

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2/28-3/1/2022 *Revelation Chapter 3*

PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE STUDY!

MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN CLASSROOM HS107, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 87858644763 Passcode: 087484

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TUESDAY 7 AM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada).

THE TUESDAY MORNING STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN THE FAMILY ROOM, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 85309150746 - Passcode: 715340

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OPENING PRAYER

***Revelation Chapter 3* – Sardis – The Dead Church – Powerless Church - (vs. 1-6); Philadelphia - The Faithful Church – Persevering Church - (vs. 7-13); Laodicea – The Lukewarm Church – Putrid Church - (vs. 14-22).**

CHAPTER 3 - John was to send the letters to the seven churches of Asia. He was commanded to write the **things which he had seen**, the **things which are** and the **things which will be after** these things. In each of the messages, there is a common format.

***To the Church in Sardis* – Powerless Church**

- **Jesus continues His messages to the church.** He was addressing churches that existed at that time in Asia Minor. The seven churches that signify the completeness of the church. There were other churches there in Asia Minor that are not listed, but the Lord selects the seven churches to sort of give us a complete overview of the church.

- **For each of us!** There is something in each of the messages for us. As Jesus said, *He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

Rev 3:1 *"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.*

- **You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead!** This is not a wonderful introduction to the church! There is no commendation here, at all! The city of Sardis was built at the top of the plateau, about fifteen hundred feet above the valley floor. It was much like Masada, having the sheer cliffs on three sides, with only one narrow path up to the top, being the only entrance into the city. Thus, they felt that it was impregnable against all enemies. That it was impossible for it to be conquered. It was a very wealthy city. The king of the city in the early days, seeming to have a Midas touch in that everything he did seemed to prosper.
- **When the Persian empire was strong and conquering** other nations, the king of Sardis, King Croesus, in 546 B.C., decided to go to war against Persia. He went to the oracle of Delphi, Greece, receiving the message from the oracle that if he made a campaign against the Persians, that a great empire would fall. Encouraged by that message, he sent his troops out towards Persia. However, he was soundly defeated. What he did not stop to realize that the empire that would fall would be his own! The oracle did not make that clear.
- **Cyrus pursued him back to the city of Sardis**, offering a large reward to any soldier who could conquer the city. One of the soldiers noticed that a soldier on the top of the city defending the walls, slumbered off, and his helmet fell down the cliff. So, he watched the soldier as he came on down this crevice into the area where the helmet had fallen and retrieved it and went back up. So, a way into Sardis was seen. A contingent of soldiers, by night, went up that crevice, scaled the walls. They found that everyone was asleep. They were able to conquer the city while it slept.
- **It was only conquered twice and the second time, in 218 B.C. it was conquered was much the same.** Both times it was **because they were not on watch**, which becomes important in the message to the church in Sardis.
- **He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars:** Jesus describes Himself again as the One who has the seven Spirits of God, the sevenfold working of the Spirit of God in the life of Jesus. It is that completeness of the work of the Spirit in the life of Christ by which we get this term, The Seven Spirits of God, it will come up again when we get into chapter four. It does not mean that there are seven Holy Spirits. Again, **the number seven, being significant, speaking of completeness, the complete work of the Spirit in the life of Jesus.**
- **Looking at the church of Sardis from a historic period** of the church history, **it is the church of the Reformation** It was born in the 1500's and it exists to the present day. Surely the Protestant Reformation (1517AD). , began with a mighty move of God's Spirit. There were such great names as Luther, Calvin, Knox, Zwingli and Huss and all. It was born in a marvellous renewal of the scriptures and a love for the scriptures! Yet, it soon developed into an organizational structure. The Lord said, *I did not find your works perfect* or complete. The Protestant Reformation was not a total or a complete reformation.
- **They carried many of the Babylonian traditions from the Catholic church on into the Protestant church.** Thus, it soon became dead. Dead Protestantism! Many of the great denominations, once alive in the things of God, have become dead today in a dead orthodoxy.

Rev 3:2 *Be watchful* (an imperative! constantly being watchful), **and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect** (complete) **before God.**

- **Be watchful, continually!** Sardis had fallen twice because they were not watchful and now He is saying to the church to be watchful! Note five imperatives - **Wake up! Strengthen! Remember! Obey! Repent!**
- **Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.** Many things from the Babylonian religion and from Rome, were brought into the church, when the church state was formed by Constantine. He wanted to create a church state that would include everyone. The Romans were deeply steeped in a religious system, tracing their origins back to the mysteries of Babylon. Many of the things of the Babylonian religion were just Christianized. They took the pagan holidays, giving them Christian names, saying they actually now represent

Christian events.

