



**Old Testament Reading – Isaiah 55:1-11**

**New Testament Reading – 2 Timothy 2:1-12**

## **The Church Triumphant God's Forever Word Revelation 22:12-21**

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Martin Luther was a German theologian and religious reformer who was the catalyst for the 16<sup>th</sup> century Protestant Reformation.

- At its core, the Reformation was a call to return to the Word of God as the final authority on the matters of faith and the practice of one's faith.
- Roman Catholicism had drifted away from the Scriptures. They taught that God's wrath could be avoided through receiving the Sacraments, an invented word for man-made practices like confession, confirmation and infant baptism, which made salvation a process rather than conversion.
- Luther defied the Papal decrees and said that a sinner could not be justified with God by his works but by grace alone through faith alone, according to the scriptures alone. Luther is quoted as having said:
- *"If I profess with loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except that little point which the*

*world and the Devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."*

- In view of the departure from Scripture by today's evangelical churches, we need a reformation – a return to God's Forever Word.

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus told His disciples, ***"I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."***

- The word "church" is translated in our English Bibles from the Greek word "ekklesia," which describes a group of people called out and assembled for a specific purpose.
- When Jesus said He would build His Church, He was, in effect, prophesying the future results of His discipleship of the men whom He would send out to proclaim the redemptive purpose of His life, death, burial, and resurrection.
- The Church is a body of all those who have been called out of the darkness of this evil world and into the light of God' Holy Word.
- Jesus said He would build His Church:
- **Through the proclamation of the gospel** – John 10:27-28 – *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."*
- **Of those who would confess Him as their Savior and Lord** – Romans 10:9-10 – *"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*
- **And the gates of hell would not prevail against it** – Isaiah 46:10-11 – *"I have spoken it: I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it."*
- Satan and his followers will attack the Church throughout the ages, but at the end of this age, Satan and his followers will be cast into the lake of fire, but the Church will be victorious – Isaiah 40:8, *"The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."*

In Revelation 22:18-19, Jesus warned those who would try to adapt the Word of God to fit the culture.

## **1. The Reason for the Warning – Vs. 14 – *"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."***

- In Deuteronomy 4:2, God told that generation of Jews that were about to enter the Promised land, *"Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you."*
- Standing on the banks of the Jordan river, this 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of Jews could look back over the Sinai desert where the bodies of their fathers and mothers were buried in the sands because of their disobedience to God's Word.

### **The Bible is God's Holy Word!**

- In 2 Peter 1:20-21, the Apostle Peter wrote: *"No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*
  - That is the key verse to validate the divine inspiration of the Bible.
- In 2 Timothy 3:16, the Apostle Paul wrote: *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for*

*reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

- That's the key verse to validate the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible.
- God ordained the writing of the Scriptures to protect the Church against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and of the world.
- Jesus affirmed the Old Testament Scriptures in His confrontations with the Jewish religious leaders.
  - When they tried to trap Him on the issue of divorce, Jesus asked them, *"What did Moses command you?"* Mark 10:3
  - In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus referred to the incorrect interpretations of the Rabbi's by saying, *"You have heard it said, but I say unto you."* Matthe 5:17-48
  - In preaching about His resurrection from the dead, Jesus pointed to Jonah as an illustration of what was to come. *"As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."* Matthew 12:40
  - During His 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus quoted passages from the Old Testament to defend His position. *"If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. But Jesus answered and said, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."* Matthew 4:2-4
- In 1 Peter 1:23, the Apostle said, *"For you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God."*
- In Romans 10:17, the Apostle Paul said, *"Faith comes from hearing the Word of God."*
- In Acts 2:37ff, after Peter preached the first gospel message, those who heard it were convicted of their sins and asked Peter what they should do. Three thousand people were saved on that day.
- As the Apostles continued to preach the Word, the number of believers continued to grow, and we continue to see that each time a sinner repents and turns to Christ for eternal life.

***2. The Reality of the Warning – Vs. 18-19 – For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."***

- The Bible, written over a period of 1500 years by 40 different authors, and in three languages – Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek – is settled, once and for all and forever.
- Psalm 119:89-90: *"Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. They continue this day according to Your ordinances."*

However, mankind has never been settled with God's Word, which is why it has always been and always will be under assault.

