

Revelation Chapter 3

In Revelation chapter 3, we continued with the last 3 of the 7 churches

Revelation 3:1 "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

Sardis: The Danger of Spiritual Death. 1517 to 1790 A.D., the Reformed church.

This church at Sardis is seen by many as the reformation church. In this study we will look at this church in the light of our modern churches.

Sardis is located 35 miles south east of Thyatira. It was the capital of Lydia and was once a portrait of strength, fertility, and wealth. Idolatry and immorality were its reputation. The church at Sardis had "a name," a good reputation, and it appeared to be alive. But in reality, there was nothing but inward deadness. Their deadness was at least partially due to some type of defilement because the Word says there were only "a few" which had not been defiled (Rev. 3:4).

These people desperately needed the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The mention of the "seven Spirits of God" is a reference to the sevenfold ministry of the Spirit found in Isaiah:

Isaiah 11:2 "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."

This church needed the ministry of the Holy Spirit in these areas. If you are spiritually dead, you need these ministries also:

- (1) The Spirit of Wisdom: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to seek the wisdom of God.
- (2) The Spirit of Understanding: A lifeless dying church or individual needs a true understanding of their condition so they can correct it.
- (3) The Spirit of Counsel: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to heed the counsel of God.
- (4) The Spirit of Might: A lifeless dying church or individual needs new strength to enter into its lifeless body.
- (5) The Spirit of Knowledge: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to flow in renewed revelation knowledge.
- (6) The Spirit of Fear of the Lord: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to have their fear of the Lord rekindled.

If you feel spiritually dead or your church is dying corporately, then you must follow the fivefold plan that the Spirit gave to the church at Sardis (in Rev. 3:3):

- (1) Be Watchful: The amplified Bible says to "Rouse yourself and keep awake." It is time for us to wake up, become alert to the signs of the time, and be active for God as never before.
- (2) Strengthen: Take hold of the things that remain and are ready to die in your life and strengthen them through prayer and the Word.
- (3) Remember: Reflect back on the promises of God, what you have received and heard in times past.
- (4) Hold Fast: Hold fast to your faith and God's Word.
- (5) Repent: Repent so you will be ready for the return of Christ and not caught unaware.

This church is very obvious to me. When I was a child, I went to a certain denomination church. This particular church was seemingly very strong in the Lord. People shouted and said amen. People were prayed for who were sick. Then all of a sudden, something called the National Council of Churches was formed and my church, I had loved so dearly, changed. The National Council of Churches seeks to physically make the church one. God's plan from the beginning has been for the churches to be one in Spirit. You cannot legislate Christianity.

In my church we no longer taught Sunday school from the Bible, but we got lessons from headquarters that we were to use. As best I could see, they had dropped many of the Biblical teachings and went more too teaching social reform.

What had been a way of life for me for nearly all my life had changed. The shouting stopped; the church became too formal for the amen corner. The first thing I knew, I found myself in a cold formal church, not the warm caring church I had loved so well. Church never dared run over fifteen minutes; we had to stay on schedule. Bible studies became fewer and fewer. The congregation was not even made aware of how important Bible reading and study at home was. It seemed my church, which loved all Christian people, had made a detour.

I really believe that churches like this, is what the church at Sardis is all about. They started out just great; but as time went on, they waned away.

Notice in the verse above that Jesus speaks of the seven Spirits of God. When the gifts of the Holy Spirit are denied and even spoken evil of, the true church will dry up. The power of God is in His Spirit. This is why Jesus spoke to this church thusly. The Spirit has gone. This church is still flying the flag of Christianity, but denying the power thereof.

I use this scripture in Second Timothy a lot but it perfectly describes the time we are living in and describes this church at Sardis best of all.

- (1) 2 Timothy 3:1 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."
- (2) 2 Timothy 3:5 "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Many denominations would have us believe the gifts of the Spirit are not in operation today. If they are not, it is because of our lack of faith. God never changes; we change.

You see, a man without a spirit is like a horse who has lost his wind. A church without the Spirit is slowly dying.

God does not want us to systematically go to church because it is expected of us once a week. He wants us to look forward to fellowshiping with Him. The love in our heart for Jesus should make us desire to go to church and receive everything He has for us.

Revelation 3:2: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God."