- **For example, the Romans had the celebration of Saturnalia, annual celebration of winter solstice on December 25.** It was borrowed from the ancient Babylonian religion, being, actually, the celebration of the birth of Tammuz to his mother Semiramis. Semiramis was called the mother of god. Tammuz was worshipped as god in the Babylonian religion. So, here you had **the mother and child**. In the ancient pictures of Semiramis, there is always a halo above her head and above the head of little Tammuz. We can see how “the worship of Mary” came into being.
- **The Romans had taken this holiday, which was purely pagan,** being celebrated by a lot of drinking, the lighting of bonfires. The idea came at the winter solstice, as the days were getting shorter and shorter. They had a superstitious fear that the sun was waning, it might die! Hence, the lighting of the bonfires for more light! Then, as the days became longer, that you could visibly see the days are getting longer, on the 25th of December, they had this huge party, gift giving, drunken orgies.
- **Thus, when they made Christianity the state religion, they took this pagan holiday of Saturnalia,** saying this is the birthday of Jesus. This is what we will celebrate on December 25th. There is no indication in the scriptures at all just when Jesus was born. The chances of His being born on December 25th are very slim in that the shepherds were watching their flocks by night. They did not do that after late October. So, it is just a date that was borrowed from the pagan religions.
- **The celebration of Easter.** The word Easter comes from the pagan goddess Astarte. It was at the spring solstice as they celebrated the new life. The egg represents perpetuated life. They would color eggs and have these various parties that surrounded the colored eggs. So, the church adopted that, taking the name from Astarte. They said this is Easter. We will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ at Easter! Did you ever wonder why Easter included rabbits and eggs?
- **Much of the Babylonian influence was carried over into the Protestant church** at the Protestant Reformation. Thus, the Lord said, *I have not found your works perfect before God.*

Rev 3:3 Remember (be remembering constantly!) ***therefore how*** (not what, but how) ***you have received and heard; hold fast*** (constantly hold fast!) ***and repent*** (turn, come back!) ***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.***

- ***Remember therefore how you have received and heard.*** It would be good for the churches that came out of the Protestant Reformation, to go back and remember their origins. How that Luther stepped out and God gave to him the glorious message, The just shall live by faith! Remembering Luther, writing, “the Spirit and the gifts are ours” and speaks about the gifts of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit and his tremendous commentaries on the Word of God. The Lord is encouraging them to remember their roots!
- ***If the Presbyterian church would go back to John Knox. If the Methodist church would go back to John Wesley.*** If they go back to the beginnings and see how it was received or how it started. But how far they have gone from the origins of the church. Actually, Wesley would not be welcomed in most of the Methodist churches today.
- ***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.*** The importance of them watching. If they did not watch, the coming of the Lord for the church would be as a thief. Jesus in giving the parables, in regard to His coming again for the church, the rapture of the church, said, ***(Mat 24:42-44) Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. [44] Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. The “as a thief” is always given by Christ in the context of His second coming!***
- ***Note the inference, But you, brethren! (1Th 5:2,4-6) For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*** But then Paul qualified it and said, ***[4] But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. [5] You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. [6] Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.***
- ***(Rev 16:15) “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”*** The warning of the church of Sardis is that because it was asleep, because of the spiritual lethargy, when the Lord would come, they would be caught by surprise! Of course, the implication is that they would not be taken with the rapture of the church.

Rev 3:4 *You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk* (future-end times, all speaking that the work of becoming Christ-like has been completed!) **with Me in white, for they are worthy.**

- **The Protestant Reformation, the churches that have come out of it are not all bad.** There were mighty men of God. But unfortunately, when you look at the church as a whole, it has become very cold, very formal, very ritualistic. It has a name that is alive, but it is ready to die. So “*they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.*”

Rev 3:5 *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.*

- **He that overcomes.** Indeed, it is wonderful news that to each church there are the overcomers, and we must not neglect that! God has His people in every situation.
- **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.** Those who hold very strictly to the idea of eternal security, that once you have received Jesus Christ or have been saved, that you can never be lost no matter what you do, have difficulty with this verse. Is it possible that a person’s name could be blotted out of the book of life? If it is not possible, then the words of Jesus are totally meaningless. Why would He even make such a suggestion unless such a thing was possible? Could it be that everyone’s name is initially written in the Book of Life, but is blotted out if they die in unbelief, with the final resulting Book of Life, containing only believers, which is, or becomes, the Lamb’s Book of Life?

