



# Revelation 3

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, *because the time is near.* 1:3

## Read Revelation 3:1-6 The Letter to the Church in Sardis

### The Dying Church

**Sardis** was told to “watch!” No commandment appears more frequently in the New Testament than the commandment to **watch**. This commandment should have been especially meaningful to the people of Sardis because of an incident that happened at Sardis centuries before. King Croesus of Sardis and his men had retreated from the Persian Army to find refuge in the high mountain fortress of Sardis. The walled city is perched 1,500 feet above the valley below, where the battle had begun, and is protected by massive walls. **Feeling secure, Croesus failed to post guards.** The Persian King Cyrus besieged the city for 14 days without success. Then a Persian guard saw a helmet fall from the top of the wall all the way down to the bottom of the cliff. He watched as one of Croesus men climbed down the sheer wall to retrieve it. This led Cyrus to make a closer inspection of the cliff, where he discovered a place where footholds could be made in the crumbly rock. That night he sent a raiding party up the cliff. They found the city without guard and Sardis fell to Cyrus. Two hundred years later, a similar thing occurred. Antiochus the Great, seeking to conquer Sardis, again found it unguarded, and the city fell to him. So the Lord writes to the church at Sardis: **Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.** Revelation, P.A. Bartz

Like the city of Sardis the church there, too, was dying. Founded around 1200 B.C. Sardis was universally recognized as the first metropolis of Asia and of Lydia and of Hellenism according to the oldest coins found. It was a royal city as well as a great manufacturing center. By the time of St. John the city was in decay. All that remains of Sardis today are a few shepherd huts which comprise a settlement called Sart. **The church at Sardis at St. John's time, like the church at Ephesus, had left her first love.** Sardis, however, had degenerated more than Ephesus. Little else is known of the church there aside from what the Lord speaks. Apparently the church did not heed the Lord's warning, for there is no church to be found there today. Nor is there any known



record of the church there after the words of our Lord in Revelation . . . a grim reminder that the Lord will not force what is best for us upon us if we refuse it.

† Sardis is a picture of spiritual decay and ruin; it's belongs to the saddest in the entire New Testament. Kretzmann, [Popular Commentary](#), p.600-601

### 3:1 The Spirit and the Church

The “Seven Spirits Of God” were mentioned previously in 1:4 as the “seven spirits before the throne.” The **Spirit of God** is the source of life, that which is desperately needed by this dying church. This is the Spirit whose breath can rouse dead, dry bones to life again (Ezekiel 37:14). **The life-giving Spirit is at Christ's disposal, thus in the imagery of the text Christ “holds the seven spirits of God.”**



† At the same time, Christ also “holds...the seven stars” which represent the angels of the seven churches, the pastors who proclaim the Word of God within the congregations. The Spirit conveys life by means of the Word and that Word has been entrusted to the office of the ministry which God has Himself established. Thus the conjunction of the “**stars**” and the “**spirits**” is most appropriate. Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.68

† The Lord places do emphasis upon the fact that the sevenfold spirit of God is His, that the various gifts and spiritual blessings of the Spirit come upon believers by virtue of the atoning work of Christ. Kretzmann, [Popular Commentary](#), p.600-601

Evidently there was no opposition to the church in Sardis because the church is not preaching the cross, which is an offense to the unbelieving world. Instead, the pagans of Sardis see Christians as nice, respectable people -- neither dangerous nor desirable. The “dead” church -- with the Spirit suppressed and the Word of God watered-down -- is no threat to Satan's kingdom and therefore is perfectly acceptable to a world filled with religion.

### 3:1 Reputation

Despite the deceptive image of renown spiritual vitality this church is dead. A state of spiritual death permeated this congregation. **Unlike her sister churches, Sardis is not threatened by enemies internal or external. The church in Sardis had peace, but it was a graveyard peace, the peace of death.** This was a church complacently at ease resting upon the laurels of its glorious past.

† The church had taken on the character of its city. Ancient Sardis, as previously noted, was a virtually impregnable fortress, built on a high plateau which could only be approached on a narrow land bridge. And yet, the city had fallen twice, first in 540 B.C. to the Persian Cyrus, and then again in 218 B.C. to the Greek Antiochus the Great. In both cases, the citadel was unguarded because the inhabitants were convinced their city could not be taken. And so they slept securely while the enemy came upon them. So also the church in Sardis was complacent and at rest. They believed themselves to be secure. But this was a delusion. The sleep of the church of Sardis was the sleep of death from which only the voice of God could raise and rouse them. Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.69

### 3:3-4 Urgency! Wake up! Repent!

**This is a most urgent summons to be roused before it is too late, a last minute appeal to a congregation that is on the verge of death itself.**

† “**Wake up!**” literally means to be aroused from drowsiness and sleep to a state of alert watchfulness. The Lord wants the church in Sardis to recognize the peril in which they stand, to see the true state of their church, before it is too late.

† **GOSPEL IMPERATIVE:** *The gospel which calls for faith creates faith; the Lord who says "Wake up" is waking us up.* “Come, Lord Jesus”, R.D.Balge

† *Sardis is like a leaking, sinking ship, in which captain and crew are sunk in dull lethargy. They must wake up to the situation and thus must take measures to save the ship.* Revelation Lenski, p. 128

† Decisive action is called for - “**Strengthen what remains and is about to die.**”

† Christ calls for a **continual state** of repentance/faith – confession/forgiveness

- What we have received and heard is the good news of God's free grace in Christ. To obey it is to trust God's promises alone-- not our intentions, decisions, "spiritual" resources, positive thinking. **To repent is to turn from every evil work, every self-righteousness; turn to the blood and righteousness of Jesus.** “Come, Lord Jesus”, R.D.Balge

† **True faithfulness to Christ requires constant watchfulness of doctrine and practice, as well as constant repentance and forgiveness. Even we Christians must daily struggle with the Old Adam who is naturally earthly-minded and not heavenly-minded.** Revelation, P.A. Bartz

† **Deeds lacking** While the deeds don't save us, their presence shows faith, and the lack of following God's commands shows lack of faith. Here, the completeness of the deeds are lacking. Revelation, P.A. Bartz

† Christ gives them the steps to being watchful and returning to faithfulness. The response He desires is for the person to say, **If the Lord says that I should be doing differently than I am, I'd better repent of my past actions and begin doing as He asks.**

† Persecution is dangerous -- some turn apostate; heresy is worse -- often many are deceived; worst of all is the dry rot from within --- the whole church dying from the inside. Its membership may be large, it works may be great in number and in size, but the life is dying out or is already dead.” Revelation Lenski, p. 129

While this time of grace endures, such people should be aroused and called to repentance. And so **God issues the command to awaken all those who are now spiritually asleep or spiritually dead within the pale of a Christian congregation.** So it becomes the duty of every Christian pastor to arouse all those in their flock who are earthly minded and indifferent toward divine grace, and so given to the sleep of spiritual death. God would have their conscience to be aroused and sharpened, so that they may return to Christ in heartfelt repentance. Such people are to think back to what they once have learned and accepted as divine truth. Moreover all those who will not be aroused must at once face a dreadful end. The Lord will come upon them as a thief in the night, and they shall find no more room for repentance. Stoekhardt, Lectures on Revelation, p.14



### 3:3 Remember! Obey! Repent!

Now comes the threefold exhortation which provides God's remedy for this nearly fatal crisis.