Jesus tells them here; there is still some good in this church, build upon those things. Even the good in this church is being watered down to the point, that even it is about to die. I believe the works here spoken of are not saying they are not doing works, but that their works are slanted more toward the world than toward God. This church, if I understand it, is very social minded and helps local government with their projects.

If you took a count of how many true conversions were made within the last year, you would be amazed at the shortage. You see, what we call good works and what God calls good works are two entirely different things. God looks at the Spirit, and we have a tendency to look at the physical.

Revelation 3:3 "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

"Come on thee as a thief": Here the reference is not to Christ's second coming (compare 16:15; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10), but to His sudden and unexpected coming to His unrepentant, dead church to inflict harm and destruction.

Here again Jesus is saying, your message at the beginning was alright, go back to that, the pure Word of God. Some new Bible translations are watering Jesus down to the point that He is not God in them.

Some Bible colleges would have their people believe that: Jesus was not born of a virgin, that the Red Sea did not part, that Jonah was not truly swallowed by a large fish, and many more things.

You see, they are reducing the miraculous workings of God and trying to analyze them with what they call scientific knowledge. This is just another attack of Satan to destroy the beauty of Christianity. These are basic to belief in salvation through Jesus Christ. If a mere man died for your sins, you are lost. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. He was the perfect Lamb of God. He was and is LIFE. To deny that He was born of a virgin, denies that He is God the Son. You see, His Father must be God.

These false teachers say the Red Sea did not part, but was just a marshy area. If this is true, explain to me how the Egyptian soldiers were drowned.

You see, the whole thing is a conspiracy to deny the deity of Christ. This is very dangerous. If we deny Him, He will deny us before the Father (Matthew 10:33).

Of course, these false teachings include a teaching that there is no heaven and no hell. That they are just a state of mind. The Bible speaks explicitly about both and even tells us what they will be like. All of this is slightly preposterous.

We must believe the Bible in its entirety or not believe it at all. As for me, I believe it in its entirety. Jesus was Immanuel, God with us. I believe to deny Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, is to deny salvation through Him."

Revelation 3:4 "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."

"In white": The white garments of all the redeemed (compare 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:8, 14), speak of holiness and purity. Such white robes are reserved for Christ (Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:3), holy angels (Matt. 28:3; Mark 16:5), and the glorified church (19:8, 14). In the ancient world, white robes were commonly worn at festivals and celebrations.

Jesus is saying here there are a few people even in this church of Sardis, or our fallen away church now that are still strong in the Lord. They believe the truth rather than a lie.

A defiled garment is one not washed in the blood of the Lamb. You see, the white that we must wear is a white robe made whiter than snow by being washed in the blood of the Lamb. This is our robe of righteousness that we will wear in heaven. "Righteousness" means in right standing with God.

Most of the churches now that are like this church in Sardis, do not like to preach or teach on the blood of Jesus. It was the shed blood that defeated Satan and purchased our salvation. We read in Hebrews, just how important this shed blood is.

Hebrews 9:22 "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

You see, if we are not washed in the blood of the Lamb, then we are walking in sin. We will study in a later lesson, in chapter seven of Revelation, about the great number from all nations standing around the throne in their white robes.

Revelation 7:14 "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

To deny the power of the blood, would deny us our right to stand before the throne of God. Do not be deceived. Believe the Word of God, the Bible. Let no one convince you that it is not true.

Revelation 3:5 "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

“Book of life”: A divine journal records the names of all those whom God has chosen to save and who, therefore, are to possess eternal life (13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19; Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20). Under no circumstances will He erase those names (see note on Phil. 4:3), as city officials often did of undesirable people on their rolls.

This is one of the greatest promises in the Bible. We must Overcome the world and its teachings to inherit eternal life. If we do overcome, our name will be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, which will insure us eternal life in heaven with Jesus.

If we confess Jesus before men, He will confess us before His Father. Jesus is the Judge. We stand or fall by His command.

You see from the statement above that overcoming is not a bed of roses, but a battle. Jesus won the war. We must enlist in this army of Jesus. We must fight to the death, if necessary, for the principles He has taught us in the Bible.

Be strong; do not be led away by all these new teachings of heaven on earth before Jesus comes. The only time the earth will be like heaven is the 1000 year reign of Jesus here. Withstand the devil and he will flee from you. Be part of the elect who cannot be deceived.