OT references to blotting out names:

(Exo 32:32) *Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."*

(Exo 32:33) *And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.*

(Deu 9:14) *Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.'*

(Deu 25:19) *Therefore it shall be, when the LORD your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.*

(Deu 29:20) *"The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven.*

References to the Book of Life:

(Php 4:3) *And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life. (referring to believers)*

(Rev 3:5) *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. (referring to believers – not to be blotted out?)*

(Rev 13:8) *All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (earth dwellers -unbelievers – names not in the Book of the Lamb)*

(Rev 17:8) *The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (earth dwellers - unbelievers – their names not written in the Book of Life!)*

(Rev 20:12) *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. (unbelievers at the Great White Throne Judgment)*

(Rev 20:15) *And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (unbelievers at the Great White Throne Judgment)*

(Rev 21:27) *But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (The New Jerusalem – only believers)*

(Rev 22:19) *and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (A warning to all not to add or take away from God’s word!)*

- **A relationship with Jesus should never be in the past tense.** It needs to be in the present tense. And do not be deceived! If you are practicing the walking after the flesh and involved in the things of the flesh, you have no assurance of being in the kingdom of heaven.
- **Paul, writing to the Ephesians, gave a very serious warning, (Eph 5:3-8)** *But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; [4] neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. [5] For this you know that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. [6] Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. [7] Therefore do not be partakers with them. [8] For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.*
- **Do not be deceived!** If you are living and doing these things, do not think that you have any inheritance in the kingdom of heaven. He also gave this same message in (Gal 5:17-21) and (1Co 6:9-11).
- **The doctrine of eternal security is something that has been much argued about.** As born-again believers, we do not want to be guilty of giving someone false security, assuring them that now that you are saved, you can go out and live however you wish, saying it does not matter if you are involved in pornography or fornication. It does not matter, you have been saved! When any unbeliever stands before the great White Throne judgment of God and are condemned, we do not want anyone pointing to any of us, saying you gave me **false assurance!**
- **The Lord is warning the church of Sardis that they were in danger of being blotted out.** But the Lord said, (Mat 10:32-33) *"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. [33] But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.* The denial of Jesus, even under pressure, is a terrible thing.
- **Peter was guilty of that terrible sin. But there's forgiveness!** That is the wonderful thing! It may be that under pressure or strain, you denied your relationship with Jesus at one time. But there is forgiveness! Peter was forgiven and God used him in a mighty way at the Day of Pentecost!

Rev 3:6 *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says (present tense - for today!) to the churches.*

- **Again, the reminder that the believers' ear needs to hear** the voice of the Spirit, speaking through the word of God the message of Christ to His church today. Whenever a church stops preaching the gospel, it turns inward and self-destructs. When we get our eyes off the lost and focus on ourselves, we have lost our true spiritual vision. Without new converts the church stagnates. When it stops growing, it starts to die.
- **Applying that to us, we need to remember** how we were first converted and born again! We need to **keep** the truth, which is the only anchor for our soul in changing times! We need to **repent** of our apathy, becoming vigilant and diligent in our walk with God!

To the Church in Philadelphia – Persevering church!

Rev 3:7 *"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":*

- **The church in Philadelphia, one of the strongest of the seven churches, lasted longer** than the other churches except for Smyrna. The church of Philadelphia did last until about 1300, when the Turks came and murdered the remaining Christians that were there, destroying the church. Today, about all that remains, is that of a Byzantine chapel.
- **'These things says He who is holy.** He reminds them that *He is holy.* He was *holy* at His birth! He was *holy* at His death! He is *holy* today in His present priestly office as our Eternal High Priest!
- **He who is true, "HE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID, HE WHO OPENS AND NO ONE SHUTS, AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS":** The Lord, introducing Himself now as the One who has the key of David. The One who can open, and no man shuts, shuts and no man opens.

Rev 3:8 *"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.*

- **The Lord often leads us by opening and shutting doors.** As we are seeking God for guidance and

direction, He often leads us by opening a door of opportunity for us. Also, God often stops us by closing the door. When God closes a door, we should not try and force it open or break it down. Just accept closed doors as well as open doors! We must learn to just recognize, especially by much prayer, if God closes one door, look for another. Do not try and break it down. He has something else in mind. That is a great way to live! To just let God open doors! Let God shut doors. That takes a lot of pressure off.