- In Genesis 3, Satan asked Eve, *"Hath God really said you should not eat of every tree in the garden."*

- In the Old Testament Days, the Pentatuch was either revered or rejected by the morality of the Kings and the integrity of the prophets. Even the scrolls of the Pentatuch were lost for decades.
- Josiah, the King of Judah, ordered a search for the missing scrolls, and a copy was found among the implements used in the temple. They called the people to assemble, and they read the first five books of the Bible.
- In 586 B.C., the whole city of Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple was burned, and the people were taken captive to Babylon for 70 years, but their holy writings survived.
- When King Jehoiakim heard the prophecy of Jeremiah, he cut it up with a penknife and threw it in the fire. God told Jeremiah, *“Take yet another scroll, and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah burned.”* Jeremiah 36:28
  - During the New Testament Days, the Old Testament was in three parts: the Torah, the Nevi'im, and the Ketuvim.
  - The Torah was the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
  - The Nevi'im, or Prophets, included Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve.
- The Ketuvim, or Writings, included poetic books, wisdom, and history.
- However, the Jewish Religious leaders had twisted the Word of God and had added so many of their traditions, that the truth of the Word of God was in question.
- The Gnostic movement began sometime before the birth of Christ and lasted until the fourth century CE. Gnosticism was a philosophical and religious movement that focused on gaining knowledge, or gnosis, to achieve salvation.
- The Roman Emperor Diocletian issued an edict that every Christian should be killed, and every Bible burned. A few years later, Constantine proclaimed the Bible as the official Maga Carta of the Roman Empire, and he called for Bibles to be openly displayed. The Christians produced fifty copies, which they had preserved in the catacombs.
- In the Dark Ages, the Bible was near extinction again, but the Monks who lived in caves in Ireland protected, preserved, and made new copies. Then, the Catholic Church declared that only priests should have the Bible, as well as the sole authority to interpret the Bible.
- Voltaire, the noted French infidel who died in 1778, boldly predicted that, within 100 years of his death, the Bible and Christianity would have been swept away into oblivion, but within 100 years. However, the very printing press on which Voltaire had published his atheistic literature began printing copious copies of the Bible he had spurned.
- In the 19th century, we had an increase in belief systems that were cults and false religions like Unitarian universalism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventism and Christian Science. They denied the deity of Christ and the sufficiency of his atoning death, which meant they also denied the authenticity of the Bible.
- In the 20th century, German theologians tried to deconstruct the Bible through “higher criticism” – reinterpreting the Bible to understand the meaning “behind” the word, rather than accepting the word as truth.
- This was followed by the neo-orthodoxy and demythologizing of Scripture characterized by Harry Emerson Fosdick, the old liberalism and the new liberalism; man's attempt to accommodate the Christian Faith according to the contemporary culture. This movement infected many churches, seminaries and denominations, leading to the Progressive Christianity Movement, Moralism, and Humanism.
- In the last century, the Bible was attacked by the Emerging Church movement with leaders such as Brian McClaren, Rob Bell, Tony Jones, Jim Wallis and Tony Campolo. That was the beginning of situational ethics, the new morality, feminism, diversity, equality and socialism in America's pulpits, as well as the rise in the Entrepreneurial approach to church; the name it and claim it, prosperity gospel.

- Then came the seeker sensitive-church, which actually started with Emerson Fostick, who denied the inerrancy of the Scriptures, who was the spiritual father of Norman Vincent Peale, who selected the verses that supported the power of positive thinking, who was followed by Robert Schuller, who inspired Bill Hybels of the Willow Creek Church and Rick Warren who fanned the fires of the Emergent Church and the Church Growth Movement with his book on the Purpose Driven Life, and now the Mega-Church and the Giga-Church.
- The common thread in all of these men and their movements is the downplaying, the depreciation, the diminishing of theology, the deconstruction of sound biblical interpretation and the priority of the verse by verse preaching and teaching of the Word of God.
- The new model of evangelicalism is the old Modernism:
  - That there is no such thing as absolute truth. What is true for you may not be true for me.
  - That love, tolerance, diversity, inclusion, and accommodation are more important than biblical truth. We should love the sinner enough to accept them in their sin, rather than confront them.
  - To embrace a radical climate change agenda under the seductive banner of *"Creation Care,"*
  - To support illegal immigration policies by renaming it as *"Welcoming the Stranger."*
  - To support the Marxist critical race theory by *"decolonizing discipleship from whiteness."*
  - To adopt the unbiblical LGBTQ agenda under the pretext of *"challenging the promotion of narrow or hateful interpretations of religious doctrine."*
- The deconstruct of the Scriptures is to allow those who claim to be Christians to embrace the immoral values of today's generation.
- Emperors, Kings, philosophers, false prophets, false preachers, and false teachers, false religious systems, the communists, the fascists, and other totalitarian regimes have tried to stamp out God's Word, but they all have failed.

Jesus said, if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book:

- This means there is a high price to pay for tampering with the Book of Revelation specifically, and the Scriptures in general.
- This is a solemn warning to those who have tampered with the Word of God in any way.

Jesus said, if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

- God has preserved the Bible through every attack that has been raised against it, and, having seen how God has protected His Word for these many years, I am assured the Bible will survive anything mankind can bring against it.
- Any attack on the truth of any Scripture is an attack on the truth of all Scripture, and any attack on the Word of God is an attack on the God of the Word, and Jesus, the Living Word of God.