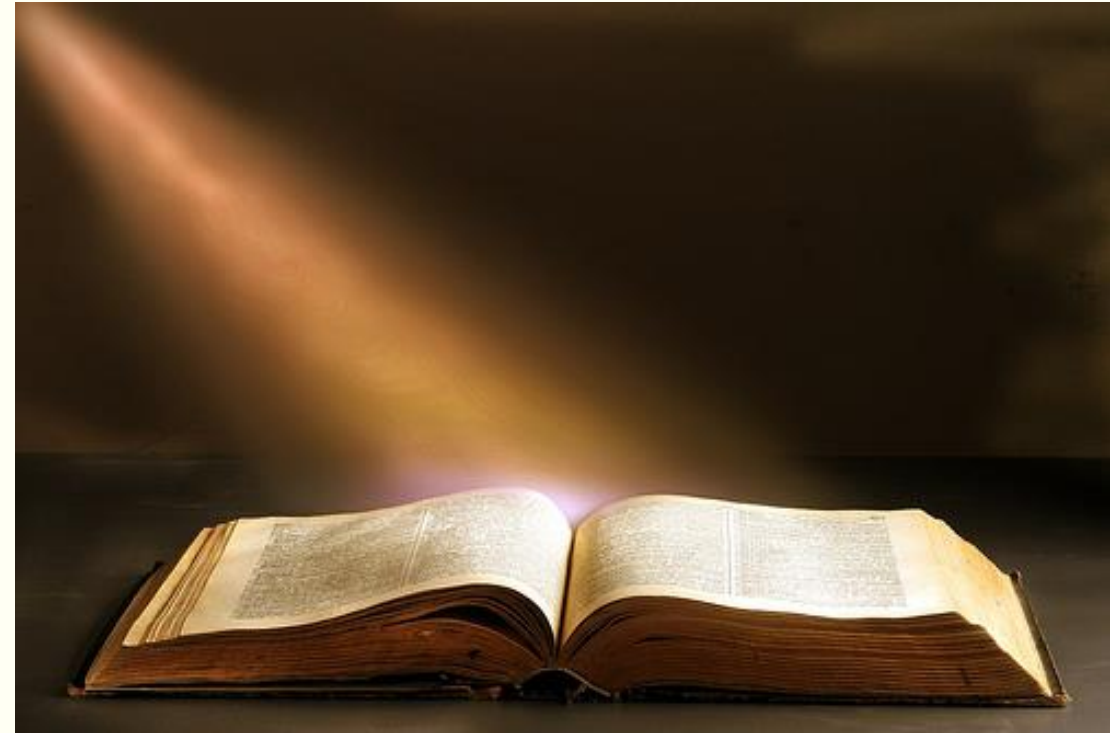




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# Exploring the Book of Revelation: Verse by Verse

## Chapter 3





# CHAPTER 3

Letters to the Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea churches

# SEVEN LEADING CITIES OF ASIA MINOR

- Each church represents a period in the history of the Christian church from the death and resurrection of Jesus (31 AD) until the Second coming of Jesus
- Begins with the historical background of the city in which the church was located
- Each letter is introduced with a part of the description of Christ in Revelation 1



# Seven leading cities of Asia Minor

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- Ephesus means desirable
- Smyrna means sweet smelling like myrrh
- Pergamos means elevation or exalted
- Thyatira means sacrifice of contrition or sweet savor of labor
- Sardis means renewal
- Philadelphia means brotherly love
- Laodicea means judgment or judging the people



It is incredible that the names of the cities so accurately reflect the history of the Christian church through the centuries



# Letters to the Seven Churches

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Greeting

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Encouragement

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Condition

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Problem

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Counsel

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Admonition

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Promise

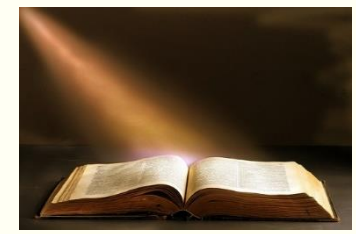
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Primary purpose of our Bible study is to understand each message as it applied to the church to which it was given AND its personal application for us today

# Revelation 3:1-6

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1 “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, ‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. 4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. 6 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

# SARDIS

- Located ~30 miles southeast of Thyatira (called Sart today)
- Sardis was the capital of the province of Lydia
- Lydia, capital of the Persian kingdom
- Built on a steep hill at foot of Mt Tomolus (6700 feet)
- Temple of Artemis and Zeus located at the foot
- Natural citadel. Impregnable and strategic location
- Great history – 600 years before the book of Revelation
- One of the greatest and wealthiest cities in ancient world
- Use of money originated and first to make gold/silver coins
- Deteriorated from past splendor to signs of dying
- Center of wool and dyeing industry
- City goddess Cybele believed to possess special power of restoring the dead to life



# The Church of Sardis: AD 1500 - 1750

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Message to the church of Sardis has application to the condition of the Christian church of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries

Period has been described as the “**age of dead orthodoxy**”

Tone of alarm to a spiritually dying church

Seven Spirits represents the Third Person of the Godhead – fullness and continuity

Vibrant generation of the Reformers passed away

Assurance to the church leaders (seven stars) of the Holy Spirit’s power to revive and revitalize a dying church

Most serious charge from Christ against any church

Possessed no characteristics Jesus could commend

“**you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead**”

