

The Seven Churches of Asia

By

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The Seven Churches of Asia

Lesson One

CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF SEVEN CANDLESTICKS

1. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ".

- (1) This is the title that John gives his book.
- (2) **REVELATION** means "An unveiling, removing the cover from something"; "The unveiling of that which has been veiled; the disclosing of that which has been hidden." It describes divine things hitherto unknown, but now have been revealed by the Holy Spirit. (I Cor. 2: 9 - 13; Eph. 3: 3 - 5).
- (3) This book unveils the struggles through which the church was destined to pass, and its ultimate triumph and victory under Christ. (Eph. 6: 10 - 17; I Pet. 5:8; II Cor. 10: 3 - 5; I Tim. 1:18; II Tim. 2: 3 - 4; Jude 3)

2. The Source of this Revelation:

- (1) "*Which God gave...*" (Rev. 1:1).
- (2) The steps by which it came:
 1. From God,
 2. To Jesus,
 3. From Jesus to the angel,
 4. From the angel to John,
 5. From John to God's servants.
- (3) The revelation was given in signs -- "signified" (Rev. 1:1).
 1. The reader must interpret the signs and determine the divine message intended for the people to whom it was addressed -- and the meaning for us today.

3. The Contents (Rev. 1: 1 - 2).

- (1) "*Things which must shortly come to pass*" (verse 1).
- (2) In the book many pictures are found:
 1. We see Christ in His exaltation and triumph.
 2. We see the church in its mighty struggle and final victory (Matt. 5: 10 - 12).

3. We see enemies of Christ and the church:

(1) Satan -- Rev. 12:9

(2) The Beast out of the sea (The Roman Empire -- an instrument of Satan -- Rev. 13: 1 - 9).

1. This beast out of the sea symbolizes all the anti-God opposition by force that can ever be brought against the people of God.
2. Any government can be used by Satan to oppose God's people.

(3) The beast out of the earth (Rev. 13: 11 - 18).

1. Paganism or Emperor worship.
2. All forms of false religion and worship (II Cor. 11: 13 - 15).

(4) Babylon (or Rome) -- Revelation chapters 17 and 18.

1. Babylon symbolized Rome (Rev. 14: 8; 16:19). "Babylon the Great" is Rome; symbolic, not of the world power which was represented by the beast out of the sea, but the world of lust and seduction.
2. Pagan Rome symbolizes the world of lust and all that is seductive, enticing, and appealing to the desires of the flesh and mind.

(5) Satan has three approaches by which he seeks to destroy the people of God:

1. Political force -- symbolized by the Beast out of the sea.
2. False religion -- Paganism, Denominationalism, and Catholicism -- symbolized by the Beast out of the earth.
3. The World of Lust -- all that appeals to the flesh or mind (I John 2: 15 - 17; Eph. 2:3) -- represented by the great harlot, Babylon (Rev. 17:1).

4. An incentive to study the book:

(1) Rev. 1:3

(2) Seven Beatitudes (Being blissfully complete) in the Book of Revelation:

1. Rev. 1:3
2. Rev. 14: 13
3. Rev. 16:15
4. Rev. 19:9

5. Rev. 20:6

6. Rev. 22:7

7. Rev. 22:14

5. The Salutation (Rev. 1: 4 - 5).

(1) The writer --John -- Rev. 1:4.

(2) The ones addressed -- "*The seven churches that are in Asia*".

1. Seven is a symbolical number representing completeness and fullness.

2. These seven congregations were selected by the Lord as congregations which have the qualities characterizing various congregations throughout history.

3. Combinations of these conditions are present in any congregation of the Lord in our present day.

(3) The Blessings bestowed -- Rev. 1:4

1. Grace

2. Peace

6. An outburst of praise -- Rev. 1: 5 - 6

(1) "*Prince of the kings of the earth*" -- Higher than the kings of the earth (Psa. 89: 27).

(2) Ex. 19: 3 - 6; I Pet. 2:9

7. A prophecy of the Lord's second coming -- Rev. 1:7

8. The voice of God -- Rev. 1:8

(1) God speaks the second time in the book in Rev. 21: 5 - 8.

9. A sublime charge -- Rev. 1: 9 - 11

(1) Tribulation -- John 16:33; Acts 14:22

10. The Vision -- Rev. 1: 12 - 18

(1) Christ in the midst of the seven candlesticks -- Rev. 1:13

(2) Christ described -- Rev. 1: 13 - 16

11. John's reaction to this vision and the Lord's reply -- verses 17 - 20.

(1) John fell at his feet as dead -- verse 17.

(2) The Lord comforts John -- verses 17 - 18.

(3) The Lord tells John to write -- verse 19.

(4) Two things in the vision identified -- verse 20.

QUESTIONS

1. What title does John give the last book in the New Testament? _____

2. What does the word "REVELATION" mean? _____

3. Who is the source of the book of Revelation? _____

4. What does the word "signified" mean? _____

5. Does the book of Revelation picture the mighty struggle of the church in this dispensation of time?

6. Give the steps (order) of this revelation: _____

7. Name the enemies of Christ and the church in the book of Revelation: _____

8. Name Satan's three approaches to destroy God's people: (1) _____

(2) _____ (3) _____

9. What incentive is given to study the Book of Revelation? _____

10. Name the Seven Beatitudes in the book of Revelation: (1) _____

(2) _____ (3) _____

(4) _____ (5) _____

(6) _____ (7) _____

11. The Revelation is addressed to whom? _____

12. What has Christ done for us in verse 5? _____

13. What was the sublime charge given to John? _____

14. What is Christ in the midst of? _____

15. Give the description of Christ: _____

16. Give John's reaction to the vision: _____

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Lesson Two

LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT EPHEBUS

Revelation 2: 1- 7

INTRODUCTION:

1. The beginning of the church at Ephesus:

- (1) Paul's first visit was brief, at the closing portion of his second journey (A.D. 53) -- Acts 18: 18 - 21.
- (2) At this time he left Priscilla and Aquila (their work is recorded in Acts 18: 18 - 21).
- (3) Paul returned -- Acts 19: 1 - 6.

2. The city of Ephesus:

- (1) Situated in Asia Minor on the west coast.
- (2) It lay at the mouth of the river Cayster, and a mile from the Aegean Sea.
- (3) One of the greatest seaports of the ancient world.
- (4) A city of great commercial importance.

3. Ephesus was a city of greatest political importance.

- (1) It was what was known as a free city.
- (2) Rome had granted to it the right of self-government within its own limits.

4. Ephesus was a city of the greatest religious importance.

- (1) Its greatest glory was the Temple of Diana (Acts 19: 26 - 27).
- (2) This temple was one of the seven wonders of the world.
- (3) The image was so old that none knew whence it had come, and some said that it had fallen from heaven (Acts 19:35).
- (4) The image was a black, squat, repulsive figure covered with man breasts (which was a symbol of fertility), and held a club in one hand and a trident in the other.
- (5) This image was to millions of people the most sacred thing in the world.

