

# **The 7 Churches of Asia Minor**

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**Title:** Unlike most books of the Bible, Revelation contains its own title: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:1). "Revelation" (Greek Apokalupsis) means "an uncovering", "an unveiling", or "a disclosure".

**Background - Setting:** Revelation begins with John, the last surviving apostle and an old man, in exile on the small, barren Island of Patmos, located in the Aegean Sea southwest of Ephesus. The Roman authorities had banished him there because of his faithful preaching of the gospel (1:9). While on Patmos, John received a series of visions that laid out the future history of the world.

John was told to write down what he saw in a book and to send it to seven churches in the province of Asia (western Asia Minor): **Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea** (1:11). The original recipients of Revelation were the believers in these seven churches. Tradition reports that the apostle John exercised spiritual oversight over these churches while he resided at Ephesus during the final decades of the first century. The order of the listing of the seven churches forms a semicircle beginning in the west at Ephesus, then extending northward to Pergamos, and subsequently southeastward to Laodicea. Revelation was probably sent initially as a circular letter beginning at Ephesus and thence throughout the province.

**Historical - Theological themes:** Since it is primarily prophetic, Revelation contains little historical material, other than that (in chapters 1-3). The 7 churches to who the letters were addressed were existing churches in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Apparently, they were singled out because John had ministered in them.

As "The faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth" (1:5);

As "the Alpha and the Omega" (1:8);

As the one "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (1:8);

As a son of man (1:13);

As the one who was dead, but now is alive forevermore (1:18);

As the Son of God (2:18);

As the one who is holy and true (3:7);

As "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God" (3:14);

One of the unusual things about the book of Revelation is that it is the only book in the Bible that contains a promise to everyone that reads it, and all that hear it will be abundantly blessed. The early church read the book of Revelation in its entirety every time they met. There is a curse spoken at the end of Revelation to anyone who tampers with the contents of the Bible.

In Revelation, it appears to me, that our Lord is pulling the curtain aside and allowing us to see what He really is and what He expects from us. Many people call this the Apocalypse which means the revealing.

Revelation is written in symbols so that people cannot understand with their mind but must have faith. So many things in the Bible are veiled to the nonbeliever. So many people look at the Bible literally, but to truly understand, we must understand it through the Spirit.

**Revelation 2:1** "Unto the angel of the church of **Ephesus** write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks"

## **The Loveless Church**

**"Angel"**: The elder or pastor from the church.

**"Ephesus"**: The city of Ephesus was one of the most important commercial and religious cities in Asia Minor. The most famous temple of the goddess Artemis (Diana), was located there. It was also John's headquarters before his exile. Ephesus served as the "mother" church to the others, all of which were connected by the same Roman road.

From the spiritual standpoint of churches today, we would see this church located in the midst of a very worldly surrounding but being a church holding up a standard against the evil surroundings. This church would be a spiritual church guided and taught through the Holy Spirit of God. This church will be found working when the Lord comes back. They have been full of the power and presence of God. Jesus first tells them the good, then tells them of their weakness, as we see in the next verse. Even though this church has worked hard and not given up, we will see here that they have a few shortcomings.

**Revelation 2:2** "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:"

**Revelation 2:3** "And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted."

*This church does not just accept everyone who says he is an apostle. They judge the message before they accept the apostle. It seems that this church is well grounded in the Word. This church (the physical church), was one of the older churches founded by Paul and nurtured by Timothy. This physical church of Ephesus was located in a busy city.*

**"Hast not fainted"**: For over 40 years, since its founding, this church had remained faithful to the Word and the Lord. Through difficulty and persecution, the members had endured, always driven by the right motive, i.e., for Christ's name and reputation.

**Revelation 2:4** "Nevertheless I have [somewhat] against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. "

**"Left thy first love"**: To be a Christian is to love the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:21, 23; 1 Cor. 16:22). But the Ephesians' passion and fervor for Christ had become cold, mechanical orthodoxy. Their doctrinal and moral purity, their undiminished zeal for the truth, and their disciplined service were no substitute for the love for Christ they had forsaken.

**2 Timothy 3:5**: "*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*"

Probably this church has gotten too sophisticated for healing and deliverance. Perhaps some of the world's music had crept in unaware. Perhaps this church has begun to entertain more than teach. This church is more appealing to the world than to God.

**Revelation 2:8 "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;"**

## **The Persecuted Church**

**Revelation 2:9 "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and [I know] the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but [are] the synagogue of Satan."**

Smyrna was a rich and beautiful commercial city in Asia Minor and was recognized by Rome as its loyal ally and a center of emperor worship. In His message to this church, the Lord again commended their good works, "*I know your works, tribulation, and poverty*". These believers were persecuted and often lost their means of livelihood as a result of their commitment to the Lord.