Revelation 3:6 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Again we are told to hear what the Spirit said to the churches.

Revelation 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;"

Philadelphia: The Danger of Failing to Advance (1790 to 1900 A.D.). The Missionary Church.

The city of Philadelphia was 25 miles southeast of Sardis on an 800 foot rise. To this church, which Christ says has a little strength, the Lord comes to open an avenue of opportunity that no force in hell can shut. "Possessing the key of David" means that He has the authority to open this supernatural door. The reference to those who "say they are Jews and are not" refers to all who reject Jesus Christ. Romans 2 explains what constitutes a Jew.

Romans 2:28-29 “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:” “But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

Jesus shows Himself to this church of Philadelphia in the very same way that they worship Him.

(1) He is Holy. Jesus tells us to be Holy even as He is Holy (Lev. 11:44, I Peter 1:15).

(2) He shows Himself as truth. He is the Way, The Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).

Jesus is the one that opens the door to heaven or hell for us. Jesus is the door to heaven. He is the only one who can shut or open either door. He took the keys of hell away from the devil when Jesus went there and preached. Jesus is the final Judge for everyone's resting place.

This church in Philadelphia and its symbolic church today, are not only well aware of who Jesus is, but they are patterning their lives after His. They are the very elect. Full of the Word, so full that it would be terribly difficult to deceive them.

God promises these believers that He will keep them from the hour of temptation which will come upon all the world. Note that the event spoken of:

- (1) Is a definite time period - "the hour";
- (2) Is a period of trial;
- (3) Was future from the time of John's writing;
- (4) Was to be worldwide;
- (5) The promise, in Greek, was to "keep thee out of" the hour.

These facts make it evident that the event refers to the Great Tribulation described (in Mat. 24:15-22). Tribulation, Purpose of these believers at Philadelphia who have only a "little strength" have nevertheless kept God's Word and have not denied His Name. God promises that they will become pillars in the temple of God (Rev. 3:12). This church may have been small in number or in material resources, but God was going to make them strong. They are promised an open door. In Scripture, an open door refers to Christ (John 10:7), an opening to preach the Gospel (Acts 5:19-20), and the rapture of the Church (Rev. 4:1). Each of these may be interpreted as the "open door" promised to this church, even as each can be applied to the Church today.

In these end times, God is opening many tremendous doors of opportunity and there is always an inherent danger of failing to advance at Christ's command. You may feel you have only a little strength, but God can make you a strong and mighty pillar in His Kingdom, a spiritual warrior who is able to walk through every door He opens. Let me ask you: What is holding you back from fulfilling God's call for your life?

- (1) Fear?
- (2) Your finances?
- (3) Your health?
- (4) Your relationships with others?

God has set before you an open door which no man can shut. All the demons in hell cannot shut it. Jesus is the way. All you must do is walk through those doors in the almighty power of God.

Revelation 3:8 "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

Jesus is aware of everything the churches are doing. He has first hand knowledge, because He walks in the church. Jesus is the door and has provided Himself for us to go through to heaven. The door that Jesus opens can only be closed by Him. Jesus cares for His own.

It is very interesting here that He says this church has a little strength. This is very true of all strong believers. In our weakness, Jesus is strong. The strength that sustains us and sees us through is His, not our own. The very good statement Jesus makes about this church is that they have kept His Word.

We too, must be careful to guard the Word of God. The Bible is our instruction book for living. If we change it in any way, the instructions won't work. But, many have watered down the Word until it has been short circuited and lost power. We must not tamper with the power. This church mentioned here might be small in size, but big in love and the Holy Spirit. Again, we see so many denying the name of Jesus. I believe here that the name they are denying is that Jesus was God. We touched on it before, but it is worth mentioning again. Most churches today want to call Jesus: Prophet, Teacher, Healer, Man. Very few realize that He was God manifest in the flesh (God the Son). This is a very important thing, and will be mentioned more as we go.

Revelation 3:9 "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

There is no difference, really, in someone who follows Satan and someone who pretends to be a Christian and is not. Both are lost.