5. The character of the people was notoriously bad.
6. This was the second letter that had been written to the church at Ephesus.
7. The church had been there at the time of this writing about 40 years.

I. THE LETTER IS ADDRESSED TO "THE ANGEL" (OR MESSENGER) OF THE CHURCH -- Rev. 2:1

II. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKER -- Rev. 2: 1 - 2

1. *"Holdeth the seven stars in his right hand"*

(1) The stars are the angels or messengers -- Rev. 1:20

(2) *"Holdeth the seven stars in his right hand"* would mean that the TEACHERS of the church must depend upon him for the source of their knowledge.

1. Jesus -- Matt. 28:18; Heb. 1: 1 - 2

2. Paul -- Gal. 1: 11 - 12; Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 2:10

(3) Today the same is true.

2. *"Walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks"*

(1) The candlesticks are the churches, the local congregations -- Rev. 1:20.

(2) A candlestick is a light-bearer. Each congregation is to hold forth the light of the gospel to the people of the world lost in sin (I Tim. 3:15).

1. Christians are light-bearers (Matt. 5: 14 - 16; Phil. 2:15).

(3) Jesus dealt with each congregation separately.

1. This shows each congregation is to do its own work.

2. New Testament congregations were independent and self-governing.

(4) This shows that Christ is present with us and knows what we are doing -- Matt. 18:20; Heb. 4:13.

3. *"I know"*

(1) John 2: 24 -25; Heb. 4:13

III. WHAT IS RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH ?

1. *"Thy works and thy labor"* -- Rev. 2:2

(1) Christians must work -- Phil. 2:12; James 2: 14 - 26.

2. *"Thy patience"* or steadfastness -- Acts 2:42; I Cor. 15: 58.

3. *"Thou canst not bear them which are evil"*

(1) Must not fellowship the evil -- II Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16: 17; II John 9 - 11; I Cor. 5: 1 - 6

4. *"Tried them which say they are apostles"*

(1) Doctrine is important -- Gal. 1: 6 - 9; II Cor. 11:13; Matt. 15:9

5. *"Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans"* -- Rev. 2:14; 2:20.

IV. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CHURCH ?

1. *"Hath left thy first love"* -- Rev. 2:4

(1) Formality of service to God had been persistently carried on. They were motivated by fear or by custom, and did not have genuine love in their hearts toward God.

(2) "First love" is the love of devotion and espousal (Jer. 2:2 -- *"Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after men in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."*)

(3) "First love" is characterized by an anxiety to please and serve.

(4) "First love" leads one to ask not, "How much must I do?", but "How much can I do?"

(5) They had held on to the form of godliness but had drifted away from real love and devotion as the motivating power upon which our service and godliness should rest.

(6) Love is indispensable as a motive (I Cor. 13: 1 - 3).

V. ADMONITION -- Rev. 2:5

1. *"Remember therefore from whence thou are fallen"*

2. *"Repent"*

3. *"Do thy first works"*

VI. WARNING -- Rev. 2:5

1. *"Will remove thy candlestick".*

(1) A candlestick supports the light.

(2) No church can do this without "first love".

(3) They would lose identity as a church of Christ.

VII. PROMISED REWARD -- Rev. 2:7.

1. Those who would overcome would inherit eternal life.

QUESTIONS

1. Tell the beginning of the church at Ephesus: _____

2. Where was the city of Ephesus located? _____
3. Why was Ephesus a city of political importance? _____

4. What great heathen temple was located at Ephesus? _____
5. Was the image of Diana beautiful? _____
6. What kind of people made up the city of Ephesus? _____
7. Had a letter been written to the church at Ephesus before this one? _____
8. How old was the church at Ephesus when Revelation was written? _____
9. What danger does a local congregation face when the first converts have passed and the second and third generation comes along?

10. To whom was this letter addressed? _____
11. What does the word "angel" mean? _____
12. Who *"holdeth the seven stars in his right hand"*? _____
13. Who are the seven stars? _____
14. What does it mean to *"hold the seven stars in his right hand"*? _____

15. What are the "seven golden candlesticks"? _____
16. What is the function of a candlestick? _____
17. What is the meaning to us of the symbol "candlestick"? _____

18. Did Jesus deal with all the congregations together or separately? _____
19. What is the meaning of the expression "*walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*"? _____
20. For what is the church commended? _____
21. What would the church not tolerate? _____
22. What did the church in Ephesus think of the Nicolaitans? _____
23. What did the Lord think of them? _____
24. What should be our attitude toward error? _____
25. What rebuke was given? _____
26. What does it mean to leave "first love"? _____
27. What does it mean to repent? _____
28. Name three things the Lord said do in verse five to correct the problem at Ephesus : (1) _____
 _____ (2) _____ (3) _____
29. What does it mean to have the candlestick removed? _____
30. What is the promise to those who overcome? _____

DISCUSS THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A CONGREGATION THAT CEASES TO BE "PUSHING UPHILL" AND BEGINS TO DECLINE:

1. A loss of interest in evangelism. Discuss reasons why: _____
- _____
- _____
2. Members begin to refuse to accept responsibility.
- (1) Discuss member's responsibility to the local church: _____
- _____
- _____
- (2) Discuss whether one can be a "member-at-large", accept no responsibility and be pleasing to God:
- _____
- _____

3. Poor attendance begins to set in.

(1) The attendance problem shows that some are putting their desires above the Lord.

(2) Discuss what many members put before the Lord: _____

4. A loss of militancy.

(1) How members show that they have lost their militancy:

1. They fail to back a man when he exposes false men for what they are.
2. Criticism of the preacher for "negative preaching" when heresies are exposed.
3. A desire for short "sermonettes" filled with anecdotes rather than the scriptures.
4. A failure to see any danger in "a little liberalism".

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Lesson Three

THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA

(THE SUFFERING CHURCH)

Revelation 2: 8 - 11

INTRODUCTION:

1. Smyrna was a great trade city.
 - (1) It stood on a deep gulf about 35 miles to the north of Ephesus.
 - (2) It had an especially rich trade in wines.
2. Smyrna was an outstandingly beautiful city.
 - (1) It claimed to be the "Glory of Asia".
 - (2) It claimed to be the "first in beauty".
 - (3) Several temples of idol gods were in this city.
3. Smyrna was an important city politically.
 - (1) It had chosen the right side in all the civil wars (for this Rome was grateful).
 - (2) It claimed to be first in "Caesar worship".
 - (3) It claimed to be the birthplace of Homer.
 - (4) They looked with contempt on poor, humble Christians and considered them of no importance.
4. Smyrna had two characteristics which made life for the Christian a constant and continued peril.
 - (1) Caesar Worship
 1. One of the great centers of Caesar worship.
 2. In the days of Domitian, Caesar worship became compulsory.
 3. Once a year the Roman citizen must burn a pinch of incense on the altar to the "godhead" of Caesar. Having done this, a certificate was given showing political loyalty to Caesar.
 4. Nowhere could life have been more dangerous for a Christian than in Smyrna.

