). But she is not. Sentence has been passed. She is no longer God's voice to the world. She will maintain that she is, but God says not.

Oh, God still has a voice for the people of the world, even as He has given a voice to the bride. That voice is in the bride as we have said and we will talk more about that later.

Rich and Needs Nothing

(2) Revelation 3:17-18,

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable and poor, and blind and naked;

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