Perhaps, their **poverty spoken of** here indicates that they are not obsessed about having worldly wealth. They are not rich in things the world would class as wealth. Their wealth is of spiritual things. The treasure that we should all be seeking is the treasure stored up in heaven

This "**synagogue of Satan**" that comes against them is what we were discussing before. These are religious people with an outward appearance of belief but with no inward conviction. This literal church at Smyrna had many martyrs who stood against the evil, idolatrous people around them even unto the death.

In our day, it is the same situation. If we are in God's army, we must be willing to stand for what is right even unto death. The Spirit and the flesh (world), will be locked in battle until the return of Jesus. The world and its system, and even the idolatrous church is opposed to true righteousness and holiness. Jesus is coming back for a church that is without spot or wrinkle.

"Some say they are Jews": Although they were Jews physically, they were not true Jews but spiritual pagans (compare **Rom. 2:28**). They allied with other pagans in putting Christians to death as they attempted to stamp out the Christian faith.

Making a public confession of their faith meant poverty, hunger, imprisonment, and sometimes death. The word "tribulation" used here paints a picture of a huge rock crushing whatever lies beneath it. The word conveys intense and constant pressure. Can you identify with that? Many of you are experiencing "intense and constant pressure". You aren't forgotten! Jesus sees and knows.

**But know this:**

**Not all those who claim to be Christians are actually Christians.** If we are not careful, we will be like these Jews. We may say we are a Christian, and the world might actually believe that we are because of our outward appearance, but Jesus looks at the heart.

**Matthew 7:22-23** *"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"*

**Revelation 2:12** *"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;"*

## **The Compromising Church**

It was also the center of worship for four of the most important pagan cults of the day: Zeus, Athene, Dionysus and Asclepius. They were not forgotten. Jesus recognized their faithfulness despite the satanic environment in which they lived. In the original Greek, the words "holdest fast" means, "to hold onto desperately with all of one's power." These Christians were holding onto their faith with everything they had and Jesus commended them for their faithfulness.

**Revelation 2:13** *"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, [even] where Satan's seat [is]: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas [was] my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."*

Jesus says that He knows **where they dwell**. He is referring to the very evil surroundings. This was an educational center. There were great libraries and places of worldly education.

This church is committing sin; compromising with the heathen around them. Many times, worldly wisdom and faithfulness to God are not cohesive. The Bible says that "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (**Romans 8:7**).

Faith is not fact. The educated mind wants to prove by facts. Faith, I say again, is not fact:

**Hebrews 11:1-2** *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." "For by it the elders obtained a good report."*

**"Where Satan's seat [is]":** The headquarters of satanic opposition and a Gentile base for false religions. On the acropolis in Pergamum was a huge, throne-shaped altar to Zeus. In addition, Asclepius, the god of healing, was the god most associated with Pergamum. **His snake-like form is still the medical symbol today.**

Jesus says to this church, you have My name on your church and I also am aware you have not denied Me. Jesus even reminds them that He is aware that Antipas was martyred because of his great faith in Jesus. This Satanic influence had come against Antipas and killed him. **We must realize that we must not fellowship with those of unbelief.** We must witness to them, and then go home. Fellowshiping with the world brings compromise. The shame is that some of this has crept into this church as we see (in verse 14).

**Revelation 2:14 "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."**

But the Lord also reproved them for allowing members who practiced the "doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans" to remain within their congregation.

**"The doctrine of Balaam"**: Balaam tried unsuccessfully to prostitute his prophetic gift and curse Israel for money offered him by Balak, king of Moab. So, he devised a plot to have Moabite women seduce Israelite men into intermarriage. The result was the blasphemous union of Israel with fornication and idolatrous feasts (for the story of Balaam, see Num. chapters 22-25).

In his message to Pergamos, Jesus compares the conduct of some of these believers with the actions of the Israelites who compromised with the Moabites. He also condemned them for allowing the doctrine of the Nicolaitans to remain in their midst.

**The word "Nicolaitan"** comes from two Greek words, one meaning "to conquer" and the other meaning "the laity." It is symbolic of the development of a priestly order which ruled over the laity in contrast to Christ's command regarding serving one another given (in Matt. 23:8-9). The headship of Christ had been set aside in favor of an **Ecclesiastical Hierarchy**.