5. For a man to become a Christian was to be considered an outlaw.
6. To become a Christian in Smyrna was to literally take one's life in his own hands.

(2) The second peril was the Jewish population.

1. Historians say that it was the Jews who informed against the Christians or who gained the ear of the local governor and incited him to unleash an attack of persecution upon the Christians.

I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKER -- Revelation 2:8

1. *"The First"*

(1) Self-existent Being who is the origin of all things (John 1: 1 - 3; 8:58; Col. 1: 15 - 17).

(2) Christ should be first with man (Matt. 6:33).

1. Most of the time He is not first (II Tim. 3:4).

2. *"The last"* -- Rev. 22: 13

(1) His eternal nature (Psa. 90:2).

(2) His dependability (II Tim. 1:12; 2:13).

3. *"Which was dead and is alive"* -- Rev. 1:18; Rom. 6:9

(1) He had been through what they were experiencing.

(2) His death, burial and resurrection are fundamental facts of the gospel (I Cor. 15: 1 - 4; Rom. 1:4).

1. He died for our sins (Rom. 5:8).

II. "I KNOW" -- verse 9

1. Assurance that Christ was possessed of a complete and perfect knowledge of their needs and character (Heb. 4:13).
2. There is no chance of deceiving the Lord about the character and accomplishments of the church anywhere (Gal. 6:7) *"God is not mocked"*.

III. WHAT IS RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH -- verse 9

1. *"Thy works"*

(1) Will be judged according to works (Rev. 20:12; Heb. 6:10; James 2:24; Matt. 25: 34 - 40).

2. *"Thy tribulation"* (Acts 9:16)

- (1) The source of much of their tribulation was "*them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan*" (Rev. 2:9).
- (2) There will be tribulation if we live as God would have us live (Matt. 5: 11 - 12; II Tim. 3:12; Acts 14:22; John 17: 14 - 15).

1. When we suffer for His cause we are having fellowship with Him -- Phil. 3:10.
2. Paul says Christians should glory in tribulations -- Rom. 5: 3 -4.
3. Paul tells what tribulation does -- Rom. 5: 3 - 4.
4. James tells -- James 1: 3 - 4
5. Peter tells -- I Pet. 1: 6 - 7; 4:16
6. Acts 5:41; II Cor. 7:4; Heb. 10:34

3. "*Thy poverty*"

- (1) Physical poverty -- James 2:5; I Cor. 1:26:- 27

1. The churches of Macedonia were poor -- II Cor. 8: 1 - 5
2. One probable reason for their poverty -- Heb. 10:34

- (2) "*But thou art rich*"

1. Rich in spiritual things.
2. A rich church physically was told it was poor -- Rev. 3: 17 - 18

4. "*The blasphemy*"

- (1) It would be better to translate it SLANDER.

1. The Jews had the ear of those in high places, so they would whisper their slander against Christians into the ears of Roman authorities.
2. The fleshly Jews were no longer God's people (Rev. 2:9; Rom. 2: 28 - 29; Phil. 3:3).
3. They claimed to be God's people, but were the devil's (Rev. 2:9).

- (1) Many today do the same thing (II Cor. 11: 13 - 15).

IV. THE ADMONITION -- verse 10

1. "*Do not fear what you are about to suffer*" (NASV).
2. Their suffering was going to get worse.

V. THE PROMISED REWARD -- verses 10 and 11

1. "Crown of life".

2. "Shall not be hurt of the second death" --Rev. 20: 14 - 15

QUESTIONS

1. Was Smyrna a great trade city? _____

2. Name one thing it traded in: _____

3. Smyrna was so beautiful it was called: " _____ "

4. Did Smyrna have many idol temples? _____

5. Tell why Smyrna was an important city politically: _____

6. What was the attitude of the people of Smyrna toward Christians? _____

7. What two characteristics made life for a Christian a constant peril in Smyrna? _____

8. What does Christ mean when He calls Himself "the first"? _____

9. What does He mean when He calls Himself "the last"? _____

10. Had Christ been through what they were experiencing? _____

11. What are the facts of the gospel? _____,

& _____

12. Why did Jesus need to die? _____

13. Does Jesus possess a complete knowledge of churches and individuals? _____

14. Is it possible to every deceive God? _____

15. Will we be judged by our works? _____

16. What kind of works will justify man? _____

17. What was the source of much of their tribulation in Smyrna? _____

18. Will all Christians suffer tribulation if they live right? _____

19. Are Christians to glory in tribulations? _____

20. What does tribulation do for a Christian? _____

21. Would you say the church at Smyrna had been "refined" by their sufferings? _____

22. Was being a Christian in Smyrna a real sacrifice from an earthly point of view? _____

23. Name some men in the Bible who served God at a real sacrifice: _____

24. What do you think the attitude of many members of the church today would be if they were faced with poverty, hunger, imprisonment and death in order to be faithful to Christ and God?

25. Name the sources of much "blasphemy" against the church today: _____

26. What was the admonition to the church? _____

27. What was the promised reward? _____

DISCUSS SOME THINGS WHICH CHALLENGE A CONGREGATION, KEEPING IT ALIVE AND FAITHFUL TO GOD:

1. Members who talk to non-Christians every week.
2. Members who talk to weak members every week (I Thess. 5:14).
3. Members who study every day (II Pet. 1:5; Acts 17:11).
4. Members who pray several times a day (I Thess. 5:17; Lk. 18:1; James 5:16).

5. Members who pray for those who teach and preach (Eph. 6: 18 - 19).
6. Members who visit the sick and shut-ins (Matt. 25: 36).
7. Members who make no distinction between the wealthy and poor (James 2: 1 - 10).
8. Members who attend the services regularly (Heb. 10:25).
9. Members who have convictions on morals and stand up for them (Tit. 2: 11 - 12).
10. Members who hate error (Psa. 119: 104; Rom. 12:9 "*hate what is wrong*").
11. Members who sacrifice in their giving to the Lord (II Cor. 9: 6 - 7).
12. Members who have proper attitudes toward the elders, deacons, the church, the work and the preacher.