No working presence of the Holy Spirit – spiritual lethargy

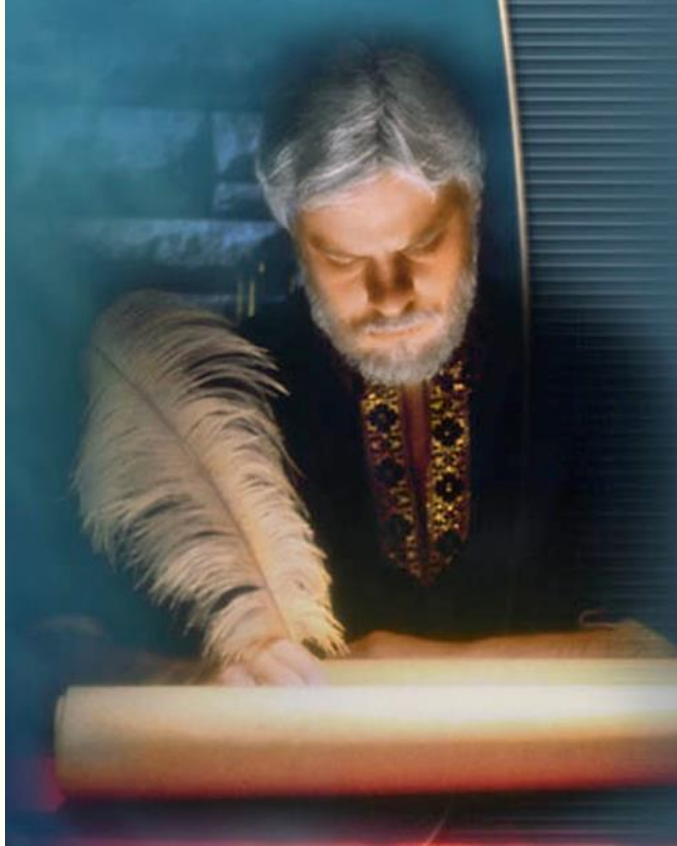




Read the third chapter of revelation—in the message to the church at Sardis two parties are presented—those who have a name to live but are dead; and those who are striving to overcome. Study this message, found in the Third chapter of Revelation.

# Two distinct camps emerge within God's church

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## Persevering church (True believers)

- Love
- Obedience
- Intolerance of compromise
- Steadfast to the Word of God
- Service and Labor for God's kingdom
- Patience
- Faithfulness

# Two distinct camps emerge within God's church

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## Corrupt church (Papacy)

- Compromise
- Pride
- Tolerance for falsehood
- Spiritual adultery
- Man-made traditions
- Mix of pagan practices with Christianity
- Persecution of dissenters

# Corrupt church compromised with paganism

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**Babylon** – Roman Catholic doctrines and traditions from pagan sun worship (Mithraism)

- infant baptism
- sprinkling during baptism
- teachings on death and immortality
- celibate priests with power over the dead
- prayers to the dead and to relics
- repetitive prayers with the use of beads
- doctrines on forgiveness of sins
- teachings on hell
- the mass
- pagan holidays (Christmas, Easter, Halloween)
- Sunday worship



# Parallels between Apostate Israel & Corrupt church

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## Apostate Israel

- Jezebel
- Prophetess of Baal
- Harlotries and witchcraft (2 Kings 9: 22)
- Worship of Babylonian sun god (Nimrod/Tammuz/Baal)
- Marriage of Israel with pagan nation
- Jezebel dominated King Ahab
- Jezebel killed God's prophets & followers
- Jezebel set up false prophets
- Prophet Elijah called for repentance and reform
- 3-1/2 literal years of drought
- A remnant remained faithful, hidden in the wilderness (7000 have not bowed the knee to Baal - I Kings 18: 4; 19 :18)

## Corrupt Church (church of Rome)

- Scarlet woman – Spiritual Babylon
- Bishop of Rome (Apostate church)
- Mother of Harlots (Rev 17: 2, 5; 18:23)
- Mithraism - Babylon sun worship
- Church and state unite
- Papacy dominion over political kings
- Millions of faithful believers persecuted and killed during Papacy millennia reign
- Set up apostate priesthood and teachers
- Reformers raised to restore the pure faith
- 3-1/2 prophetic years of spiritual drought
- A remnant remained faithful (God's true church fled to the wilderness)

“In spite of numerous voices raised in protest, even from within the papacy, the Catholic church refused to repent and reform. The moral corruption and apostasy continued to increase until finally millions of her adherents turned their backs on the church in disgust during the upwelling of Protestant Reformation”.

# The Protestant churches of the Reformation

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John Wycliffe (1320 -1384), morning star of the English Reformation and Protestantism

Theologian, priest and professor at University of Oxford

Influential dissenter within the Roman Catholic priesthood

Forced to leave England but translated the Bible (New Testament) into English language while in exile

Laid the foundation for the Reformation

After his death, his cause and teachings were taken up by John Hus and his followers

# The Protestant churches of the Reformation

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## Martin Luther, Father of the Reformation

Posted his 95 Theses on the door of Wittenberg Cathedral, in protest at the Catholic doctrine of indulgences and formally began the Protestant Reformation

Three significant figures of the reformation: Martin Luther, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli

**Lutheran Church** was the first church

Founded by Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)

Comprised mostly of Protestants in Germany, Denmark, Scandinavia and segment of Dutch





# The Protestant churches of the Reformation

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Anglican church was the second church