- † First, **Remember!** – the verb is in the present tense, indicating ongoing action – “keep on remembering.” That which the church in Sardis had “*received and heard*” was the message of the Gospel, the Word of God by which their faith and their church had originally been called into being.
- † To **obey** (literally “to keep”) that Gospel and live according to it will require the total transformation of heart and life which is true repentance.

The main task of the church is to preach the gospel and in its truth and purity and to administer the sacraments according to the institution of Christ. If this is neglected or if the gospel is obscured by all sorts of false teaching, the church may be busy day after day, from morning to night, but its works will never be “complete” in the sight of God because it is not doing the job that God assigned to it.

Revelation, Becker, p.62-63

### 3:3 Judgement as “thief”

The coming of the judgment “as a thief” is a common simile in Scripture (cf. Matthew 24:43; Luke 12:39; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 16:15). Repentance may not be delayed because we never know when the hour of judgment will come for us or for the world.

- † The Lord will come like a **thief; suddenly and unexpectedly!** “*You will not know at what time!*” cf. Rev 16:15, Matt 25:13, Mark 13:33 **We know neither the day of the Parousia nor the time of our own death!**
- † The Greek text is most emphatic on this point, using the strongest negative expression possible. The text could be translated “There is absolutely no way for you to find out when I am coming.” ***Those who delight in setting dates and establishing time tables would do well to note these words carefully.***
- † Suddenly the Lord will come, like a thief. Terror will go before Him, striking the hearts of the unbelievers numb with fear; and His punishment will bring them everlasting destruction.

Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, p.600-601

### 3:4 Remnant

The Greek text literally says “*You have a few names in Sardis.*” This terminology conforms to the following verse which will refer to the removal of names from the **Book of Life** in heaven.

- † **Clothing** The righteousness or unrighteousness of men is frequently symbolized by clothing in Scripture. For instance, Isaiah declares: “*All of us have become as one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.*” (Isaiah 64:11; cf. also Isaiah 61:10). Later in Revelation, John describes the redeemed in heaven as “*those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*” (Revelation 7:14; cf. also 22:14) Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.71
- † **Soiled** The Greek word is an intense word which means “to smear with filth,” “to befoul,” or “to pollute.” It is often used in a moral context with particular application to sexual immorality. In contrast, the faithful who remain in this dying church are promised deliverance in the coming judgment – “*They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.*”

- † **White** The garment imagery continues. The color white in Scripture is typically the color of holiness and purity – *“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.”* (Isaiah 1:18) This is also generally the usage in Revelation (cf. 7:9,13). To walk with the Lord, dressed in white, is the promise of eternal life in heaven where we will dwell in the presence of God forever in perfect holiness and blessedness.
- † **Worthy** They will receive this gift because “they are worthy.” That is to say, they have been counted worthy by God’s grace, and that grace within them has enabled them to persevere where so many others have fallen away. As St. Paul declares: *“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect.”* Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.71-72
- † **Acknowledged** To be acknowledged by Christ is to be identified and claimed as one of His own. The language is similar to that of Matthew 10:32 where Christ declares: *“Everyone, therefore, who will confess Me before men, I will confess him before My Father who is in heaven.”*
  - **Confessing Christ in church is easy but confessing Christ by denying your inclinations and desires, and by going against public opinion when necessary, is not easy. He who overcomes these obstacles, remaining faithful to Christ, is truly faithful.**

Every Christian that conquers, that overcomes all the deceitful attacks of the devil, all the weakness and weariness of the flesh, will be given these great blessings as a reward of the grace of Christ. They will stand clothed in the garment of the perfect righteousness of the Savior, white and spotless, with all the stains of their sins washed away. Their names, which were entered into the Book of Life as a result of their faith in Christ, will not be erased. And at the time of the judgment, when the Wrath of God strikes the unbelievers, they will be beyond all condemnation, for their Savior will confess them as His own before the Father and before all the holy angels. Kretzmann, [Popular Commentary](#), p.600-601

## The Book of Life

The “book of life” appears seven times in the imagery of Revelation (3:5; 13:8; 17:8;20:12, 15; 21:27), although the image is not unique to this book. Jesus urges His disciples to “rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20). St Paul describes his co-workers in the Gospel as people “whose names are in the book of life.” (Philippians 4:3). **The “book of life” is a figurative way of expressing the doctrine of election** (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:3-6). **The book contains the names of those whom God has predestined for eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus.** It is the census book of the heavenly Jerusalem, written before history began. To have one’s name written in the Book Of Life is to have the assurance of a salvation which has been accomplished not by human effort but by God Himself. When the Savior says He will not erase their names out of the book, He is emphasizing the **certainty** of the salvation which God has prepared for the elect. Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.72

But very many will have their names erased from the Book of Life again as they allow the devil to influence them away from the Lord. That names can be removed from the Book of Life demonstrates that saved, faithful people can fall completely away from saving faith. This illustrates the error of believing or teaching eternal security (“once saved always saved”), as does the Parable of the Sower. We must be careful any of us can and will, **by neglect of our Lord's Word**, be so influenced. And those who are separated from the Lord in this way never realized it and are self-satisfied with what they think is a living faith. **They have a reputation that is alive, but they are dead.. You can avoid this happening in your life by daily study of God's Word, with knowledge of what God says to you in His Word and with the attitude If this is what my Lord who loves me wants me to do, I'd better change my life to fit in with His will which is repentance.** [Revelation](#), P.A. Bartz