- ***For you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.*** The church of Philadelphia is the church in the last days. It is not a denomination. There are denominational churches, but it is the faithful church that has been and has kept faithful to the teaching of the Word of God.
- ***You have a little strength! Although there are not too many today, there are those churches that do exist*** where the pastors teach the Word of God to the people, faithfully teaching the Word of God! They are powerful, not strong, not turning the world upside down, wishing they were, but the Lord said, “*You have a little strength!*” It does not mean that they are going to become a great, great power and influence in the world, but God is given them a little strength. It is so important for a church to keep His word and not deny His name!

Rev 3:9 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.

- ***One day, the Jewish people will recognize that their forefathers*** made the greatest and most tragic mistake in the history of the nation when they failed to recognize that Jesus was the promised Messiah. That will take place during the Great Tribulation period when the man that they hailed as their Messiah turns out to be the anti-Christ, standing in the rebuilt temple, declaring that he is God. They will recognize then that they have been deceived! They will turn to Jesus Christ in great numbers, recognizing the truth of the church.
- ***To know that I have loved you.*** It is in the His power that hearts are turned to Him! God’s love and the love of Jesus Christ for His church today. In the church there is no nationality. In Christ we are all one! (*Col 3:11*) *where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.* There is that recognition that Jesus loves His church!

Rev 3:10 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.

- ***The hour of trial!*** It is a reference the Great Tribulation. Many chapters, from six through eighteen, will have details of the events that will take place in just a three-and-a-half-year period of time, before Jesus comes with His church to establish God’s kingdom upon the earth.
- ***Then the world is going to go through the greatest of bloodbaths.*** It will be a time of Great Tribulation such as the world has never seen before or will ever see again!
- ***As we move through the descriptions in the book of Revelation, we need to recognize*** that John saw all of these in a vision. But 2,000 years ago, the weapons of warfare that have been developed, the means of destroying mankind today, were totally unknown to him. He does his best to describe them with things that would be familiar with people at that time.
- ***However, we can see how they do apply to many of the modern weapons,*** modern warfare and even to the atomic and nuclear bombs. There will be unheard massive destruction of humanity that is going to take place in this last three-and-a-half years in which God is going to pour out His wrath and His judgment upon this world. (*Rev 14:10*) *he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.* The world will see a time of terror and horror such as never before.
- ***We read of events in history, horrible battles, atrocities, massacres,*** but nothing has taken place in history that can match what is going to happen in the future when God’s wrath is poured out upon the earth! It will be greater than that of Noah and the Great Flood! Greater than that of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah! Nothing in history is to equal what is going to come! *Do not be there!*
- ***But notice the blessed hope that Jesus gives to the church of Philadelphia!*** *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. (1Th 5:9) For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- ***When the Bible speaks of the Great Tribulation,*** of the wrath of God that is to be poured out, it

always distinguishes that it is to be poured out upon the wicked, upon the ungodly! As Paul said in **(Rom 1:18)** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.*

- **But then He began to talk to them about the signs of His second coming** and He told of this Great Tribulation. He told of the horrible things that will be happening, the cataclysmic events. Not only just world wars, not only just man against man with modern type of weapons destroying humanity. He also talked about cataclysmic events in nature. **(Luk 21:11)** *And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.* Fierce winds, earthquakes shaking the world in different places. He spoke of other events, pestilences, which always follow the mass destruction and earthquakes.
- **God tells of these events that are going to take place, but He promises His church,** “*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.*” There is the inference, if you do not!

Rev 3:11 *Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*

- **Behold, I am coming quickly!** That did not mean that He was coming in a month or so, but that the events will be something that will be speedily or of short duration. **(1Co 15:51-52)** *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— [52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.* That is what is coming quickly. It is going to happen fast without any notice, just suddenly! In a twinkling of an eye, the Lord’s going to snatch (rapture) His church out. There will be no time for repentance! No time to call out to God, pleading for mercy! It will all be over before you realize what happened! That is why it is important to be ready at all times!
- **Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.** Paul said, **(2Ti 4:7-8)** *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. [8] Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.* The Lord speaks about His coming. At His appearing, those that love His appearing, the crown of righteousness that will be given unto us.

Rev 3:12 *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.*

Notice the fourfold promises to these who are victorious – He who overcomes!