Also known as the Church of England

Both “Catholic and Reformed”

Diverged into two main denominations: Anglicans  
and the Puritan critics

Puritans were forced to separate from the church  
in 1662 and deemed nonconformists

From the Puritans came the Presbyterians,  
Congregationalists, Baptists and Quakers

# The Protestant churches of the Reformation

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The Reform Church was the third church

Began under **Ulrich Zwingli** of Zurich (1484-1531)

Founded by **John Calvin** in Geneva (1509-1564)

Comprised mostly of Protestants in Switzerland, France (Huguenots) and Holland

Included the Protestants in Scotland led by **John Knox** and the Puritans of England

The irony was that the **Lutheran, Reform and Anglican churches** in turn often became relentless persecutors of those who dissented from them

- Anabaptists – suffered great persecution from Protestants and Catholics
- Huguenots - branch of the Reformed Church in France (massacre of St. Bartholomew where 70,000 were killed in 1572)
  - Puritans in England
  - Covenanters in Scotland

# The Protestant churches of the Reformation

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These Protestant groups were unquestionably led by God and used mightily to shed the light of truth to the world

Why did they lose their spiritual vigor and fall into decline?

- Union of church with powers of secular state – establishment of state churches
  - Formation of rigid creeds
- Adherence to unscriptural doctrines
  - Jesuit Counter-Reformation
- Rise of Deism and Age of Reason



# Unscriptural Doctrines of the Reformation

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**Sacramentalism** – by partaking in Holy Communion, salvation is given to the believer

**Predestination** – before birth, everyone is chosen to either eternal life or eternal torment, and no one has a choice in the matter (no freedom of will in salvation)

From St Augustine introduced into Protestantism through Luther/Calvin who had been Augustinian monks

**Original sin** – all infants are guilty of Adam's sin from their birth and deserving of God's wrath (infant baptism). This false concept states that our sinful, fallen nature is itself sin and we are born sinners instead of the Biblical concept that we are born with a sinful nature.

**Sin** is the deliberate and willful transgression of God's law. Infants are counted innocent by God until the age of understanding (Deut 1:39)



# Unscriptural Doctrines of the Reformation

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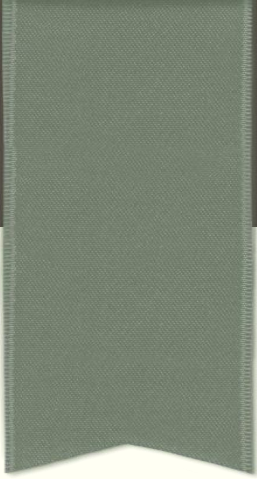
Erroneous view of justification by faith – the believer is declared to be righteous only in a judiciary sense. No need for spiritual transformation of the mind and heart. Once experienced, it cannot be lost (Once saved, always saved)

Biblical justification is a divine pardon as a result of an individual's repentance and genuine acceptance of Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Savior and substitute for sin, followed by an inner change seen visibly

Antinomianism – (meaning no law) the believer has no need of the law of God as a guide in their lives, and it is impossible to keep the commandments even by God's grace

Through Christ's atoning death, we are delivered from the condemnation or penalty of the law, not from the obligation to keep the law (divine standard)





## Revelation - Pure and Simple Page 61

“ The Council of Trent, which lasted for eighteen years from AD 1545 – 1563 set in motion events that brought about what is known in history as the Counter-Reformation. This ended the spiritual revival which had taken place under the reformers. A new organization called the Society of Jesus, better known as the Jesuit Order was put in place. It was the largest Roman Catholic religious order for men in the world. The Jesuit Order was founded by Ignatius of Loyola and approved by Pope Paul III in AD 1540. They centered their efforts on evangelism and education. During the next two centuries, they were effective in undoing much of the work of the Reformation. Through the teaching of the futurist concept of prophecy, they were able to confuse the people and there was no longer a clear voice. By the late 1700, the church had a name that was alive but in reality, was dead”.

Powerful and concerted effort by Rome to destroy Protestantism

# THE JESUIT ORDER

“Rome was desperate to neutralize the impact of these Protestant teachings. The Jesuits counterattacked and...their most effective strategy, the one that did most damage, was the **creation of false interpretations of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation**. These were deliberately designed to shift the stigma of the antichrist from the papacy...Two schools of thought regarding the antichrist were formulated by the Jesuits in order to shift the focus away from Rome., These were termed Preterism and Futurism. Preterism proclaimed that the antichrist applied solely to a figure in the past, such as Emperor Nero, while Futurism projected the antichrist into a future era, closer to the time of the second advent of Christ. The Jesuits then began a campaign of infiltration, at which they became masters. They used subterfuge to attend the Protestant universities, seminaries and churches in the attempt to popularize Jesuitical interpretations of prophecy and Scripture. In the end, they achieved **remarkable success in undermining true biblical interpretation** of prophecy, especially concerning the identity of the antichrist.”



# Catholics and Lutherans mark 500th anniversary of Protestant Reformation

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October 31, 2017 marked the 500th anniversary of the day on which German theologian Martin Luther published his 95 theses, setting in motion the events of the Protestant Reformation

Commitment by Pope Francis and former Lutheran World Federation president Bishop Munib Younan to continue the ecumenical journey

“the shared journey of the past fifty years has resulted in “the removal of prejudices, the increase of mutual understanding and the identification of decisive theological agreements”

We rejoice that the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, solemnly signed by the **Lutheran World Federation** and the Roman Catholic Church in 1999, has also been signed by the **World Methodist Council** in 2006 and, during this Commemoration Year of the Reformation, by the **World Communion of Reformed Churches**.