The "synagogue of Satan" is just a place of worship where God is not Lord. A Jewish synagogue could be of Satan if evil prevailed. A body of Christians meeting could also be a synagogue of Satan, if the true Word of God is not taught and received.

There will come a time when the Truth will prevail. The church, which does not compromise and prevails unto the end, shall reign with Christ. Jesus is just encouraging this church that has tried so hard, that there will be a day of reward. Jesus loves the faithful. He has His ear turned to our needs.

Revelation 3:10 "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

This verse presents a promise that Christ will rapture genuine believers out of the world before the Tribulation period begins. The "hour of temptation" is the period of worldwide testing (Greek peirasmos), which has not yet occurred (compare Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21, 29). Christ promises to keep them "from" (Greek ek, "out of"), the period of the Tribulation. That is, they

will not even enter into this period of history. The Tribulation is for the purpose of trying or judging "them that dwell upon the earth", those who are connected to the earth and its system. Believers are not even included in this term (compare Phil. 3:18-20; 1 Peter 2:11; Rev. 6:10; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 17:8).

Trials, tribulations, and temptations come to all. It seems the group here mentioned, have been tested and found to stand in their temptation. There is a time of testing, and a time of victory, or defeat. Jesus was tempted forty days and nights and came out victorious. When trials come, we can do one of two things. We can stand against the temptation and experience victory, or we can take the easy way out and succumb to temptation and fall to defeat. If you are a Christian and if the temptation wins, then you will go through this particular temptation over and over until you stand against it and Overcome it.

It appears that this group mentioned here has stood against these temptations, so their promise from Jesus is that they will not be required to go through the great temptation. There is a time specified of God when the temptations, tribulations, and trials will be so great that it will be next to impossible to stand. An hour with God can be any specific time. God's time and our time is not the same. This hour mentioned here certainly does not mean sixty minutes, but a period of time, the Tribulation. There will be seven years of tribulation at the end of the Gentile age. The last three and a half years of this will actually be the wrath of God. God has promised the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ that we will be saved from the wrath to come.

I believe this is the case here. Temptation here, I believe, is the same as tribulation. (Revelation 7:9 and 7:13-14), tells of the Christians who are saved from the unbearable temptation at the end of three and a half years of tribulation.

Revelation 7:9 "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;"

Revelation 7:13-14 "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, what are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?" "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

You see, these are believers in Jesus the Christ (the saved), who have been brought out (saved in), great tribulation.

Matthew 24 describes the severity of this great tribulation.

Matthew 24:21-22 "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

This is the hour of temptation, I believe, this Scripture (in Revelation 3:10), is speaking of. The believers in Jesus will be taken out just before this begins.

Verses 11-13: "I Come quickly": The time of the deliverance mentioned (in verse 10), is here identified with the return of Christ for His church (the Rapture). The "temple", may relate either to the millennial kingdom or to the New Jerusalem. The genuine believer will be given a place of service and honor before God. The threefold reference to the "name", gives a guarantee of eternal security in Christ. The "name of my God", shows ownership. The "name of the city", shows heavenly citizenship. And "my new name", indicates co-heirship with Christ.

Revelation 3:11 "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

"I come quickly": This isn't the threatening temporal judgment described (in verse 3; 2:5, 16), nor the final judgment (of chapter 19), it is a hopeful event. Christ will return to take His church out of the hour of trial (see note on 2 Thess. 2:1).

This statement (in verse 11), is just verifying what we said above, that there is a test time for the believers. We will be required to stand; and when we do, then we will be raptured and saved from the horrors.

Revelation 3:12 "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, [which is] new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and [I will write upon him] my new name."

Again we see here that there is something that we must overcome. A person many times is spoken of as a pillar of the community, or a pillar of the church, which just means, that they are strong and are holding up the church. These people would be like founding fathers, high in principles. They would be the ones who would see to it that the church stays on solid ground.

This writing of the name of God just means that we are sealed into His kingdom.

If we were to read very much about this city, we would find that sometimes it is spoken of as a bride. The believers in Jesus are the bride of Christ. This name of the city being on the believers just indicates that we are the bride of Christ.

This new name of Jesus that is written upon us is showing that we are Jesus' possession. We are His; we have been bought and paid for with His blood.

When it says we shall no more go out, it means that our eternal home is here with Jesus.