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Lesson Four

THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS

Rev. 2: 12 - 17

INTRODUCTION:

1. The first two churches we studied were located in seacoast towns, Pergamos was inland.
2. Had been the capital of the Attalid kingdom.
3. At this time it was the capital of the province of Asia, and retained this honor until 130 A.D.
4. Thus, Pergamos had been a capital city for more than three hundred years at this time.
5. When Pergamos was a part of the Attalid kingdom, its king willed it into the possession of the Roman Empire (so it became a part of the Roman Empire by choice, not by compulsion).
6. Had one of the most famous libraries in the world (200,000 books -- before the days of the printing press!).
7. Was a famous center of religious worship:
 - (1) The center of the worship of Asklepios (ASK -LU-PEEUS), the Greek god of healing.
 - (2) The emblem of Asklepios is the serpent.
 - (3) Tame snakes were kept in the temple.
 - (4) The sufferers were allowed to spend the night in the darkness of the temple, and if a snake touched the sick this was held to be the touch of the "god" himself.
8. Pergamos was also a center of Caesar worship.

I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKER -- Rev. 2:12

1. "*Hath the sharp sword with two edges*".
 - (1) The sword is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).
 - (2) The words of Christ cut and penetrate deep. They are as piercing as a sharp sword.
 - (3) He was about to reprove the church at Pergamos (II Tim. 3: 16 - 17; 4:2).
 - (4) This reproof would cut deep.
 - (5) His word pricks and cuts the heart (Acts 2:37; 7:54; Heb. 4:12).

1. The word exposes (John 3:20; Eph. 5:11).

II. THE LORD'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHURCH --verse 13

1. *"I know thy works"*.

2. *"Where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is"*:

(1) The Lord knows our surroundings.

(2) The wickedness we are confronted with daily.

(3) They were in Pergamos; they had to go on living there; they could not escape; life had set them where Satan's seat (throne) was.

(4) It was in Pergamos they must live, and it was there that they must show they were Christians.

3. Where Satan's seat is -- *"Satan's throne is"*.

(1) Here he had a seat of special authority.

(2) Pergamos was a place where the anti-God forces of Satan were most authoritative and most powerful.

4. *"Thou holdest fast my name"*.

(1) They had not denied their confession of Christ (Matt. 10: 32, 33).

(2) They wore and honored the name of Christ, given at Antioch (Acts 11:26; I Pet. 4:16; Isa. 62: 1,2; 56: 4,5).

(3) Hold fast (I Cor. 15: 58; II Tim. 1:13).

5. *"Hath not denied my faith"*.

(1) There is one faith (Eph. 4:5).

(2) We should contend for it (Jude 3; Phil. 1:17).

(3) In the days when one was killed they held fast (Rev. 2:13).

(4) Antipas, an example of faithfulness unto death (Rev. 2:10; Matt. 10:22).

III. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CHURCH -- verses 14 - 15

1. *"Them that hold the doctrine of Balaam"* -- Num. 31: 16

(1) What Balaam did: "He taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel". (Rom. 14:13)

(2) It is bad to sin and involve others; it is even worse to teach others to sin.

(3) What Balaam taught:

1. To eat things sacrificed unto idols (I Cor. 8: 8 - 13; Acts 15:29).
2. To commit fornication (I Cor. 10:8).

(1) It has been said that chastity was the one completely new virtue which Christianity introduced into the ancient world.

(2) Warnings: I Cor. 5:11; 6: 9 - 10, 18; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3: 5, 6; I Thess. 4: 3, 4

IV. THE ADMONITION -- verse 16

1. Repent -- Acts 8:22
2. I Cor. 5: 1 - 8

V. THE PROMISED REWARD -- verse 17

1. *"I give to eat of the hidden manna"* -- spiritual sustenance
2. *"And will give him a white stone"*
3. *"And in the stone a new name written"*

QUESTIONS

1. Where is Pergamos located, on the seacoast or inland? _____
2. Pergamos had been the capital of what kingdom? _____
3. What was Pergamos the capital of at this time? _____
4. How did Pergamos become the possession of the Roman Empire? _____

5. How many books were reputed to be in the library at Pergamos? _____
6. What was the name of the idol god of healing that was worshipped at Pergamos? _____
7. What was held to be a "touch of the god"? _____
8. What is the "sharp sword with two edges"? _____
9. Does the word of Christ cut and penetrate? _____
10. Does the Lord know the wickedness we are confronted with daily? _____

11. Can one be a Christian anywhere he lives? _____
12. Do some Christians have to endure more because of where they live than other Christians? _____
13. What does the expression "*Satan's seat is*" mean? _____

14. What does the expression "*Thou holdest fast my name*" mean? _____

15. What was the new name given at Antioch? _____
16. What does it mean to "contend" for the faith? _____

17. Who was the Lord's faithful martyr? _____
18. How many faiths are there? _____
19. Did some in this congregation hold false doctrine? _____
20. Name the two things Balaam taught: _____

21. Why was eating things sacrificed unto idols such a problem in the first century? _____

22. Are we warned over and over about the sin of fornication? _____
23. Discuss how to flee fornication: _____

24. Is fornication grounds for divorce? _____
25. What would happen if the people at Pergamos did not repent? _____

26. What was the promised reward? _____

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Lesson Five

THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA

(THE CHURCH TEMPTED TO COMPROMISE)

Rev. 2: 18 - 29

INTRODUCTION:

1. It is an odd fact that the longest of the letters to the seven churches was written to the church in the smallest and least important of the seven cities.
2. The name "Thyatira" emerged in history in 290 B. C. as the name of a military center.
3. The supreme importance of Thyatira was that it was the gateway to Pergamos, the capital city of Asia.
4. Thyatira was a great commercial center.
 - (1) The roads which passed through its valley brought the trade of half of the world to its doors.
 - (2) It was the great center of wool trade, and of the dyeing industry.
 1. It was from Thyatira that Lydia, the seller of purple, came (Acts 16: 14).
 2. Purple dye was extremely expensive.
5. Thyatira possessed more trade guilds than any other town of its size in Asia.
 - (1) It would seem that the danger which threatened the church at Thyatira was the direct result of the powerful existence of these trade guilds.
 - (2) No merchant or trader could hope to prosper and to make money unless he was a member of his trade guild.
 1. If a trader refused to join his trade guild, he would be in much the same position as a working man would be today if he refused to join the trade union.
6. We may well ask, "Why should a Christian of Thyatira not join such a trade guild?"
 - (1) The social activities of these trade guilds were intimately bound up with the worship of the heathen gods.
 - (2) These trade guilds had common meals together:
 1. The meal would begin and end with a cup of wine poured out as a libation and an offering to the "gods".

2. Such a meal would almost certainly follow a sacrifice.

(3) At these social activities, drunkenness and fornication were the accepted things.

7. There was a very real problem facing the Christians here at Thyatira:

(1) They had to decide whether to make money or serve Christ.

8. It seemed that this woman, Jezebel, was teaching Christians that it was alright to be a member of these trade guilds.

I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKER -- Rev. 2:18

1. *"The Son of God"* -- Luke 1: 35

(1) The gift of God -- John 3:16

(2) God's spokesman -- Heb. 1: 1 - 2; Matt. 17:5

(3) The way to the Father -- John 14:6; I Tim. 2: 4

(4) Man's Savior -- Matt. 1:21; Lk. 19:10

2. *"Eyes like a flame of fire"*

(1) Eyes all-penetrating.