“Commitment to continue the journey towards unity, guided by God’s Spirit, in the knowledge that “what we have in common is far more than that which still divides us””





# The Church of Sardis: The Dying Church

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Their works not measured to God's standard and Christians only in name

Lifeless church but not hopeless

**Keep remembering** – bear in mind the past and apply the lessons to present

**Repent** – decisive turning around and radical change of the direction of life

**“Keep watching”** – apt admonition for carelessness from Jesus

Location of the city made the citizens overconfident and the city walls were carelessly guarded. The city was captured twice by surprise. First by Cyrus the Persian (549 BC) and later by Antiochus (218 BC). On both occasions, enemy troops climbed the precipice by night and the Sardians had set no guard

Call to wake up and keep remembering their first love for Jesus

Make a decisive turn around from their spiritual lethargic condition or be visited unexpectedly with judgment

Allusion to the second coming **“like a thief in the night”** at an unexpected hour



# The Church of Sardis: The Dying Church

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Three-fold promise to the overcomer

A small remnant remained faithful and did not defile their garments

**“they would walk with me in white because they are worthy”**

White garment symbolizes purity, victory and righteousness (Rev 19:8)

When Romans celebrated a war victory, all the citizens of Rome clothed themselves in white

Promise of eternal life forever with Jesus

John sees this fulfillment when he sees God’s saved people before the throne dressed in white garment (Rev 7:9, 13,14)

The **Book of Life** refers to the heavenly record where God’s people who are saved by faith in the death of Christ are registered by name  
(Ps 69:28, Phil 4:3)

Blotting out a name from the book of life deprives a person of eternal life (Ex 32:32-33, Rev 20:12, 15)

**Jesus will acknowledge them before the Father and His angels** because they have confessed Jesus before men (Matt 10: 32-33)



# Practical Application - The Dying Church

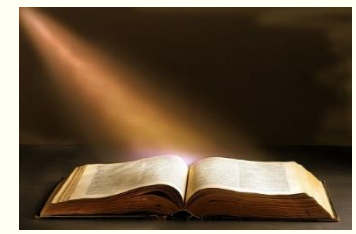
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- Jesus is fully acquainted with the thoughts and intents of the heart, every word and action
- Focusing on keeping up a name or reputation can make shipwreck of faith
- To be faithful to God at some time in the past does not guarantee that we will remain faithful to the end
- Hold fast to the comfort, faith and hope that God has given you in His Word
- Watch out for spiritual lethargy and your faith degenerating into lifeless formalism
- To reclaim wholehearted love and devotion to Jesus, keep afresh your past experience of God's leading in your life and apply His promises to the present
- Strive to be part of God's faithful remnant



# Revelation 3:7-13

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7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”’: 8 “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. 13 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

# PHILADELPHIA

- Located 25 miles southeast of Sardis
- Youngest of the seven cities and gateway to the East
- Strategically located on the mail, trade and commerce route
- Built in 189 BC on the slopes of Mt Tomolus (fortress city)
- Also known as Decapolis (10 cities of the plain)
- Frequent earthquakes and nearly destroyed several times
- Named after Attalus Philadelphus, brother of King of Lydia
- Known for the love and loyalty among the citizens
- Missionary city for promotion of Greek language and culture to the area of Lydia and Phrygia
- Possessed in AD 1392 by the Turks
- Today Philadelphia is called **Alasehir** “city of God”
- Subject to occasional earthquakes (AD 17 devastation)



# The Church of Philadelphia: AD 1750 - 1844

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Sixth of the seven churches

Philadelphia means **brotherly love**

Not a single complaint made by Jesus

Stark contrast to the message to Sardis

The dramatic change was brought about by the remarkable revival of Christian faith and a return to Christ

Era of the evangelical revival of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries

Began with the Pietists of Germany from the Moravian movement which became one of the most remarkable missionary movements of the Christian era

Also from Oxford University, the Holy Club formed by young gifted religious scholars including George Whitefield, John Wesley and Charles Wesley were used by God to revive the Christian faith in Britain and beyond

# The Church of Philadelphia: AD 1750 - 1844

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John Wesley (1703-1791), morning star of the English Reformation and Protestantism

Initially a cold, legalistic churchman

Found Jesus and true salvation through the influence of the Moravian missionaries

Became a transformed man

United with George Whitefield, they began the mighty Evangelical Revival of the 18<sup>th</sup> century

Proclaimed the gospel to the masses in England

Motto – “the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man”

Ministered for 52 years, preached 45,000 sermons, wrote 233 books and 417 books with his brother, Charles

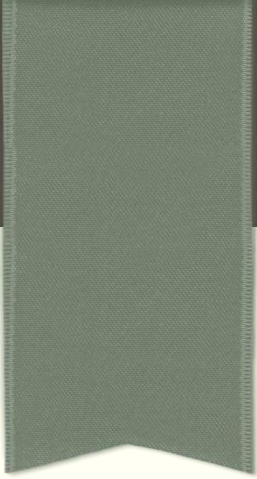
“There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who putting self aside makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God”

-TC vol 8 page 19

“In order to reach the masses of the underprivileged, George Whitefield and the Wesley brothers were compelled to preach outside in the open air. At all hours of the day and night, in all sorts of locales, and in varying and extreme weather conditions, they proclaimed the simple gospel of Christ. They were burning and shining lights, and they set Britain alight. Vast audiences stood in wonder while thousands upon thousands took heed of their message. The huge crowds of people realized that these preachers, who were actually members of the privileged class loved them, which was so contrary to normal expectations. It was thus that the wretched masses, in their seemingly hopeless circumstances learned that God loved them and regarded them as precious in His sight”.