(Verse 12), is saying that we, the believers, have put our trust and faith in Jesus and endured hardship. We then have an eternity of nothing but pure joy in this New Jerusalem with Jesus. Once we have passed from death into life through accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are sealed by Jesus Himself. We belong to Him. No one can snatch us back away from Him. Jesus has the keys. Look to Him and no other. He is salvation.

Revelation 3:13 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Once again, we are told to hear what the Spirit said to the churches by Jesus Himself who spoke these words as all of these messages to these churches are printed in red. He reminds us once again here to open the ears of our understanding to His teachings.

Revelation 3:14 "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;"

The Danger of Luke Warmness, 1900 A.D. to Current. The Apostate Church.

Traveling 45 miles southeast from Philadelphia, one would arrive at the fortified city of Laodicea where several major roads converge. Medicine, production of eye ointment, wool distribution, manufacturing, and banking brought fame to this city. It is interesting to note how Christ related His message to these qualities of the city (in verses 17-18). The people of Laodicea felt they needed nothing. They boasted of their riches, yet they were spiritually poor. Although they were famous for their eyesalve, they were spiritually blind. They were known for their fine wool, but they were spiritually naked. How do you know if you are lukewarm? Ask yourself these questions:

- (1) Are you committed to evangelism and missions?
- (2) Are you committed to living a holy life?
- (3) Are you committed to your local church fellowship?
- (4) Are you committed to spending time in prayer, worship and the Word?
- (5) Are you committed to other believers in the Body of Christ?
- (6) Are you actively supporting God's work with your finances?

The people at Laodicea were spiritually lukewarm and Christ said their condition must be remedied. He commanded them to do three things which we also must do if we want to eradicate our lukewarmness:

- (1) "Buy of me Gold, Tried in the Fire". Gold is refined by the fire. Let the Word of God refine you spiritually and burn away the lukewarmness in your life. The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times (Psalms 12:6).
- (2) "Buy of me White Raiment". Allow God to change you by making a renewed commitment to righteous living. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4:24).
- (3) "Anoint your Eyes so You Can See". Receive the powerful revelation of God through Jesus Christ which will open your blinded eyes and effect true change in your life. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6).

The book of Colossians, as well as this message here, was to the Laodiceans, we see (in Colossians 4:13; 16). They were a very prominent area. It seems that Paul, as well as Jesus (in the book of Revelation), warned them about their lack of zeal in their church.

In (verse 14 above), Jesus is called "Amen". This is a very unusual name for Him. I believe that it means when He has said something, it is final. There is no room for discussion. His statements are absolute.

Jesus is spoken of as "faithful". He is worthy of our faith in Him.

Jesus is Truth. His witness is true because He Himself experienced it. It does not waver. It is fact. He created everything in the earth as we know it. We can easily see from John that Jesus created everything.

John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The same was in the beginning with God." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Jesus is the Creator of all things.

Verses 15-16: The church is likened to "lukewarm" water, or as being virtually worthless. Christ says He will "spew them out", or eject them from His company. The hot waters of nearby Hierapolis were known for their medicinal qualities, whereas Colossae was known for its cold, pure water. But Laodicea was forced to receive water by aqueduct from other areas. By the time it arrived at Laodicea it was lukewarm and provoked nausea. The "works", of the Laodicean church were as worthless as the city's lukewarm water. The description does not refer to a backslidden condition, but rather to their lack of genuine faith.

Revelation 3:15 "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot."

The Laodicean church was self-satisfied. They went through the formality of church. They felt if they attended church one or two hours a week, they had done their duty toward God. Self-satisfied worship is even worse than not being saved at all. If we are not saved, at least we realize it. Someone could possibly lead us to God.

In the church at Laodicea, and in our apostate churches today, they felt no need for more than they had. They were not even aware that salvation was not already theirs.

Jesus had told the scribes and Pharisees that the publicans and harlots were more likely to inherit heaven (Matthew 21:31). Those who believe they do not need a physician may die of some dread disease before they even discover they have it. Those who know they have a bad disease can begin to try to get rid of it.

When someone has been introduced to Jesus and begins to take Him for granted, it is very sad. This is what I see in this church at Laodicea and in our formal churches of today.

In 2 Peter 2 is a scripture we need to take heed of.