(2) The all-wise inspector -- Heb. 4:13; Prov. 15:3; Psa. 139: 1 - 16

3. *"His feet are like fine brass"*

(1) Strong and durable.

(2) Able to tread under foot all evil His eyes may discover.

II. THE CHURCH COMMENDED -- Rev. 2:19

1. *"I know thy works"*

2. *"Charity"* or love. Love is the fountain from which flows true activities -- Gal. 5:6; I Cor. 13.

3. *"Service"* is the result and proof of love, for God and man -- John 14: 23 -24; I John 3:18.

4. *"Faith"* -- fidelity, faithfulness.

5. *"Patience"*--perseverance under all circumstances -- I Cor. 15:58; Heb. 10:36.

6. *"Thy works"* -- a growth in works -- *"the last to be more than the first"* --I Pet. 2:2; II Cor. 4:16

(1) Thyatira had kept its love aflame.

(2) This burning flame of love and enduring faith had led to the increase of works.

1. Such love and faith today will keep the church active.

III. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CHURCH -- Rev. 2:20

1. A sinner is tolerated, Jezebel (a symbolic name).

(1) A character like Jezebel of the Old Testament (the wife of King Ahab -- I Kings 16: 29 - 33).

(2) They should have withdrawn from her (I Cor. 5: 1 - 5; II Thess. 3:6).

2. Jezebel called herself a prophetess.

(1) She was a false teacher with great leadership ability.

(2) She taught it was right to:

1. Commit fornication.

2. Eat things sacrificed unto idols (Acts 15: 29)

(3) This doctrine was "*the depths of Satan*" -- verse 24.

3. Divine grace extended -- verse 21

IV. A WARNING -- Rev. 2: 22 - 23

1. "*I will cast her into a bed*"

(1) Afflict (pain and affliction inevitably follow sin).

(2) Also those who have followed her false teaching (Matt. 15:14)

2. "*I will kill her children with death*" -- By exterminating the seeds of wickedness and false doctrine, preventing its offspring.

3. "*Will give unto every one of you according to your works*" -- II Cor. 5:10.

V. EXHORTATION:

1. "*Unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine ... I will put upon you none other burden*" -- Rev. 2:24

(1) It seems the "*none other burden*" would be the responsibility to rid the congregation of this false teaching.

(2) We know this is what Christ requires throughout the New Testament -- I Cor. 5: 1 - 5; Eph. 5:11; Rom. 16: 17 - 18.

2. They were to "*hold fast*" -- Rev. 2:25; II Tim. 1:13

3. They were to keep the works of Christ unto the end -- Rev. 2:26

(1) The life of a Christian does not consist in ONE victory over sin.

(2) The life of a Christian is a life of faithfulness which defies every assault of sin.

(3) The life of a Christian is battle after battle against Satan and his forces and sin.

4. The promised reward -- Rev. 2: 26 - 29

5. The admonition -- Rev. 2:29

QUESTIONS

1. Was the city of Thyatira as important as the other six cities in this study? _____

2. Is the letter to Thyatira the longest of the seven letters? _____

3. How did the name "Thyatira" emerge in history? _____

4. Name two industries that were found in Thyatira: _____

5. Where was Lydia, a seller of purple, from? (Acts 16: 14) _____

6. Was purple dye cheap in that day and time? _____

7. What seemed to be the danger which threatened the church at Thyatira? _____

8. What would happen to a person if he refused to join a trade guild? _____

9. What about a person who refuses to join a trade union (in many places) today? _____

10. Tell why a Christian could not join a trade guild: _____

11. Does a person sometimes have to decide whether he will make money or serve Christ? _____

12. Does it seem (from what is said) that Jezebel taught it was alright for Christians to be members of these trade guilds?

13. Describe the relationship of the Son of God to man: _____

-
14. What does the scripture mean that says, "his eyes" are "like unto a flame of fire"? _____
-
15. How do we know Christ is able to tread underfoot all evil? _____
-
16. Did Christ know what was going on in this congregation? _____
17. Is love the foundation of all service that pleases God? _____
18. What is service the proof of? _____
19. What does patience mean? _____
-
20. How do you know Thyatira had kept its love aflame? _____
-
21. What will keep a church active today? _____
22. Name the sinner this congregation tolerated: _____
23. What should they have done with her? _____
24. What did Jezebel call herself? _____
25. Did she have leadership ability? _____
26. Name the two things she taught: _____
-
27. What was this doctrine she taught called? _____
-
28. Did Christ give her space to repent of her sins? _____
29. What would happen to Jezebel and her followers if they did not repent? _____
-
30. What does the expression "*and I will give unto every one of you according to your works*" mean? _____
-

31. What was the responsibility of those at Thyatira who were not involved with Jezebel? _____

32. What does it mean to keep the works of Christ unto the end? _____

33. What is the promised reward? _____

34. What is the admonition? _____

35. What did you learn from this lesson? _____

The Seven Churches of Asia

Lesson Six

SARDIS: THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING DEAD

Revelation 3: 1 - 6

INTRODUCTION:

1. THE CITY:

- (1) Thirty miles southeast of Thyatira lay Sardis, one of the oldest cities in Asia Minor.
 1. A wealthy trading center on the routes between the Aegean Sea and the interior of Asia Minor.
 - (1) Great commercial center -- extremely wealthy
 - (2) A great center of woolen industry.
 2. Sardis had been the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Lydia.
 3. Sardis was the place where modern money was born.
- (2) Sardis was built on top of a mountain, and from its position it was regarded as well-nigh impregnable. Its position seemed to defy assault.
- (3) Cyrus, King of Persia, captured it in 546 B. C.
 1. The story of how it was captured:
 - (1) Cyrus was besieging Sardis and wished to capture it with all speed because he could not advance his campaign until it was taken.
 - (2) A special reward was offered to any man who worked out a method whereby this "unscalable" cliff could be scaled.
 - (3) As one of the soldiers of the Persian army watched one day he saw a Lydian soldier atop the battlement accidentally drop his helmet over the battlement and down the cliff.
 - (4) He then watched as the Lydian soldier picked his way down the cliff to get his helmet and climb back up.
 - (5) He marked the path in his memory, and that night led a selected band of troops up the cliff and Sardis was taken.
 2. The same thing happened about two hundred years later.

2. THE PEOPLE:

(1) The people of Sardis were notoriously loose in the way they lived -- notoriously "pleasure and luxury-loving".

1. They had grown "flabby" and had sunk into easy, loose living.

(2) The fate of the church at Sardis was the same:

1. It was not threatened by the persecutions which menaced the other churches.

2. The church was at peace, but it was the "peace of the dead".

(1) Two kinds of peace:

1. The peace of Conquest and Achievement -- comes after great effort into which a person has put all he is and has;

2. The peace of comfortable lethargy -- comes when one has ceased to care; the peace of evasion and escape; the peace of death!