## Read Revelation 3:7-13 The Letter to the Church in Philadelphia

*The Church of the Open Door*

**Philadelphia** was located in a fertile valley about thirty miles southeast of Sardis. Philadelphia was the youngest of the seven cities, having been founded in the Second Century B.C. by the Greek King Eumenes II. It was named Philadelphia (Greek “*philia*” - love, “*adelphos*” - brother) in honor of the king’s brother, Attalus II, who was renowned for his love and loyalty to his royal sibling. The city was designed to be an outpost of Greek culture and civilization in Asia. It’s position on an important East-West trade route and the imperial postal road resulted in prosperity and prominence. In ancient times Philadelphia was known as “the gateway to the East” and “the keeper of the gateway.” Hence Revelation’s designation of Philadelphia as the church of the open door was historically most appropriate. The city was situated on the edge of a geologically unstable region known as the “*Katakekaumene*” (from the Greek verb which means “to burn down”), so designated because of its frequent earthquakes and regular volcanic activity. The city of Philadelphia, along with the other cities in the valley, was devastated by a major earthquake in A.D. 17, and had not yet been fully rebuilt when John wrote the Book of Revelation. The imperial government provided substantial aid for reconstruction and accordingly, the cult of the emperor flourished in the city. The city took on a new name “*Neokaiseria*,” the city of the new Caesar, as a demonstration of its gratitude for imperial patronage. The fertile volcanic soil of the region was well suited to the cultivation of vineyards and wine production was one of Philadelphia’s major industries. Dionysius (Roman – *Bacchus*) the Greek god of wine and the vine was the most prominent deity of the city. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.75

**3:7 The angel** – The stars of Revelation 1:16 represent the angels of the churches, as 1:20 shows. As the lampstands/churches represent actual physical churches, so the stars/angels represent actual individuals. An angel is a messenger from God. A pastor is such a messenger in a congregation. Jesus here, in this letter to Philadelphia, is giving the pastor the message he is to deliver. An Exegesis of Revelation 3:7-13

Paul G. Eckert

### 3:7 Jesus: Holy & True

Jesus is “**the holy One**”. The title is used elsewhere in Revelation in reference to God the Father (cf. 4:8; 6:10). Elsewhere in Scripture this is a common title for the divine Messiah (cf. Psalm 16:10; Habakkuk 3:3; Isaiah 40:25; Mark 1:24; Luke 1:35; 4:34; John 6:69; Acts 4:27; 1 John 2:20). **To be holy, is not merely to be without sin, but also to be set apart as the divine Son of God, commissioned by Him to be the Savior of the world.** Jesus is also “**the true One**”. He is the Truth personified (cf. John 14:6). He is genuine and real in contrast to all the false Messiahs who sought to foist themselves upon Israel.

### 3:7 Key of David Isaiah 22:15-25 and 2 Kings 18:18-19:2

In Revelation 1:18 Christ had asserted: “I hold the keys of death and Hades.” The imagery of the keys now recurs as the Lord is identified as “Him...who holds the key of David.” The language is drawn from Isaiah 22:22 where a man named Eliakim is chosen by God as the treasurer of the royal house. Of this faithful servant it is said, “I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; what he opens, no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.” Eliakim, as the Treasurer of the kingdom of Judah, had full control over all the resources of the kingdom with the authority to

withhold or bestow the king's treasure as he wished. **In this sense, he was a type, a prefigure of the Messiah who was to come as a royal king of the House of David. In the case of Jesus, the treasure in question is not mere material wealth but the gift of life eternal for He "holds the keys of death and Hades."** He alone can open or close the door to heaven. His power and authority in this matter is absolute -- "**What He opens no one can shut; and what He shuts no one can open.**"

### O Come O Come Immanuel

Lutheran Worship #31 verse 5

Oh, come, **O Key of David**, come,  
And open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel!

† [Jesus] is so much greater than Eliakim, so His key opens to far greater wealth, or leads to far greater loss if rejected. In 1:18, Jesus says, "**I hold the keys of death and Hades.**" While He entrusts the use of the keys to the church (Matthew 16:18; 18:18; John 20:23), He alone is the actual possessor of the key, for no one comes to the Father except through him. He alone is the source, the one to whom all judgment has been entrusted (John 5:22). And when he returns on Judgment Day, he will say, "Come," and "Depart," opening and closing. None will be able to change that, as Jesus clearly showed in his account of the rich man and poor Lazarus. Heaven – what a wonderful place to be, with no worry about falling away! Hell – what a terrible place to be, with no chance of getting even a drop of water past the chasm! [An Exegesis of Revelation 3:7-13](#), Paul G. Eckert

† He has the Key of David; as a true descendent of David according to the flesh, as the Son of Man, He has established His kingdom, His church, here on earth. To this mansion of His grace He has the key, in it He rules and governs; He opens and He shuts its doors, He unlocks and He locks the treasures of His mercy to whom He will. This description prepares for the wonderful promises which the Lord now makes to this congregation. Kretzmann, [Popular Commentary](#), P.601-602

† **OFFICE OF THE KEYS** The Lord has the keys of death and hell (Rev. 1:18) and the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19). He has given these keys to His church (John 20:21-23; Matthew 18:18). The faithful church uses both keys as instructed by the Lord to assure the unrepentant and smug of sure condemnation (the **Law**) in the hope of working repentance, and to bind up the broken-hearted (the repentant) and assure them of God's forgiveness (the **Gospel**). [Revelation](#), P.A. Bartz

### **What is the Office of the Keys?**

The Office of the Keys is the special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth: to forgive the sins of the penitent sinners, but to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent.

### **What is Confession?**

Confession consists of two parts: one, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the pastor or confessor as from God himself, and in no way doubt, but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

Martin Luther's [Small Catechism](#)

## 3:8 Open Door

This open door can be seen in two ways.

1. **First as a metaphor for salvation.** Jesus assures the church that He has set before them "**an open door that no one can shut.**" The "open door" which Christ graciously sets before the church in

Philadelphia is the promise of life eternal and access to the endless joy and blessedness of heaven. The promise of the open door assures them of the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. None of their enemies or opponents can deprive them of this blessing. This is an open doorway “that no one can shut.”



2. **Second, as a metaphor for evangelism.** There may also be a missionary connotation in this promise. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the open door terminology is used in connection with unusual evangelistic and ministry opportunities (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Colossians 4:3). What could be more fitting than for those who have been assured the promise of the open heaven, to also be given unique opportunities to share the wonderful Gospel of salvation? Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.77

- The open door is the invitation to witness, to evangelize, to preach the gospel, to train and send workers. “Come, Lord Jesus”, R.D.Balge
- Some have suggested that the reference to a little power may also reflect the possibility that the Philadelphian church was small at this time. Here we see illustrated a principle voiced by C. F. W. Walther: **the size of a church doesn’t matter, what matters is its faithfulness to the Word of God.** Such churches shall be prospered by God. This is the key to true growth of the church. A principle is revealed here: **True mission and genuine evangelism opportunities are a gift of God to churches that remain faithful.** [Revelation](#), P.A. Bartz
- The Son of David has opened the door before them, a door through which many might still enter into the Kingdom of Christ. The Lord has given to this congregation unusual opportunities and facilities for preaching and advancing the faith among outsiders, the best chance for extending the Gospel message. The entrance of unbelievers of every class, the conversion of the heathen, is the work of the Lord, and of Him alone. Kretzmann, [Popular Commentary](#), P.601-602
- The open door is the free access to the conversion of the heathen in the world about them. God had already open for them that door. They are to enter in with the preaching of the gospel, and he will grant success to the Word, so that many heathen shall be converted to Christ . . . God will also open [Jewish] hearts to believe and join the Christian church. That is the greatest of boon and blessing which the Lord can grant to this church at the present time. Stoekhardt, [Lectures on Revelation](#), p.15
- **Pray that the Good Lord gives to us here at TLC, LP, AZ the “open door”!**