## WHITEFIELD AND THE WESLEY BROTHERS





England before and after Wesley,  
page 319

“The high Anglican churchman, Dr Alexander Knox was an intimate friend of Wesley. Regarding pride, ambition, selfishness and personal gratification of whatever kind, Knox records it as his deep impression that since the days of the Apostles, there has not been a human being more thoroughly exempt from all those frailties of human nature than John Wesley”.

JOHN WESLEY

# Impact of the great Evangelical revival

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- Abolishment of slavery: Britain was one of the primary nations promoting slavery. They brought an end to it
- Social responsibility: Instilled in the English aristocracy, it helped to create the middle-class in England and averted a repeat of the terrifying French Revolution by the poverty-stricken masses
- Prison reform with barbarous torture
- Abolishment of child labor and slavery
- Social reform (working conditions of labor force) and labor unions
- Health and temperance reform in public health
- Produced the age of English prose and poetry
- Sunday school movement and religious education
- Moral reform with elimination of liquor traffic, gambling, animal abuse, bribery, smuggling
- Formation of the gospel and tract societies for distribution, giving birth to the unprecedented surge of foreign missionary efforts to take the gospel to the non-Christian world
- Revival in the dissenting churches of Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptists, Quakers, church in Scotland
- Movements such as YMCA, Boy Scouts, orphanage homes (George Mueller), Salvation Army (William Booth)
- Prepared the way for the great Second Advent movement of 1833 and 1844



# The Church of Philadelphia: the faithful church

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Great missionaries like Carey, Moffett, Livingston, Judson, William Miller and Joseph Wolf took the gospel around the globe

“The Holy One” refers to God’s divine essence (Mark 1:24)

“The True One” (alethinos in Greek) meaning **genuine** or **real**, not (alethes in Greek) meaning **not false**

Jesus is real. He is the true God. He is faithful to all His promises

“The One who had the key of David” symbolizes His full authority

Isa 22:20-22 imagery refers to the key of David as the key to the king’s storehouse with full control, authority and access

Jesus has full authority as King of Kings with royalty access to the heavenly storehouse and eternal riches

Philadelphia was truly a period of faith in action

Just as Philadelphians spread Greek ideas widely through the region, the church in the city was given a great missionary opportunity to carry the gospel message of Jesus to the world

No man was able to shut the open door of mission opportunity Jesus had set before the church of “brotherly love”

# The Open Door – Five Biblical Applications

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DOOR TO THE  
TRUTH  
JOHN 10:9



DOOR TO ANSWERED  
PRAYER  
MATT 7:7



DOOR OF ACCESS TO  
GOD  
REV 3:21



DOOR OF OUTREACH  
ACTS 14:27



DOOR TO THE MOST  
HOLY PLACE  
REV 11:19

“For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries” - I Cor 16:9

“Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord” – 2 Cor 2:12

“Meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains” – Col 4:3

“The true Witness declares: “Behold, I have set before thee an **open door**.” Let us thank God with heart and soul and voice; and let us learn to approach unto Him as through an **open door**, believing that we may come freely with our petitions, and that He will hear and answer. It is by a living faith in His power to help, that we shall receive strength to fight the battles of the Lord with the confident assurance of victory.”

**OPEN DOOR**

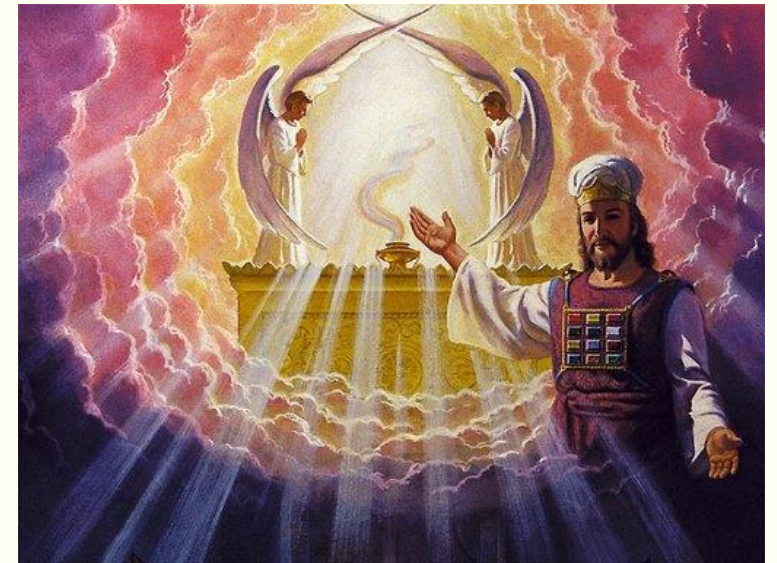
“The true Witness has given us the assurance that He has set before us an **open door**, which no man can shut. Those who are seeking to be faithful to God may be denied many of the privileges of the world; their way may be hedged up and their work hindered by the enemies of truth; but there is no power that can close the **door of communication** between God and their souls. The Christian himself may close this door by indulgence in sin, or by rejection of heaven's light. He may turn away his ears from hearing the message of truth, and in this way sever the connection between God and his soul... Neither man nor Satan can close the door which Christ has opened for us.”