3. THE LETTER

(1) The KEY WORD in this letter is "WATCH" -- Rev. 3: 2, 3.

1. These people could know from history that disaster comes many times when we think we are secure.

I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKER -- Rev. 3:1

1. *"Hath the seven Spirits of God"*

(1) He possessed the Spirit without measure -- John 3:34

2. *"Hath the seven stars"*

(1) The stars are the angels -- Rev. 1:20

(2) They are under His authority.

II. A CHURCH WITH A REPUTATION -- Rev. 3:1

1. *"Thou hast a name that thou livest"*

(1) We learn from this that what men think of a church is not necessarily what the Lord thinks of it!

(2) We learn from this that congregations, like men, have reputations.

2. Things which probably gave Sardis this reputation:

(1) A large membership.

- (2) Material wealth
- (3) Prominent people in its membership
- (4) Sound in doctrine.

III. A DEAD CHURCH IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD -- Rev. 3:1

1. There are several causes of spiritual death.
 - (1) A church is dead when it worships its own past; when it lives on its memories instead of finding a challenge in its hope for the future.
 - (2) A church is dead when it is more concerned with material things than with spiritual things.
 - (3) A church is dead when love for one another is gone.
 - (4) "*Works*" not perfect (Rev. 3:2). They never finished a single thing they started.

IV. ADMONITION

1. "*Be Watchful*" -- Rev. 3:2
 - (1) We have seen the history of Sardis; how it was captured twice because it failed to watch.
 - (2) There are two points at which every man must watch:
 1. We must be watchful at our WEAK POINTS (illustration: A stone-breaker hunts the weak point in a stone, then easily breaks it into pieces.)
 2. We must be watchful at our STRONGEST POINT (I Cor. 10:12).
 - (1) This is where the city of Sardis failed twice
2. "*Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*" -- Rev. 3:2
 - (1) Some were very weak and sickly, ready to die -- I Cor. 11:30
 - (2) Strong members have a responsibility to the weak members -- Gal. 6:1
3. "*Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard*" --Rev. 3: 3
 - (1) Remember your past state and get back to it -- Rev. 2:5
4. "*Hold fast*" -- Rev. 3:3
 - (1) A condition of success.
 - (2) Paul told Timothy to "*hold fast the form of sound words*"-- II Tim. 1:13
5. "*Repent*" -- Rev. 3:3

V. A CHURCH WITH A REMNANT

1. "A few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments" -- Rev. 3:4
 - (1) "Few", true in too many places.
 - (2) The faithful FEW keep the church going.
 - (3) Only the few had been able to keep themselves unspotted -- James 1:27
2. "They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy" -- Rev. 3:4

VI. A CHURCH WITH POSSIBILITY -- Rev. 3: 5 - 6

1. Though dead, Sardis was not hopelessly dead.
 - (1) It was possible for the members to wrench themselves from the death-grip.
 - (2) "He that overcometh" was promised:
 1. "Shall be clothed in white raiment" -- verse 5
 2. "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life" -- verse 5
 3. "I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels". -- verse 5; Matt. 10: 32 - 33

VII. THE WARNING GIVEN TO THE CHURCH -- Rev. 3:3

1. "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".
 - (1) Sudden judgment to come on them if they did not "hold fast" and "repent" -- Rev. 3:3

QUESTIONS

1. Was Sardis one of the oldest cities in Asia Minor? _____
2. Was Sardis a great trading center? _____
3. Sardis was at one time the capital of what kingdom? _____
4. Where was modern money born? _____
5. Tell where Sardis was built: _____
6. In what year did Cyrus, King of Persia, capture Sardis? _____
7. How many times had Sardis been captured? _____

8. What is the key word in this letter? _____
9. What did these people know from history? _____

10. What great industry was found here? _____
11. What kind of lives did the people here live? _____
12. What was the fate of the church at Sardis? _____
13. Was there any threat of persecution to the church at Sardis from Caesar worship, from the Jews, or from any other source?

14. Was the church at Sardis completely untroubled from without and from within? _____
15. The church at Sardis was at peace -- what kind of peace was it? _____

16. Discuss the peace of conquest and achievement: _____

17. Discuss the peace of comfortable lethargy: _____

18. What does the expression "*hath the seven Spirits of God*" mean? _____

19. What does the expression "*hath the seven stars*" mean? _____

20. Did this church have a good reputation? _____
21. Can a congregation have "outward activity" but have no "inner spirituality" in the Lord's sight?

22. Do men many times, from outward manifestations, think they see a fine congregation when in reality there is no real spiritual life in that congregation?

23. What gives a congregation a good reputation? _____

24. Was Sardis dead in the sight of the Lord? _____

25. List some causes of spiritual death in a congregation: _____

26. Why do many congregations never finish the things they start? _____

27. Name two points where all men must watch: _____

28. Tell how to strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die: _____

29. Was there a few in Sardis who had not defiled their garments? _____

30. Was the church at Sardis hopelessly dead? _____

31. What was the warning given to the church at Sardis? _____

32. Discuss some of the reasons why churches are not growing in number and spiritual strength:

(1) Ineffective preaching:

1. Tell what ineffective preaching is: _____

(2) Ineffective leadership: _____

(3) Selfishness (men putting their own things before the things of the Lord): _____

(4) Lack of discipline: _____

(5) Glorifying in the past: _____

33. What did you learn from this lesson? _____

The Seven Churches of Asia

Lesson Seven

THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA

Rev. 3: 7 -12

INTRODUCTION:

1. Twenty-eight miles southeast of Sardis lay the city of Philadelphia.
 - (1) As cities went, it was not a very ancient city.
 - (2) The city was founded by *Attalus the Second* in 140 B.C.
 1. Attalus was called *Philadelphos* and the city was named after him.
2. Philadelphia stood at the place where the borders of three countries met:
 - (1) Mysia
 - (2) Lydia
 - (3) Phrygia
3. Because of its position, Philadelphia was the gateway to the East.
4. Philadelphia commanded one of the greatest highways in the world, the highway which led from Europe to the East.
 - (1) The gateway from one continent to another.
5. Philadelphia lay on the edge of a great volcanic area:
 - (1) In one way this brought prosperity:
 1. This great plain was one of the most fertile areas in the world.
 2. It was a great grape-growing area.
 3. An area rich in hot springs.
 - (1) A center to which the infirmed came to bathe in the waters.
 - (2) But the very fact which brought prosperity also brought danger:
 1. Philadelphia was often subject to earthquakes.
 2. When the quakes would come the people would flee the city to open country; when the quakes were over they would come back into the city (Rev. 3:12).