### 3:8 Kept My Word

This is a church that has been faithful to Scripture, that has not tolerated false teaching, and has not yielded to the world’s relentless efforts toward compromise and conformity. As Jesus declares in the Gospel of St. John: **“If you continue in My Word, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”** (John 8:31; cf. also John 14:23,24). Faithfulness to the Word has



been consistently demonstrated in the congregation by a refusal to deny “My name.” The open, joyful confession of Jesus Christ as Lord, even in the face of determined opposition, has characterized the life of the church. Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.77

**Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word**

By: Martin Luther

Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word;  
Curb those who by deceit or sword  
Would wrest the kingdom from your Son  
And bring to nought all he has done

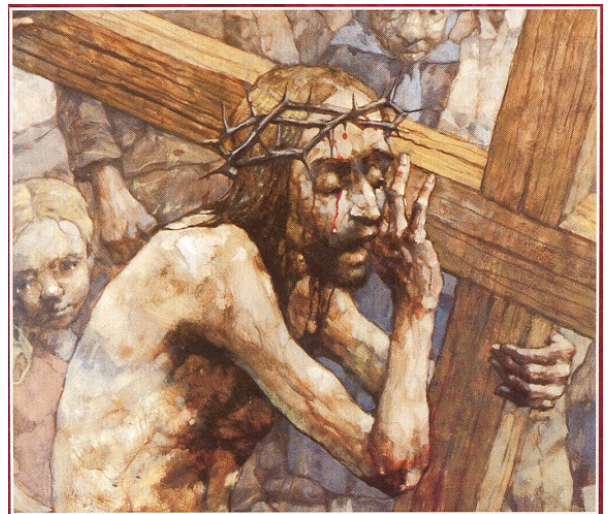
### 3:9 Synagogue Of Satan

Like the church in Smyrna (cf. Revelation 2:9), Philadelphia was being persecuted by Jews who rejected Jesus as the Messiah. These people professed themselves to be the true Israel of God because of their physical descent from Abraham. They bitterly rejected Jesus and those who followed Him. In so doing, they have become “**the synagogue of Satan**,” and have forfeited the right to be called “Jews.” **True descent from father Abraham is a matter of faith not blood** (cf. Romans 2:28-29; 9:6-9).

- † **ON THE LAST DAY** The Old Testament had promised that Gentiles from all across the world would one day come to bow down before the true Israel of God (cf. Isaiah 45:14; 49:23; 60:14; Psalm 86:9). Jesus now promises the beleaguered Christians in Philadelphia the fulfillment of those promises in a manner that confounds and contradicts all human expectation. The day will come when those who believe themselves to be Jews but who are not will be compelled to acknowledge that Jesus is, in fact, the promised Messiah, and that those who followed him are, in fact, the true Israel of God, those whom He has loved (cf. Isaiah 43:4). This text does not indicate the conversion of the Jews but the universal acknowledgment of the lordship of Jesus when He returns in might and majesty as the Judge of all mankind. In that sense, the passage is very similar to the prophecy of Revelation 1:7 (cf. also Philippians 2:10-11) White, [Revelation](#), p.79
- † **THROUGH FAITH IN THIS LIFE** From the midst of these very bitter enemies of Christ and His church the Lord intended, by His grace, to gain some souls for eternal salvation. This the Lord would give, this the Lord would bring to pass, for it is He that converts the hearts and fills them with joy of their redemption. Kretzmann, [Popular Commentary](#), P.601-602

### 3:10 God’s patience

The NIV’s translation muddles the Greek text in the opening phrase of Verse 10. The Greek literally says, “**Because you have kept the word of My patience.**” There is nothing here about divine commands or obedience to them. To insert this thought into the text is to distort what is essentially a Gospel concept into Law. **The Gospel tells us of Christ’s patient endurance as our suffering Savior. That is “the word of My patience.”** In fact, it was that very patient endurance, Christ’s willingness to submit to humiliation and death, that caused most men to reject and scorn Him. Thus, St. Paul declares that the cross of Christ is an offense (Greek - “skandalon” - literally a deathtrap) to the Jews and silliness to the Gentiles (1 Corinthians 1:23). Our Lord’s own example, held before us in the Gospel, encourages and strengthens us to endure



persecution and pain with patience, just as Jesus did for us. The Christian who endures as Jesus did, remaining with Christ crucified, has truly “kept My word of patience.” Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.80

† Those who have “kept My word of patience” are now promised that the Lord will keep them in the time of testing. ... The church in Philadelphia was faithful to Christ in the time of trial and now Christ promises to be faithful to them in the greater trials to come. ... They will be protected spiritually from any threats posed to their faith during the time of trial.

† The **ongoing tribulation** of the people of God throughout the New Testament era is to be one of the characteristic “**signs of the times**,” to serve as a constant reminder that we have entered upon the final era of human history, the end times. That tribulation will intensify in the period immediately before the Lord returns in glory and power. This is the “great tribulation” of Revelation 7:14 (cf. Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:15-31; Mark 13:7-20; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).



† But we can be sure that whatever the future holds, the Lord is promising to preserve our souls, keep us in the faith, guard us against the ultimate disaster of denying his name and losing our crown. That is not because we keep the Word so well, but because He is gracious, because he who promised is "holy and true (3:7)." **He does not promise exemption from suffering on earth, but release from all suffering in heaven.** “Come, Lord Jesus”, R.D.Balge

† The promise to the Philadelphians, relevant in the first century and the twenty-first century is simply this: “The church has kept her Lord’s Word, and has, in the strength of it, patiently endured; the Lord will keep this church; amid all those successive waves of preliminary judgments of God each more severe than the last, which shall sweep and sift the world, the church shall be safely kept.” Franzmann, p. 49

† Specifically for the Philadelphians in their lifetime they would be spared, for God’s own reasons, what many others would have to endure during the persecutions against the Christians, such as carried out by Emperor Trajan from the year 98 on. Didn’t God do the same thing with John? To our knowledge he is the only one of the apostles who was spared a martyr’s death. So God, for his reasons, would spare Philadelphia in the face of both physical and spiritual dangers. While we have no such promise from God when it comes to physical dangers (some are spared, some are not), do we not have his promise that in all things he works for the good of those who love him? Do we not have his promise that no one will snatch us out of his hands? That applies now, for what was “about to come” is constantly reoccurring in history. [An Exegesis of Revelation 3:7-13](#), Paul G. Eckert

### 3:11 Urgency!

This emphasis on the **urgency and imminence** of the coming of Christ is characteristic of Revelation (cf. Revelation 2:5,16; 22:7,12,20). **Behind the trials and sufferings of these last days there looms the decisive reality of the final judgment.** To faithful Philadelphia these are words of encouragement and comfort. ... It is a summons to live in eager anticipation of the return of Christ.