2 Peter 2:21 "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known [it], to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

A little knowledge is not good. We must be on fire for God to please a holy God. Jesus must be Lord of our life. He will accept no less.

Revelation 3:16 "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."

"I will spew thee out of my mouth": Just like the dirty, tepid water of Laodicea, these self-deceived hypocrites sickened Christ.

Who wants lukewarm coffee or tea? No one. Jesus is saying, If you do not stop being lackadaisical in your worship, "I will spew thee out". This is a strong warning that Jesus is displeased. Jesus does not want just hearers of the Word, but doers. Don't be a pew warmer, get involved.

Verses 17-19: Laodicea was famous for its wealth, its bankers, its medical school, its popular eyesalve, and its textile industry. Christ says that spiritually the people of the church are "poor, blind", and "naked". True wealth is found only in God's grace. This church had no spiritual value ("gold"), virtue ("white raiment"), or vision ("eyesalve"). He urges the Laodiceans to "repent" of their lack of genuine faith and of spiritual understanding.

Revelation 3:17 "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:"

Wealth can sometimes give us a false sense of security. It is very difficult for a very wealthy person to be humble and realize a need for God. It is not impossible, just difficult. Some large churches can meet a fantastically large budget because of the people of great wealth who attend. I find that it is much harder to tithe on an income of 500,000.00 per year than it is on 5,000.00 per year. The person giving is not realizing that all he has belongs to God. He just looks at the large "gift" and says that is enough.

God blesses a cheerful giver, not a reluctant giver. God promises over and over to meet our needs. This church and its people have no physical need. They think they can pay their way out of anything. It is for sure that we came into the world naked, and that is the way we will leave. We will leave all the big cars, big houses, and diamond rings behind. God will not be impressed

by how much earthly wealth you have acquired. He owns everything. Your little bit in comparison will not impress Him, even if you count it in the billions.

We all face Jesus with nothing but our faith and works done for Him to testify of us. There is no treasure that will count then, but the treasure that we have stored up in heaven.

This church and these wealthy people really should be pitied by us. Their self-satisfied attitude keeps them from growing in the Lord. A Christian never stands still; if we are not growing, then we are falling away. This church is blind to the reality of their condition. They are blind to the needs of others. Unless you have felt need yourself, you cannot relate to it.

Revelation 3:18 "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."

"Gold tried in the fire", means pure gold. Jesus is speaking of being rich in the sight of God. We need to be rich in good works laying up our treasures in heaven "where moth nor rust doth not corrupt ..." (Matthew 6:19-20).

The only riches worth having are the ones that we can collect on in heaven.

White raiment garments are only available if we are washed in the blood of the Lamb. Christians who are dressed in white robes standing around the throne of God are wearing garments Jesus has purchased with His own precious blood. We do not have enough money to buy them. They are a free gift to all believers in Jesus. In the sight of God, we are all naked until we are clothed in this white robe.

It is a very serious mistake to trust in uncertain riches. The rich young ruler who came to Jesus to find what he must do to be saved, went away sorrowful when he found he must give away his gold, which was wealth (Matthew 19:16-24).

The young man traded all of eternity with God for momentary wealth here on earth. We are all naked before God, because He can see right through us into our heart. Wash your eyes out where you can see clearly.

Revelation 3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten": Both verses 18 and 20 indicate that Christ was speaking here to unbelievers. God certainly loves the unconverted (compare John 3:16). Both "reprove" and "discipline" often refer to God's convicting and punishing the unregenerate (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 14:24; 2 Tim. 2:25).

Jesus says here that He rebukes this church because He loves them.

Proverbs 19:18 "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."

Jesus tells this church to get excited about serving Jesus and repent of their lukewarmness. When Jesus returns, we must be found working. Work for the night is coming when man's work is done.

Just as a fruit tree produces much more fruit after it is pruned, Jesus here is pruning the church so it will produce much fruit. Tribulation comes to make us strong. Perhaps this church would be stronger if it faced a little tribulation.

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

In the closing appeal of these messages to the churches, Jesus issues a final call as we see in the next scripture.