6. Philadelphia was a famous center of heathen worship and had many temples built to heathen gods.

(1) Philadelphia had a custom which concerned these temples:

1. When a man had served the state well, a pillar was erected in one of the temples with his name inscribed on it (Rev. 3:12).

I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKER --Rev. 3:7

1. "*He that is holy*" -- separated from all evil; Acts 2:27 "*Holy One*"; Heb. 7:26 "*Who is holy*"; I Pet. 1:15 - 16

2. "*He that is true*" --genuine, real.

(1) He is holy and true in CONTRAST with the wicked and non-genuine.

3. "*Hath the key of David*" --Isa. 22:22; Isa. 9: 6 - 7

(1) The key is the symbol of power.

(2) Today He has all power (Matt. 28:18).

(3) He is reigning NOW on David's throne (I Cor. 15: 23 -25; Acts 2: 29: 35).

4. "*He that openeth, and no man shutteth;*"

(1) This power and authority belongs exclusively to Christ; it is shared with no individual or organization on this earth.

(2) No one can usurp this authority without sinning (II Thess. 2:3 - 7).

(3) Christians must recognize His authority ALONE (Eph. 1: 22- 23).

(4) The way to heaven is opened by Him.

II. A CHURCH WITH "AN OPEN DOOR" -- Rev. 3:8

1. The "*open door*" is a symbol of the great opportunity before the church in Philadelphia to preach the gospel (I Cor. 16:9; II Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3; Acts 14: 27) The door of faith to the Gentiles.

2. Before them was a door of usefulness in the kingdom of Christ.

3. No man could close this door of opportunity; the adversaries could not !

4. We today have an "open door" of opportunity:

(1) The door of self-improvement; Bible study and church attendance.

(2) The door of opportunity to convert others.

(3) The door of prayer.

(4) The door to use our money and time.

III. A CHURCH WITH "A LITTLE STRENGTH" (POWER) -- Rev. 3:8

1. This church, no doubt, was small and without abundant resources, but they were great in the Lord's sight.

(1) God can perform wonders with little things:

1. I Cor. 1: 25 - 29

2. David's sling and stone (I Sam. 17:49).

(2) We all need to learn that "*the battle is the Lord's*"-- I Sam. 17:47

IV. A CHURCH WITH HEAVEN'S COMMENDATION -- Rev. 3:8

1. "*Hast kept my word*".

(1) They patiently endured during opposition and persecution.

2. "*Hast not denied my name*".

(1) Matt. 10: 32 - 33

V. A CHURCH WITH FUTURE REWARDS

1. Ultimate triumph over enemies or foes -- verse 9

(1) The true Jew -- Gal. 6: 15 -16; Phil. 3:3; Rom. 2:25

2. Divine protection promised -- verse 10

3. Promised reward to "*him that overcometh*"-- verse 12

(1) "*Will I make a pillar in the temple of God*" --He who overcomes will have a permanent place in heaven, the eternal temple of God.

(2) "*Him that overcometh*" --will have inscribed upon him a threefold name which would show possession and relationship:

1. "*The name of my God*" --verse 12

(1) He now belongs to God permanently.

2. "*The name of the city of my God*" -- verse 12

(1) He is identified as a citizen of the heavenly city.

3. "*And I will write upon him my new name*"-- Christ's own new name -- He will share the glory which is Christ's.

VI. A CHURCH ADMONISHED

1. To "*hold that fast which thou hast*" --verse 11

(1) That which they had was: "*an open door*"; "*a little strength*"; "*his word*"; "*hath not denied my name*" (Christ's); and His promises.

1. They were to hold each of these fast; to keep hold on what they had.

2. There must be continuous steadfastness by all saints (I Cor. 15:58).

(2) "*That no man take thy crown*" -- verse 11

1. The crown could be forfeited by any saint who: grows careless; is complacent; is self-satisfied; is over-confident; is worldly; or neglects opportunity and duty.

QUESTIONS

1. How many miles was Philadelphia from Sardis? _____

2. Was Philadelphia an ancient city? _____

3. Who was Philadelphia named after? _____

4. Philadelphia stood on the borders of what three countries? _____

5. Was Philadelphia the gateway to the east or west? _____

6. Was Philadelphia the gateway from one continent to another? _____

7. Tell how the volcanic area of Philadelphia brought prosperity: _____

8. Tell of the danger of the volcanic area: _____

9. Was Philadelphia famous for heathen worship? _____

10. What does "holy" mean? _____

11. What does "true" mean? _____

12. What is the "key" a symbol of? _____

13. Does Jesus have all power today? _____

14. Jesus is now reigning on whose throne? _____
15. What does the expression "*he that openeth, and no man shutteth*" mean? _____
- _____
16. Does one sin when he tries to usurp the authority of Christ? _____
17. What is the "*open door*" a symbol of? _____
18. Who opens the door of opportunity for us? _____
19. Are we to pray for doors of opportunity to be opened for us? _____
20. Can our adversaries close the doors that God has opened for us? _____
21. Name some doors of opportunity that are before us: _____
- _____
- _____
22. What does the term "*little strength*" mean? _____
- _____
23. Give some Bible examples of God performing great things with "little things": _____
- _____
- _____
24. What lesson do we all need to learn? _____
25. Did Christ promise them ultimate triumph over their enemies? _____
26. What did He promise them in verse 10? _____
27. What were they admonished to do in verse 11? _____
- _____
28. What did they have to "hold fast" to? _____
- _____
29. How could the crown be forfeited? _____
- _____
30. What did you learn from this lesson? _____
- _____

The Seven Churches of Asia

Lesson Eight

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA

Rev. 3: 14 - 22

INTRODUCTION:

1. The town of Laodicea lay 43 miles southeast of Philadelphia.
2. It was one of a group of three towns which lay in easy sight of one another in the Valley of the River Lycus.
 - (1) The two companion towns were Hierapolis and Colosse (Col. 4: 13, 16).
3. It was a town of great commercial prosperity for it controlled the trade which flowed down the river valley toward the seacoast.
4. There were also three strategic roads from other places which centered upon Laodicea helping to make it one of the richest commercial centers in the ancient world.
5. In 133 B.C. Laodicea became part of the Roman Empire.
 - (1) It became one of the towns where the Roman governor periodically went to administer Roman justice.
6. Laodicea contained a large number of Jews.
 - (1) About 7,500 adult males, plus women and children.
 - (2) Jews were useful citizens and brought money and trade to every city in which they settled.
 - (3) The Jews were so influential in this part of Asia that they could bring pressure upon the Roman government.
7. Laodicea was a notably wealthy city:
 - (1) It was the center of the banking arrangements of Asia Minor.
 - (2) It was so wealthy that when it was laid waste in A.D. 60 by an earthquake, it refused all help preferring to rebuild out of its own resources.
 1. This self-sufficient attitude was in the church (Rev. 3: 17).
 - (3) A considerable part of its wealth came from cloth and the clothing industry.