- **I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more.** Just like the massive pillars supported ancient temples, so the believers will be strong and secure in their position in His heavenly temple. **(2Ch 3:17)** *Then he set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand and the other on the left; he called the name of the one on the right hand Jachin, and the name of the one on the left Boaz.*
- **I will write on him the name of My God!** God’s name is a reflection of His character. Having His name written on us identifies having His character indelibly written on our hearts and lives!
- **The name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God.** The promise of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, reminds us that we are destined for the heavenly city where the church will reign triumphantly!
- **I will write on him My new name.** The new name of Christ indicates the full and complete revelation of His character. The Bible promises, **(1Jn 3:2)** *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

Rev 3:13 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." "*

- **We have been told of Philadelphia being the church of the open door**, which pretty much represents the ideal church. *The open door* symbolizes their great opportunity. The *key of David* represents His authority. *The pillar of God temple* demonstrates the assurance of our security. The *new name* reveals the assurance of our new nature and destination for all eternity!

To the Church in Laodicea - Putrid church – This last exhortation to the churches, ends the things “that are”

Rev 3:14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen (of truth, so be it, unchanging), *the Faithful and True* (genuine) *Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:*

- **Jesus here describes Himself as the faithful and true witness, the Beginning of the creation of God!** What does that mean? Jesus is a true witness of God. That is, if you want to know what God is like, you can look at Jesus and understand and know exactly what God is like. For "(*Joh 1:1-3*) *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.* Later on, in discussions with the Jews, Jesus said, (*Joh 10:30*) *I and My Father are one.*" Also, we read in (*Joh 14:8-9*) *Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." [9] Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*
- **The Faithful and True Witness!** He was a faithful witness of what God is. His life was a witness to us of what God is. The Lord calls us to be His witnesses. That others should be able to know what Jesus Christ is like by looking at our lives. In those areas where our lives are not a true reflection of Jesus, we are not true witnesses, which we can only do it through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. (*Act 1:8*) *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Rev 3:15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

Rev 3:16 So then, because you are lukewarm (lukewarm and cooling, like hot water coming from Hierapolis), and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

- **Jesus hates lukewarmness!** The Laodiceans have lost their spiritual fervor or heat. *I will vomit you out of My mouth.* Christian lukewarmness is hated for many reasons but one of the most significant is because it gives a false picture, no positive witness, to the unsaved, that they are okay in their unbelief! What a difference they were from what Paul had written to the Colossians, a nearby city, about 30 years earlier. (*Col 3:2-4*) *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. [3] For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4] When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*
- **Today, Laodicea just lies in ruins.** You really cannot get close to even the ruins. You can see these two sluices that used to bring water to Laodicea. There was no water supply, so they built these sluices to bring the water from the nearby mountains. One brought cold-water, ice-cold water that came from the snow. Running along beside it there was another sluice that brought hot water from a hot water spring. But by the time it came the five miles from the springs, it had become lukewarm.
- **Nothing is more refreshing than ice cold water on a hot day.** Some people like hot water. Some people like ice cold water, but very few like lukewarm water! But such was the case of the church in Laodicea. They were neither hot nor cold. They were lukewarm! They were not on fire for the Lord. They still went to church. But their position was, Well, I can take it or leave it, kind of a thing. But Jesus does not want a take-it-or-leave-it relationship with you. He wants a full right on relationship with you! And Jesus said, *Because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.* He is not interested in just a lukewarm relationship.

Rev 3:17 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—

- **Because you say! But what is the Lord saying? This is an interesting thing and quite important!** They were saying and thinking one thing about themselves, whereas the Lord was saying and thinking something different! It is not important what I think about myself, but what the Lord thinks about me! That is what is important! They were thinking of themselves in one light, God was seeing them in another light. It is most important that we see ourselves in the light of God. That is why David said, (*Psa 139:23-24*) *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; [24] And see if there is any wicked way in me And lead me in the way everlasting.*
- **Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing!** It is the modern apostate church. Many of them have great foundations by which the church is supported. They have become very wealthy. The Mormon church brags to be one of the wealthiest organizations in the world. We are rich. We have need of nothing. We are increased with goods, with all their properties and all. The Catholic church is rich, in need of nothing. All of the properties they hold.

- **The Lord, says, *And do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.*** You are stripped. You have nothing. You are wretched. You are miserable. This is how God viewed them. What a contrast with how they saw themselves! The Laodiceans were in charge of their church themselves. Our Lord basically had not part in their church! Man, not God, was in charge! That is never blessed! It is never good!

Rev 3:18 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.