Verses 20-22: In light of the spiritual condition of the Laodiceans described (in verses 17-18), the invitation (of verse 20), seems to be evangelistically addressed to individual members of an apostate church, so they might receive Christ genuinely as Savior and Lord (compare John 1:12; 10:27). To "sup" (dine), means to have fellowship (compare Luke 22:30; John 14:23), and to enjoy Christ's blessings. The promise to "sit" with Christ in His "throne", refers to reigning with Christ in His kingdom (compare Matt. 19:28; Rev. 20:4; 22:1). Verse 22 contains the last reference to the church before (chapter 22), implying that the Rapture will occur before the events of (chapters 4 to 19), and thus that the church will not be present on earth during the Great Tribulation.

Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Here we see a terrible scene. Jesus is outside trying to get in. Jesus will knock for a while, but there will come a time, if we do not allow Him to come in, that He will stop knocking. Jesus wants to come and live inside of each of us. We need to allow Jesus to live through us.

Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Our flesh is nothing. It will soon pass. The Spirit which dwells in us is the important thing; it is eternal.

(In verse 20), Jesus says "will sup with him". He is speaking of His fellowshiping with us. He loved us so much that He died for each of us. He wants to be our friend.

Revelation 3:21 "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

“Sit with me in my throne”: A figurative expression meaning that we will share the privilege and authority that Christ enjoys as we reign with Him (1:6; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:29-30).

Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. If we live pleasing to Him, we shall be seated on thrones with Jesus.

Luke 22:29-30 "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;" "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Jesus' plan for all of us, is that we will be seated with Him in heavenly places. Jesus overcame the world when He submitted His will to the Father's will. He overcame sin and death on the cross. We will be an overcomer when we submit our will to His.

"Not my will but thine O Lord", should be the cry of every believer in Christ.

Revelation 3:22 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

This is the last time that Jesus Himself will speak to the churches. Each church has its own individualism. Did you see yourself or your church in any of them?

Once again, at the end of this message, Jesus tells them to hear and understand; because this message, as all the others, came from the Spirit.

Because Christ loves us, He rebukes us. Because He cares for us, He warns us of specific dangers in these closing days of time.

- (1) The Danger of Diminishing Love (Represented by the church at Ephesus);
- (2) The Danger of Fearing, Suffering (Represented by the church at Smyrna);
- (3) The Danger of Doctrinal Compromise (Represented by the church at Pergamos);
- (4) The Danger of Moral Compromise (Represented by the church at Thyatira);
- (5) The Danger of Spiritual Death (Represented by the church at Sardis);
- (6) The Danger of Failing to Advance (Represented by the church at Philadelphia);
- (7) The Danger of Luke Warmness (Represented by the church at Laodicea).

In these closing passages, we see a picture of:

- (1) The standing Christ, symbolizing His readiness to enter our individual lives and corporate church fellowships to correct every deficiency.
- (2) The knocking Christ, who seeks us unceasingly, He keeps on knocking.
- (3) The pleading Christ, continually speaking to us, wooing us to a more intimate relationship with Him.
- (4) The penetrating Christ, who as we open the door of our lives to Him, enters in.

- (5) The companion Christ, enjoying sweet fellowship and communion with us, preparing and equipping us for His soon return.

Here are Nine Promises to Overcomers. Jesus is not returning for a weak, anemic, defeated Church. He is returning for a mighty powerful Church composed of men and women who have learned to overcome. In each of His messages to the seven churches, Jesus gave a specific promise to those who overcome.

- (1) Overcomers Will Eat of the Tree of Life. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7). Those who Overcome will inherit eternal life. They will live forever!
- (2) Overcomers Will Not be Hurt by the Second Death. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Rev. 2:11). Those who Overcome have their names written in the Book of Life and are part of the first resurrection. The "second death", is identified (in Rev. 20:14), as the lake of fire. The second death has no power over the righteous who are part of the first resurrection: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).
- (3) Overcomers Will Eat of the Hidden Manna. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." (Rev. 2:17). The "hidden manna" refers to Christ because He is the Bread of Life (John 6:33-35). Jesus, in all His fullness, will be manifested to those who Overcome and they will partake of all that He is and has!
- (4) Those Who Overcome Will be Given a New Name. "I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. 3:12). To "write the name upon something" is a common Hebrew expression used to indicate taking absolute possession of something. Christ will write His Name upon the foreheads of those who overcome, forever identifying them as His own possession.
- (5) Overcomers Will Be Given Power Over the Nations. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26). Overcomers will reign with Christ and sit in judgment over the nations (Rev. 20:4).
- (6) Overcomers Will Be Clothed in White Garments. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Rev. 3:5). The white garments that Overcomers will wear represents the righteousness of the saints: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:8). John saw the redeemed standing before the throne of God, clothed in white robes with palms in their hands (Rev. 7:9).
- (7) Overcomers Will Be a Pillar in the Temple in the New Jerusalem. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him