Two thousand years have passed since Jesus promised His imminent return. Although “*of that day and hour no one knows*” (Matthew 24:36) the time has been determined, the Lord is coming. Nothing will delay or divert His arrival. **From a human perspective we are to live in a state of constant readiness eagerly awaiting His return.** We are to leave the date, “the times and the seasons” to God and be constantly prepared so that we will not be caught unaware when Christ returns. White, Revelation, p.82

† It is as St. Peter wrote: *“First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this coming He promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes as it has since the beginning of creation. But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s Word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and with water...But do not forget this one thing, dear friends; With the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”* 2 PETER 3:3-9

† **In the face of Christ’s imminent return, the admonition to the congregation is to stand firm and “Hold on to what you have.”** They had been given the Truth of the Word of God and the wonderful Gospel of Salvation. They had been blessed by the Spirit with gifts and abilities to be used in the service of the Lord. The enemies of Christ and of His Church were constantly seeking to deprive them of that which they had been given. Their own sinful nature and the complacent indifference which lulled them into a false sense of security would also have robbed them of these precious gifts. These enemies of God, both internal and external, must be steadfastly and continuously resisted lest they “take your crown.” Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.83

† We should watch for any slackening of purpose, of losing our sense of urgency. **Jesus’ “soon” may not seem soon to us.** “In the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, *‘Where is this “coming” he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation* (2 Pe 3:3.4).” The Book of Revelation was written to make us yearn for that coming, to assure us that he is coming, but also to awaken and sustain in us an urgency to be about his mission in view of his coming. “Come, Lord Jesus”, R.D.Balge

### 3:11 Crown

The word for “crown” is the victor’s crown of laurel leaves presented to the winning athlete rather than the royal crown of a king. In Chapter 2, Christ used the same terminology to promise “the crown of life” to those in Smyrna who were faithful unto death. **Thus, to lose the crown means to lose life and eternal salvation, to be deprived of our place in the kingdom. The robbers who seek to take the crown do not desire it for themselves. Their goal is to deprive the believer of the eternal life that Christ has won for him: to drag him down with them to perdition in the unending torment of hell.** Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.83-84



- † That crown of life we don't ever want to lose by unbelief. Instead with Paul we want to say, *“There is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that, day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing”* (2 Timothy 4:8). **Hold on. Be on guard** against any temptations that try to take from us our CROWN. An Exegesis of Revelation 3:7-13, Paul G. Eckert

### 3:12 “Overcomes”

“He who overcomes” is a part of each 7 letters. The Greek word is “Nike”, (like the shoe!) and has the idea of “conquer, gain the victory” (Note: the word is used 28 times in NT, John uses it 24 of those times.)

### 3:12 Pillar in the Temple

The promise to the overcomer in this letter is shaped by the particular circumstances of the church in Philadelphia. To a city that had been shaken and destroyed by devastating earthquakes the assurance of salvation comes in the form of a promise of solid stability and permanence. They will stand forever (*“He will never leave it.”*) in the heavenly Jerusalem, the eternal temple of God as a mighty immovable pillar. They will remain in the blessed presence of God throughout all of eternity (cf. Ephesians 2:20-22). Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.84

- † A **pillar** gives us a picture of permanence, of being a solid part of a building. God's people are not going to be like furniture in his building, furniture that can be rearranged or even thrown out. His people are going to be with God, a permanent and solid relationship. An Exegesis of Revelation 3:7-13, Paul G. Eckert

### 3:12 Signed, Sealed, And Confirmed By Three Names

Three most sacred names are to be inscribed upon this pillar, thus marking and sealing the believer as the permanent possession of God. The noun “name” is repeated three times for special emphasis.

- † To be marked with **“the name of My God”** signifies belonging to God and being endowed with the power of God.
- † To be marked with **“the name of the city of My God”** is a guarantee of irrevocable citizenship in the new Jerusalem, the *eternal* dwelling place of God (cf. Revelation 21:10ff.).
- † The **name of Jesus** is “the name above every name” before which every knee shall bow as all of humanity confesses the Lordship of Christ. The Lord declares His name, written upon the believer will be “My new name.” In the Bible, the bestowal of a new name generally indicated a change in status or character. The new name of the glorified Christ indicates His exaltation to the right hand of God and the inscription of that new name upon the believer is the promise that he who overcomes will share in the Lord's glory and power. Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.84

These words of commendation for the Philadelphian church should encourage us to faithfulness to the Lord. No matter what kind of odds we are up against, we can be sure that the Lord has everything under His watchful control. We remember too, that it is not our great virtue or strength of character that keeps us faithful until the end, but the virtue of Christ and the power of God that helps us overcome the world, the devil, and even our own rebellious flesh. Revelation, P.A. Bartz

## Read Revelation 3:14-22 The Letter to the Church in Laodicea

*The Lukewarm-Compromising Church*

**Laodicea** was on the southeast corner of the circuit of the seven churches about a hundred miles east of Ephesus. It was situated in the Lycus Valley at the junction of strategic east - west and north - south highways. The town of Colosse, to which St. Paul addressed his New Testament letter to the Colossians, was at the opposite, upper end of the same valley. The city was founded in the third century B.C. by the Greek King Antiochus II and named for his wife Laodice. Because of its location it was a major commercial and financial center. Laodicea was renowned for the manufacture of a particularly soft black woolen cloth. The Greek historian Strabo reports: “Laodicea produces sheep that are excellent, not only for the softness of their wool, but also for its raven black color, so that the Laodiceans derive splendid revenue from it.” A major medical center was also located in Laodicea which specialized in the preparation of a salve for the treatment of diseases of the eye. There was a renowned cluster of hot springs within a few miles at Hieropolis, attracting visitors from around the world who came to bathe in their steamy soothing waters. The boiling mineral water that bubbled up from these thermal vents created crystal columns and cliffs that had the appearance of frozen white waterfalls. The hot water flowed over a 300 foot high cliff near the city, gradually cooling and growing tepid - lukewarm - as it came closer to Laodicea. The city was noted for its architecture with massive walls and towering gates. The triple arches of the “Ephesus Gate” still stand today. The great stadium of Laodicea was 900 feet long. Laodicea was a prosperous and economically well established community. It became a world center of banking and money lending. The Seleucid kings re-settled about 2,000 Jews in this region after deporting them from Babylon. The Jewish community in the town was prominent and influential. They shared in the wealth of their city. The paramount god of Laodicea with a native Phrygian deity named “Men Karou” identified in the minds of the people with Zeus, the father of the Greek gods. St. Paul had a hand in the foundation of the congregation in Laodicea (Colossians 1:6-7; 2:1). Tradition indicates that the congregation was established under the leadership of Archippus (Colossians 4:17), the son of Philemon. The church remained active in the city throughout the Roman era. Its bishop was martyred for the faith in 166 A.D. The city was abandoned early in the 14 century after having been repeatedly conquered by the Turks. Its ruins remain largely unexcavated today. Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.86-87

### 3:14 Christ is Faithful!

The threefold designation of Christ emphasizes His **complete truthfulness** and **absolute authority**.