OPEN DOOR

# The Church of Philadelphia: AD 1750 - 1844

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- A door was also opened in heaven (Heb 8:1,2)
- After Jesus' resurrection, He ascended to heaven and began interceding on our behalf as our High Priest in the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary
- The second phase of Jesus ministry began in 1844 (2300 prophetic years after 457 BC) when He entered the Most Holy Place (Dan 7:13, 8:14). This opened the door to Jesus' ministry as our Mediator (Advocate) in the pre-advent judgment (cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary)



19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” **Heb 10:19-25**

# The Church of Philadelphia: AD 1750 - 1844

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By taking hold of Jesus strength, we can be overcomers (Isa 27:5)

The church of Sardis denied Jesus' name (Titus 1:16), hence the promise of confession before the Father and angels. However, the church of Philadelphia did not deny His name

They did not fall into compromise or apostasy

As with the church of Smyrna, the main problem for the church of Philadelphia came from the Jews

In contrast, the believers in Philadelphia were Jews inwardly

“But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God.” (Rom 2:29)

Today, the synagogue of Satan refer to those who call themselves Christians and do not live it, but are used by the enemy to be a stumbling block to the truth and the work of the gospel

“Jews” used here represents Christians who would reject the light and ridicule those who believed it

Promise of exaltation and honor for those love and are loved by God when all Christ's enemies are put under His feet



“The Great Awakening of this time was met with suspicion and even hostility by the established churches of the day as they refused to accept new light on the Scriptures”.  
**Walking through Revelation**

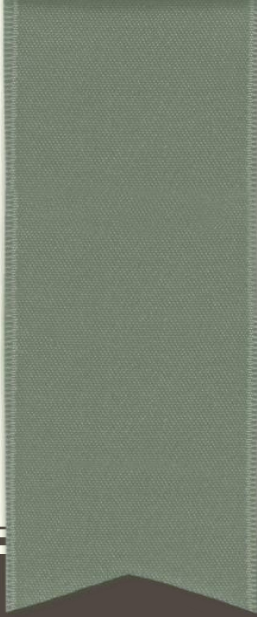




AmazingDiscoveries.com

“In 1844, a group of believers turned to the Word of God and rediscovered the great truths and pillars of the faith. The Sanctuary, Plan of Salvation, the Second Advent movement, the Sabbath, the State of the dead and the Spirit of Prophecy. Truth, long lost, was given back to the world. But Satan, fearing this message, began a counter theology. Dispensationalism, speaking in tongues, secret societies, spiritism, the Quakers, the Mormons, B’nai Brith, Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Ecumenical movement were all born. The message of the three angels of Revelation was to be buried under a quagmire of religious movement and doctrine designed to hid the spirit of truth from the minds of mankind.”

WHAT HAPPENED IN 1844?

- 
- Origin of species (Charles Darwin) – Foundation of Evolution - Nov 1859
  - Spiritualist rappings (Fox Sisters) Creation of spiritism – Nov 1849
  - Mormon faith (Joseph Smith) Published Book of Mormon – 1830
  - Jehovah's Witness (Charles Russell) Launched Watchtower - 1879

“As always in an age of spiritual enlightenment, Satan endeavored to destroy the work by the introduction of counterfeit movements. Spiritism in all its forms saw its modern revival at that time. Out of the French Revolution of 1789-1799 came the concepts of humanism and atheism that were to form the foundation stones for communism. The period also saw the rise of many false prophets who would claim special revelations contrary to the Word of God”.

Amazing Discoveries  
Walking through Revelation

# The Church of Philadelphia: AD 1750 - 1844

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Twice, they were commended for “keeping the word” – obedience, faith and endurance (characteristics of the saints – Rev 14:12)

“those who dwell on the earth” refer to the unsaved (Rev 6:10, 14:6, 17:8)

Jesus promises to keep and protect His faithful church during the eschatological hour of trial (God’s judgement) about to come on those who dwell on the earth during the seven plagues of Rev 16 (Dan 12:1)

**Historic continuous nature of the prophetic message to the seven churches**

In view of the nearness of Jesus second coming, the church is counseled to hold fast to the faith that no one takes your crown (stephanos – garland of the overcomer)

The church of the living God is the pillar and support of the truth – I Tim 3:15

Being a pillar in the temple conveys stability, eternal security and permanence

Having the **name of God** on the forehead is the **seal of God** given before the time of trouble

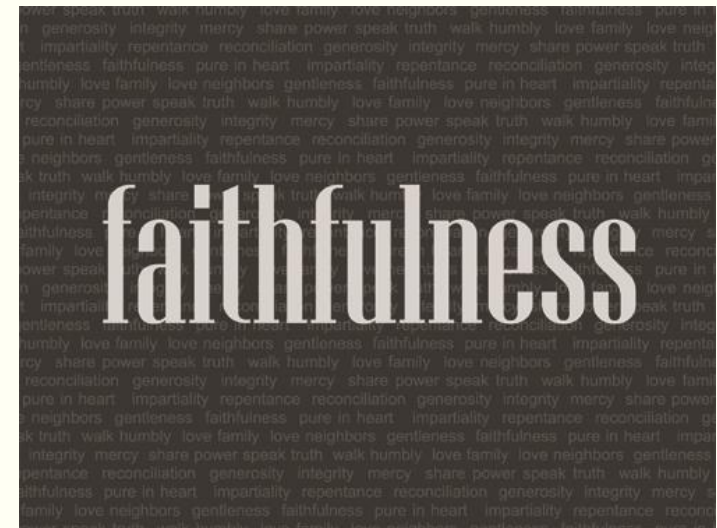
John sees the promise fulfilled of the faithful having the name of God, Jesus and New Jerusalem in Rev 14:1, 22:4. This is a sign of belonging.