my new name." (Rev. 3:12). A pillar is permanent, so Christ's promise to those who Overcome means He will give them a permanent place in the New Jerusalem. Absolutely nothing will be able to remove them from their place in heavenly Jerusalem!

- (8) Overcomers Will Sit With Christ on His Throne. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. 3:21). Those who Overcome will sit with Christ on His throne and reign with Him forever!
- (9) Overcomers Will Inherit All Things. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son". (Rev. 21:7). This promise is the summation of all the blessings God can bestow. Like a son taking possession of his inheritance, those who Overcome will take possession of all their Heavenly Father has prepared for them.

You Are Called to Overcome. Beloved, these promises do not belong to halfhearted, uncommitted, compromising, fearful, unfaithful believers, but to those who overcome! The word "overcome", in these verses is translated from the Greek work, "nikao," which means "to conquer." When Christ calls us to overcome, He is calling us to conquer by locating our enemy, engaging him in combat, and defeating him! We are called to Overcome and CONQUER the flesh!

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lust of men, but to the will of God? (1 Peter 4:1-2).

We are called to Overcome and Conquer the world! Jesus said: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have Overcome the world."

We are called to Overcome and Conquer sin! "For sin shall not have dominion over you" (Romans 6:14).

We are called to Overcome and Conquer Satan! "Ye are of God, little children, and have Overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Christ has overcome, and by His Spirit living within us, we are able to do the same: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5).

You do not Overcome because of who you are. It is not because of any merit of your own, your good works, your strength, or anything else you possess. You are able to Overcome the flesh, the world, sin, Satan and his evil principalities because of Jesus Christ who lives within you! In the Spirit, John glimpsed the great victory that belongs to God's people and declared, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Rev. 12:11).

Beloved, you are an overcomer and more than a conqueror through Him who loved you. (Romans 8:37). Your victory is sealed with the assurance of the blood of Jesus Christ!

Our Yea and Amen. The last great anointing that will fall on this earth prior to the return of Jesus Christ is the prayer anointing. (In Rev. 3:14), there is an often neglected, yet beautiful picture of Jesus' role as your prayer partner.

Jesus declares, "These things saith the Amen", meaning He is the "Amen". The Hebrew rendering of (Isaiah 65:16), also calls God "the God of Amen." What does this mean? The original meaning of the verb "to amen" is used to affirm that someone is reliable, trustworthy, and truthful. It is used in the Old Testament in two ways:

- (1) It echoes a leader's prayer or praise. It means "Yes, indeed" or "may it be so in very truth." (For examples, see Psalms 41:13; 72:19; 106:48; 1 Chronicles 16:36; and Nehemiah 8:6).
- (2) It is used as the assent of a listener to a royal decree or purpose. (For examples, see 1 Kings 1:36; Jeremiah 11:5).

When Scripture declares that Jesus is the "Amen," it means that He is the divine "Yes" to the prayers of God's people whenever they are made in accord with God's will.

2 Cor. 1:20 "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us".

Picture this: Jesus is seated at the Father's side. As you enter the throne room in prayer to intercede, according to the will of God aided by the Spirit indwelling you, Jesus joins His almighty intercession with yours, then He turns to the Father and seals it with His "Yes and Amen!" The "Amen" (so be it), is uttered to the Father through Christ as we claim God's promises in prayer!

To close this chapter, I want to you to read (Rev. 1:3) again.

Rev. 1:3 "Blessed [is] he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time [is] at hand."

Chapters 2 and 3 are two of the most important chapters in the Book of Revelation in my mind. I recommend you re-read these and study them, then compare them to your church. Not all churches are alike and much false teaching or teaching about worldly interests instead of the gospel message is being taught today in many assemblies.