- † This is the only instance in Scripture where the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew term “**Amen**” is used as a personal name for Christ. The Hebrew word literally means “to be firm” and is used to signify that which is fixed, true, and unchangeable. In the liturgical worship of Israel the “Amen” was used as both an affirmation (“Thus it is!”) and a prayer (“So let it be.”). At times, the word is simply translated as “truth” in the Old Testament. **To name Christ “the Amen” is to designate Him as the personification of Truth.**
- † All that which He says must most certainly be accomplished. This emphasis is continued in the second title, “**the faithful and true Witness.**” The Greek word “*martyrs*” in the history of the church it came to refer particularly to those who gave their lives because of their testimony

for Christ, thus the English word “**martyr**.” Jesus is “*the true and faithful Witness*” in that His testimony in revealing the will and purpose of God is totally true and reliable. The text repeats and expands the reference of Revelation 1:5 which described Jesus as “the faithful Witness.”

- † The third title adopted by Christ in the letter to Laodicea is “**the Ruler of God’s Creation**.” In his letter to the nearby Colossians, thirty five years earlier, St. Paul had found it necessary to rebuke those who downgraded the divinity of Christ and rejected His identity as the eternal Son of God through whom all things were made (cf. **Colossians 1:15-20**). The use of this title suggests that a similar problem may also have existed in Laodicea. Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.88

### 3:15-16 Lukewarm

Christ’s declaration of knowledge about this church is blunt and directly to the point. In the other letters if there was good to be commended, that commendation came first. **There is no commendation here.** He who is “the faithful and true witness” knows all there is to know about this tepid congregation and He will mince no words in asserting the truth. **The condemnation of the church in Laodicea is the most scathing of any in the seven letters.** The Lord not only knows external actions but His gaze penetrates into the innermost recesses of the heart to discern motivation and attitude. **This is a church that has settled comfortably into the middle, indifferent and apathetic, avoiding a decisive stand in any direction.** ... To exist in such a state, satisfied with the semblance of faith without its substance, relying upon a false assurance of salvation, represents a condition of greater spiritual peril than outright unbelief. As Peter warns: “*It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then to turn their back on the sacred command that was passed on to them.*” Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.90

The Laodicean’s affluent life cooled the peoples’ love for Christ, their eyes blinded by false, temporary pleasures which gave them a very unreal view of life. The result was that God’s Word seemed unimportant to them.

*Doesn’t this sound like the USA?*

- † The half and half position of the church in Laodicea is one of deadly danger.
- † The imagery of “hot,” “cold,” and “lukewarm” water is effectively drawn from local conditions in Laodicea. As noted above the hot spring of Hieropolis, six miles to the north, were renown throughout the ancient world for their medicinal qualities. In the other direction lay the nearby city of Colossae, which was well supplied with pure cold water from deep subterranean wells. Laodicea had neither hot healing water nor cold refreshing water. It was in the middle - its water supply tepid and revolting. The Greek historian Strabo reports that the water of Laodicea had a distinct odor because of its high mineral content and was therefore barely drinkable. Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.91
- † Such was the Christianity of the church in Laodicea. **They stood for nothing.** They were willing to go along with anything. Easy, indifferent **tolerance** characterized this congregation. They had come to the self-serving conclusion that it was unnecessary to choose between truth and error, right and wrong. They would remain comfortably ensconced in the middle, neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. Sadly, the allure of lukewarm religion has been a consistent problem in the history of God’s people despite constant warnings that it is impossible to have it both ways. Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.91
- † Lukewarm has the idea of being “on the fence”, self-sufficiency, self-satisfaction, spiritual indifference noncommittal, *akadia*

† **God's will is that you are "zealous" -- Hot! On Fire!** See Romans 12:11.

† Either hot or cold is fine, because they both are God pleasing; they are images of servanthood; the point is that the "lukewarm" (neither hot nor cold) is the problem ... they weren't doing anything. Jesus asks them to be one of the other, so cold is not a negative, as in hardness of heart, or unresponsiveness

† **Christ notices the status of your relationship with him; and the neglect of that relationship**

## **ZEALOUS ("hot") for the Lord!**

On the summit of Mount Carmel, in dramatic confrontation with the heathen prophets of Baal, Elijah called the people of Israel to decision and reminded them that if the Lord is God, then He is God alone: "*How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God follow him.*" (1 Kings 18:21) Our Lord Himself declared that compromise and co-existence between the way of God and the way of the world was impossible: "*No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.*" (Luke 16:13) Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.92

## **Lukewarm children?**

As we teach our children about Christ we need to be aware that we can teach them just the facts, the truth. But to personally know Christ as one's Lord can never be taught. That saving faith is worked only by the Holy Spirit, through God's Word. Parents and the church can help or hinder that witness to the next generation. **They can help the witness if the importance of faith is evident in their way of life which is notably different from unbelievers.** They can hurt that witness if the next generation perceives that faith is simply an empty hope that means little. Hence we say, **Christianity is as much caught as it is taught.** **A generation that was taught by the example of their parent's that faith in Christ is knowing things without their lives being influenced too much, will be lukewarm.** They will know some facts but do not personally know Christ and will be very lukewarm church members. Revelation,

P.A. Bartz

## **3:16 Spit you out!**

The metaphor continues as Christ warns of impending judgment upon this church. The Lord threatens the lukewarm church with total and utter rejection. The Greek verb for "spit" literally means "to vomit," the drastic physical response of the body to that which is nauseating, corrupt, or poisonous.

† **Even this drastic warning is a call to repentance.** Judgment is very near but it has not yet come. Time is running out but there is still time!