1. They thought much of the adornment of the body and completely forgot the adornment of the soul.
8. The Laodiceans were a people who put their trust in material prosperity, in outward luxury, and in physical health.
 - (1) A famous school of medicine was located 13 miles from the city. It was famous for two kinds of medicine:
 1. An ointment to cure sore ears
 2. Was most famous for an eye powder for weak and ailing eyes (Rev. 3:18).
9. They were trying to build a lasting civilization on material benefits.

I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKER -- Rev. 3:14

1. *"The Amen"*
 - (1) The true one whose words are final.
2. *"Faithful and true witness"*
 - (1) He would not misrepresent them.
 - (2) His testimony would not be biased.
 - (3) What he speaks is a matter of knowledge.
3. *"The beginning of the creation of God"*
 - (1) The Greek word here for "beginning" would be better translated "source" or "origin".
 - (2) Heb. 1: 10 - 12; John 1: 1 - 3; Col. 1: 16 - 17; John 1:10

II. THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH -- Rev. 3: 15-16

1. Of the seven churches, this one was in the saddest plight:
 - (1) *"Thou are lukewarm"*.
 1. The Lord prefers either extremity to a state of lukewarmness --verse 15.
 2. The lukewarm are listless, indifferent, inactive, and unconcerned.

(1) The most difficult person to reach is the indifferent and unconcerned person.

(2) The greatest hindrance to the Cause is the man who, knowing the truth and his duty, will not do anything about it.

3. Self-satisfied.

4. No zeal.

III. A CHURCH WITH A HIGH ESTIMATE OF THEMSELVES -- Rev. 3:17

1. "*Thou sayest*" -- This was their estimate of themselves.

2. They regarded material prosperity as a token of Divine pleasure, as evidence of their spirituality (I Tim. 6:5).

(1) How one feels may not be the way Jesus feels:

1. Sardis was exalted by others; Laodicea exalted herself !

(1) The Lord saw both differently from the way men did.

IV. A CHURCH BLIND TO THEIR REAL CONDITION -- Rev. 3:17

1. "*Thou art*":

(1) "*Wretched*" and "*Miserable*"

1. An object of pity because of their self-complacency.

(1) Who is more pitied than an individual who imagines that he is a fine Christian, whereas in reality he is utterly disgusting to Christ?

(2) "*Poor*" -- Paupers; they had no treasures in heaven (Matt. 6: 19 - 20).

(3) "*Blind*" -- blind to their obligation to Christ, and to their responsibility to self and to others.

1. Without the Christian graces we are blind (II Pet. 1: 5 - 9).

(4) "*Naked*" -- This is all the worse because it is spiritual nakedness.

1. They had failed to put on the spiritual garments (Col. 3: 12 - 14).

V. DIVINE COUNSEL -- Rev. 3:18

1. "*Buy*" true riches (3:18)

- (1) I Pet. 1:7
- (2) Col. 2: 3, 10
- (3) Matt. 13: 44 -46

2. Buy "*white raiment*"

- (1) Rev. 19:8
- (2) I John 3:7

3. "*Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve*" -- verse 18

- (1) They needed to see things right so they could make self-improvement.
- (2) A man who is blinded to his own needs will not improve.

VI. CHRIST REBUKES AND CHASTENS THOSE WHOM HE LOVES

- 1. Rev. 3:19
- 2. Heb. 12: 5 - 11

VII. ADMONITION -- Rev. 3:19

1. "*Be zealous*"

- (1) There can be no real religion without enthusiasm.
- (2) The church at Ephesus had lost its enthusiasm (Rev. 2:4)
- (3) The word for "hot" in verses 15 and 16 means "at boiling point".
- (4) Zeal provokes zeal in others (II Cor. 9:2).
- (5) It is good to be zealously affected in good works (Gal. 4:18; Col. 3:23).

2. "*Repent*"

- (1) Repentance is a change of will.
- (2) He calls for immediate repentance.
- (3) Only by a change of attitude in repentance could they overcome this lukewarmness.

VIII. WARNING -- Rev. 3: 16 -- "*I will spue thee out of my mouth*".

- 1. Their lukewarmness was about to cause Christ to reject them (verse 16).

(1) We learn from this that Christians can be lost (Gal. 5:4; Heb. 3: 13).

IX. THE LORD SEEKS ADMITTANCE -- Rev. 3:20

1. Here is a picture of the Lord seeking admittance into the life of this spiritually indifferent church that had excluded Him.
2. The knocking expresses His effort through the word to be admitted.
3. To "*hear*" and "*open the door*" is to give heed to the word of Christ and accept His entrance into the heart (Eph. 3:17).
4. To "*sup*" is to dine with Him in spiritual fellowship.

X. PROMISED REWARD -- Rev. 3:21

1. The Lord had threatened to reject them (verses 15 and 16).
2. Now, on the condition that they overcome the state of indifference, He promises a place of honor (verse 21).

CONCLUSION:

1. All are to hear "*what the Spirit saith unto the churches*" (verse 22).

QUESTIONS

1. How far was Laodicea from Philadelphia? _____
2. What were the names of the two companion towns to Laodicea? _____

3. When did Laodicea become part of the Roman Empire? _____
4. Was this a town where Roman justice was administered? _____
5. Did a large number of Jews live in Laodicea? _____
6. Tell why Jews were useful citizens: _____

7. Was Laodicea the center of the banking arrangements of Asia Minor? _____
8. Did the people of Laodicea have a self-sufficient attitude? _____
9. What kind of powder was Laodicea famous for? _____

10. What does "*the Amen*" mean? _____
11. What does "*the faithful and true witness*" mean? _____
- _____
12. Give the meaning of "*the beginning of the creation of God*": _____
- _____
13. What was the condition of the church at Laodicea? _____
14. Describe the "*lukewarm*" condition: _____
- _____
15. What kind of estimate did Laodicea have of herself? _____
- _____
16. Did Jesus feel about them as they felt about themselves? _____
17. How did they regard material prosperity? _____
- _____
18. What was the real condition of this congregation? _____
- _____
19. What did the Lord counsel them to buy? _____
- _____
20. What are the true riches? _____
21. What is the "*white raiment*"? _____
22. What does Jesus mean by "*anoint thine eyes with eyesalve*"? _____
- _____
23. Does Christ rebuke and chasten those He loves? _____
24. What does it mean to "*be zealous*"? _____
25. What is repentance? _____
26. Why did they need to repent? _____
27. What warning did the Lord give them? _____
- _____

28. How does the Lord seek admittance into our lives? _____

29. Will the Lord force Himself into our lives? _____

30. What does "*sup*" mean? _____

31. What was the reward if they overcame? _____

32. Are all to hear what the Spirit says to the churches? _____

33. Discuss (from points 7, 8, and 9) the similarity between the attitudes of the people of Laodicea and the people in this country today:

34. What did you learn from this lesson? _____

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