- **In reality, the Laodiceans were really poor, blind and naked.** Jesus, here is speaking to them in language the commercially prosperous believers could easily understand what our Savior urges them to do:
- **Buy from Me fine gold!** Only Jesus Christ can enrich their spiritual poverty with the gold of the gospel, which can enable standing against the refining fires of enemy persecution or spiritual corruption. (*Isa 55:1*) *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.*
- **Buy from Me white garments that you may be clothed.** White garments (white linen) are used as a symbol, throughout the Revelation, to denote righteousness. This is really His robe of righteousness, which He give to all who are His own. (*Rev 19:8*) *And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*
- **Anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.** **They were lacking spiritual vision!** No prophetic understanding, not understanding what is in store for them! Laodicea was well known for their eye salve, which was sold around the world. In contrast to this questionable earthly eye salve, He is urging them to anoint their eyes with the eye salve of the truth, The Word of God, in order that they might see things the way God sees them. Only in this way can they perceive and understand a spiritual world of which they have never dreamed!

Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous (with heat of passion) and repent.

- **Even though this church is in such a tragic state, the Lord still loves, and He is chastening them in order to bring them to repentance.** He said, (*Heb 12:5-6*) *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "MY SON, DO NOT DESPISE THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD, NOR BE DISCOURAGED WHEN YOU ARE REBUKED BY HIM; [6] FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE CHASTENS, AND SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."* The Lord speaks of the chastening and is calling them to a zealousness and to repentance.

Rev 3:20 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.

- **Behold, I stand at the door and knock.** In a sense, coming to the end of the church history in this church, the Laodicean church. Where do you find the Lord? He is outside knocking at the door!
- **Salvation is an individual matter.** You are not saved by a religious system. You are not saved by a church. You are saved by a personal experience with Jesus Christ! Knocking at the door of your heart. Seeking entrance into your life. Seeking deep, intimate fellowship with you. *I will dine with Him.*
- **Jesus wants that close intimate fellowship with you.** He wants to become one with you. He wants to dine with you. He said, *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if anyone hears My voice, and opens the door."* Notice He did not say, I will break it down! If you do not open, I will huff and puff and blow your house down. No. If you hear My voice and open the door.
- **In Holman Hunt's picture of Christ knocking at the door, one easily notices that there is no door handle on the outside of the door.** When the painting was first shown, one of his friends said, Well, you have left something out! There is no door handle there on the door. Holman Hunt said, No, I did not leave that out by accident. That was deliberate. You see, the handle's on the inside!
- **So, as the Lord knocks at your heart, you have to open the door!** (*Joh 6:37*) *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.* What a glorious thing. Jesus said that "If you open the door, He said, I will come in! You may say, My house is so filthy, so dirty. You do not know the filth in my house. The Lord said, I will come in. The beautiful thing is He will help you clean it up! *I will come in, dine with Him and He with Me.*

Rev 3:21 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.

- Then the promise, *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.* Today, Jesus is sitting at the throne of God in heaven. He gives the offer to those that would be overcomers, that they would be able to share and sit with Him on His throne, even as He sits with His Father in His throne.

Rev 3:22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' ' "

SUMMARY POINTS:

- **May we careful take note of what Jesus commends, condemns, corrects, as it applies to each of us!**
- **Church of Sardis – Great censure! It was Spiritually dead! Remember your conversion; Get back to NT Christian basics; Keep the truth; Repent of your apathy!**
- **Church of Philadelphia – Great commendation! Small and poor outside. Inwardly, dynamic and powerful! Little strength, but the Lord promises to do great things through them! I have put before you an open door! Given to you the Key of David, Christ's authority; Will make you a pillar in the Temple of God.**
- **Church of Laodicea, most typical of churches today! – Large and rich on outside, but poor, blind, naked, on the inside! Their Lukewarmness – "I will vomit you out of My mouth!" They were to put on white raiment of His righteousness; Anoint their eyes with the eye-salve of truth.**
- **When He calls us home, we will escape the Great Tribulation and suffer no more, joining the Church triumphant, every true believer, from every nation on earth, who shall stand before God's throne day and night worshiping Him. Hallelujah! Oh, what a day that will be!**
- **Rev 3:5 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.**

CLOSING SONG:

WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED UP YONDER – Johnny Cash – (1:36)

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more
And the morning breaks eternal bright and fair
When the saved diverse shall gather over on the other shore
And the roll is called up yonder I'll be there
When the roll is called up yonder when the roll is called up yonder
When the roll is called up yonder when the roll is called up yonder I'll be there

Let us lay before the Master from the dawn till setting sun
Let us talk of all his wonderous love and care
And when all of life is over and our work on earth is done
When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there
When the roll is called up yonder...
(When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there)

CLOSING PRAYER:

Read Chapter 4 for next week!