## **Excerpts from the "Lukewarm Laodicean Hymnal"**

Amazing Grace, How Interesting the Sound  
Christ Be My Hobby  
A Comfy Mattress is Our God  
Blest be the Tie That Doesn't Cramp My Style  
I Surrender Some  
Joyful, Joyful We Kinda Like Thee  
Lift Every Voice and Intellectualize  
Oh, How I like Jesus  
Praise God From Whom All Affirmations Flow  
Sit Up, Sit Up for Jesus  
Spirit of the Living God, Fall Somewhere Near Me  
Take My Life and Let Me Be  
When Peace Like a Trickle  
Where He Leads I will Consider Following

- † The ruler of God's creation is repelled, nauseated by those who are "ingloriously neutral in the things that matter most." He will not tolerate a confession that says: "**Here I stand, but I could do something else if you prefer.**" Come, Lord Jesus", R.D.Balge
- † Their attitude fills the Lord with supreme disgust, with unspeakable loathing; it acts upon him literally as an emetic (*causes vomiting*), He is constrained to vomit them out of his mouth. That is the judgment of the Lord upon all such as are not seriously concerned about their Christianity. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary

### 3:17 Wretched, Pitiful, Poor, Blind and Naked

The church of Laodicea is self-deluded. They are complacent, comfortable, and self-satisfied. Their assessment of their spiritual state has no basis in fact. It is a most dangerous illusion. The language of the text refers to spiritual conditions, not material wealth.

- † "It is often noted that Laodicea prided itself on three things; financial wealth, an extensive textile industry, and a popular eye salve which was exported around the world. It is hard not to see here a direct allusion to Laodicea's banking establishments, medical school, and textile industry." Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.94
- † The heart of Laodicea's peril was that **they "do not realize" this grim reality**. They prefer to remain comfortably ensconced in their delusions. As the hymn reminds us, we must come to God as we truly are if we are to come to Him at all:

"Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
Yea, all I need in Thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come." TLH, # 388

### 3:18 Gold, Clothes, And Salve

There is a sense of life and death urgency involved here. The ironic sarcasm of Christ's invitation is powerful and profound. You think that you have everything, but you have nothing. You confidently believe that you have provided for all of your own needs, but you must be completely dependent upon Me. Jesus urges the self-deluded church to cast aside the counterfeits upon which they have relied, and receive instead the reality that He alone can provide.

- † The three suggested purchases -- "**gold**," "**white clothes**," and "**salve**" reflect the threefold description of the Laodiceans' actual condition in the previous phrase -- "**poor**," "**naked**," and "**blind**." In each instance the proposed item is infinitely more valuable than its counterfeit counterpart which the people had provided for themselves.
- † Only one who has **God's creative omnipotence** can offer the advice which He offers; to "**buy without money and without price**" (**Isaiah 55:1**) finer **gold** of greater value than wealthy Laodicea ever had, coin of God's own realm; white **clothing** of the celestial, blessed ones, able to cover the evil nakedness which shames them in the sight of God; an eye **salve** more effective than the one compounded by the famous medics of Laodicea, to give men eyes for both the severity and the kindness of God. Their Creator Lord can give what He demands; His Spirit can make fervent men of these lukewarm saints (cf. Romans 12:11). Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.95



If my eternal salvation depends on always burning to do the Savior's will, always yearning to share Christ's love, always turning fervently to the Spirit for gifts to use in God's service, **THEN I AM LOST**. If Christ is going to spit out everyone who is not hot to win souls, care for souls, pray for souls, I am lost. I am lost. "**Wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked**." Here the Savior preaches the Law to show me my sins, my lost state; to show me where I will go if I am left to myself.

What should we be doing? "**I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see** (3:18)." **What the Lord is offering under these apt pictures is simply the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation**. We have no currency that can buy such gifts, no line of credit to secure what we need. We will have to rely on his generosity, his gracious good will. "**You who have no money come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.**" (Is 55:1)

"Come, Lord Jesus", R.D.Balge

### 3:19 Call to Repent *reiterated*

Lest the congregation misunderstand the purpose for these harsh words of rebuke, the Lord now adds an explanation and an invitation. "**REBUKE AND DISCIPLINE**" are demonstrations of love, the concrete applications of loving concern and compassion. This is tough, real love, not the superficial, permissive sentimentalism that most often passes for love among us.

- † But **the Lord is not interested in these lukewarm people being condemned**. He speaks to them with the hope that they will become full of zeal of the Lord in living, vibrant faith -- living a life of repentance.
- † **The new attitude which God urges upon the Laodiceans is the exact opposite of their lukewarm, apathetic indifference. "Be earnest" -- the Greek text literally says "be zealous"**. The verb is related to the adjective "zestos" ("hot"), used in verses 15 and 16 to condemn the congregation's lukewarmness.

### 3:20 Jesus is knocking

This is one of the best known texts in the Book of Revelation, immortalized by the classic William Holman Hunt painting, "The Light of the World." While the imagery of Christ waiting at the door is often used in the Bible in the context of the imminence of the Final Judgment (cf. Matthew 24:33; Mark 13:29; Luke 12:36; James 5:9), the emphasis here appears to be more personal and immediate. **This gentle, loving invitation represents the call of the Gospel to every sinner through the metaphor of the Savior standing at the door to each man's heart**. In the most incredible role reversal imaginable, the Almighty King comes down from His exalted throne (vs. 21) and patiently asks the beggar who has nothing (vs.17) to receive Him. "Here I am!" the Lord declares, focusing the reader's attention immediately upon the person of the Savior. The verb tenses indicate **continuous, ongoing action**, thus highlighting the patience of the Lord. He not only knocks upon the door but also calls out to identify Himself, "if anyone hears My voice and opens the door." **This is the call of the Gospel.** Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.96



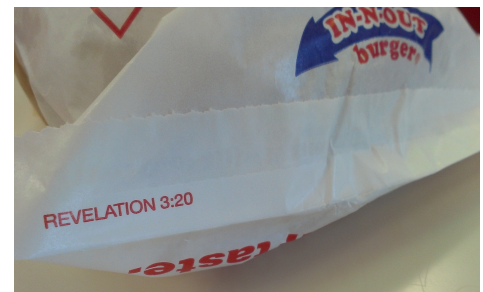
- † The time of mercy is still at hand, the gospel is still being preached. The coming of the Lord is near, however, many events, many happenings in church and state are intended to remind us of the fact and the nearness of his return. Upon us devolves the supreme necessity of hearing his voice, of heeding the word of his gospel and of his will that all men come to the knowledge of the truth. If we thus heed is knocking and obey his voice, then he will enter into our hearts and make his abode with us, hold the feast of his everlasting grace with us, feed us with the heavenly manna of his body, and let us drink of the River of heavenly pleasures forever more. Kretzmann, [Popular Commentary](#)