# Practical Application - The Faithful Church

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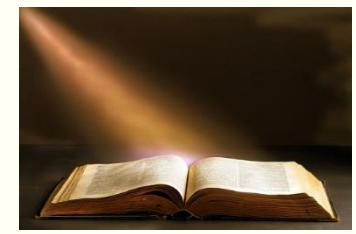
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- Like the believers in Philadelphia, our strength may be small but when we steadfastly keep God's Word and not deny Him through our faithfulness, the gates of hell cannot prevail against us and we shall be overcomers
- Jesus is in control. When He opens a door of opportunity to spread the gospel, we must be alert and ready to move forward in His strength
- Bearing God's name makes us ambassadors. We must be careful not to dishonor or deny Him by actions and words that do not glorify Him
- Today, believe in God and His Word is challenged. Know what you believe, test it by the Scripture and hold on to God's truth and not man's opinion
- It will be a tragedy if we renounce the truth to save our lives and another takes our place and crown (Saul/David, Judas/Matthias, Esau/Jacob, Reuben/Judah, Jews/Gentiles)



# Revelation 3:14-22

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**14** “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: **15** “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. **16** So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. **17** Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—**18** I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. **19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. **20** Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. **21** To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. **22** “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ”

# LAODICEA

- Located 45 miles SE of Philadelphia and 90 miles east of Ephesus
- Founded by Antiochus II and named after his wife, Laodice
- Located on the borders of Phrygia and Lydia between the narrow valleys of two small rivers
- Wealthy city built between 261- 246 BC on one of the great Roman roads which led to Damascus and Arabia
- Important banking center - it owned gold mines & gold refineries
- Destroyed by an earthquake in 60 AD
- Laodiceans refused help from the Imperial Roman government and rebuilt their city at their own expense
- Known for its garment industry – superior black glossy wool
- Famous for its medical school and “Tephra Phrygia” tablet exports. When crushed, it can used to heal eye ailment



# The Church of Laodicea: AD 1844 – 2<sup>nd</sup> advent

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## Hydrotherapy

**Hot water** helps to improve circulation. The arteries and vein expand and carry blood more effectively through the body. Helps the body to detoxify through sweating, increases metabolism, unclog sinuses and supports bowel movement.

**Cold water** is refreshing. It can keep the body from overheating, boost immune system, treat health conditions by constricting the blood vessels and reduce blood flow to the area, reduce swelling, inflammation and decreases muscle soreness.

**Lukewarm water** (only slightly warm – like the temperature of a baby's milk bottle) only good for bathing. When mixed with salt is an effective method for vomiting because it is repulsive to the system.

“Laodicea was located on the Lycos river, six miles downstream from the city of Hierapolis. Hierapolis was famous for its hot springs which were used for health spas starting in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. However, by the time the water flowed to Laodicea, it was tepid, neither cold nor hot. It also smelled of sulfur and tasted terrible – one would spew “vomit” it out of the mouth. The Laodiceans attempted to solve this by building an aqueduct from the distant mountains. The water was hot as it left the mountains, however, by the time it arrived in Laodicea, it was lukewarm. Lukewarm is a mixture of hot and cold. This symbolizes a mixture of religion and worldliness.”

## THE LUKEWARM CHURCH



# The Church of Laodicea: AD 1844 – 2<sup>nd</sup> advent

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Cold (Greek: Psuchros icy cold) – Sardis church: AD 1500 to 1750

Spiritually dead, Compromise, formalism

Destitute of faith and any desire for truth and holiness



Hot (Greek: Zestos boiling hot) – Philadelphia church: AD 1750 to 1844

Faithful, purity of devotion and godliness

Zealous for the Word of God and witness for God



Lukewarm (Greek: Chilaros tepid) – Laodicea church: AD 1844 to end

Apathetic, half-hearted, indifferent, passionless

Self-sufficient, Arrogant and Self-deceived

“The church of Laodicea has settled down and become very comfortable. Nothing seems to bother it. It is more concerned about everything else than they are about the kingdom of God...God desires them to be uncomfortable. There is no truer comparison to the church today, which has become increased in goods and in need of nothing. Thus we find ourselves living in the last period of time before Jesus comes.”