**Revelation 2:15 "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."**

Although they were victorious in keeping their faith during persecution, they opened the door to spiritual destruction when they compromised with the world, **Apostasy** - Various Religions, Cults. Compromise is blending two ideas together. The dictionary says it is "to lay open to danger." In spiritual matters, any position of compromise opens you up to danger and corruption.

Compromise is rampant throughout the Body of Christ and the Spirit of God is calling us to allow the "sword of the Spirit", the Word of God, to expose and remove compromise just as a surgeon removes a cancerous growth. God cannot tolerate compromise! He hates it.

Even the smallest compromise opens the doors to additional compromise, which leads to even greater compromise and eventually, spiritual death. If you have compromised in any area of your life, you must do what Jesus told believers at Pergamos.

**Revelation 2:18 "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet [are] like fine brass;"**

## **The Corrupt Church**

**Revelation 2:19 "I know thy works, and Charity, and Service, and Faith, and thy Patience, and thy Works; and the last [to be] more than the first"**

It seems that this church here in Thyatira has great love and compassion and is a working church trying to improve the condition of the less fortunate around them. This church is patient, which is gained by much tribulation. This is not a stiff cold church, as some of the other churches are, but is a loving caring church. It seems that the works of this church improve as they go along, because the last is more than the first. This is really a very nice statement that Jesus made about them.

**Revelation 2:20 "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."**

Once again, Jesus sees beyond this outward display of good works and exposes a stronghold of Satan right in the midst of the church. The church of Thyatira was allowing a woman who called herself a prophetess to teach others that it was all right to mix pagan religions with Christianity. She was teaching and seducing people to commit fornication and compromise morally.

This false teacher is referred to as "Jezebel," which may or may not have actually been her name, but certainly refers to her spirit. It references Jezebel in the Old Testament, who was the wife of King Ahab. She was an idolatrous woman with unscrupulous methods, to perpetuate her power. Jesus warned the church of Thyatira of coming judgment to this false teacher and all those who commit spiritual adultery by moral compromise. This "Jezebel" was given time to repent, but refused (Rev. 2:21).

Acts 21:8-9 "And the next [day] we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was [one] of the seven; and abode with him." "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." There are many examples just like this of Philip's daughters.

**Revelation 2:21 "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."**

We must carefully look at what must be repented of. The sin here is fornication. She was not to repent of preaching, but repent of fornication. In the days that John wrote this, there were evil churches that even had harlots working in the church for the convenience of the members.

In our day, the satanic churches promote sex. Some churches teach that homosexuality and lesbianism are alternate life styles. My Bible says they are an abomination to God (Leviticus 18:22). You can easily see spiritually this church in Thyatira in these churches. Not only did Thyatira need to repent, but modern churches who teach this abomination.

**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."

## The Dead 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. 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 **Fivfold 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.

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.



If Timothy 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.

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.

### Revelation Chapter 3 Continued

We will begin this study with the church at Philadelphia. Oh, to be like the church at Philadelphia. This church is sometimes thought to be the missionary church. I believe, if we carefully look at this church, we will be able to see a church in our time. The church would be strong and active in the gifts of the Spirit. They would be teaching holiness and righteousness. They would not be tolerant to compromise. They would not be any particular denomination, but rather grounded in Jesus. Taught by the Holy Spirit of God. This church would be promoting Spirit rather than bringing the world into church.

**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;"**

### The Faithful Church . .

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, 1 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**). 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.

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.**

**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.

### **Revelation Chapter 3 Second Continued**

In this lesson, we will look at the church at Laodicea. This church is certainly a look at the apostate churches of our day. This is a church afraid to show its emotions. One that is a very sophisticated group really to the point of being very ineffective in winning people to the Lord.

**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;"**

#### **Luke Warmness.**

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. Eph. 4:24 "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

(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 (here in the book of Revelation), warned them about their lack of zeal in their church.

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.

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.

**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. 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.

**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.

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 3:20 "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."**

**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.

**Ephesus** – Loveless Church - **Hard Work & Endurance**

**They do not love us at first – Repent**

**Smvrna** – Persecuted Church – **Suffered Persecution, Poverty.** – No Rebuke – **Don't Fear; Be Faithful**

**Pergamum** – Compromising Church – **Remained Loyal – Tolerate Compromise – Repent**

**Thyatira** – Corrupt Church – **Love, Faith, Service, Patience – Tolerates Idolatry & Immorality – Keep the Faith**

**Sardis** – Dead Church – **Some have keep the Faith – Dead – Repent strengthen what remains.**

**Philadelphia** – Faithful Church – **Keep the Faith.**

**Laodicea** – Lukewarm Church – **Indifferent, Wretched, Miserable, Poor, Blind, and Naked - Repent**