### 3:20 “Decision Theology” misuse *“If you just [open your heart to Jesus then you will be saved.](#)”*

Decision Theology is “synergism,” the view that man must participate in his own conversion. Faith is always a free gift of God. It is never a work of man, the result of human decision or will. **If any man opens the door to his heart, it is only because through the means of grace, the Gospel in Word and Sacrament, God has moved and enabled him to do so.** Since the fall of our first father Adam, the will of mankind is in bondage to sin (Rom 3:19-20). In the terms of this image, the doors to our hearts are barred and bolted. We cannot open those door nor do we have any desire to do so. Sinful man can and most often does spurn and reject the Gospel call, but he cannot accept it. That must be the work of God and of God alone. In Acts 16:14, Luke describes the conversion of Lydia in this way: *“**And the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.**”* This is the experience of each and every believer. Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.96



- † “The truth is that the King comes to the door, stands there, knocks, calls with His voice. **In this lies the power that moves the will to open the door.** The Lord’s power of love and grace in and by His Word, which is the power of God to save (Romans 1:16), reaches into the heart and moves it to open and to receive. This is the picture here presented.” Lenski, p. 163
- † Often times used to witness to unbelievers; as a picture of Christ knocking on the door of an unbelievers heart. Note: **Popular picture of Christ knocking on a door with no doorknob. It can only be open from within.** *This is the false teaching of decision theology!*
- † Context, though, is that this is sent to a church, to believers, not unbelievers! And the context is sanctification, not justification.
- † See “In and Out” burger wrappers. *Why do you think they chose that specific verse out of the 31,101 other ones?*



### 3:20 Table Fellowship image

The intimacy of the relationship between the believer and His Lord is presented in the image of table fellowship. ... To share a meal together indicated a strong bond of companionship and affection. Thus the eternal celebration of heaven is often depicted in Scripture as a sumptuous banquet.

### 3:21 Sit on Christ's throne

Note that the right to reign with Christ upon His throne is not earned -- it is given. The exaltation of the believer was made possible and foreshadowed by the exaltation of our Lord Himself.

- † Perhaps the best explanation of this is found at the close of Luther's explanation of the Second Article of the Apostles Creed: **Christ has redeemed me . . . that I may be His own and live under Him in His Kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true!** Part of that service to the Lord will involve reigning with Him (see Daniel 7:27 and Revelation 22:5). Revelation, P.A. Bartz

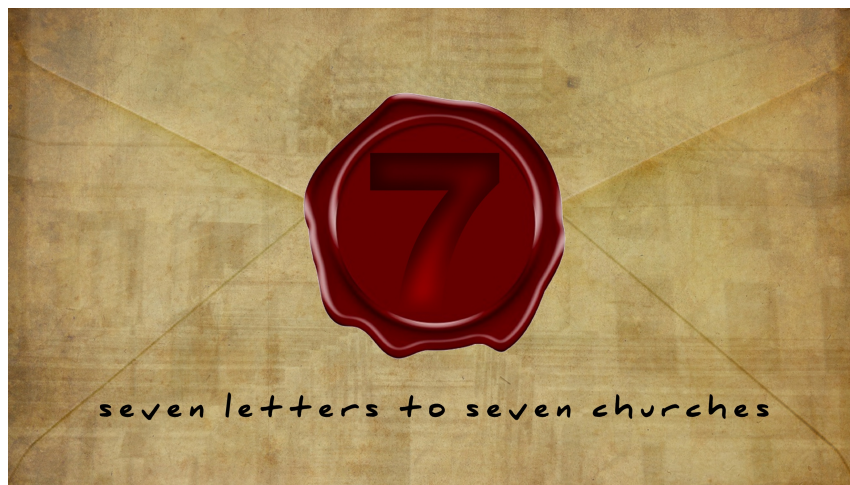
### 3:22 Notice The Plural: Churches

Each letter has ended with this phrase. While each letter has been specifically addressed to particular problems in individual congregations, these individual messages are universally applicable to all congregations. The word **CHURCHES** appearing in the plural here indicates that our Lord wishes us to understand that there are messages here for us, as well. Revelation, P.A. Bartz

#### The messages to the seven churches could be summed up in this way:

1. **Ephesus** "You are strong; but don't forget your first love."
2. **Smyrna** "In your tribulation, be faithful to death."
3. **Pergamum** "In your strength, you are still permitting false doctrine, and this cannot be."
4. **Thyatira** "You are tolerating in your midst an abomination that will bring judgment."
5. **Sardis** "Dead church, repent; or else you will lose all."
6. **Philadelphia** "I have opened the door for mission work before you."
7. **Laodicea** "Realize your poorness; be 'hot' for me; or else I will spit you out."

An Exegesis of Revelation 3:7-13 Paul G. Eckert



# The One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church

Represented by the Seven Churches of Revelation 2-3

Revelation 1 gives us assurance that Christ the Lord is over all things in the End Times, using at least 27 different names, titles, and descriptions. Chapters 2-3 call the Church to

## **Repentance, Faithfulness, and Patient Endurance**

through many and various encouragements and warnings. Repentance, Faithfulness, and Patient Endurance summarizes the One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church's posture and attitude as it lives and works in the End Times.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Warnings</b> to avoid these things</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Encouragement</b> to do these things</p>
<p>Don't Forsake Your First Love Fear Of Suffering False Teachers Idolatry Sexual Immorality Tolerate False Teachers Do Not Follow False Teachers Fall Asleep In Faith Apathy In Faith Deny Christ Grow Weary Lukewarm Faith Spiritual Pride Jezebel types Balaam types Nicolaitan types ½ hearted good works</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p><i>The letters to the seven churches in Asia calls them to prepare for Christ return. Through the seven letters, John warns the churches to prepare for tribulation and to overcome all difficulties through God's Word and Spirit. Jesus' message to the seven churches still applies to us today! In these chapters of Revelation, Christ also calls us to repent and prepare for His return.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>Good News, p.19</small></p>	<p>Repent! Work Hard in Faith Perseverance Do Not Tolerate Wicked People Test Teachers Endure Hardships and Persecution Don't Grow Weary Reject False Teachers Do Not Be Afraid Of Suffering Be Faithful Even Unto Death Remain True To Jesus Do Not Renounce Your Faith Good Works Love Others Serve Others Patient Endurance In Suffering Hold On To What You Have Wake Up! Strengthen Your Faith! Remember What God Has Done For You Hold Fast To The Word Of God Share Your Faith! Keep God's Word! Humility Believe In God And His Word Be Zealous For God And His Kingdom</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>He Who Has Ears To Hear, Let Him Hear What The Spirit Says To The Churches!</i></p>

The **descriptions of Christ** in Revelation 2-3 find their source in Revelation chapter 1

The **promises to the faithful** in Revelation 2-3 find their source in Revelation chapters 21-22