## THE LUKEWARM CHURCH

# The Church of Laodicea: AD 1844 – 2<sup>nd</sup> advent

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Final of the seven churches - seven periods of the Christian faith

The church of Laodicea describes the remnant believers from 1844 to the end of time

Pre-advent (investigative) judgment began in 1844 (Dan 8:14)

Laodicea is composed of two words: **laos (people)** and **dikaios (righteous, right, lawful)** – **judged or justified people**

Jesus is coming for His justified people, ready for translation

No words of commendation from Jesus

Paul urged Epaphras to read his epistles to Laodicea

“Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.” Colossians 4:16

Three words in the message to the church of Laodicea only occurs once in the entire Bible (lukewarm, vomit, eyesalve)

Laodicea’s problem is a unique one! Her need is the most desperate

# The Church of Laodicea: AD 1844 – 2<sup>nd</sup> advent

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Three titles are used by Jesus as He introduces Himself

**Amen** in the Bible is used as a solemn affirmation of truth. It refers to Jesus as the Last or the God of truth (2 Cor 1:20)

The Laodicean message is the last invitation given by Jesus calling for repentance. If rejected, there will be no other.

**Faithful and True Witness** combines the “Faithful Witness” in Rev 1:5 and the “Faithful and True” in Rev 19:11

The message to the Laodicea church is the most drastic and strong in reproof of all the messages. Jesus is the Author and Finisher

**Beginning** in Greek (Arche) can mean “first in time” or “first in rank”

Jesus is both the Creator and Ruler of all things (Col 1:15-17)

He is the Beginner or Initiator of creation (John 1:1-3)

Jesus was “begotten” as far as His humanity, but prior to this, He is God the Son who has existed for eternity

Firstborn signifies “chief or head” – not the one born first (Jacob)

# The Church of Laodicea: AD 1844 – 2<sup>nd</sup> advent

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## Laodicea's opinion

- Rich
- Become wealthy
- Need of nothing



## Laodicea's true condition

- Wretched: without hope
- Miserable: without joy
- Poor: without spiritual riches (beggarly)
- Blind: without spiritual insight/discernment
- Naked: without spiritual cover (shame)

The problem of Possession  
The problem of Perception  
The problem of Pride

# The Church of Laodicea: AD 1844 – 2<sup>nd</sup> advent

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Laodicean attitude is primarily one of spiritual self-satisfaction

“Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ and do not know that you are **wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked,**” – Rev 3:17

“In their innermost being, they feel assured of salvation. They believe they have the truth, and their ultimate destination is heaven. They believe they have spiritually arrived. They do not feel nor sense any spiritual need.” – An Enduring Vision, page 137

An attitude of watchfulness, vigilance, a sense of insufficiency, a consciousness of the continual battle with self for supremacy within the human heart should never cease until death or translation at the second advent of Jesus.

What makes the condition of Laodicea so serious is that they are clueless and totally unaware of their state. It is not hopeless.

Jesus, the Heavenly Physician gives the diagnosis...and the remedy

# The Church of Laodicea: The Gold of Faith

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In Rev 1:15, Jesus feet are like fine brass as if refined in a furnace. His solution to Laodicea begins with spiritual gold refined in the fire.

A tried and tested faith is spiritual gold

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.. (1 Pet 1:6-7)

Trials, tribulations and testing keeps us spiritually alert and grows our faith in Jesus

“The gold tried in fire is the faith that works by love”  
(Christ’s Object Lessons, page 158)

Call not to seek material prosperity (earthly gold) which is not an indication of God’s favor, but heavenly gold which fades not



# Laodicea: The White robe of Righteousness

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In Rev 3:4, Jesus commended the few in Sardis who remained alive.  
“They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy”

In contrast, the Laodiceans are spiritually naked. Unlike Adam and Eve in the garden, they are full of self and do not realize they are naked.

The righteousness that comes from Jesus is the only one that fits a believer for heaven

The church of Laodicea has an intellectual understanding of salvation rather than a heartfelt experience

“By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him, we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, 312)



# The Church of Laodicea: Eye salve of discernment

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Laodiceans are spiritually blind and without discernment

**To buy:** to give up something in exchange for another worth more

Laodiceans need to give up spiritual pride and self-sufficiency to see with the eyes of faith to see their true spiritual condition

2 Pet 1:5-11 contrasts the man who adds to his faith, Christian virtues and the man who is spiritually blind

“But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. (vs. 9)

Spiritual deception is to beset those who live in the end of time

To prepare for the coming conflict, spiritual eye salve is essential for every believer (Eph 1: 17-18)

Jesus calls on his church to buy the remedy and apply it. Heaven is cheap enough

# Church of Laodicea: The Self-sufficient church

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To chasten: to punish or discipline with the end goal of reforming

A powerful call to repentance, revival and reformation

Repentance is a personal experience because every believer must experience it to be an overcomer

Laodicea has locked God out, but He does not force His way in

Jesus stands at the door with a personal invitation

Jesus' position at the door shows the nearness of His return

“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. (Luke 12:35-37a)

“Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!” (James 5:9)

# Church of Laodicea: The end-time people of God

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If we accept His invitation, He will come in and dine with us  
Greek literally mean “**I will enter into him**” – mystic union of Jesus  
and the believer



Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col 1:27)

Dine together – spiritual fellowship the believer enjoys with Jesus  
Similarity to the experience of human love, courtship and intimacy  
(Songs of Solomon 5:2-6) **Spiritual marriage relationship**

The Holy Spirit woos the sinner, the sinner responds to Jesus love, a spiritual union takes place, a marriage follows as Jesus becomes the spiritual husband and the believer the bride. The bride takes her husband's name. The husband becomes responsible for her, provides her needs, supplies her clothing, food, protection, assures her of His love and abiding presence, desires her faithfulness and wants to spend the rest of life (and eternity) with her.

Grandest, highest honor: the bride will sit on the throne with her King

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# PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS

