Revelation 3 Commentary

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Supplemental Commentary

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Revelation 3:1

Jesus dictates letters to the remaining three of the *Seven Churches of Asia*. This chapter completes the record of "the things which are" (Rev. 1:19+). The reader is encouraged to "have ears to hear what the Spirit says to the churches", even down to our own day.

the angel

See the discussion concerning the identity of the angel at *Revelation 1:20*.

church in Sardis

See commentary on *Seven Churches of Asia*.

Sardis

Sardis was the ancient capital of Lydia.

Temple of Artemis at Sardis

[1]

Sardis was known for its great wealth and may have been the earliestkingdom (7th century B.C.) to use minted coins.[2]

In John's time it was a trade center known for textile manufacture, dyeing, and jewelry. Sardis had been Lydia's capital and was proverbial for its riches. To this day, our idiom "as rich as Croesus" acknowledges this fact, for Croesus was the king of Sardis who had almost unlimited riches, yet who led the Lydian empire into defeat and decline. Sardis epitomized the complacency, softness and degeneration which invariably ultimately accompany wealth.[3]

It was also considered a mountain fortress[4] which was very difficult to capture, except through the negligence of the defenders:

At the approach of Alexander, . . . the Sardians hastened out to surrender theircity without resistance. . . . the place was again captured by Antiochus III in 214 BC through the negligence of the defenders.[5]

The rock on which Sardis was built is friable, which means that while the slopes were precipitous, because of the cracks and faults, it was climbable. One of Cyrus' soldiers had noticed a Sardian soldier climbing down this slope to retrieve a helmet he had dropped, and so concluded that the slopes were negotiable in that particular spot. So that night he led a party of Persian troops up to the citadel by following the fault in the rock. When they reached the battlements they found them unguarded, for the Sardians considered themselves too safe to need a guard. The battle of King's Mountain in American history is similar to the Sardian collapse, for in that battle the rebels scaled a redoubt while the English relaxed in false confidence of their security. Astonishingly, Sardis did not learn from experience, for two centuries later one of Antiochus' soldiers repeated this feat and again led the capture of an unguarded city which had resisted siege for a year. Twice, the Sardians lost their city because they were too complacent to watch! This historical background underlies Christ's injunction to watchfulness (Rev. 3:2-3+), and Rev. 3:3+ alludes to the means by which the city was lost twice before—a thief in the night.[6]

A large temple dedicated to the Asiatic goddess Cybele stood at Sardis:

Excavations . . . unearthed . . . an exceptionally large (160 by 300feet) temple dedicated to Artemis. Its seventy-eight Ionic columns (of which two are still standing) are each fifty-eight feet in height. . . . It was dedicated to a local Asiatic goddess usually referred to as Cybele, who was identified with the Greek Artemis. This patron deity was believed to possess the special power of restoring the dead to life [cf. Rev. 3:1+].[7]

Being situated in a mountainous region, the city was earthquake-prone:

Sardis, like neighboring Philadelphia, suffered a catastrophic earthquake in AD 17. . . . this was nothing less than the sudden collapse of a great part of the mountain and the consequent disappearance of much of the very site of the original fortress-city.[8]

Because of the earthquake, which drove them from the city proper, and because of the fertility of the soil, many of the people had turned to farming as a means of livelihood, specifically to the cultivation of vineyards. Apparently, because of famine, in A.D. 92 Domitian issued an edict that at least half the vineyards in the provinces be cut down and no new ones planted. This action was designed to increase production of corn which the Empire needed badly. This crisis affected Philadelphia more critically than any other, because no city of Asia depended on the fruit of the vine more than it. Dionysius, god of wine, was the principal deity.[9]

(Some correlate Domitian's edict with Revelation 6:6+, although we believe it to be unlikely.) In the second century, Melito was bishop of this city. [10] but Christianity was completely exterminated in the Hermus Valley in the Middle Ages.[11]In more recent times, Sardis has none of its previous opulence:

Sardis, the once proud capital of Lydia, and the residence of its opulent monarchs, is now reduced to a wretched Turkish village called Sart, the habitation of herdsmen, buffaloes, and oxen, situated at the foot of mount Tmolus, on the banks of the Pactolus, between 30 and 40 miles east from Smyrna. The ruins of Sardis are peculiarly grand, and lift up theirheads, as if to assert their ancient glory; but it now contains not a single Christian family.[12]

The derivation of the name Sardis is uncertain as is the meaning, having been given as *remnant*, "[Some] have derived it from the Hebrew, and have assigned it the signification of *remnant*, or *an escaped few*."[13] *those escaping*, [J. Dwight Pentecost, BORROW *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 152] *renovation*, [Ibid.] *the sun*, [Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Rev. 3:1] *red ones*, [Ibid.] and *prince of joy*.[14]

seven Spirits of God

See commentary on *Revelation 1:4*. Christ emphasizes to this church that He is the source of the *seven Spirits of God* (John 15:26; 16:7) because of His assessment that they *are dead*. It is the specialty of the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, to bring forth life from that which is a lifeless wilderness (Gen. 1:2+):

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:5-8+)

Prior to the Day of Pentecost, Jesus explained that it was the Holy Spirit that would be the source of "rivers of living water" which would flow out of the heart of those believing in Him (John 7:37-39+). This life-giving Spirit was poured forth on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:33+). It was on this day that the *body of Christ* was first animated by the *Spirit of Christ* (Rom. 8:9+). As God had first breathed the "breath of life" to animate dust from which he formed man (Gen. 2:7+), so each believer is animated by the Holy Spirit when he comes to spiritual life and is joined to the body of Christ (1Cor. 12:12-13+). Christ is here emphasizing the Spirit as the means by which they might *strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die* (Rev. 3:2+).

It need hardly be observed how important a witness this verse, when the right interpretation of *"the seven Spirits"* has been seized, bears to the faith of the Western Church on that great point upon which it is at issue with the Eastern, in respect, namely, of the procession of the Holy Ghost. He is indeed the Spirit of the Father *and the Son*.[15]

seven stars

The stars are the angels of the churches. If elders, they are to be men "full of the spirit" (Acts 6:3-5+; Acts 11:24+). See commentary on *Revelation 1:16* and *Revelation 1:20*.

I know

See commentary on *Revelation 2:2*.

have a name that you are alive

Alive is ζῆς [zēs]: "Which needs to be distinguished from the word-group of βίος [bios] ('life'). The former refers to inner life, the latter to external."[16] Christ emphasizes the wide divergence between how the church of Sardis *appears to men* and how it *appears to God*. This underscores a theme which runs throughout Scripture: that those without the Spirit of God are unable to see the world through the eyes of God. The church of Sardis had made *for themselves* a *name*. *Name* is here used to represent fame, reputation, or character. Thus the Sardians were following in the sin of Babel. "And they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth' " (Gen. 11:4).

but you are dead

Jesus says they are *dead*—in the sense of being disconnected from the Father, just as the prodigal (Luke 15:24, 32).

One commentator has said, "Their state is described in a single word—soulless profession-they had a name to live but were dead. It is not scandalous wickedness, but decent death; the form retained, the heart gone; Christ owned in word, ignored in deed; creeds correct, conduct respectable, life departed . . . sound doctrine and outward propriety . . . affections not only waning, but gone. His name held, His Word read, His truth owned, Himself forgotten." . . . When the human spirit does not control some part of the body, there is said to be a partial paralysis. Some pressure upon a nerve center or some other abnormality may cause one foot to be dragged or one hand to be withered instead of maintaining the normal participation in the life of the body. The Holy Spirit should govern and direct the Church which is the Body of Christ.[17]

The *activity* of a fellowship can often be mistaken as an indication of life. But Scripture makes plain that works and activity in and of themselves are no reliable indicator of spiritual life for it is possible for an active fellowship to be comprised of the "living dead" ("Go throughout Christendom . . . and you will often find the Gospel in a coffin."[18] "The letter does not speak of persecution (why would Satan bother to persecute a dead church?)."[19]

It is vain to boast of a correct creed, of right theories, of sound doctrine, if there be no practical godliness, no good works, no positive virtues and active charities and labours. Orthodoxy is important, but orthodoxy alone will not do. The most orthodox in this list is depicted as the deadest. . . . There are, indeed, such things as "dead works;" works that have no life-connection with piety; works put on from without, and not brought forth from within; fruits tied upon the tree, and not the product of its life; which are not at all characteristics of true religion. There may be prayers, vigils, fasts, temples, altars, priests, rites, ceremonies, worship, and still be

no true piety. Heathenism has all these.[20]

True spiritual life comes to the "living dead" by way of spiritual regeneration (Eph. 5:14) and is characterized by the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 1:12, 20; Mt. 4:1; Luke 2:27; Acts 8:29; 10:19; 13:2; 16:9-10; 18:5).

Revelation 3:2

be watchful

A present imperative participle (γίνου γρηγορ ν [ginou grēgrōn = gregoreuo]) : "you be continually watching!" The command to the church at Sardis is the same found throughout Scripture to all believers. They are to be *continuously watching*. "It is not merely the call to be awake; it is to remain awake, to keep a vigil as a watchman in the midst of a sleeping encampment."[21] The Sardian church was to *be watchful* because of the weakness of the flesh. " 'Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak' " (Mt. 26:41+). They were to *watch themselves*:

But take heed to yourselves, **lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly**. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke 21:34-36+) [emphasis added]

They were also to *watch others* in order to guard the fellowship:

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. (Acts 20:28-31+)

If they would not watch, then He would come upon them as a thief (Rev. 3:3+). Unlike the "secure sinner," those who watch will not be taken by surprise.

strengthen the things which remain

The church of Sardis had need of endurance and was to press forward and strengthen those things which had not already died. Evidently, their fellowship had been drawing back from God's calling:

For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: "For yet a little while, *and* He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if *anyone* draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." (Heb. 10:36-38+)

But the Sardian church would be unable to strengthen the things which remain except for a renewed dependence upon the Holy Spirit. For in their own efforts, they were totally incapable of what Jesus here commands.[22] Again we see the purpose for Christ's title as "He who has the seven Spirits of God" when writing to this dying church.

that are ready to die

The branches were almost completely disconnected from the life-giving vine (John 15:5).

works perfect

Perfect is πεπληρωμένα [peplērōmena - pleroo] rather than τέλεια [teleia] indicating works previously prepared and appointed but having been unfulfilled (Eph. 2:10+). The works that they had (Rev. 3:1+) were done to please or impress men and thus their *motivation* was fatally flawed. In this, the Sardian church was following in the footsteps of the religious leaders of Jesus' day: "But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments" (Mt. 23:5). "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Mt. 23:28).

before God

Before *men*, the works were impressive and gave the church a name, but before *God* they were wood, hay, and stubble leaving their appointed true works of God unfulfilled. See *Worldly Churches*. The NU and MT differ from the TR here having *My God*. See Revelation 3:12+.

Revelation 3:3

remember . . . how you have received

The church at Sardis is given a command similar to that of the Ephesian church: to remember what they had earlier received and practiced. Inattention had played a significant part in their drift away from life toward death (Heb. 2:1+).

hold fast

τήρει [tērei], a present tense imperative: "continually hold fast!" Like those who would be blessed by "the words of this prophecy" (Rev. 1:3+), the church at Sardis would need to actively *keep* the things they had heard.

repent

See commentary on μετανοια [metanoia] at *Revelation 2:5*.

if you will not watch

Christians are to watch: (1) for Christ; (2) themselves lest they drift; (3) others lest false brethren or teachers pervert what they have received. Here the emphasis is upon watching for Christ (Mt. 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:33, 35+; Mark 13:37+; Luke 12:36-40+; Lk 21:36+; 1Cor. 1:7+; 1Cor 16:13+; Php. 3:20+; 1Th. 1:10+; 1Th 5:6+; 2Ti. 4:8+; Titus 2:13+; Heb. 9:28+; 2Pe. 3:12+; Rev. 3:2-3+; Rev. 16:15+).

as a thief, and you will not know what hour

Coming *as a thief* always denotes an unexpected coming in judgment because a *thief* comes to rob and destroy. Christ is never said to come for His church *as a thief*. "The first phase of the Lord's coming is as a bridegroom and the second phase is as a thief. He does not come upon His bride as a thief and He does not come upon the apostates and unregenerate world as a bridegroom."[23] Here, the phrase would remind the Sardian church of the historical fall of the city (see commentary on *Revelation 3:1*):

The city had been captured twice in its history, once in 549 B.C. by Cyrus of Persia and again in 195 B.C. by Antiochus the Great, while its inhabitants were indifferently resting in its supposed impregnability. Would Christians there allow the same to happen to them at the hands of one whom they had made their spiritual opponent?[24]

Some believe the immediate context of the letter argues for understanding this threat as pertaining to a localized spiritual coming in judgment:

The context of Rev. 3:3b+ requires that the term "like a thief in the night" does not here refer to the rapture, but rather to Christ coming in judgment like that threatened to the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:5+), for this coming can be averted by repentance, but that cannot apply to the rapture. Here the "thief" aspect is a reminder drawn from the embarrassing history of the city.[25]

At a time when the Sardian church least expected Him, judgment would fall on the local assembly. Yet even here when a local application appears in view, we find Scripture teaching a general principle which will apply at the time of the end. "The threat here is not related to His second coming, but is that the Lord would come and destroy the Sardis church if there is no revival. It can also be extrapolated into a warning of the judgment that faces all dead churches at Christ's return."[26] There are indicators that the coming could be eschatological: "In other alleged cases of Christ's coming for special judgment (cf. Rev. 2:5, 16+, Rev 22-23+), consequences are explicitly stated, but here no such penal result is given. Apparently it is understood to be Christ's punishment of disloyalty at His second advent."[27] Elsewhere, Scripture relates that the Day of the Lord will come in a similar manner:

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a **thief** in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a **thief**. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. (1Th. 5:2-10+) [emphasis added]

But the day of the Lord will come as a **thief** in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. (2Pe. 3:10+) [emphasis added]

On the Day of the Lord, Jesus comes *as a thief* in judgment upon an unsuspecting world:

But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating

and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two *women will be* grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. 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. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an **hour** you do not expect. (Mt. 24:37-44)[28] [emphasis added]

Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!' (Mark 13:33-37+)

Let your waist be girded and *your* lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed *are* those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat*, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants. 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. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an **hour** you do not expect. (Luke 12:35-40+)[29] [emphasis added]

"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." (Rev. 16:15+) [emphasis added]

Christ's coming as a thief has no reference to His coming for the church at the rapture. His thief-like coming occurs at the day of the Lord. Since Paul tells the Thessalonians they were well acquainted with the prophetic truth concerning the day of the Lord, this day is not to be identified with the Rapture, about which Paul did need to write to clarify their understanding. The day of the Lord begins with the Great Tribulation, and ends with the close of the Millennium. Those who shall "not escape" (1Th. 5:3+) are those who are not brethren, who fail to watch and pray (Luke 21:36+), are not counted worthy to escape, and therefore go on into the tribulation period.[30]

Paul said much the same thing to the Thessalonian church as Jesus says here to the church at Sardis—to the faithful who remain watching, Christ will *not come as a thief*:

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. (1Th. 5:2-6+) [emphasis added]

See *Trouble Ahead*.

will not

The negation here is with οὐ μὲ [ou me], the strongest possible form of negation in Koine Greek.[31] No matter the resolve, awareness, or intelligence of those who fail to continuously watch, they will be spiritually deceived and will not know the time.

Revelation 3:4

a few even in Sardis

God never lumps the faithful in with the errant in his assessment. Even in the midst of a wicked culture, there are those who trust in Him which He will never forsake (Ge 6:9; 18:25; 19:22; Jos. 6:17+).

not defiled their garments

Before coming to faith, these few were wearing "filthy rags" in comparison to the righteousness required by God (Isa. 64:6). Having trusted in Christ, His righteousness has been imputed to them and they are positionally holy. Even then, in their walk, they could become defiled by fleshly activities of the world (Jas. 1:27+; Jude 23+). By confessing their sins, these few had steadfastly remained in close fellowship with God (1Jn. 1:9+).

shall walk with me

The picture of *walking* is two-fold: (1) the faithful are presently guided by the Spirit to walk in His ways (Gen. 5:22; 1S. 2:9; Job

23:14; Ps. 37:5, 23; 40:2; 66:9; 119:133; Pr. 3:6; 16:9; 19:21; 20:24; Isa. 2:3; 30:21; 48:17; Jer. 6:16; 10:23; Rom. 8:1, 4-6; Gal. 5:16); (2) in the future, the redeemed will have full fellowship with God as did Adam in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8; Rev. 21:3+; Rev 22:3-4+).

in white

They will wear *white* garments in contrast to the "filthy garments" they wore prior to coming to faith:

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the Lord stood by. (Zec. 3:3-5)

These are those whose sin has been atoned by the blood of Jesus, who "wash their garments in the blood of the Lamb." Those at Sardis in John's day are to be followed by a constant stream of faithful throughout history culminating in those who stand firm to obtain the crown of life during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:9-17+). Those slain for the word of God and for the testimony they held are given white robes to wear (Rev. 6:9-11+). The *white* color speaks of the righteousness of Christ, but also of the marriage garments worn by His bride and those who attend the wedding feast who are found to be "spotless and without blemish" and "white and clean":

But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. (Mat. 22:11)

"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 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. . . . And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. (Rev. 19:7-14+)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:25-27)

they are worthy

Their worthiness is found in the worthiness of Him on Whom they have believed. Those who were at one time invited to the wedding, but rejected the Bridegroom were not worthy to attend. "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy" (Mat. 22:8). Those with faith in Christ are adopted into God's family and are found worthy to attain the resurrection of life (Luke 20:34-36, the *first resurrection*, see commentary at *Revelation 2:11*).

God's Word does not refuse to ascribe a *worthiness* to men (Mat. 10:10-11; 22:8; Luke 20:35; 21:36; 2Th. 1:5, 11); although this worthiness must ever be contemplated as *relative* and not *absolute*; as resting on God's free acceptance of an obedience which would fain be perfect, even while it actually *is* most imperfect, and on this his acceptance and allowance of it alone.[32]

Revelation 3:5

overcomes

See *Who is the Overcomer?*

clothed in white garments

See commentary on *Revelation 3:4*. *Clothed* is περιβαλε ται [peribaleitai], the overcomer will *cause himself* to be clothed in white.[33] The overcomer will be *clothed in white garments* like those in Laodicea who are counseled "to buy ... white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed" (Rev. 3:18+). This clothing *covers* nakedness, reminding us of the Hebrew word for *atonement*, כָּפַר [kuppar]: "*pual* - to be covered over."[34] The *white garments* are a symbol of redemption (Rev. 4:4+; Rev 5:8-9+; Rev 7:9-17+). The sin of the overcomer will be removed from God's sight by being covered by the "righteousness of God" (Rom. 3:5, 21-26; 10:3; 2Cor. 5:21; Php. 3:9; Jas. 1:20).Some have also seen the *white garments* as a possible allusion to the glorified state of the redeemed (Dan. 12:3; Mat. 13:43; Rom. 8:19, 23; Php. 3:21).

The armies of heaven who appear with the warrior Messiah are "arrayed in fine linen, white and pure" (Rev. 19:14+). It would seem, therefore, that the white garments promised to the overcomer in Rev. 3:5+ represent an attire appropriate to the heavenly state. Since they are made white by washing in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:13+), the figure is highly appropriate to portray justification.[35]

I will not

This is emphatic: a double negative (Luke 21:33; John 6:37; 8:51; 13:8; Rev. 2:11+).

blot out his name from the Book of Life

The church at Sardis had a name and likely had an official roll containing the names of those who attended. Yet it was dead. Jesus directs the church members to be concerned whether they are in the *Book of Life* rather than the church role. See *Book of Life*.

confess his name

Christ taught the same in the gospels—that whoever would confess Him before men, in turn, He would confess before His Father and the angels (Mat. 10:32; Luke 12:8). What powerful incentive this is for our witness of Him in the face of skeptics and mockers! When standing before such men, let us consider ourselves to be standing before the very throne of the Father in our confession of the Son. "Coming immediately after the promise of not erasing the overcomer's name from the book of life, this promise implies that on that future day of reckoning the judge will acknowledge the names written in the book as those who belong to Him."[36]

Revelation 3:6

let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches

See commentary on *Revelation 2:7*.

Revelation 3:7

the angel

See the discussion concerning the identity of the angel at *Revelation 1:20*.

church in Philadelphia

See commentary on *Seven Churches of Asia*. Philadelphia was built by Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamum (died 138 BC) from which it derives its name.

Architrave Fragment at Philadelphia

[37]

Philadelphia is twenty-seven miles E.S.E. from Sardis[38] and suffered frequent earthquakes, one of which nearly destroyed it during the reign of Tiberius Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, so called from its founder, Attalus Philadelphus, still exists in the town called Allah-shear, "the city of God." . . . The number of houses is said to be about 3000, of which 250 are Greek, the rest Turkish; and the Christians have twenty-five places of worship, five of them large and regular churches, a resident bishop, and twenty inferior clergy.[39]

He who is holy,

Here again we see the deity of Christ (and the Trinity) in the application of a title by the Son which is uniquely the Father's. This title is applied to יהוה [Yahweh] in the OT (Isa. 6:3; 40:25; 43:15). The holiness of Jesus is a reflection of his identification with the Father in the Godhood. "I and *My* Father are one" (John 10:30). "Hagios characterizes Jesus, not so much as the sinless one, but as one especially set apart, belonging exclusively to God."[40]There is only *one* who is holy, an attribute required as the perfect sacrifice (Isa. 53:4-11; Heb. 10:14). No other man could bear the sins of other men since they could not even bear their own sin (Heb. 7:27). He is holy not only in the sense of being *perfect and without sin* (Isa. 53:9; John 8:46; 14:30; 2Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 9:14; 1Pe. 1:19; 2:22; 1Jn. 3:5), but because of his *uniqueness and separateness*—there is none other like Him. "And you shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine" (Lev. 20:26). His name is "Holy" (Isa. 57:15) and he is righteous in all His ways (Ps. 145:17). He is the "Holy One" Who the Father had promised would not be allowed to see corruption (Ps. 16:10) and thus would be raised from the dead.The holiness of God is the subject of great angelic praise throughout Scripture (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8+). All those in the spiritual realm, even the demons, recognize this attribute of Christ (Mark 1:24). Yet, this truth was sadly lacking on earth where the "Holy One" was denied by unholy men who asked for a murderer in His place (Acts 3:14; 4:27).

He who is true

Another attribute of the Trinity: God cannot lie (Num. 23:19; Rom. 3:4; Heb. 6:18; Tit. 1:2). Jesus tells the Laodiceans that His witness is faithful and *true* (Rev. 3:14+)—what He says is *undeniable* in its accuracy. This is why it is He who will judge and avenge the blood of the martyrs (Rev. 6:10+; 19:11+). Because He Himself is *true*, His "words will by no means pass away" (Mat. 24:35).

key of David

The *key* indicates the governmental authority of *David*.[41] He is the promised king Who will rule from the throne of David (2S. 7:13-17; Ps. 89:4, 28; Isa. 9:7; 16:5; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Amos 9:11; Zec. 6:13; Mat. 19:28; 25:31; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:30).Jacob prophesied that a ruler would arise from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10). Isaiah prophesied of a coming child with an eternal kingdom that would rule from David's throne (Isa. 9:6-7). Gabriel repeated this promise to Mary at the annunciation: "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32).The *key of David* was laid on the *shoulder* of Eliakim who acted as prime minister and who determined who would be allowed to see King Hezekiah. He also would make decisions only the king could overthrow. His was a position of great authority and trust:

Then it shall be in that Day, that I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah; I will clothe him with your robe and strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open. I will fasten him *as* a peg in a secure place, and he will become a glorious throne to his father's house. (Isa. 22:20-23)

This key was properly handled by the king (Rev. 3:7+), and therefore by the "house-mayor" only in his stead. The power of the keys consisted not only in the supervision of the royal chambers, but also in the decision who was and who was not to be received into the king's service. There is a resemblance, therefore, to the giving of the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter under the New Testament. But there the "binding" and "loosing" introduce another figure, though one similar in sense; whereas here, in the "opening" and "shutting," the figure of the key is retained.[42]

The key being *laid on his shoulder* speaks of *committing responsibility into his hand* and alludes to Isaiah's prophecy of the ultimate Davidic ruler:

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; **And the government will be upon His shoulder**. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isa. 9:6-7) [emphasis added]

Being both God and man, in the line of David (Mat. 1:1, 6; Luke 3:31), Christ alone has the authority to open the scroll initiating the judgments which usher in the Davidic kingdom upon the earth. "But one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.' " (Rev. 5:5+).Some interpreters see these keys as being identical with the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Mat. 16:19; Heb. 3:6).[43] Peter was given the keys to the kingdom and was personally present when each of the 3 person groups (Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles: Acts 1:8) first received the Holy Spirit.[44] Jesus chastised the scribes and Pharisees, "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in" (Mat. 23:13). Instead, authority to enter the kingdom of heaven was entrusted to a simple fisherman (Mat. 16:19). The authority of heaven stands behind the Spirit-led decisions of the church (Mat. 18:18; John 20:23).Concerning the keys of Hades and Death, see commentary on *Revelation 1:18*.

He who opens and no one shuts

ο ανοιγων και ουδεις κλεισει [ho anoigōn kai oudes kleisei]: "the one presently opening and no one shall shut". He is *actively* holding open the door such that no one else can shut it.

shuts and no one opens

κλειων και ουδεις ανοιγει [kleiōn kai oudeis anoigei]: "while presently shutting and no one is presently opening". He is *actively* shutting things which are to remain shut. Men must respond while the door is held open by God for once it is shut, there is no recourse for entry:

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. (Mat. 25:10)

When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from.' (Luke 13:25)

Revelation 3:8

I know

See commentary on *Revelation 2:2*.

open door

Θύραν ⸀νεῳγμένην [Thyran eneōgmenēn]: "a door while having been opened" (perfect tense) - the door now stands open after *having been opened* by Jesus. Although Jesus is knocking at a *shut* door in Laodicea (Rev. 3:20+), at Philadelphia He Himself holds the door *open* such that *no one can shut it*. This door in Philadelphia could represent the door of evangelism and illumination without which human promulgation of the gospel falls on unreceptive ears (Luke 24:45; Acts 14:27; 16:14; 1Cor. 16:9; 2Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3). See commentary on *Revelation 3:20*.In view of the mention of the *key of David* (Rev. 3:7+) and *synagogue of Satan* (Rev. 3:9+), it seems more likely the door provides entrance into the Messianic Kingdom where Christ will rule from the throne of David (see commentary on *Revelation 3:21*).[45]

It speaks of a sure entrance into the Messianic Kingdom, promised to this church as a reward for their faithfulness. No one, not even those of "the synagogue of Satan," can shut them out. Jewish opponents would seek to deny Gentiles, such as Christians in this city, entrance into the Messianic Kingdom.[46]

In view of Jesus' subsequent promise to the overcomer, "I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world" (Rev. 3:10+), perhaps this door that is held open and which no man can shut is a sure pathway to heaven for the faithful at the time of the Rapture: "After these things I looked, and behold, a **door** standing **open** in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, 'Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.' " [emphasis added] (Rev. 4:1+). See *Rapture*.

a little strength

Even though they have but little strength, they will be able to avail themselves of the door since Christ ensures it remains open. Some believe this should be translated without the indefinite article, "little strength" as an indication of weakness rather than power.[47] The ministry of the church at Philadelphia would be all the more effective because in their strength their accomplishments would be undeniably of God (2Cor. 12:9; Php. 4:13). Others believe that the commendations given to this church are an indication of their spiritual vitality so that this phrase "must refer to the church's limited influence because of its numerical smallness."[48]

kept My word

The church at Philadelphia had faithfully kept His word. They had preserved its meaning and applied it to their own lives. They were blessed with those who keep the words of this prophecy (Rev. 1:3+; Rev 22:7+). It is by keeping his word—and the commandments therein—that the Philadelphian church *demonstrated* the depth of their love for Him (John 14:21-24).In our own day, there are many pressures attempting to dissuade believers from keeping His word. "We are asked by some to abandon Genesis to 'science,' salvation by redemption to anthropology, the life of the Spirit to psychology, the very Word itself to higher criticism."[49]

not denied My name

They had not denied Him by their words (Mat. 10:32-33; 26:70-72; Luke 12:8-9; 1Jn. 2:22-23) or through their actions (Pr. 30:9; Acts 3:13-15; 1Ti. 5:8). In the midst of the ultimate test, the church at Pergamos held fast to His name and did not deny His faith. (See commentary on *Revelation 2:13*.) In the days of the Tribulation, many will deny His name by taking the name of another (John 5:43; Rev. 13:17+; Rev 14:11+).

Revelation 3:9

synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not

See commentary on *Revelation 2:9*.

but lie

ψεύδονται [pseudontai], present tense, middle voice: *they themselves are presently lying*. They are making this ongoing claim

themselves.

worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you

In the local context, Christ would give converts who were formerly of the "synagogue of Satan" to the Philadelphian church.[50] The worship would not be *to* the Philadelphian believers, but *before* them in recognition that God has *loved* them and favored them (Dan. 2:46-47).[51] "That the persecuting Jews would one day be forced to come and worship before your feet does not mean that the latter will be worshiped as deities, but they will be sitting enthroned with Christ (Rev. 3:21+), before whom, someday, every knee will bow (Php. 2:10)."[52]This is an allusion to numerous passages in the OT which indicate that in the Millennium, Gentiles will come and bow down to Israel in recognition that God is with them (Isa. 45:15; 49:22-23; 60:14-16). Zechariah described a time when Gentiles would honor faithful Jews because, "we have heard *that* God *is* with you":

Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, 'Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD, and seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also.' Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD." Thus says the LORD of hosts: "In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard *that* God *is* with you.' " (Zec. 8:20-23)

In the *church age*, just the opposite is true—God elevates the faithful, both Gentile and Jew, over the national Jew who rejects Messiah Jesus.[53] The unique role of favor enjoyed by the Church is intended to provoke the unbelieving Jewish nation to jealousy (Dt 32:21; Isa. 65:1-2; Rom. 10:19-21; 11:11, 14; Rev. 3:9+). "What the Jews expected from the pagans, they themselves will be forced to render to the followers of Jesus."[54]

In light of the general nature of the application of all seven of these messages, the prophecy must look forward to the time when the whole church enters the Messianic Kingdom. The people of Israel will have an entirely different attitude toward the church as Christ's bride because they will by then have turned to Christ themselves.[55]

This verse does not distinguish *Gentiles* from *Jews*, but *faithful* from *faithless*. The Philadelphian church included *Jewish* believers (Rom. 9:27).

In connexion with this promise, there is an interesting passage in the Epistle of Ignatius to this same Philadelphian Church (c. 6), implying the actual presence in the midst of it, of converts from Judaism, who now preached the faith which once they persecuted.[56]

The formerly non-believing Jews from the *synagogue of Satan* would *worship before* their believing *Jewish* countrymen as well as the believing Gentiles. (Lest we forget, the writer of the Revelation is himself a son of Abraham by birth!)God *loved* them as was *demonstrated* by the cross (John 3:14-17; Rev. 1:5+). "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins" (1Jn. 4:10).

Revelation 3:10

to persevere

Perseverance is especially needed in the midst of adversity. Jesus said that it would be by patience that believers "possess your souls" (Luke 21:16-19). *Persevere* is πομον ς [hypomonēs], which may include the idea of expectation related to the promise to be kept from the hour:

Arndt and Gingrich hold that the word hupomone sometimes meant '(patient) expectation.' They indicated that is its meaning in the expression 'patience of Jesus Christ' in Revelation 1:9+ and that perhaps that is its meaning in Revelation 3:10+. . . . One thing in favor of this view is Christ's exclamation in Rev. 3:11+, 'Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast.[57]

keep you from the hour of trial

A large body of discussion attends this phrase. The debate centers on whether *from* (εκ [ek]) here denotes *out of* or *through*. Is the promise to keep the church *out of* the trial or to preserve it *through* the trial?Proponents of the *kept through* view observe other passages where εκ [ek] can have this meaning.[58] They also observe examples in Scripture where God's people are protected in the midst of God's judgment:

On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark. (Gen. 7:13)

Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague

shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt. (Ex. 12:13)

Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain. (Isa. 26:20-21)

"Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." . . . They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. (Rev. 7:3+; Rev 9:4+)

Proponents of the *kept from* view point to the fact that the most natural use of ἐκ [ek] indicates *out of* and that if the alternate meaning were in view, another more suitable preposition would have been used.[59] They too can point to passages which support their view—where the faithful are *removed* prior to God's judgment:

And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him. (Gen. 5:24)

And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare *it* for the fifty righteous that were in it?" . . . Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of ten." (Gen. 18:23-32)

And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. (Gen. 19:21-22)

The problem cannot be solved simply by appeal to similar passages since *both models* of protection are found in Scripture. This is because saints occupying different roles in history find themselves in different situations with regard to what God is doing in their midst. There is not a "one size fits all" approach to how God chooses to protect the faithful: at the time of Noah's flood, Enoch "walked with God and he *was* not, for God took him" (Gen. 5:24), yet Noah and his family were preserved *through* the flood within the Ark (Gen. 7:13). We believe that by these typological examples, God is teaching us that some saints will be raptured whereas others—who come to faith later—will be protected in the midst of His wrath.But, the simple answer to the question at hand is found by reading the promise more carefully, for the promise is not to be kept from *the trial*, but from *the hour of trial*. The church will not even experience the trial for it will be *kept from the hour* when the trial is visited upon the earth.

Christ promised to keep these church saints form the *time period* characterized by the testing Christ had in mind. If the Lord had meant that He would keep them from just the testing itself, He could have made that very clear by omitting the words 'the hour' and simply saying, 'I will keep you from the testing.'[60]

When the all-important word *hour* is factored into the discussion, it becomes clear that the promise relates to the *time* of trial and not its effects. "When Jesus in his human nature prayed 'remove this cup from me [Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42],' and the parallel or equivalent request, 'save me from this hour [John 12:27],' he was not praying to be spared during the hour, but to be kept from it, which settles the meaning of the expression here."[61] Too often, commentators fail to grasp this important distinction. For example:

It is far from clear that the removal of Christians from the earth would be the only possible way in which Jesus could *keep* His people *from* **the wars and plagues** anticipated to occur at that time. [emphasis added][62]

But this line of reasoning is flawed because the verse says nothing about being kept from *wars and plagues*—the promise is to be kept from the *hour* or *time*.A serious problem with the *kept through* view is that God's promise is of little merit in view of the fact that Scripture records multitudes of the faithful will suffer violent death during this period (Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; Rev. 7:9-16+; Rev 12:11+; Rev 13:7+; Rev 20:4+):[63]

Even if the church saints were to be shielded from the testing of God's wrath will bring on the earth in the period of testing Christ had in mind, the Scriptures (Rev. 6:9-11+; Rev 13:7, 15+; Rev 20:4+) make it clear that many of the saints alive on the earth during that period will be martyred by unbelievers. Thus, even though they will not be put to death by God's wrath, they will still experience violent death as if they had not been shielded from God's wrath. This militates against the answer that Christ will shield or protect the saints in or through that period of testing.[64]

This verse does not say that the Church will be merely kept safe *during* the trial, but it will be kept *from the very hour* of trial, that is, from the very *time* of it. This requires a removal before the Tribulation ever occurs. If Revelation 3:10+ means that the Church will be kept safe during the Tribulation, then something goes terribly wrong. Throughout the Tribulation, saints are being killed on a massive scale (Rev. 6:9-11+; Rev 11:7+; Rev 12:11+; Rev 13:7, 15+; Rev 14:13+; Rev 17:6+; Rev 18:24+). If these saints are Church saints,

they are *not* being kept safe and Revelation 3:10+ is meaningless. Only if Church saints and Tribulation saints are kept distinct does the promise of Revelation 3:10+ make any sense.[65]

This *hour of trial* is said to *come upon the whole world* (see below) and cannot relate to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 as some hold for there was no need to protect the Philadelphian church from events hundreds of miles distant which had offered no direct physical threat to Asia Minor. This promise relates to a unique time of trial yet future that all believers shall escape due to their participation in the Rapture. In this, the passage has in common a typological and future application like that of Revelation 2:20-22+ where *Jezebel* is cast into *great tribulation*. See commentary on *Revelation 2:22*. See *Rapture*.

which shall come

τ ς μελλούσης ρχεσθαι [tēs mellousēs erchesthai], *the one about to come*. "The participle τ ς μελλούσης [tēs mellousēs] ('which is about to') modifies ρας [hōras], 'hour,' rather than πειρασμο [peirasmou], 'trial,' showing that it is the hour, not the trial, that is prominent in the statement."[66]

the whole world

Some interpreters take *world* (ο κουμένης [oikoumenēs]) as denoting the land in Israel or the Mediterranean in order to find fulfillment in the events attending Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

In A.D. 68, the death of Nero, and the civil wars that followed, greatly threatened the stability of the Roman Empire, until Vespasian was made emperor in A.D. 70. During this same period (A.D. 66-70), the Jews were embroiled in a fight for the survival of their nation against the Romans . . . which they lost.[67]

It is true that this term is used in contexts where its scope is not global (Luke 2:1; Acts 11:28; 17:6; 19:27). However the term is also used in a global sense elsewhere (Mat. 24:14; Luke 4:5; Luke 21:26; Acts 17:31; Rom. 10:18; Heb. 1:6; 2:5; Rev. 12:9+; 16:14+).

This same expression is used in Revelation 16:14+ to refer to the kings of the whole inhabited earth gathering together to battle at Armageddon in conjunction with the sixth bowl judgment . . . it was used in Jesus' statement concerning the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom in all the inhabited earth to all nations during the future tribulation period (Mat. 24:14 [cf. Rev. 14:6+]). In both of these passages, it must refer to the entire inhabited earth, not just the Roman Empire.[68]

Thus, it is not a technical term and it's meaning is determined by the context. Even if we permit the preterist interpretation that *world* here means all the *known* world, the events of Nero in Rome and the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 had little impact at Philadelphia in Asia Minor:

The Neronian persecution was limited to Rome as far as the data tell us, and there is no evidence for it extending to the province of Asia at that time.[69]

What does a localized judgment hundreds of miles away have to do with the seven churches of Asia? John uses two long chapters in addressing those churches regarding the implications of the coming of Christ for them. For instance, the promise to shield the Philadelphian church from judgment (Rev. 3:10-11+) is meaningless if that judgment occurs far beyond the borders of that city.[70]

The context of the book of Revelation and the events which it describes—the wrath of God being poured forth on an unbelieving world prior to the return of Christ—argue for the global sense here. This time was described by Jesus in terms which are clearly global:

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. (Mat. 24:21-22)

For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke 21:35-36)

Of special interest is Jesus' statement recorded by Mark. In describing the uniqueness of this time, He mentioned *since the beginning of creation*, another indication of global scope. This is in contrast with the words told Daniel by the angel that it would be the most unique time *since there was a nation* when describing its effects upon the Jewish nation (Dan. 12:1).

For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been **since the beginning of the creation** which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days. (Mark 13:19-20) [emphasis added]

An early teaching from the Didache alludes to this passage and takes it in a global sense:

For as lawlessness increases, they will hate and persecute and betray one another. And then the deceiver of the world will appear as a son of God and "will perform signs and wonders," and the earth will be delivered into his hands, and he will commit abominations the likes of which have never happened before. (5) Then **all humankind will come to the fiery test**, and "many will fall away" and perish [emphasis added][71]

3.3.10.1 - Earth Dwellers

to test those who dwell upon the earth

Both Isaiah and Zephaniah described this day:

For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain. (Isa. 26:21)

The great day of the LORD *is* near; *It is* near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. That day *is* a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day ofdarkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers. "I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like refuse." Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, for He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land. (Zep. 1:14-18)

The tribulation and wrath associated with this coming hour is intended *to test* those whose home, citizenship, and focus is earthward rather than heavenly.[72]The phrase *those who dwell upon the earth* takes on a soteriological/eschatological meaning in the book of Revelation for it denotes the *unsaved at the time of the end who steadfastly continue in their rejection of God* In contrast to the faithful who are *aliens* and *sojourners* upon the earth (Lev. 25:23; Num. 18:20, 23; 1Chr. 29:15; Ps. 39:12; 119:19; John. 15:19; 17:14, 16; Php. 3:20; Heb. 11:13; 1Pe. 2:11) and whose hope is heavenward (Heb. 11:13-16; Rev. 13:6+), these that *dwell* upon the earth are trusting in man and his environment.[73] These are the spiritual offspring of the humanists of our day. Believers are not among these earth dwellers, for the earth dwellers ultimately hate believers![74] "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19). When the earth dwellers give us praise and are in love with us, then it is time for us to reassess the validity of our heavenly witness.The time of testing will come unexpectedly upon "those who dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Luke 21:35). They will suffer through a time of testing like none before and they will endure both the wrath of God (Rev. 6:16-17+) and Satan (Rev. 12:12+)! They will be subjected to incredible deception (2Th. 2:11; Rev. 13:12-14+; 17:8+),[75] will worship both Satan and the Antichrist (Rev. 13:4+, Rev 13:8+) and willingly participate in the slaughter of those who remain faithful to God (Rev. 6:10+; Rev 11:10+). Even though every nation, tribe, tongue, and people will hear the gospel during this time of testing, the majority will stand confirmed in their rejection of God (Rev. 14:6+):

All the classes [of men named here] literally reside on the earth, but the phrase referred to is one of moral signification and import. They are apostates from Christianity, having deliberately and determinately rejected the heavenly calling, and chosen the earth. *God* may have heaven; *they* are determined to have the earth as their place and portion.[76]

All of these Revelation references to "them that dwell upon the earth" clearly indicate that they will be unsaved people of the future period of testing who will never get saved. . . . In spite of the devastating horrors of the sixth trumpet, which will kill one-third of mankind, the earth-dwellers will not repent of their wicked deeds (Rev. 9:20-21+). The fourth bowl will cause people to be scorched with great heat; the fifth bowl will cause excruciating pain; and the sixth bowl will cause hailstones weighing approximately 94 pounds each to bombard people. Although they will recognize that these are God's wrath judgments, the earth-dwellers will blaspheme Him rather than repent (Rev. 16:1, 7, 8-11, 21+).[77]

> **Additional Comment from Glossary 5.2.18 - Earth Dweller** - The phrase "those who dwell upon the earth" takes on a soteriological and eschatological meaning in the book of Revelation for it denotes the unsaved at the time of the end worship the Beast and who steadfastly continue in their rejection of God. See earth dwellers. See *Beast Worshipers are Unique*.
>
> **Additional Comment on EARTH DWELLERS from Revelation 6:10** - Their persecutors appear to be currently living on the earth which argues for understanding these as recent martyrs from the times described by the seals. This phrase denotes the earth dwellers and has significance far beyond merely designating people who happen to be living upon the earth. In this book, it takes on a soteriological and eschatological sense as a technical phrase describing those in the end times who refuse salvation, persecute the saints, and

continue to blaspheme God in the midst of judgment (Rev. 3:10+; Rev 6:10+; Rev 11:10+; Rev 12:12+; Rev 13:8+, 12+, 14+; Rev 14:6+; Rev 17:8+).[72] These are the ones being tested by this time of trial from God (Rev. 3:10+) and rejoice when God's two witnesses are killed (Rev. 11:10+). It is they who are subject to the wrath of both God and the devil (Rev. 12:12+) and who will be deceived into worshiping the beast (Rev. 13:12+, 14+). Even though an angel preaches the everlasting gospel to each one (Rev. 14:6+), they continue in their rejection of God to the end. Therefore, their names are not written in the Book of Life (Rev. 17:8+). See *Book of Life*.

See *Beast Worshipers are Unique*.Like the believers of Philadelphia, those who trust in Christ prior to this time will be *kept from the hour*. Yet Scripture also records numerous saints who will come to faith during this horrific period and will walk through the events of their day—often ending in the ultimate witness—death (Rev. 7:9-16+; Rev 12:11+; Rev 13:7+; Rev 20:4+).Some suggest that the *trial* or test of this time period will have at least threepurposes: (1) to serve as a witness to God (Dan. 11:35; 12:10); (2) to purge the rebels from Israel and turn the elect to God (Zec. 13:7-9; Mark 13:13); (3) to demonstrate the unrepentant state of the earth dwellers.[78] Even as the *earth dwellers* remain steadfast in their rejection of God, the believing Jewish remnant will swell:

"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion," says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones. And it shall come to pass in all the land," says the LORD, "*That* two-thirds in it shall be cut off *and* die, but *one*-third shall be left in it: I will bring the *one-third* through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This *is* My people'; and each one will say, 'The LORD *is* my God.' " (Zec. 13:7-9)

Only the faithful will dare risk supporting the Jewish faithful during this massive outpouring of anti-Semitic and anti-Christian sentiment (Mat. 25:31; Rev. 12:13+). See *Trouble Ahead*.

Revelation 3:11

I am coming quickly

"The placement of this fifth promise at this point is clear implication that the deliverance of the faithful will occur in conjunction with His coming. It holds open the possibility that His coming will happen before this generation passes, but does not guarantee it. This heightens the expectancy of Christ's coming soon, a possibility which is stressed further by the presence of tachy ('soon')."[79] See commentary on *Revelation 1:1*. See *Imminency*.

hold fast

κράτει [kratei], a present tense imperative: "be continually holding fast!" The same thought as those who are blessed in Revelation 1:3+.

that no one may take your crown

The crown *of life* was promised to the overcomer in Smyrna (Rev. 2:10+). Since a specific crown is not identified, "Perhaps here the more general meaning of victory attached tostephanon should remain undefined."[80] See *Crowns*.

Revelation 3:12

overcomes

See. *Who is the Overcomer?*

I will make him a pillar in the temple

Some have seen this as an allusion to the pillars inSolomon's Temple. "The reference here to Solomon is unmistakable. He it was who built the temple, and put in its porch those mysterious pillars 'Jachin [*i.e., He shall establish*] and Boaz [*i.e., In it is strength*]' (1K. 7:13-22; 2Chr. 3:17)."[81] Others find the analogy flawed in this instance:

To find any allusion here . . . to the two monumental pillars, Jachin and Boaz, which Solomon set up, not in the temple, but in the open vestibule before the temple (1K. 7:21; 2Chr. 3:15, 17), I must say, appears to me quite beside the mark; and if there were any question on this point, the words which follow, *"and he shall go no more out,"* appear entirely decisive upon this point. These famous pillars were *always without* the temple; they would therefore have served very ill to set forth the blessedness of theredeemed, who should be *always within* it.[82]

The language has much in common with *Temple* language elsewhere in the NT which is applied to the body of the believer and the presence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. See *Temple of the Believer*.Since there is no *Temple* in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22+), this promise may be similar to the promise concerning theMillennium made to the Thyatiran overcomer (Rev. 2:27+) and denote participation in the Millennial Temple during the Messianic Age.[83] Some view the entire New Jerusalem as a "temple." See *New Jerusalem*.The image of the *pillar* also evokes passages where the righteous are compared to fruitful trees "planted in the house of the Lord" (Ps. 92:12-14), God's *house* being the Temple (John 2:16).

go no more out

This is perhaps the most precious promise among all the promises given the overcomer. For this phrase relates to *fellowship with God!* The entire message of Scripture, from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22+, can be found within this pregnant phrase. See *Hide and Seek*. To the overcomer in Philadelphia is the promise of the fulfillment of that *first love* so lacking in Ephesus, to walk once again in full fellowship with God (Gen. 3:8; 5:24; Rev. 21:3+, Rev 21:22+).

write on him the name of My God

The written name indicates character and ownership (Num. 6:27; John 1:12). These will be owned by God and molded according to His character. They are "sons of God" (Mat. 5:9; Luke 20:36; John 1:12; Rom. 8:14, 19; Gal. 3:26). In theTribulation, the 144,000 Jews have the Father's name written on their foreheads (Rev. 14:1+) which identifies whose they are and provides for their protection (Rev. 7:3+; 9:4+). Here, the name is recorded on all the redeemed in the eternal state (Rev. 22:4+).In the last days, Satan will provide his own imitation of this identification (Rev. 13:16-17+; Rev 17:5+; Rev 20:4+). See *Master Imitator*.Previously, a new name was written on a stone given to the overcomer at Pergamos. See commentary on *Revelation 2:17*.

name of the city of My God

Jerusalem will have a new name during the Millennium:

The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name. (Isa. 62:2)

At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts. (Jer. 3:17)

"All the way around *shall be* eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from *that* day *shall be*: THE LORD *IS* THERE." (Eze. 48:35)

The Lord will name the millennial Jerusalem "The Throne of the LORD" and "THE LORD *IS* THERE" indicating the presence of Messiah Jesus who will rule from the throne of David in the midst of the city.[84]However this name is that of the *New Jerusalem* and is not said to be *new*.[85] The name is applied to the overcomer as a declaration of his right to citizenship in the eternal city (Rev. 21:2+). Citizenship *declared* now (Php. 3:20) will be *realized* there.This verse may also contain an allusion to an event of Philadelphian history whereby the city took a new name:

The gratitude of the victims to the emperor is . . . variously attested . . . A huge pedestal found at Puteoli bears a dedicatory inscription to Tiberius surrounded by the names of Asian cities, . . . The name 'Philadelphea' [*sic*] is fully preserved. Later coins and inscriptions of some of these cities show that they assumed an imperial name or cognomen about this time. . . [Philadelphia] takes the name 'Neocaesarea' . . . The concept of Philadelphia as a new city with a new name to honour the divine emperor whose patronage had restored its fortunes has again been related to Rev. 3:12+.[86]

city of My God

Earthly Jerusalem has been chosen by God. He has put His name there (1K. 8:48; 11:13, 36; 14:21; 2Chr. 6:6, 38; 12:13; Ps. 132:13; Isa. 49:14-16). Yet for all its glory, even in the Millennium when it is restored (Isa. 60; (62), the earthly Jerusalem is not the final destiny of the saints or the abode of God's presence. For at the end of the Millennium there will be a "new heavens and new earth" (Rev. 21:2+) and a *New Jerusalem* which will be the ultimate destiny of the saints.Elsewhere, Jesus also refers to the Father as *My God* (Mat. 27:46; John 20:17; cf. Eph. 1:17; Heb. 1:8-9). We are Christ's and Christ is the Father's (1Cor. 3:23).

New Jerusalem

New is καινος [kainēs], new in quality. The *New Jerusalem* bears little similarity to the Jerusalem of our time or of the Millennium (Rev. 20:4-6+). This is not the millennial city, which many Scriptures declare will be restored to prominence among the nations. It is the eternal abode of the saints:

In Holy Scripture there are two Jerusalems: the one is on earth in the land of Palestine; the other is 'above' in heaven (Gal. 4:25-26; Heb. 12:22). Now the Old Testament prophets speak of a city which, in the coming Kingdom, shall be reclaimed from Gentile power, rebuilt, restored to the historic nation of Israel, and made the religious center of the world. This Jerusalem cannot be the 'heavenly Jerusalem,' for that city is impeccably holy, the eternal dwelling of the true God, and has never been defiled or marred by human sin and rebellion. Any such notion is to the highest degree impossible and absurd. All predictions of a restored and rebuilt Jerusalem must therefore refer to the historical city of David on earth.[87]

which comes down out of heaven

This is the "Jerusalem above" (Gal. 4:24), the "heavenly Jerusalem," the ultimate goal and destination of all the saints (John 14:2-3; Heb. 13:14).

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect. (Heb. 12:22-23)

She comes down *out of heaven* as a "bride, the Lamb's wife":

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. (Rev. 21:9-10+)

She is referred to as a *bride* and *wife* for this is the final residence of the wife of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7+).

My new name

New is καινο ν [kainon], new in quality. This new name, which denotes a yet unrevealed aspect of the character of Jesus (Rev. 3:12+; Rev 19:12+) will be written on the overcomer. This recalls the mysterious, but unrevealed name attending the Angel of the Lord and Son of God throughout Scripture. The name is hinted at, but never revealed: when Jacob wrestled with the Angel and was named Israel (Gen. 32:29); when the Angel announced the birth of Samson to his parents (Jdg. 13:6, 18); in the question concerning the Son of God (Pr. 30:4); and in God's new name to be written on the overcomer (Rev. 3:12+).The overcomer is intimately identified with He who overcame (John 16:33). That the overcomer bears the names of both the Father and the Son is yet another clear statement of the deity of Christ—for God the Father would never share ownership or identity with any non-God.

Revelation 3:13

let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches

See commentary on *Revelation 2:7*.

Revelation 3:14

the angel

Some have suggested this particular angel to be Archippus (Col. 4:17) who was named as the first bishop of Laodicea in the *Apostolical Constitutions* (viii. 46)[88].

Lightfoot has suggested however from Col. 4:17 that Archippus, presumably the son of Philemon (Philemon 2), held responsibility in the church in Laodicea. The two cities were only ten miles apart, and Col. 4 suggests habitual communication between them.[89]

See the discussion concerning the identity of the angel at *Revelation 1:20*.

church of the Laodiceans

See commentary on *Seven Churches of Asia*. Laodicea was in southern Phrygia, midway between Philadelphia and Colosse.

Bathhouse Arches at Laodicea

[90]

It was known as *Laodicea on the Lycus* to distinguish it from at least five other cities bearing the same name. Previously Diospolis,

then Rhoas, then rebuilt by Antiochus the Second, king of Syria, and named after his wife Laodice (whom he divorced and who later poisoned him).[91]Laodicea was known as an independent and wealthy city where wool was a major source of commerce."It has often been observed that Laodicea was a banking centre. Cicero cashed his bills of exchange there on his arrival in his province of Cilicia in 51 BC."[92]

The city suffered grievously in the Mithridatic war, but presently recovered again; once more in the wide-wasting earthquake in the reign of Tiberius, but was repaired and restored by the efforts of its own citizens, without any help asked by them from the Roman senate (Tacitus, *Annal.* xiv. 27).[93]

The prosperity of the city was illustrated following a great earthquake of A.D. 60, which destroyed the city and other cities around it. As was its habit, the Roman government offered substantial aid in rebuilding the devastation. Yet Laodicea was not among those cities who received help. Whether the government refused to offer it because of their great wealth, or Laodicea refused it because they did not need it, is debated. Whatever the case, the reason was wealth.[94]

In 62 BC the proconsul Flaccus confiscated large amounts of Jewish gold bound for Jerusalem, among them the sum of over twenty pounds weight at Laodicea. . . . the sums collected may represent the totals of temple-tax from their respective districts. It has been calculated that the amount from Laodicea would imply a population of 7,500 adult Jewish freemen in the district.[95]

Aspects of the letter from Christ appear to allude to commercial activities in Laodicea:

Laodicea was a great garment manufacturing center and pioneered mass-produced, and therefore cheap, outer garments. These garments used the wool of the vast flocks of sheep that grazed the high plateaus in the vicinity. Laodicea was proud of its garment industry and its well-clothed citizens—this adds pertinence to the nakedness of Rev. 3:17+. This verse draws on another aspect of Laodicean pride, too, for the city was a noted medical center with a famous school at the temple of the Carian god, Men. This medical school was world famous for two products in particular, an ointment for the ears and one for the eyes. To aid in exporting these medications, the doctors of Laodicea developed a process of converting the ointment to powder which was compressed into tablets. The comment of Rev. 3:18+ is thus ironic; in their pride, the church members of Laodicea did not recognize that they were spiritually blind.[96]

The name Λαοδίκεια [Laodikeia] is a compound from Λαός [Laos] ("people") and δίκη [dikē] ("judgment," "rule"). Thus the city was aptly named for the letter which Christ here writes:

Its name designates it as the Church of mob rule, *the democratic Church*, in which everything is swayed and decided by popular opinion, clamour and voting; and hence a self-righteousness and self-sufficient Church.[97]

Laodicea . . . means "people ruling." This is set in contrast to God's ruling in the church. It is a church entirely ruled by men, for the Holy Spirit is not present and doing His ministry of guiding.[98]

Although Paul mentions this church in his epistle to the Colossians (Col. 2:1; 4:13-16) and it remained a significant church for a number of centuries as witnessed by an important council concerning the canon of Scripture which was held there in AD 361—the *Council of Laodicea*, at the time of John's writing, the leadership of the church appears to have been inverted from Scriptural guidelines. Paul had previously warned Timothy concerning the consequences of the sheep ruling in place of spirit-led Shepherds:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (2Ti 4:3-4)

the Amen

Derived from the Hebrew term אָמֵן [ʾāmēn] which denotes certainty, a reliable support:

The basic root idea is firmness or certainty. In the Qal it expresses the basic concept of support and is used in the sense of the strong arms of the parent supporting the helpless infant. The constancy involved in the verbal idea is further seen in that it occurs in the Qal only as a participle (expressing continuance). The idea of support is also seen in II Kings 18:16, where it refers to pillars of support.[99]

the Faithful and True Witness

"Christ's attributes of sincerity and truth come to the forefront as He deals with those whose alleged devotion to Him is only superficial and not substantial."[100] He will shortly deliver an assessment of the Laodicean church which is unique in its total lack of commendation. No other of the seven churches fairs as poorly in His assessment. Therefore, He emphasizes the accuracy and trustworthiness of what He is about to say. In scenes of judgment, we find an emphasis on the reliability of His witness because it is

a requirement for Holy judgment (Rev. 19:11+). His words are worthy to have faith exercised upon them (Rev. 21:5+; Rev 22:6+):

The word [πιστός [pistos]] is employed in two very different senses in the New Testament as elsewhere, in an active and a passive, —now as trusting or believing (John 20:27; Acts 14:1), now as trustworthy or to be believed (2Ti. 2:22; 1Th. 5:27; 1Jn. 1:9). Men may be πιστοί [pistoi] in both senses, the active and the passive, as exercising faith, and as being worthy to have faith exercised upon them; God can be πιστός [pistos] only in the latter.[101]

Again, we find Jesus applying to Himself titles which are descriptive of the Father (Jer. 42:5). Being God, Jesus can do nothing but witness of the truth. What other man could make the claim of Jesus, "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true" (John 8:14-18)?

Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say*rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all." (John 18:37-38)

These characteristics will allow for His just rule during the Millennium:

His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist. (Isa. 11:3-5)

See commentary on *Revelation 1:5*.

the Beginning of the creation of God

This meaning of *beginning* here may be *author* or *efficient cause*[102] and does not indicate that He was a product of creation:

This is a favorite Arian prooftext, cited to prove that Jesus is not eternal, but had a beginning, Jesus being understood by them to be the first-created creature of God, through whom God created all else in the universe. The underlying Greek word, arche, may be understood in a passive sense, and rendered "the beginning," as the A.V., or more correctly understood in the active sense, and rendered "the beginner," source, origin, or principle of creation. Since God is eternal, and Jesus is God, the passive sense is not suited to the context, as being out of harmony with the many representations of Christ John has already given, whereby he in citing or alluding to Old Testament passages has applied to Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation what is in the Old Testament spoken of Jehovah.[103]

Not he whom God created first, but as in Col. 1:15-18, the Beginner of all creation, its originating instrument. All creation would not be represented adoring Him, if He were but one of themselves.[104]

Having analyzed the use of ρχή [archē] (*beginning*) in the Septuagint and throughout the NT, Svigel concludes the meaning here is primarily that of governmental rule and the phrase here should be rendered, "the supreme Authority over the creation of God."[105]Jesus is the Beginning and End (Rev. 21:6+; Rev 22:13+), both the *author* of and ruler over creation (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-3; 1Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2).[106] See commentary on *Revelation 5:12* and *Revelation 5:13*.

Revelation 3:15

I know

See commentary on *Revelation 2:2*.

cold

ψυχρ ς [psychros]: "in mind: of one destitute of warm Christian faith and the desire for holiness."[107]

hot

ζεστός [zestos], used of " 'boiling' water."[108]

I could wish

It is always and constantly God's desire that men would fear Him and keep His commandments, but men still choose to walk in their own counsels (Dt 5:29; Ps. 81:10-13).

you were cold or hot

Here we have what would seem to be an allusion to the marginal water supply ofLaodicea:

Rudwick and Green emphasize that the site of Laodicea was chosen for its position at an important road-junction. 'It lacked a natural water-supply, for there are no springs on the site, and the Lycus River dries up in summer' (p. 177). The remains of a remarkable aqueduct of stone pipes indicate that the people derived water from a source south of the city, perhaps from the hot mineral springs near Denizli, the modern town five miles distance. This would have cooled only slowly in the pipes, and on arrival the supply would have been tepid and its effect emetic.[109]

The people of Laodicea had built an aqueduct to supply their city, but the water was lukewarm and impure. The remains can still be seen, and thick deposits of calcium carbonate inside the pipes witness plainly to the worth of the water which once flowed through them. The words of Rev. 3:14-15+ must have hit home powerfully in Laodicea: the writer said that the church was as useless and distasteful as that bad water.[110]

Aqueduct at Laodicea

[111]

Some have pondered why Jesus would rather have *cold*. This is explained by realizing that the only thing God hates more than lack of faith is *hypocritical* faith. Inconsistency of conviction is more damaging and irretrievable than the wrong conviction. Scripture is replete with the theme of the need for the people to make a clear choice between God or the alternative (Jos. 24:15; 1K. 18:21; Eze. 20:39; Zep. 1:5; Mat. 6:24). "There is no one farther from the truth in Christ than the one who makes an idle profession without real faith."[112] It is the double-minded man, like "the wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind," who should not "suppose he will receive anything from the Lord" (Jas. 1:5-8).Here, the *cold* and *hot* relate to their spiritual condition:

The *hot* are the truly saved believers. The *cold* are those who are not believers and do not claim to be believers. The *lukewarm* are those who do claim to believe in Jesus, but are not truly regenerate believers.[113]

How shall we then understand this exclamation of the Saviour, . . . namely, by regarding the *"cold"* here as one hitherto untouched by the powers of grace. There is always hope of such an one, that, when he does come under those powers, he may become a zealous and earnest Christian. He is not one on whom the grand experiment of the Gospel has been tried and has failed. But the *"lukewarm"* is one who has tasted of the good gift and of the powers of theworld to come, who has been a subject of Divine grace, but in whom that grace has failed to kindle more than the feeblest spark. The publicans and harlots were *"cold,"* the Apostles *"hot."* The Scribes and Pharisees, . . . were *"lukewarm."*[114]

Revelation 3:16

you are lukewarm

The church was no longer a light shining in the darkness. It appears to have been atpeace with its enemies: the *synagogue of Satan*:

Antiochus settled a community of twothousand Jews in Laodicea after expelling them from Babylon. By 62 BC the governor of the city became alarmed at the amount of currency the Jews were exporting to pay thetemple tax and so placed an embargo on currency (exchange control is nothing new!), and consequently seized one hundred and twenty pounds weight [Hemer gives the figure of *twenty* pounds, p. 182.] of gold as contraband in Laodicea and Apameia. This gold was worth about 15,000 days' wages in those days, and as the temple tax was the equivalent of two days' wages, this means there were at least 7,500 Jewish men (besides women and children) in these cities. When John wrote this letter more than a century later, given the prosperity of the city, the Jewish population was probably considerably higher. The significance of this probability is that, while Christians elsewhere inAsia were persecuted by the Jews (e.g., Rev. 2:9+; Rev 3:9+), there is no mention of persecution in this city with so large a Jewish population. This silence speaks volumes, for the Christian church in Laodicea was so complacent and self-sufficient in its wealth that it had ceased to be effective for Christ; so much so that its traditional persecutor, the Jews, considered it benign.[115]

See *Worldly Churches*.

vomit you out

An equivalent threat to that given to the Ephesianangel of removing his lampstand (Rev. 2:5+). "Recent travellers with difficulty

discovered one or two Christians in the poor village of Iski-hissar, which stands on the site which Laodicea occupied of old."[116] When conditions become so bad that repentance and return are not forthcoming, God turns men loose to their own destruction and loss (Jer. 15:1-4; Zec. 11:9; Rom. 1:20-28).

Revelation 3:17

you say

λέγεις [legeis], *you are presently saying*.

I am rich

The attitude of the city of Laodicea had infected the church. "It is evident that the Christians of Laodicea shared the self-sufficiency of their fellow-townsmen, and carried it into the sphere of their relations with God and Christ."[117] Self-sufficiency is the death-knell of relationship with God for *independence of God is sin*! The town had independently recovered from a devastating earthquake in the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 14-37, Luke 3:1) without asking for or receiving help from theRoman senate.[118] Its riches and success had influenced the thinking of its residents. Pride and self-sufficiency had crept into the culture and the culture had crept into the church.*I am rich*, πεπλούτηκα [peplytēka], is *I have become rich*, (perfect tense). The emphasis is on the *result*—now being rich—so it is translated as a present tense.[119] Here we see the curse of blessing for Scripture records that where men receive God's blessing they soon drift away from the very source of their blessing. Everywhere, the pattern of history is that of a revolving wheel![120]

1. Men suffer lack and affliction and turn to God.
2. God responds to repentance with provision and blesses.
3. Men glory in their condition of prosperity and grow cold toward God.
4. Judgment falls and the wheel goes around again.

Man seems unable to experience provision from God without misplacing its source as his own achievements (Jer. 9:23-24; Hos. 12:8-9; Luke 12:16-21) which then becomes the focus leading to evil:

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into*this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and*into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1Ti. 6:6-10)

How different was the condition of the Laodicean church from those in Smyrna (Rev. 2:9+)!

have need of nothing

It appears the Laodiceans highly valued their independence and that they refused the offer of Rome to help rebuild following the earthquake. Many of the rebuilt structures included the inscription κ τ ν δίων [ek tōn idiōn] ("out of our own resources").[121]God had warned the children of Israel of how their sin could pervert His blessing:

Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, lest-*when* you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell*in them*; and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, *in which were* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock. (Dt 8:11-15)

Agur, the son of Jakeh, understood the danger of the lack of need leading to independence from God:

Remove falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches-Feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny *You*, and say, "Who *is* the LORD?" Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God. (Pr. 30:8-9)

do not know

The Laodicean's had no idea of their condition for they were spirituallyblind (Hos. 7:8-9; Luke 6:42).

you are

σ ε [sy ei], emphatic: *you . . . you are*.

wretched and miserable

They were *wretched*, ταλαίπωρος [talaipōros]—*afflicted*[122], and *miserable*, λεεινός [eleeinos]—*pitiable*.[123] They themselves were afflicted but did not know their condition, hence they were pitiable.

poor

They were poor in the wrong way: *spiritually* rather than *physically*. See commentary on *Revelation 2:9*.

blind

They *do not know* because they are *blind*. Scripture makes plain that those who are sure of their sight are most often sightless (Isa. 42:18-20; John 9:39-41). So it was with the Laodicean church. Of all the churches which Jesus wrote to, this church was the *least likely* to respond to His exhortation because it was sure of its health and vision.

But sin makes blind and man cannot perceive his corruption (Eph. 4:18; Rev. 3:17+). He believes in the good within himself and deifies his own nature (2Th. 2:3-4): 'Mankind is deity seen from below.' So long as he believes that, he will never lay hold of the redemption (Mat. 9:12).[124]

So it is with many churches in our day who are convinced that their social activities and programs are an indicator of their spiritual health. Having lost all capability of introspection by the measure of God's Word, they are unable to assess their condition by anything other than pragmatic measures and ministry statistics. As they grow in influence and numbers, their willingness to admit of the need for correction continually wanes until they reach a condition much like that of the Laodicean church.

naked

They had not watched nor kept their garments so now they were naked (Rev. 16:15+). Their shame was evident to all but themselves, for they were blind to their own nakedness.

Revelation 3:18

I counsel you to buy from Me

The language is meant to speak to the merchants of the city, some of whom would have been members of the church:

He who might have commanded, prefers rather to counsel; He who might have spoken as from heaven, conforms Himself, so far as the outward form of his words reaches, to the language of earth. To the merchants and factors of this wealthy mercantile city He addresses himself in their own dialect. . . . Would it not be wise to transact their chief business with Him?[125]

Salvation is *free* for no man has the necessary riches to contribute even one penny toward the cost of his own salvation. And to do so would be the height of blasphemy since it would deny the sufficiency of the sacrifice of God's own Son (Col. 2:14; Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 28). On the other hand, Scripture also records that true salvation and service for the Lord costs *everything* (Luke 14:33).

The price which they should pay was this, the renunciation of all vain reliance on their own righteousness and wisdom; the price which in another Epistle St. Paul declared he had so gladly paid, that so he might himself win Christ (Php. 3:7-8); the [forsaking all], ἀποτάσσεται πᾶσα [apotassetai pasa], which the Lord long before had declared to be the necessary condition of his discipleship (Luke 14:33).[126]

gold. . . white garments. . . eye salve

The remedies for the previously-stated ills, for they were *poor*, *naked*, and *blind* (Rev. 2:17+).

refined in the fire

Not just gold, but *refined* gold which has been purified by fire:

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

The Laodiceans church needed true spiritual gold which would stand the test of the bema seat of Christ:

Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. (1Cor. 3:12-13)

white garments

The mention of *white garments* would be especially noteworthy since Laodicea was known for its production of high quality glossy black wool:

Commentators . . . have seen allusion to theclothing industry of Laodicea and in particular a contrast with the glossy black wool of its sheep. Knowledge of the breed rests primarily upon Strabo: 'The country around Laodicea produces sheep remarkable not only for the softness of their wool, in which they surpass even that of Miletus, but also for its raven-black color.[127]

"Laodicea's wools were famous. Christ offers infinitely whiter raiment."[128] The same white garments which are promised to the overcomer in Sardis (Rev. 3:4-5+). See commentary on *Revelation 3:4*.

be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed

The Laodicean church had walked in the steps of Adam and Eve before them—they had attempted to *clothe themselves* to cover their nakedness (Gen. 3:7-11). Yet the fig leaves sewn by Adam and his wife were not sufficient in God's sight—animal sacrifice was needed to atone for sin when *God provided* their clothing (Gen. 3:21). **The Laodicean church had *religion*, but was lacking *relationship*.** They had attempted to substitute their own righteousness (Pr. 20:6; 21:2; Mat. 5:20; Luke 10:29; 18:9) for the righteousness that can only come from God (Rom. 10:3). They were clothed in see-through garments of their own works—naked but unable to see their condition. They needed to purchase from God the robes of righteousness (Isa. 61:10; Mat. 22:11; Rom. 3:21-22; 4:3-11; 10:3; 2Cor. 5:21).

eye salve that you may see

The *eye salve* may allude to the early practice of ophthalmology associated with the city:

We have explicit evidence for the connection of Laodicea with a leading figure of first-century ophthalmology. . . . local people today find medicinal value in bathing their eyes in the Hierapolis waters, the alum content apparently being the beneficial [*sic*] agent. . . . the city probably marketed extensively and profitably an ointment developed locally from available materials, whose exact composition may have been kept secret from commercial rivals.[129]

The Laodicean's needed the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit so that they may more clearly see their own nakedness and realize their need of clothing. "The Spirit convinces of sin, and by this ['eye salve'] we must understand the illuminating grace of the Holy Ghost, which at once shows to us God, and in God and his light ourselves."[130] They needed the illumination of the Holy Spirit so they could see their condition accurately, just as the "seven eyes" saw them (Rev. 4:6+). See *Hiding or Revealing?*

Revelation 3:19

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten

The Laodicean church could take comfort in the fact that Christ had written a letter of rebuke to them for it was an indication of his ongoing love for them. They were not so far gone that He would leave them silently to their own devices. Like a loving Father, God chastens those who would be His sons (Dt 8:5; 2S. 7:14; Heb. 12:5-8).

be zealous

ζήλευε [zēleue], *be continually full of zeal* (present-tense). The same root word as "hot" in Revelation 3:15+. Although God said "I could wish you were cold or hot" (either state being preferable to lukewarm hypocrisy), He still prefers that they be *hot*. The Laodicean church-goer was to *earnestly desire*, *pursue*, and *strive after* God.[131] He could no longer remain a *church-goer*, but would need to become a *God-chaser*.

repent

See commentary on μετανοια [metanoia] at *Revelation 2:5*.

Revelation 3:20

I stand at the door and knock

I stand is στηκα [hestēka], perfect tense: *I have stood*. *Knock* is κρούω [krouō], present tense: *I am knocking*. He has been standing for a period of time and is *still* awaiting their response to his continual knocking. The knocking is accompanied by the voice of the bridegroom. When the bride lacks sufficient zeal and is slow to respond, the bridegroom has already withdrawn (Song 5:1-6). If the

Laodicean church was truly *zealous*, they would have already opened the door (Luke 12:35-36).The irony here in that Christ is outside *His own church*, desiring to be invited back in![132] The love of God and His desire to rectify the condition in Laodicea is reflected in the manner in which the God of the universe steadfastly waits outside the Laodicean door.

He at whose door we ought to stand, for He *is* the Door (John 10:7), who, as such, has bidden *us* to knock (Mat. 7:7; Luke 11:9), is content that the whole relation between Him and us should be reversed, and instead of our standing at his door condescends Himself to stand at ours.[133]

Some have seen in this *door* an allusion to a monumental gate in the city.[134] Elsewhere, Jesus is Himself the door (John 10:9) providing full access to heaven and God (Heb. 10:19-20).

hears My voice

The voice is intentionally contrasted with the knock:

So far as we may venture to distinguish between the two, . . . to see in the voice the more inward appeal, the closer dealing of Christ with the soul, speaking directly by his Spirit to the spirit of the man; in the knocking those more outward gracious dealings, of sorrow and joy, of sickness and health, and the like, which He sends, and sending uses for the bringing of his elect, in one way or another, by smooth paths or by rough, to Himself.[135]

All men have ears, but not all hear His voice. See commentary on *Revelation 2:7*.

come in to him

Wallace argues from the grammar that this verse cannot denote an offer of salvation. He observes that Christ is promising to come *in to the presence of* (πρ ς α τόν [pros auton]) the one who opens the door, not *into* the sphere of his person.[136] But this is not essential for the verse to denote the fellowship associated with salvation. Elsewhere, salvation is described as the Father and Son coming *to* (not *into*) the believer:

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come **to him [πρ ς α τόν [pros auton]]** and make Our home with him." (John 14:21-23) [emphasis added]

Yet the context offers little to support an evangelistic emphasis:

The verse contains nothing of the gospel message as such—no mention of substitutionary atonement, of Christ's resurrection, of repentance, of faith in the person and work of Christ. Neither is there anything in the adjacent context about these vital matters. Yet evangelists and personal workers everywhere commonly employ this verse as a gospel invitation. God, in His grace, does occasionally use it to help bring an unsaved person to Christ, since it does enjoin a proper attitude of openness to God's call, but that is not its intent. It is addressed only to compromising, lukewarm Christians in compromising, lukewarm churches, and it is they whom Christ is seeking to draw back to Himself.[137]

and dine with him

After coming under the Mosaic Covenant, Moses, Aaron, Aaron's sons, and seventy of the elders of Israel "saw God" and "ate and drank" in His presence (Ex. 24:8-11). Dining conveys the idea of intimate fellowship (Luke 19:5-7; John 13). Jesus says he will *dine with him* in ongoing fellowship and intimacy as soon as the door is opened. There is also the promise of dining with Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Mat. 22:1-14; 25:1-13; 26:29; Luke 22:16; Rev. 19:9+) . "The consummation of this blessed intercommunion shall be at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, of which the Lord's Supper is the earnest and foretaste."[138] Jesus has promised not to partake of the Passover meal until he dines with believers in the Millennial Kingdom (Mat. 8:11; Mat. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18).

Revelation 3:21

overcomes

See *Who is the Overcomer?*

sit with Me

They will sit with Him and share His rule in the same way He sits at the right hand of the Father and shares His rule. See

commentary on *Revelation 2:26* and *Revelation 2:27*.

on My throne

An amazing manifestation of grace. Those who were about to be spewed from his mouth are invited to sit with Him on His throne.[139]

The promise . . . is an extension of the promise Christ made to the Twelve while on earth that they would not only eat and drink with Him in His kingdom, but also sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (cf. Mat. 19:28; Luke 22:29-30). Paul expanded the promise to include all Christians as rulers and the broadened domain of the world, not just Israel (cf. 1Cor. 6:2).[140]

Jesus clarifies a point which is often confused today: He is not now sitting on *His throne*, but is seated at the right hand of the Father on the *Father's throne*.

There is a most important dispensational teaching in this verse. There are those who think that the Church is the kingdom and that there is to be no literal kingdom on earth. Here the Lord says that at the present time He is not upon His own throne.[141]

Jesus taught that there would be a delay in the coming of His kingdom (Mat. 6:10; Luke 11:2; 19:11-15; Acts 1:6-7). Its arrival is yet future and will be indicated by signs (Luke 21:31). It occurs after the Antichrist has his day (Dan. 7:11-14, 21-22, 25-27; Rev. 19:20+), after the seventh angel sounds his trumpet (Rev. 11:15-17+), after Satan is cast down (Rev. 12:10+), when Christ returns to judge the sheep and the goats (Mat. 25:31; 2Ti. 4:1), in the regeneration when the apostles will rule over the tribes of Israel (Mat. 19:28; Luke 22:29-30) and believers co-rule (Rev. 20:4-6+), when He drinks wine and eats the Passover again with His followers (Mat. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:16-18).

This passage, in harmony with Luke 1:32, 33; Mat. 19:28; Acts 2:30, 34, 35; 15:14-16, is conclusive that Christ is not now seated upon His own throne. The Davidic Covenant, and the promises of God through the prophets and the Angel Gabriel concerning the Messianic kingdom await fulfilment.[142]

Several factors indicate that David's throne is separate and distinct from God's throne in heaven. *First*, several descendants of David have sat on his throne, but only one of his descendants ever sits on the right hand of God's throne in heaven. That descendant is Jesus Christ (Ps. 110:1; Heb. 8:1; 12:2). *Second*, David's throne was not established before his lifetime (2S. 7:16-17). By contrast, since God has always ruled over His creation, His throne in heaven was established long before David's throne (Ps. 93:1-2). *Third*, since God's throne in heaven was established long before David's throne and since God's throne was established forever (Lam. 5:19), then it was not necessary for God to promise to establish David's throne forever (2S. 7:16) if they are the same throne. *Fourth*, David's throne was on the earth, not in heaven. David and his descendants who sat on his throne exercised an earthly, ruling authority. They never exercised ruling authority in or from heaven. By contrast, as noted earlier, the Bible indicates that God's throne is in heaven. *Fifth*, the Bible's consistent description of David's throne indicates that it belongs to David. When God talked to David about his throne, God referred to it as "thy throne" (2S. 7:16; Ps. 89:4; 132:12). When God mentioned David's throne to others, He referred to it as "his throne" (Ps. 89:29; Jer. 33:21), "David's throne" (Jer. 13:13), and "the throne of David" (Jer. 17:25; 22:2, 4; 22:30). By contrast, the Scriptures' consistent description of the throne in heaven indicates that it belongs to God the Father. [143]

According to Trench, this is a greater position than the role given to the apostles over the tribes of Israel (Mat. 19:28).[144] He is currently seated to the right hand of the Father on *the Father's* throne. In the Millennium, He will take up *his* throne (Mat. 25:31). In the eternal state, it appears the two thrones become synonymous (1Cor. 15:24-25; Rev. 22:1+, 3+).

as I also overcame

It is by Jesus' identity as the overcomer and their identification with Him that believers are overcomers. See *Who is the Overcomer?*.

sat down with my Father on His throne

After His ascension, Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father. This is his present position (Mark 16:19; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1 Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1Pe. 3:22). Jesus told the high priest that he would see the Son of Man "sitting at the right hand of the Power" (Mat. 26:64). He stood up at the death of His witness Stephen (Acts 7:55-56), but this was not yet the time to receive the kingdom and return to rule for He must remain seated until His enemies are made His footstool (Ps. 110:1; Mat. 22:44). Eventually, He will be presented before the Ancient of Days to receive the kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14) initiating His return and subsequent rule from the throne of David (Luke 1:33; Mat. 5:31-32; Rev. 19:11-21+; Rev 20:4-6+).

This, the grandest and crowning promise, is placed at the end of all the seven addresses, to gather all in one. It also forms the link to the next part of the book, where the Lamb is introduced seated on His Father's throne (Rev. 4:2+, 3+).[145]

Revelation 3:22

let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches

See commentary on *Revelation 2:7*.

After reading the seven letters to the seven churches, we cannot escape the fact that compromise of God's word is anathema to Christ and is the root of all Christian weakness. Let us each individually resolve to uphold the full teaching of our Lord and Savior—in the strength He provides.[146]

This is the *last mention* of "church" (ἐκκλησίᾳ [ekklēsia]) in the book of Revelation until the closing remarks: "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." (Rev. 22:16+). As we note elsewhere, the Jewishness of the book of Revelation was recognized early on and contributed to a reluctance to recognize its canonicity. This is a reflection of what we have just observed: the absence of the church from the events following chapters 2 and 3. We believe this is intentional and indicates that the saints who experience the Tribulation period come to faith after the Rapture of the church. This includes a significant Jewish witness (Rev. 7:4-8+; Rev 11:3-13+; Rev 14:1-5+).

The fact that parts of Revelation contain no reference to the church but make many references to Israel has been recognized by scholars who do not advocate a Pretribulation Rapture of the church. For example, the Roman Catholic scholar, C. Van Den Biesen, state, "The Apocalypse abounds in passages which bear no specific Christian character but, on the contrary, show a decidedly Jewish complexion."[147]

It is important to understand that the pretribulational rapture view is not *derived from* this observation, but that it is founded upon other passages. The emphasis on the church in chapters 2 and 3 followed by a complete omission of any mention of the church in the events of judgment spanning chapters 6 through 19 is but one of numerous evidences in Scripture which indicate that the church will not endure the Tribulation. See *Rapture*.

Notes

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[2] *American Heritage Online Dictionary*, Ver. 3.0A, 3rd ed (Houghton Mifflin, 1993), s.v. "Lydia."

[3]Monty S. Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 3:1.

[4]"Even at dates later than the Revelation 'to capture the acropolis of Sardis' was proverbially 'to do the impossible'."—Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 133.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John*, Rev. 3:1.

[7]Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 109.

[8]Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 134.

[9]Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992), 272.

[10]"Melito, a name we hear seldom now, but the titles of whose works inspire us with a deep regret for their almost entire loss, was bishop of Sardis, being the only illustrious name connected with this Church, in the latter half of the second century (Neander, *Kirch. Gesch.* i. 3, p. 1140)."—Richard Chenevix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1861), 152.

[11]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 242.

[12]Jerome Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Rev. 3:1.

[13]J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 71.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 153.

[16]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, Rev. 3:1.

[17]Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 66-67.

[18]Ibid., 68.

[19]John MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), Rev. 3:4.

[20]Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 73.

[21]Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 68.

[22]"This doctrine of Total Inability, which declares that men are dead in sin, does not mean that all men are equally bad, nor that any man is as bad as he could be, nor that any one is entirely destitute of virtue, nor that human nature is evil in itself, nor that man's spirit is inactive, and much less does it mean that the body is dead. What it does mean is that since the fall man rests under the curse of sin, that he is actuated by wrong principles, and that he is wholly unable to love God or to do anything meriting salvation. . . . Man is a free agent but he cannot originate the love of God in his heart. . . . As the bird with a broken wing is 'free' to fly but not able, so the natural man is free to come to God but not able."—Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1932), 61-62.

[23]Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 70.

[24]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 255.

[25]Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John*, Rev. 3:3.

[26]MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, 114.

[27]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 253.

[28]This passage does not describe the Rapture of the church as Luke's account makes especially clear:" 'I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.' And they answered and said to Him, 'Where, Lord?' So He said to them, 'Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together' " (Luke 17:34-37). Those who are *taken* are like those who *perished* in the flood of Noah. Jesus indicates they are taken in *judgment* as many parallel passages which describe birds feeding on carrion make plain: Dt 28:26; Job 39:30; Eze. 39:4, 17-20; Jer. 7:33; 12:9; 15:3; 16:4; 19:7; Mat. 24:28; Luke 17:37; Rev. 19:17-18+.

[29]Once again, the context of this passage is *judgment* as can be seen by the verses which follow:"But if that servant says in his heart, "My master is delaying his coming," and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare *himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. . . . I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" (Luke 12:45-49).

[30]Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Rev. 3:3.

[31] *New Electronic Translation : NET Bible*, electronic edition (Dallas, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 1998), Rev. 3:3.

[32]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 164.

[33]"the one who conquers *will cause himself to be clothed* in white clothing. Like Gal. 5:12, this is an example of a causative direct middle. Direct middles are not uncommon with verbs meaning 'to put on clothes.' "—Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House and Galaxie Software, 1999, 2002), 424.

[34]James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), H3722.

[35]Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, Rev. 3:5.

[36]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 264.

[37]Copyright © 2003 www.BiblePlaces.com. This image appears by special permission and may not be duplicated for use in derivative works. *Architrave*: The lowermost part of an entablature in classical architecture that rests directly on top of a column. Also called epistyle.

[38]Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Rev. 3:7.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 273.

[41]"By Metonymy of the Adjunct, whereby the sign is put for the thing signified, 'key' is put for governmental authority, of which it is the sign."—Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Rev. 3:7.

[42]Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 7:262.

[43]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*.

[44]Although Paul is commissioned as the apostle to the Gentiles in Acts 9:1-43, it is Peter who first takes the gospel to the Gentiles in Acts 10:1-48. Why? Because it is Peter who has the keys to the kingdom.

[45]Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, Rev. 3:8.

[46]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 278.

[47]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*.

[48]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 279.

[49]Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 75.

[50]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 280.

[51]"The passage does not mean that believers are to be worshiped. It is merely at their feet that the unbelievers shall kneel as they are forced to acknowledge that Christ is God, and that every detail of the Scripture is eternal and true."—Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 76.

[52]Steve Gregg, *Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 76.

[53]"Rev. 3:9+, . . . refers to Isaianic prophecies that the Gentiles will come and bow down before Israel and recognize Israel as God's chosen people (Isa. 45:14; 49:23; 60:14). This Jewish hope has been turned upside down. Note it is the Jewish persecutors of Christians whom God will make to submit to the church. This reversal of Isaiah's language is probably a conscious attempt to express the irony that the submission that unbelieving ethnic Jews hoped to receive from Gentiles, they themselves will be forced to render to the church."—Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 94.

[54]Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), Rev. 3:9.

[55]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 282.

[56]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 177.

[57]Renald E. Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995), 209-210.

[58]"To be kept *in* temptation, not to be exempted *from* temptation (τηρε ν εκ [tērein ek] not being here==τηρε ν πό [tērein apo], Jas. 1:27; Pr. 7:5 cf. 2Th. 3:3); a bush burning, and yet not consumed (cf. Isa. 43:2)."—Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 178. "The words τηρήσω κ [tērēsō ek] are to be understood from John 17:15: God's people shall receive special protection in the trial rather than exemption from it (πό [apo]; cf. also 2Pe. 2:9)."—Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 164.

[59]"The idea of the saints being shielded from the testing while living within and through its time period also would have been expressed more clearly through the use of another preposition, either *en* (meaning 'in') or *dia* (meaning 'through') [thus, 'I will keep you *in* or *through* the time period of testing'] rather than *ek*."—Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*, 212.

[60]Ibid., 211.

[61]Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Rev. 3:10.

[62]Gregg, *Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*, 76.

[63]"If Gundry's view of Rev. 3:10+ is correct [that the church will be guarded and preserved during God's testing of earth-dwellers during the Tribulation], then one is left with the colossal problem of reconciling the fact that multitudes of believers will die under the fierce persecution of Antichrist during the Tribulation and yet God supposedly will preserve His people physically through the Tribulation."—Keith H. Essex, "The Rapture and the Book of Revelation," in Richard L. Mayhue, ed., *The Master's Seminary Journal*, vol. 13 no. 1 (Sun Valley, CA: The Master's Seminary, Spring 2002), 29-30.

[64]Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*, 212.

[65]Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 155.

[66]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 288.

[67]Gregg, *Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*, 77.

[68]Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*, 214.

[69]Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 8.

[70]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 225.

[71]J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2nd ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 158.

[72]"The temptation brings out the fidelity of those kept by Christ and hardens the unbelieving reprobates (Rev. 9:20+, 21+)."—A. R. Fausset, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 3:10. Note, however, that this verse indicates that it is those who dwell on the earth who are the object of the testing, *not the faithful*.

[73]This fact explains why the events of Revelation include great judgments poured out upon the natural systems of the earth for the earth has become an idol of worship for the earth dwellers.

[74]Some may say that earth dwellers do not *hate* believers, but simply tolerate them. This is only true to the extent the local culture has been influenced by the salt and light of believers. When darkness increases, hatred of the earth dwellers towards believers escalates dramatically, for believers remind them of God's righteous judgment which they desire to throw off.

[75]This spiritual deception will be so powerful that only those who have come to faith will have the needed supernatural protection to overcome it.

[76]Walter Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), Rev. 11:9.

[77]Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*, 216-217.

[78]The idea that the trial is also to *refine believers* is contradicted by this verse which states that the ones to be tested are the ones who "dwell upon the earth"—a technical term in the book of Revelation for those who remain unrepentant during the events of the end. "This same expression occurs in Revelation 6:10+; 11:10+; 13:8+, 12+, 14+; 14:6+ and 17:8+. In its usage it is not giving us a geographical description but rather a moral classification."—Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 197.

[79]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, Rev. 3:11.

[80]Ibid., 291.

[81]E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), 96.

[82]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 182.

[83]Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 65.

[84]"Heb. *Jehovah shammah*. i.e. *The Lord is there*. Signifying the personal presence of Messiah who will reign visibly in Israel."—Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Eze. 48:35.

[85]Trench believes it will be "The Lord is there" (Eze. 48:35). [Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*]

[86]Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 157.

[87]Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), 244.

[88]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 190.

[89]Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 181.

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[91]"The new city was established by Antiochus II (261-246 BC) and named after his first wife Laodice, whom he divorced in 253."—Ibid., 180.

[92]Ibid., 191.

[93]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 189.

[94]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, Rev. 3:14.

[95]Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 182.

[96]Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John*, Rev. 3:14.

[97]Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 72.

[98]Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 66.

[99]Robert Laird Harris, Gleason Leonard Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999, c1980), 1:41.

[100]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 300.

[101]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 191.

[102]"Waterland defines Arkē (beginning), 'that is, author or efficient cause' (Works, vol. 2, p. 53)."—Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Rev. 3:14.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Fausset, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, Rev. 3:14.

[105]Michael J. Svigel, "Christ as Arche in Revelation 3:14," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 161 no. 642 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, April-June 2004), 225.

[106]See also Pr. 8:22-30 where wisdom is personified with attributes much like those of Jesus: having intimate fellowship with the Father, eternal generation, beside the Father as a master craftsman, the delight of the Father.

[107]Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, G5593.

[108]Frederick William Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 337.

[109]Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 188.

[110]Tim Dowley, ed., *The History of Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 72.

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derivative works.

[112]John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), Rev. 3:15.

[113]Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 66.

[114]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 195-196.

[115]Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John*, Rev. 3:14.

[116]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 191.

[117]Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998, 1906), lxi.

[118]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 189.

[119]"Intensive Perfect (a.k.a. Resultative Perfect). . . . The perfect may be used to emphasize the results or present state produced by a past action. The English present often is the best translation for such a perfect. This is a common use of the perfect tense."—Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 574.

[120]In our own day and culture, we are experiencing stage 3 and nearing stage 4.

[121]Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 193.

[122]Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, G5005.

[123]Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 249.

[124]Erich Sauer, *The Dawn of World Redemption* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1951, c1964), 50.

[125]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 201-202.

[126]Ibid., 203.

[127]Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 199.

[128]Fausset, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, Rev. 3:18.

[129]Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 198.

[130]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 206.

[131]Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, G2206.

[132]Gregg, *Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*, 80.

[133]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 211.

[134]"This ostentatious self-sufficiency reached a climax when the reconstruction was completed by the erection of great public buildings at the expense of individual citizens in the years immediately preceding the Domitianic date of the Revelation [in response to the earthquake of Nero's reign]. The monumental triple gate thus donated may have been in mind in the writing of Rev. 3:20."—Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 208.

[135]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 212.

[136]"The crucial phrase for our purposes is 'I shall come in to him.' This text has often been taken as a text offering salvation to a lost sinner. Such a view is based on two assumptions: (1) that the Laodiceans, or at least some of them, were indeed lost, and (2) that ε σελεύσομαι πρ ς [eiseleusomai pros] means 'come into.' Both of these assumptions, however, are based on little evidence. With reference to the first assumption, that those in the Laodicean church were not believers, it is important to note that in the preceding verse, the resurrected Lord declares, 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline.' Here φιλεω [phileō] is used for 'love' a term that is never used of God/Jesus loving unbelievers in the NT. (Indeed, it would be impossible for God to have this kind of love for an unbeliever, for it routinely speaks of enjoyment and fellowship. γαπα [agapa], rather, is the verb used of God's love for unbelievers [cf. John 3:16], for it frequently, if not normally, speaks of commitment and, when used with God/Jesus as the subject, the idea is

often of an unconditional love.) This φιλεω [phileō] must be applied to the Laodiceans here, for the verse concludes, 'Be zealous, therefore, and repent.' The inferential ο [ou] connects the two parts of the verse, indicating that the Laodiceans are to repent because Christ loves (φιλεω [phileō]) them! The second assumption is that ε σελεύσομαι πρ ς [eiseleusomai pros] means 'come into.' Such an assumption is based on a less than careful reading of the English text! The ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, for example, all correctly render it 'come in to.' (Note the space between the prepositions.) The idea of 'come into' would be expressed with eij as the independent preposition and would suggest a penetration into the person (thus, spawning the idea of entering into one's heart). However, spatially πρό [pro] means toward, not into. In all eight instances of ε σέρχομαι πρ ς [eiserchomai pros] in the NT, the meaning is 'come in toward/before a person' (i.e., enter a building, house, etc., so as to be in the presence of someone), never penetration into the person himself/herself. In some instances, such a view would not only be absurd, but inappropriate (cf. Mark 6:25; 15:43; Luke 1:28; Acts 10:3; 11:3; 16:40; 17:2; 28:8). What, then, can we say that this verse is affirming? First, we should answer in the negative: it is not an offering of salvation. The implications of this are manifold. Among other things, to use this text as a salvation verse is a perversion of the simplicity of the gospel. Many people have allegedly 'received Christ into their hearts' without understanding what that means or what the gospel means. Although this verse is picturesque, it actually muddies the waters of the truth of salvation. Reception of Christ is a consequence, not a condition, of salvation. As far as the positive meaning of this verse, it may refer to Christ having supremacy in the assembly or even to an invitation (and, consequently, a reminder) to believers to share with him in the coming kingdom. But to determine which of these is correct is beyond the scope of grammar. All grammar can tell us here is which view is almost certainly not correct—namely, that which sees this as an offering of salvation."—Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 381.

[137]Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 3:20.

[138]Fausset, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*.

[139]Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 3:21.

[140]Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 325.

[141]Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 84.

[142]C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Study Bible* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002, 1909), Rev. 3:21.

[143]Renald Showers, *Israel My Glory*, January/February 2001, 30.

[144]Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*

[145]Fausset, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, Rev. 3:21.

[146]Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John*, Rev. 3:22.

[147]Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*, 246.

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON REVELATION 2 - Bruce Hurt MD

PREVIOUS NEXT

Apostle John on Isle of Patmos

**REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
THE BIG PICTURE**

REVELATION 10-22

EVENTS OF THE END TIMES

HISTORICAL SETTING OF REVELATION

Click charts to enlarge
Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission
Another Chart from Charles Swindoll

NOTE - These comments on **Revelation 1 and Revelation 2** are separate and distinct from the Revelation Commentary above by Tony Garland.

Revelation 3:1 "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

BGT Revelation 3:1 Κα τ γγ λ τ ς ν Σ ρδεσιν κκλησ ας γρ ψον· Τ δε λ γει χων τ πτ πνε ματα το θεο κα το ς πτ στ ρας· ο δ σου τ ργα τι νομα χεις τι ζ ς, κα νεκρ ς ε .

KJV Revelation 3:1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

NET Revelation 3:1 "To the angel of the church in Sardis write the following: "This is the solemn pronouncement of the one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: 'I know your deeds, that you have a reputation that you are alive, but in reality you are dead.

CSB Revelation 3:1 "Write to the angel of the church in Sardis: "The One who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars says: I know your works; you have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead.

ESV Revelation 3:1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. '"I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

NIV Revelation 3:1 "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

NLT Revelation 3:1 "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis. This is the message from the one who has the sevenfold Spirit of God and the seven stars: "I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive-- but you are dead.

NRS Revelation 3:1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works; you have a name of being alive, but you are dead.

NJB Revelation 3:1 'Write to the angel of the church in Sardis and say, "Here is the message of the one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: I know about your behaviour: how you are reputed to be alive and yet are dead.

NAB Revelation 3:1 "To the angel of the church in Sardis, write this: " 'The one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars says this: "I know your works, that you have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

YLT Revelation 3:1 And to the messenger of the assembly in Sardis write: These things saith he who is having the Seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I have known thy works, and that thou hast the name that thou dost live, and thou art dead;

GWN Revelation 3:1 "To the messenger of the church in Sardis, write: The one who has God's seven spirits and the seven stars says: I know what you have done. You are known for being alive, but you are dead.

BBE Revelation 3:1 And to the angel of the church in Sardis say: These things says he who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: I have knowledge of your works, that you seem to be living but are dead.

RSV Revelation 3:1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: `The words of him who has the seven

spirits of God and the seven stars. "`I know your works; you have the name of being alive, and you are dead.

NKJ Revelation 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.

ASV Revelation 3:1 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead.

MIT Revelation 3:1 To the messenger of the church at Sardis write— The one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars has this to say: I know your activities. You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

- **to**: Rev 1:11,20
- **He who has**: Rev 1:4 4:5 5:6 Joh 1:16,33 3:34 7:37-39 15:26,27 20:22 Ac 2:33 1Pe 1:11
- **and the seven stars**: Rev 1:16,20 Rev 2:1
- **I know your deeds**: Rev 2:2,9,13,19
- **and are**: Lu 15:24,32 Eph 2:1,5 Col 2:13 1Ti 5:6 Jas 2:26 Jude 1:12
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Revelation 4:5+ Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the **seven Spirits of God**;

Revelation 5:6+ And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the **seven Spirits of God,** sent out into all the earth.

Proverbs 15:3+ The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

2 Timothy 3:5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

Sardis' Steep Wall

SARDIS: AUTOPSY OF A DEAD CHURCH

This title is from Swindoll's Living Insights (Adrian Rogers also uses this title).. Ray Stedman calls it "The First Zombie Church of Sardis." The church of "Nominal Christians" (in name only, no substance)! Rod Mattoon entitles it "Sardis, a Morgue with a Steeple!" Michael Andrus calls it "The Church of the Living Dead." “The Fruitless Church" "The Church that was at peace…the peace of the dead!" "The church of spiritual Apathy." Brian Bell calls it “The church with a Reputation, but needing Resuscitation!”

Outwardly splendid as of old,
Inwardly lifeless, dead and cold.
Her force and fire all spent and gone,
Like the dead moon, she still shines on.

To the angel (aggelos/angelos) **of the church** (ekklesia) **in Sardis write** (grapho): While one cannot be dogmatic on the interpretation of **the angel**, it is probably the pastor of the church in Sardis.

Write (grapho) -The glorified Christ gives John this command to **write** (aorist imperative = do this now; don't delay; it is important), the same command He gives for each of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor (Rev. 2:1; Rev. 2:8; Rev. 2:12; Rev. 2:18; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 3:7; Rev. 3:14). John then records the words of the risen, ascended, glorified Christ (Rev 1:10-17+) **sent and communicated by His angel** (Rev 1:1). Recall that earlier Jesus had commanded John to "**Write** (aorist imperative) in a book what you see (present tense = what you are seeing), and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." (Rev 1:11+) To what does this writing refer? From the context this passage would indicate that John recorded the entire vision from Revelation 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 and that it was this scroll that was to be sent to each of the churches. The reason that this is almost surely the entire Revelation that was to be circulated and not the letters to each

individual church is because each of those letters was not what HE SAW but what HE HEARD, in effect representing the "dictation" of Christ's letter to each individual church.

He who has (present tense) **the seven** (hepta) **Spirits of God and the seven** (hepta) **stars** (aster) - **Seven Spirits of God** is clearly figurative language as there is only one Holy Spirit. **Seven** is the number of completeness and perfection, which would emphasis those attributes of the Spirit. In the context of the church at Sardis, Jesus could well be be referring to the fullness of the Holy Spirit, which is essential to keep a church alive! The church was born with the Spirit descended at Pentecost and the Spirit continually "breathes" spiritual life into the church (And sardis needed "mouth to mouth" resuscitation!) (See A Spirit Filled Church) **Seven stars** (Rev 1:16) is explained by Jesus in Rev 1:20+ as "the angels of the seven churches." Isaiah 11:2 is frequently cross-referenced as an explanation of the seven fold ministry of the Spirit, but unless I am mistaken, there is His Name, "the Spirit of the LORD," followed by 6 attributes of the Spirit. I am not sure His Name truly qualifies as one of His attributes. I am just trying to be literal. Enough said.

Ray Stedman - The way the Lord presents Himself is to what that particular church needs. What this church desperately needed was the Spirit from Whom all believers receive LIFE. The church had built up a good reputation, but it was really dead and corrupt inside. The members of this church were, for the most part, not even believers. Today we would call the Christians at Sardis "**NOMINAL CHRISTIANS**" where nominal is from the root word for NAME. The church of the WALKING DEAD, the church of the ZOMBIES. Most at Sardis outwardly **professed** Christ, but who **possessed** no real spiritual life. The world sees this church, filled with pious platitudes but lacking a life that validates all their pomp. The First Zombie Church of Sardis it could have been nicknamed.The church at Sardis was so devoid of life that there weren't even struggles going on within it. The Jews aren't opposing it. False teaching isn't rampant. There were no Nicolaitans springing up like choking weeds. Wake up! And this message is for believers. We dare not shrink from the convicting words and say that does not apply to me. Rather, we must bravely face them and ask ourselves " What has gone wrong w. my spiritual life? Why does my worship and Christian service seem so dreary? Why does my church seem so lifeless and unattractive?

> **THOUGHT** - As we stand under the hot glare of the letter to Sardis, the question is Can people tell whether we are alive or dead? Am I truly alive, or do I just have a reputation, a name, for being alive?

Lehman Strauss - The deadness of the church perhaps is the reason why the Lord identified Himself as the one with the seven Spirits of God (that is, the omnipresent and all-seeing Holy Spirit)....The church was in dire need of the quickening power of the Holy Spirit." (Book of the Revelation: Outlined Studies - BORROW)

(Sardis) *a perfect model of inoffensive Christianity*

S Lewis Johnson says "this church, then, is what we would call a perfect model of inoffensive Christianity which had come to terms completely with the pagan environment in which it stood....it's remarkable in our day how so many of our churches have creeds, fine creeds, but when you enter the churches of the groups, how far you have to go to find a group that really believes the creed. In other words, it's possible for us to have a great creed, and not live up to it at all. And it's possible for a person to say, "I don't have a creed, I just have the Bible." And not live up to the Bible at all. So what we have in Sardis is a dead church with an outward sound view of the word of God, so far as we know. Our Lord writes to them then as those who have attached themselves to the apostolic statements, the belief of the Scriptures as they had them at that time. But nevertheless, in such a church, the gospel was really in a coffin.

Alan Carr - The "seven Spirits of God" refer to the Holy Spirit in His complete ministry. The seven-fold ministry of the Spirit is defined in Isaiah 11:2. **In His hand is the plentitude of the Holy Spirit. This is a reminder to the churches that we are to operate, not under the power of human skill, leadership and organization, but under the awesome power of the Holy Spirit.** When the church walks in the power of the flesh, we will surely fail, but when we walk in the power of the Spirit, there will be success (SEE A SPIRIT FILLED CHURCH) There will be glory and there will be power and life instead of deadness and ineffectiveness! When the human spirit is in control of the human body, amazing things can be accomplished. For instance, a pianist can sit down at a keyboard; perform thousands of delicate, precise movements that will produce beautiful music. However, let that same pianist suffer some injury that leaves the arms paralyzed, and the mind is no longer in control of those arms, hands and fingers. Then, try as it might, the human spirit cannot will the hands to make music. So too, when the Spirit of God is in control of the members of the church, great things can be accomplished. However, when He is not, paralysis is the result and nothing can be accomplished for God.) Note: That is a message the modern church needs today. Men are trying every method under the sun to reach sinners, and to do the work of the church. But, all the power we need is found in the fullness of the Holy Ghost and in the Word of God. What we need is not a new method; but a new desire to seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit and do everything according to the teachings of the Word of God.

Says this (tade legei) **'I know your deeds** (ergon)**, that you have** (present tense) **a name that you are alive** (zao), **but you are dead** - Note that Sardis is the only church Jesus does not open with at least some commendation. Just as the City itself was now

only a shadow of its former glory, being alive in name only, so too was the state of the church at Sardis! There is no praise for the church at Sardis. Toward the end He will commend those who have kept their clothes unsoiled, but they are few in number. Corporately this church is in serious trouble. Also note that it is the only church not troubled by persecution or false teaching. Why bother a church that is dead or impotent? Sardis was a church of Reputation without Reality, a church of Form without Force! (2Ti 3:5+) Sardis was like the Fig tree (see note) of Mt 21:19 which still had leaves but which had no fruit! It is surprising that Jesus did not introduce Himself as the divine Judge (as He did in Rev 2:18+ to Thyatira), although the church at Sardis faced imminent judgment.

> **THOUGHT** - Religious works and dead deeds are a smokescreen for the lack of true spiritual power. The message to Sardis and us is to not live on our past glory! A.W. Tozer some 50 years ago made a similar pronouncement "If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, **95 percent** of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the NT church (in Acts), **95 percent** of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference." What about the church you pastor or attend beloved? As **Wiersbe** says "The church was born when the Spirit of God descended on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2+), and its life comes from the Spirit. When the Spirit is grieved (Eph 4:30+, cf 1Th 5:19+), the church begins to lose life and power. When sin is confessed and church members get right with God and with each other, then the Spirit infuses new life—**revival**!" Do you need personal revival? Does your church need corporate revival? If so Psalm 119:25+ gives a good solution "My soul cleaves to the dust; Revive me according to Your word." In other words, if you want "revival," then "RE-BIBLE!" Preach the Word (2Ti 4:2+). Teach (in depth) the Word. The Word is your life (Dt 32:47+, cf Php 2:16+, 1Jn 1:1+ = Jesus).

Deeds (ergon) is a common word in the seven letters and refers to both good (God initiated and glorifying) deeds and bad deeds, as in Rev 2:22 referring to the **deeds** of Jezebel. And as Jesus declared in Rev 2:23 He will "give to each one...according to your deeds," rewards for deeds of saints and greater judgment for the wicked deeds of unbelievers. In Rev 2:26 Jesus refers to good deeds as "**My deeds**," which clearly does not apply to these deeds in Sardis for they are (spiritually)**dead** and cannot produce good (Spirit enabled) deeds. **Deeds** (ergon) is used in Rev. 2:2; Rev. 2:5; Rev. 2:6; Rev. 2:19; Rev. 2:22; Rev. 2:23; Rev. 2:26; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 3:2; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:15;

John Stott on their **deeds** - Its works were beautiful grave clothes which were but a thin disguise for this ecclesiastical corpse. The eyes of Christ saw beyond the clothes to the skeleton. It was dead as mutton. It even stank. (Borrow What Christ thinks of the church : insights from Revelation 2-3)

Brian Bell - Vance Havner tells us that spiritual ministries often go thru 4 stages: A man, a movement, a machine, and then a monument! Sardis was in Monument stage!…but there was still Hope!

Leon Morris says "Content with mediocrity, lacking both the enthusiasm to entertain a heresy and the depth of conviction which provokes intolerance, it was too innocuous to be worth persecuting." When the Voice of the Andes radio station was founded, the men who had the vision for that work asked God to give them a great oak tree, the branches of which would reach all across Latin America. Instead, God gave them an acorn and told them to watch it grow. It is far better to begin small and grow than to begin with great plans, all of which dry up and come to nothing. (Borrow Revelation of St John page 74)

Jesus' words to Sardis recall His scathing rebuke of the Pharisees - ""Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are **like whitewashed tombs** which on the **outside appear beautiful**, but **inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.** 28 "So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." (Mt 23:27-28)

Don't miss the point that Sardis does not appear dead!
A dead church may still look like an alive church!

Michael Andrus adds that "This church's deadness is not man's evaluation but God's. So I would conclude that not only do the great historic mainline churches and cathedrals need to pay attention to this warning; **even conservative, evangelical churches that appear to be vital and growing are susceptible to the curse of the living dead**."

A name that you are alive - **Name** refers to the reputation of Sardis, so that others think this church is filled with born again souls because they are actively "playing church" and doing so well enough to fool the natural eye. But Jesus knows their heart and their deeds and His assessment is that they are **dead** or as Paul would say they are "**dead** in (their) trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." (Eph 2:1-3+) Paul goes on to add how to come to life "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even **when we were dead in our transgressions,** made us

alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)." (Eph 2:4-5+) And their fleshly **deeds** are also **dead** because "It is the Spirit who gives life; the **flesh** profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." (Jn 6:63+). And how does one know they are truly alive in Christ? The writer of Hebrews says "if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end." (Heb 3:6+) and "if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." (Heb 3:14+ - See related topic Perseverance of the Saints) Note the repetition of the time phrase "until the end," the end of our life or the end of this age with Christ returns and raptures His beloved bride. Paul makes a similar statement about perseverance in 1Co 15:1-2+ writing "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved (sozo in present tense - "are being saved" aka progressive sanctification), **if you hold fast** (katecho) **the word** which I preached to you (cf Luke 8:15+), unless you believed (pisteuo) in vain (**NB**: true belief is never in vain, but this refers to spurious belief, intellectual belief)."

> **THOUGHT** - The church at Sardis reminds me of the truth that God sees not just the exterior, but also the interior (our heart). Indeed men know our reputation, but God knows our character. How would you assess your spiritual life - active on the outside but dead on the inside? It is a serious and solemn question for all of us to ponder.

Michael Andrus - It has a reputation for being alive, but it is, in fact, dead. I can't think of anything more tragic that could be said about a church–intended to be a light upon a hill, a hospital of hope, a fountain of life–than that it is dead and doesn't know it. How does a church die? I suggest that a church never dies in a moment of time. Churches don't have accidents or heart attacks or massive strokes. The death of a church is almost always a slow, gradual process. Let me suggest some of the factors that can cause a church to die. One is doubt, the kind Satan introduced to Eve when he said, "Has God really said...?" Tragically many young would-be pastors are fed a steady diet of doubt in liberal seminaries. In fact, some seminaries should have a sign out front, warning, "Entering here can be fatal to your faith." You see, most denominations go bad from the top down, not the bottom up. It starts with a seminary president who is more concerned about hiring Ph.D.'s from the right graduate schools than he is with hiring professors who know and love the Lord. Then academic freedom and tenure are used to keep those Ph.D.'s in the classroom even after they have abandoned the historic creeds of the Church. Over time the graduates of those schools, impressed with the credentials and intellectual acumen. of their professors, are appointed to local parishes by liberal bishops and superintendents. These young pastors often use the same language the man in the pew has always heard but they mean something very different by the terms.ii They still preach the resurrection, for example, but they don't believe that Jesus literally rose from the dead. They use the term "resurrection" as symbolic for turning over a new leaf, not to describe a dead body coming alive. A second factor that can lead to the death of a church is self-sufficiency. There is usually no sense of self-sufficiency or overconfidence when a church is young and struggling. Another factor that can lead to a church's death warrant is clericalism, or more plainly, the hiredgun syndrome. Many churches today take the attitude, "If something needs to be done, hire it done." They have paid soloists, paid nursery workers, paid Sunday School teachers. I'm obviously not opposed to professional staff, but we must keep in mind that the staff are not the principal ministers of a church; they are the equippers of the ministers. The ministers are the members of the congregation. The goal of any professional pastoral team should be to make sure each person who knows Christ is both challenged and equipped to find a meaningful place to serve Him effectively and wholeheartedly.

C H Spurgeon - The first charge of general defilement he brings against the church in Sardis was that they had a vast deal of open profession, and but little of sincere religion....In going up and down this land, I am obliged to come to this conclusion, that throughout the churches there are multitudes who have "a name to live, and are dead." Religion has become fashionable. The shopkeeper could scarcely succeed in a respectable business if he were not united with a church....You can scarcely meet with a man who does not call himself a Christian (SOUNDS LIKE AMERICA 2023!), and yet it is equally hard to meet with one who is in the very marrow of his bones thoroughly sanctified to the good work of the kingdom of heaven....The whole nation appears to have been Christianized in an hour. But is this real? Is this sincere? Ah! we fear not. How is it that professors can live like other men? How is it that there is so little distinction between the church and the world? Or, that if there is any difference, you are frequently safer in dealing with an ungodly man than with one who is professedly righteous? How is it that men who make high professions can live in worldly conformity, indulge in the same pleasures, live in the same style, act from the same motives, deal in the same manner as other do?....Take our churches at large—there is no lack of names, but there is a lack of life. Else, how is it that our prayer-meetings are so badly attended? Where is the zeal or the energy shown by the apostles? Where is the Spirit of the living God? Is he not departed? Might not "Ichabod" be written on the walls of many a sanctuary? They have a name to live, but are dead. They have their piety? Where is sincere religion? Where is practical godliness? Where is firm, decisive, puritanical piety? Thank God, there are a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; but charity itself will not allow us to say that the church generally possesses the Spirit of God.....Can I bear to see the laziness, the slothfulness, the indifference of ministers, and of churches, without speaking. No! there must be a protest entered, and we enter it now. Oh! Church of God, thou has a name to live, and art dead; thou art not watchful. Awake! awake! arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (Feb 24, 1856 - Sermon A Solemn Warning for All Churches)

Daniel Akin - (Exalting Jesus in Revelation - BORROW; related sermon Autopsy Of A Dead Church – Revelation 3:1-6) In 2014 Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources, wrote a highly acclaimed book titled Autopsy of a Deceased Church. Its genesis was a popular blog article with the same title. In this book Rainer identifies several fatal causes that put once-alive and vibrant churches in the grave. These include

• treating the past as the hero;
• refusing to adapt to the needs of the present community;
• moving the focus of the budget inward;
• allowing the Great Commission to become the Great Omission; (**ED**: AND WHAT IS THE GREAT COMMISSION? ONLY COMMAND IN Mt 28:19 is **MAKE** [aorist imperative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey] DISCIPLES! - SEE Make Disciples)
• letting the church become preference-driven out of selfishness and personal agendas;
• seeing the tenure of the pastors decreasing;
• failing to have regular, corporate prayer;
• having no clear purpose or vision; and
• obsessing over the facilities.

Here I would like to build on Rainer's excellent points with a simple observation. Many a church begins with a**man**, reaches out with a **mission**, becomes a **movement**, but ends up a **monument** or in the **mortuary**. This is a polite way of saying many a church begins with life but ends in death. It has a glorious past, but a glorious past is all it has. It is now a zombie church, a church of the living dead. There are live bodies walking around with dead souls on the inside. Amazingly, astonishingly, sometimes only God notices. Spiritually there is no pulse, no heartbeat. Spiritually they are flat-lined, a dead church. Another complement to Rainer's precise analysis might be an article titled "When Does My Church Need Revival?" in which Stevan Manley highlights six tell-tale signs of a church standing at death's door:

1. The church is plagued with disagreements.
2. The preaching is ineffective.
3. Few can remember when a person was last saved.
4. God's supernatural power is never seen.
5. God is not praised regularly.
6. No one is being called into God's work. (Herald)

Adam Clarke - Thou hast a name that thou livest: Ye have the reputation of Christians, and consequently of being alive to God, through the quickening influence of the Divine Spirit; but ye are dead — ye have not the life of God in your souls, ye have not walked consistently and steadily before God, and his Spirit has been grieved with you, and he has withdrawn much of his light and power. Physical life and activity do not necessarily imply the presence of spiritual life. Only persons and groups directed by God's Spirit can claim spiritual life.

In some respects Sardis is the most difficult church to dissect
because we don't really know what was wrong there.
-- Ray Pritchard

Ray Pritchard - It is certainly notable what Jesus does not mention: The church does not seem to be suffering persecution. It does not seem to be seriously infected with false doctrine. We find no mention of the mysterious Nicolaitans. There is no hint of sexual immorality in the church. Nor is the church warned about losing its first love. In some respects Sardis is the most difficult church to dissect because we don't really know what was wrong there. When Jesus speaks to the other churches, he spells out the problem so there can be no confusion. But here we are told simply that at Sardis things looked good on the outside but were dying on the inside. Strange as it may seem, there is something that can be much worse than false doctrine or sexual immorality or trouble in the church: **A good reputation that is undeserved**. It's like saying, "We're in the top 4% of all churches in our denomination." What does that really mean? What if it means nothing at all? That's a scary proposition. If you are dying, it would help to know about it. It's better to know about cancer even though the treatment may be difficult than to live in blissful ignorance until it is too late to do anything about it.....Evidently the Jews and the Romans didn't bother the church because the church didn't bother them. It was left alone because it lacked the conviction to stir the waters and make any waves.....How does a situation develop where a church with a good reputation turns out to be spiritually dead? We can list a few indicators: (1) When the past becomes more important than the present. (2) When keeping a good reputation matters more than a bold witness for Christ. (3) When religious ritual becomes an end in itself. (4) When talking about Christ matters more than knowing Christ. (5) When convenience trumps sacrifice. (6) When appearance matters more than reality. (7) When tradition stifles every attempt at innovation. (8) When personal comfort outweighs risky faith. (9) When church activity substitutes for a growing walk with God. What strikes me is that these things are matters of the heart and are thus very hard to spot. A church that is dead will often seem quite alive. No church would advertise itself by saying,

“Come worship with us. We ask nothing, demand nothing, dare nothing, and dream nothing.” How had this happened at Sardis?

G. Campbell Morgan - The church had come to the place where it lived before men rather than before God, more anxious in all probability about their reputation in Sardis than their reputation in heaven.

An interesting historical fact is that as Sardis was rebuilt in the time of Alexander the Great, it was dedicated to a local Asiatic goddess usually referred to as **Cybele**, who was identified with the Greek Artemis. This patron deity was believed to possess the special power of restoring the dead to life.

John MacArthur writes that "Like the ship in Coleridge’s “Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner,” which had corpses to row and steer it, the **church at Sardis** was being operated by members who were spiritually dead. The city of Sardis was synonymous with wealth. The expression “**rich as Croesus**” comes from the extreme wealth of **King Croesus,** who ruled over the ancient kingdom of Lydia, of which Sardis was the capital. But the superficial activities of the church there could no more keep it spiritually alive than the great wealth and reputation of the city could keep it politically alive. **Both city and church went out of existence shortly after New Testament times.** When a church substitutes programs, activities, ceremonies, and human issues for the Lord and His work, it becomes a **spiritual corpse,** despite its **appearance of vitality**. It has no spiritual life because God is not there. It becomes an Ichabod, because the glory of the Lord departs from it (see 1Sa 4:21+). When lovelessness, immorality, empty ritual, and self–satisfaction overcome a church, the result is spiritual lifelessness. The few believers in Sardis who had “**not soiled their garments**” were encouraged by the Lord with the promise of one day walking with Him in white in His glorious heavenly kingdom (Rev. 3:4). That faithful remnant prevented the church as a whole from losing its lampstand and falling into oblivion. (See Ephesians Commentary)

In The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner Samuel Coleridge wrote,

> “Corpses man the ship;
> dead men pull the oars;
> dead men hoist the sails;
> dead men steer the vessel.”

I know (oida/eido is used in all 7 introductions - Rev 2:9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15) and "speaks of absolute, beyond the peradventure (chance) of a doubt knowledge, a knowledge that is self-evident...a positive knowledge...to know absolutely and finally...to know absolutely...a sure knowledge, a positive knowledge...an absolute acquaintance with something." (Wuest) **Oida/eido** is the perfect tense of the obsolete verb eido (stem = eid- in Latin - "video") which means to see, so literally it means "have seen" hence to know something. Someone has said this verb for **know** "emphasizes better the absolute clearness of mental vision which photographs all the facts of life as they pass." The use of this verb (**eido**) indicates that Jesus is intimately acquainted with **every** aspect of this church (and all 7 churches). He has perfect knowledge of this church. Nothing is hidden from Him.

> **THOUGHT** - Do you live with a sense that your every thought, word and deed is seen/known by Jesus? One way to describe this lifestyle is Coram Deo living. Do you live with the idea that we should be motivated by a desire to please an audience of One? Do you rely on Him (His Spirit, rest in Him and respond to Him in unhesitating obedience cf 1Sa 15:22+)? This truth applies to all of us. Jesus sees perfectly into our heart, and knows our every thought whether we speak it or not (See what Jesus sees/knows in Ps 139:1-4+). He knows every motive, even for our "good deeds." (cf 1 Cor 4:5+) "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things are open and laid bare** ("naked and exposed" = Heb 4:13NET+) **to the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do** ("to Whom we must render account" - cf 2 Cor 5:10+)." (Heb 4:13+, cf Eccl 12:14) The reality of this truth should give us cause to pause when we are being tempted to stray (Jas 1:13, 14+), because we can never stray from or hide from His perfect, piercing, righteous gaze! This truth should motivate us, enabled by His Spirit (Php 2:13NLT+), to "to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age." (Titus 2:12+)

As an aside, Sardis and Laodicea are the only two of the seven churches that have no mention of conflict with spiritual foes either internally or externally.

Sardis
William Cowper

“Write to Sardis,” saith the Lord,
“And write what He declares,
He whose Spirit, and whose word,
Upholds the seven stars:

All thy works and ways I search,
Find thy zeal and love decay'd;
Thou art call'd a living church,
But thou art cold and dead.

"Watch, remember, seek, and strive,
Exert thy former pains;
Let thy timely care revive,
And strengthen what remains;

Cleanse thine heart, thy works amend,
Former times to mind recall,
Lest my sudden stroke descend,
And smite thee once for all.

"Yet I number now in thee
A few that are upright;
These my Father's face shall see,
And walk with me in white.

When in judgment I appear,
They for mine shall be confess'd;
Let my faithful servants hear,—
And woe be to the rest!"

Angel (messenger)(32) **aggelos/angelos** [*gg* in Greek is pronounced *ng*] possibly from **ago** = to bring) literally means a messenger (one who bears a message - Lk 1:11, 2:9, etc or does an errand). Most of the NT uses refer to heavenly angels (messengers) who are supernatural, transcendent beings with power to carry out various tasks. All uses of **aggelos** that refer to angels are masculine gender (the feminine form of aggelos does not occur.) **Vine** writes that **aggelos** refer to "an order of created beings, superior to man, Heb 2:7; Ps. 8:5, belonging to Heaven, Mt. 24:36; Mark 12:25, and to God, Luke 12:8, and engaged in His service, Psa. 103:20. **Angels** are spirits, Heb. 1:14, i.e., they have not material bodies as men have; they are either human in form, or can assume the human form when necessary, cp. Luke 24:4, with Lk 24:23, Acts 10:3 with Acts 10:30."

> **Aggelos in the Revelation 76x/72v** (out of 172v in NT) - Rev. 1:1; Rev. 1:20; Rev. 2:1; Rev. 2:8; Rev. 2:12; Rev. 2:18; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 3:7; Rev. 3:14; Rev. 5:2; Rev. 5:11; Rev. 7:1; Rev. 7:2; Rev. 7:11; Rev. 8:2; Rev. 8:3; Rev. 8:4; Rev. 8:5; Rev. 8:6; Rev. 8:8; Rev. 8:10; Rev. 8:12; Rev. 8:13; Rev. 9:1; Rev. 9:11; Rev. 9:13; Rev. 9:14; Rev. 9:15; Rev. 10:1; Rev. 10:5; Rev. 10:7; Rev. 10:8; Rev. 10:9; Rev. 10:10; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 12:7; Rev. 12:9; Rev. 14:6; Rev. 14:8; Rev. 14:9; Rev. 14:10; Rev. 14:15; Rev. 14:17; Rev. 14:18; Rev. 14:19; Rev. 15:1; Rev. 15:6; Rev. 15:7; Rev. 15:8; Rev. 16:1; Rev. 16:5; Rev. 17:1; Rev. 17:7; Rev. 18:1; Rev. 18:21; Rev. 19:17; Rev. 20:1; Rev. 21:9; Rev. 21:12; Rev. 21:17; Rev. 22:6; Rev. 22:8; Rev. 22:16

Seven (2033) hepta (For discussion of imagery of seven click here and gotquestions.org) is the indeclinable number 7 (a cardinal number) denotes sufficiency. In Jewish usage **hepta** often designated a round or complete number. **W E Vine** notes hepa- is found in "English words beginning with "hept," and corresponds to the Hebrew sheba' (which is akin to saba', signifying "to be full, abundant"), sometimes used as an expression of fullness, e.g., Ruth 4:15 ("better to you than seven sons"): it generally expresses completeness," See Tony Garland's comments on Seven: Perfection, Completeness.

> **Hepta in the Revelation** - Matt. 12:45; Matt. 15:34; Matt. 15:36; Matt. 15:37; Matt. 16:10; Matt. 18:22; Matt. 22:25; Matt. 22:26; Matt. 22:28; Mk. 8:5; Mk. 8:6; Mk. 8:8; Mk. 8:20; Mk. 12:20; Mk. 12:22; Mk. 12:23; Mk. 16:9; Lk. 2:36; Lk. 8:2; Lk. 11:26; Lk. 20:29; Lk. 20:31; Lk. 20:33; Acts 6:3; Acts 13:19; Acts 19:14; Acts 20:6; Acts 21:4; Acts 21:8; Acts 21:27; Acts 28:14; Heb. 11:30; Rev. 1:4; Rev. 1:11; Rev. 1:12; Rev. 1:16; Rev. 1:20; Rev. 2:1; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 4:5; Rev. 5:1; Rev. 5:5; Rev. 5:6; Rev. 6:1; Rev. 8:2; Rev. 8:6; Rev. 10:3; Rev. 10:4; Rev. 11:13; Rev. 12:3; Rev. 13:1; Rev. 15:1; Rev. 15:6; Rev. 15:7; Rev. 15:8; Rev. 16:1; Rev. 17:1; Rev. 17:3; Rev. 17:7; Rev. 17:9; Rev. 17:10; Rev. 17:11; Rev. 21:9
>
> **MARVIN VINCENT ON "SEVEN":** The number seven was regarded by the Hebrews as a sacred number, and it is throughout Scripture the covenant number, the sign of God's covenant relation to mankind, and especially to the Church. The evidences of this are met in the hallowing of the seventh day; in the accomplishment of circumcision, which is the sign of a covenant, after seven days; in the part played by the number in marriage

covenants and treaties of peace. It is the number of purification and consecration (Leviticus 4:6, 17; 8:11, 33; Numbers 19:12).

"Seven is the number of every grace and benefit bestowed upon Israel; which is thus marked as flowing out of the covenant, and a consequence of it.

1). The priests compass Jericho seven days, and on the seventh day seven times, that all Israel may know that the city is given into their hands by God, and that its conquest is a direct and immediate result of their covenant relation to Him.

2). Naaman is to dip in Jordan seven times, that he may acknowledge the God of Israel as the author of his cure.

3). It is the number of reward to those who are faithful in the covenant (Deuteronomy 28:7; 1 Samuel 2:5); of punishment to those who are froward in the covenant (Leviticus 26:21, 24, 28; Deuteronomy 28:25), or to those who injure the people in it (Genesis 4:15, 24; Exodus 7:25; Psalms 79:12). All the feasts are ordered by seven, or else by seven multiplied into seven, and thus made intenser still. Thus it is with the Sabbath, the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, of Tabernacles, the Sabbath-year, and the Jubilee."

Similarly the number appears in God's dealing with nations outside the covenant, showing that He is working for Israel's sake and with respect to His covenant. It is the number of the years of plenty and of famine, in sign that these are for Israel's sake rather than for Egypt's. Seven times pass over Nebuchadnezzar, that he may learn that the God of his Jewish captives is king over all the earth (partly quoted and partly condensed from Trench's "Epistles to the Seven Churches").

Seven also occurs as a sacred number in the New Testament. There are seven beatitudes, seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer; seven parables in Matthew 13; seven loaves, seven words from the cross, seven deacons, seven graces (Romans 12:6-8), seven characteristics of wisdom (James 3:17). In Revelation the prominence of the number is marked. To a remarkable extent the structure of that book is molded by the use of numbers, especially of the numbers seven, four, and three. There are seven spirits before the throne; seven churches; seven golden candlesticks; seven stars in the right hand of Him who is like unto a son of man; seven lamps of fire burning before the throne; seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb; seven seals of the book; and the thunders, the heads of the great dragon and of the beast from the sea, the angels with the trumpets, the plagues, and the mountains which are the seat of the mystic Babylon, — are all seven in number.

Write (1125)(**grapho** from root **graph**- = primarily means to scratch on or engrave as on an ornament, reports, letters, etc; **English** = graph, graphic, etc) means to engrave or inscribe with a pen or stylus characters or letters on a surface which can be wood, wax, metal, leather, stone, parchment, dirt (John), paper, etc. Note that John is given 12 commands to **write** what he **SAW** (**NOTE**: THIS IS A VERY "VISUAL" BOOK!) - Rev 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5) and one command to not write (Rev 10:4+).

Grapho - 30x in 29v in Revelation - Rev. 1:3; Rev. 1:11; Rev. 1:19; Rev. 2:1; Rev. 2:8; Rev. 2:12; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 2:18; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 3:7; Rev. 3:12; Rev. 3:14; Rev. 5:1; Rev. 10:4; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 14:1; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 17:5; Rev. 17:8; Rev. 19:9; Rev. 19:12; Rev. 19:16; Rev. 20:12; Rev. 20:15; Rev. 21:5; Rev. 21:27; Rev. 22:18; Rev. 22:19

Church (1577) **ekklesia/ecclesia** from **ek** = out + **klesis** = a calling, verb = **kaleo** = to call) literally means called out (but see note by Louw-Nida below) and as commonly used in the Greco-Roman vernacular referred to citizens who were *called out* from their homes to be publicly assembled or gathered to discuss or carry out affairs of state. **Wuest** writes that "The word ***assembly*** is a good one-word translation of **ekklesia**."

John Walvoord has a helpful discussion of **ekklesia** - This word translated church or assembly is found in at least four important meanings in the New Testament. It is used **(1)** to mean an assembly of people. In this sense it has no special theological meaning. It can refer to Israel as a gathered people in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) or a regular assembly of citizens (Acts 19:39) or a group of people gathered for religious worship (Heb. 2:12). **(2)** The same word is used for an assembly of Christians in a local church (Acts 8:1, 8:3; 11:22, 26) and in the plural for a group of such churches (1Cor. 16:19; Gal. 1:2). Each assembly or church has a local gathering composed of professed Christians. That all in the assembly are not necessarily true believers is clear from the messages to the seven churches of Asia (Rev 2:1-29; Rev 3:1-22). (3) **Ecclesia** is also used of the total of professing Christians without reference to locality and is practically parallel in this sense to Christendom (Acts 12:1; Ro 16:16; 1Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Rev. 2:1-29, Rev 3:1-22; etc.). The same word is used **(4)** of the body of Christ, composed of those baptized by the Holy Spirit into the church (1Cor. 12:13). **Ecclesia** used in this connection becomes a technical word referring to the saints of this age. (Borrow The Millennial Kingdom on page 224) (See also his article Revelation 2: The Letters To Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, And Thyatira)

Ekklesia in the Revelation - Rev. 1:4; Rev. 1:11; Rev. 1:20; Rev. 2:1; Rev. 2:7; Rev. 2:8; Rev. 2:11; Rev. 2:12;

Rev. 2:17; Rev. 2:18; Rev. 2:23; Rev. 2:29; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 3:6; Rev. 3:7; Rev. 3:13; Rev. 3:14; Rev. 3:22; Rev. 22:16 = "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the **churches**." **NOTE THE STRANGE ABSENCE OF THE WORD EKKLESIA IN Revelation 4-20 WHICH EVEN HAS NO ALLUSION TO THE CHURCH!**

Deeds (work, works) (2041) **ergon** gives us our English word "erg," a unit of work or energy, equal to the work done by a force of one dyne when its point of application moves one centimeter in the direction of action of the force. **Friberg** defines **ergon** - (1) generally work; (a) active, anything done or to be done = deed, work, action (Jn 3.21); (b) passive, anything achieved or made as the product of an action or process = workmanship, deed, accomplishment (1Cor 3.13); (2) in contrast to rest = work, activity (Heb 4.3, 4); deed (1Jn 3.18) in contrast to word (lo,goj); as a corollary or complement to faith, as a practical demonstration or proof of it work(s), deed(s) (James 2.18); (3) as God's activity in the world work(s), deed(s), act(s) (Jn 5.20); (4) as human duties and occupations = work, task (Acts 14.26); (5) in a weakened sense = matter, thing, undertaking (Acts 5.38) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament) **Gingrich** adds "1. deed, action Lk 24:19; Col 3:17; 2 Th 2:17; Heb 4:3, 4, 10; Jas 2:14ff. Manifestation, practical proof, practice Ro 2:15; Eph 4:12; 1 Th 1:3; 2 Th 1:11; Jas 1:4. Deed, accomplishment Mt 11:2; Mk 14:6; Lk 11:48; Jn 3:19, 20f; 6:28f; 7:3, 21; 10:25, 37f; Acts 9:36; Ro 3:20, 28; Col 1:10; Heb 6:1; Jas 3:13; Rev 15:3.—2. work, occupation, task Mk 13:34; Jn 17:4, Ac 14:26; 15:38; 1 Cor 15:58; 2 Ti 4:5.—3. work in the passive sense, indicating what is produced by work Acts 7:41; 1 Cor 3:13, 14, 15; Heb 1:10; 2 Pet 3:10; 1 Jn 3:8.—4. thing, matter Acts 5:38; (Borrow Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament by Gingrich, F. Wilbur.) (For more borrow Spiros Zodhiates The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament).

Death, Spiritual.(TOPICAL BIBLE)

1.Alienation from God is. Eph 4:18.
2.Carnal-mindedness is. Ro 8:6.
3.Walking in trespasses/ sins. Eph 2:1; Col 2:13.
4.Spiritual ignorance is. Isa 9:2; Mt 4:16; Lu 1:79; Eph 4:18.
5.Unbelief is. Joh 3:36; 1 Joh 5:12.
6.Living in pleasure is. 1Ti 5:6.
7.Hypocrisy is. Rev 3:1,2.
8.Is a consequence of the fall. Ro 5:12,15.
9.Is the state of all men by nature. Ro 6:13; 8:6.
10.The fruits of, are dead works. Heb 6:1; 9:14.
11.A call to arise from. Eph 5:14.
12.Deliverance from, is through Christ. Joh 5:24,25; Eph 2:5; 1 Joh 5:12.
13.Saints are raised from. Ro 6:13.
14.Love of the brethren, a proof of being raised from. 1Jn 3:14.
15.Illustrated. Eze 37:2,3; Lu 15:24.

ILLUSTRATION - Maybe you heard about the little boy who walked out of the church sanctuary one Sunday. Out in the lobby was an engraved plaque listing all the members of the church who had died in military service. The little boy asked his father,"Dad, what' that?" His dad replied,"That's for the members who died in the Service." To which the little boy asked, "Which service did they die in, Dad? The morning or the evening service?"

ILLUSTRATION OF "I KNOW" - By means of satellite imagery and software programs that can find almost any address on the planet, I can see almost any church building in the world from my study at home. If, for example, I want to see a certain church in South Africa, I can open a software application and a spectacular picture of our blue and green planet spinning in space appears on my computer screen. I type in Africa and the spinning planet rotates to the giant continent of Africa. I then type in South Africa and zoom in on the country of South Africa. I type in Barberton (a city west of Swaziland), and in seconds I see the entire city. Finally, I type in the address of the church. Before I know it, I'm looking down at the roof of a church building 9,800 miles (15,680 km) from my home. As powerful and amazing as this technology is, however, I still can't see inside the building. I see only the roof. I cannot see or hear God's people as they worship, nor can I look into the hearts and minds of the people who gather there. But there is one who can see perfectly into every human heart. He can perceive the corporate spirit of a church. Not only can he see into every church and every heart, he can walk among the churches on earth without being detected! And he does it all without the benefit of our feeble computers, cameras, or satellite imagery.

ILLUSTRATION - The vast distances of interstellar space are unimaginably immense. The nearest stars to us are trillions of miles away. Those large distances have forced astronomers to come up with an appropriate measurement unit, the light-year. One light-year equals the distance that light, traveling at more than 186,000 miles per second, travels in one year—more than 6 trillion miles.

The enormous distance to even the nearest stars presents an interesting possibility. If a star thirty light-years away from the earth exploded and died five years ago, we would not be able to tell by looking at it for another twenty-five years. Though no longer in existence, the light from that star would go on shining as if nothing had changed. That illustration perfectly sums up the situation in many churches. They still shine with the reflected light of a brilliant past. Looking at them from a distance, one might think nothing had changed. Yet the spiritual darkness of false teaching and sinful living has extinguished the light on the inside, though some of their reputation may still remain. Such a church was the church at Sardis. It was reputed to be alive, but the Lord Jesus Christ pronounced it to be dead. The downward spiral depicted by these churches, beginning with the Ephesian church's loss of its first love for Jesus Christ and continuing with Pergamum's worldliness and Thyatira's toleration of sin, reached a new low at Sardis. The church at Sardis could well be nicknamed "The First Church of the Tares." (Actually this fits Laodicea better as there were 100% tares there!) It was a church dominated by sin, unbelief, and false doctrine. Like the fig tree in Jesus' parable, it bore leaves, but no fruit (Matt. 21:19). (See Revelation Commentary)

ILLUSTRATION - I (Adrian Rogers) remember hearing my good friend Dr. W. A. Criswell talk, one time, at a convention. And, Dr. Criswell was talking about some of these dead churches. He told about how, on a vacation, he went into a church to visit in that church. He told how dead it was, and how barren it was, and how still it was, and how there was a clammy coldness about it all. Then, he said, after that—it was in a resort area—he said he and his wife went to a restaurant, and that restaurant was staffed with college kids. And, he said they had on the tables their red checkered tablecloths, and the kids were dressed very brightly. And, the kids had big smiles on their faces, and they were serving. And, they even had a little songfest over in the corner, and it was such a happy place to be. Dr. Criswell, in his own way, said, "I went out of that restaurant so happy and just so blessed." He said, "They didn't give an invitation at the church." And, he said, "They didn't give an invitation at the restaurant. But, if they had, I would have joined the restaurant, rather than the church."

Sardis: Cocky and Confident - Sardis seemed impregnable, sitting on a hill surrounded by high cliffs which no army could scale. Cocky and confident, the people of Sardis slept soundly while Cyrus, the Persian king, and his army climbed the steep cliffs. When the sun rose over Sardis on that day in 549 B.C., its inhabitants discovered they should have been watching instead of sleeping. Did the people of Sardis learn a lesson? Perhaps—but they failed to tell it to their children. In 214 B.C. Sardis again fell when Antiochus the Great surprised the sleeping city by scaling the cliffs at night.

ILLUSTRATION OF A MAN WHO WAS ORTHODOX BUT DEAD - THE STORY OF JOHN WESLEY founder of Methodism

John and his brother Charles went to Oxford and in 1726 established "The Holy Club" arising at 4 a.m. for prayer, Bible study, self-examination and going out to minister to the poor and the imprisoned. In 1735 Charles and John sailed for Georgia to "save" the Indians.

John on returning to England wrote: "I went to America to convert the Indians, but who will convert me?" On the initial trip from England to America there were some Moravians on board who had an alive, vibrant Christianity. The Moravians told the Wesleys that they had not been born again. Before they sailed for Georgia, John Wesley talked with Charles who now began to long for the faith that could conquer sin after 10 vain years of struggling. John Wesley, despondent from his experience in America, entered into "a dark night of the soul" writing "For 3 days I was sorrowful and very heavy, being neither able to read nor sing nor meditate nor pray nor do anything." Charles could pray despite suffering bodily pain but his prayer brought no sense of Christ's presence and he thought he was going to die. But he was convinced he would not die until he truly knew Jesus. He knew all about Jesus but nothing changed in his life. Charles shared the gospel of salvation by faith at one church and the church was upset. He supposed they were "too religious" to tolerate a FAITH SO SIMPLE.

On Saturday John gathered with some friends to spend the night in prayer for his brother Charles and on the morning of Sunday, May 21, 1738 Charles Wesley came to know the Lord Jesus Christ. As they arose from prayer John was greeted with the news that his brother Charles had accepted Christ and truly believed and was at peace with God, rejoicing and recovering from his illness. John Wesley lapsed into misery, on Monday and Tuesday seeking and praying for "a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for me, a trust in Him as my Christ, my sole justification, sanctification and redemption." He had thought that he must become holy BEFORE he could be saved. Now he knew that he deserved nothing but wrath. On May 24, 1738, 3 days after his brother accepted Christ, John Wesley was saved.

THE ACCOUNT OF JOHN WESLEY'S CONVERSION:

John went to a meeting at Aldersgate where they were reading Luther on the book of Romans. John later wrote "In the evening I went...to a society at Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle of the Romans. About a quarter before 9, while he was describing the change which God works in a heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did

trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." He began to pray "for all those who despitefully use me." Then he testified openly to those who were there what he now felt in his heart. "But it was not long before the enemy suggested this cannot be faith for where is joy." He learned then that faith does not depend on feeling. "Joy might be given or withheld." The others ran to Charles who was writing a hymn to celebrate his own conversion "Where Shall My Wandering Soul Begin?". John was brought in and declared "I believe. We sang our hymn with great joy:

" Out passive men, to you I call: harlots and publicans and thieves.
He spreads His arms to embrace you all, sinners alone His grace receives.
No need of Him the righteous have.
He came the lost to seek and save.
For You the Prince of glory died. Believe and all your guilt's forgiven.
Only believe and yours is heaven."

He went out to share at a Sunday evening dinner party. John got up and told them that 5 days earlier he was not a Christian and that the way for all of them to be Christians was to believe and to own that they were not Christians! Mr. Hutton was surprised by this unexpected injudicious speech and said "Have a care Mr. Wesley how you despise the benefits received by the two sacraments." After the company left several went in to eat where again Wesley made the "same wild speech at supper in the parlor. Mrs. Hutton exclaimed "If you was not a Christian ever since I knew you, you was a GREAT HYPOCRITE for you all made us believe you once was!"

Significant facts about Sardis

- "To a striking degree, the history of the church at Sardis paralleled that of the city." MacArthur)
- "Sardis' claim to fame at the time Revelation was written lay essentially in its history, for, while it had once been the preeminent city in Asia, it had fallen into decline and lost any claim to a leading role. Sardis was situated at the junction of the major roads leading from Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum to the East." (Monty Mills)
- **Sardis** was the capital of the fabulously wealthy Lydian empire as early as 1200 B.C. (See map of Lydian kingdom circa 547 BC) to become one of the greatest cities in the ancient world
- Sardis reached its zenith under King Croesus. King Croesus and Sardis were famed around the world for their wealth. In that part of the world, it is still common to hear the phrase, "As rich as Croesus". (depiction of Croesus) He is credited with issuing the Croeseid, (picture) the first true gold coins with a standardized purity for general circulation and the world's first bimetallic monetary system c. 550 BC. While Sardis reached its zenith under Croesus, it also fell under his reign. He and the people of the city became complacent in their wealth, their power and their city's apparent invincibility (see picture of acropolis where city citadel once set - you can see why it was almost impregnable - it was built with a smooth, nearly perpendicular rock walls on three sides). When the region where Sardis was located came under attack by Cyrus the Persian, King Croesus and his people retreated to their city, believing they were safe. One night, one of the Persian soldiers saw a Sardinian soldier drop his helmet over the wall of the city. He watched as that soldier followed a hidden path down the side of the mountain to retrieve his helmet. When nightfall came, Cyrus and his troops followed the hidden path up the side of the mountain, entered the city while the guards slept and conquered Sardis.

  R L Thomas adds - Despite an alleged warning against self-satisfaction by the Greek god whom he consulted, Croesus the king of Lydia initiated an attack against Cyrus king of Persia, but was soundly defeated. Returning to Sardis to recoup and rebuild his army for another attack, he was pursued quickly by Cyrus who laid siege against Sardis. Croesus felt utterly secure in his impregnable situation atop the acropolis and foresaw an easy victory over the Persians who were cornered among the perpendicular rocks in the lower city, an easy prey for the assembling Lydian army to crush. After retiring one evening while the drama was unfolding, he awakened to discover that the Persians had gained control of the acropolis by scaling one-by-one the steep walls (549 B.C.). So secure did the Sardians feel that they left this means of access completely unguarded, permitting the climbers to ascend unobserved. It is said that even a child could have defended the city from this kind of attack, but not so much as one observer had been appointed to watch the side that was believed to be inaccessible. History repeated itself more than three and a half centuries later when Antiochus the Great conquered Sardis by utilizing the services of a sure-footed mountain climber from Crete (195 B.C.). His army entered the city by another route while the defenders in careless confidence were content to guard the one known approach, the isthmus of land connected to mount Tmolus on the south. (See Revelation Exegetical Commentary)
- Sardis regained some of its former wealth under the reign of Alexander the Great, but was invaded and defeated by Antiochus the Great, who also entered the city at night while the guards slept.

- When the Romans came, Sardis was still a wealthy, powerful city, but by John's day, Sardis was just a shell of what it had been. The people had grown lazy, degenerate, immoral and complacent. Sardis was dying through apathy and indifference.
- Once an important commercial city - Pliny says that the art of dyeing wool was invented there, and it was theentrepôt of the dyed wool, the raw material for which was furnished by the flocks of Phrygia.
- Located about 60 miles inland from Ephesus and Smyrna and about 30 miles south of Thyatira in the fertile valley and on the Pactolus River (picture) from which the ancient Lydians mined electrum (a combination of silver and gold - see picture) and minted it into coins, some of the first coins minted in the ancient world. Archaeologists have found hundreds of crucibles, used for refining gold, in the ruins of Sardis (Borrow New Testament Cities in Western Asia Minor)
- Melito of Sardis (died circa 180 AD) was a well-known bishop and apparently wrote one of the early commentaries on the Revelation.
- Geographically imposing, founders placed the acropolis of the city upon an impressive hill (1,500 foot high plateau), but it is a hill of mud, not of rock. Wind and rain have carved the surrounding soft hills into a variety of curious shapes. There was one narrow road leading into the city and other sides of the plateau were steep cliffs (see picture above) which made the city safe and nearly impenetrable by invading armies (or so they thought).
- In its lower city, there was a large temple to Artemis/Diana (goddess of the hunt, the moon, and fertility - picture of temple). In later centuries a church building occupied the same site.
- Hot springs not far from Sardis were celebrated as a spot in which the gods manifested their supposed power to give life to the dead—an ironic note for a city whose church was dead. **Death** in fact was a special preoccupation of the Sardians, as witnessed by the impressive necropolis, or cemetery, of "a thousand hills" so named because of the hundreds of burial mounds visible on the skyline seven miles from Sardis.
- In the second century the Romans built a large bathhouse complex of over five acres that included a gymnasium for exercise (picture of ruins; reconstructed picture).
- A synagogue in Sardis is one of the largest ancient synagogues excavated in the Roman world (picture), providing evidence for a significant and influential population of Jews.
- Sardis was the city of death. It possessed appearance without reality and provided promise without performance. Due to its careless confidence, the church at Sardis displays a lack of watchfulness in spiritual matters.
- Sardis was the home of Aesop, author of the famous children's fables.
- Sardis was destroyed by a devastating earthquake in 17 AD and rebuilt by the Romans with the aid of Emperor Tiberius for whom the Sardians built a temple in his honor.
- The city was proud of its past; it was proud of its reputation. But, its reputation was all it had left. For all intents and purposes, the city of Sardis was dead, even while it lived.
- The city is now a heap of ruins. In 1850 no human being found a dwelling there.

WILLIAM RAMSEY ON SARDIS:

The letter to the Sardian Church breathes the spirit of death, of appearance without reality, promise without performance, outward show of strength betrayed by want of watchfulness and careless confidence.

Carelessness and failure to keep proper watch, arising from over-confidence in the apparent strength of the fortress, had been the cause of this disaster, which ruined the dynasty and brought to an end the Lydian Empire and the dominance of Sardis. The walls and gates were all as strong as art and nature combined could make them. The hill on which the upper city stood was steep and lofty. The one approach to the upper city was too carefully fortified to offer any chance to an assailant. But there was one weak point: in one place it was possible for an active enemy to make his way up the perpendicular sides of the lofty hill, if the defenders stood idle and permitted him to climb unhindered.

The sudden ruin of that great Empire and the wealthiest king of all the world was an event of that character which most impressed the Greek mind, emphasizing a moral lesson by a great national disaster.

A little carelessness was shown; a watchman was wanting at the necessary point, or a sentinel slept at his post for an hour; and the greatest power on the earth was hurled to destruction. The great king trusted to Sardis, and Sardis failed him at the critical moment. Promise was unfulfilled; the appearance of strength proved the mask of weakness; the fortification was incomplete; work which had been begun with great energy was not pushed through to its conclusion with the same determination.

More than three centuries later another case of exactly the same kind occurred. Archaeus and Antiochus the Great were fighting for the command of Lydia and the whole Seleucid Empire. Antiochus besieged his rival in Sardis, and the city again was captured by a surprise of the same nature: a Cretan mercenary led the way, climbing up the hill and stealing unobserved within the fortifications. The lesson of old days had not been learned; experience had been forgotten; men were too slack and careless; and when the moment of need came, Sardis was unprepared.

A State cannot survive which is guarded with such carelessness; a people at once so slack and so confident cannot continue an imperial power. Sardis, as a great and ruling city, was dead. It had sunk to be a second-rate city in a Province. Yet it still retained the name and the historical memory of a capital city. It had great pretensions, which it had vainly tried to establish in A.D. 26 before the tribunal of the Roman Senate in the contention among the Asian cities recorded by Tacitus, Annals, 4:55. When in that year the Asian States in the provincial Council (called the Commune of Asia) resolved to erect a temple to Tiberius and Livia his mother and the Senate, as a token of gratitude for the punishment of an oppressive and grasping administrator, eleven cities of the Province contended for the honor of being the seat of the Temple. Nine were quickly set aside, some as too unimportant, Pergamum as already the seat of a Temple to Augustus, Ephesus and Miletus as taken up with the ritual of Artemis and of Apollo; but there was much hesitation between the claims of Smyrna and of Sardis. Envoys of Sardis pleaded the cause of their city before the Senate. They rested their claim on the mythical or historical glory of the city as the capital of the Lydians, who were a sister-race to the Etruscans, and had sent colonists to the Peloponnesus, and as honored by letters from Roman generals and by a special treaty which Rome had concluded with Sardis in 171-168 B.C.: in conclusion, they boasted of the rivers, the climate, and the rich territory around the city. The case, however, was decided in favor of Smyrna.

And such also was the city and its history. Looked at from a little distance to the north in the open plain, Sardis wore an imposing, commanding, impregnable aspect, as it dominated that magnificent broad valley of the Hermus from its robber stronghold on a steep spur that stands out boldly from the great mountains on the south. But, close at hand, the hill is seen to be but mud, slightly compacted, never trustworthy or lasting, crumbling under the influences of the weather, ready to yield even to a blow of the spade. Yet the Sardians always trusted to it; and their careless confidence had often been deceived, when an adventurous enemy climbed in at some unguarded point, where the weathering of the soft rock had opened a way.

Sardis boldly styled itself “first metropolis of Asia, of Lydia, of Hellenism” on the arrogant coin represented in Fig. 9.

Smyrna was dead and yet lived.
Sardis lived and yet was dead.

SARDIS: No city in the whole Province of Asia had a more splendid history in past ages than Sardis. No city of Asia at that time showed such a melancholy contrast between past splendor and present decay as Sardis. Its history was the exact opposite of the record of Smyrna. Smyrna was dead and yet lived. Sardis lived and yet was dead.

SARDIS was one of the great cities of primitive history: in the Greek view it was long the greatest of all cities. At the beginning of record it stands forth prominently as the capital of a powerful empire. Its situation marks it out as a ruling city, according to the methods of early warfare and early kings; it was however more like a robber’s stronghold than an abode of civilized men; and in a peaceful and civilized age its position was found inconvenient. In the Roman period it was almost like a city of the past, a relic of the period of barbaric warfare, which lived rather on its ancient prestige than on its suitability to present conditions.The great plain of the Hermus is bounded on the south by the broad ridge of mount Tmolus, which reaches from the main mass of the Central Anatolian plateau like an arm extended westwards towards the sea. In front of the mountains stretch a series of alluvial hills, making the transition from the level plain to the loftier ridge behind. On one of those hills stood Sardis. The hills in this neighborhood are of such a character that under the influences of the atmosphere each assumes the form of a small elongated plateau having very steep sides, terminating towards the north in a sharp point, and on the south joined by a neck to the main mass of Tmolus. One of those small elevated plateaus formed the site of the original Sardis, an almost impregnable fortress already as it came from the hand of nature without any artificial fortification. Only a small city could be perched on the little plateau; but in the primitive time, when Sardis came into existence, cities were small. It was actually inaccessible except at one point, viz., the neck of land on the south, which still offers the only approach. On all other sides the rock walls were smooth, nearly perpendicular, and absolutely unscalable even without a defender (except in rare conditions described in the sequel). The local myth expressed the facts in a religious form by saying that the ancient Lydian King, Meles, carried a lion, the symbol of Sardis and type of the oldest Lydian coins, round the whole city except at one point. The story is told by Herodotus, 1, 84; but he (or a glossator) has given an incorrect explanation, to the effect that Meles thought it unnecessary to carry the lion round the southern side of the city, because there it was precipitous. The exact opposite was the case: the only approach to the old city must have been from the beginning and must always be on the south. The story is a popular explanation of the fact that the south alone was accessible and not precipitous.

This southern approach is far from being easy. It is a tedious and difficult climb at the present day (See picture above), when the hill-sides are overgrown with thorns, and only a sheep-track exists in place of a path. Even when the summit was inhabited and a carefully made road led up to the southern gates, the approach must have been long and steep by a winding road, which could be defended with perfect ease. The plateau is fully 1,500 feet above the plain, from which its sides rise perpendicularly.

This small city on its lofty plateau was an ideal stronghold for a prince of primitive times. It was large enough for his needs; it could be easily fortified and defended at the only point where fortification or defense was needed. It was like a watch-tower overlooking the whole of the great plain. That primitive capital of the Hermus Valley seems to have been called, not Sardis (which was a plural

noun), but Hyde; and it is mentioned by Homer under that name.

As the capital of the great kingdom of Lydia, Sardis had a history marked by frequent wars. In it the whole policy of a warlike kingdom was focused. To fight against Lydia was to fight against Sardis. The master of Sardis was the master of Lydia. Thus in early centuries Sardis stood forth pre-eminent in the view of the Greek cities as the Oriental enemy on whose action their fate depended. They were most of them involved in war with Sardis, and fell one by one beneath its power. It was the great, the wealthy, the impregnable city, against which none could strive and prevail. In the immemorial contest between Asia and Europe, it represented Asia, and the Greek colonies of the coast-lands stood for Europe. Sardis was the one great enemy of the Ionian cities, it learned from them, taught them, and conquered them all in succession. Among an impressionable people like the Greeks, such a reputation lived long; and Sardis was to their mind fully justified in inscribing on its coins the proud title, “Sardis the First Metropolis of Asia, and of Lydia, and of Hellenism,”

To avoid over-confidence in self, to guard against pride and arrogance, not to despise one’s enemy, to bear always in mind the slipperiness and deceitfulness of fortune — such was the greatest part of true wisdom, as the Greeks understood it; and nowhere could the lesson be found written in plainer and larger letters than in the fall of Sardis.

According to the popular tale this weak point existed from the beginning of history in Sardis, because, when the divine consecration and encompassing of the new fortress had been made at its foundation, this point had been omitted; thus the tale would imply that the weak point was known to the defenders and through mere obstinate folly left unguarded by them. But such a legend is usually a growth after the fact. The crumbling character of the rock on which the upper city of Sardis stood shows what the real facts must have been. In the course of time a weakness had developed at one point. Through want of proper care in surveying and repairing the fortifications, this weakness had remained unobserved and unknown to the defenders; but the assailants, scrutinizing every inch of the walls of the great fortress in search of an opportunity, noticed it and availed themselves of it to climb up, one at a time. On such a hill, rising fully 1,500 feet above the plain, whose sides are, and must from their nature always have been, steep and straight and practically perpendicular, a child could guard against an army; even a small stone dropped on the head of the most skillful mountain-climber, would inevitably hurl him down. An attack made by this path could succeed only if the assailants climbed up entirely unobserved; and they could not escape observation unless they made the attempt by night. Hence, even though this be unrecorded, a night attack must have been the way by which Cyrus entered Sardis. He came upon the great city “like a thief in the night.”

History repeated itself. The same thing happened about 320 years later, when Antiochus the Great captured Sardis through the exploit of Lagoras (who had learned surefootedness on the precipitous mountains of his native Crete). Once more the garrison in careless confidence were content to guard the one known approach, and left the rest of the circuit unguarded, under the belief that it could not be scaled.

RELIGION IN ASIA MINOR:
The general Anatolian temper of religion is summarized in the following words (taken from the Cities and Bishoprics of Phyygza, 1., p. 87): “Its essence lies in the adoration of the life of Nature — that life subject apparently to death, yet never dying but reproducing itself in new forms, different and yet the same. This perpetual self identity under varying forms, this annihilation of death through the power of self-reproduction, was the object of an enthusiastic worship, characterized by remarkable self abandonment and immersion in the divine, by a mixture of obscene symbolism and sublime truths, by negation of the moral distinctions and family ties that exist in a more developed society, but do not exist in the free life of Nature. The mystery of self-reproduction, of eternal unity amid temporary diversity, is the key to explain all the repulsive legends and ceremonies that cluster round that worship, and all the manifold manifestations or diverse embodiments of the ultimate single divine life that are carved on the rocks of Asia Minor.”

The strange and uncouth idol, under whose form the goddess was worshipped, often appears on coins; and in alliance-coins Sardis is often symbolized by this grotesque figure, whose half-human appearance is quite of the Anatolian type. Thus Fig. 30 shows an “alliance” or religious agreement between Ephesus, represented by Artemis in her usual idol with her stags at her side, and Sardis, symbolized by the curious veiled image of her own goddess (whom numismatists usually call in Hellenizing style Kora or Persephone).

THE GODS OF SARDUS:
Healing power was everywhere attributed to the local embodiment of the divine idea, but in Sardis it was with exceptional emphasis magnified into the power of restoring life to the dead. It was, doubtless, associated specially with certain hot springs, situated about two miles from Sardis in the front hills of Tmolus, which are still much used and famous for their curative effect. As the hot springs are the plain manifestation of the divine subterranean power, the god of the underworld plays a considerable part in the religious legend of the district. He appeared to claim and carry off as his bride the patron-goddess of the city, in the form of Kora-Persephone, as she was gathering the golden flower, the flower of Zeus, in the meadows near the springs; the games celebrated in her honor were called Chrysanthia; and it may be confidently inferred that crowns of the flower called by that name were worn by her

worshippers. The name of “Zeus’s flower” also is mentioned on the coins.

A DEAD CITY IN ROMAN TIMES:
It is plain that the greatness of Sardis under the Roman rule was rooted in past history, not in present conditions. The acropolis ceased during that period to be the true city; it was inconvenient and useless; and it was doubtless regarded as a historical and archaeological monument, rather than a really important part of the living city. Apart from the acropolis there is nothing in the situation of Sardis to make it a great center of society, and it has long ceased to be inhabited. The chief town of the district is now Salikli, about five miles to the east, in a similar position at the foot of Tmolus, but more conveniently situated for travelers and trade.

ILLUSTRATION - Michael Andrus - I have discovered an unusual thing. In most places in the world the vitality of religious faith is in inverse proportion to the size and the cost of the houses of worship. Where the number and size of cathedrals is the greatest, church attendance and church health seems to be at its lowest. On the other hand, where believers have to worship in house churches in secret, attendance is strongest and the church most vital. A case in point is a visit I made three years ago to **York Minster** (**ED**: LOOK AT THESE PICTURES), a cathedral in central England. **This amazing building dwarfs any church building in our country.** Its huge and intricate stained glass windows, some of which date back to the 13th century, were removed during the Second World War to protect them from German bombs, and it took the craftsmen 13 years to reinstall them. They picture much of the story line of the Bible in beautiful symbolism, all laid out in a gorgeous stone building almost as big as **three football fields.** Sadly at York Minster, like most of the great cathedrals throughout Europe and England, there are **far more tourists than worshipers**. There are seats for thousands, but an average service might find 35-50 people in attendance, mostly in their 80's (**ED**: I WATCHED A STREAMED SERVICE WHICH CONFIRMS THIS) Many of these churches haven’t had vibrant congregations for decades, maybe even centuries, and for the most part they are more like **mausoleums** than **churches**. **In fact, there are literally more dead people present in the worship services than living ones, for there are hundreds of famous clerics, powerful politicians, and major donors entombed in the floor and in the basement**! Now I still love visiting these buildings because I love the architecture and the stained glass and the wood carvings in these cathedrals. But spiritually speaking these great edifices are not worth the enormous cost of maintaining them, to say nothing of the immense amount of time (250 years for York Minster) and treasure it took to erect them, if they do not house a family of believers that is alive and growing.

REPETITION OF THE PHRASE "SAYS THIS" = "TADE LEGEI"

Says this - Literally the Greek reads "These things says" **Says this** could be accurately paraphrased "“**this is the solemn pronouncement of**” (NET)

> Greek = “**These things says** [the One] …” The expression **τάδε λέγει** (**tade legei**) occurs eight times in the NT, **seven** of which are in Rev 2–3 [Rev. 2:1; Rev. 2:8; Rev. 2:12; Rev. 2:18; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 3:7; Rev. 3:14]. “The pronoun (**tade**) is used to add solemnity to the prophetic utterance that follows.…In classical drama, it was used to introduce a new actor to the scene (Smyth, Greek Grammar, 307 [§1241]). But the **τάδε λέγει** formula in the NT derives from the OT, where it was used to introduce a **prophetic utterance**. Thus, the translation “**this is the solemn pronouncement of**” for τάδε λέγει is very much in keeping with the OT connotations of this expression (because) the expression **This is the solemn pronouncement of** reflects an OT idiom. The Septuagint (Lxx) has the same Greek phrase (τάδε λέγει, tade legei) about 350 times, with nearly 320 of them having “the LORD” (Heb יהוה, Yahweh) as subject. That the author of Revelation would use such an expression seven times with the risen Christ as the speaker may well imply something of Christ’s sovereignty and deity. Cf. also Acts 21:11 in which the Holy Spirit is the speaker of this expression. (NET Note - Bolding added)
>
> **EDITORIAL COMMENT** - "**TADE LEGEI**" is used over 350 times in the Septuagint (Lxx) - here are a few representative uses which are as noted above usually are from the LORD Himself and begin "Thus says the LORD (or "Lord God" or "LORD of hosts")" -
>
> Amos 1:6; Amos 1:9; Amos 1:11; Amos 1:13; Amos 2:1; Amos 2:4; Amos 2:6; Amos 3:11; Amos 3:12; Amos 5:3; Amos 5:4; Amos 5:16; Amos 7:11; Amos 7:17; Mic. 2:3; Mic. 3:5; Obad. 1:1; Nah. 1:12; Hag. 1:2; Hag. 1:5 = "Now therefore, **thus says** the LORD of hosts, “Consider your ways!"; Hag. 1:7; Hag. 1:9; Hag. 2:6; Hag. 2:11; Zech. 1:3; Zech. 1:4; Zech. 1:14; Zech. 1:16; Zech. 1:17;

I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. —Revelation 3:1

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:1-6

It happened more than 30 years ago but it still hurts. During a period of spiritual rebellion, I ran into a young man I had introduced to Christ. He was stunned to discover that I had walked away from the Lord and was no longer the person he had known. It is one of my most regretted experiences, and I still pray for an opportunity to make it right with him.

During those wandering years, I would have fit in comfortably as a member of the First Church of Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6). My dilemma, like theirs, was that people thought I was the person I used to be.

The risen Lord confronted the church in Sardis: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God” (Revelation 3:1-2).

Their reputation for being alive didn’t match reality. They were spiritually dead. But there was still hope. The Lord told them to wake up and fan the spark of spiritual life still in them. “Hold fast and repent,” He warned (Rev 3:3).

Pretending to be what we aren’t is a heavy burden to bear. Our Lord calls us to lay it down, repent, come back to Him, and live.By: David C. McCasland

O Lord, return to me Your power
That once by grace I knew;
Forgive the sin that grieved Your heart,
And help me to be true. —Anon.

No matter how far you’ve run from God, He’s only a prayer away.

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Character Or Reputation?

You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. — Revelation 3:1

Today's Scripture & Insight: Revelation 3:1-6

Legendary basketball coach John Wooden (1910–2010) believed that character is far more important than reputation. “Your **reputation** is what you’re perceived to be by others,” Coach Wooden often told his players, “but your **character** is what you really are. You’re the only one that knows your character. You can fool others, but you can’t fool yourself.”

In the book of Revelation, we find the words of the risen Christ to seven churches in Asia. To the church in Sardis, Jesus said, “I know your works, that you have a name [reputation] that you are alive, but you are dead” (Rev. 3:1). The Lord knew the truth about them, and no doubt deep down they knew it too. Jesus told them to wake up and strengthen the spiritual life inside them that was about to die (v.2). He urged them to remember the truth they had received, obey it, then turn around and start moving in a new direction (v.3).

When the Lord shows us what’s wrong in our lives, He always provides a remedy for change. When we turn from our sins, He forgives and strengthens us to start over.

How liberating to exchange a false spiritual reputation for the true, life-giving character that comes from knowing Christ our Lord! By: David C. McCasland

Men talk too much of gold and fame,
And not enough about a name;
And yet a good name’s better far
Than all earth’s glistening jewels are.
—Guest

The true test of our character is what we do when no one is watching.

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Revelation 3:2 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.

BGT Revelation 3:2 γ νου γρηγορ ν κα στ ρισον τ λοιπ μελλον ποθανε ν, ο γ ρ ε ρηκ σου τ ργα πεπληρωμ να ν πιον το θεο μου.

KJV Revelation 3:2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

NET Revelation 3:2 Wake up then, and strengthen what remains that was about to die, because I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.

CSB Revelation 3:2 Be alert and strengthen what remains, which is about to die, for I have not found your works complete before My God.

ESV Revelation 3:2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

NIV Revelation 3:2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.

NLT Revelation 3:2 Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God.

NRS Revelation 3:2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God.

NJB Revelation 3:2 Wake up; put some resolve into what little vigour you have left: it is dying fast. So far I have failed to notice anything in your behaviour that my God could possibly call perfect;

NAB Revelation 3:2 Be watchful and strengthen what is left, which is going to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

YLT Revelation 3:2 become watching, and strengthen the rest of the things that are about to die, for I have not found thy works fulfilled before God.

GWN Revelation 3:2 Be alert, and strengthen the things that are left which are about to die. I have found that what you are doing has not been completed in the sight of my God.

BBE Revelation 3:2 Be on the watch, and make strong the rest of the things which are near to death; because as judged by me your works have not come up to God's measure.

RSV Revelation 3:2 Awake, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God.

NKJ Revelation 3:2 "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

ASV Revelation 3:2 Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God.

MIT Revelation 3:2 Go on the alert, and strengthen what remains that is about to die, for I have not found your works to meet the full standards before my God.

- **Wake up**: Rev 16:15 Isa 56:10 62:6,7 Eze 34:8-10,16 Zec 11:16 Mt 24:42-51 Mt 25:13 Mk 13:33-37 Ac 20:28-31 2Ti 4:1-4 1Pe 4:7 1Pe 5:8
- **strengthen**: Rev 2:4 De 3:28 Job 4:4-5 16:5 Isa 35:3 Lu 22:31,32 Ac 18:23
- **your deeds**: 1Ki 11:4 15:3 2Ch 25:2 Isa 57:12 Da 5:27 Mt 6:2-4 Mt 23:5,28-38
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Revelation 16:15+ (“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”)

Ephesians 5:14+ For this reason it says (Isa 60:1), “**Awake**, (egeiro in present imperative see our need to

depend on the Holy Spirit to obey) sleeper, And **arise** (anistemi in aorist imperative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey) from the dead, And Christ will shine on you." (See commentary for discussion of whether this refers to believers or unbelievers).

Romans 13:11-14+ - (DON'T MISS THE **TIME PHRASES**) Do this, knowing **the time**, that it is **already the hour** for you to **awaken from sleep**; (WHY?) for **now** salvation is **nearer** to us than **when** we believed. 12 The **night** is almost gone, and the **day is near.** Therefore **let us lay aside the deeds of darkness** and put on the armor of light. 13 **Let us behave properly as in the day**, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But **put on** (aorist imperative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey) the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision** (present imperative with a negative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey) for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

JESUS' COMMANDS WAKEFULNESS AND STRENGTHENING

MacArthur - Christ addressed the command to the faithful remnant of true Christians at Sardis; there is no point in talking to those who are dead. If their church was to survive it desperately needed life. Christ laid out for them the path to spiritual restoration by giving them five steps to follow.

Ray Stedman - Wake up! And this message is for believers. We dare not shrink from the convicting words and say that does not apply to me. Rather, we must bravely face them and ask ourselves "What has gone wrong w. my spiritual life? Why does my worship and Christian service seem so dreary? Why does my church seem so lifeless and unattractive?"

Wake up, (gregoreuo) - The first question to address is to whom are these 5 commands addressed? By default they would have to be believers (**the few** in Rev 3:4) because spiritually dead people cannot wake up. Only sleepy saints could respond by waking up. **Wake up** is two Greek words ginomai which means '**be**" and and gregoreuo which means watchful or awake from sleep and speaks of mental alertness. Jesus gives this command in the present imperative, which means He is calling for this alert mindset to be their constant practice, their lifestyle. The best way to keep from falling asleep spiritually is to keep spiritually awake continually. This command would be especially apropos for citizens in Sardis, for the city of Sardis was considered to be a natural citadel and incapable of capture and yet there were several times in the city's history that the Sardis fell because of self-confidence and failure to post guards to watch watch (See note by Allen below)! So just as the city had fallen for failure to be watchful, the church was in danger of being defeated because the "spiritual sentries" were not guarding their posts.

> **Allen** - Cyrus the Persian captured the city in 549 bc by sending a cohort of soldier-mountaineers up the cliffs that King Croesus had left unguarded imagining them unclimbable. The city was captured and looted. The Sardians never seemed to learn the lesson and, in the changing politics of the pre-Roman era it was captured...by Seleucid Antiochus (214 bc) using the same tactics. **Trusting in a false impregnability Sardis was an easy prey to a determined enemy.** (What the Bible Teaches -Revelation)
>
> **Andrus** adds that "On both occasions enemy troops scaled the precipice at night and discovered that the over-confident Sardians had set no guard. The temptation for those who consider themselves safe is always to get complacent."

MacArthur on **wake up** - The believing remnant needed to look at what was happening in their church, evaluate the situation, get involved in changing things, confront sin and error, and make a difference.

Wiersbe - The "sentries" were asleep! The first step toward renewal in a dying church is honest awareness that something is wrong. When an organism is alive, there is growth, repair, reproduction, and power; if these elements are lacking in a church, then that church is either dying or already dead.... a remnant of dedicated people often exists in even a dying church. The Christians at Sardis had life, even though it was feeble. (Borrow Be Victorious - In Christ You Are an Overcomer - Book of Revelation)

Lehman Strauss - The remedy for lethargy and routine religiosity is an awakening to the imminence of Christ's return. Long before, Christ had told His disciples: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matthew 24:42).(Book of the Revelation: Outlined Studies - BORROW)

And strengthen (sterizo) **the things that remain** (loipos)**, which were about to die** - **NJB** = "put some resolve into what little vigour you have left: it is dying fast." This is the second part of the prescription Jesus offers to this church. This church is not hopeless and still has a spark of life in it, though Jesus warns that what remains "**is about to die**." **Things** refers to spiritual graces that were still present and still alive, but were on the verge of dying. Evidently not all of the spiritual activities in the church were wrong, but they were dwindling and in need of spiritual resuscitation (so to speak)! It was incumbent on the small believing remnant to take hold of

the remaining ministries and infuse them with new life. Ultimately that life would come from Spirit filled believers, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Word.

Strengthen is in the aorist imperative, a command that conveys a sense of urgency. Like the old Nike commercial, Jesus says "Just do it!" Then He explains why the situation in the church is urgent. **Strengthen** means literally to make stable or firm with the idea of putting in a buttress as a support those remaining few graces, which are not yet extinct, but soon would be for they **were about to die**! This warning is especially apropos to Sardis where death was a special preoccupation of the citizens, as witnessed by the impressive necropolis, or cemetery, of "a thousand hills" so named because of the hundreds of burial mounds visible on the skyline seven miles from Sardis. In addition there were well known hot springs not far from Sardis where supposedly the gods manifested their power to give life to the dead, certainly an ironic note for a city whose church was gasping for its last breaths! "Christ exhorted the true Christians at Sardis to fan into flame the dying embers of the remaining spiritual graces in their church." (MacArthur)

S Lewis Johnson - These are words that are used of an orthodox church, not an apostate church. If it were not orthodox, there would be nothing that remained to be strengthened. The words refer to the forms to be filled by this work of the Holy Spirit. That is, they at least have that. They are a dead church, but they at least have the forms. They have the things that might be filled. They do gather on the Lord's day. The do observe the ordinances. They do pray. They do preach the word, to some extent, but everything is empty. So, our Lord says, "strengthen the things that remain." There are some things that do. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? The foundations were still there in Sardis, it appears.

Michael Andrus - What remains is a small group of faithful individuals (Rev 3:4). God has often worked through faithful remnants. A committed minority can sometimes recall the majority from death. Of course, if a church has abandoned the fundamentals of the faith and has become apostate, then believers should abandon it. But if the church is orthodox but dead, Christ's desire is for the faithful remnant to strengthen what remains, through prayer, love, and faithful witness.v

For (term of explanation). Jesus is giving the reason that He has issued these sobering commands. This explanation offers some insight into what is meant by strengthening what remains and here is the reason "for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God."

Wiersbe - "They were working, even though their works were not all that they could have been. The Lord admonished them to strengthen what remained and not to give up because the church was weak. Where there is life, there is hope!" (BORROW Be Victorious)

I have not found (heurisko) **your deeds** (ergon) **completed** (pleroo) **in the sight of My God** - What does Jesus mean by **deeds** not **completed**?

> We know works (doing deeds) do not save us. So what Jesus is referring to is **deeds** that originate from true faith, characterizing those deeds as completed. Jesus' half-brother James explains it this way in James 2:17, 26+ writing "faith, if it has no works (**deeds**), is dead, being by itself....For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works (**deeds**) is dead." The works (**deeds**) do not save, but are evidence (spiritual fruit) that one is genuinely saved by grace through faith.

Jesus' words **I have not found your deeds** remind us of His declaration in Rev 2:23 "I am He who (present tense - continually) searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you **according to your deeds** (ED: SPIRIT WROUGHT OR FLESHLY WROUGHT)."

> **THOUGHT** - Jesus' eyes like flaming fire continually search and assess every one of our deeds for authenticity. Are they **deeds** initiated by the Spirit, grown by abiding in the Vine (Jn 15:5) and for the purpose of glorifying the Father (Mt 5:16+)? If so, then it is a deed which has been "**completed in the sight of My God"**

John Phillips on **deeds** (not) **completed** - It would seem that this church was great for starting things but not for completing them. D. L. Moody used to remark, "I would rather say, 'This one thing I do' than say, 'These forty things I dabble with.' " The church at Sardis was **dabbling instead of doing**. It had a dozen programs, no doubt, launched with fanfare and flourish, none of which had come to anything. (Exploring Revelation - BORROW)

Paul clearly links salvation with works in Ephesians writing "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For (TERM OF EXPLANATION - EXPLAINS RELATIONSHIP OF WORKS TO SALVATION) we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works** (**DEEDS**), which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:8-10+) (See related topic - Believers Are God's Masterpiece, His Poiema).

We see a similar truth taught by Paul in Titus 3:8+ "This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak

confidently, so that those **who have believed God** will be **careful to engage in good** (kalos) **deeds**. These things are good (kalos) and profitable (ophelimos) for men.

Related Resource:

- Good Deeds

RAY STEDMAN: **Wake up!** And this message is for believers. We dare not shrink from the convicting words and say that does not apply to me. Rather, we must bravely face them and ask ourselves "

- What has gone wrong with my spiritual life?
- Why does my worship and Christian service seem so dreary?
- Why does my church seem so lifeless and unattractive?

SARDIS HAD LOST ITS EXPECTATION OF HIS RETURN.

This what Jesus described in Matt 24:43 where He says He will come suddenly, w/o warning.
This hope is THE DYNAMIC that fuels wakefulness, faithfulness, zeal for holy living, urgency to spread the gospel.

(**ILLUSTRATION**) More than 400 years ago the Reformation spread like wildfire throughout Europe. What many do not know however is how rapidly the Reformation fires were quenched, in fact so rapidly that many of the churches founded by the Reformers began to die even within the lifetimes of the Reformers themselves. Why? **Because the leaders of the Reformation made a serious error!** Yes, salvation by grace thru faith but they made a mistake when they linked the authority and oversight of the church with the civil government of the country in which they lived. **Luther** looked to the German princes for protection against the power of Rome. **Zwingli** tied the church to the ruling state in Switzerland. The result was a system of state churches spreading across Europe and today these state churches are almost uniformly dead like Sardis!

ILLUSTRATION - We ought to be like the little boy whose family clock malfunctioned and struck 15 times so that he rushed wide-eyed to his mother crying, "*Mommy, it's later than it's ever been before*" What sanctifying logic! We should also keep in mind that if Christ does not return in our time, He will certainly come individually for us in death. Each ache, pain, gray hair, new wrinkle or funeral is another reminder that it is later than it has ever been before. It is time to love our neighbors as ourselves. IT'S LATER THAN YOU THINK. Redeem the time!

Wake up (Literally be watchful) (1127)(**gregoreuo** from **egeiro** = to arise, arouse) means to be watchful or to refrain from physical sleep. Later **gregoreuo** came to used in the moral and religious sphere and was used to call for one to**be on the alert**, in a **constant state of readiness** and **vigilant** (alertly watchful especially to avoid danger this word suggesting intense, unremitting, wary watchfulness; keenly alert to or heedful of trouble or danger as others are sleeping or unsuspicious). We are to be be watchful and ready to respond to external influences, focused, alert for the winds of temptation or overt attacks of evil. We are to remained alert lest we be deceived by the devil the deceiver or sin which is deceitful (Heb 3:13).

> **Gregoreuo** conveys the idea of alertness. It is like a sleeping man rousing himself. It means to give strict attention to, to be active, to take heed lest through remissness and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake one. Secular Greek used **gregoreuo** to describe people carefully crossing a river while stepping on slippery stones. If they did not pay strict attention to their steps, they would end up in the water. So the idea of vigilance is to stay alert and cautious. **Gregoreuo**, is used of mental alertness, the condition of the mind opposite to that which characterizes it in sleep.**Gregoreuo** means to to take heed lest through remission and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake one.
>
> > **Gregoreuo** -22 times in the **NAS** - Mt. 24:42, 43; 25:13; 26:38, 40, 41; Mk. 13:34, 35, 37; 14:34, 37, 38; Lk. 12:37; Acts 20:31; 1 Co. 16:13; Col. 4:2; 1Th 5:6, 10; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev 3:2, 3; 16:15.

Strengthen (confirm) (4741) **sterizo** from **histemi** = to stand as in 1 Pe 5:12 "stand firm in" the true grace of God.**Histemi** also root of "Resist" - anthistemi and of "firm" - stereos, both used by Peter in 1 Pe 5:9) means to make firm or solid, to set fast, to fix firmly in a place, to establish (make firm or stable), to cause to be inwardly firm or committed, to strengthen. The basic idea is that of stabilizing something by providing a support or buttress (a projecting structure of masonry or wood for supporting or giving stability to a wall or building), so that it will not totter. **Barclay** writes that **stērízō "**means to make as solid as granite." (Daily Study Bible)

> **Sterizo - 14v - confirm(1), determined(1), establish(2), established(2), fixed(1), strengthen(6), strengthening(1).** Lk. 9:51; Lk. 16:26; Lk. 22:32; Acts 18:23; Rom. 1:11; Rom. 16:25; 1 Thess. 3:2; 1 Thess. 3:13; 2 Thess. 2:17; 2 Thess. 3:3; Jas. 5:8; 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:12; Rev. 3:2

Remain (others, finally, remaining, other things) (3062) **loipos** from **leipo** = to leave or to lack) is an adjective which refers to that which remains over - where it refers to people the sense is the rest, those that are left, the remainder (cf. Mt 22: 6; Mk 16:13; Lk 24: 9; Acts 2:37; Ro 11: 7; 1Co. 7:12; Rev. 12:17; 19:21). In the plural, loipos means remaining ones (Mt. 25:11; Acts 2:37; Ro 1:13; 2Cor. 12:13; 2Pet. 3:16) Loipos is used several times with the meaning of "**other**" which Webster defines as being the one (as of two or more) remaining or not included (Mk 4:19, 16:13, Lk 18:9, Acts 17:19, Rev 9:20) **Loipos** is occasionally used in a soteriological sense (describing the saved or the unsaved) - Thus in the parable (Mt 22:6) **loipos** speaks of those outside the Kingdom of God (cf 1Th 4:13), whereas in other contexts **loipos** speaks of those in the Kingdom of God (Rev 2:24)

> **Loipos in the Revelation** - Rev. 2:24; Rev. 3:2; Rev. 8:13; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 11:13; Rev. 12:17; Rev. 19:21; Rev. 20:5

Completed (4137) **pleroo** to **be** filled (**passive voice** = saints acted on by outside force = "Divine Passive") to the brim (a net, Mt 13:48, a building, Jn 12:3, Acts 2:2+, a city, Acts 5:28+, needs Phil 4:19+), to make complete in every particular, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally, to flood, to diffuse throughout, to pervade, to take possession of and so to ultimately to control. The only other use of pleroo in the Revelation 6:11

Wake-Up Call!

> Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. Revelation 3:2

Today's Scripture & Insight: Revelation 3:1–6

During the years when I traveled frequently and stayed in a different city every night, I always scheduled a wake-up call when I checked into a hotel. Along with a personal alarm, I needed a jangling telephone to help get me out of bed and moving in the morning.

The book of Revelation contains a spiritual wake-up call in the apostle John's letters to the seven churches in the province of Asia. To the church in Sardis he wrote this message from Jesus Himself: "I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God" (Rev. 3:1–2).

In the midst of spiritual fatigue, we may fail to notice the lethargy that creeps into our relationship with God. But the Lord tells us to "remember . . . what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent" (v. 3).

Many people find that scheduling some extra time each morning to read the Bible and talk to the Lord in prayer helps them stay spiritually alert. It's not a job but a joy to spend time with Jesus and know that He prepares us for whatever lies ahead that day. By: David C. McCasland

Lord, enable us to hear and respond to Your wake-up call today.

Read *In His Presence* from Discovery Series.

Spending time with Jesus is a joy!

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Wake-Up Call

> Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, . . . for I have not found your works perfect before God. — Revelation 3:2

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:1-6

On February 26, 1993, a powerful bomb exploded in the underground parking garage of the World Trade Center in New York City, killing six people and injuring more than a thousand. It sparked an aggressive investigation with many arrests. But few law enforcement authorities recognized it as part of an international terrorist plot. When the Trade Center towers were destroyed by terrorists in 2001, police commissioner Raymond Kelly looked back on the first attack and said, "It should have been a wake-up call for America."

The Lord told the church at Sardis that although they had a reputation for being spiritually alive, they were dead. He told them to

wake up: “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent” (Revelation 3:2-3).

The call to every believer is to be vigilant toward the Lord rather than lax and indifferent. If the fire has gone out in our hearts, He pleads with us to stir the embers into flame again.

Ask yourself: Has there been a wake-up call in my life recently that I’ve missed? Is God trying to tell me something? Will I answer His wake-up call today? By: David C. McCasland

Lord, grant to us a holy zeal
That burns within our heart;
A zeal like Yours for truth and right
From which we'll not depart.
—D. De Haan

To keep your heart from growing cold, stay on fire for God.

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Revelation 3:3 'So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

BGT Revelation 3:3 μνημ νευε ο ν π ς ε ληφας κα κουσας κα τ ρει κα μεταν ησον. ν ο ν μ γρηγορ σ ς, ξω ς κλ πτης, κα ο μ γν ς πο αν ραν ξω π σ .

International Children's Bible So do not forget what you have received and heard. Obey it. Change your hearts and lives! (NOT A GOOD TRANSLATION AS IT IMPLIES WE CAN DO THIS IN RELIANCE ON OUR OWN POWER - ONLY THE SPIRIT CAN GIVE US THE DESIRE AND POWER TO REPENT). You must wake up, or I will come to you and surprise you like a thief. And you will not know when I will come.

KJV Revelation 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

NET Revelation 3:3 Therefore, remember what you received and heard, and obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will never know at what hour I will come against you.

CSB Revelation 3:3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; keep it, and repent. But if you are not alert, I will come like a thief, and you have no idea at what hour I will come against you.

ESV Revelation 3:3 Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

NIV Revelation 3:3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. 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.

NLT Revelation 3:3 Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again. If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief.

NRS Revelation 3:3 Remember then what you received and heard; obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

NJB Revelation 3:3 remember how you first heard the message. Hold on to that. Repent! If you do not wake up, I shall come to you like a thief, and you will have no idea at what hour I shall come upon you.

NAB Revelation 3:3 Remember then how you accepted and heard; keep it, and repent. If you are not watchful, I will come like a thief, and you will never know at what hour I will come upon you.

YLT Revelation 3:3 'Remember, then, how thou hast received, and heard, and be keeping, and reform: if, then, thou mayest not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou mayest not know what hour I will come upon thee.

GWN Revelation 3:3 So remember what you received and heard. Obey, and change the way you think and

act. If you're not alert, I'll come like a thief. You don't know when I will come.

BBE Revelation 3:3 Keep in mind, then, the teaching which was given to you, and be ruled by it and have a change of heart. If then you do not keep watch, I will come like a thief, and you will have no knowledge of the hour when I will come on you.

RSV Revelation 3:3 Remember then what you received and heard; keep that, and repent. If you will not awake, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.

NKJ Revelation 3:3 "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

ASV Revelation 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

MIT Revelation 3:3 Therefore, remember how you once received and obeyed me. Continue to hold to that course, and repent of your digression. If you do not watch out, I will come like a thief, and you certainly will not know at what hour I would surprise you.

- **Remember**: Rev 2:5 Eze 16:61-63 20:43 36:31 Heb 2:1 2Pe 1:13 3:1
- **and keep**: Rev 3:11 2:25 1Ti 6:20 2Ti 1:13
- **repent**: Rev 3:19 2:5,21,22
- **I will**: Rev 16:15 Mt 24:42,43 Lu 12:39,40 1Th 5:2,4,5,6 2Pe 3:10
- **know**: Mt 25:13 Mk 13:33,36
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Revelation 1:3+ Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and (present tense - continually, habitually) **heed** (tereo) the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Revelation 2:26+ - He who overcomes, and he who (present tense - continually, habitually) **keeps** (tereo) My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS;

Revelation 3:8+ - 'I know your deeds. **Behold**, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and **have kept** (tereo) My word, and have not denied My name.

Revelation 3:10+ - Because you **have kept** (tereo) the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Revelation 12:17+ So the dragon (SATAN) was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who (present tense - continually, habitually) **keep** (tereo) the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation 14:12+ Here is the perseverance of the saints who (present tense - continually, habitually) **keep** (tereo) the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

Revelation 16:15+ ("**Behold**, I am coming **like a thief**. Blessed is the one who stays awake and (present tense - continually, habitually) **keeps** (tereo)his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.")

Revelation 22:7+ "And **behold**, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who (present tense - continually, habitually) **heeds** (tereo) the words of the prophecy of this book."

Revelation 22:9+ But he said to me, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who (present tense - continually, habitually) **heed** (tereo) the words of this book. Worship God."

Matthew 24:42-44 "Therefore **be on the alert** (gregoreuo in present imperative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey), for (TERM OF EXPLANATION) you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the **thief** (kleptes) was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 "For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For you yourselves know full well that the Day of the Lord will come just **like a thief** (kleptes) in the night.

2 Peter 3:10 But the Day of the Lord will come **like a thief** (kleptes), in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

Hebrews 10:32 But **remember** the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

Galatians 5:7 You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?

THREE MORE "PRESCRIPTIONS" TO REVIVE A DYING BODY

So (oun = term of conclusion) **remember what you have received and heard**- **NLT** = "Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly." Jesus, Jehovah Rapha (The LORD our Healer), issues three more prescriptions as commandments, not suggestions! **Remember** (same command to church at Ephesus) in the present imperative calls for them to continually recall to mind the gift of salvation and the gifts of the Spirit that they had **received** and the Gospel that they had **heard** (see below). Of course, first they had to awaken from sleep before they could even obey this command to **remember**. **Received** is in the perfect tense which signifies the message they had received was complete and was abiding.

Barclay - The Risen Christ is telling the lethargic Sardians to remember the thrill with which they first heard the good news. It is a fact of life that certain things sharpen memory which has grown dull. When, for instance, we return to a graveside, the sorrow from which the years have taken the edge grows piercingly poignant again. Ever and again the Christian must stand before the Cross and remember again what God has done for him.

What had those in Sardis **heard**? Acts 19:10+ tells us "And this took place for two years (Paul teaching in school of Tyrannus - Acts 19:9), so that **all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord,** both Jews and Greeks." Clearly, they had heard the Gospel.

Charles Swindoll applies Jesus' prescription to **remember** - To this day every true church's worship features a constant reminder: the Lord's Supper, or Communion. When this ordinance is practiced correctly, the church comes together to remember the death of Christ as payment for sins (Lk 22:19; 1Co 11:24-25+). Other ways of remembering include reading God's written Word and listening to the passionate proclamation of God's truth." (See Insights on Revelation)

> **THOUGHT** - Paul explains the power of communion, properly practiced "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death (FIRST COMING - THE CROSS) until He comes (SECOND COMING." (1Cor 11:26+) And Paul then alludes to a powerful effect of communion - "Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep." (1Co 11:27-30+) Beloved, how often do we hear verses 27-30 read at the time of communion? My personal experience has been that I have almost never heard those passages read. You might be asking, "So what?" Is it possible that some of the saints are not doing self-examination, not confessing sins, not repenting, not seeking reconciliation, etc with the result that they become weak, sick or even die? Even though the passage was not read before the communion one Sunday, I was shocked when my wife helf the bread and the wine in her hand and then got up to go to the other side of the congregation and ask forgiveness from someone she had offended. Then she returned and took communion. Is this not one of the ways we can **remember what you have received and heard**?

John Phillips on **remember** - Every church is born in a time of revival, in some time of the Spirit's moving. It is only when the first movings of God are forgotten that a church settles down and becomes institutionalized. The drive, the dynamic of the former years is replaced with a more formal, ritualistic, traditionalized, stereotyped, and complacent form of activity. The movement becomes a monument. God's demand at Sardis is that the church remember its heritage. (Exploring Revelation - BORROW)

And keep (tereo) **it** - **NIV** = "Obey it" **MIT** = "Continue to hold to that course." **NJB** = "Hold on to that (**what you have received and heard**)." **NLT** = "hold to it firmly." **Keep** is also in the in the present imperative emphasizing the need to continually **keep** watch over and preserve the word. **Keep** on keeping it in mind "never allow yourself to forget" so you will keep on obeying it! Jesus affirms they have orthodox teachings, and charges them to not only guard (preserve) it but also to obey (both senses are convey by the verb tereo). Or as James might say "**prove** (present imperative) yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." (James 1:22+) Their remembering was to be more than just recalling to mind, but as Jesus says was to involve doing. **Orthodoxy** had to be be accompanied by **obedience**, for it to be effective in restoring and reviving the body in Sardis.

And repent (metanoeo) - Jesus issues a command for a decisive change of mind in order that the Sardians might experience

spiritual recovery. **Repent** is in the aorist imperative and is the "Nike commercial" command signifying "**Just Do It**!" In addition the aorist imperative conveys a sense of urgency, because unless they obeyed Jesus would **come like a thief** (kleptes), **and you will not know** (ginosko) **at what hour I will come to you**.

Martin Luther's first of 95 Theses was "When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said "Repent", He called for the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."

Ray Pritchard - We are so messed up by sin that we need to repent every single day. And we even need to repent of our repentance because we are worse off than we think we are. On a Guilt Scale of 1-10, we probably think we're a 5 or 6, definitely sinful but not as bad as lots of other people. Or maybe on a bad day, we're a 7 or an 8. But we hardly ever think of ourselves as a 9 or 10 on the scale of badness. But the sobering fact is that even our good deeds, the things we brag about, our claim to being good and upright and moral and virtuous, even the good things we do are in themselves nothing but "filthy rags" in the sight of the Lord (Isaiah 64:6). We will never get better unless we repent. Our churches will never get better unless we repent. We can't repent for anyone else. It's the man in the mirror who gets us in trouble.

Swindoll - The Great Physician quickly explained the seriousness of their spiritual state and wrote them a clear prescription: "No more playing around with spiritual things. No more talking about doing what's right. The time has come to do it! Start today!" (See Insights on Revelation)

Note that the Great Physician's prescription for the church body about to die included 5 crystal clear commands. The only way the "few" believers could keep these commands was by depending on the Holy Spirit to obey. Indeed, this necessity, could well explain why Jesus began with "**He Who has the seven Spirits of God**." This tiny remnant would need the Holy Spirit's power if the body of Christ at Sardis was to be supernaturally resuscitated!

Therefore (oun = term of conclusion) **if you do not wake up** (gregoreuo) - **If** is a third class condition, which speaks of possibility, but it is by no means definite. How would they **wake up**? By obeying Jesus' five commands!

OR ELSE!

I will come like a thief (kleptes), **and you will** (absolutely) **not know** (ginosko) **at what hour I will come to you** - Jesus gives a prophetic warning ("**I will**"). He uses a graphic term of comparison (simile) which should arouse their attention. **Will not** is a strong double negative (ou me) in Greek, which assures them that His coming will catch them totally by surprise, totally off guard! They won't have a clue. Their spiritual slumber will be rudely, radically awakened! Jesus is not speaking of the rapture (as some suggest), because the Scripture never describes the rapture with the comparative term **like a thief**. To the contrary, like a thief always points to an event that brings judgment. As **Donald Barnhouse** wrote "The first phase of the Lord's coming (AKA RAPTURE) is as a bridegroom and the second phase is as a thief. He does not come upon His bride as a thief and He does not come upon the apostates and unregenerate world as a bridegroom."

Monty Mills - The context of Rev. 3:3b requires that the term "like a thief in the night" does not here refer to the rapture, but rather to Christ coming in judgment like that threatened to the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:5), **for this coming can be averted by repentance**, but that cannot apply to the rapture. Here the "thief" aspect is a reminder drawn from the embarrassing history of the city.

John MacArthur agrees writing that "The threat here is not related to His second coming, but is that the Lord would come and destroy the Sardis church if there is no revival. It can also be extrapolated into a warning of the judgment that faces all dead churches at Christ's return." (See Revelation Commentary)

Rod Mattoon - Like the doctor who said to the cobra victim, "You are dead unless you take the antidote." This church was as good as dead if they did not take God's antidote. (Treasures from Revelation)

To **what hour** does Jesus refer? Most commentaries agree with MacArthur who "feels that "Here the reference is not to Christ's second coming (cf. Rev 16:15; 1Th. 5:2; 2Pe 3:10), but to His sudden and unexpected coming to His unrepentant, dead church to inflict harm and destruction."

Note that Jesus says **like a thief** (kleptes) and not like a robber who plunders on a larger scale and not by stealth. By contrast the **thief** (kleptes) is more appropriate as it emphasizes the unexpected and stealthy coming of the Lord.

"The last day is hidden from us, that every day may be observed by us"
-- Augustine

Barclay on Jesus coming **like a thief** - There is an old Latin saying that "the gods walk on feet that are wrapped in wool." Their

approach is silent and unobserved, until a man finds himself without warning facing eternity.

John Phillips on **like a thief** - The second coming of the Lord is likened to the coming of a thief (Mt. 24:43),**but that does not seem to be the thought here**. Here the thought is that the Lord will come suddenly upon this church, which has nothing but an empty reputation, and will break it up. A **thief** comes to spoil and to remove everything of value. The Lord warns this local church that if there is not self-judgment, He will come suddenly and break up the testimony once and for all. **It is a remarkable fact that western Asia Minor, now Turkey, was once the brightest spot on earth for gospel witness. Today it is one of the darkest.** (Exploring Revelation - BORROW)

Remember (recall, bearing in mind) (3421) mnemoneuo from **mimnesko** = to recall to one's mind) means to exercise memory, call something to mind, recollect, to pay attention to something and so to be warned (eg, Lk 17:32). **The Analytical Lexicon** has an excellent summary of the NT meanings - (1) of recollection recall, remember (Mt 16.9); (2) of solicitous concern be mindful of, think of, remember (Gal 2.10); (3) of self-reflection remember, keep in mind (Eph 2.11); (4) speak (of), (make) mention (of) (Heb 11.22) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

> **Mnemoneuo** is "derived from the Indo-European root **mēn*, to think… Hence there arises, in Indo-European languages generally, the following complex of meanings: (a) to remember (referring to the intellectual ability, and its exercise, of linking the past to the present); (b) to consider, weigh up (where the present is linked to the future); (c) to be mindful, take into account, mention (assessing how the present relates both to past and future). This range of meanings can be seen in English, e.g., in the various uses of the word "mind": to remind, call to mind, give one's mind to, bear in mind, have a mind to, etc. (Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan)
>
> A couple of "plugs" for **remembering** God's Word (which points to the Incarnate Word - Jn 1:1) - See discussion of Memorizing God's Word of Truth & Life and then put it into practice as a daily discipline (under grace, not law!) by beginning to Memorize Verses by Topic. You will not regret it… in the present age or the age to come.

Keep (obey, guard, heed, kept in custody, observe, preserve) (5083) **tereo** from **teros** - a guard or warden) means to keep an eye on, to keep something in view, to hold firmly, to attend carefully, or to watch over it (watchful care - Jesus' prayer to His Father for His disciples - Jn 17:11). **Tereo** speaks of watching over, of taking care of, of guarding something which is in one's possession keeping it from loss or injury. It means to watch as one would some precious thing. The idea is to observe attentively, to heed, to keep watch over and to retain in custody.

> **John's uses of tereo in the Revelation** - Rev. 1:3; Rev. 2:26; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:10; Rev. 12:17; Rev. 14:12; Rev. 16:15; Rev. 22:7; Rev. 22:9
>
> **Tereo** with idea of **keep watch or guard** - Mt 27:36, 27:54, Mt 28:4 (guards = tereo), Jn 17:11, 12, Jn 17:15 (with nuance of protection from Satan), Acts 12:5, Acts 12:6 (watching), Acts 16:23, Acts 24:23, 25:4, 25:21 (held in custody), 1Jn 5:18, Jude 1:1, 6,
>
> **Tereo** in the sense of **to preserve or maintain** -Jn 2:10, 1Cor 7:37, 2Cor 11:9, Eph 4:3, 1Th 5:23, 1Ti 5:22, 2Ti 4:7, James 1:27, 1Pe 1:4, 2Pe 2:4, 2Pe 2:9, 2Pe 2:17, 2Pe 3:7, Jude 1:13, 21, Rev 16:15
>
> **Tereo** with the idea of **obey** - Mt 19:17, Mt 23:3 (tereo = observe), Mt 28:20, Jn 8:51, 52 (one who keeps Jesus' Word = a believer = one who will never see the second death in hell), Jn 9:16 (keep = observe the Sabbath), Jn 14:15 (description of a genuine disciple - love is not just with one's lips but is validated by one's life lived in loving obedience to God), Jn 14:21, 23, 24 (no love = no obedience = not a believer - Note Jesus is not talking about legalistic obedience but Spirit enabled obedience which is the only obedience that pleases the Father!), Jn 15:10 (used twice), Jn 15:20 (used twice), Jn 17:6 (the 11 disciples), Acts 15:5, 1Ti 6:14, James 2:10, 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5, 3:22, 1Jn 3:24, 1Jn 5:2, 3, Rev 1:3 (heed), Rev 2:26, 3:3, 3:8, 3:10, 12:17, 14:12, Rev 22:7 (heeds), Rev 22:9. Jesus uses **tereo** in his "job description" of a genuine Christ follower (disciple) in Mt 28:20 , where tereo "does not merely speak of the act of obeying His commands, but of a solicitous desire that we do not disobey any of them but on the other hand, that we obey them perfectly." (Wuest)

Repent (3340) **metanoeo** from **meta** = with, among + **noeo** = to think, exercise the mind <> from **nous** = mind; cf **metanoia**) means to have another mind. **Friberg** says it literally means to "perceive afterward, with the implication of being too late to avoid consequences." (Analytical Lexicon). **Metanoeo** means to change one's mind (one's heart) in respect to sin, God, and self. To turn to God and from sin (Luke 15:7,10+ = "one sinner who **repents**", cf illustration of repentance = 1 Th 1:9+). While **repentance** involves an intellectual decision, it is more than that because the intellectual decision must produce a change in

one's behavior.

> **Repentance** is aptly depicted by the military command "**About, face**!" The repentant person in effect turns around 180 degrees and goes the other direction. And keep in mind that the spiritual dynamics of true repentance are enabled by the Holy Spirit (cf Acts 5:31+, Acts 11:18+, 2 Ti 2:25+). In other words repentance is a work of grace and not merely a human effort, although it does require the repentant individual to make a volitional choice. Repentance then involves the mysterious interaction of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Further, this change of mind may, especially in the case of Christians who have fallen into sin, be preceded by sorrow (2 Cor 7:8, 9, 10, 11); but sorrow for sin, though it may cause repentance, is not repentance. Darrell Bock writes "the point is that repentance involves a reorientation of perspective, a fresh point of view. When dealing with God's plan, it means to see that plan in a new way and to orient oneself to it. Luke demonstrates the fruit of repentance expresses itself concretely (Lk 3:10-14+). Repentance expresses itself in life, especially in how one treats others." (**Gulp**!) There can be no genuine conversion without genuine repentance.
>
> **John's use of metanoeo in the Revelation** especially concentrated in the letters to the 7 churches (8 times out of 12 total uses in the Revelation) - Rev. 2:5; Rev. 2:16; Rev. 2:21; Rev. 2:22; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 3:19; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 9:21; Rev. 16:9; Rev. 16:11

Thief (2812) **kleptes** from **klépto** = steal; kleptomaniac) is a stealer or thief who acts with stealth or subterfuge. The**kleptes** steals by fraud and in secret (Mt 24:43; Jn 12:6) whereas the robber or lestes steals by violence and openly. The NT uses **kleptes** in a figurative sense to describe the false teachers and deceivers who "steal" men away from the truth. In the present context **kleptes** is used as a figure of speech ("like a thief" - see term of comparison = simile) to describe the sudden and unexpected appearance of the **Day of the Lord**.

Rod Mattoon - What are the signs of death in a church?

- Worship of the past or the worship of men.
- Greater concern with form than with life.
- Love of tradition over love for Christ.
- Inflexibility and resistance to change.
- Loss of evangelistic and missionary fervor.
- People unwilling to obey God's leading in their lives.
- The undermining of leadership through gossip, slander, or lack of love.

(Treasures from Revelation)

ILLUSTRATION - “There was a little girl who being required to take her birth cert. to school, had lost it on the way. - The janitor saw her crying & asked her what was wrong. - She said, “I’ve lost my excuse for being born”……That was Sardis! Let’s remember why we were born: to Love Him, Serve Him, Worship Him, Obey Him,…w/a all our heart, mind soul, & strength. (Brian Bell)

Revelation 3:4 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

> BGT Revelation 3:4 λλ χεις λ γα ν ματα ν Σ ρδεσιν ο κ μ λυναν τ μ τια α τ ν, κα περιπατ σουσιν μετ μο ν λευκο ς, τι ξιο ε σιν.
>
> KJV Revelation 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.
>
> NET Revelation 3:4 But you have a few individuals in Sardis who have not stained their clothes, and they will walk with me dressed in white, because they are worthy.
>
> CSB Revelation 3:4 But you have a few people in Sardis who have not defiled their clothes, and they will walk with Me in white, because they are worthy.
>
> ESV Revelation 3:4 Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.
>
> NIV Revelation 3:4 Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.

NLT Revelation 3:4 "Yet there are some in the church in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes with evil. They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

NRS Revelation 3:4 Yet you have still a few persons in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.

NJB Revelation 3:4 There are a few in Sardis, it is true, who have kept their robes unstained, and they are fit to come with me, dressed in white.

NAB Revelation 3:4 However, you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; they will walk with me dressed in white, because they are worthy.

YLT Revelation 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis who did not defile their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, because they are worthy.

GWN Revelation 3:4 But you have a few people in Sardis who have kept their clothes clean. They will walk with me in white clothes because they deserve it.

BBE Revelation 3:4 But you have some names in Sardis who have kept clean their robes; and as a reward they will go in white with me.

RSV Revelation 3:4 Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

NKJ Revelation 3:4 "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

ASV Revelation 3:4 But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.

MIT Revelation 3:4 But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothing. They will walk with me dressed in white, because they are worthy.

- **You have a few people**: Rev 11:13 *Gr: Ac 1:15
- **few**: 1Ki 19:18 Isa 1:9 Ro 11:4-6
- **who**: Rev 7:14 Rev 19:8 Isa 52:1 59:6 61:3,10 64:6 Zec 3:3-6 Jude 1:23
- **walk**: Rev 3:5,18 Rev 4:4 Rev 6:11 Rev 7:9,13 Rev 19:14 Es 8:15 Ps 68:14 Ec 9:8 Zec 3:4 Mk 16:5
- **for**: Mt 10:11 Lu 20:35 21:36 2Th 1:5
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and **to keep oneself unstained by the world**.

Revelation 3:5 'He who overcomes **will thus be clothed in white garments**; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Revelation 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and **white garments so that you may clothe yourself,** and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

Revelation 4:4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, **clothed in white garments,** and golden crowns on their heads.

Revelation 6:11 And there was given to each of them **a white robe;** and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

Revelation 7:9; After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, **clothed in white robes**, and palm branches were in their hands;

Revelation 7:13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?"

Revelation 19:14 And the armies which are in heaven, **clothed in fine linen, white and clean**, were following Him on white horses.

Psalm 51:7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Ecclesiastes 9:8 Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head.

Daniel 7:9 "I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire.

Genesis 5:24 Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Matthew 22:8 (A GOOD DESCRIPTION OF MOST OF CHURCH AT SARDIS) "Then he *said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not **worthy** (axios).

2 Thessalonians 1:5 This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered **worthy** (axios) of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

THE COMMENDATION:
A FEW ARE WORTHY

Sardis was noted for its luxury clothing trade and here Jesus says there are a faithful few who are genuine believers, clothed in His righteousness and shall be arrayed in white garments of the redeemed and share in the triumphal coming of their Lord.

But - Contrast with the warning in the previous passage.

Barclay - God never abandons his search for the faithful few and they are never lost to his sight in the mass of the wicked.

Swindoll - No matter how badly His people deteriorate, God always preserves a remnant to carry out His will and to bring forth fruit (2 Kings 19:30–31; Isa. 10:20–21; Ro 11:5). This remnant can also serve as the seed for a bountiful revival. The same was true in Sardis. (See Insights on Revelation) (SEE ALSO "REMNANT")

You have a few (oligos) **people** (onoma) **in Sardis who have** (absolutely) **not soiled** (moluno) **their garments** (himation) - **Few** describes those in Sardis whose lives were true believers. In Israel it was never the entire nation of Israel ,but only a remnant that was true to God and truly saved (spiritually speaking). In Lu 12:32 Jesus referred to the believers as "little flock." **People** is more literally names. Jesus knows their names. Jesus is speaking figuratively of spiritual **garments**. **Not soiled their garments** is a picture of a life which is not continually stained by sin. To reiterate, those without **soiled garments** are genuine believers. Clearly Jesus is not speaking of ***perfection*** (or there would be none), but of the general ***direction*** of their lives. Before believing they had "filthy garments" described by Isa 64:6 ("*all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment*"), and after believing they could still be "soiled" by sin. Thus Jas 1:27+ calls for believers to to keep themselves unstained by the world. But when their garments are defiled by sin, they can be cleansed by confession (1Jn 1:9+, cf Pr 28:13+). The related derivative word of **soiled** is used in 2Co 7:1+, Paul writing "Therefore, having these promises (2Co 6:16-18+), beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all **defilement** (molusmos from moluno) of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

What does **not soiled** (moluno) **their garments** (himation) depict? - **William Barclay** writes "(i) In the heathen world no worshipper was allowed to approach a temple of the gods with soiled clothes. For the heathen this was an EXTERNAL THING; but this may describe the man who has kept his soul clean so that he can enter into the presence of God and not be ashamed. (ii) Swete thinks that the white garments stand for the profession a man made at baptism; and that the phrase described the man who had not broken his baptismal vows. At this stage in the Church's history baptism was adult baptism, and at baptism a man took his personal pledge to Jesus Christ. This is all the more likely because it was common at baptism to clothe a man, after he had emerged from the water, in clean white robes, symbolic of the cleansing of his life. The man who is faithful to his pledge will, beyond a doubt, some day hear God say: "Well done!" (**NOTE**: ONLY THE SPIRIT CAN TRULY BAPTISE SOMEONE SO BARCLAY EMPHASIZES "OUR PART" A BIT TOO MUCH. - See discussion of Barclay's "orthodoxy" especially the article "The Enigmatic William Barclay") A). There may be a heathen background. At the Persian court the king's most trusted favourites were given the privilege of walking in the royal gardens with the king and were called "The Companions of the Garden." Those who have been true to God will some day walk with him in Paradise. B). There may be a reference to the old story of Enoch. "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him" (Gen 5:24). Enoch walked with God on earth and continued to walk with him in the heavenly places. The man whose walk with God is close on earth will enter into a nearer companionship with him when the end of life comes. (Revelation 2)

And they will walk (peripateo) **with Me in white** (leukos) - This is a prophetic promise of fellowship with Christ in this life (Gal 5:16+, 1Jn 1:7+, see Havner below). Compare also Eph 5:27+ "that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having

no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless." **Will walk with Me** in context refers to walking with (and living with) Jesus now on earth and forever in Heaven.

> **THOUGHT**- How is your walk with Christ? Are you experiencing fellowship with Him now? Are your garments stained by some unconfessed sin which is disturbing your walk with Him? Are living in light of the truth that you will walk with Him forever in Heaven? Note that Jesus says they were "worthy," so in terms of their final destiny, they were secure. But the question for all of us who would be designated "worthy" by our Lord Jesus, are we truly walking "worthy" (Eph 4:1, Php 1:27, 1Th 2:12) One way to "energize" a worthy walk is to pray Paul's prayer in Col 1:9-10 "we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." I had someone pray this for me daily for about 5 years. I can assure you that He will answer this prayer. So pray it for yourself and those in your circle of associations.

Vance Havner on **walk with Me** - The scriptures begin with God walking in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8+) and they end with our glorified Lord walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (Rev. 2:1). All the way through, the Book is geared to the spiritual pedestrian....The Christian life is set forth perhaps more as a walk than in any other figure. We are to walk in newness of life (Ro 6:4), by faith (2Co 5:7), worthy of our vocation (Eph 4:1), circumspectly (Eph 5:15), honestly (1Th. 4:12), worthy of the Lord (Col 1:10), in light (1Jn 1:7), in the truth (3Jn 1:4), in the Spirit (Gal 5:16, in love (Eph. 5:2)....The faithful few in Sardis are promised that they shall **walk with** the Lord in white (Rev. 3:4). It seems to be the established gait throughout the Word of God. Perhaps it is best summed up in walking “as He walked” (1Jn 2:6). We may run the race (Heb 12:1) and even fly as eagles (Isa 40:31), but the saint is above all a pedestrian....The vanishing Pedestrian, whether in the flesh or in the spirit, needs to come back into his own. We do not have to stand or run, freeze or fry. The choice is not between living in a stupor or in a stew. We have only to return to the Gait of Galilee (**ED**: SEE Walking Like Jesus Walked!). God grant us a new race of pedestrians. Sons of Enoch, of whom it may be said at the last, “They walked with God, they pleased God, and God took them." (Ge 5:24) Amen.

In white (leukos) - **White** garments in Scripture are always a symbol of redemption and is repeated in Rev 3:5 "He who overcomes (cf 1Jn 5:4-5) will thus be clothed in **white garments.**" **White** garments are the garments of heaven, in Rev 19:8+ the “fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints,” in which it shall be given her as her “wedding garment.” The **white** garments of all the redeemed (Rev 6:11; 7:9,13,14) are made white in the blood of the Lamb! (Rev 19:8,14) and speaks of holiness and purity. White robes are reserved for Christ (Mt. 17:2; Mk 9:3), holy angels (Mt. 28:3; Mk 16:5), and the saints in heaven (Rev 19:8,14). The Bride of Christ is not to sully her Christian profession with defilements of flesh or spirit, but to “keep her garments.” No defilement shall enter the heavenly city. On this earth it is clear that no saint can be wholly free from defilement ,but compared with professors, the godly keep themselves unspotted from the world (Jas 1:27) and when they do contract it, they wash it away (confession and repentance), so as to have their “robes white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev 7:14).

> Isaiah 61:10 I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For H**e has clothed me with garments of salvation,** He has **wrapped me with a robe of righteousness**, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
>
> Revelation 19:8 It was given to her to clothe herself in **fine linen, bright and clean;** for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (works of godliness produced by the Holy Spirit,)

Jesus' description recalls the pagan inscription found in Asia Minor which announced that soiled garments disqualified the worshiper and dishonored the gods. The mention of garments in would strike a note of familiarity with those in Sardis for this city was known for manufacture and dying of woolen goods as a principle trade.

R Kent Hughes says that white is "the grand apocalyptic color, the color representative of what is beyond." (See Luke: That You May Know the Truth)

The LORD, through His mouthpiece, the prophet Isaiah, appeals to His disobedient chosen people with an offer of grace and mercy - "Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are as scarlet, **They will be as white as snow**; (PLAY SONG) Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool." (Isa 1:18+) Even in the ancient pagan world **white** spoke of purity, festivity and triumph as Ramsay describes below.

> **William Ramsay** - **White** was widely considered among the ancient nations as the color of innocence and purity. On this account it was appropriate for those who were engaged in the worship of the (pagan) gods, for purity was prescribed as a condition of engaging in divine service though usually the purity was understood in a merely ceremonial sense. All Roman citizens wore the **pure white toga** on holidays and at religious ceremonies, whether or not they wore it on ordinary days; in fact, the great majority of them did not ordinarily wear that heavy and cumbrous garment; and hence the city on festivals and holidays is called “*candida urbs*,”

> the city in white. Especially on the day of a Triumph white was the universal color — though the soldiers of course, wore not the toga, the garb of peace, but their full-dress military attire with all their decorations — and there can hardly be any doubt that the idea of walking in a Triumph similar to that celebrated by a victorious Roman general is here present in the mind of the writer when he uses the words, "**they shall walk with me in white**". A dirty and dark-colored toga, on the other hand, was the appropriate dress of sorrow and of guilt. Hence it was worn by mourners and by persons accused of crimes. (The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and Their Place in the Plan of the Apocalypse)

As an aside the phrase "**with Me**" (*met emou*) is found in Lu 23:43+ in Jesus' words to the thief on the cross declaring "Truly (amen) I say to you, today you shall be **with Me** (*met emou*) in Paradise." and in His high priestly prayer in Jn 17:24 Jesus says "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be **with Me** (*met emou*) where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."

> **THOUGHT** - What an incredible thought to be WITH JESUS forever and ever! May that truth continually motivate us to "lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Heb 12:1+)

Spurgeon - "But what shall be done with such persons as live in the church, but are not of it, having a name to live, but are dead? What shall be done with mere professors who are not possessors? What shall become of those who are only outwardly religious but inwardly are in the gall of bitterness? We answer, as good Calvin did once: 'They shall walk in black, for they are unworthy.' They shall walk in black—the blackness of God's destruction. They shall walk in black—the blackness of hopeless despair. They shall walk in black—the blackness of incomparable anguish. They shall walk in black—the blackness of damnation. They shall walk in black for ever, because they were found unworthy."

Depiction of Axios

For (term of explanation) **they are worthy** (axios - see all uses in Revelation) - Jesus explains why they can walk with Him in Heaven throughout eternity! It is because they are in an unbreakable, intimate covenant with Him by grace through faith. They are clothed with His perfect righteousness. They are **worthy** not because of what they do (with one exception - they believed in Christ) but because of Who He is, what He has accomplished (Jn 19:30+) and because they are in an immutable covenant with Him. The adjective axios means having the same weight as another. What does this imply? Jesus is saying that all who are born again "MEASURE UP" so to speak, but those in Sardis who are still the "walking dead" are coming up short and are not **worthy**. To say it another way, the idea of axios is depicted by a set of balance scale (see picture above) in which one puts weight on each side of the scale so that the scale is perfectly balanced. So Jesus is saying of those who are born again, who have Christ in them the hope of glory and His indwelling Spirit, it is these who "measure up," who balance the scale with Jesus on the other side of the scale. The only way a sinful soul could balance the scale with Jesus is to have Jesus within! Unbelieving professors cannot be worthy or walk worthy, but they attempt to be "worthy" by doing deeds which they think are righteous, godly, holy, etc, but all of their efforts to gain enough "weight" to balance Jesus on the other side of the scale are futile and ultimately will fail to gain them Jesus' words of affirmation that "This one is worthy to enter into the Kingdom of My God and Father."

Look at how our Lord further defines "**worthy** (axios)" in Mt 10:37-38+

> He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not **worthy** (axios) of Me.

John the Baptist has the first use of axios in the New Testament and gives an excellent picture of the meaning of axios for he declares to those who were coming to him for baptism "Therefore **bear fruit** (aorist imperative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey) in **keeping** (axios) with repentance." (Mt 3:8+) In other words, the "**repentance**" brings forth works/deeds as a result of the person's changed mind/heart and demonstrate that their repentance is genuine. Picture repentance on one side of a pair of scales, and the works/deeds on the other side of the scale. The scales are perfectly balanced, because the fruit is in keeping with or worthy (axios) of the repentance.

Soiled (defiled)(3435) **moluno** literally meant to cause something to become dirty as when smeared with dirt, mud, filth. It was

used of used of "moral soil" ("smut") that defouls and besmirches the soul. All three uses are figurative - 1 Cor 8:7 a "befouled" conscience, Rev 3:4+ of garments not soiled, become spiritually besmirched (by sin), and Rev 14:4+ of the 144,000 who have not been defiled with women. In Rev 3:4, 14:4 the reference is not just to sexual continence in the strict sense but to the faithfulness of the community (cf.Rev 14:1) as the bride of Christ (cf. 2Co 11:2)The picture of moluno is of sin smearing a person with its spiritual filth.

White (3022) **leukos** is an adjective which means (1) bright, shining, gleaming Mt 17:2; Lk 9:29 or (2). white (Mt 5:36; Mk 9:3; 16:5; Lk 9:29; J 4:35; Ac 1:10; Rev 1:14; 2:17; 6:2; 7:9, 13; 19:11, 14; 20:11). In the Septuagint **leukos** was used to describe manna (Ex 16:31), a sign of skin disease (Lev 13:3, 4, et al), the Ancient of Days (Da 7:9), horses (Zech 1:8, 6:3, 6). Compare our English words leukocyte (white blood cell), etc. The adjective leukos comes from a root that means “bright” or “radiant” and is the general term for the color white.

Gilbrant - In classical Greek leukos describes, among other things, the color of snow, hair, stones, clothing, and dust. Like the opposite color melas (“black”), leukos assumes a figurative meaning, with the former symbolizing that which is morally evil and the latter symbolizing purity, holiness, and divinity. In classical texts leukos is the color of sacrificial animals and priestly clothing. Indeed, Plato suggests that the color white is pleasing to the gods (cf. *Liddell-Scott*). Septuagint Usage = The religious practices of the Hebrews indicate that they held white in similar esteem. In addition to its ordinary literal usages, leukos appears in the Septuagint as the color of priestly garments. Figuratively leukos symbolizes purification from sin (Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 1:18), and a vision of God is dominated by the color leukos (Daniel 7:9). Apart from the four instances mentioned in the previous paragraph, the New Testament uses leukos as the color associated with heaven. Most references are to white clothing, as in the descriptions of the transfiguration of Jesus, the post-Resurrection appearances of angels, or the heavenly citizens in the Book of Revelation. (See, for example, Matthew 17:2; Matthew 28:3; Acts 1:10; Revelation 3:4,5.) Even the throne of God is white (Revelation 20:11). Revelation 1:14 portrays the victorious Christ in terms reminiscent of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9; both of these scenes are dominated by white. (Complete Biblical Library)

> **Leukos** - 14 of 23 uses are in the Revelation - Matt. 5:36; Matt. 17:2; Matt. 28:3; Mk. 9:3; Mk. 16:5; Lk. 9:29; Jn. 4:35; Jn. 20:12; Acts 1:10; Rev. 1:14; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 3:4; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 4:4; Rev. 6:2; Rev. 6:11; Rev. 7:9; Rev. 7:13; Rev. 14:14; Rev. 19:11; Rev. 19:14; Rev. 20:11
>
> Revelation 1:14 His head and His hair were **white** like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.
>
> Revelation 2:17 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a **white** stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.’
>
> Revelation 3:4 ‘But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in **white**, for they are worthy.
>
> Revelation 3:5 ‘He who overcomes will thus be clothed in **white** garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
>
> Revelation 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and **white** garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.
>
> Revelation 4:4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in **white** garments, and golden crowns on their heads.
>
> Revelation 6:2 I looked, and behold, a **white** horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.
>
> Revelation 6:11 And there was given to each of them a **white** robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.
>
> Revelation 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in **white** robes, and palm branches were in their hands;
>
> Revelation 7:13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the **white** robes, who are they, and where have they come from?” 14 I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and **made them white** (leukaino - only other use = Mk 9:3) in the blood of the Lamb. (Note the paradox - garments washed in

red blood of Jesus made white forever!)

Revelation 14:14 Then I looked, and behold, a **white** cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a **white** horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

Revelation 19:14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, **white** and clean, were following Him on white horses.

Revelation 20:11 Then I saw a great **white** throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

Worthy (adjective) (514) **áxios** from **ágō** = to weigh) strictly speaking means bringing up the other beam of the scales. Having the weight of another thing of like value, worth as much. Counterbalancing - weighing as much (of like value, worth as much). Bringing into balance and hence equivalent or equal value/similar worth (Ro 8:18, see use in Lxx of Pr 3:15, 8:11). Other nuances of axios include describing that which is fitting or appropriate (1Cor 16:2), that which is deserving (Mt 10:10), that which "deserves" to be considered or accepted (1Ti 1:15), that which is worthy of praise (Rev 4:11), that which corresponds to or is congruent with something else (Mt 3:8, Luke 3:8, 23:41, 26:20). Worthy or deserving of evil (Rev 16:6). **Friberg** - literally, as causing something to be dirty soil, smear, stain; metaphorically, as keeping the life spotless literally they did not soil their garments, i.e. they have lived in the right way (Rev 3.4); figuratively, of religious and moral unfaithfulness defile, make impure (1Co 8.7)

Axios - 41x/39v - appropriate(1), deserve(2), deserving(4), fitting(2), keeping(2), unworthy*(1), worthy(29). Matt. 3:8; Matt. 10:10; Matt. 10:11; Matt. 10:13; Matt. 10:37; Matt. 10:38; Matt. 22:8; Lk. 3:8; Lk. 7:4; Lk. 10:7; Lk. 12:48; Lk. 15:19; Lk. 15:21; Lk. 23:15; Lk. 23:41; Jn. 1:27; Acts 13:25; Acts 13:46; Acts 23:29; Acts 25:11; Acts 25:25; Acts 26:20; Acts 26:31; Rom. 1:32; Rom. 8:18; 1 Co. 16:4; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Tim. 4:9; 1 Tim. 5:18; 1 Tim. 6:1; Heb. 11:38;

AXIOS in the Revelation.

Revelation 4:11 "**Worthy** (axios) are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

Revelation 5:2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is **worthy** (axios) to open the book and to break its seals?"

Revelation 5:4 Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found **worthy** (axios) to open the book or to look into it;

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "**Worthy** (axios) are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Revelation 5:12 saying with a loud voice, "**Worthy** (axios) is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

Revelation 16:6 for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They **deserve** (axios) it."

John Phillips - **ILLUSTRATION** - An old French count was reduced, by the spendthrift character of his ancestors, to living in a common lodging house in Paris. It was the haunt of nefarious notables of the underworld, of burglars, murderers, and the like. Many a time they tried to get the old gentleman to join them in their lawless enterprises. To all their temptations the old gentleman would reply, as he pulled himself up to his full height, "Excuse me, gentlemen, noblesse oblige. Privilege has its responsibilities. You see, I am a French count. If I were to join in your operations, why, my family name would be besmirched. I should bring disgrace upon the name I bear. No! No! Excuse me! Noblesse oblige." There were some at Sardis who had adopted that very attitude. They were a virtuous remnant. They had not defiled their garments. When tempted to do something wrong, they would say, "Excuse me, please. I am a member of the royal family of heaven. God is my Father, His Son is my Savior, His Spirit is my comforter and guide, the Lord's people are my companions. If I did what you suggest, I should bring dishonor on the name I bear. Excuse me, please." How much temptation we could surmount if we adopted the attitude of that old French count and these Sardian overcomers! (Exploring Revelation - BORROW)

C H Spurgeon from sermon **A SOLEMN WARNING FOR ALL CHURCHES** - Do you meet with many men who hold communion

with Christ? Though they may be godly men, upright men, ask them if they hold communion with Christ, and will they understand you? If you give them some of those sweetly spiritual books, that those who hold fellowship love to read, they will say they are mystical, and they do not love them. Ask them whether they can spend an hour in meditation upon Christ, whether they ever rise to heaven and lay their head on the breast of the Saviour, whether they ever know what it is to enter into rest and get into Canaan; whether they understand how he has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; whether they can often say,

"Abundant sweetness while I sing
Thy love, my ravish'd heart o'erflows;
Secure in thee my God and King
Of glory that no period knows."

Ask them that, and they will say, "We don't comprehend you." Now, the reason of it is in the first part of my sermon—they have defiled their garments, and therefore Christ will not walk with them. He says "Those that have not defiled their garments shall walk with me." Those who hold fast the truth, who take care to be free from the prevailing sins of the times, "These," he says, "shall walk with me; they shall be in constant fellowship with me; I will let them see that I am bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh; I will bring them into the banqueting-house; my banner over them shall be love; they shall drink wine on the lees well refined; they shall have the secrets of the Lord revealed unto them, because they are the people who truly fear me: they shall walk with me in white."

C H Spurgeon on Rev 3:4 "**they will walk with me in white**" - We may understand this to refer to **justification**. "They shall walk in white"; that is, they shall enjoy a constant sense of their own justification by faith; they shall understand that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them, that they have all been washed and made whiter than the newly-fallen snow.

Again, it refers to joy and gladness: for white robes were holiday dresses among the Jews. They who have not defiled their garments shall have their faces always bright; they shall understand what Solomon meant when he said "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart. Let thy garments be always white, for God hath accepted thy works." He who is accepted of God shall wear white garments of joy and gladness, while he walks in sweet communion with the Lord Jesus. Whence so many doubts, so much misery, and mourning? It is because so many believers defile their garments with sin and error, and hence they lose the joy of their salvation, and the comfortable fellowship of the Lord Jesus, they do not here below walk in white.

The promise also refers to walking in white before the throne of God. Those who have not defiled their garments here shall most certainly walk in white up yonder, where the white-robed hosts sing perpetual hallelujahs to the Most High. They shall possess joys inconceivable, happiness beyond a dream, bliss which imagination knoweth not, blessedness which even the stretch of desire hath not reached. The "undefiled in the way" shall have all this—not of merit, nor of works, but of grace. They shall walk with Christ in white, for he has made them "worthy." In his sweet company they shall drink of the living fountains of waters. (Morning and Evening)

WILLIAM BARRICK - Practical Implications

1. Carelessness and a lack of urgency can benumb a church's spiritual life.
2. Spiritually immature believers can come to dominate a church and bring it to the point of going out of existence (dying).
3. A lack of knowing and obeying the teachings of the Word of God results in a spiritually sleeping church.
4. Spiritual slumber results in a fleshly and worldly spirit in the church. Rev 3:1-6 – The church at Sardis

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Ray Pritchard applies the principles in Revelation 3:1-6 - The church was lethargic because the people were lethargic. *That can happen to any of us at any time.* And it can happen while we are attending an evangelical church..... *The Sardis spirit overtakes us whenever we begin to take God's gifts for granted.* How quickly we can become the Church of the Living Dead and not even know it. Some of us should ask ourselves, "Do I really know the Lord at all?" *It would be better to be an out-and-out pagan than to go through life as a "cultural Christian" not really knowing the Lord.* At least the pagan knows he is a pagan, but the cultural Christian thinks he is alive when in reality he is dead.

Revelation 3:5 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

BGT Revelation 3:5 νικ ν ο τως περιβαλε ται ν ματ οις λευκο ς κα ο μ ξαλε ψω τ νομα α το κ τ ς β βλου τ ς ζω ς κα μολογ σω τ νομα α το ν πιον το πατρ ς μου κα ν πιον τ ν γγ λων α το .

KJV Revelation 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

NET Revelation 3:5 The one who conquers will be dressed like them in white clothing, and I will never erase his name from the book of life, but will declare his name before my Father and before his angels.

CSB Revelation 3:5 In the same way, the victor will be dressed in white clothes, and I will never erase his name from the book of life but will acknowledge his name before My Father and before His angels.

ESV Revelation 3:5 The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

NIV Revelation 3:5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

NLT Revelation 3:5 All who are victorious will be clothed in white. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will announce before my Father and his angels that they are mine.

NRS Revelation 3:5 If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes, and I will not blot your name out of the book of life; I will confess your name before my Father and before his angels.

NJB Revelation 3:5 Anyone who proves victorious will be dressed, like these, in white robes; I shall not blot that name out of the book of life, but acknowledge it in the presence of my Father and his angels.

NAB Revelation 3:5 " '"The victor will thus be dressed in white, and I will never erase his name from the book of life but will acknowledge his name in the presence of my Father and of his angels.

YLT Revelation 3:5 He who is overcoming -- this one -- shall be arrayed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the scroll of the life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before His messengers.

GWN Revelation 3:5 Everyone who wins the victory this way will wear white clothes. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life. I will acknowledge them in the presence of my Father and his angels.

BBE Revelation 3:5 He who overcomes will be dressed in white, and I will not take his name from the book of life, and I will give witness to his name before my Father, and before his angels.

RSV Revelation 3:5 He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life; I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

NKJ Revelation 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.

ASV Revelation 3:5 He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

MIT Revelation 3:5 I will thus dress the one who conquers in white garments. I surely will not erase his name from the life-book. I will also confess his name before my father and his angels.

- **He who** (present tense - continually) **overcomes**: Rev 2:7 1Sa 17:25
- **be clothed**: Rev 3:4 Rev 19:8
- **blot**: Ex 32:32-33 De 9:14 Ps 69:28 109:13
- **the book**: Rev 13:8 17:8 20:12,15 21:27 22:19 Php 4:3
- **confess**: Mal 3:17 Mt 10:32 Lu 12:8 Jude 1:24
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Luke 10:20+ Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but **rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven**."

Hebrews 12:23+ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn **who are enrolled** (apographo in perfect tense = stands registered, speaking of permanence) **in heaven**, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

Exodus 32:32-33+ "But now, if You will, forgive their sin–and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!" 33 The LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My

book.

> Revelation 20:12-15+ (GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT) And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and **books were opened**; and another book was opened, which is the **book of life**; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in **the books**, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

OVERCOMERS CLOTHED AND CONFESSED

It is important to emphasize one truth about this passage and that is **WHAT IT DOES NOT TEACH**! Jesus in **NOT TEACHING** that an overcomer, a believer can lose his or her salvation. In fact, Jesus is teaching just the opposite truth, that one cannot lose their salvation. So while there is a difference of opinion among experts on the meaning of the **Book of Life**, there is no difference of opinion on what Jesus is teaching about salvation. Jesus is not sitting up in Heaven with an "eraser" and watching our deeds and erasing us from the Book of Life when we stumble and fall (which we all do to one degree or another - 1Jn 1:8+). When Jesus died on the Cross, He spoke the Greek word TETELESTAI, which means **paid in full**. Every sin we have committed, are committing today or will ever commit in the future, has been paid for in full, covered by His precious, redeeming blood, forever and ever. Amen.

He who (present tense - continually) **overcomes** (nikao) **-** First note that this is not a reference to some spiritually elite believers ("super saints") but to all believers as John explains below. Second, note that **overcomes** is in the present tense signifying he or she continually has victory. In other words present tense indicates this is their lifestyle, their habitual practice (thus Lenski translates it "To the one conquering."). **Thomas** adds that the "thought is not that of victory finally achieved at the end of life, which would have been an aorist participle. It is rather the picture of **a believer who from the beginning of his faith in Christ to the end of life stands victorious** because he **keeps on overcoming whatever the enemy has to offer.**" (Bolding added).

Two other points must be remembered - (1) We as followers of Christ are still living in bodies with a sin nature and so there are times when we will sin and in those times we in effect are "*overcome*" by sin, but that is not our dominant pattern of living. (2) Our dominant pattern of living is more about *direction* than *perfection* (that's called glorification!), and the way (the only way) it is possible for that to our dominant or habitual pattern is because Jesus has sent us His supernatural Spirit Who lives in us and continually "*energizes*" us ("*who is at work* [energeo]" = continually - present tense in Php 2:13) continually giving us the ***desire*** to overcome our mortal enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil, and the power to overcome them, so that we might walk in a manner that pleases our Father in Heaven (Php 2:13NLT+, cf Col 1:10+, Eph 4:1+, 1Th 2:12+).

John explains **overcomers** writing... (see also chart "Who is an Overcomer?")

> "For whatever is born of God **overcomes** (nikao in present tense = in Christ we CONTINUALLY HAVE THE VICTORY OVER) the world, (AND ALSO OVER the flesh and the devil!!!); and this is the **victory** (nike = victory in battle, in the athletic games, over all opponents) that has **overcome** (nikao in present tense) the world–our **faith**. (NOT FAITH IN FAITH BUT AS HE EXPLAINS FAITH IN JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD) 5 Who is the one who **overcomes** (nikao) the world, but **he who** (present tense - life is characterized by general direction of continually) **believes that Jesus is the Son of God**?" (1 John 5:4-5+)

Robertson observes "Faith is dominant in Paul, victory in John, faith is victory (1 Jn 5:4+)."

Will thus be clothed (periballo) **in white** (leukos) **garments** (himaton) - Here is the first promise to the "**few people who have not soiled their garments**", the small remnant of overcomers in the largely "dead church" at Sardis. By extension this is a promise of white garments for ALL believers in all ages even if they are members of a dead church! As noted **white** is the color of heavenly garb of all the redeemed (cf. Rev 6:11; Rev 7:9,13; Rev 19:8,14) and speaks of holiness and purity. There were white robes for Christ (Mt. 17:2; Mk 9:3), His angels (Mt. 28:3; Mk 16:5, Acts 1:10), and the armies in heaven (Rev 19:8,14). See note above on how the overcomers were made worthy to walk in white (cf Rev 7:14, Rev 22:14). In addition in the ancient world, white robes were commonly worn at festivals and celebrations, which could speak of the joy we will experience in Heaven.

Every man still in Adam has a garment of "filthy rags" in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6), but once they confess Christ and are placed in Christ they are "made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). In Rev 5:9 John explains how the glorious **white garments** were made available to overcomers "And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You (CHRIST) to take the book (SEVEN SEALED SCROLL) and to break its seals; for You were slain, and **purchased for God with Your blood** men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Jesus paid the prices to purchase our white garments! John then explains that the saints

"have washed their robes and **made them white** in **the blood of the Lamb**." (Rev 7:14) When a saint believes, he is clothed in the righteousness of Christ, in effect washing his filthy rags and now supernaturally made white the blood of the Lamb. And in Rev 12:11 John adds that our white garments were not earned but bestowed on all overcomers for "they overcame him (THE DEVIL) because **of the blood of the Lamb** and because of **the word of their testimony** (CONFESSED JESUS AS LORD - Ro 10:9-10), and they did not love their life even when faced with death." As Christ appeared in dazzling white at His transfiguration (Luke 9:29), so all believers shall appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4) The picture of "walking in white" is Jesus' promise of eternal, unblemished righteousness for every overcomer.

Lehman Strauss reminds us that "The man without a wedding garment cannot be present at the marriage supper of the Lamb (see Matthew 22:11-14)."

Barclay - What do the **white robes** signify? (a) In the ancient world white robes stood for festivity. "Let your garments be always white," said the preacher, "and let not oil be lacking on your head" (Ecclesiastes 9:8). The white robes may stand for the fact that the faithful will be guests at the banquet of God. (b) In the ancient world white robes stood for victory. On the day when a Roman triumph was celebrated, all the citizens clad themselves in white; the city itself was called urbs candida, the city in white. The white robes may stand for the reward of those who have won the victory. (c) In any land and time white is the colour of purity, and the white robes may stand for the purity whose reward is to see God. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). (d) It has been suggested that the white robes stand for the resurrection bodies which the faithful will someday wear. They who are faithful will share in that whiteness of light which is the garment of God himself. We need not make a choice between these various meanings; we may well believe that they are all included in the greatness of the promise.

Guzik comments "Jesus explained the absolute necessity of this being clothed by God with His garments of purity and righteousness in His parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22:11–14). Real righteousness is receiving God's covering instead of trying to cover ourselves. Adam and Eve tried to cover their own sin (Genesis 3:21) but God provided them with a covering that came from sacrifice (Genesis 3:7).

And I (absolutely) **will not erase** (exaleipho) **his name from the Book of Life** - Jesus continues His prophetic promises (prophecy is denoted by "I will") to the one who **overcomes**. **Will not** is a double negative (ou me), the strongest way one can express negation in the Greek language. It conveys ABSOLUTE negation. In other words, to put it simply and plainly, a genuine believer can never, ever lose their salvation! (See How can I have assurance of my salvation? | GotQuestions.org and Eternal security) While we might debate the meaning of the book of life, clearly these words of Jesus, the final Judge of all men, are not intended to be a warning, but a promise to all who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb! Note also that this book is not called the "book of the dead"! It would seem to follow that no souls that are spiritually dead are ever recorded in this book.

John Walvoord - To some this verse seems to indicate that a believer's name could be blotted out, which is contrary to the Bible's clear teaching of the believer's Eternal security. To make the continuance of our salvation depend upon works is a gross failure to comprehend that salvation is by grace alone. If it depended upon the believer's perseverance, the name would not have been written there in the first place. (Revelation 3: The Letters To Sardis, Philadelphia, And Laodicea)

John MacArthur - Exodus 32:33, it is argued by some, supports the idea that God may remove someone's name from the Book of Life. In that passage the Lord tells Moses that "whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book." There is no contradiction, however, between that passage and Christ's promise in Revelation 3:5. The book referred to in Exodus 32:33 is **not the Book of Life** described here, in Philippians 4:3, and later in Revelation (Rev 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27). Instead, it refers to the book of the living, the record of those who are alive (cf. Ps. 69:28). The threat, then, is not eternal damnation, but physical death. In John's day, rulers kept a register of the citizens of a city. If someone died, or committed a serious crime, their name was erased from that register. Christ, the King of heaven, promises never to erase a true Christian's name from the roll of those whose names were "written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain" (Rev 13:8). (See Revelation Commentary)

James Allen - The blotting out of names is certainly an OT truth. However the idea must be physical death in the two passages where the expression occurs: Exod 32:32 with respect to Moses and Ps 69:28 with regard to the wicked. Thus in the OT to "blot out a name" is a metaphorical way of speaking of physical death.

Alan Johnson - For Christ to say that he will never erase the overcomer's name from the book of life is the strongest affirmation that death can never separate us from Christ and his life (Ro 8:38–39).

Steve Lawson points out that "the names of God's elect were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8, Rev 17:8) Before we were even born, the names of all believers were written in God's book-before they had done anything good or bad. We wee chosen in Christ before the beginning of time. What is predestined before time is settled for all time!" (Final call - BORROW)

John Stott - It is a solemn fact that we can have a reputation for being alive (like the church of Sardis) and still have no entry in God's book of the living. Our name can be on a church register without being on God's register. Jesus told his disciples to rejoice that their names were "written in heaven" (Luke 10:20; compare Heb 12:23). (Borrow What Christ thinks of the church : Revelation 1-3 expounded)

And I will confess (homologeo - acknowledge, fully agree) **his name** (onoma) **before My Father and before His angels** - These saints confessed His name on earth; He will confess their names in heaven. The verb homologeo was a strong word for confession before the courts and this context is confession before the ultimate real "supreme" court! Notice the play on names to add assurance -- Jesus says not only will He not erase the overcomer's **name** from the book of life, but He will openly confess his/her **name** before the Father! No overcomer needs to fear when he is presented before God the Father and His angels, for God the Son will confess the name of each overcomer to His Father.

This promise affirms Jesus' declarations during His life on earth...

> Matthew 10:32-33 "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. 33 "But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.
>
> Luke 12:8 "And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; 9) but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.
>
> Mark 8:38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."
>
> Luke 9:26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Paul wrote

> 2 Timothy 2:12-13 If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

Ray Pritchard - *This is a statement of absolute assurance of salvation* The Greek form here is a double negative. "I will never, ever, under any circumstances blot their names from the book of life." Those whom God saves he saves forever.

Strauss notes that "Great will be the difference between the names Jesus will confess and some of the names made famous in this world. But we may be certain that He will be forever true to the man who confesses Him."

Charles Swindoll - I want to point out something interesting in the Greek text of the letter to Sardis. Throughout the letter Jesus played on the Greek word onoma, which can mean either "name" or "reputation." In Revelation 3:1 the church in Sardis had a "reputation" or "name" (onoma) for being alive, but in reality they were dead. In Rev 3:4, Christ literally said, "You have a few names [onoma] in Sardis who have not soiled their garments." In Rev 3:5, He promised that He would not remove their names (onoma) from the Book of Life and that He would confess their names (onoma) before God. **All of this points to a profound truth. In Christ we have an eternal acceptance and identity. He will one day stand beside believers whom God has graciously clothed in white, whose names He has written in the Book of Life with permanent ink, and He will announce, "This one's mine! His/her name is _____, and he/she is a child of the King!" What an incredible thought!**

MacArthur - The comforting truth that true Christians' salvation is eternally secure is the unmistakable teaching of Scripture. Nowhere is that truth more strongly stated than in Romans 8:28–39:

Herbert Lockyer - As warriors of the cross, may grace be ours to fight on, never halting until victory is complete, and that eternal reward crowning a life of warfare is ours. The white raiment speaks of perfect purity, more perfect than the undefiled garments of a Jew in Sardis. Yes, and the white raiment speaks of reward becoming a conqueror, and priestly array. No speck or stain shall rest on the garment of white. "**The book of life**" mentioned here is not the same to be found in Revelation 13:8, in which the names of true believers are recorded. In the promise before us "the book of life" is the record of Christian profession—not the record of reality as in Rev 13:8. In the former true and false are found: in the latter the true only. Many who have not persevered and overcome will find their names erased in the register of Christian profession when life's records are to be scanned by the all-searching eye of the Lord of the churches. If we never shrink from confessing His name, He will not be ashamed to single us out in the august presence of the Father and His angels and confess our name before the grand assembly.
(Borrow All the promises of the Bible)

Related Resource:

- The Book of Life - Tony Garland - subtopics on the Book of Life include (1) Its Ultimate Purpose, (2) When are Names Written? and (3) Names Blotted Out (Caveat - These discussions are very difficult to follow)

Overcomes (conquers, prevails) (3528)(**nikao** from **nike** = victory, conquest) means to conquer, to be the victor, to gain the victory, to be victorious or to prevail in the face of obstacles. **Webster's 1828 dictionary** says to overcome means "to conquer; to vanquish; to subdue; as, to overcome enemies in battle.To surmount; to get the better of) **Overcome** describes the quality of a true saint who may (will) stumble and fall but who God always picks up and he continues onward and upward in the power of the Spirit and in the motivation of the victory Christ has won for us on the Cross (cf 2Pe 1:10-11+). As **Jesus** alerted His soon to be vigorously persecuted disciples "These things (Ed: Always ask "What things?" - forces you to read the preceding context - See Jn 14:1ff, esp Jn 14:23) I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but **take courage** (present imperative see need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey); I have **overcome** (perfect tense pictures permanence of our Lord's victory over this evil world system and its evil ruler! Glory!) the world." (Jn 16:33)

> **Nikao in NT - most uses in the Revelation** - 25v - Lk. 11:22; Jn. 16:33; Ro. 3:4; Ro. 12:21; 1Jn. 2:13; 1Jn. 2:14; 1Jn. 4:4; 1Jn. 5:4; 1Jn. 5:5; Rev. 2:7; Rev. 2:11; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 2:26; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 3:12; Rev. 3:21; Rev. 5:5; Rev. 6:2; Rev. 11:7; Rev. 12:11; Rev. 13:7; Rev. 15:2; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 21:7
>
> Luke 11:22 "But when someone stronger than he attacks him and **overpowers** him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.
>
> John 16:33 "These things (John 13-16 UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE) I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation (thlipsis), but **take courage** (present imperative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey); I have **overcome** (perfect tense = victory at Calvary which will endure eternally!) the world."
>
> Romans 3:4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, "THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND **PREVAIL** WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED."
>
> Romans 12:21 Do not be **overcome** by evil, but **overcome** (present imperative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey) evil with good.
>
> 1 John 2:13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because (TERM OF EXPLANATION) you have **overcome** (perfect tense = when you became a believer with this effect enduring) the evil one (DEVIL AND HIS CHILDREN). I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.
>
> 1 John 2:14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have **overcome** (perfect tense = when you became a believer with this effect enduring) the evil one (DEVIL AND HIS CHILDREN).
>
> 1 John 4:4 You are from God, little children, and have (perfect tense = when you became a believer with this effect enduring) them; because greater is He who is in you (Christ - Col 1:27, Spirit of Christ - 1Co 6:19) than he who is in the world (DEVIL AND HIS CHILDREN).
>
> 1 John 5:4 For whatever is born (perfect tense = past completed act, enduring effect = cf "Eternal Security"!) of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world–our faith.
>
> 1 John 5:5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
>
> Revelation 2:7 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who (present tense - continually) **overcomes**, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'
>
> Revelation 2:11 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who (present tense - continually) **overcomes** will not be hurt by the second death.'
>
> Revelation 2:17 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who (present tense - continually) **overcomes**, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'
>
> Revelation 2:26 'He who (present tense - continually) **overcomes**, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS;
>
> Revelation 3:5 'He who (present tense - continually) **overcomes** will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His

angels.

Revelation 3:12 'He who (present tense - continually) **overcomes**, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and 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 My new name.

Revelation 3:21 'He who (present tense - continually) **overcomes**, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Revelation 5:5 and one of the elders *said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has **overcome** so as to open the book and its seven seals."

Revelation 6:2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out **conquering** and to **conquer**.

Revelation 11:7 When they (Rev 11:3) have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and **overcome** them and kill them.

Revelation 12:11 "And they **overcame** him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

Revelation 13:7 It was also given to him (ANTICHRIST) to make war with the saints and to**overcome** them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

Revelation 15:2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who (present tense - continually) **had been victorious** over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

Revelation 17:14 "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will **overcome** them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful."

Revelation 21:7 "He who (present tense - continually) **overcomes** will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

Erase (cancel out, blot out, wipe away) (1813) **exaleipho** from **ek** = out, intensive [adds sense of "completely" - see also Vincent's note below] + **aleipho** = wipe, cover over, besmear) means literally to completely wipe off. Literally exaleipho means to remove by wiping off, as when a blackboard is erased. The word was applied to the process of obliterating writing on any material. Some of the uses in Scripture retain this literal meaning but most uses speak of a figurative blotting out or wiping off. The idea in all the uses is to cause something to cease by obliterating or eliminating any evidence. Twice in the Revelation God promises He will **wipe away** every tear. A number of uses in both OT (Septuagint) and the NT use this verb to describe the blotting out or wiping away of sins. **Exaleipho** was used by Thucydides of whitewashing a wall.

Exaleipho - 5x - Acts 3:19; Col. 2:14; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 7:17 = "God will wipe every tear from their eyes"; Rev. 21:4 = "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes"

Name (3686) **onoma** means that by which something or someone is called or known. Thus a name constitutes the distinctive designation of a person or thing. However in antiquity the **name** meant more than it does today. We use a**name** as little more than a distinguishing mark or label to differentiate one person from another. But in the ancient world the **name** signified not only the person's identity but the inherent character of the person designated by the name. Stated another way, in ancient times, one's whole character (title, reputation, person) was implied in the **name**. For example, in John 1:12 to "believe in His **Name**" (cf Jn 3:18, 20:31, 1Jn 3:23) is to believe (with a belief that results in a new, "circumcised" heart) in all Jesus is and all He has accomplished to effect our eternal redemption (Heb 9:12).

Onoma in the Revelation - Rev. 2:3; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 3:4; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:12; Rev. 6:8; Rev. 8:11; Rev. 9:11; Rev. 11:13; Rev. 11:18; Rev. 13:1; Rev. 13:6; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 13:17; Rev. 14:1; Rev. 14:11; Rev. 15:2; Rev. 15:4; Rev. 16:9; Rev. 17:3; Rev. 17:5; Rev. 17:8; Rev. 19:12; Rev. 19:13; Rev. 19:16; Rev. 21:12; Rev. 21:14; Rev. 22:4

Confess (acknowledge, profess, admit, promise) (3670) **homologeo** from **homos** = one and the same or together with+ **lego** = to say; confess from **con** = together, **fateor** = to say.) literally means to say the same thing as another and so to agree in one's statements with, to acknowledge, to admit the truth of (an accusation). This is the only use in Revelation.

Homologeo - 23v - Matt. 7:23; Matt. 10:32; Matt. 14:7; Lk. 12:8; Jn. 1:20; Jn. 9:22; Jn. 12:42; Acts 7:17; Acts 23:8; Acts 24:14; Rom. 10:9; Rom. 10:10; 1 Tim. 6:12; Tit. 1:16; Heb. 11:13; Heb. 13:15; 1 Jn. 1:9; 1 Jn. 2:23; 1 Jn. 4:2; 1 Jn. 4:3; 1 Jn. 4:15; 2 Jn. 1:7; Rev. 3:5

WHO IS AN OVERCOMER?

WHAT IS OVERCOME?	HOW IS IT OVERCOME?
Rev 12:11+ Saints overcome Satan	**BECAUSE**: (1) The blood of the Lamb (2) The word of their testimony (3) Not loving their life even to death!
Rev 17:14+ Lamb overcomes kings and beast (antichrist)	**BECAUSE**: He is Lord of lords and King of kings
1 Jn 2:14+ Young men overcome the evil one	**BECAUSE**: (1) They are strong (2) Word of God abides in you
1 Jn 4:4+ Saints (little children) overcome the false prophets and spirit of antichrist	**BECAUSE**: Greater is He (Spirit -1Jn 3:24) Who is
1 Jn 5:4-5+ Whoever is born of God overcomes the world	**BECAUSE**: (1) Our faith overcomes the world (2) He who believes (as a lifestyle) that Jesus is the Son of God
John 16:33 Saints overcome their tribulation in the world	**BECAUSE**: (1) They are in Christ (2) Christ has overcome the world

C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook -

WARRIOR of the cross, fight on! Never rest till thy victory is complete, for thine eternal reward will prove worthy of a life of warfare.

See, here is perfect purity for thee! A few in Sardis kept their garments undefiled, and their recompense is to be spotless. Perfect holiness is the prize of our high calling; let us not miss it.

See, here is joy! Thou shalt wear holiday robes, such as men put on at wedding feasts; thou shalt be clothed with gladness, and be made bright with rejoicing. Painful struggles shall end in peace of conscience, and joy in the Lord.

See, here is victory! Thou shalt have thy triumph. Palm, and crown, and white robe shall be thy guerdon; thou shalt be treated as a conqueror, and owned as such by the Lord himself.

See, here is priestly array! Thou shalt stand before the Lord in such raiment as the sons of Aaron wore; thou shalt offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and draw near unto the Lord with the incense of praise.

Who would not fight for a Lord who gives such large honours to the very least of his faithful servants? Who would not be clothed in a fool’s coat for Christ’s sake, seeing he will robe us with glory?

No Mistakes

> I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life. — Revelation 3:5

Today's Scripture: Revelation 20:11-15

The name of David F. Kies is listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. A small diamond is etched beside it to indicate that he died in battle. But it is a mistake, for Kies is very much alive. He’s living in Wisconsin with his wife and five children.

David F. Kies did fight in Vietnam and was seriously injured in combat near Saigon. He and his partner were on night patrol when they stepped on a mine. His buddy died immediately; Kies lost both of his legs but survived. He was reported as dead because of an error in some paperwork.

Mistakes like that can happen on military records, but in the most important record, the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 21:27), there are no errors. The names of those who put their trust in Jesus Christ as Savior from sin are written in that book, and they are secure forever (John 10:28; Revelation 3:5). There is another side to this fact, however—a very sobering reality. The day is coming when those whose names are not found in that eternal record book will be "cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

Is your name in the Lamb's Book of Life? Have you trusted in Jesus? If you have, you can be sure that you'll never be condemned. God makes no mistakes. — David C. Egner

Christ, who gave Himself to save me,
Now will keep me to the end;
In His care securely resting,
On His promise I depend.
—Bosch

Our salvation is secure because God's Word is sure.

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J J Knap - Loins Girded - White Raiment Rev. 3:5

The garments that we wear show more or less the condition of our innermost being. To the connoisseur someone's character can to some extent be read from the choice of his clothes. Garment and personality are related and therefore it is that Christ promised those that would keep themselves undefiled and that would overcome the struggle, would eventually be clothed in white raiment,—so, with clothes that were in harmony with their inner being.

White raiment,—a glorious prophecy of what we once shall be.

White is the colour that denotes holiness. This makes us spontaneously think of the Psalmist that is ours also in the sense of guilt: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," a prayer to which the Lord Himself gives the comforting answer: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Presently the garment of our life is still completely spoiled. Even the most eminent amongst us are oppressed to their own sorrow by sin day by day. However, by God's grace a time shall come when no unholy thought, no impure desire shall stain us, in which we shall stand before God's eye in the white of holiness.

White is also the colour of joy in distinction of the garment of mourning made of black goats' hair, common in the East. We think of the words of the Preacher: "Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment." As long as we are on this earth, we are constantly placed in sorrow and forced to wear sombre colours,—there is hardly a home without mourning. Above there is no mourning nor wailing but all eternal joy. There we find a skipping in the joy of the soul. Our joy shall then unbounded be, by the light that shines forth from God's countenance, reaching to the highest climax. No black is found there as in the kingdom of the eternal night, but only the shining white of the marriage of the Lamb.

Finally, white is the colour of glory. Think of Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, when his garments shone like light, which no fuller on earth could make so white. On Patmos John saw Him in a vision, riding upon the white horse as Conqueror. We shall not only be justified and sanctified, but afterwards we shall also be glorified and dressed with long, white garments! That be our expectation, our share in eternity, oh, not because in ourselves we merit any of that holiness, joy and glory, but only because our present spoiled garment of sin has been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Sam Storms - Eternal Security - Revelation 3:5

The reward promised to those who persevere is four-fold.

First, in Rev 3:4, they will walk with Jesus in white. Some see a reference here to the resurrection body, but this is more likely a promise of victory and purity in the messianic kingdom when those who have remained faithful will experience the consummation of fellowship with Jesus. The reference to "white" may allude to the righteousness imputed to us in the act of justification. That is why they are regarded as "worthy".

Second, the overcomer will be "clothed in white garments" (Rev 3:5a; cf. Rev 3:18; 6:11; 7:9–14;; 19:13).

Third, the overcomer will not have his/her name erased from the book of life.

There are at least five possibilities for this "**book**".

(1) Hemer refers to one particular custom in Athens according to which the names of condemned criminals were erased from civic registers before their execution. The Greek word translated "to erase," exaleiphein, "was the technical term for such degradation" (148). However, it is more likely that we should look for a biblical background to this imagery.

(2) In the OT the "**book of life**" (or its equivalents) was a register of the citizens of the theocratic community of Israel. To have one's name written in the book of life implied the privilege of participation in the temporal blessings of the theocracy, while to be erased or blotted out of this book meant exclusion from those blessings. In other words, this book had reference to the rights of citizenship for the Jewish people (cf. Ex. 32:32; Ps. 69:28; Isa. 4:3).

(3) The concept of a "book" was also used to portray God's all-inclusive decree (Ps. 139:16); i.e., the very days of one's life are ordained and written in God's "book" before one of them occurs.

(4) There is also the notion of "books" of judgment in which are recorded men's deeds. They serve as that by which or from which one shall be judged (Da. 7:10; Rev. 20:12).

(5) The most vivid usage, however, is the concept of the book as the register of those who have been**chosen for salvation from eternity past.** It is not temporal or earthly blessings that are in view, but participation in the eternal kingdom of God as recipients of eternal life (see Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 13:8; 17:8). It would appear from these texts that not all (**ED**: souls ever born) are written in this book, but only the elect. If it is the latter which Jesus has in view, there are three possible interpretations.

First, he may be saying that it is possible for a sinning, unrepentant Christian (such as were many at Sardis) to fail to overcome and thereby to forfeit their place in the book of life. Their names will be erased from that book and they will lose their salvation.

Second, others suggest that to have one's name blotted out refers to something other than salvation. In Rev. 3:1 Jesus referred to the people at Sardis as having a "name" for being alive, i.e., they had a reputation for spiritual vitality. The idea, then, is that such people are saved, but will forfeit any hope of an honorable position in the coming kingdom of God. They are saved, but will experience shame at the last day. It is not the loss of life, per se, but the loss of a certain quality of life that otherwise could have been theirs. Thus, what one loses by having their name erased from the book of life is eternal rewards in the kingdom.

Third, others insist that the key is in identifying the "overcomers". Those who overcome, it is argued, are Christians, indeed, all Christians. See 1 John 5:4–5; Rev. 21:7. This isn't to suggest that Christians can't backslide and sin badly. The rebukes in these seven letters indicate otherwise. Nevertheless, the evidence of the reality of true saving faith is perseverance (i.e., "overcoming"; cf. 1 John 2:19).

Three factors lead me to conclude that John does not envision the possibility of a true Christian forfeiting salvation. First, all of the other promises to the "overcomer" are coined in positive terms with no threat (implied or explicit) of losing a salvation once gained (see Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26–27; 3:12, 21). Second, if it is asked why this promise is couched in negative terms, the answer is obvious: Jesus couldn't say "I will write his name in the book of life" because the names of the "overcomers" (i.e., the elect) were already written in the book from eternity past. Read Rev. 13:8; Rev 17:8. There is no indication in Scripture, least of all in Revelation, of additional names being inscribed in the book as a reward for faithfulness or perseverance. **Rather, faithfulness and perseverance are the evidence or fruit of having had one's name written in the book.** Those who worship the "beast" do so precisely because their names were not written in the book in eternity past (Rev 13:8; 17:8). Third, this declaration of Jesus is a promise to the elect that nothing will by any means (he uses a double negative) prevent them from possessing the eternal inheritance to which they have been ordained. In other words, **we must take note of what Jesus does not say**. He does not say that anyone will be erased from the book of life. Rather, he says the overcomers will not be erased. **His word is a promise of security to overcomers, not a threat of insecurity to those who lapse**. So again, Jesus nowhere says he will erase names previously in the book of life. Eternal Security) (Bolding added)

Clothed (wrapped)(4016) **periballo** from **peri** = around, about + **ballo** = throw) means literally to cast or throw around, to throw up a rampart around, to encompass by erecting something around, to build an embankment around as in Lk 19:43 ("your enemies will throw up a barricade against you") (Lxx of Ezek 4:2). **BDAG** describes a figurative use in the Apocrypha - to envelop someone in torture, thereby involving the person in misfortune (3 Macc 6:26).

> **Gilbrant** - In classical Greek **periballō** is used in a variety of ways. In a literal sense it is used of embracing, of surrounding with defenses (such as with a city wall), and of putting on garments. Figuratively, the word can denote investing a person with authority, involving in evil or calamity, encompassing, or understanding (cf. Liddell-Scott). In the papyri the common use "to clothe" occurs, as well as "to construct" an enclosing wall around a vineyard. The meaning "afflict" is also found (cf. Moulton-Milligan). In the **Septuagint**

periballō usually means “clothe.” However, other uses such as “cover” (Judges 4:18; 2 Kings 8:15 [LXX 3 Kings 8:15]; Psalm 147:8 [146:8]), “encompass” (Job 23:9), “cling to” (Job 24:8), and “throw” a net “over” (Ezekiel 32:3) do appear as well. In two instances the word is used in connection with a city wall. Proverbs 28:4 in the Septuagint uses it figuratively: “Those who love the Law put a city wall (that is, a wall of protection) around themselves.” Ezekiel 4:2 uses it of throwing up a mound around a walled city to besiege it. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

Periballo - 22x/22v - clothe(4), clothed(13), dressed(1), wear for clothing(1), wearing(2), wrap...around(1). Matt. 6:29; Matt. 6:31; Matt. 25:36; Matt. 25:38; Matt. 25:43; Mk. 14:51; Mk. 16:5; Lk. 12:27; Lk. 23:11; Acts 12:8; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 4:4; Rev. 7:9; Rev. 7:13; Rev. 10:1; Rev. 11:3; Rev. 12:1; Rev. 17:4; Rev. 18:16; Rev. 19:8; Rev. 19:13

Revelation 3:5 ‘He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Revelation 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

Revelation 4:4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

Revelation 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;

Revelation 7:13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?”

Revelation 10:1 I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire;

Revelation 11:3 “And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

Revelation 12:1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;

Revelation 17:4 The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality,

Revelation 18:16 saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls;

Revelation 19:8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Revelation 19:13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

Revelation 3:6 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

BGT Revelation 3:6 χων ο ς κουσ τω τ τ πνε μα λ γει τα ς κκλησ αις.

KJV Revelation 3:6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

NET Revelation 3:6 The one who has an ear had better hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

CSB Revelation 3:6 "Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

ESV Revelation 3:6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

NIV Revelation 3:6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

NLT Revelation 3:6 "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.

NRS Revelation 3:6 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

NJB Revelation 3:6 Let anyone who can hear, listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

NAB Revelation 3:6 " '"Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'

YLT Revelation 3:6 He who is having an ear -- let him hear what the Spirit saith to the assemblies.

GWN Revelation 3:6 Let the person who has ears listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

BBE Revelation 3:6 He who has ears, let him give ear to what the Spirit says to the churches.

RSV Revelation 3:6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

NKJ Revelation 3:6 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'

ASV Revelation 3:6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

MIT Revelation 3:6 One who has capacity to hear should listen to what the spirit is saying to the churches.

- Rev 2:7
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

LEND YOUR EAR
AND LISTEN!

He (singular) **who has an ear, let him hear** (akouo) **what the Spirit** (pneuma) (present tense - continually) **says to the churches** (ekklesia) **- Let him hear** (akouo) is a command in the aorist imperative and the only way we can obey is by depending on the Holy Spirit to give us the desire and power to obey (Php 2:13NLT+). This command is found only on the lips of Jesus, 8 times while He was still on earth and 8 times after He ascended to Heaven! The command conveys a sense of urgency, what I like to call the "Nike commercial command" "Just Do it!" The idea is do not delay, procrastinate or prevaricate! Note the recipient is **churches** plural so this combined entreaty and command is repeated to every church (See Pattern). And remember, the idea of akouo is not just to hear the "sound waves" but to heed (obey) what is heard. It is not to bein one ear and out the other, because that results in self-delusion as Jesus' half-brother **James** wrote "But **prove** (present imperative) yourselves doers (poietes) of the word, and not merely hearers (akroates) who delude (paralogizomai - present tense continually deceiving by false reasoning) themselves.." (James 1:22+).. This addresses any and every person who has a "spiritual" ear. As Paul says in 1 Cor 2:14+ we know "a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand (AKA CANNOT "HEAR") them, because they are spiritually appraised." The Spirit speaks all 7 letters to the churches in John's day and throughout the church age! (cf Rev 14:13 and Rev 22:17). So in all 7 messages, both Christ and His Spirit deliver the messages!

> **THOUGHT** - If you are a pastor it would behoove you to consider an expository series on these letters to the 7 churches every few years, like performing "preventive maintenance on the heart and soul of the congregants.

Garland - It is Christ's desire that "those who hear the words of this prophecy" (Rev. 1:3+) not only hear the subject matter, but understand its significance. This phrase recognizes the reality that those whose hearts are not open to Christ may hear (or read) the words, but will not understand the message: If we desire that God would reveal more to us, we must first respond in obedience to that which has already been revealed. If we fail to respond to what He has already revealed, then we stand to lose what we already understand (Mark 4:24-25+; Luke 8:18+).

Spurgeon rightly said "There are many, who have ears, who do not hear to any real purpose. There is the physical act of hearing, but they do not hear in the heart and the mind. It is a very different thing to have an impression on the drum of the ear and to have an impression on the tablet of the heart. "He that hath ears to hear, **let him hear**."

John Phillips - Again the Lord's challenge rings forth. He has used these very words before (16 times in the NT). It is a phrase often repeated. In writing from glory to the seven churches of Asia, the Lord uses the expression over and over again (Rev. 2-3). Shakespeare borrowed the expression and used it in a different form when recounting Mark Anthony's speech to the Romans attending Caesar's funeral: "***Friends, Romans and countrymen, lend me your ears.***" The words are a challenge to us to pay attention to what is being said. That is important when listening to any communication. When the speaker is God, it is vital!

Avery Willis - The simplest way to receive the Word is to hear it. Even a child or a person who cannot read can hear the Bible. "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear" (Mark 4:23). "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). Matthew 13:3-23 lists four kinds of hearers of the Word: the apathetic hearer who hears the Word but is not prepared to receive and understand it (v. 19); the superficial hearer who receives the Word temporarily but does not let it take root in the heart (vv. 20, 21); the preoccupied hearer who receives the Word but lets the worries of this world and the desire for other

things choke it out (v. 22); and the reproducing hearer who receives the Word, understands it, bears fruit, and brings forth results (v. 23). (Master Life)

Fausset writes that ""Every man 'hath an ear' naturally, but he alone will be able to hear spiritually to whom God has given 'the hearing ear'; whose 'ear God hath wakened' and 'opened."

> **THOUGHT** - The picture of "open ears" (and I would add an "open heart") reminds us of Lk 24:45+ where Jesus "opened (dianoigo) their minds to understand (suniemi) the Scriptures!" Truth be told, if the Spirit of Jesus does not open our minds when we open His book, it will be like reading just another book! Pray Ps 119:18+ "Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law."

A T Robertson on **He who has an ear** - An individualizing note calling on **each** of the hearers (cf Rev 1:3+ = "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy") to listen and a reminiscence of the words of Jesus in the Synoptics (**ED**: This challenge to heed Christ's words appears eight times in the gospels and eight times in Revelation. Mt. 11:15+; Mt 13:9, 43+; Mark 4:9+, = He who has ears to hear, let him hear.", Mk 4:23+; Mk 7:16+; Lk 8:8+; Lk 14:35+ also Rev. 2:7; Rev. 2:11; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 2:29; Rev. 3:6; Rev. 3:13; Rev. 3:22; Rev. 13:9), but not in John's Gospel.

Mark Hitchcock - One of my favorite lines from the lips of Jesus is His oft-repeated statement, "**He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**" Jesus is saying, "Look, if you have a set of ears on your head you'd better use them and listen up to what I'm about to say." It's a direct challenge to us to be spiritually sensitive to the words of Jesus. The responsibility to listen carefully to Him is serious. As we move into a careful study of Jesus' forecast for the future, I can't think of a better reminder. Let's listen carefully and willingly to the mighty Master as He leads us down the corridors of time to the end of the age. And be ready to follow His instructions about how to live while we wait for that day to come. (See What Jesus Says about Earth's Final Days)

Hear (191) **akouo** primarily means physical hearing of sounds and the apprehension of the sounds with one's mind. **Akouo** gives us our English **acoustics** which is the science of designs that helps one hear (We need "*spiritual acoustics*" to help us hear spiritual truth!). Friberg summarizes akouo - listen to; (1) followed by the genitive to indicate sense perception hear (Acts 9.7); (2) followed by the accusative to indicate understanding of what was said hear (Acts 9.4); (3) as a legal technical term give a hearing, grant a court trial (Jn 7.51); (4) of being informed about something learn or hear (of) (Mt 14.13); (5) impersonally avkou,etai it is reported (1Co 5.1); (6) of discipleship listen to, pay attention to, obey (Lk 9.35); (7) of inner comprehension understand, be aware of, listen to (Gal 4.21) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

> **Akouo** in the Revelation - Rev. 1:3; Rev. 1:10; Rev. 2:7; Rev. 2:11; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 2:29; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 3:6; Rev. 3:13; Rev. 3:20; Rev. 3:22; Rev. 4:1; Rev. 5:11; Rev. 5:13; Rev. 6:1; Rev. 6:3; Rev. 6:5; Rev. 6:6; Rev. 6:7; Rev. 7:4; Rev. 8:13; Rev. 9:13; Rev. 9:16; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 10:4; Rev. 10:8; Rev. 11:12; Rev. 12:10; Rev. 13:9; Rev. 14:2; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 16:1; Rev. 16:5; Rev. 16:7; Rev. 18:4; Rev. 18:22; Rev. 18:23; Rev. 19:1; Rev. 19:6; Rev. 21:3; Rev. 22:8; Rev. 22:17; Rev. 22:18

ILLUSTRATION OF EARS TO HEAR - The Battle of Britain was at its height. Night and day the enemy bombers flew in across the English Channel to unload their cargoes of death and destruction on the cities and villages below. The Royal Air Force had put up a magnificent fight. Sir Winston Churchill, in recounting later what the world owed to that valiant group of men who flew their battered Hurricanes and Spitfires against incalculable odds, declared, "Never before in the field of human conflict have so many owed so much to so few." In one lonely RAF outpost, a group of fighter pilots was gathered in the mess hall. It was a scene often repeated in those days. The men were worn out with fatigue, they were dirty and disheveled, their eyes were bleary, and beards sprouted on their chins. They were snatching a moment's relaxation before climbing the skies again to fight off more of the Nazi airwolves. Suddenly a buzzer sounded, and a voice came over the intercom from the operations room. "Bandits at fifteen thousand feet over P25. Over!" At once the pilots were on their feet and racing for the runways. Pausing on his way, the squadron leader barked back into the intercom one short reply: "**Message received and understood**."

Vance Havner - Are You Listening?

> Speak; for thy servant heareth. I Samuel 3:10.
> He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Matthew 11:15.
> He that hath an ear, let him hear. Revelation 2:7.

It is an oft-recurring word from our Lord, found throughout the Gospels—"**He that hath ears to hear...**" Some have ears—period! Samuel was listening—and God spoke. God has much to say today, but we have "ears to hear, and hear not" (Ezek. 12:2). Some stop their ears (Acts 7:57). Some turn their ears from the truth (2Ti 4:4). Some have itching ears (2Ti 4:3).

Are you tuned in on God? It is said that John Burroughs, the naturalist, could walk along a noisy street and overhear a cricket in the hedge. His ear was tuned to the little voices of nature. You can make your way through the hubbub and still keep in touch with heaven.

Samuel was listening. The boy who listens for God to speak will hear Him, for God is looking for such boys. God's men have been men of a double resolve: "I will hear what God the Lord will speak" (Ps. 85:8); and then, "What the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak" (1Ki 22:14).

Related Resource:

- ARE YOU LISTENING?
- Sermon by Joseph Parker - "If any man have ears."
- What are some Bible verses about listening? | GotQuestions.org

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Vance Havner adds - A lot of Sunday-morning Christians, who want to sit with folded hands and listen to a mild discourse on the Teacher of Galilee, need to be aroused from their stupor by a vision of the flaming Christ of the Candlesticks. Eight times in these messages to the churches He says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." Eight times in the Gospels He says, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Some of us have ears ... period. "Hearing we hear not." We sit at church looking but not listening. God grant us ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches! And eyes to behold the Lord of the Lampstands bidding us "Repent ... or else!"

Vance Havner - Learn How to Listen
We spend much time and money learning how to speak when we need to learn how to listen.

"... hearing they hear not" (Matt. 13:13).
"... if any man hear my words" (John 12:47).
"He that hath ears, let him hear" (Mark 4:9).

After all, we have two ears to hear with and only one mouth to speak with—thank the Lord!

QUESTION - What did Jesus mean when He said, "He who has ears to hear"?

ANSWER - In the Gospels, Jesus speaks of those who have "ears to hear" at the end of a difficult saying or parable (e.g., Matthew 11:15; Mark 4:9, 23). Who is "he who has ears to hear"? Better yet, who is "he who has ears"? Ears are a feature shared by all of humanity—to not have ears would be an unnatural occurrence. Therefore, when Jesus addresses those who have ears, He refers to all who have been given His words—no matter their age, ethnicity, language, or status.

But there is a difference between having ears and having "ears to hear." Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed contrasts types of hearers: those who let the Word of God pass straight through their ears and those who truly listen and seek understanding (Mark 4:13–20). Some hear the Word, yet they do not allow it to take root because the seduction of worldly pleasures and comfort overcomes them. Others end up rejecting the Word because of persecution or trials. Others hear the Word and open themselves to understand and accept it so that it transforms them. Those who have "ears to hear" allow the Word to bear fruit to the glory of God. It is up to the hearer to decide whether to take the Word seriously and pursue understanding; only a few are willing—the rest have ears, but they do not have "ears to hear" (Matthew 7:13–14, 24–27).

Whenever Jesus says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear," He is calling for people to pay careful heed. It's another way of saying, "Listen up! Pay close attention!" Speaking in parables was one way in which Jesus sought to gain the attention of the crowds—people love stories, and the parables depicted events and characters with which they could readily relate. But unless they were willing to tune out other distractions and come to Jesus to understand the meaning of His preaching, His words would be only empty stories. They needed more than ears, however keen they were; they needed ears to hear.

When asked by His disciples why He was speaking to the crowds in parables, Jesus refers to Isaiah 6, which speaks of people who have eyes and ears, yet who have hardened their hearts and chosen to ignore the Word of the Lord (Matthew 13:10–15; cf. Isaiah 6:8–10). Part of the judgment on those who refuse to believe is that they will eventually lose their opportunity to believe: "Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them" (Matthew 13:12; cf. Romans 1:18–32).

A similar phrase is found in Revelation in each of the seven letters to the churches: "Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). And in Revelation 13:9, immediately following a description of the Antichrist, we read, "Whoever has ears, let them hear." The readers of Revelation are called upon to pay close attention and

seek God's wisdom concerning what's written.

Who is "he who has ears"? The simple answer: all people who have been or are being given the words of God. Like the parables' original audience, we must also "Listen up! Pay close attention!" Jesus' simple request is that we use our God-given faculties (eyes to see, ears to hear) to tune in to His words (John 10:27 –28; Mark 4:24; Revelation 3:20). "For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open" (Mark 4:22). Seeking God's truth takes energy and focus; it takes a willingness to be challenged and changed. While the way of God's truth is not the most convenient or fun path to take, we can be assured that it is the best one (John 1:4; 10:9; 14:6). And so He bids us, "Come" (Matthew 11:28 –30).

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. (Isaiah 55:1–3) GotQuestions.org

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Vance Havner - The Deaf Generation

In Caesarea we saw an outdoor theatre, not an amphitheatre, but a semicircular stone auditorium. From the back row we could hear our leader speak in conversational tones from the platform. Moreover, he told us that a larger theatre in Ephesus that could hold twenty-four thousand was constructed centuries ago with the same marvelous acoustics. All this in a day when in my travels all over America I have had congregations of a hundred or so complain that they could not hear in a tiny church! Larger edifices wrestle continually with the problem. All our experts somehow cannot come up with the acoustics of antiquity!

How many times have listeners in little auditoriums lamented that hearing was bad only a few yards from the pulpit! Could it be that we slaves of our own devices have become so accustomed to hearing aids of all sorts that we imagine we cannot hear without them? We limp on our crutches and if the amplifier does not work "hearing we hear not" (Matthew 13:13).

Once I listened to the veteran evangelist, Gipsy Smith. He was a preacher of the old days and abhorred all new devices. I thought I could not hear him and when he asked if any of us were having trouble about it, I raised my hand. "You're not listening!" was his reply. Could it be that, conditioned as we are to mechanical aids, we just think we cannot hear the preacher?

And of course those dear souls who come to church early to get a back seat could move up closer and fill that empty lumberyard of ten rows of seats right in front of the pulpit. But they never do, yet still insist that they cannot hear!
"Ears that hear not." "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Mark 4:9). Ears to hear! All of us are equipped with ears but hearing is another matter. We hear and we do not hear. Our ears catch vocal sounds emanating from the pulpit, but the message escapes us. We hear (after a fashion) what the minister says but our Lord said, "Let him hear what the Spirit saith..." (Revelation 2:7). Of course sometimes the preacher is not saying what the Spirit says and if we listened ever so well there would be no word from God. Or the trouble, may be not with the transmitter but with our receiver! There is a preparation to hear the sermon as well as a preparation to deliver the sermon.

We live now in an ear-splitting age of amplified dissonance and some think the next generation will have to be equipped with hearing aids. The more our eardrums are bombarded with demonic waves of music (which is not music but only an excuse for not being able to make music), the deafer our souls will be.

Something has gone wrong with our hearing—both physically and spiritually. We are not going to correct it by clever devices. We must get at the cause. We need to do something about how we hear as well as what we hear. There is famine of the hearing of the Word of God—a famine because in some quarters it is not being preached and in others because our ears are not tuned and trained to hear it.

God grant us more Samuels who can say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:9)!

Rob Morgan - Borrow From this Verse - Stay of Death

At age 15, George T. B. Davis determined to give himself to the Lord's service; and, inspired by such mentors as D. L. Moody, R. A. Torrey, and Charles M. Alexander, he resolved to be a soul-winner. He promised himself to speak to someone each day about accepting Christ.

Sometimes I would forget to speak to someone during the day, and after I had retired would suddenly remember that I had not spoken to anyone that day about accepting Christ. I would get up and dress and go out on the streets. Perhaps the first person I met would be walking very rapidly and I would not speak to him, but presently I would find an opportunity and grasp it.

When World War I erupted, Davis began working among the soldiers under the auspices of the Pocket Testament League, distributing Bibles to those who would agree to carry them and read them.

While holding meetings in a military camp at Fort Matilda in Scotland, Davis met a Private Cairney who showed him a Pocket Testament League Bible that had saved his brother's life. The brother had kept it in the upper left-hand pocket of his jacket. Suddenly a sharp-nosed, steel-jacketed German bullet went straight for his heart, but struck the little Book instead. It plowed its way through page after page and finally stopped at Revelation 3:6, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The soldier did listen and was thus spiritually prepared for death when, a month later, he was hit by shrapnel. Being in great pain, he groaned fearfully. A chum leaned over and said, "Jock, don't groan so."

He replied, "I know I'm groaning and I'm suffering, but think how the Savior suffered for us on Calvary."

Davis was given that little bullet-drilled New Testament, and he used it for the rest of the war to impress soldiers with the urgency of salvation, saying, "He who has an ear, let him hear."

Rod Mattoon - At the age of 15, George Davis dedicated himself to serving the Lord. He was resolved to be a soul-winner and determined to speak to someone about Christ everyday. In his diary he writes: Sometimes I would forget to speak to someone about the Lord during the day, and after I retired, I would suddenly remember that I had not spoken to anyone about accepting Christ. I would get up and dress and go out on the streets.
When WW1 broke out, George began witnessing among the soldiers under the auspices of the Pocket Testament League. He would distribute Bibles to those who would carry them and read them. While he was in Scotland, Davis met Private Cairney who showed him a Pocket Testament League Bible that had saved his brothers life. He kept it in the pocket over his heart. One day a blazing German bullet was heading for this boy's heart when it was stopped by the New Testament. **The bullet plowed through the entire New Testament and stopped at Revelation 3:6....** "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The soldier did listen and trusted Christ. One month later he was hit by shrapnel. Being in great pain, he groaned fearfully. His friend leaned over him and said, "Jock, don't groan so." He replied, "I know I'm groaning and I'm suffering, but think how Jesus suffered for us on the Cross of Calvary." George Davis was given the bullet-drilled New Testament and he used it for the rest of the war to challenge soldiers with the urgency of salvation, saying, "**He that hath an ear, let him hear.**" Are you listening to what the Lord has to say to you? Are you spiritually growing or dead, apathetic, floundering in your Christian life?

Revelation 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:

BGT Revelation 3:7 Κα τ γγ λ τ ς ν Φιλαδελφε κκλησ ας γρ ψον· Τ δε λ γει γιος, ληθιν ς, χων τ ν κλε ν Δαυ δ, νο γων κα ο δε ς κλε σει κα κλε ων κα ο δε ς νο γει·

KJV Revelation 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

NET Revelation 3:7 "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write the following: "This is the solemn pronouncement of the Holy One, the True One, who holds the key of David, who opens doors no one can shut, and shuts doors no one can open:

CSB Revelation 3:7 "Write to the angel of the church in Philadelphia: "The Holy One, the True One, the One who has the key of David, who opens and no one will close, and closes and no one opens says:

ESV Revelation 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

NIV Revelation 3:7 "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

NLT Revelation 3:7 "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Philadelphia. This is the message from the one who is holy and true, the one who has the key of David. What he opens, no one can close; and what he closes, no one can open.

NRS Revelation 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of the holy

one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens:

NJB Revelation 3:7 'Write to the angel of the church in Philadelphia and say, "Here is the message of the holy and true one who has the key of David, so that when he opens, no one will close, and when he closes, no one will open:

NAB Revelation 3:7 "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write this: " 'The holy one, the true, who holds the key of David, who opens and no one shall close, who closes and no one shall open, says this:

YLT Revelation 3:7 'And to the messenger of the assembly in Philadelphia write: These things saith he who is holy, he who is true, he who is having the key of David, he who is opening and no one doth shut, and he shutteth and no one doth open!

GWN Revelation 3:7 "To the messenger of the church in Philadelphia, write: The one who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens a door that no one can shut, and who shuts a door that no one can open, says:

BBE Revelation 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia say: These things says he who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, opening the door so that it may be shut by no one, and shutting it so that it may be open to no one.

RSV Revelation 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: `The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens.

NKJ Revelation 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":

ASV Revelation 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth:

MIT Revelation 3:7 To the messenger of the church at Philadelphia write— The holy and true one, he who has David's key, who opens and no one locks, and who locks and no one opens, has this to say:

- **And to the angel** : Rev 1:11 2:1
- **He who is holy**: Rev 4:8 Rev 6:10 Ps 16:10 Ps 89:18 Ps 145:17 Isa 6:3 Isa 30:11 Isa 41:14,16,20 Isa 47:4 Isa 48:17 Isa 49:7 Isa 54:5 Isa 55:5 Mk 1:24 Lu 4:34 Ac 3:14
- **who is true**: Rev 3:14 1:5 6:10 15:3 16:7 19:2,11 21:5 Mt 24:35 Joh 14:6 1Jn 5:20
- **who has the key of David**: Rev 1:18 Isa 22:22 Lu 1:32
- **who opens and no one will shut**: Rev 5:3-5,9 Job 11:10 12:14 Mt 16:19
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Psalm 16:10 (MESSIANIC PROPHECY) For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow **Your Holy One** to undergo decay.

Habakkuk 3:3+ God comes from Teman, And **the Holy One** from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, And the earth is full of His praise.

Isaiah 40:25 “To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal?” says the **Holy One**.

Isaiah 43:15 “I am the LORD, your **Holy One**, The Creator of Israel, your King.”

Isaiah 47:4 Our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, **The Holy One** of Israel.

Isaiah 48:17 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, **the Holy One** of Israel, “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, Who leads you in the way you should go.

Isaiah 49:7 Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and its **Holy One**, To the despised One, To the One abhorred by the nation, To the Servant of rulers, “Kings will see and arise, Princes will also bow down, Because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You.”

Revelation 4:8+ And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY** is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.”

Isaiah 6:3+ And one called out to another and said, "**Holy, Holy, Holy,** is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

Mark 1:24+ (DEMONS RECOGNIZE JESUS) saying, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are–**the Holy One of God**!"

Luke 1:35+ (ANGELS RECOGNIZE JESUS) The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason **the holy Child** shall be called the Son of God.

John 6:66-69+ (PETER SPEAKING FOR THE 12 DISCIPLES MINUS ONE) As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. 67 So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69 "We have believed and have come to know that You are **the Holy One of God**."

Matthew 16:19 "I will give you the **keys** of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

(See below)

JESUS TO THE CHURCH OF BROTHERLY LOVE

Lehman Strauss - Clovis G. Chappell said: "Were it my privilege to go back across the years and attend a service at one of these seven churches, I think I should choose the church at Philadelphia. Then, should I have the further privilege of choosing at just what particular service I should be present, I should select the one at which the pastor read this letter that we have for our present study." I like Dr. Chappell's choice. (The Book of the Revelation: Outlined Studies - BORROW)

James Hamilton has an interesting note - Faith is not a vague spiritual sense. Faith is an active confidence that what one does not presently see nevertheless corresponds to reality. Our faith in Jesus does not increase because we think about faith. Our faith in Jesus increases because we are made more confident in Jesus. There is a real sense, then, in which Jesus intends every one of these introductions to these seven letters to build faith in him. (See Revelation: The Spirit Speaks to the Churches)

Leon Morris says Philadelphia "had a good deal in common with that at Smyrna. Both receive no blame, only praise. Both suffered from those who called themselves Jews and were not, both were persecuted it would seem by the Romans, both are assured that the opposition is satanic, and both are promised a crown. (Borrow Revelation of St John)

And to the angel (aggelos) **of the church** (ekklesia) **in Philadelphia write** (grapho): Seven times John is commanded to write to the angel (probably the leader or pastor) of the local church.

He Who is (the) **holy** (hagios) ("the Holy One") - Most of the translations add verbs "is...is...has" but literally the Greek reads "the holy, the true, the key of David." **H e** of course refers to Jesus. See God's attribute Holy. Jesus is saying in essence "I am God." Jesus is Holy in His character, in His words, in His actions, in His purposes. He is uniquely set-apart from anything else. Holiness is the most difficult attribute to define because it deals with the essence of God's character. Defining holiness is like defining God! It can't be done completely. We can describe holiness and find ample illustrations of it, but we can't define it entirely. This is what makes God God! Applied to Jesus, holiness is that characteristic that sets Him apart from His creation. He is separated from creation because He is the Creator. Jesus is holy, wholly separated from sin and all that is profane. He is separated from sin because He is the Savior. In many ways holiness is God's central attribute. "Holiness is that which makes God God." **Reginald Showers** calls it "the foundational truth of revelation." Jesus is described as the Holy One in the Messianic Ps 16:10, quoted by Peter in Acts 2:27+. Jesus is referred to as **Holy One** multiple times in the NT - Mk 1:24; Lk 1:35; Lk 4:34; John 6:69; Acts 4:27, 30; 1Jn 2:20).

Holiness is the only attribute of God mentioned in triplicate. Two times the Bible tells us that God is holy, holy, holy (Isaiah 6:3+, Rev 4:8+). Think about that for a moment. If God says something about his character once, that's enough to settle it! When he says it twice, that's emphasis. But when he says it three times, that means it's of supreme importance. The Bible never says that God is love, love, love or mercy, mercy, mercy, or justice, justice, justice. But it does say that He is holy, holy, holy.

R L Thomas - Hagios characterizes Jesus, not so much as the sinless one, but as one especially **set apart,** belonging exclusively to God. Though opposed and rejected by the synagogue of Satan (cf. Rev 3:9), Christ remains characteristically holy. Hence, His words are also holy, carrying with them a mandate for obedience. (See Revelation Exegetical Commentary)

James Hamilton -The fact that he is “true” speaks to his reliability. He can be trusted. The fact that he is “holy” speaks to his purity and total consecration to God. He will not lead his people into sin. He can be followed. Those who hear Jesus announce himself as “the holy one, the true one” have their confidence in Jesus bolstered. (See Revelation: The Spirit Speaks to the Churches)

Related Resource:

- What does it mean that Christ is holy? What is the holiness of Christ? | GotQuestions.org

Barclay - holy (hagios) means different, separate from. God is holy because he is different from us; he has that quality of being which belongs to him alone. To say that Jesus Christ is holy is to say that he shares the being of God.

Holy, Holy, Holy
by Reginald Heber
(Play Hymn)

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessèd Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who was, and is, and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessèd Trinity!

Who is true (alethinos) - In Rev 3:14 and Rev 19:11 Jesus is called "**faithful and true**." This attribute of Jesus describes Him as dependable, genuine, trustworthy, in all ways in accord with what is true. In a culture where there were gods everywhere, Jesus stood (and stands) out as the authentic God, not a molded or crafted god, not a god invented by one's fallen unredeemed mind (cf 1Co 8:5-6+). Every word spoken by Him can be depended upon to accomplish exactly what He says it shall accomplish. WE CAN RELY ON HIM! Today we might say "Jesus is the Real Deal!" Jesus stands in stark contrast to those who were a synagogue of Satan populated by men who said they were Jews but who actually were not, but were in fact liars, like their father (Jn 8:44). Trench (Synonyms of the NT) also compares alethinos and alethes summarizing a lengthy discussion by concluding "we may affirm of the alethes, that he fulfils the promise of his lips, but the alethinos the wider promise of his name. Whatever that name imports, taken in its highest, deepest, widest sense, whatever according to that he ought to be, that he is to the full."

Barclay - There is alethes, which means true in the sense that a true statement is different from a false statement. There is alethinos, which means real as opposed to that which is unreal. It is the second of these words which is used here. In Jesus, there is reality. When we are confronted with him, we are confronted with no shadowy outline of the truth but with the truth itself. (cf "I Am...the Truth" - Jn 14:6)

Lehman Strauss on **true** - G. Campbell Morgan distinguishes between being “holy” and “true.” He says that as the “holy” One, Christ is right in character; as the “true” One, He is right in conduct. He could not be different in His actions from what He is in His attributes. When character is right, conduct will be right. Because holiness inherently resides in Him, truth does likewise. Since He is perfect in what He is, He is also perfect in what He does. He only could say, “I am … the truth” (John 14:6). In this He claimed oneness with the Father when He prayed, “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3). (The Book of the Revelation: Outlined Studies - BORROW)

Wiersbe on **true** - He is the original, not a copy; the authentic God and not a manufactured one. There were hundreds of false gods and goddesses in those days (1 Cor. 8:5–6), but only Jesus Christ could rightfully claim to be the true God. It is worth noting that when the martyrs in heaven addressed the Lord, they called Him “holy and true” (Rev. 6:10). Their argument was that, because He

was holy, He had to judge sin, and because He was true, He had to vindicate His people who had been wickedly slain. (Borrow Be Victorious)

Monty Mills on **true** - Alethinos indicates that Jesus is the only reality. Somehow, as humans we regard the material things around us as the 'real world' and spiritual things as a mystic, ill defined, vague realm. However, Scripture teaches that material things all pass away, and only spiritual things endure (e.g., 1Pe 1:7, 1Jn 2:17). This means reality has its permanent meaning in the spiritual realm, not in the material world (i.e., spiritual things are the only reality 2Co 4:18), and, as Christ is the source of the spiritual world, He is the prime reality! The word alethinos used for '**true**' here encapsules all this!

Who (present tense - continually) **has the key** (kleis) **of David, Who** (present tense - continually) **opens** (anoigo) **and** (oudeis - absolutely) **no one will shut** (kleio)**, and who** (present tense - continually) **shuts** (kleio) **and** (oudeis - absolutely) **no one** (will open) **opens** (anoigo) **, says this** (tade legei) - Jesus has **the key of David**. What function does a key have? It opens and gives access to something that otherwise might be locked and inaccessible. In effect it speaks of the control or authority of the person who holds the key, in this case Jesus. He can open and close doors. It is a metaphorical expression indicating complete control over the royal household (entrance to the kingdom, aka salvation as in Acts 16:14; illumination of His Word as in Lk 24:45, etc).

> **NET NOTE** - The word "door" (Rev 3:8NET) is not in the Greek text but has been supplied in the translation. Direct objects were often omitted in Greek when clear from the context. Since the following verse does contain the word "door" (θὐραν, thuran), that word has been supplied as the direct object here.

In Rev 1:18 Jesus declared "I have the **keys** of death and of Hades."

We see a parallel passage to the **key of David** in Isaiah 22:22 "Then I will set the **key of the house of David** on his shoulder, When he opens no one will shut, When he shuts no one will open." In the context of Isaiah 22, Shebna is deposed and replaced by Eliakim (Isa 22:15-20) as the authority over the royal treasury. Practically what does the **key** signify? Authority, power, right. Eliakim served as King Hezekiah's royal treasurer, with the authority and responsibility of guarding that treasure entrusted to his care. He was given a key that opened the vault, and he alone possessed the authority to access those vast riches. Like Eliakim Jesus alone has the power to admit into or exclude from His Kingdom.

Daily Notes of the Scripture Union - The open door which Jewish synagogue and pagan cults were powerless to shut is the God-given opportunity to preach Christ to all who will hear. The key of David is an Old Testament allusion to the absolute sovereignty of God in opening doors and shutting mouths. See Isaiah 22:22.10

Wiersbe - The background of this imagery is Isaiah 22:15–25. Assyria had invaded Judah (as Isaiah had warned), but the Jewish leaders were trusting Egypt, not God, to deliver the nation. One of the treacherous leaders was a man named Shebna who had used his office, not for the good of the people, but for his own private gain. God saw to it that Shebna was removed from office and that a faithful man, Eliakim, was put in his place and given the keys of authority. Eliakim was a picture of Jesus Christ, a dependable administrator of the affairs of God's people. (BORROW Be Victorious - In Christ You Are an Overcomer)

R L Thomas - "Christ in the fulfilled sense controls the entrance to David's house, which ultimately refers to the Messianic kingdom....The Jews, whose hostility is prominent in Rev 3:9 of this message, denied that Jesus was the Messiah and claimed that they alone, not Jesus' followers, had access to the kingdom of David..... With an authority like what He has over Hades (cf. Rev. 1:18), heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18), and His own house (cf. Heb. 3:6), He has regal dominion over the house of David."

John MacArthur feels that the **key of David**, gives Jesus the "sovereign authority to determine who enters His messianic kingdom (cf. John 10:7, 9; 14:6; Acts 4:12). Revelation 1:18 reveals that Jesus has the keys to death and hell; here He is depicted as having the keys to salvation and blessing. (See Revelation Commentary) In his sermon **MacArthur** adds "This is a direct reference, by the way, to Isaiah 22:22, where speaking of Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, it refers to him as the one who had the key to all the treasures of the king. He was the one who could open up the door and let people into the treasure. He had authority over the royal treasury. He could open it up and let its riches out, and he could lock it up and keep them in. The key of David is the key over royal riches. The key of David is the key over the divine treasury, over the kingdom of God, the kingdom of salvation. Jesus has the key to all the divine treasure. That is to say, He is in ultimate authority. He decides who gets in and who is shut out, who is blessed and who is cursed. He opens and closes its riches to everybody. So there is no higher authority. He has all holiness, all truth, and all authority. There's no one else to appeal to. (Revelation 3:7-11 Divine Blessing for a Faithful Church, Part 1)

Lehman Strauss on **true** - The angel said to Mary, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the **throne of His father David:** and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32–33). Christ is the absolute Ruler in His kingdom. The key to the house of David is His by legal right and by lineage. He is sole Heir to the throne of David, and until He comes again to reign, the Jews can have no true sovereign. The key is the symbol of His authority, and this authority was given to Him over Heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18).(The Book of the Revelation: Outlined Studies - BORROW)

Danny Akin sees the open door as "The door to salvation swings open and closes at the discretion of Jesus and Jesus alone. Mohammed has no control over this door. Buddha has no control over this door. No pope, priest, guru or self-appointed cultist determines who walks through salvation's door. This door belongs only to Jesus and He shares His authority with no one. At one time the door was slammed shut, sealed up by our sin. But by the blood of the cross and His glorious resurrection the door has been opened and anyone who will approach it with faith in Jesus will find it already opened wide to them."

Adam Clarke - "David could shut or open the kingdom of Israel to whom he pleased. He was not bound to leave the kingdom even to his eldest son. He could choose whom he pleased to succeed him. The kingdom of the Gospel, and the kingdom of heaven, are at the disposal of Christ."

Holy (40) **hagios** = set apart ones, separated ones, sanctified ones, holy ones) is literally a holy one and properly means different, set apart, distinct, holy. It describes one who is set apart for or by God and can be brought near or into God's holy presence. "Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of Deity, sharing in God's purity and abstaining from earth's defilement." (Zodhiates) So depending on the context hagios refers to whoever or whatever is set apart (sanctified) for a special purpose. **Vine** says hagios "is predicated of God (as the absolutely Holy One, in His purity, majesty and glory): of the Father, e.g., Luke 1:49; John 17:11; 1 1Pet. 1:15, 16; Rev. 4:8; 6:10; of the Son, e.g., Luke 1:35; Acts 3:14; 4:27, 30; 1 John 2:20; of the Spirit, e.g., Matt. 1:18 and frequently in all the Gospels, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Cor., Eph., 1 Thess.; also in 2 Tim. 1:14; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:21; Jude 20. (b) It is used of men and things in so far as they are devoted to God. Indeed the quality, as attributed to God, is often presented in a way which involves Divine demands upon the conduct of believers. These are called hagioi, saints, i.e., 'sanctified' or 'holy ones.' This sainthood is not an attainment, it is a state into which God in grace calls men; yet believers are called to sanctify themselves (consistently with their calling, 2 Ti 1:9), cleansing themselves from all defilement, forsaking sin, living a holy manner of life, 1 Pet. 1:15; 2 Pet. 3:11, and experiencing fellowship with God in His holiness. Revelation 20:6+ "Blessed and **holy** is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

> **Hagios in the Revelation** - Rev. 3:7; Rev. 4:8; Rev. 5:8; Rev. 6:10; Rev. 8:3; Rev. 8:4; Rev. 11:2; Rev. 11:18; Rev. 13:7; Rev. 13:10; Rev. 14:10; Rev. 14:12; Rev. 16:6; Rev. 17:6; Rev. 18:20; Rev. 18:24; Rev. 19:8; Rev. 20:6; Rev. 20:9; Rev. 21:2; Rev. 21:10; Rev. 22:11; Rev. 22:19

True (adjective) (228) **alethinos** from **alethes** = true, one who cannot lie) is an **adjective** which pertains to being in accordance with historical fact - genuine, real, true, valid, trustworthy (worthy of confidence, dependable). Alethinos describes that which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name, in every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name -- thus genuine not spurious, fictitious, counterfeit, imaginary, simulated or pretended.

> **Alethinos (note most of NT uses are by John)** - 26v - Lk. 16:11; Jn. 1:9; Jn. 4:23; Jn. 4:37; Jn. 6:32; Jn. 7:28; Jn. 8:16; Jn. 15:1; Jn. 17:3; Jn. 19:35; 1 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 8:2; Heb. 9:24; Heb. 10:22; 1 Jn. 2:8; 1 Jn. 5:20; Rev. 3:7;
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> - Rev. 3:14 = The Amen, the faithful and **true** Witness
> - Rev. 6:10 = O Lord, holy and **true**
> - Rev. 15:3 = Righteous and **true** are Your ways
> - Rev. 16:7 = O Lord God, the Almighty, **true** and righteous are Your judgments
> - Rev. 19:2 = HIS JUDGMENTS ARE **TRUE** AND RIGHTEOUS
> - Rev. 19:9 = "These are **true** words of God."
> - Rev. 19:11 = He who sat on it is called Faithful and **True**
> - Rev. 21:5 = "Write, for these words are faithful and **true**."
> - Rev. 22:6 = "These words are faithful and **true**"

Key (2807)(**kleis** from **kleio** = to shut) (cp. Latin 'clavis'=key) is anything used for locking and so refers to a key Figuratively kleis was used as a symbol of authority (Rev 1.18) or as a symbol of entrance into knowledge, describing the means of acquiring knowledge (Lk 11.52) BDAG - " ``the notion of Anoubis [Egyptian] as the custodian of the keys of Hades is a standard element in magical charms")."

> **Kleis** - 6x/6v - Matt. 16:19; Lk. 11:52; Rev. 1:18; Rev. 3:7; Rev. 9:1; Rev. 20:1 Septuagint - Jdg. 3:25; 1 Chr. 9:27; Job 31:22;
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> **Gilbrant - Classical Greek** - Kleis is a noun related to the verb kleiō (2781). It is the common word for "key" in Greek and occurs widely in Greek literature. It is often used for a bar, bolt, catch, or hook. It is also used of

keys. It is sometimes used of literal keys, of which there were several kinds in antiquity, but it also occurs frequently as a symbol or metaphor for various kinds of power or authority to open or to close. Various figures in mythology are pictured as holding these keys (cf. Bauer).

Septuagint Usage - Kleis is found five times in the Septuagint (Judges 3:25; 1 Chronicles 9:27; Job 3:22 of the shoulder or shoulder blade [Hebrew sh^{e}khem]; Isaiah 22:22; and Bel and the Dragon 12 [Hebrew maphtēach]) with the passages in Judges and 1 Chronicles referring to literal keys. We may take special note of two of these: 1 Chronicles 9:27 describes the use of keys in regard to those Levites who were charged with opening the temple each morning, a practice which may be reflected in the New Testament (Matthew 16:19; Revelation 3:7,12). Isaiah 22:22 appears to be a messianic prophecy describing how God will lay the key of the house of David upon the shoulder of Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, “So he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.” This image of laying a key on the shoulder may reflect the fact that some keys for ancient buildings were quite large, or that a symbolic key of authority was sometimes carried on the shoulder of an official or authority figure during public ceremonies.

New Testament Usage - In the New Testament kleis appears only six times (Matthew 16:19; Luke 11:52; Revelation 1:18; 3:7; 9:1; and 20:1), and in each case it is symbolic. What these keys symbolize, especially in Matthew 16:19, has been a subject of much debate (see Bromiley, “Power of the Keys,” International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 3:11).

Luke 11:52 refers to the key of knowledge, suggesting the grace and power of God in freeing people from the Law and granting access to the truth ultimately found in Jesus Christ. The parallel in Matthew 23:13 (without the use of “key”) refers specifically to the kingdom of heaven which the scribes and Pharisees did not enter and which they also denied to others by their legalism.

Revelation 3:7 speaks of the Lord as holding the key of David and thus possessing the authority or power to open or to shut without human opposition. This is a parallel to Isaiah 22:22 where the opening and shutting refer to the house of David. In Revelation 3:7-9 the opening and shutting also appear to refer to the door that can be opened (3:8) to the heavenly temple or sanctuary of God, and to the new Jerusalem (3:12). The Lord is the one who controls access to spiritual or heavenly realities.

In Revelation 1:18; 9:1; and 20:1 the keys are associated with the control of hell and death, and the bottomless pit or abyss. This suggests that just as the Lord controls access to the heavenly or eternal sanctuary, so too it is the Lord and His angels who control death and hell.

Much attention has been given to Jesus’ words to Peter in Matthew 16:19: “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Several observations are necessary. It seems clear that the Church or the kingdom of heaven is a basic concern and that the role of the keys in binding or loosing is something that affects the Church. But are the keys given only to Peter since “thee” and “thou” are singular? While the Roman Catholic Church has generally insisted that Peter alone is to be understood, others have said that Peter represents all of those who are involved in opening the kingdom of heaven by evangelism (Matthew 28:19f.). Jesus was addressing Peter only in this verse because only Peter had made the great confession. It should be remembered, however, that Jesus told all the disciples the same thing after the Resurrection (John 20:23). “Handing over the keys implies appointment to full authority” (Jeremias, “kleis,” Kittel, 3:750). Ultimately it is the Lord who really provides access to the heavenly realm and sanctuary (in Revelation 3:7). God’s house or church or temple is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ being the Chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:19).

As the keys of Revelation 1:18; 9:1; and 20:1 are associated with the power or authority to control death and hell, so too here the Lord is really the one who will not allow the gates of hell to prevail against the Church. The keys may be symbolic of anything—evangelism, the Word of God, doctrine or teaching, prayer, faith, etc. —which provides access to the power of God which alone subdues or controls the forces of evil. At the same time such keys prevent hell from overwhelming the Church.

The language of binding and loosing is well known in Jewish literature (see especially John Lightfoot, A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica, 2:236ff.). That which is bound or loosed is “whatsoever,” i.e., impersonal. Matthew 18:18 and John 20:23 suggest that it is sin which may be in focus, although some would prefer legalism as the focus, especially in view of Paul’s frequent concern for freedom from the Law (cf. especially Romans 3:19ff.; 7:4ff.; and Galatians 5:1ff.). Above all, the verse is not so much a matter of chronology but of compatibility and cooperation between the work of the Church on earth and

heavenly power and authority. The Lord will reject anyone who rejects the message that the disciples bring. If anyone believes, his sins will be forgiven. (Complete Biblical Library)

Shut (Close) (2808) **kleio** literally means to shut or close (like shutting the door of your prayer room so that you pray in secret - Mt 6:6, **the door has already been shut** = Lk 11:7, after the resurrection the disciples were together and **the doors were shut… for fear of the Jews** = Jn 20:19, 26). Figuratively to shut the windows of heaven means to have no rain (Lk 4:25, Rev 11:6). In Mt 23:13 **kleio** is used metaphorically of the Scribes and Pharisees **shutting off the kingdom of heaven from men**. In the parable of the 10 virgins (Mt 25:1-12) the foolish virgins were shut out of the wedding feast (Mt 25:10) because the Lord did not know them (Mt 25:11, cp Mt 7:21-23). **Kleio** is used figuratively in 1Jn 3:17 to describe the shutting of one's heart to the obvious needs of their brethren. Kleio is used of Jesus who "**shuts and no one opens**." (Rev 3:7) In Rev 3:8 Jesus tells the church at Philadelphia "I have put before you an open door which no one can **shut**." In Rev 20:3 Satan is **shut** in the abyss for one thousand years. In Rev 21:25 the gates of the city of the New Jerusalem **shall never be closed**. The first use of kleio in the Septuagint describes God closing the door of the ark = "And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed [it] behind him." (Ge 7:16).

Kleio - 16x/15v - close(1), closed(1), closes(1), locked(1), shut(11), shuts(1). Matt. 6:6; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 25:10; Lk. 4:25; Lk. 11:7; Jn. 20:19; Jn. 20:26; Acts 5:23; Acts 21:30; 1 Jn. 3:17; Rev. 3:7; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 11:6; Rev. 20:3; Rev. 21:25

The Church That Honors Jesus (Revelation 3:7-13) - Danny Akin

I. Christ is characterized by His awesomeness. Revelation 3:7

1. Our Lord is a God of purity.
2. Our Lord is a God of reliability.
3. Our Lord is a God of authority.
4. Our Lord is a God of sovereignty.

II. The Church is commended for its actions. Revelation 3:8-10

1. The Church's energy should focus on God's direction. (Revelation 3:8)
2. The Church's enemies will fall by God's decision. (Revelation 3:9)
3. The Church's endurance will foster God's deliverance. (Revelation 3:10)

III. The Church is challenged in its attainments. Revelation 3:11-13

1. We are challenged to hopeful perseverance. (Revelation 3:11)
2. We are challenged by heavenly permanence. (Revelation 3:12)
3. We are challenged with honored acceptance. (Revelation 3:12)
4. We are challenged through heavenly correspondence. (Revelation 3:13)

QUESTION - What is the Key of David?

ANSWER - The Key of David is a term found in Revelation and Isaiah. A key indicates control or authority; therefore, having the Key of David would give one control of David's domain, i.e., Jerusalem, the City of David, and the kingdom of Israel. The fact that, in Revelation 3:7, Jesus holds this key shows that He is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, the ruler of the New Jerusalem, and the Lord of the kingdom of heaven.

However, the passage in Revelation has been used inappropriately by a number of cults that ultimately descend from the Christian Identity Movement via Armstrongism. The Philadelphia Church of God, a splinter group from the Worldwide Church of God, produces a television program called *Key of David*.

Scriptural Usage

The Key of David is most directly referenced in Revelation 3:7, "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: these are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David." The Old Testament reference is Isaiah 22:22. There, the prophet tells the palace secretary Shebna that he will be replaced by Eliakim, for God "will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David" (Isaiah 22:22). **The one who holds the keys has the authority. Thus, the "key of David" implies control of David's domain, which was promised to the Messiah in both the Old and New Testaments** (Isaiah 9:7; Luke 1:32).

Cultic Usage

The television show called *Key of David* is hosted by Gerald Flurry, the author of a book of the same name. Flurry is founder and pastor of the Philadelphia Church of God. His interpretations of Scripture include the twisting of many biblical prophecies and a reading of many other passages as being secretly prophetic. Flurry has a special interest in Revelation 3:7-13, the letter to the church at Philadelphia (the ancient city located in modern-day Turkey). Flurry claims that the "key of David" held by Christ is "the profound understanding he wants all of us to have" (*Key of David*, p. 10), which will lead to special "positions of authority" (p. 11) in the New Jerusalem. Flurry claims that the letter is a vision of what Christians of our time are to do, but that "only a small percentage" (p. 8) will understand this great vision, qualify to receive the special authority, and share the throne of David with Jesus.

Another major component of Flurry's beliefs is the claim that Great Britain and the United States of America (meaning their Caucasian, Anglo-Saxon citizens) are descended from the "lost" tribes of Israel. As Israelites (he says), we are uniquely qualified to hold authority in the Kingdom and create the spiritual Israel. This belief in Anglo-Israelism has no basis in fact.

Conclusion

Paul told Timothy to avoid "myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith" (1 Timothy 1:4). There is no "special knowledge" beyond the gospel itself that will aid salvation. Any claim beyond faith in the work of Jesus tears out the heart of the good news: that the just will live by faith (Romans 1:17). There is no great vision, special knowledge, or Jewish lineage needed, only faith in Christ. GotQuestions.org

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KEYS - Dictionary of Biblical Imagery

Keys as actual physical objects appear only rarely in Scripture, yet metaphorically they form an important connecting motif that runs between the OT and NT. As a motif, keys have long been recognized as symbols of power and authority, yet the image has more subtle overtones as well. Keys symbolize power because they are given to those who are judged trustworthy, and a key (even in ancient times) is a relatively small thing compared to that which it opens. Thus it suggests something of power, mystery and exclusivity.

In the OT keys belong to the steward of the house, the trusted servant, the one that the master has chosen to care for the household affairs. In Isaiah the prophet foresees a day when the false steward will be removed and a true steward will be entrusted with the care of Jerusalem. The image used by Isaiah is striking, for he says, "I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David" (Is 22:22 NIV). Evidence suggests that the long and heavy keys of those days were customarily carried on one's shoulder. In addition to the obvious suggestion of authority given to the new steward, the passage also suggests that the keys are images of trust and responsibility. For the one who gives the keys, they are symbols of trust and belief in the character of the steward. For the one who receives the keys, they are symbols of responsibility.

The Gospel records include two significant uses of the key image that build on the OT suggestions. In Luke 11:52 the lawyers are accused of not fulfilling their offices of trust and responsibility. Jesus says that they took away "the key of knowledge" (NRSV), so that they not only refused to enter into knowledge themselves, but they actually prevented others from entering as well. The key controls access. The lawyers should have used their offices to gain knowledge and to unlock that knowledge for others; they were stewards of the truth. Because they did not fulfill their duties, however, it is implied that the key has been taken away.

The most famous of the key images in the Scriptures is the account of Jesus' empowering of Peter with the keys to the kingdom (Mt 16:13–20). This passage once again builds on the twin themes of trust and authority. Peter's confession of Christ's identity forms the immediate circumstance for Jesus' granting of the keys to him. Because Peter understands who Jesus is, at least in part, he is to be trusted. Like the key of knowledge, Peter is to use the keys to bind and to loose. Peter, however, is responsible not only for the earthly actions of the kingdom but for the heavenly as well, since the keys in this passage seem to connect the earthly and the heavenly in one operation.

In the Revelation the image of the keys reappears. Here again the emphasis is on power and authority but also on trust and responsibility. The words of Isaiah concerning the true steward are quoted by the vision of Christ in Revelation 3:7: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens" (NRSV). The passage from Isaiah has been transformed from a future possibility to a present reality; Christ has become the steward that can be trusted. Yet the author of the Revelation carefully identifies the keys to which the Christ is referring. These are apparently not the same metaphorical keys given to Peter in the Gospels. Whereas Peter's keys were identified as the keys of the kingdom, the glorified Christ carries "the keys of Death and of Hades" (Rev 1:18 NRSV). Later in the Revelation, keys are used to open the bottomless pit to release the judgment of God.

If keys are read as part of an image pattern extending through both Testaments, it might be suggested that the responsibility of opening the kingdom of heaven has been given to the church. Human beings have been entrusted with the authority to set people

free with the knowledge of the gospel. The final power of judgment, however, still rests in the hands of the glorified Christ, who will come with final power and authority.

See also AUTHORITY

DOOR - Dictionary of Biblical Imagery

Doors and doorways are places of transition. We move through them to the outside or into another room to greet new people; we close doors and find quiet and solitude. The door is an important symbol for the biblical writers. The doorway, gate, portal or entryway is often associated with entrance into areas of great spiritual significance. The various courts in the temple area were marked by walls and portals, and the Holy of Holies in the temple was sealed off for all but one day of the year (see Sacred Space). Then the high priest, after appropriate ceremonies, would enter to represent the people before God.

The biblical writers use this almost primal association of doors and religious boundaries, but more often the imagery of door is connected quite closely to its literal work of opening and closing (see SHUT, CLOSE) and of hiding and revealing. The door is one of the most significant parts of a house, and at times biblical writers use it as a synecdoche for an entire house (see HOME, HOUSE). In the well-ordered, God-fearing Hebrew home, doors were to bear words testifying to God's truth (Deut 6:9). This figurative language speaks of a house oriented around God's law.

The Closed Door Hides. The closed door literally keeps those outside from seeing and hearing what is going on inside (1 King 14:6). The closed door hides the activities of the prostitute, but the open door where she sits seeking to entice men is mysteriously inviting (Prov 9:14). Job implies that to violate a shut door by eavesdropping or loitering would be an action worthy of divine punishment. In his own defense he claims that he has not "lurked at my neighbor's door" (Job 31:9 NIV). Jesus uses this image, with a hyperbolic edge, when he calls for people not to pray like the hypocrites who make showy public prayers, "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Mt 6:6 NIV). Privacy would be a scarce commodity in first-century Palestine. Many of the houses would only have had one interior door, and that was for a storage closet.

The Closed Door Excludes. Just as the drawn curtain and closed door of the temple excluded unauthorized persons from the sacred spaces, so doors in everyday life exclude one. After the brutal rape of Tamar by Amnon, he ordered her put out and the door bolted behind her (2 Sam 13:17, 18). The brutality of the rape is reprehensible, but for Tamar this act of exclusion is utterly devastating.

The image of the closed door that will not yield to knocking is used by Jesus. A time will come when those who have rejected him will be excluded from the festivities by a closed door that will not be opened (Mt 25:10; Lk 13:25; Rev. 3:7).

The Door as Spiritual Entryway. Jesus refers to himself as "the door" (Jn 10:9). In the context this certainly refers to being a door for the sheep and hence the gate or entryway to salvation. When the risen Christ stands at the door and knocks-"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Rev 3:20 NIV)—the door symbolizes the need for a decision and the potential exclusion of Christ.

The door imagery is also used to give a word of comfort to beleaguered Christians when Christ declares, "I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name" (Rev 3:8 NIV). Paul used the metaphor of God's opening the "door of faith" (Acts 14:27) as showing the exclusive way of faith as the portal through which people enter the kingdom of God.

The Door as Opportunities for the Gospel. Paul uses door imagery three times to figuratively describe opportunities provided for the spread of the gospel. This imagery contains the idea that the open door makes possible that which a closed door would not. These references hearken back to Hosea 2:15, which speaks in salvific terms of a "door of hope" that the Lord will provide. Paul writes that "a great door for effective work has opened to me" (1 Cor 16:9 NIV). When he visited Troas, Paul found that "the Lord had opened a door for me"; later he prayed that "God may open a door for our message" (Col 4:3). In all of these references door speaks figuratively about an opportunity to spread the gospel.

Key Events at Doors. We can note, finally, some famous moments in the Bible in which the crucial event happens at a door. The list includes the monster sin either couching (RSV) or crouching (NIV) or lurking (NRSV) at the door of Cain's heart (Gen 4:7), the closed door of the ark that signals safety for Noah and his family (Gen 6:16; 7:16), the door of Lot's house that foils the would-be rapists (Gen 19:10), the blood-signed doorposts of the Israelites on the evening of the Passover (Ex 12:22–23), the locked doors of Eglon's chamber that enable Ehud to make his get-away after the assassination (Judg 3:23–25), the "ancient doors" that are commanded to be lifted up so the King of glory may come in (Ps 24:7, 9) and the door of every individual's soul at which Jesus stands and knocks, ready to enter and sup (Rev 3:20).

See also OPEN, OPENING;

SHUT, CLOSE - Dictionary of Biblical Imagery

In the Bible, to shut or close is primarily to exercise power. Although God has the ultimate authority to shut and close things, human beings in their exercise of free will are also said to shut out the word of God from their own understanding. Thus shutting or closing is chiefly the site of a battle between divine and human wills.

At a literal level the imagery of shutting chiefly pictures the act of protecting something inside an enclosure from an outside threat. Thus God shuts the door of the ark (Gen 6:16), Lot shuts the door of his house when the men of Sodom threaten to seize his angelic visitors (Gen 19:10), and people threatened by invasion shut themselves in their houses for protection (Is 24:10; 26:20). In addition to domestic scenes of shutting the doors of houses, the imagery appears in military situations, where people in besieged towns shut the door or gate of a tower or city wall (Josh 6:1; Judg 9:51). Even if there is no physical door or gate to shut, exclusion from a community is pictured by the imagery of being shut out, as Miriam is shut out of the camp during her period of leprosy (Num 12:14–15).

The imagery of shutting is ambivalent in these contexts. While shutting brings safety to those behind the closed door or gate, the outside threat also makes the people inside prisoners to their own house or refuge. Accordingly, for a gate to be no longer shut assumes overtones of a glorious liberation. In the millennial kingdom, Isaiah predicts, “your gates shall always be open; day and night they shall not be shut, so that nations shall bring you their wealth” (Is 60:11 NRSV). Revelation has a similar prediction, declaring of New Jerusalem, “Its gates will never be shut by day-and there will be no night there” (Rev 21:25 NRSV).

The primary use of shutting or closing is seen in God’s sovereign and ultimate authority to shut or close what he wishes. When God speaks to the church in Philadelphia, he describes himself as “the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens” (Rev 3:7 NRSV). Such ultimate authority is seen in several places throughout the Bible. God uses this power in giving power to rulers on the earth, as when he declares that he will open doors for Cyrus’s conquest of the known world, so that “the gates shall not be closed” (Is 45:1 NRSV).

God’s sovereignty in closing and shutting also appears in his protection of his people. When creating the world, God “shut in the sea with doors” to keep them from overwhelming the earth (Job 38:8 NRSV). He delivered Daniel from being devoured in the lions’ den by sending his angel to “shut the lions’ mouths” (Dan 6:22 NRSV). In the OT, God is also viewed as protecting his people by preventing what was hurting them from closing in upon them. The psalmist begs God not to let “the Pit close its mouth over me” and to prevent his enemies from closing in on him (Ps 69:15 NRSV; 88:17). Here shutting is an image of protection or deliverance.

But the same imagery can imply judgment, as shutting becomes withholding. God is capable of preventing childbearing, as seen when he “closed fast all the wombs of the house of Abimelech” because the already-married Sarah was living in Abimelech’s house as his wife (Gen 20:18 NRSV). Similarly, God closed Hannah’s womb until she was able to bear Samuel (1 Sam 1:5). He also “shut up the heavens” to prevent rain when his people had disobeyed. He promised to do this in Deuteronomy 11:17, and he actually did so many times throughout the OT in response to Israel’s unfaithfulness.

Finally, God ultimately is able to shut people in as a means of punishment for their deeds. When Korah, Dathan and Abiram rebelled against Moses and Aaron, God caused the earth to close over their families and bring them directly to Sheol (Num 16:33). When Job was suffering and felt that God was against him, he moaned, “God has put me in the wrong, and closed his net around me” (Job 19:6 NRSV). Isaiah prophesies that in the end times God will shut up all the kings of the earth for punishment (Is 24:22). Finally, Jesus warned people to repent before God closes the doors of heaven and it is too late for them to be saved (Mt 25:10; Lk 13:25).

The imagery of shutting is also given a human application when people are pictured as closing themselves to God. On an external, literal level, Ahaz shut up the doors of the temple when instituting idol worship (2 Chron 28:24). Psalm 17:10 speaks of evil persons who “close their hearts to pity” (NRSV), and Proverbs warns that those who “close [their] ear to the cry of the poor” will receive no mercy themselves (Prov 21:13 NRSV). More important, God condemns his people, saying, “This people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes,” thus refusing to hear and see and “understand with their heart” that God could heal them of their sins (Mt 13:15 NRSV, quoting Is 6:10).

Yet even in human stubbornness God is sovereign. Not only does he know what these people have done in secret-what they have whispered behind closed doors-but he also takes part in closing their minds to understanding him (Job 17:4; Mt 6:6; Lk 13:25). He declares in Isaiah that because people have not heeded him, he will close their eyes that they may not understand him (Is 29:10; 44:18). His sovereignty can also work in the reverse direction. In Revelation, God declares to the church in Philadelphia that because they have remained faithful, he has “set before [them] an open door, which no one is able to shut” (Rev 3:8 NRSV). This open door is an invitation into heaven. Thus even though people have the free will to ignore God, God is ultimately sovereign even in their denial of him.

FACTS ABOUT PHILADELPHIA

- Philadelphia (modern day Alaşehir translates as "multicolored town,") was the youngest of all the seven cities located in Lydia about twenty-five miles southeast of Sardis.. It was founded by colonists from Pergamum under the reign of Eumenes II. Eumenes II named the city for the love of his brother, who would be his successor, Attalus II (159–138 BC), whose loyalty earned him the nickname, "Philadelphos", literally meaning "one who loves his brother".
- A small theatre, located at the northern edge of Toptepe Hill, is all that remains of Roman Philadelphia.
- The city was located on an important trade route situated where the borders of Mysia, Lydia and Phrygia met. But it was not as a garrison town that Philadelphia was founded, for there was little danger there. It was founded with the deliberate intention that it might be a means of spreading Greek culture and language to Lydia and Phrygia and so well did it do its work that by AD 19 the Lydians had forgotten their own language and were all but Greeks
- The road ascending from the Hermus Valley, about 500 feet above sea level, to the main plateau about 1,500 feet higher also served as the imperial postal road during the first century A.D. Communications from Rome moved to Troas, whence they continued overland to Pergamum, Sardis, and then to Philadelphia and on to the east. Philadelphia was thus a stage on the main line of Imperial communication.
- The city was not without its pagan religions, its major deity being Dionysus (Bachus), the god of wine, in honor of the prolific vineyards which grew on the rich volcanic soil.
- Archaeology has yielded no evidence of a Jewish synagogue in the city, but the message itself indicates there must have been one (cf. Rev. 3:9)
- Philadelphia was situated in a strategic place on the main route of the Imperial Post from Rome to the East, and thus was called "**the Gateway to the East**." It was also called "little Athens" because of the many temples in the city. The church was certainly located in a place of tremendous opportunity. (Wiersbe) Philadelphia commanded one of the greatest highways in the world, the highway which led from Europe to the East (merging trade routes leading to Mysia, Lydia, and Phrygia). **Philadelphia was the gateway from one continent to another**. (Barclay)
- Philadelphia was originally founded as a **missionary outpost** for Hellenism, the culture of ancient Greece."The original purpose behind this key city was to make it a center for spreading Greek language, culture and manners throughout the Asian provinces." (Hocking) Ramsay adds, "The intention of its founder was to make it a centre of the Graeco-Asiatic civilization and a means of spreading the Greek language and manners in the eastern parts of Lydia and in Phrygia. It was a missionary city from the beginning, founded to promote a certain unity of spirit, customs, and loyalty within the realm, the apostle of Hellenism in an Oriental land. It was a successful teacher. Before AD 19 the Lydian tongue had ceased to be spoken in Lydia, and Greek was the only language of the country" (Ramsay, The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia).
- "Philadelphia had been built with the deliberate intention that it might become a **missionary city.** Beyond Philadelphia lay the wilds of Phrygia and the barbarous tribes; and it was intended that the function of Philadelphia should be to spread the Greek language, the Greek way of life, the Greek civilization, throughout the regions beyond." (Barclay)
- The primary purpose for the city's establishment was consolidating, regulating, and educating the central regions that were subject to the Pergamenian kings. These rulers wanted Philadelphia to be a hub of Graeco-Asiatic civilization so as to spread the Greek language and manners in the eastern parts of Lydia and in Phrygia. It thus had a missionary function from the outset as an apostle of Hellenism in an Oriental land.
- Like Sardis, Philadelphia was destroyed by the great earthquake of A.D. 17 (see AD 17 Lydia earthquake), and even though it was rebuilt with generous aid from Tiberius people often lived outside the city in the open for protection. In Philadelphia, the tremors went on for years; Strabo describes it as a 'city full of earthquakes'.
- For centuries, it was a free Greek Christian city amid people from a very different culture. It was the last bastion of Asian Christianity. It was not until midway through the fourteenth century that it fell; and to this day there is a Christian bishop and 1,000 Christians in it. With the exception of Smyrna, the other churches are in ruins; but Christian testimony continues in the city in this present century.
- Through the centuries, a nominal Christian testimony continued in this city of Philadelphia and prospered even under Turkish rule. But all nominal Christians left the city for Greece after World War I. (Walvoord)
- Sources: William Barclay, Wikipedia, R L Thomas, William Ramsay, et al

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QUESTION - What was Jesus' message to the church in Philadelphia in Revelation?

ANSWER - Revelation 3:7-13 records Christ's message to the sixth of the seven churches addressed in Revelation 2–3. The Philadelphian church is the recipient of this letter. Philadelphia was a city in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) on the Imperial Post

Road, an important trade route.

The message is from the Lord Jesus Christ through an angel or "messenger" (likely a reference to the pastor): "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write . . ." (Revelation 3:7). This was not John's personal message to these believers; it was a message from the Lord, who identifies Himself as "him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open." This description of Jesus emphasizes His holiness, His sovereignty, and His authority. The reference to the key of David is an allusion to the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 22:22. Jesus is the one who opens and shuts, and no one can say Him nay.

Jesus affirms the church's positive actions: "I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name" (Revelation 3:8). The church of Philadelphia was weak in some respects, yet they had remained faithful in the face of trial. Because of this, the Lord promises them an "open door" of blessing.

Jesus' letter then condemns the enemies of the Philadelphian believers: "I will make those who are of thesynagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you" (Revelation 3:9). Those who persecuted the believers (the persecutors were religious hypocrites in this case) would one day realize Christ loves His children. The church of Philadelphia would be victorious over its enemies.

Jesus encourages the Philadelphian believers regarding His future coming: "Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown" (Revelation 3:10-11). The church's faithful endurance would serve as a blessing. Jesus would take them to be with Him before the coming tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). He also exhorts them to remain faithful, because this would lead to rewards in the afterlife. Based on this and other passages, many Bible interpreters conclude that the rapture is an event distinct from the second coming of Christ. The fact that the Philadelphians are promised to be preserved from the time of the tribulation corresponds with the pretribulational view of the rapture.

Jesus provides a final promise to the believers in Philadelphia and to all believers: "Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down from out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name" (Revelation 3:12).

Professor Thomas Constable notes, "God promised that He will not just honor overcomers by erecting a pillar in their name in heaven, as was the custom in Philadelphia. He will make them pillars in the spiritual temple of God, the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:22; cf. Gal. 2:9; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-10)." (Source: Thomas Constable, *Notes on Revelation* at http://soniclight.org/constable/notes/pdf/revelation.pdf.)

So, those who struggled with weakness Jesus makes everlasting pillars in the house of God. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). Jesus' words of comfort certainly would have been a blessing to the Philadelphians who had faithfully stood for Christ in their pagan culture. His words continue to serve as an encouragement to faithful believers today. GotQuestions.org

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He Holds The Keys

> He who has the key of David [is] He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.. —Revelation 3:7

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:7-13

For many people, the keys to a car signify independence and freedom. So to be told that they can't drive anymore would be humiliating. Imagine how hard it would be to surrender the cherished privilege of traveling when and where they like.

My friend Gary gave up his keys at the age of 26 after surgery for a brain tumor left him with epileptic seizures. During a period of 6 months, he went from flying supersonic Air Force jets to having his driver's license revoked because of the seizures. He mourned his loss of ability, but his faith enabled him to embrace these limitations as a means of knowing Christ more intimately. He came to understand that his relationship with Jesus was more important than any privilege or possession.

In the book of Revelation, the risen Christ identified Himself to the church in Philadelphia as "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens" (Revelation 3:7). The Lord Jesus holds the keys to salvation and blessing.

When the time-bound keys that we have to give up are compared to the eternal keys that Christ holds, we bow at His feet in worshipful acceptance of His dealings. Jesus alone unlocks the door to everything that really matters. David C. McCasland (Click to

go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets. Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Because Christ is the One who holds
The key to all our needs,
We can release what we hold dear
To follow where He leads.
—Sper

To accept God's will is to experience God's peace.

Revelation 3:8 'I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

BGT Revelation 3:8 ο δ σου τ ργα, δο δ δωκα ν πι ν σου θ ραν νε γμ νην, ν ο δε ς δ ναται κλε σαι α τ ν, τι μικρ ν χεις δ ναμιν κα τ ρησ ς μου τ ν λ γον κα ο κ ρν σω τ νομ μου.

KJV Revelation 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

NET Revelation 3:8 'I know your deeds. (Look! I have put in front of you an open door that no one can shut.) I know that you have little strength, but you have obeyed my word and have not denied my name.

CSB Revelation 3:8 I know your works. Because you have limited strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name, look, I have placed before you an open door that no one is able to close.

ESV Revelation 3:8 "'I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

NIV Revelation 3:8 I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

NLT Revelation 3:8 "I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me.

NRS Revelation 3:8 "I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

NJB Revelation 3:8 I know about your activities. Look, I have opened in front of you a door that no one will be able to close -- and I know that though you are not very strong, you have kept my commandments and not disowned my name.

NAB Revelation 3:8 " '"I know your works (behold, I have left an open door before you, which no one can close). You have limited strength, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

YLT Revelation 3:8 I have known thy works; lo, I have set before thee a door -- opened, and no one is able to shut it, because thou hast a little power, and didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name;

GWN Revelation 3:8 I know what you have done. See, I have opened a door in front of you that no one can shut. You only have a little strength, but you have paid attention to my word and have not denied my name.

BBE Revelation 3:8 I have knowledge of your works (see, I have put before you an open door which may be shut by no one), and that you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have been true to my name.

RSV Revelation 3:8 "`I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut; I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

NKJ Revelation 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.

ASV Revelation 3:8 I know thy works (behold, I have set before thee a door opened, which none can shut), that thou hast a little power, and didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name.

MIT Revelation 3:8 I know your activities. Observe the scene: I have put before you an open door, so that no one can impose a lockout of you. Because you have a little power, you have kept my word and did not deny

my name—

- **I know your deeds**: Rev 3:1,15 2:2
- **Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut**: Rev 3:7 1Co 16:9 2Co 2:12 Col 4:3
- **because you have a little power,**: Da 11:34 2Co 12:8-10 Php 4:13
- **have kept My word**: Rev 3:10 22:7 Joh 14:21-24 15:20 17:6 2Ti 4:7
- **have not denied My name**: Rev 2:13 Pr 30:9 Mt 26:70-72 Lu 12:9 Ac 3:13,14 1Ti 5:8 1Jn 2:22,23 Jude 1:4
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Revelation 4:1+ After these things I looked, and behold, **a door standing open in heaven**, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

2 Corinthians 12:8-10+ (PAUL'S EXAMPLE 0F "LITTLE POWER") Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for **power is perfected in weakness**." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for **when I am weak, then I am strong**.

Philippians 4:13+ (CONTEXT - Php 4:11-12) I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Revelation 1:3+ (HAVE KEPT [tereo] MY WORD) Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and **heed** (KEEP/OBEY - tereo) the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Revelation 22:7+ (HAVE KEPT [tereo] MY WORD) "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who **heeds** (KEPT - tereo) the words of the prophecy of this book."

PHILADELPHIA PARADOX:
WEAK BUT POWERFUL

I know your deeds - Jesus had just made the same statement about **deeds** to the church at Sardis, but added "**you are dead**" and "**your deeds** (are not) **completed**" (Rev 3:1-2). Jesus makes no such "disclaimers" regarding this church's **deeds**, so we can assume that their **deeds** were "**Good Deeds**," **deeds** that had been prepared before the foundation of the world for them to walk in (Eph 2:10+), **deeds** energized by the Holy Spirit (Jn 6:63+), **deeds** wrought by their abiding in the Vine (Jn 15:5) and **deeds** that brought glory to their Father in Heaven (Mt 5:16+).

THOUGHT - How would the Lord Jesus, Who knows all and sees all, describe *your* **deeds** -- like those of Sardis or like those of Philadelphia? Will *your* **deeds** stand the test of the Refiner's fire or will you be left standing with a smell of smoke? (see 1Cor 3:11-14,15+). (cf 2Co 5:10+, borrow Joe Wall's book "Going for the Gold")

Behold (idou) (Look! See!) - Note that this attention getting command is rendered "**see**" or "**look**" in some translations. Jesus is calling for this church to see what He had placed before them, works for them to walk in (Eph 2:10+).

THOUGHT- Have you seen the doors of opportunity that Jesus has placed right in front of you? Or perhaps you could not even see the opportunity because you were in unconfessed sin. I often wonder about the phrase in the Revelation 21:4+ "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Could this in some way be related to opportunities missed during our short time on earth? Just wondering! Redeem the short time we each have been given. Let me encourage you that they next time Jesus places an open door before you, don't hesitate to walk through and boldly share the Gospel.

I have put before (enopion - in sight of or front of) **you an open** (anoigo) **door** (thura) **which no one can shut** - **Put** (didomi) is literally given or granted by Jesus (passive voice = divine passive). **Put** and **open** (anoigo) are both in the perfect tense signifying that the **door** (thura) was given as an opened door by Jesus at some time in the past and it remains given and **open**. A **door** (thura) is something to walk thru to get into a room. The saints at Philadelphia could walk through this door of opportunity. Frankly, unless Jesus opens the door, it is futile to attempt to walk through, as Paul discovered in Acts 16:7+!

Hampton Keathley - They were using the opportunities (the open doors) the Lord had given them as the door opener. This is implied in verse 8a. Christ knew their deeds, and so He put before them an open door of ministry. We should note that "**put**" of the NASB, or "**set**" of the KJV, or "**placed**" of the NIV is the perfect tense of Greek didōmi which literally means, "I give." It is used

according to context in the sense of "bestow, grant, supply, deliver, commit, and entrust." While the idea here is clearly that of placing before the Philadelphian believers **open** doors of ministry, **it should be noted that this word is used of entrusting something to someone for some type of stewardship**: money for investment purposes (Mt 25:14–15), the keys of the kingdom (Mt 16:19), and someone's care (Jn 6:37, 39; 17:6, 9, 12, 24; Heb. 2:13). See also Luke 19:23 where didōmi is used of putting money in the bank to gain interest. There are two points to ponder here. **First, open doors of opportunity—no matter how hard we think we have worked to open the doors—are gifts from the Savior because without Him, they would not open**. **Second, open doors are trusts given to us for faithful stewardship just as with our spiritual gifts or our finances.** If we will be faithful to live in the fullness of His life, He will bring opportunities of service and ministry. (The Message to Philadelphia)

As **Lenski** says "We cannot take the gospel where we please but only where the Lord opens the door. He has the key."

Wiersbe - In a very real sense, the church today is like the Philadelphian church, for God has set before us many open doors of opportunity. If He opens the doors, we must work; if He shuts the doors, we must wait. Above all, we must be faithful to Him and see the opportunities, not the obstacles. If we miss our opportunities, we lose our rewards (crowns), and this means being ashamed before Him when He comes (1 John 2:28). (BORROW Be Victorious)

Use of **door** here in context of **key of David** also suggests Jesus is saying He has granted them admission into the future Davidic Kingdom (Messianic Kingdom - Millennial kingdom.)

While a few commentators take the "door" as Jesus referring to Himself as in Jn 10:9, that is not the best interpretation. **Dr R L Thomas** in his excellent commentary feels this opened **door** represents entrance into the Messianic Kingdom (as noted above) and he goes on to strongly refute the possibility that this open **door** is a **door** of service and evangelism. In so doing, he discounts the important principle that the **best commentary on Scripture is Scripture**! As listed below, there are 4 Scriptures which use not one but both words, "**open**" and "**door**", and all four passages refer in some way to the same subject, service and evangelism. Dr Thomas gives 3 reasons he feels such an interpretation "**faces serious objections**." (see here) However, by far the majority of expositors do not agree with Dr Thomas, including Dr John MacArthur, who is closely associated with him at Master's Seminary! I make this point simply to encourage you to remember that as good inductive students taught by the Holy Spirit, you need to stick with your observations which will guide you to the most accurate interpretation and which will also give you confidence to comment on accuracy or inaccuracy of erudite, credentialed commentators, which as in this case are not always accurate!

Danny Akin (president of Southeastern Seminary) disagrees with Thomas writing "What is the open door: 1) the open door into the eternal kingdom; 4 2) Christ; 3) prayer; 4) immediate access to God by martyrdom; or 5) a great opportunity for evangelism and missionary activity (cf. 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3). #5 is the best view. This church had little strength (dunamin) but great potential. She had constant trials but kept Christ's Word. They faced consistent opposition but did not deny Jesus' name. Though they could not open the door to evangelism and missions, they knew the one who could and He had. A church like Philadelphia could be trusted to walk through the door Christ opened. They would not delay or debate, but with determined dedication they would follow the Lord's leading. As evangelists of the Greek culture, the city of Philadelphia had only partially succeeded. As evangelists of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the church at Philadelphia would not stop until their assignment was completed. "**We'll work 'til Jesus comes** (Play song and get ready to tap your feet!)" was the song that undergirded their service. They were busy in only a few things. They were busy in the right things.

J Vernon McGee on Rev 3:8 - This is the verse that we have taken as the maxim for our "Thru the Bible" radio program. We began with it at the first, and it means a great deal to us. The church at Philadelphia was the one which was true to the Word of God.

Notice Jesus has just commented on their **deeds** with no negative implication, suggesting they have been faithfully working for their Lord. Then He tells them **behold**, listen up, pay attention, that He had placed an **open door** before them. So the question is what does this **open door** represent in the immediate context? Comparing Scripture with Scripture (see 4 passages below) an **"open door"** would clearly speak of opportunity for ministry and evangelism. As described above (see note), Philadelphia was geographically strategically located ("gateway to the east") which would have provided an excellent opportunity for this church to spread the Gospel, even as the secular city had effectively spread the Greek culture.

1. Acts 14:27+ When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how **He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.**
2. 1Cor. 16:8-9+ But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; 9 for **a wide door for effective service has opened to me**, and there are many adversaries.
3. 2Cor. 2:12+ Now when **I came to Troas for the Gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord,**
4. Colossians 4:3+ praying at the same time for us as well, that **God will open up to us a door for the word (GOSPEL)** so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned

As **John MacArthur** says "Their salvation was secure; their entrance both into the blessings of salvation by grace and into Christ's future messianic kingdom was guaranteed. **The picture of Christ's opening the door also symbolizes His giving the faithful Philadelphia church opportunities for service**. Elsewhere in Scripture an **open door** depicts freedom to proclaim the gospel....**Their city's strategic location provided the Christians at Philadelphia with an excellent opportunity to spread the gospel**. (See Revelation Commentary) (Bolding added)

Wiersbe - Around the world, doors are always opening or closing, so it is important that the church be alert and ready to take advantage of the opportunities God presents. When Christ opens or shuts a door, nobody can interfere. (Example - In 1990 with the fall of the Iron Curtain, Jesus opened a door to bring His saving gospel to millions of people who had long been held in spiritual darkness under the sway of atheistic governments.) (BORROW Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament)

Brian Bell - When God opens a door to you, Nobody can shut it...but you can Ignore it. Or, Neglect it. [examples in Scripture? Moses/speak, Jonah/to evangelize his enemies] 3. *Having the faith to walk through those open doors & keep walking is not about plans, charts, graphs, marketing, or self-confidence. It's about faith in Him. It's about keeping His Word. It's about a little power. The power to take one small step at a time, with our eyes fully focused on Him. (Swindoll) With Doors timing is important. Ever try to walk through a door before it was fully open? With Doors opening is important.Ever see what happens to a dog when the doggy door isn't open (sliding board). After a couple hurt noses, they learn to nudge 1st & not just plow through it. The one thing to remember about Open Doors is to…WALK THROUGH THEM! Ok Jesus opens doors but whats on the other side of the Door? [expect obstacles] Sometimes we can see through doors (eg. our office doors have windows in them) we can see what's on the other side then we walk thru. But most times we can't see through them which involves risk. a) Sometimes there's even rude awakenings on the other side (

> **THOUGHT** - What doors have been open to you recently? Did you walk through them? What doors have you missed? Did someone else walk through them? Are you truly waiting on the Lord, or procrastinating? (Brian Bell) When God opens a door for you, nobody can shut it; but you can ignore or neglect it.

Vance Havner - God opens doors for ministry and ministers today. "I would like to bear witness that I have proved this Philadelphian promise of the open door through years of ministry and it has never failed. Promotion does not come from the south, east, or west, but from God; and if we commit our way unto Him and trust Him, He will bring it to pass . . . God's man is not dependent on religious talent scouts nor is his ministry in the hand of ecclesiastical officials. His headquarters is heaven and his itinerary is made up by the Lord of the Open Door."

Rod Mattoon - Christ has opened many doors of opportunities for service, but too many of us have been blinded by greed, selfishness, and lust for pleasure to the point that we fail to see the open doors. The doors in China, parts of Europe, and in Latin America are now shut or in the process of closing. Douglas MacArthur called for 5000 missionaries to evangelize a "ready" Japan. We fumbled the ball. In 1960, President Eisenhower was prevented from visiting Japan by several hundred thousand demonstrating communists. The tide had quickly changed in Japan in just fifteen years. If the Lord should call you to preach or to the mission field, would you go? If He called, would you hear Him? (**ILLUSTRATION**) A traveling collector stopped at a store of glass and chinaware. His hobby was to collect crystal that was pitched to the key of "A." The owner told him that they did not purchase their glass this way and would have no idea which glasses were pitched to the note of "A." The collector told him, "No problem!" He took out his tuning fork and struck it and all the glasses pitched to the key of "A" responded. God wants us to be like these glasses. He wants our hearts and lives to be so in tune with Him that we will respond when He calls for devoted service to Him. Are you in tune with the Lord? The Lord opens doors of opportunities for service, but those doors can close if we tarry or delay. (Treasures from Revelation)

David Guzik Jesus told them to see that they had this open door. Sometimes God sets an open door of evangelistic opportunity in front of us, but we don't **see** it. "A man once came to Spurgeon and asked how he could win others to Jesus. Spurgeon asked him, "What are you? What do you do?" The man said, "I'm an engine driver on a train." "Then," said Spurgeon, "Is the man who shovels coal on your train a Christian?" "I don't know," said the man. "Go back," said Spurgeon, "and find out and start on him.""

The next 3 commendations would also seem to relate to this**open door** - **little power, kept My faith, not denied My Name**. All three would be attributes that would lead to an effective ministry and spreading of the Gospel and if we accept the translation of "**because**" these would be 3 reasons Jesus has replaced an **open door** before this faithful church. The Gospel itself has supernatural power (Ro 1:16+), so they only need a **little power**, ultimately the power of the Spirit (cf Zech 4:6). The next two traits speak of their obedience and their courage in the face of opposition (the Gospel is always going to be opposed, but in this context the synagogue of Satan is clearly playing a significant role as an adversary).

Guzik The church in Philadelphia had an open door set before them. Often, an open door speaks of evangelistic opportunity (1 Corinthians 16:9, 2 Corinthians 2:12, and Colossians 4:3). Jesus told them He had opened the door of evangelistic opportunity, and they must go through that door in faith. In its history, Philadelphia had a great "evangelistic" calling. The city had the mission of spreading Greek culture and language through the whole region. Now Jesus opened the door for the Christians of Philadelphia to

spread the culture of His kingdom through the whole region.

Barclay writes "Three centuries before, Philadelphia had been given an **open door** (**ED**: IN THE SECULAR SENSE) to spread Greek ideas in the lands beyond (**ED**: "EVANGELIZE" WITH GREEK CULTURE); and now there has come to it another great missionary opportunity, to carry to those who had yet to hear it the message of the love of Jesus Christ (**ED**: THE GOSPEL)."

Guzik quotes Morris who adds that "Neither wealth or influence, neither promotional schemes nor the eloquence of its pulpit, nor the harmonies of its musicians can give it an effective ministry. The Lord alone has opened the door; the Lord alone 'giveth the increase.' "

Because - (hoti used as causal conjunction by NASB and YLT. The KJV, NKJV use "for") - If one takes this as a term of explanation it would be explaining (giving 3 reasons in the following section) why the **door** is **open**. (not that they earned or merited the open door, but that their small power, faithful adherence to His Word and confession of His Name allowed Jesus to bless them). However, there is another way to understand this clause as seen in several of the translations that omit the word "because." **NLT** = " You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me." (Rev 3:8NLT) Reading it this way would indicated because they have a little power, they obeyed and did not deny.

NET I know that you have little strength, but you have obeyed my word and have not denied my name.

ESV I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

NIV I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

NLT You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me.

NRS I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

NAB You have limited strength, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

GWN You only have a little strength, but you have paid attention to my word and have not denied my name.

RSV I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

MIT Because you have a little power, you have kept my word and did not deny my name

> **TECHNICAL NET NOTE** - This translation is based on connecting the ὅτι (hoti) clause with the οἶδα (oida) at the beginning of the verse, giving the content of what is known (see also Rev 3:1, 15 for parallels). Because of the intervening clause that is virtually parenthetical (see the note on the word "shut" earlier in this verse), the words "I know that" from the beginning of the verse had to be repeated to make this connection clear for the English reader. However, the ὅτι could be understood as introducing a causal subordinate clause instead and thus translated, "because you have."

You (present tense) **have a little** (mikros) **power** (dunamis) - **Little power** in the hands of an all powerful Jesus is all a faithful church needs to turn the world upside down! In other words we have another Christian paradox, that when we are weak, we are strong (2Co 12:10b+, cf Mt 17:20) (See Spiritual Paradox in the Christian Life). Our problem too often is we are "too strong" in own strength (too confident, "too big for our britches"), to even be in the humble position to receive His strength! Some feel that **Little** could refer to small size of the church body, but what is that to Jesus, Who rocked the world with a small band of nobodies!

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing.
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.

Vance Havner said "It is not a matter of great strength, not great ability but **great dependability**. Samson had great ability but poor dependability. A little strength faithfully used means more than much strength flashily and fitfully used." (BORROW Repent or Else, page 72)

Brian Bell on **little power** - Lack of Strength - apparently 1st church of Philadelphia wasn't a large church, but it was faithful one. Small but mighty. Small & maybe of little importance. They were true to His word & unafraid to bear His name. It isn't the size or the strength of the church that determines its ministry, but faith in the call & command of the Lord. His Commands are His Enablements (Warren Wiersbe). My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. (2Cor.12:9)

This description of their possessing **little power** reminds me of Paul's words in 2Cor 3:5-6+ "Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, Who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (**ED**: AND POWER - see Acts 1:8+)."

Henry Morris adds that "The Lord's promise of a continuing **open door,** therefore, is conditioned on the premise that the church (or any Christian ministry, for that matter) have **little** strength of its own, and thus relies wholly on the strength of the Lord. Worldly marketing methods may seem to yield large numerical results for a time but will also produce gradual spiritual compromise and eventual disintegration. In addition to the "little strength" criterion, the church or other ministry must keep ("guard") the absolute integrity of God's Word and uphold the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A T Robertson suggests **little power** could mean "little influence or weight in Philadelphia, the members probably from the lower classes (1 Cor. 1:26-28)."

Rod Mattoon on **little** - This church was apparently few in number. They had little numerical strength, but were very faithful. Those who follow the Lord usually are never in the numerical majority. Abraham—318 defeated four kings. Gideon—300 defeated thousands of Midianites. Elijah—was against 450 prophets of Baal.

FAITHFUL TO JESUS & HIS WORD

And have kept (tereo) **My word** (logos) (NET = "you have obeyed My word") - They guarded and heeded His **word**, "none of the members losing it by carelessness, deadness, heresy, and lax living." (Lenski) In Rev 1:3 we noted a similar meaning for tereo - "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and **heed** (tereo) the things which are written in it; for the time is near." Undoubtedly the church at Philadelphia faithfully preached (cf 2Ti 4:2+) and taught His Word as well as faithfully obeyed it. Jesus refers to those who are His in Jn 17:6 as "they **have kept** (tereo) My word." In contrast with Sardis who was commanded to keep (tereo) what they had received and heard (Rev 3:3), this church was faithful and **kept** Jesus' **word**, which is most likely the Gospel.

In John 14:23-24 "Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will **keep** (tereo) My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. “He who does not love Me does not **keep** (tereo) My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me." (cf Jn 14:15, Jn 15:10)

> **ILLUSTRATION OF NOT KEEPING HIS WORD** - Recently (February 13, **1961**) a leader in the Episcopal Church spoke of “the myth of the Garden of Eden.” He said, “I do not know a single member of the Anglican Communion—bishop, presbyter, deacon, or layman—who believes this story literally.” The newspaper reported that, “He [speaking of the bishop] described the virgin birth as a myth which churchmen should be free to accept or reject.” Then the bishop concluded his tirade by saying, “Our church has long left room for differing degrees of acceptance as to the details of the narrative late inserted by humans into the gospel accounts.” (Lehman Strauss - The Book of the Revelation: Outlined Studies - BORROW)

Henry Morris - The pressures to repudiate His Word, to distort the Word, to dilute the Word, to allegorize the Word, or just to ignore God’s Word, have always been great, and multitudes of believers have compromised their witness throughout the centuries by yielding to these pressures. The modern scene is saturated with innumerable compromise-generating pressures, and most churches today have yielded in one way or another. The Scriptures are filled with warnings: “Keep that which is committed to thy trust” (1 Timothy 6:20); “Hold fast the form of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13); “Earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3). “Continue in the faith grounded and settled” (Colossians 1:23). When a church begins to deal loosely with the word of Christ, it will sooner or later deny the **name** of Christ. (The Revelation Record - BORROW)

And have not denied (arneomai) **My Name** (onoma) - (cf Pergamum in Rev 2:13 "you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith") This speaks of spiritual fidelity (faithfulness). Jesus' **Name** in Scripture stands for all that He is. **Denied** is in the aorist tense (past completed action) which could refer to some specific occasions in the past when, being put to the test, they had proved themselves faithful to their Lord Jesus by refusing to deny His **Name**. The Emperor Cult demanded loyalty to Caesar and his name ("Caesar is lord"), but these Christians would not deny Jesus' Name. The Jews from the synagogue of Satan likely also pressured the saints at Philadelphia, for these Jews were liars who did not believe Jesus was their Messiah and did not think belief in Him was the way one attained to the Kingdom of God.

> **THOUGHT** - Dear reader, do not be deceived! You may **confess** Jesus with your lips, but you in effect **deny** Him with your life. This deceptive mode of thinking will take you straight to theplace of eternal punishment! Paul echoes this sobering truth "They (present tense - continually) profess (claim) to know God (**ED**: AND JESUS! E.G., "*I ASKED HIM INTO MY HEART WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER*"), but by their deeds they (present tense - continually) **deny** Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed." (Titus 1:16+, see Mt 10:33+, Lk 9:26+, Lk 12:9+, 2Ti 2:12+).

Henry Morris - The name of a person stands for his character, his position, his work—all that he is and does. The concept of the

name of Christ is, therefore, vital. There are at least 125 references to His name, as such, in the New Testament alone. (The Revelation Record - BORROW)

Lenski says **have not denied** "This is a litotes for, “didst confess my name.” To keep inwardly and to confess outwardly makes us faithful; see Rom. 10:9, 10. (BORROW The Interpretation of St. John`s Revelation)

Donald Barnhouse - The church of Philadelphia is commended for keeping the Word of the Lord and not denying His Name. **Success in Christian work is not to be measured by any other standard of achievement** It is not rise in ecclesiastical position. It is not the number of new buildings which have been built through a man’s ministry. It is not the crowds that flock to listen to any human voice. All of these things are frequently used as yardsticks of success, but they are earthly and not heavenly measures.”

In his first letter John writes "Who is the **liar** but the one who (present tense - continually) **denies** that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever (present tense - continually) **denies** the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also." (1Jn 2:22-23+) Paul adds "If we endure (hupomeno), we will also reign with Him; If we **deny** Him, He also will **deny** us." (2Ti 2:12+)

Revelation 14:12+ describes those who have **not denied** Christ's **Name** - "Here is the perseverance of the saints who **keep** (tereo) the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus."

Related Resource:

- Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower:

Behold (2400) idou is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. **Idou** in the **middle voice** means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The **aorist imperative** is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" **Idou** is used by the Biblical writers to (1) prompt or arouse the reader's attention (introducing something new or unusual), (2) to mark a strong emphasis ("Indeed!" Lk 13:16) and (3) to call the reader to pay close attention (very similar to #1) so that one will listen, remember or consider **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

> **Idou (behold) in the Revelation** - Rev. 1:7; Rev. 1:18; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 2:22; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:9; Rev. 3:20; Rev. 4:1; Rev. 4:2; Rev. 5:5; Rev. 6:2; Rev. 6:5; Rev. 6:8; Rev. 7:9; Rev. 9:12; Rev. 11:14; Rev. 12:3; Rev. 14:1; Rev. 14:14; Rev. 16:15; Rev. 19:11; Rev. 21:3; Rev. 21:5; Rev. 22:7; Rev. 22:12 “**Behold**, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

Open (455) anoigo from **ana** = again + **oigo** = to open) means to open, to open up, to open again, to give access to. To open one's eyes causing them to see (Acts 26:18). To open one's mouth that they might begin to speak (Mt 5:2). Figuratively, to open a "door" meaning to make possible (Col 4:3). Luke records the parallel passages (Lk 11:9, 10). Of heavens open = have the heavens opened or divided so that celestial things become manifest - Mt 3:16; Lu 3:21; Jn 1:51; Acts 7:56; 10:11; Rev 19:11; (Lxx of the following passages) Isa 64:1; Ezek 1:1; Ps 78:23. In 2 Cor 6:11 the idea is to pour out one’s mind, open one’s heart, to speak fully and frankly. Anoigo is used in NT and Lxx of Jesus not opening His mouth - Not to open one’s mouth = not to utter complaints (Acts 8:32; Isa 53:7 cp Ps 38:14; 39:9)

> Matt. 2:11; Matt. 3:16; Matt. 5:2; Matt. 7:7; Matt. 7:8; Matt. 9:30; Matt. 13:35; Matt. 17:27; Matt. 20:33; Matt. 25:11; Matt. 27:52; Mk. 7:35; Lk. 1:64; Lk. 3:21; Lk. 4:17; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 12:36; Lk. 13:25; Jn. 1:51; Jn. 9:10; Jn. 9:14; Jn. 9:17; Jn. 9:21; Jn. 9:26; Jn. 9:30; Jn. 9:32; Jn. 10:3; Jn. 10:21; Jn. 11:37; Acts 5:19; Acts 5:23; Acts 8:32; Acts 8:35; Acts 9:8; Acts 9:40; Acts 10:11; Acts 10:34; Acts 12:10; Acts 12:14; Acts 12:16; **Acts 14:27**; Acts 16:26; Acts 16:27; Acts 18:14; Acts 26:18; Rom. 3:13; **1 Co. 16:9; 2 Co. 2:12;** 2 Co. 6:11; **Col. 4:3**
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> **Anoigo in the Revelation** - Rev. 3:7; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:20; Rev. 4:1; Rev. 5:2; Rev. 5:3; Rev. 5:4; Rev. 5:5; Rev. 5:9; Rev. 6:1; Rev. 6:3; Rev. 6:5; Rev. 6:7; Rev. 6:9; Rev. 6:12; Rev. 8:1; Rev. 9:2; Rev. 10:2; Rev. 10:8; Rev. 11:19; Rev. 12:16; Rev. 13:6; Rev. 15:5; Rev. 19:11 = "And I saw heaven opened,"; Rev. 20:12 = "books were opened; and another book was opened"

Door (2374) **thura** referred to a literal door as allowing one to enter and exit some place (Mk 1:33), a courtyard or outer door (Acts 12:13), a reference to the Temple gate (Acts 3:2), the door of a tomb (Mk 15:46), or the door of heaven (Rev 4:1 - this last use being

in a sense metaphorical). Figuratively thura referred to Jesus Himself as the metaphorical door through which one could enter into salvation (John 10:7, 9). And so in John we read that **Jesus** taught "I am **the door** (NOTE CAREFULLY - NOT "a door" BUT "THE door!" = the unique, only "DOOR!"); if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (John 10:9) and added "I am **THE** (specific, exclusive) way, and **THE** (specific, exclusive) truth, and **THE** (specific, exclusive) life; (absolutely) no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6) In Greek the definite article "**THE**" is important as it speaks of specificity...in other words, had Jesus been one of many ways, He would not have used the definite article "**THE**" but would have identified Himself as "**a**" way, "**a**" truth, "**a**" life, one of many gates/ways. Jesus did not teach that there are many roads that lead to the Kingdom of Heaven but clearly taught "I am the only **Way**.

> Thura in the Revelation - Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:20; Rev. 4:1
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> Matt. 6:6; Matt. 24:33; Matt. 25:10; Matt. 27:60; Mk. 1:33; Mk. 2:2; Mk. 11:4; Mk. 13:29; Mk. 15:46; Mk. 16:3; Lk. 11:7; Lk. 13:24; Lk. 13:25; Jn. 10:1; Jn. 10:2; Jn. 10:7; Jn. 10:9; Jn. 18:16; Jn. 20:19; Jn. 20:26; Acts 3:2; Acts 5:9; Acts 5:19; Acts 5:23; Acts 12:6; Acts 12:13; **Acts 14:27;** Acts 16:26; Acts 16:27; Acts 21:30; **1 Co. 16:9; 2 Co. 2:12**; **Col. 4:3;** Jas. 5:9; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:20; Rev. 4:1

Power (1411) **dunamis** from **dunamai** = to be able, to have power) power especially achieving power. It refers to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function, the potential for functioning in some way (power, might, strength, ability, capability), the power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature. Inherent power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature. **Vine** - (In 2Ti 1:7 dunamis) denotes the ability requisite for meeting difficulties and for the fulfillment of the service committed to us. **Dunamis** (**Click here for all the NT verses that use dunamis**) is a key word in the NT being found in 115 verses in the NAS most often in the **Gospels** and especially by Dr. Luke and in the **Revelation** translated variously as: **ability**, 4; meaning, 1; mightily, 1; mighty, 1; miracle, 2; **miracles**, 17; miraculous powers, 3; **power**, 83; powers, 6; strength, 2; wealth, 1.

> **Dunamis in the Revelation** - Rev. 1:16; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 4:11; Rev. 5:12; Rev. 7:12; Rev. 11:17; Rev. 12:10; Rev. 13:2; Rev. 15:8; Rev. 17:13; Rev. 18:3; Rev. 19:1

Denied (720) **arneomai** from "**a**" = negation + **rheo** = say) literally means "to say no", to **say** one does **not** know about or is in any way related to some person or some thing. Webster says that to **deny** implies a firm refusal to accept as true, to grant or concede or to acknowledge the existence or claims of. The only other use of **arneomai** in the Revelation is Rev 2:13.

Because (3754)(hoti) Conjunction that is primarily translated "that" (demonstrative) or "because" (causal). (1) marker of narrative or discourse content, direct or indirect (2) marker of explanatory clauses (3). marker introducing direct discourse. (4) marker of causality = because, since, for. See Zodhiates lengthy discussion.

> **Gingrich on hoti** - conjunction—**1. that, introducing an indirect statement,** etc. Mt 26:54; 28:7; Mk 11:32; Ac 20:26; 27:10; 1 Cor 1:15; 16:15; 2 Cor 1:23; 1 Jn 4:9, 10, 13. **So that** expressing result Jn 7:35; 14:22; 1 Ti 6:7; Heb 2:6. **what** (is it) that, why? Lk 2:49; Ac 5:4, 9; Mk 2:16 not that, not as if Jn 6:46 ; 7:22; 2 Cor 1:24; Phil 3:12; 2 Th 3:9.—**2. introducing direct discourse.** In this case it is not to be translated into English, but to be represented by quotation marks: I will declare to them, 'I never knew you' Mt 7:23. Cf. Mt 26:72, 74f; Mk 1:37; 2:16; Lk 1:25, 61; Jn 1:20, 32; Ac 15:1; Ro 3:8; 1 Jn 4:20.—**3. as a causal conjunction - because, since** Mt 5:3ff; Mk 5:9; Lk 10:13; Jn 1:30, 50a; 20:29; Ro 6:15; 9:32; 1 Cor 12:15f. For Mt 7:13; Lk 9:12; J n1:16f; 1 Cor 1:25; 4:9; 2 Cor 4:6; 7:8, 14. (BORROW Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)
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> **Friberg on hoti** - conjunction; (1) that; (a) used declaratively after speech verbs to turn a direct assertion into an indirect assertion (Acts 20.26); (b) used after verbs of perception to introduce what is perceived (Jn 4.19); (c) used after verbs of thinking, judging, believing to introduce the content of the thought processes (Jn 11.13); (d) used after verbs denoting emotion such as fear, joy, amazement to introduce the cause of the emotion (Lk 11.38); (2) (that); to introduce direct discourse, untranslated but represented in written English conversation by quotation marks (Mt 9.18); (3) because, since, for (this reason), used to introduce a cause or reason based on an evident fact (Jn 20.29) (BORROW Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)
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> **Gilbrant** - **(1) Hoti frequently introduces an objective or noun clause**, calling specific attention to the fact or concept under consideration. This is clear in indirect discourse. Hoti also designates what is being quoted or said (Mark 3:28,29). Lexicons list a number of variants. Hoti can also introduce what is only perceived, thought, felt, hoped, implied, summarized, or interpreted—whether orally communicated or not. The conjunction calls specific attention to the concept being discussed. **(2) Hoti can introduce direct discourse.** English would use quotation marks instead of translating the conjunction. But hoti still serves the purpose of calling specific attention to the content and form of the quotation as do quotation marks in English. **(3) In many New Testament contexts there is an evident causative force** that gives hoti the meaning "because, since, for," or even "when." Used in this way it indicates the nature and extent of the influence of the thing said in the

subordinate clause on the statement in the main clause. Note, for example, how each subordinate clause in the Beatitudes is introduced with “for” (Matthew 5:3-12), e.g., “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (verse 3). (Complete Biblical Library)

Revelation 3:9 'Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie--I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.

BGT Revelation 3:9 δο διδ κ τ ς συναγωγ ς το σαταν τ ν λεγ ντων αυτο ς ουδα ους ε ναι, κα ο κ ε σ ν λλ ψε δονται. δο ποι σω α το ς να ξουσιν κα προσκυν σουσιν ν πιον τ ν ποδ ν σου κα γν σιν τι γ γ πησ σε.

KJV Revelation 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

NET Revelation 3:9 Listen! I am going to make those people from the synagogue of Satan– who say they are Jews yet are not, but are lying– Look, I will make them come and bow down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.

CSB Revelation 3:9 Take note! I will make those from the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews and are not, but are lying-- note this-- I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and they will know that I have loved you.

ESV Revelation 3:9 Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie-- behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

NIV Revelation 3:9 I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars--I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.

NLT Revelation 3:9 Look, I will force those who belong to Satan's synagogue-- those liars who say they are Jews but are not-- to come and bow down at your feet. They will acknowledge that you are the ones I love.

NRS Revelation 3:9 I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying-- I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

NJB Revelation 3:9 Look, I am going to make the synagogue of Satan -- those who falsely claim to be Jews, but are liars, because they are no such thing -- I will make them come and fall at your feet and recognize that I have loved you.

NAB Revelation 3:9 Behold, I will make those of the assembly of Satan who claim to be Jews and are not, but are lying, behold I will make them come and fall prostrate at your feet, and they will realize that I love you.

YLT Revelation 3:9 lo, I make of the synagogue of the Adversary those saying themselves to be Jews, and are not, but do lie; lo, I will make them that they may come and bow before thy feet, and may know that I loved thee.

GWN Revelation 3:9 I will make those who are in Satan's synagogue come and bow at your feet and realize that I have loved you. They claim that they are Jewish, but they are lying.

BBE Revelation 3:9 See, I will make those of the Synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews, and are not, but say what is false; I will make them come and give worship before your feet, and see my love for you.

RSV Revelation 3:9 Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie -- behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and learn that I have loved you.

NKJ Revelation 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.

ASV Revelation 3:9 Behold, I give of the synagogue of Satan, of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

MIT Revelation 3:9 see this—I would put at your disposal those from the synagogue of Satan who call themselves Jews but are not; they are lying. See: I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and

they will know that I loved you

- **the synagogue of Satan**: Rev 2:9
- **I will make them come and bow down at your feet** Ex 11:8 Ex 12:30-32 1Sa 2:36 Es 8:17 Job 42:8-10 Isa 49:23 60:14 Zec 8:20-23 Ac 16:37-39
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Revelation 2:9+ (**CHURCH AT SMYRNA**) 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a **synagogue of Satan**.

Romans 2:28-29+ (**JEWS WHO ARE NOT JEWS**) For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Romans 2:17-27+ (**SAY THEY ARE JEWS BUT THEY LIE**) But if **you bear the name "Jew"** and rely upon the Law and boast in God, 18 and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, 21 you, therefore, who teach another, **do you not teach yourself**? You who preach that one shall not steal, **do you steal**? 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, **do you commit adultery**? You who abhor idols, **do you rob temples**? 23 You who boast in the Law, **through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God**? 24 For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written. 25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. 26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? 27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

Romans 9:6-8+ But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's (PHYSICAL) descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise (BY FAITH) are regarded as descendants.

SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN FILLED WITH LIARS PROFESSING TO BE JEWS

Behold (idou - NET = Listen! CSB = Take note. NLT = Look. NIV - omits this demonstrative particle!), **I will cause those of the synagogue** (sunagoge) **of Satan** (satanas) As an aside it is notable that **Satan** is most concentrated in the book of the Revelation in the letters to these 7 churches, four times in 2 chapters (Rev. 2:9; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 2:24; Rev. 3:9) with one designation of "devil" in Rev 2:10 for "good measure!" How would this be a **synagogue of Satan**? If none of members of the synagogue are born again, then their father is Satan (Jn 8:44) and they are all children of Satan (1Jn 3:8+). In effect then this was "Satan's synagogue" or assembly. Keep Paul's words in mind that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph 6:12+). Recall also Paul's words in 1Co 16:9+ "a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and **there are many adversaries** (antikeimai)" But Satan does use human beings and we know that the Jews opposed and persecuted, even unto death, those who accepted Christ as Messiah (cf Saul before his conversion - Acts 9:1-2+).

Hampton Keathley on **synagogue of Satan** - "**Of Satan**" is a genitive of possession, ***Satan's synagogue***, that which belongs to him. **Satan** was its head and the power behind the scenes. More crime, evil and persecution have been perpetrated in the name of religion and by the religious, self-righteous type than almost any other one source of evil. Religion is Satan's trump card, and one of his primary weapons that he uses to both deceive and hurt mankind. This is what we have here, religious persecution by religious Jews operating under Satan's control whether they realized it or not. The Lord's word to the religious leaders in John 8:41–47 is fitting here. (The Message to Philadelphia)

John MacArthur on **synagogue of Satan** - Christians in Philadelphia faced hostility from unbelieving Jews. Ignatius later debated some hostile Jews during his visit to Philadelphia. Because of their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, they were not a synagogue of God, but a synagogue of Satan. Though they claimed they were Jews, their claim was a lie. They were Jews physically, but not spiritually (Romans 2:28–29). (Because the Time is Near : John MacArthur explains the book of Revelation- BORROW)

John Walvoord quoting **Tait** - "The most inveterate enemy of the Church of Christ were the Jews. We read of them in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-11+), in Smyrna, and here in Philadelphia; and in every case most hostile and embittered against Christians. In Palestine, they were the sole persecutors of the Church; and, elsewhere, if they did not directly oppose the gospel, they instigated others to do so. In Smyrna, the same term, "Synagogue of Satan," is applied to them as here." Tait goes on to note, however, that their very opposition to Christ some-times led them to faith. We have seen in the history of the Church, many who were its greatest enemies—who were infuriated against it—led to the feet of Jesus. Nothing is too hard for the Lord."

David Guzik is may gives a disclaimer regarding the name **synagogue of Satan**, writing "In this, Jesus did not speak against all Jewish people. It would be entirely wrong to speak of the Jewish people as a whole as the **synagogue of Satan** or those who say they are Jews and are not. Jesus spoke of this specific group of Jewish people in Philadelphia who persecuted the Christians during that period."

Who say that they are Jews (loudaios) **and are not, but** (present tense - habitually) **lie** (pseudomai) -- **NJB** = "those who falsely claim to be Jews, but are liars." It is important to point out that Jesus (a Jew Himself) is not being "anti-semitic!" As liars these "Jews" would present a direct contrast with the Jewish Jesus Who was true (Rev 3:7)! What are two ways these Jews might falsely claim to be **Jews**? (1) They are actually Gentiles by race who are Jewish "wanna be's" but (2) **More likely** they were literal, physical Jews but not born again, spiritual Jews (Ro 2:28-29+). They were physical descendants of Abraham, but not spiritual descendants of Abraham (which occurs only by faith as in Ge 15:6+, see the Jews arguing with Jesus in John 8:37-44+).

Bruce Barton on the **Jews and are not, but lie** - These people, descended from Abraham and Jews by birth, vehemently opposed and persecuted the Christians for their belief that Jesus was the Messiah. Because of their opposition, Christ considered them as belonging to Satan. True Jews (God's people) have accepted Jesus as Messiah and Savior (see Romans 2:28–29; Galatians 3:29; Gal 6:16). (Borrow Life application New Testament commentary)

Hampton Keathley - They were not children of God regardless of their claims and religiosity. They had rejected God's Son and revelation of God, they were of their father the Devil, as Christ plainly told them. To be a true Jew in the biblical sense one had to have the hope and faith of Abraham. Abraham was the possessor of faith in the promises of God to him and faith in the coming Messiah.(The Message to Philadelphia)

Gotquestions - The **synagogue of Satan** say they are Jews (the people of God), and they persecute those who believe in Jesus the Messiah (the true people of God). In reality, by rejecting the Jewish Messiah (**ED**: CP JESUS OWN DESCRIPTION IN Rev 3:8 "HE...WHO IS TRUE."), they have renounced their status as "true" Jews, and that is why Jesus calls them "liars."....Internet searches of "**synagogue of Satan**" produce quite a few links to sites that claim the "**synagogue of Satan**" refers to the Jewish people today and that promote all kinds of conspiracy theories about how the Jews run the world. **Quite frankly, this is a misinterpretation and misapplication of the verses in Revelation**. (Bolding added)

ADVERSARIES HUMILIATED
SAINTS VINDICATED

(**Behold -** idou) **I will make them come and bow down** (proskuneo - "worship") **at your feet, and** *make them* **know** (ginosko - recognize, acknowledge) **that I have loved** (agapao - aorist = past completed action) **you** - Note for some unknown reason the **NAS** fails to translate the second **"behold"** which is in fact present in the Greek text. **ESV** = "**behold**, I will make them come and bow down before." This is a sad verse for Jesus, a Jew Himself, because He will be forced to force these non-believing Jews to **bow down** and **know** He had love for these saints at Philadelphia, saints these Jews had almost certainly persecuted and harassed regarding their belief in Yeshua. **Bow down** (proskuneo) can mean to worship, but would not have that sense here for Jesus would never have men worship men! To bow down at someone's feet depicts total submission. Thus this is more a picture of these Jews being forced to subjugate or humble themselves before the church at Philadelphia (contra Php 2:10-11+ when they will **bow down** and be forced to worship Jesus). In the future when the Jews see the redeemed saints of Philadelphia in the Kingdom, they will **know** that Jesus **loved** them. The tragedy is that He would have shown the same love to these Jews, had they bowed their knee to Him during their life. In sum, Jesus is saying to the saints at Philadelphia that they would one day be vindicated. The self-righteous Jewish persecutors would clearly see that Jesus' followers were correct in their belief.

Hampton Keathley - Since faithful believers will reign with Jesus Christ and share in His throne, these persecutors will in essence have to fall down at the believer's feet in "*operation footstool*" (Phil. 2:10–11, Heb. 2:13). (The Message to Philadelphia)

Note that some commentators interpret bow down as God giving the church Jewish converts from the synagogue of Satan.

Guzik quoting Mounce writes "God promised Israel that Gentiles would honor them and acknowledge their God (Isaiah 45:14). Now the tables were somewhat turned, and these Jewish people "will play the role of the heathen and acknowledge that the church is the

Israel of God." (Mounce) It should however be noted that the church at Philadelphia may have had a significant number of Jewish believers, which would have accentuated the persecution by the non-believing Jews.

Swindoll on the probable Jewish persecution - In fact, so strong was this Jewish influence that within a couple decades the church in Philadelphia would find itself battling a false teaching in which the Old Testament law was exalted above the New Testament gospel (**ED**: JUDIAZER). (The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians - see chapter 6)

Philadelphia had both **Opportunities** but also **Obstacles**.
Unbelief sees the **Obstacles**, Faith sees the **Opportunities**.
-- Brian Bell

Other ways the Jews could have been opposing the church at Philadelphia include excommunicating Jews from the synagogues who had believed in Jesus and by blaspheming or slandering the true believers.

This passage reminds me of Peter's exhortation '**Keep** your behavior excellent among the Gentiles (AND IN PHILADELPHIA'S CASE **AMONG THE JEWS**!), so that in the thing in which they slander (katalaleo) you as evildoers (cf "THE BLASPHEMY BY THOSE WHO SAY THEY ARE JEWS, AND ARE NOT, BUT ARE A SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN" Rev 2:9+), they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1Pe 2:12+) The Jews from the **synagogue of Satan** will one day see that the saints at Philadelphia were right in believing in Jesus as the Savior of the world but as the passage below notes, at that time it will be too late.

Jesus' description also reminds me of His words of warning and condemnation in Luke 13 to the Jews after He called for them to strive to enter through the narrow door...

> "**Strive** to enter through the narrow door; **for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able**. 25 "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' 26 "Then you will begin to say, 'We (JEWS) ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; 27 and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.'"In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth **when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God,** but yourselves (JEWS WHO WERE NOT JEWS) being thrown out. "And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. 30 "And **behold**, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last." (Lk 13:24-30+)

William Barclay quotes Tertullian "What sight shall wake my wonder, what my laughter, my joy and exultation? As I see all those kings, those great kings . . . groaning in the depths of darkness! And the magistrates who persecuted in the name of Jesus, liquefying in fiercer flames than they kindled in their rage against the Christians!"

Brian Bell He will avenge them (SAINTS AT PHILADELPHIA) of their enemies. One day the Jews in name only will have to eat humble pie and acknowledge the Christians were right. Bow down or worship is not in the strict sense but in the military sense. To bow or kneel in defeat.

If we take care of God's work, He will take care of our battles.
-- Charles Swindoll

Synagogue (4864) **sunagoge** from **sunago** = lead together, assemble or bring together) refers to a group of people "going with one another" (**sunago**) literally describes a bringing together or congregating in one place. Eventually, **sunagoge** came to mean the place where they congregated together. The word was used to designate the buildings other than the central Jewish temple where the Jews congregated for worship. Historically, the Synagogues originated in the Babylonian captivity after the 586 BC destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar and served as places of worship and instruction. **Sunagoge** was the name of a group "**Synagogue** of the Freedmen" (Acts 6:9) . **Synagogues** should have been (and frequently were) a place of teaching and proclamation of the Gospel (Mt 4:23, 9:35, 12:9, 13:54, Mk 6:2, Lk 4:15, 16, Lk 4:44, 6:6, 13:10, Jn 6:59, 18:20, Acts 9:20 = Paul immediately "began to proclaim Jesus," Acts 13:5 = Paul proclaimed "the word of God," Acts 14:1 = place Paul, et al, spoke and where "a large number of people believed," Acts 17:17, 18:4, 18:19, 19:8 = Paul, et al reasoned with various audiences in synagogues). Sunagoge is used a second time in Rev 3:9 "Behold, I will cause those of the **synagogue of Satan,** who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie–I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you."

Satan (4567)(**satanas** transliterated from Hebrew **Satan** - see 07854 and Aramaic sātānâ) literally means **Adversary**, the evil antagonist who offers opposition, hostility, resentment, etc and is an enemy who continually contends, opposes, and resists. In English dictionary an **adversary** is one who hates or opposes another person and tries to harm them or stop them from doing

something because of hatred and malice. **Satan** is the inveterate, implacable, relentless, ruthless, remorseless, merciless, heartless, pitiless, cruel, hard, harsh, hardened, incorrigible, dedicated enemy of God and man. **Satan** is not a myth or a fable, but a created, fallen angel who is a real, supernatural evil being (Mt 16.23; 1 Th 2.18+). **Satan** is not divine but is subject to the divine Creator Jesus (John 1:3+, Col 1:16+). He was the tempter of Jesus and sifter of men like Peter (Mt 4.1+, Lk 4:2+, Mk 1:13+, Lk 22:31+).

> **Satanas** in the **Revelation** - Rev. 2:9 = "a synagogue of Satan"; Rev. 2:13 = "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is...where Satan dwells"; Rev. 2:24 = "have not known the deep things of Satan"; Rev. 3:9; Rev. 12:9; Rev. 20:2; Rev. 20:7

Lie (5574) **pseudomai** from **pseudo** = to cheat, defraud, falsify) means to communicate what is false, with the evident purpose of misleading. The Greek term and the English equivalent 'to lie' involve more than simply telling what is not true, for this could occur without an intent to deceive or mislead. It means means to tell a falsehood, attempt to deceive by lying, to speak falsely or deceitfully. **Pseúdomai** therefore involves not only the communication of a falsehood but also the intent to deceive.

> **Pseudomai** - 12v - Matt. 5:11; Acts 5:3; Acts 5:4; Rom. 9:1; 2 Co. 11:31; Gal. 1:20; Col. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:7; Heb. 6:18; Jas. 3:14; 1 Jn. 1:6; Rev. 3:9

QUESTION - What is the synagogue of Satan in Revelation?

ANSWER - The synagogue of Satan is mentioned twice in Revelation, once in Jesus' letter to the first-century church in Smyrna and once to the church in Philadelphia. In both cases, the synagogue of Satan is opposed to the mission and message of the church.

To the church in Smyrna, Jesus says, "I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan" (Revelation 2:9).

To the church of Philadelphia in Asia Minor, Jesus says, "I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you" (Revelation 3:9).

In short, **the synagogue of Satan was a group of unbelieving Jews who were persecuting Christians.** These groups were guilty of slandering the church in Smyrna and opposing the church in Philadelphia in some way.

The majority of the persecution the New Testament church faced came from the Jewish community. Even most of the Roman persecution was an effort to appease the Jewish authorities. This is true of Pilate's condemnation of Jesus (John 19:1–16) and Paul's imprisonment by the Roman governors Felix (Acts 24:27) and Festus (Acts 25:16). This pattern held true throughout the Roman world in the first century. As long as Christians were considered a sect of Judaism, they were exempt from the required observance of certain aspects of Roman state religion. However, as Christians were expelled from synagogues and denounced by the Jewish leadership, Rome began to see Christianity as a new religion that did not have these same exemptions. Therefore, Christians outside the protective umbrella of the synagogue were open to Roman persecution.

The **synagogue of Satan** say they are Jews (the people of God), and they persecute those who believe in Jesus the Messiah (the true people of God). **In reality, by rejecting the Jewish Messiah, they have renounced their status as "true" Jews, and that is why Jesus calls them "liars."** This distinction between ethnic Jews and faithful Jews is also seen in Romans 9:6 ("Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel") and Romans 2:28–29 ("For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter"). By their persecution of the true people of God, these unbelieving Jews had become a synagogue of Satan—a gathering of people who were actually following the devil's priorities.

Both churches are promised victory over the synagogue of Satan. This promise echoes Isaiah 60:14: "The children of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet." In the context of Isaiah 60, an oppressed Jerusalem will be vindicated. Those who oppress her will bow down at her feet and will have to admit that she is indeed blessed by God, and—in the language of Revelation 3:9—that God loves her. But Isaiah 60:14 applied to these Jews and the Church is something of a reversal. In Isaiah 60, the oppressing Gentiles will bow down at the feet of Jews and admit that God loves them. In Revelation 2—3, oppressing Jews will bow down at the feet of the persecuted Church (with a significant population of Gentiles in it) and admit that God loves them. This is a striking role reversal.

Internet searches of "**synagogue of Satan**" produce quite a few links to sites that claim the "synagogue of Satan" refers to the Jewish people today and that promote all kinds of conspiracy theories about how the Jews run the world. Quite frankly, this is a misinterpretation and misapplication of the verses in Revelation. The synagogue of Satan refers to specific Jewish communities in

Smyrna and Philadelphia that were persecuting the church, not to any modern situation. Likewise, no modern situation should be used as an interpretive tool to explain a passage firmly rooted in the first-century Roman world. GotQuestions.org

Revelation 3:10 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

BGT Revelation 3:10 τι τ ρησας τ ν λ γον τ ς πομον ς μου, κ γ σε τηρ σω κ τ ς ρας το πειρασμο τ ς μελλο σης ρχεσθαι π τ ς ο κουμ νης λης πειρ σαι το ς κατοικο ντας π τ ς γ ς.

KJV Revelation 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

NET Revelation 3:10 Because you have kept my admonition to endure steadfastly, I will also keep you from the hour of testing that is about to come on the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

CSB Revelation 3:10 Because you have kept My command to endure, I will also keep you from the hour of testing that is going to come over the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

ESV Revelation 3:10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

NIV Revelation 3:10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

NLT Revelation 3:10 "Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to this world.

NRS Revelation 3:10 Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

NJB Revelation 3:10 Because you have kept my commandment to persevere, I will keep you safe in the time of trial which is coming for the whole world, to put the people of the world to the test.

NAB Revelation 3:10 Because you have kept my message of endurance, I will keep you safe in the time of trial that is going to come to the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

YLT Revelation 3:10 'Because thou didst keep the word of my endurance, I also will keep thee from the hour of the trial that is about to come upon all the world, to try those dwelling upon the earth.

BBE Revelation 3:10 Because you have kept my word in quiet strength, I will keep you from the hour of testing which is coming on all the world, to put to the test those who are on earth.

RSV Revelation 3:10 Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell upon the earth.

NKJ Revelation 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.

ASV Revelation 3:10 Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

- **the word:** Rev 1:9 13:10 14:12
- **I also will keep you from the hour of testing:** Mt 6:13 26:41 1Co 10:13 Eph 6:13 2Pe 2:9
- **upon the whole world**: Mt 24:14 Mk 14:9 Lu 2:1 Ro 1:8
- **to test**: Isa 24:17 Da 12:10 Zec 13:9 Jas 3:12 1Pe 4:12
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

KEPT OUT OF THE HOUR OF TESTING

Because (term of explanation) **you have kept** (tereo) **the word** (logos) **of My perseverance** (hupomone) - **NLT** = "have obeyed my

command to persevere." **NET** = "endure steadfastly" **ESV** = "have kept my word about patient endurance." Note the play on words as Jesus repeats tereo promising because they **kept** His word, He would **keep** them!

Leon Morris says that **the word of My perseverance** "is a curious expression and seems to mean 'the teaching which was exemplified in my steadfastness' (so Swete; cf. 2Th 3:5; Heb 12:1–2)." (Borrow Revelation of St John)

Brian Bell on **word of My perseverance** - - God has placed all confidence in Jesus Christ to save us, now He wants us to place our all in confidence in Him. So we persevere in our faith. In our trust in Him. In our believing He'll pull us through. In our attachment to Jesus. In enjoying His presence.

Barclay says **the word of My perseverance** means "that the promise is to those who have practised the same kind of endurance as Jesus displayed in His earthly life."

Hampton Keathley on **the word of My perseverance** - "The Word of My patience" refers to the Word, the testimony of Scripture regarding the truth of Christ as the suffering, resurrected, and so also, the victorious Savior Who endured the shame of rejection and the cross and Who endures today as the resurrected and ascended Lord now sitting at God's right hand (Heb. 1:3 with Heb 12:1–3). (The Message to Philadelphia)

Note that some writers point out that the conjunction **because** grammatically might explain the reason for the preceding triumph of the Philadelphians over the Jews of Satan's synagogue.

I also will keep (tereo as in Rev. 1:3, 2:26, 3:3, 8, 10) **you from the hour of testing** (peirasmos), **that** *hour* **which is about to come upon the whole world** (oikoumene)**, to test** (peirazo) **those who** (present tense = continually) **dwell** (katoikeo) **on the earth** (ge) - **From** is the preposition "ek" which means out of , not "take out," "take from," "keep in" or "keep through" (see diagram above - see Keathley's analysis below). Note that what Jesus will keep them from is the **hour**, or the time of the testing. In other words Jesus says they will be kept from the whole time period. He does not say from the **testing**. The Greek word peirasmos means "a trial, temptation, or testing" and so the context must determine the exact meaning of the word. In this passage, peirasmos refers to a very specific world-wide testing or tribulation. **Whole world** in the context of the phrase **on the earth** would indicate that this geographical phrase (whole world) means the entire earth. Jesus is speaking of a global **hour of testing**.

Those **who dwell on the earth** are clearly unbelievers and specifically unbelievers (see all the passages below that use this identical phrase) who cannot be saved because in Rev 13:12+ they worship the beast (Antichrist) and in Rev 13:14+ they take the mark of the beast and this will firmly and immutably seal their eternal fate! John MacArthur adds that "Unbelievers will either pass the test by repenting, or fail it by refusing to repent. Revelation 6:9–11; 7:9–10, 14; 14:4; and Rev 17:14 describe those who repent during the tribulation and are saved, passing the test. Revelation 6:15–17; 9:20; 16:11; and Rev 19:17–18 describe those who refuse to repent, failing the test."

Swindoll on **hour of testing** - Although there are several possible interpretations of what it means to "**keep**" the believers from "**the hour of testing**" (Rev 3:10), it is most commonly understood as a reference to the expected period of coming wrath that God will send to judge the world in preparation for the return of Christ. Similarly, Paul said that Christians are waiting for Christ to come from heaven to rescue them "from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10). (See Insights on Revelation)

Hampton Keathley - "**Hour**" is metaphorical for a shortened period. Because of the clause that follows, this clearly refers to more than the general trials or testings or temptations which people today may encounter. The **hour** is defined in three ways: (1) It is "**the**" **hour** of trial. The presence of the Greek article [*tes*] specifies this as **a very specific time of testing**. (2) It is to come upon **the whole world**. The term translated "**world**" is oikoumene, meaning "the inhabited earth," but modifying it is the adjective, **holos**, "whole, complete." The testing is worldwide. (3) Finally, it is designed to test a certain category of people defined as "those who dwell upon the earth." The verb "**dwell**" is katoikeo from kata, "down" and oikeō, "dwell, live." Katoikeo means "to live, dwell, reside, settle (down)," or it can mean "inhabit." The construction of the Greek (a substantival present articular participle) describes the **inhabitants as those who are characterized as earth dwellers**. As used in Revelation, "**those who dwell upon the earth**" is basically a **technical term for unbelievers** because they are earth dwellers, i.e., people bound only to this life and what it can give (Rev 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:8; Isa. 24:17f). In contrast to believers who are to think and live as sojourners or aliens, the earth dweller is quite at home on earth. "The hour of trial," sometimes referred to as "the Tribulation," refers to the time of wrath or judgment described in chapters 6–19. This is the same as Daniel's Seventieth Week (Dan. 9:27) and the time of Jacob's trouble described by Jeremiah as unprecedented in its judgment (Jer. 30:7). (The Message to Philadelphia)

Tony Evans on **the hour of testing** - The "hour of testing" is the Tribulation. Jesus used this terminology to describe the Tribulation because He was saying the church is going to be kept from the very time frame in which the Tribulation will occur. To be kept "from," or "out of," a situation is different than being kept "through" it. The preposition translated "from" in Revelation 3:10 suggests the church will not be around when the Tribulation breaks loose. (See The Best is Yet to Come: Bible Prophecies Throughout the Ages)

Rod Mattoon - If the Lord intended that the Church go through the Tribulation, the Greek preposition ***en*** which means "in" or ***dia*** which means "through" would have been the appropriate word to use."

John MacArthur offers this summary "Because the believers in Philadelphia had successfully passed so many tests, Jesus promised to spare them from the ultimate test. The sweeping nature of that promise extends far beyond the Philadelphia congregation to encompass all faithful churches throughout history. This verse promises that the church will be delivered from the Tribulation, thus supporting a pre-tribulation Rapture. The Rapture is the subject of three passages in the New Testament (John 14:1-4; 1Co 15:51-54; 1Th 4:13-17), none of which speak of judgment, but rather of the church being taken up to heaven. There are three views of the timing of the Rapture in relation to the Tribulation: that it comes at the end of the Tribulation (posttribulationism), in the middle of the Tribulation (midtribulationism), and the view that seems to be supported by this text, that the Rapture takes place before the tribulation (pretribulationism). Several aspects of this wonderful promise may be noted. First, the test is yet future. Second, the test is for a definite, limited time; Jesus described it as the **hour of testing**. Third, it is a test or trial that will expose people for what they really are. Fourth, the test is worldwide in scope, since it will come upon the **whole world**. Finally, and most significantly, its purpose is to test those who **dwell on the earth** – a phrase used as a technical term in the book of Revelation for unbelievers (cf. Rev 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:2,8). The hour of testing is Daniel's Seventieth Week (Dan. 9:25-27+), the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7+), the seven-year tribulation period. The Lord promises to keep His church out of the future time of testing that will come on unbelievers." (See Revelation Commentary)

Danny Akin adds "Along with John MacArthur, Chuck Swindoll, David Jeremiah, Tim LaHaye, Paige Patterson, Adrian Rogers, Jerry Vines, and Billy Graham, I too am convinced the Lord will deliver the church and keep us from the Great Tribulation. In addition to the promise of this verse, I would also add the following additional evidence: **(1).** The church is not appointed to wrath (Ro 8:9; 1Th 1:9-10; 5:9). The context of this promise, especially in 1Th 5:9, is the Great Tribulation. The church, therefore, should not expect to enter "The great day of His wrath" (Rev. 6:17) which is directed toward unbelievers. **(2).** The chronology of the discussion in 1Th 4:13-5:11 argues for a pre-tribulation rapture. The rapture discussion in chapter 4 precedes the Day of the Lord discussion in chapter 5. This would indicate that the rapture takes place before the Day of the Lord. **(3).** In 2 Thessalonians 2, the believers were alarmed that the Day of the Lord was upon them, which does not appear to be consistent with the belief that they would not go through the Tribulation. By assuring them that they were not in the Day of the Lord, Paul encouraged them in their pretribulationism. **(4).** In Rev. 19:11-21, the saints are viewed as "coming with" Christ at His Second Coming, not "waiting for" Him. Furthermore, the Church is in heaven prior to the Second Coming for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:1-10). Thus they must at some time have been gathered to Him prior to both of these events. This would be consistent with pretribulationism (**ED COMMENT**: TO ADD TO DR AKIN'S POINT IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO OBSERVE THAT AFTER THE 7 MENTIONS OF THE CHURCHES IN REVELATION 2-3, THERE IS A TIME PHRASE IN REVELATION 4:1 "AFTER THESE THINGS." AND THERE IS "STRANGELY" ABSOLUTELY NO MENTION OF THE CHURCH UNTIL Rev 19:7 WHEN JOHN DESCRIBES "THE BRIDE" OF THE LAMB. WHY IS THERE NOT ONE PASSAGE IN REVELATION 6-REVELATION 19 THAT MENTIONS THE CHURCH DURING THE TIME OF GREATEST DISTRESS THE WORLD HAS EVER EXPERIENCE? THE MOST OBVIOUS ANSWER IS THE "BRIDE" HAS ALREADY BEEN SWEPT AWAY BEFORE THE POURING OUT OF GOD'S WRATH ON THE SINFUL WORLD). **(5).** The New Testament emphasizes the imminent return of Christ. The exhortation to look for "the glorious appearing" of Christ to His own (Titus 2:13) loses its significance if the tribulation must come first. Believers in that case should look for signs. This is the strongest argument for pretribulationism.

Warren Wiersbe - He would keep them from Tribulation (Rev. 3:10). This is surely a reference to the time of Tribulation that John described in Revelation 6–19, "the time of Jacob's trouble." This is not speaking about some local trial, because it involves "them that dwell on the earth" (see Rev. 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 12:12; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:2, 8). The immediate reference would be to the official Roman persecutions that would come, but the ultimate reference is to the Tribulation that will encompass the earth before Jesus Christ returns to establish His kingdom. In many Bible scholars' understanding, Revelation 3:10 is a promise that the church will not go through the Tribulation, but will be taken to heaven before it begins (see 1 Thes. 4:13–5:11). The admonition, "Behold, I come quickly," would strengthen this view. (BORROW Be Victorious)

Mark Hitchcock has an interesting comment - Notice two important things about this promise. First, the Lord promises to keep His people not just from the hardships of worldwide testing but also from the hour of testing itself. What is the hour of worldwide testing? Since John only mentions one period of worldwide testing in the book of Revelation (chapters 6-19), he must mean the tribulation period. Second, notice the means of this protection: "I am coming quickly" (Rev 3:11a). If we put these two points together, it seems that the Lord will protect His people from the time of worldwide testing by coming for them at the Rapture. (Borrow 101 answers to the most asked questions about the end times)

John Walvoord - One of the outstanding compliments given to the Philadelphian church is contained in verse 10. Because of their faithfulness the Christians in Philadelphia are promised that they will be kept from the hour of trial which will come upon the earth as a divine judgment. It should be noted that this deliverance is not only from trial but from a period of time in which the trial exists, "the

hour of temptation." If the expression had been simply deliverance from trial, conceivably it could have meant only partial deliverance. The expression seems to have been made as strong as possible that the Philadelphian church would be delivered from this period.

Many have observed also that the preposition "**from**" (Gr., ek) is best understood as "out of rather than simply "from." Other instances of the use of the same verb and preposition together, such as John 17:15 and James 1:27, would indicate that it is perhaps too much to press it to mean an absolute deliverance. In view of the context of the book of Revelation, however, as it subsequently unfolds the horrors of this very tribulation period, it is evident that the promise here to the church at Philadelphia is one of deliverance from this time of trouble.

This conclusion has, of course, been resisted by all post-tribulationists as an unwarranted interpretation of this passage. If this promise has any bearing on the question of pretribulationism, however, what is said emphasizes deliverance from rather than deliverance through. As far as the Philadelphian church was concerned, the rapture of the church was presented to them as an imminent hope. If the rapture had occurred in the first century preceding the tribulation which the book of Revelation describes, they were assured of deliverance. By contrast, those sealed out of the twelve tribes of Israel in 7:4 clearly go through the time of trouble. This implies the rapture of the church before the time of trouble referred to as the great tribulation. Such a promise of deliverance to them would seemingly have been impossible if the rapture of the church were delayed until the end of the tribulation prior to the second coming of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom.

This passage therefore provides some support for the hope that Christ will come for His church before the time of trial and trouble described in Revelation 6 to 19. This time of tribulation will overtake the entire world, as God inflicts His wrath upon unbelieving Gentiles as well as upon Christ-rejecting Jews.

Hampton Keathley - The promise:
First, note that this is not a reward to the faithful. This will come in Rev 3:11–12. Instead, this is a promise to the church as a whole. This is clear from Rev 3:13 which broadens this as a promise to the churches at large. All believers are to listen to these messages and their warning, exhortations, and promises and act accordingly. As in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, this is to bring comfort to the church.

Second, the promise is "I will keep you from the hour…" i.e., from the Tribulation. This is very specific and carefully described in the Greek to emphasize and clearly teach the pre-tribulation rapture of the church. The Greek words for "keep out" are tēreō ek meaning "out of." There are four other ways this could have been stated if John wanted to imply that church age believers would be in the Tribulation, but none of them were used.

- **tēreō en** = To keep in. This would be a promise of preservation in the Tribulation.
- **tēreō dia** = to keep through. This would be a promise to keep us through the Tribulation.
- **aireō ek** = to take out, or sōzō ek = to save out. This could mean that believers would go into the Tribulation and then be taken out of the Tribulation.
- **aireō apo** = to take from. This would mean that believers would go into the Tribulation and then be taken out of the Tribulation.

Rather than any of the above, John chose to use **tēreō ek,** which means "to keep out." This is a promise that believers will never get into the Tribulation. But how? Paul describes this for us 1 Thessalonians 4:13f. We can chart it as above.

Some have tried to argue that this construction means just the opposite of the above interpretation. Gundry, for instance, in his book, The Church and the Tribulation, believes it argues for a post-tribulational emergence of the saints. He writes, *"As it is, ek lays all the emphasis on emergence, in this verse on the final, victorious outcome of the keeping-guarding*." Although this is generally true with **ek**, if **ek** is related to a non-motion verb like tēreō, the idea of motion out of something is negated by the static nature of the verb. The fact then, that a motion verb like sōzō is used here with **ek** shows the fallacy of Gundry's argument. However, even if a verb of motion were used, it would not prove Gundry's argument. A good illustration is 2 Corinthians 1:10 which has *rhuomai ek,* "delivered us from death." Certainly Paul did not mean that God had delivered them out of death through resurrection, but that He had kept them from death. Another illustration of this use of **ek** with a verb of motion is James 5:20, "save him **from** (the peril) of death," sōzō plus ek. As James 5:20 and 2 Corinthians 1:10 means saved from the peril of death, i.e., from dying. So likewise 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and Rev. 3:10 means delivered from the peril of wrath, the time of testing, the Tribulation. (The Message to Philadelphia)

Related Resources:

- The Meaning of "Earth Dwellers" and the Book of Revelation - Dr Thomas Ice
- Re-thinking the Rapture - E. Schuyler English (BORROW)
- The Case for the Pretribulation Rapture - Paul Feinberg (BORROW)

QUESTION - When is the Rapture going to occur in relation to the Tribulation? WATCH THE ASSOCIATED VIDEO.

ANSWER - The timing of the rapture in relation to the tribulation is one of the most controversial issues in the church today. The three primary views are pre-tribulational (the rapture occurs before the tribulation), mid-tribulational (the rapture occurs at or near the mid-point of the tribulation), and post-tribulational (the rapture occurs at the end of the tribulation). A fourth view, commonly known as pre-wrath, is a slight modification of the mid-tribulational position.

First, it is important to recognize the purpose of the tribulation. According to Daniel 9:27, there is a seventieth "seven" (seven years) that is still yet to come. Daniel's entire prophecy of the seventy sevens (Daniel 9:20-27) is speaking of the nation of Israel. It is a time period in which God focuses His attention especially on Israel. The seventieth seven, the tribulation, must also be a time when God deals specifically with Israel. While this does not necessarily indicate that the church could not also be present, it does bring into question why the church would need to be on the earth during that time.

The primary Scripture passage on the rapture is 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18+. It states that all living believers, along with all believers who have died, will meet the Lord Jesus in the air and will be with Him forever. The rapture is God's removing of His people from the earth. A few verses later, in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, Paul says, "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." The book of Revelation, which deals primarily with the time period of the tribulation, is a prophetic message of how God will pour out His wrath upon the earth during the tribulation. It seems inconsistent for God to promise believers that they will not suffer wrath and then leave them on the earth to suffer through the wrath of the tribulation. The fact that God promises to deliver Christians from wrath shortly after promising to remove His people from the earth seems to link those two events together.

Another crucial passage on the timing of the rapture is Revelation 3:10, in which Christ promises to deliver believers from the "hour of trial" that is going to come upon the earth. This could mean two things. Either Christ will protect believers in the midst of the trials, or He will deliver believers out of the trials. Both are valid meanings of the Greek word translated "from." However, it is important to recognize what believers are promised to be kept from. It is not just the trial, but the "hour" of trial. Christ is promising to keep believers from the very time period that contains the trials, namely the tribulation. The purpose of the tribulation, the purpose of the rapture, the meaning of 1 Thessalonians 5:9, and the interpretation of Revelation 3:10 all give clear support to the pre-tribulational position. If the Bible is interpreted literally and consistently, the pre-tribulational position is the most biblically-based interpretation. GotQuestions.org

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Related Resources:

- What is the rapture of the church? | GotQuestions.org
- What is the difference between the Rapture and the Second Coming? | GotQuestions.org
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-tribulational view of the rapture (pretribulationism)? | GotQuestions.org
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the mid-tribulational view of the rapture (midtribulationism)? | GotQuestions.org
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the post-tribulational view of the rapture (posttribulationism)? | GotQuestions.org
- What is the concept of a secret rapture? | GotQuestions.org
- How can I be ready to be caught up in the rapture? | GotQuestions.org
- How can I be sure I won't be left behind in the rapture? | GotQuestions.org
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-wrath view of the rapture? | GotQuestions.org
- Will there be a second chance for salvation after the rapture? | GotQuestions.org
- Will there be a partial rapture? | GotQuestions.org
- Will babies and young children be taken in the Rapture? | GotQuestions.org
- Will Christians see the Antichrist, or will the rapture occur before then? | GotQuestions.org
- What will happen to my pets after the rapture? | GotQuestions.org

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Perseverance (5281) **hupomone** rom **hupo** = under + **meno** = stay, remain, abide) literally means abiding under. The root idea of **hupomone** is to remain under some discipline, subjecting one's self to something which demands the submission of one's will to something against which one naturally would rebel. It portrays a picture of steadfastly and unflinchingly bearing up under a heavy load and describes that quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial. The picture is that of steadfastness, constancy and endurance. It has in it a forward look, the ability to focus on what is beyond the current pressures (eg Jesus "Who for the joy set before Him **endured** [verb form hupomeno] the Cross despising the shame" see notes on Hebrews 12:2). And so **hupomone** does not describe a grim resignation or a passive "grin and bear" attitude but a triumphant facing of difficult circumstances knowing that even out of evil God guarantees good. It is courageous gallantry which accepts suffering and hardship and turns them into grace and glory. For believers, it is a steadfastness, especially as God enables

us to "remain under" (or endure) whatever challenges, trials, tests, afflictions, etc, He providentially allows in our life.

> **THOUGHT** - How are you doing beloved? If you are like me (and most saints), you are experiencing manifold trials (1 Peter 1:6+)! Are you bearing up under them, leaning hard on the strengthening of the Spirit (the only way we can supernaturally remain under the "load.")?

From (1537)(ex or ek) means from, from out of, away from. **Friberg** - before a vowel ξ (**ex**); preposition with the genitive; (1) spatially, denoting motion away from a place, after verbs of going, sending, escaping, moving from, out of, away from (Mk 7:31); (2) denoting direction from which something comes from, out of (Lk 5:3); (3) denoting origin as to family, race, city from, out of (Lk 2:36); (4) denoting source, cause, motive, reason from, of, by (Mt 5:37; Jn 1:13); (5) denoting the distinguishing mark of a class, group, party from, of (Acts 11:2); (6) used in periphrasis; (a) for the partitive genitive, after words denoting number of (Jn 1:35; 6:60); (b) after an interrogative or indefinite pronoun of (Lk 11:5; Jn 6:64); (c) used with ε ναι belong to, be one of (Mt 26:73); (d) after verbs of filling with (Jn 12:3); (e) denoting price or value for (the amount of) (Mt 20:2); (7) temporally; (a) denoting time from when from, since, for (Jn 9:32); (b) showing sequence of time μέραν ξ μέρας day after day (2Pe 2:8); κ δευτέρου for the second time, again (Mt 26:42); κ τρίτου for the third time (Mt 26:44); (8) adverb; (a) κ μέτρου by measure, sparingly (Jn 3:34); (b) κ μέρους individually, in particular (1Co 12:27); (c) κ λύπης reluctantly, grudgingly (2Co 9:7); κ συμφώνου mutually, by common consent (1Co 7:5) (Borrow Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

> **GINGRICH Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament** - EK before vowels ex prep. with genitive (possessive) = **from, out of, away from**—
>
> **1. to denote separation** Mt 2:15; 26:27; Mk 16:3; Jn 12:27; 17:15 ; Ac 17:33; Gal 3:13; Rev 14:13; **from among** Lk 20:35; Acts 3:23.
>
> **2. to denote the direction from which something comes from, out from** Mt 17:9; Mk 11:20; Lk 5:3; in answer to the question where? at, on Mt 20:21, 23; Ac 2:25, 34.
>
> **3. to denote origin, cause, motive reason from, of,** by Mt 1:3, 5, 18; Jn 1:13, 46; 1 Cor 7:7; 2 Cor 5:1; Gal 2:15; 4:4; Phil 3:5. **Because of,** by Mk 7:11; 2 Cor 2:2; Rev 8:11. **By reason of, as a result of, because of** Lk 12:15; Ac 19:25; Ro 4:2; **with** Lk 16:9. **Of, from of source or material** Mt 12:34; J 19:2; 1 Cor 9:13; Rv 18:12. **According to, in accordance with** Mt 12:37; 2 Cor 8:11, 13. ek toutou **for this reason, therefore** Jn 6:66. oi` ek nomou partisans of the law Ro 4:14.
>
> **4. in periphrasis for the partitive** gen. Mt 10:29; 25:2; Lk 11:15, which may even function as subject of a sentence ek t matheton some of the disciples Jn 16:17; used with einai = belong to someone or something Mt 26:73; Ac 21:8; 1 Cor 12:15f. After verbs of filling with Lk 15:16; J n12:3; Rev 8:5. For the gen. of price or value for Mt 20:2; 27:7; Ac 1:18.
>
> 5. **of time from, from this or that time on** Mt 19:12; Mk 10:20; J 9:1, 32; for Lk 23:8; **after** 2 Pt 2:8.
>
> Note some of the uses of **EK** in the Revelation - Rev. 1:5 = **FROM** our sins by His blood (CLEARLY SPEAKS OF SEPARATION FROM OUR SINS); Rev. 1:16 = "**OUT OF** His mouth came" ; Rev. 2:5 = "remove your lampstand **OUT OF** its place"; Rev. 2:7 = "to eat **OF** ["out of" or "from"] the tree"; Rev. 2:9 = "blasphemy **BY** ["from"] those who say"; Rev. 2:10YLT = "about to cast **OF** ["from"] you to prison"; Rev. 2:11 = "**BY** (KJV = "of" NJB = "from") the second death"; Rev. 2:21 = "**OF** her immorality"; Rev. 2:22 = "they repent of her deeds"; Rev. 3:5 = "I will not erase his name **FROM** (ESV = "out of") the book"; Rev. 3:9 = "I will cause **OF** the synagogue"; Rev. 3:10 = "**FROM** the hour of testing"; Rev. 3:12 = "which comes down **OUT OF** heaven"; Rev. 3:16 = "I will spit you **OUT OF** my mouth"; Rev. 3:18 = "refined **BY** fire".
>
> **Gilbrant** - **First, it particularly denotes the point of departure or separation** such as “to rise from (ek) the dead” (e.g., John 12:1,9,17; Acts 3:15; 4:10; etc.). “Out of (ek, before a vowel ex) Egypt have I called my son” (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15) should also be understood in this way. Ek also indicates a separation between persons or objects; Jesus prays that His disciples be “(kept) from (ek) the evil one” (John 17:15, RSV).
>
> **A second basic function of ek is to designate direction**: Two possessed by demons came “out of” the tombs (Matthew 8:28). “He came up (anabainō [303]) out of (ek) the water” (Mark 1:10, RSV).
>
> **Third, ek suggests the source or reason for some event or act, including the “source” of someone.** This is evidenced in Nathaniel’s question, “Can there any good thing come out of (ek) Nazareth?” (John 1:46). In this sense ek speaks of something as part of a larger whole such as in the frequent rhetorical question, “Which of you . . . ?” (e.g., Luke 11:5,11; 12:25; 14:28; 15:4; 17:7). Similarly, righteousness comes ek God and is by faith (Philippians 3:9; i.e., God is the source of righteousness).
>
> **Fourth, ek can imply cause or reason**. Paul asked, “Did you receive the Spirit by works (ex ergōn) of the

law?" (Galatians 3:2,5, RSV). It may refer to a condition or state of being. Paul admonished Timothy, "The goal of this command is love which comes from (i.e., results from the condition of) a pure heart" (1 Timothy 1:5, NIV). The term may also suggest a basis for some action. "For the tree is known by (ek) his fruit" (Matthew 12:33; cf. verse 37).

Fifth, ek marks a point in time. According to Matthew 19:12 some men are eunuchs having been "so born from (ek) their mother's womb." The rich ruler explained to Jesus that he had kept the commandments ek neotētos, "from youth." And Herod had hoped to see Jesus ex ikanōn chronōn, "for a long time." Sixth, ek expresses means or agency. It may parallel hupo (5097) plus the genitive (after passive verbs or after any voice when accompanying the perfect verb). Some examples are Mark 7:11; 12:30,33 (with active verbs); the James series in 2:18 (active verb) 21,22,24,25; 1 Peter 1:23; Revelation 2:11. A similar pattern can be noted with apo (570) plus the genitive in Luke 7:35; 16:18; James 1:13; 5:4; Jude 23. Dia (1217) plus the genitive exemplifies the same basic idea under yet another imagery. It seems that Hellenistic Greek is simply adding ways of expressing agency through the use of additional prepositions for this purpose, which is in keeping with the growing use of prepositions in places where earlier Greek relied on case alone together with the nature of the circumstance or topic.

Also in keeping with the trend toward the proliferation of prepositions in Hellenistic Greek, on occasion ek and apo appear to be little more than pleonastic descriptive genitives roughly equivalent to our usage of "of" to link one noun adjectivally to another.

Many other fine distinctions of definition may be drawn (see Bauer), but the basic functions of ek are outlined above. Context in conjunction with grammar always makes the best guide for determining this preposition's meaning. (Complete Biblical Library)

EK in **Colin Brown (ed.), Dictionary Of New Testament Theology** κ, G1666

1. Its Basic Signification.

Originally ek signified an exit "from within" something with which there had earlier been a close connection. Therefore it naturally came to be used to denote origin, source, derivation or separation. So, for example, the prep. is used of the material out of which something is made (Matt. 27:29), the country of one's origin (Acts 23:34) or a person with whom a connection is (to be) severed (John 17:15). Having this root sense, ek is sometimes equivalent to the subjective genitive (e.g., 2 Cor. 8:7 v. l.). However in the stereotyped ho ek or hoi ek before a noun (e.g., hoi ek nomou, "nomists" or "partisans of the law," Rom. 4:14; hoi ek pisteōs, "men of faith," Gal. 3:7, 9) the notion of belonging is more prominent than that of origin. The ubiquitous ek (tou) theou depicts: (i) the agency of God in effecting spiritual regeneration (John 1:13; 1 John 3:9 bis; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18a; cf. John 8:47 bis; 1 John 4:4, 6; 5:19; 3 John 11), corresponding to the role of the male in the act of physical procreation (cf. Matt. 1:18) (cf. Arndt, 234 s.v. ek 3a); (ii) God as the authoritative source of Jesus' teaching (John 7:17), the giver of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12a) and of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 7:7), the source of all life, both physical (1 Cor. 11:12b) and spiritual (2 Cor. 5:18), the one who empowered Paul to carry out his divine commission (2 Cor. 3:5b), the architect of the resurrection body of believers (2 Cor. 5:1), the one who provides a new and right relation ship with himself (Phil. 3:9), and the one true source of love (1 John, 4:7). On the relation of ek to apo see above II. B. 1.

2. Some Notable Instances of ek.

(a) John 15:19 bis; 17:14, 16. Parallel to the Pauline antithesis between living en sarki and yet not acting kata sarka (e.g., 2 Cor. 10:3) is the Johannine contrast between living en tō kosmō (John 17:11; cf. 17:15) yet not being ek tou kosmou (John 15:19 bis; 17:14b, 16a; cf. 18:36 bis). Christians must live in the world (or flesh) but must not display the characteristics of the world (or flesh) (cf. Ep. Diog. 6, 3).

(b) Rom. 1:3f. These two verses refer to two successive stages of Christ's existence, not to two coexisting states (kata sarka … kata pneuma hagiōsynēs). With respect to human descent (kata sarka; cf. Rom. 9:5) Jesus Christ was born of David's stock (ek spermatos David). On the other hand, his installation as Son of God in power, accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit (kata pneuma hagiōsynēs; cf. Gal. 4:29), took its rise, temporally and instrumentally (or, causally), in his resurrection from the dead (ex anastaseōs nekrōn). Not only "from the time of" the resurrection but also "through" (or, "as a result of") the resurrection itself, Jesus was visibly designated Son of God. (For ek as introducing the means used to achieve a definite purpose ["through"] or the reason which forms a presupposition for something ["as a result of"], see Arndt, 234, s.v. of the ek 3f.). In the crucial phrase ex anastaseōs nekrōn ("the resurrection from the dead, but the absence of ek before nekrōn (cf. 1 Pet. 1:3) and the use of the plural nekrōn suggest that Paul envisaged the resurrection of all

believers as ideally achieved in the resurrection of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20, 23; Col. 1:18). The general, inclusive category, “the resurrection of the dead,” includes the first determinative instance, “his resurrection from the dead.” For a full discussion see C. E. B. Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans, ICC, I 19756, 57–64.

(c) Rom. 1:17. A myriad of proposals have been made in regard to the meaning of the phrase ek pisteōs eis pistin, such as: from the faith of the preacher to the faith of the hearer; from God’s faithfulness to man’s faith; from smaller to greater degree of faith (cf. apo doxēs eis doxan, 2 Cor. 3:18); from faith as a starting-point to faith as a permanent condition. But it seems more natural to construe ek as indicating not the source or starting-point (“from faith”) but the basis or means (“by faith”; as in Hab. 2:4), with the eis pistin either intensifying the effect of ek pisteōs (thus, “by faith from first to last,” New International Version), or denoting the goal of God’s impartation to men of a righteous status (“leading to faith”). On either of these latter views, faith is portrayed as the vital and perpetual characteristic of Christian experience.

(d) Rom. 3:30. On the basis of the difference between ek pisteōs and dia tēs pisteōs, it has been maintained that: (i) while the Jew is justified by faith (as “the moving cause,” ek pisteōs) through the channel of circumcision (supplying dia peritomēs; cf. Rom. 4:12), the Gentile is justified by faith as both “moving cause” (ek pisteōs) and “sole condition” or channel (dia tēs pisteōs) (W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans, 19025, 95, 96; this view highlights the contrast between peritomēn and akrobystian); (ii) Jews were to be justified by a subjective belief in the messiah, “by starting from and developing their existing faith in a coming messiah,” whereas Gentiles would be justified through the instrumentality of that developed and objective Faith of Christendom, about which they as yet knew nothing (H. P. Liddon, Explanatory Analysis of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, 1977 reprint of 1899 work, 79, 80); (iii) God will justify the Jews as a result of their own faith, but Gentiles by means of the faith of the Jews (tēs being an anaphoric article) as in Rom. 11:15 (N. Turner, Insights, 107–110).

If any distinction is intended between these two prep. phrases, it is formal not substantial: God justifies the Jew as a result of his faith (ik pisteōs), and the Gentile on the same ground, viz. by means of that same kind of faith (dia tēs pisteōs). Against there being any substantial difference between the justification of Jew and Gentile, several points may be urged. (i) Both prep. phrases (ek pisteōs and dia [tēs] pisteōs) may mean “through faith” or “by faith,” since both preps. may express either the effective means or the efficient cause (see Arndt, 178, s.v. dia III. 1. a, d; 234, s.v. ek 3. e, f). (ii) Elsewhere Paul uses either ek or dia to denote the immediate means or cause of justification or salvation (ek—Rom. 1:17 bis; 3:26; 5:1; 9:30, 32; Gal. 2:16; dia—Rom. 3:22, 25; Gal. 2:16; 3:26; Eph. 2:8). (iii) There is a comparable change from dia pisteōs to ek pisteōs in Rom. 3:25f. and in Gal. 2:16 (in reference to anthrōpos). (iv) In Gal. 3:26 the Jews and Gentiles of the Galatian churches (pantes; cf. Gal. 3:28) are said to be sons of God dia tēs pisteōs; similarly Rom. 3:22, 25. (v) Any suggestion that there are two distinct means or grounds of justification (mentioned in Rom. 3:30) would tend to undermine Paul’s earlier insistence that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile with respect to sinfulness (Rom. 3:22f.) or the ultimate ground (= grace) and means (= redemption) of justification (Rom. 3:24). (vi) Stylistic or rhetorical variation is not untypical of Paul (e.g., Rom. 4:11; 10:17).

(e) 2 Cor. 13:4. Without the wider context of 2 Cor. 10–13, one would be tempted to render estaurōthē ex astheneias, “he was crucified in (a condition of physical) weakness,” but ek probably bears a causal sense “because of (his weakness)” (thus Arndt, 234 s.v. ek 3f.). The weakness referred to it not physical or moral, but the “weakness”—in men’s eyes—of non-retaliation or non-aggressiveness (cf. 2 Cor. 10:1f., 10f.; 11:20f., 30; 12:9f.; 13:4b, 9f.), the “weakness” of obedience to God’s will, which, for Christ, involved death on a cross (Phil. 2:8). But in such weakness, divine power comes to its full strength (2 Cor. 12:9).

Matt. 1:3; Matt. 1:5; Matt. 1:6; Matt. 1:16; Matt. 1:18; Matt. 1:20; Matt. 2:6; Matt. 2:15; Matt. 3:9; Matt. 3:17; Matt. 5:37; Matt. 6:27; Matt. 7:4; Matt. 7:5; Matt. 7:9; Matt. 8:28; Matt. 10:29; Matt. 12:11; Matt. 12:33; Matt. 12:34; Matt. 12:35; Matt. 12:37; Matt. 12:42; Matt. 13:41; Matt. 13:47; Matt. 13:49; Matt. 13:52; Matt. 15:5; Matt. 15:11; Matt. 15:18; Matt. 15:19; Matt. 16:1; Matt. 17:5; Matt. 17:9; Matt. 18:12; Matt. 18:19; Matt. 19:12; Matt. 20:2; Matt. 20:21; Matt. 20:23; Matt. 21:16; Matt. 21:19; Matt. 21:25; Matt. 21:26; Matt. 21:31; Matt. 22:35; Matt. 22:44; Matt. 23:25; Matt. 23:34; Matt. 24:17; Matt. 24:31; Matt. 25:2; Matt. 25:8; Matt. 25:33; Matt. 25:34; Matt. 25:41; Matt. 26:21; Matt. 26:27; Matt. 26:29; Matt. 26:42; Matt. 26:44; Matt. 26:64; Matt. 26:73; Matt. 27:7; Matt. 27:29; Matt. 27:38; Matt. 27:48; Matt. 27:53; Matt. 28:2; Mk. 1:10; Mk. 1:11; Mk. 1:25; Mk. 1:26; Mk. 1:29; Mk. 5:2; Mk. 5:8; Mk. 5:30; Mk. 6:14; Mk. 6:51; Mk. 6:54; Mk. 7:11; Mk. 7:15; Mk. 7:20; Mk. 7:21; Mk. 7:26; Mk. 7:29; Mk. 7:31; Mk. 9:7; Mk. 9:9; Mk. 9:10; Mk. 9:17; Mk. 9:21; Mk. 9:25; Mk. 10:20; Mk. 10:37; Mk. 10:40; Mk. 11:8; Mk. 11:14; Mk. 11:20; Mk. 11:30; Mk. 11:31; Mk. 11:32; Mk. 12:25; Mk. 12:30; Mk. 12:33; Mk. 12:36; Mk. 12:44; Mk. 13:1; Mk. 13:15; Mk. 13:25; Mk. 13:27; Mk. 14:18; Mk. 14:23; Mk. 14:25; Mk. 14:62; Mk. 14:69; Mk. 14:70; Mk. 14:72; Mk. 15:27; Mk. 15:39; Mk. 15:46; Mk. 16:3; Mk. 16:12; Mk. 16:19; Lk. 1:5; Lk. 1:11; Lk. 1:15; Lk. 1:27; Lk. 1:61; Lk. 1:71; Lk. 1:74; Lk. 1:78; Lk. 2:4; Lk. 2:35; Lk. 2:36; Lk. 3:8; Lk. 3:22; Lk. 4:22; Lk. 5:3; Lk. 5:17; Lk. 6:42; Lk. 6:44; Lk. 6:45; Lk. 8:3; Lk. 8:27; Lk. 9:7; Lk. 9:35; Lk. 10:7; Lk. 10:11; Lk. 10:18; Lk. 10:27; Lk. 11:5; Lk. 11:6; Lk. 11:11; Lk. 11:13; Lk. 11:15; Lk. 11:16; Lk. 11:27; Lk. 11:31; Lk. 11:49; Lk. 11:54; Lk. 12:6; Lk. 12:13; Lk. 12:15; Lk. 12:25; Lk. 12:36; Lk. 14:28; Lk. 14:33; Lk. 15:4; Lk. 15:16; Lk. 16:4; Lk. 16:9; Lk. 16:31; Lk. 17:7; Lk. 17:15; Lk. 17:24; Lk. 18:21; Lk. 19:22; Lk. 20:4; Lk. 20:5; Lk. 20:6; Lk. 20:35; Lk. 20:42; Lk. 21:4; Lk. 21:16; Lk. 21:18; Lk. 22:3; Lk. 22:23; Lk. 22:50; Lk. 22:58; Lk. 22:69; Lk. 23:7; Lk. 23:8; Lk. 23:33; Lk. 23:55; Lk. 24:13; Lk. 24:22; Lk. 24:46; Lk. 24:49; Jn. 1:13; Jn. 1:16; Jn. 1:19; Jn. 1:24; Jn. 1:32; Jn. 1:35; Jn. 1:40; Jn. 1:44; Jn. 1:46; Jn. 2:15; Jn. 2:22; Jn. 3:1; Jn. 3:5; Jn. 3:6; Jn. 3:8; Jn. 3:13; Jn. 3:25; Jn. 3:27; Jn. 3:31; Jn. 3:34; Jn. 4:6; Jn. 4:7; Jn. 4:12; Jn. 4:13; Jn. 4:14; Jn. 4:22; Jn. 4:30; Jn. 4:39; Jn. 4:47; Jn. 4:54; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 6:8; Jn. 6:11; Jn. 6:13; Jn. 6:23; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:31; Jn. 6:32; Jn. 6:33; Jn. 6:39; Jn. 6:41; Jn. 6:42; Jn. 6:50; Jn. 6:51; Jn. 6:58; Jn. 6:60; Jn. 6:64; Jn. 6:65; Jn. 6:66; Jn. 6:70; Jn. 6:71; Jn. 7:17; Jn. 7:19; Jn. 7:22; Jn. 7:25; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 7:38; Jn. 7:40; Jn. 7:41; Jn. 7:42; Jn. 7:44; Jn. 7:48; Jn. 7:50; Jn. 7:52; Jn. 8:23; Jn. 8:41; Jn. 8:42; Jn. 8:44; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 8:47; Jn. 8:59; Jn. 9:1; Jn. 9:6; Jn. 9:16; Jn. 9:24; Jn. 9:32; Jn. 9:40; Jn. 10:16; Jn. 10:20; Jn. 10:26; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 10:29; Jn. 10:32; Jn. 10:39; Jn. 11:1; Jn. 11:19; Jn. 11:37; Jn. 11:45; Jn. 11:46; Jn. 11:49; Jn. 11:55; Jn. 12:1; Jn. 12:2; Jn. 12:3; Jn. 12:4; Jn. 12:9; Jn. 12:17; Jn. 12:20; Jn. 12:27; Jn. 12:28; Jn. 12:32; Jn. 12:34; Jn. 12:42; Jn. 12:49; Jn. 13:1; Jn. 13:4; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 13:23; Jn. 15:19; Jn. 16:4; Jn. 16:5; Jn. 16:14; Jn. 16:15; Jn. 16:17; Jn. 17:6; Jn. 17:12; Jn. 17:14; Jn. 17:15; Jn. 17:16; Jn. 18:3; Jn. 18:9; Jn. 18:17; Jn. 18:25; Jn. 18:26; Jn. 18:36; Jn. 18:37; Jn. 19:2; Jn. 19:12; Jn. 19:23; Jn. 20:1; Jn. 20:2; Jn. 20:9; Jn. 20:24; Jn. 21:2; Jn. 21:14; Acts 1:18; Acts 1:24; Acts 2:2; Acts 2:25; Acts 2:30; Acts 2:34; Acts 3:2; Acts 3:15; Acts 3:22; Acts 3:23; Acts 4:2; Acts

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Testing (3986) **peirasmos** from **peirazo** = to make trial of, try, tempt, prove in either a good or bad sense - classic Greek of a medical test to prove health or disease. See also Detzler) describes first the idea of putting to the test and then refers to the tests or pressures that come in order to discover a person's nature or the quality of something. The key to accurately interpreting the meaning of peirasmos is to carefully examine the context to see if the effect of the peirasmos is to lead one into sin (then it is translated "temptation") or for a beneficial effect (then it is usually translated "trial"). Context is the key.

World (3625) **oikoumene** the feminine participle present passive of **oikeo** = to dwell or abide) describes the inhabited portion of the earth, exclusive of the heavens above and hell below. The Romans used **oikoumene** in their secular writings to refer to the Roman Empire, for to them their empire equated with the whole world. Finally, in some NT contexts **oikoumene** was used to refer to the inhabitants of the world.

> Oikoumene - 15v - Matt. 24:14; Lk. 2:1; Lk. 4:5; Lk. 21:26; Acts 11:28; Acts 17:6; Acts 17:31; Acts 19:27; Acts 24:5; Rom. 10:18; Heb. 1:6; Heb. 2:5; Rev. 3:10; Rev. 12:9; Rev. 16:14

Dwell (2730) **katoikeo** (2730) (**katoikeo** from **kata** which intensifies the meaning of the verb **oikeo** = dwell, reside in, inhabit as one's abode from **oikos** = a house) means literally to settle down (be at home, dwell) in a place so to take up permanent abode or residence. **Barth** writes that **katoikeo** denotes permanent habitation as opposed to sojourning or an occasional visit.

> **Katoikeo in the Revelation** - Rev. 2:13; Rev. 3:10; Rev. 6:10; Rev. 8:13; Rev. 11:10; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 13:12; Rev. 13:14; Rev. 17:2; Rev. 17:8
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> > Revelation 2:13 'I know where you **dwell**, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan **dwells**.
> >
> > Revelation 3:10 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who **dwell** on the earth.
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> > **NOTE** THE FOLLOWING USES OF ***dwell on the earth*** OCCUR DURING THE TIME OF THE OUTPOURING OF GOD'S WRATH. OBSERVE WHAT IS ASSOCIATED WITH EACH DESCRIPTION OF WHAT WE MIGHT CALL THE "EARTH DWELLERS."
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> > Revelation 6:10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who **dwell** on the earth?"
> >
> > Revelation 8:13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who **dwell** on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"
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> > Revelation 11:10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who **dwell** on the earth.
> >
> > Revelation 13:8 All who **dwell** on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.
> >
> > Revelation 13:12 He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who **dwell** in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

Revelation 13:14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who **dwell** on the earth to make an image to the beast who *had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

Revelation 17:2 with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who**dwell** on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."

Revelation 17:8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who **dwell** on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

Revelation 3:11 'I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

- **I am coming quickly**: Rev 1:3 Rev 22:7,12,20 Zep 1:14 Php 4:5 Jas 5:9
- **hold**: Rev 3:3 2:13,25
- **your crown**: Rev 2:10 4:4,10 1Co 9:25 2Ti 2:5 4:8 Jas 1:12 1Pe 5:3,4
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Revelation 1:7 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

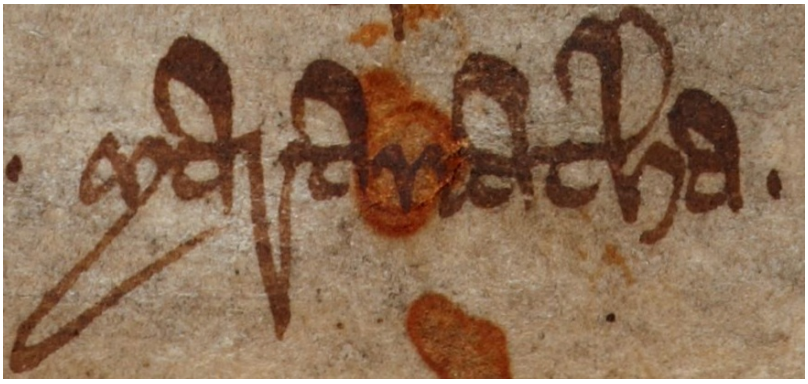
Revelation 2:25 Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.

Revelation 22:7 "And behold, **I am coming quickly**. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

Revelation 22:12 "Behold, **I am coming quickly**, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Revelation 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, **I am coming quickly**." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

James 5:9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, **the Judge is standing right at the door**



Picture from Inscription of "Maranatha" in a medieval text.
Saints in the "dark ages" were looking for the Light of the world! Am I? Are you?

A CALL TO PERSEVERE:
HOLD ON! I'M COMING!

I am coming quickly - In the present tense signifies He is on His way! Quickly means soon, without warning, suddenly, unexpectedly, without warning or announcement and not necessarily soon. The idea is His coming is imminent which is an adjective from the Latin word ***imminens*** from ***imminere*** = to hang or project over. Literally, **imminent** means hanging or projecting over. Impending. In other words imminent means "hanging over one's head, ready to befall or overtake one; close at hand in its

incidence." Thus, an imminent event is one that is always hanging overhead, is constantly ready to befall or overtake a person, is always close at hand in the sense that it could happen at any moment. It is important to note that His return is **both knowable** and **unknowable!** In other words, there are signs that will occur prior to the Second Coming ("knowable") whereas the Rapture has no preceding signs (unknowable). **A W Pink** explains that "When we say that the Redeemer's Return is an imminent event, we do not mean it will occur immediately, but that He may come back in our own lifetime, that He may come back this year; yet, we cannot say that He will do so." Imminency makes it impossible to know when He might come so the believer must remain constantly on the lookout in case the Lord were to return and find him unprepared (Mt. 24:43; Luke 12:37-39; 1Th 4:15-17; Rev. 3:3). Many passages which teach the imminency of events utilize phrases such as "soon," "quickly," and "is near." These events are described from the perspective of God Who "declares the end from the beginning" (Isa. 46:10). From His perspective, these events are certain but their timing is unspecified.

Imminency of Christ's return is the missing ingredient in evangelism in many pulpits today. As in Rev 2:16; 22:7,12,20 it is a "keynote of the book," the great incentive to persevering faithfulness, and the consolation under present trials.

> **THOUGHT** - Do you live daily with a **Marantha Mindset**? It will change your perspective on everything! Ask our Father that by His Spirit, He might place eternity in the front of our "spiritual radar," so that we might be energized to live every day as if we might see Him today, all for His glory. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Swindoll - He reminded them that His coming will be sudden, unexpected, and quick; this would motivate them to continue to hold their confidence firmly so nobody would rob them of their heavenly reward

Hold fast (krateo) **what you** (present tense - continually) **have, so that** (hina - purpose clause) **no one will take your crown** (stephanos) - **Hold fast** (continually keep a grip on) is in the present imperative and the only way believers can continually hold fast is by daily dependence on the Holy Spirit. What is it that they were to hold fast? From the context it would seem to include their "deeds" (Rev 3:8), their little power, their obedience to His Word, their continuing to confess His Name and His promise of **coming quickly**. The **crown** (stephanos) in John's day was the reward for winning in the Olympic games. Clearly it does not refer to salvation because we cannot lose our salvation (in fact we are "held fast"! Jn 10:28-29; cf Eternal security) but we can lose our rewards at the Bema seat (2Co 5:10+, 1Co 3:10-15+).

Utley - Salvation is an initial decision of repentance and faith (cf. Mark 1:15; Acts 3:16, 19; 20:21) followed by lifestyle repentance and faith, obedience, service, and perseverance. (Faith alone saves, but the faith that truly saves is not alone).

Hampton Keathley - The warning reminds us to live in the light of His coming, to hold fast to Him in faith and service. For when He comes it will mean examination and rewards. He will not forget our service on His behalf, but we must hold fast to the hope and expectation of His coming for us or we will live carelessly, indifferently to our calling and purpose as believers. When that happens we lose our crowns, rewards for faithful service. So the Spirit quickly adds, "that no one take your crown." "That no one take your crown" is an interesting picture. To lose a crown is to be deprived of the honor or glory potentially available through faithful living. There are two possible ideas here: (1) It could refer to rewards which are lost and given to others because we failed to hold fast. Swete states, "'The picture is not that of a thief snatching away what is feebly held, but rather of a competitor receiving a prize which has been forfeited.'"62 I am reminded of 1 Corinthians 9:24 where the apostle challenges us regarding rewards, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win (lit. lay hold of)." There is also the parable of Luke 19:24 where the Lord says regarding the unfaithful servant, "Take the mina away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas." (2) Or, it could refer to rewards lost because of the evil influences that we might allow to hinder us in the race of life (cf. Matt. 13:7, 22; Col. 2:18; 2 John 8; Rev. 2:20 with 2:25f). Actually, both concepts are true as the above Scriptures make clear. (The Message to Philadelphia)

Henry Morris - Although the Philadelphians were faithful, there is always the danger of backsliding, especially in the face of sustained opposition: hence, the admonition to hold fast. (The Revelation Record - BORROW)

Lehman Strauss on how to lose your **crown** - In every assembly there are various forms of evil to steal our crowns. A cold heart overcame the saints in Ephesus. In Smyrna the believers were tempted by discouragement through tribulation and poverty. In Pergamos there were the opposing doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. In Thyatira Jezebel held undisputed sway. Sardis had a name to live by and was dead. In Philadelphia there were tares among the wheat. We may lose our crowns through discouragement, worldliness, social life, success, friends, and even our families. (The Book of the Revelation: Outlined Studies - BORROW)

Barclay on lost **crown** - R. C. Trench makes a list of people in the Bible who lost their place to someone else because they had shown that they were not fit to hold it. Esau lost his place to Jacob (Genesis 25:34, 27:36). Reuben, unstable as water, lost his place to Judah (Genesis 49:4, 49:8). Saul lost his place to David (1 Samuel 16:1, 16:13). Shebna lost his place to Eliakim (Isaiah 22:15–25). Joab and Abiathar lost their places to Benaiah and Zadok (1 Kings 2:25). Judas lost his place to Matthias (Acts 1:25–6). The

Jews lost their place to the Gentiles (Romans 11:11).

Quickly (5035) (**tachu** neuter of **tachus**) is an adjective meaning quick, swift. The adverb tachu (formally a neuter singular of the adjective tachus) means "quickly" or "soon." The difference between the two ideas— immediacy (soon), suddenness (quickly)—is not always easy to determine (Bauer). Tachu does not appear in the Septuagint, but its related adjective tachus does. **Tachu** is the form most common to the New Testament. The sense of "immediately" (in a short time) should probably be understood in Mk 9:39. The notion of "quickly" (with speed) comes through elsewhere in the Gospels (e.g., Mt 5:25; 28:7; Lk 15:22; Jn 11:29). Nevertheless, a clear-cut distinction is not always possible. Revelation uses **tachu** in unique reference to the coming of the Lord or His power in judgment (Rev 2:16; Rev 11:14) or reward (Rev 3:11; cf. Rev 22:7,12,20). The refrain of Jesus, "Behold (or "indeed"), I come quickly soon (tachu)" (Revelation 22:7,12,20) refers to the immediacy of Jesus' return rather than to His style of coming. Nevertheless, the suddenness of His return cannot be ruled out since we read elsewhere that He will come "as a thief in the night" (1Th 5:2).

> **Zodhiates** - **tachú**; neut. sing. of **tachús**, prompt, swift, used as an adv. Quickly, speedily, with haste (Matt. 5:25; 28:7, 8; Mark 16:8 [TR]; John 11:29; Sept.: 2 Sam. 17:16); suddenly (Rev. 2:5 [TR], 16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:7, 12, 20; Sept.: Ps. 102:3). By implication, carelessly, lightly (Mark 9:39). (Borrow The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament)
>
> **Tachu** - 14v - before long(1), possible(1), quickly(11), soon afterward(1). Mt 5:25; Mt 28:7; Mt 28:8; Mk 9:39; Lk. 15:22; Jn 11:29; Acts 17:15; 1Ti 3:14; Rev 2:16; Rev 3:11; Rev 11:14; Rev 22:7; Rev 22:12; Rev 22:20

Hold fast (seize)(2902)(**krateo**) has the basic meaning of to be strong or possess power and thus means to take hold of, grasp, hold fast. **Krateo** is used most often in the sense of "take hold of forcibly" as when Pharisees wanted to "take hold of" Jesus (Mt 21:46; Mark 12:12). In the present context **Krateō** means to "hold fast" with the idea of being loyal to a person, in this case Christ. The Pharisees were admonished for holding the traditions of the elders (Mark 7:3ff.), while Christians are encouraged to hold to the traditions of Christianity (2 Th 2:15)

> Heb 4:14+ Therefore, since we have a Great High Priest Who has passed through the heavens (cf Heb 6:19, 20+), Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold fast** (**krateo** in present tense - continually hold fast) our confession. (**NOTE**: What will help us today to "hold fast our confession" as did the saints at Pergamum? In context it behooves us to frequently be **recalling to mind** the truth that Jesus is our Great High Priest, that He has gone on before us into our eternal home and that He is seated at the right hand of the Throne of God, continually interceding for us! Ro 8:34+, Heb 7:25+).
>
> **Krateo** is a **KEY WORD in Revelation 2** because it is used 5 times in this chapter (out of a total of 48x/46v in NT) - Mt. 9:25; Mt. 12:11; Mt. 14:3; Mt. 18:28; Mt. 21:46; Mt. 22:6; Mt. 26:4; Mt. 26:48; Mt. 26:50; Mt. 26:55; Mt. 26:57; Mt. 28:9; Mk. 1:31; Mk. 3:21; Mk. 5:41; Mk. 6:17; Mk. 7:3; Mk. 7:4; Mk. 7:8; Mk. 9:10; Mk. 9:27; Mk. 12:12; Mk. 14:1; Mk. 14:44; Mk. 14:46; Mk. 14:49; Mk. 14:51; Lk. 8:54; Lk. 24:16; Jn. 20:23; Acts 2:24; Acts 3:11; Acts 24:6; Acts 27:13; Col. 2:19; 2 Th 2:15; Heb. 4:14; Heb. 6:18; Rev. 2:1; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 2:14; Rev. 2:15; Rev. 2:25; Rev. 3:11; Rev. 7:1; Rev. 20:2

Hold On!

> I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have. Revelation 3:11

Today's Scripture & Insight: Revelation 3:7-13

A cowboy friend of mine who grew up on a ranch in Texas has a number of colorful sayings. One of my favorites is "It don't take much water to make good coffee." And when someone ropes a steer too big to handle or is in some kind of trouble, my friend will shout, "Hold everything you've got!" meaning "Help is on the way! Don't let go!"

In the book of Revelation we find letters to "the seven churches in the province of Asia" (chs. 2–3). These messages from God are filled with encouragement, rebuke, and challenge, and they speak to us today just as they did to the first-century recipients.

Twice in these letters we find the phrase, "Hold on to what you have." The Lord told the church at Thyatira, "Hold on to what you have until I come" (2:25). And to the church in Philadelphia He said, "I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown" (3:11). In the midst of great trials and opposition, these believers clung to God's promises and persevered in faith.

When our circumstances are harsh and sorrows outnumber joys, Jesus shouts to us, "Hold everything you've got! Help is on the way!" And with that promise, we can hold on in faith and rejoice. By: David C. McCasland (Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets. Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, we cling to Your promise, expect Your return, and hold on with confidence as we say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

The promise of Christ’s return calls us to persevere in faith.

Revelation 3:12 'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and 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 My new name.

- **overcomes**: Rev 2:7 17:14 1Jn 2:13,14 4:4
- **pillar**: 1Ki 7:21 Jer 1:18 Ga 2:9
- **I will**: Rev 2:17 14:1 22:4
- **the city**: Rev 21:2,10-27 Ps 48:8 87:3 Ga 4:26,27 Heb 12:22
- **my new**: Rev 22:4 Isa 65:15 Eph 3:15
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Galatians 6:17+ From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body**the brand-marks** (stigma = recognition of ownership) of Jesus.

Revelation 21:22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Ephesians 2:19-22 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:20-21 For our **citizenship is in heaven**, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Isaiah 62:2 The nations will see your righteousness, And all kings your glory; And you will be called by a new name Which the mouth of the LORD will designate.

Ezekiel 48:35 “The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and the name of the city from that day shall be, ‘The LORD is there (Jehovah Shammah).’”

PROMISES TO OVERCOMERS

I like **Grant Osborne's** title for this verse "**Security and Status**."

Bob Utley makes an interesting observation - Notice the five-fold repetitions of ‘**My**” in Rev 3:12. This is a wonderful acknowledgment of intimacy with God.

He (singular - not the whole church but individuals in that church) **who** (present tense - continually) **overcomes** (nikao) - Note that an overcomer is one who keeps on *continually* overcoming. Note also the idea is that he or she overcomes a vanquished foe (our enemies were defeated at the Cross!) But do not misunderstand what this is saying! Yes, one is truly an overcomer if their general lifestyle is godly and they generally or habitually manifest victory over the world, the flesh and the devil. We are not speaking of course of perfection but the general direction of one's life. The fact that they (we) continually overcome does not merit or earn Jesus' favor, but is clear evidence that they (we) have the supernatural power from the Spirit to overcome. They (we) persevere to the end because of the indwelling Spirit. To say it another way, we (believers) continually **overcome** because Jesus **has overcome** all our enemies on the Cross, once and for all time, and He has sent us His Spirit to enable us to continually overcome until we see Him face to face! And so Jesus gets all the glory! See note above for more detailed discussion on who **overcomes**. See also chart Who is An Overcomer? One other aspect to note is that overcomer was addressed to individuals (**He**...) in all seven churches, including those tolerating and compromising with sin and those that were nearly dead or were completely dead.

One technical note is that Grant Osborne sees "seven promises to this church, by far the most of any letter."

I will make him a pillar (stulos) **in the temple** (naos) **of My God** - A **pillar** is a support that symbolized stability, permanence, and immovability. This metaphorical description would have had special meaning to the citizens of Philadelphia who experienced frequent aftershocks earthquakes (especially the great earthquake of 17 AD). It is interesting that in areas where earthquakes occurred the structures that often remained standing were the pillars (as shown in pictures of archaeological ruins!) When all else has fallen, a pillar remains strong and erect.

In Rev 21:22 John is describing the New Jerusalem and writes "I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." And the Lamb says we are pillars in the temple! In Eph 2:19-22 Paul explains that we are "fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is **growing into a holy temple in the Lord,** in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." Peter adds "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1Pe 2:5)

John MacArthur adds that "**Pillars** can also represent honor; in pagan temples they were often carved in such a way as to honor a particular deity. The marvelous promise Christ makes to believers is that they will have an eternal place of honor in the temple of God (heaven). To people used to fleeing their city because of earthquakes and enemies, the promise that they will not go out from heaven was understood as security in eternal glory. (See Revelation Commentary)

John Stott - If, then, we become a pilgrim in this life, we will be a pillar in the next. If we dare to go out through the door of service, we will never go out of the security of paradise. If we risk our name for Christ in this world, then on our pillar in the next, three names will be permanently engraved. (BORROW What Christ thinks of the church : Revelation 1-3 expounded)

Brian Bell - Pillar - The symbolism here would be very meaningful to people who lived in constant danger of earthquakes. Because pillars are known for the stability. [no need to go out of a city that nothing could destroy] **Names** - Ancient cities often honored great leaders by erecting pillars w/ their names on them.

William Barclay describes the scene - (After) Shocks were an everyday occurrence. Gaping cracks appeared in the walls of the houses. First one part of the city was in ruins, then another. Most of the population lived outside the city in huts and were afraid even to go on to the city streets in case they should be killed by falling masonry. Those who still dared to live in the city were considered mad; they spent their time shoring up the shaking buildings and every now and then fleeing to the open spaces for safety. These terrible days in Philadelphia were never wholly forgotten, and people in the city were always waiting subconsciously for the ominous tremors of the ground, ready to flee for their lives to the open spaces.

Wiersbe - Ancient cities often honored great leaders by erecting pillars with their names inscribed on them. God's pillars are not made of stone, because there is no temple in the heavenly city (Rev. 21:22). His pillars are faithful people who bear His name for His glory (Gal. 2:9). (BORROW Be Victorious)

Steve Lawson - In ancient times, a distinguished citizen would have a pillar erected in his honor. He might be a noted senator, a noble dignitary, a famous philosopher, or a respected educator. His name would be inscribed upon a massive pillar to document his contribution for future generations to see. Drawing upon this ancient practice, Jesus said that overcomers will receive such recognition in heaven. All faithful service for Christ will never be forgotten. Better than having our name written upon one of the pillars, we will BE pillars in the Temple of God. Now, that's eternal security. (Final call - BORROW)

And he will not go out from it anymore- **Not** is again a double negative (ou me), the strongest way to express negation in the Greek! Our future foundation is fixed forever! The 17 AD earthquake was so bad and lasted so long that the majority of the citizens left the city and lived in flimsy mud huts to avoid the falling rubble. Citizens of Philadelphia could therefore readily relate to the promise you **will not go out from it anymore**.

Steve Lawson adds that "Philadelphia sat on a fault line near the epicenter of the massive earthquake of A.D. 17. Buildings, debris, and rubble came tumbling down upon the citizens as they ran out of town for safety. Aftershocks served as reminders of threatening danger. Many were too terrified to move back. Others who did return live in constant fear of another earthquake. So the slightest tremor sent the citizens of Philadelphia scurrying out of town. By contrast, Jesus says we will never leave the presence of God. He will make us a permanent fixture in the heavenly temple." (Final call - BORROW)

Paige Patterson - The promise is that the day is coming when there will be stability and permanence for the child of God, and he will never again know the kinds of uncertainties experienced by the Christians in Philadelphia. (Page 134 Revelation: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition)

As alluded to above it was common practice in the ancient world to place names of important individuals on pillars and sometimes to

even sculpt pillars in human shapes. And so in Rev 3:12 we see Jesus promises the overcomer will be a **pillar** and then He mentions three **names** on those pillars (i.e., the overcomers). We actually see this practice in the Old Testament for when King Solomon built the **Temple**, "he set up the **pillars** at the porch of the nave ("in front of the Temple" - 2Chr 3:17); and he set up the right **pillar** and **named** it **Jachin** ("he establishes"), and he set up the left pillar and **named** it **Boaz** ("in him is strength")." (1Ki 7:21).

Another possible Old Testament association with names on each overcomer, is the description of the Jewish high priest in which Moses was instructed "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and shall engrave on it, like the engravings of a seal, 'Holy to the LORD.' You shall fasten it on a blue cord, and it shall be on the turban; it shall be at the front of the turban. It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall take away the iniquity of the holy things which the sons of Israel consecrate, with regard to all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD." (Ex 28:36-38+). Every overcomer is also a priest to the Lord (1Pe 2:9) and one could see the OT practice parallel the writing of God on the overcomer, so that wherever we go in all eternity we are reminded of whose we are and that we are forever "Holy to the LORD." Revelation 22:4 adds "they will see His face, and His **name** will be on their foreheads!" Amazing grace indeed!

And I will write on him the name (onoma) **of My God, and the name** (onoma) **of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name** (onoma) - Here we see 3 **names** and we do well to remember that the purpose of a **name** is identification and they show to whom the person bearing the **name** belongs. In other words writing your name upon something (someone in this case) was a mark of ownership. "A master would write his name upon his servants. Like a brand on cattle, the master's name meant that the servant belonged to him. To receive God's name is equivalent to belonging to Him. That relationship can never be broken. His name is inscribed permanently upon His servants. We are His forever." (Lawson) Recall Rev 2:17+ we learned that the overcomer will have "a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it." In Scripture **name** stands for all the person is and in this context all that God is, all His attributes, etc. His **name** on us speaks of our identity and security. If His **name** is on us, we are His possession (forever).

The New Jerusalem is our dwelling place and the **name** guarantees that it will be our home forever and assures us that we will receive "all the rights of citizenship. (cf Php 3:20-21). This heavenly citizenship will mean the removal of all pain and sorrow, access to the water of life, eating from the tree of life, serving Christ, seeing His face, reigning with Him and deliverance from all ungodly people (Rev 21-22)." (Steve Lawson - Final call - BORROW)

Jesus' **new** (kainos - qualitatively new, brand new, never before in existence) **name** speaks of our intimacy with Him and identifies us (like with the Father) as His possession (cf 1Co 6:19-20, Titus 2:14, 1Pe 2:9-10). We are in covenant with Jesus now, this covenant guaranteeing a beautiful oneness, fellowship and communion. But the fact that Jesus uses the word **new** (kainos) would indicate that there is more to come, that we have not begun to experience the benefits of that covenant to the degree we will throughout eternity. This is so mind boggling that it is difficult to put into words. In short in our present earthly existence, our future is superbly and sublimely indescribable and incomprehensible. Little wonder the writer of Hebrews was inspired to record the phrase "so great a salvation," (Heb 2:3). As Paul said "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND which HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." (1Cor 2:9) Now, I realize in context Paul was not referring primarily to heaven but to the wisdom God had prepared for believers. However, it does not seem inappropriate to use Paul's words to describe the glories of Heaven because our eyes have not yet seen it and our ears have not yet heard what God has prepared for overcomers, those who love Him!

John Phillips - There are mysteries of beauty, of brilliance, and of blessing in Jesus not yet revealed to a wondering universe, as when the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon and said, "Behold the half was not told me." But something of that unknown glory will be written into the shining countenances of the overcomers. His old name was Jehovah. How much that name unfolds! His present name is Jesus, and what a volume of revelation there is in that! As for His new name, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9). We must be content with that. (BORROW Exploring Revelation)

Steve Lawson adds that "Christ's new name symbolizes the full revelation of His divine person. Presently, we can't even begin to grasp the full magnitude of His unveiled glory. But at the time of our arrival into heaven, we shall know Him -- exponentially so!...One day we, as overcomers, will see Christ face to face and will behold His glory. Overwhelmed in amazement, we will grown beyond all present thoughts in our knowledge of Him." (Final call - BORROW)

Guzik on **name** - They are marks of intimacy, because they show we are privileged to know Him in ways others are not. This works together well with the image of a pillar. In the ancient world, having a special inscribed pillar added to one of the temples sometimes honored a faithful city servant or distinguished priest. "Philadelphia honored its illustrious sons by putting their names on the pillars of its temples, so that all who came to worship might see and remember." (Barclay)

Barclay has an interesting background of why "**new name**" would be apropos in Philadelphia - Tiberius was as generous to Philadelphia as he had been to Sardis. In gratitude, it changed its name to Neocaesarea—the New City of Caesar. In the time of

Vespasian, Philadelphia was to change its name, again out of gratitude, to Flavia, for Flavius was the emperor's family name. It is true that neither of these new names lasted and 'Philadelphia' was restored. But the people of Philadelphia knew what it was to receive 'a new name'.

Mounce on **name** (onoma) - The impact of the threefold inscription is to show that the faithful belong to God, hold citizenship in the New Jerusalem, and are in a special way related to Christ. Aaron, the high priest, wore on his forehead a golden plate with the engraving "HOLY TO THE LORD" (Exod 28:36–38). In Rev 7:3 the servants of God are sealed on their foreheads, which according to Rev 14:1 takes the form of the name of the Lamb and of his Father written on their foreheads (cf. 22:4). The name of the city of God indicates citizenship in the heavenly commonwealth (cf. Gal 4:26; Phil 3:20). Christ's own new name symbolizes the full revelation of his character, which awaits the second advent (cf. Rev 19:12). It is not hidden at the present time because of some primitive superstition that if known could be used to his disadvantage but reflects the current inability of the human race to grasp the full theological significance of the incarnation. While it is interesting that Philadelphia twice adopted a new name (Neocaesarea, out of gratitude to Tiberius for his help in rebuilding after the great earthquake, and, later, Flavia, the family name of Vespasian), it adds little to our understanding of the verse. (he Book of Revelation - New International Commentary New Testament - BORROW)

Brian Bell - **Names** - Ancient cities often honored great leaders by erecting pillars w/ their names on them. Three Names (3 tattoos, write on him) Interesting: The citizens of Philadelphia expressed warm gratitude on inscriptions and coins to the emperor Tiberius for his assistance in the process of rebuilding their city, and they later took the name Neocaesarea. 1. YHWH. New Jerusalem. Jesus' New Name (?). God's name, His City's name. His Son's name. a) Just as the high priest wore God's name on their heads (turbans). *Holiness to the Lord.* b) Also referring to proof of ownership [eg. when men put on their wives license plate frame, Johnny's Girl] c) Also, maybe in contrast to the mark of the beast. APPLICATION - We are much like the Philadelphia church in that God has set many open doors before us. 1. If He Opens the door we must Work. If He Shuts the Doors we must Wait. 2. We must see the Opportunities & not the Obstacles. a) Missed Opportunities are missed Rewards (take your crown)

Herbert Lockyer - What a bountiful promise is this sixth one, offered to those in Philadelphia, who although weak, yet pursued! In spite of so much to test their faith they held fast with a tight and tightening grip Christ's Word, name, patience and return. The Holy Spirit promised that earth's weakness would be exchanged for heaven's stability: "Him will I make a. **pillar**." Then there is a fixed and eternal abode. "He shall go no more at all out." As to bearing God's **name**, what a privilege it will be for each one of the conquering band to bear such a privileged **name**, indicating a special relationship with Him amid heavenly blessedness. (Borrow All the promises of the Bible)

Pillar (4769)(stulos) describes a literal column which serves as a support of a structure. As a figure of speech it describes any firm support or persons of authority and influence in the church, those who bear responsibility (the elders in Jerusalem). **Robertson** on Rev 3:12 = "Metaphorical and personal use with a double significance of being firmly fixed and giving stability to the building." 1Ti 3:15 uses stulos describes "the church of the living God, the **pillar** and support of the truth." **Vine** says in 1Ti 3:15 it is used "in a collective capacity, to maintain the doctrines of the faith by teaching and practice." All 4 NT uses are metaphorical. It can describe something in shape which resembles a pillar (like a column of fire (Ex 13:21, 14:24, Rev 10:1) **Vine** adds "in Rev. 10:1, seen as flames rising like columns of fire indicative of holiness and consuming power, and thus reflecting the glory of Christ as depicted in Rev. 1:15; cp. Ezek. 1:7.) In Gal 3:2 stulos describes one recognized for spiritual leadership.

> **Gilbrant** - The noun stulos is a common term in classical Greek for many kinds of pillars, columns, and other architectural supports. In the Septuagint the Greek term stulos is used to translate five Hebrew words, of which the terms for pillars (e.g., Exodus 27:10-17; 36:36 [LXX 37:4]; 1 Kings 7:41-45 [3 Kings 7:41-45]) and column, an upright board or studding in the tabernacle (e.g., Exodus 26:15-29), are the most prominent (Madvig, "Temple," Colin Brown, 3:795). However, the term is also employed in a more metaphoric, cosmological sense to refer to God's shaking the "foundations" of earth (Job 9:6) or of heaven (Job 26:11). The underlying idea is that God, the master architect, has constructed the created order as His dwelling place (Wilckens, "stulos," Kittel, 7:733). The term stulos is used exclusively in a metaphoric or quasi-metaphoric, cosmological sense in its four appearances in the New Testament. In Revelation 3:12 the overcomer is told by the Spirit that he will become a pillar in the temple of God. The reference likely pertains to the pillars which adorned the porch of Solomon's Temple (Madvig, "Temple," Colin Brown, 3:795). In Revelation 10:1 the angel from heaven is described as having feet like "pillars of fire," a metaphoric reference to the Old Testament theophanies in which God appeared in this manner in towering glory to Israel. In 1 Timothy 3:15 the Church of the living God is called the **pillar** and ground of the truth. The Church is viewed as the house of God, which God has constructed to support and to conserve this truth. The architectural metaphor is pronounced, although here stulos refers more to the support and foundation provided by the columns than the columns per se. In Galatians 2:9 Paul referred to James, Cephas, and John, leaders of the Jerusalem church, as ones "who seemed to be **pillars**." Paul conceived of the Church as God's temple, and in this striking metaphor he viewed

these leaders as basic **pillars**. Upon them rested the authority and responsibility to provide guidance for the Jerusalem church. In all four instances the term stulos is based on either the design of the temple or the concept of the earth as God's building. Within this framework, the term is used metaphorically to refer to angels, leaders, and the Church. (Complete Biblical Library)

Stulos - 4v - pillar(2), pillars(2). Gal. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 3:12; Rev. 10:1

Revelation 3:13 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

- Rev 2:7
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

LISTEN UP!

He (singular) **who has an ear, let him hear** (akouo) **what the Spirit** (pneuma) (present tense - continually) **says to the churches** (ekklesia) - See above for more detail on this identical command. **Let him hear** is a command from Jesus in the aorist imperative which calls for the hearers to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey! Hear and heed is the our charge and this charge parallels the words trust and obey! This command calls for urgent action. Do not procrastinate or prevaricate. Just do it! (the "nike commercial command"). In the context of this letter this note of urgency is underscored by Jesus' declaration "**I am coming quickly**!"

THOUGHT Jesus' command begs the question do you even have ears to hear? Are you listening to the Spirit's words of wisdom and warning and promise of eternal wealth (crown)? Are you ready to meet Jesus face to face? Are you heeding John's words in his first epistle "Now, little children, **abide** (present imperative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey) in Him, so that (PURPOSE CLAUSE) when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." (1Jn 2:28+)? (See related discussion Are You Listening?)

Revelation 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

BGT Revelation 3:14 Κα τ γγ λ τ ς ν Λαοδικε κκλησ ας γρ ψον· Τ δε λ γει μ ν, μ ρτυς πιστ ς κα ληθιν ς, ρχ τ ς κτ σεως το θεο ·

KJV Revelation 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

NET Revelation 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write the following: "This is the solemn pronouncement of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the originator of God's creation:

CSB Revelation 3:14 "Write to the angel of the church in Laodicea: "The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Originator of God's creation says:

ESV Revelation 3:14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

NIV Revelation 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

NLT Revelation 3:14 "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen-- the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's new creation:

NRS Revelation 3:14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin of God's creation:

NJB Revelation 3:14 'Write to the angel of the church in Laodicea and say, "Here is the message of the Amen, the trustworthy, the true witness, the Principle of God's creation:

NAB Revelation 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea, write this: " 'The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the source of God's creation, says this:

YLT Revelation 3:14 'And to the messenger of the assembly of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the witness -- the faithful and true -- the chief of the creation of God;

GWN Revelation 3:14 "To the messenger of the church in Laodicea, write: The amen, the witness who is faithful and true, the source of God's creation, says:

BBE Revelation 3:14 And to the angel of the church in Laodicea say: These things says the true and certain witness, the head of God's new order:

RSV Revelation 3:14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: `The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

NKJ Revelation 3:14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,`These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

ASV Revelation 3:14 And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God:

MIT Revelation 3:14 To the messenger of the church at Laodicea write— The one who is the confirmation, the faithful and true representative, the leader of God's creation, has this to say:

- **the ang**el: Rev 1:11 2:1
- **in Laodicea**, Col 2:1 Col 4:16
- **the Amen:** Isa 65:16 2Co 1:20
- **the faithful:** Rev 3:7 1:5 19:11 22:6 Isa 55:4 Jer 42:5
- **the beginning**: Col 1:15
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Colossians 2:1-5+ (WRITTEN ABOUT 61 AD) For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at **Laodicea**, (**ED**: DID PAUL SEE THE SAD ESTATE OF THIS CHURCH ONLY 30-35 YEARS AFTER THIS GREAT CHRISTOLOGICAL EPISTEL?) and for all those who have not personally seen my face, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, 3 in Whom are hidden **all the treasures** of wisdom and knowledge (**ED**: WHAT A REFUTATION OF THE SELF-SUFFICIENT LAODICEANS WHO HAD TEMPORAL TREASURE!) . 4 I say this so that no one will (present tense - continually - IT WAS ALREADY HAPPENING!!!) delude (paralogizomai) you with persuasive argument (pithanologia). 5 For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.

Colossians 4:12-16+ (WRITTEN ABOUT 61 AD 35 YEARS BEFORE REVELATION WRITTEN) Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondslave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. 13 For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in **Laodicea** and Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas. 15 Greet the brethren who are in **Laodicea** and also Nympha and the church that is in her house. 16 When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the **church of the Laodiceans**; and you, for your part read **my letter that is coming from Laodicea**. (PAUL WAS IN LAODICEA!)

Revelation 1:5+ and from Jesus Christ, **the faithful witness**, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood–

Isaiah 65:16 (OT TITLE OF GOD) "Because he who is blessed in the earth Will be blessed by **the God of truth (AMEN)**; And he who swears in the earth Will swear by **the God of truth (AMEN)**; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My sight!

> **NEB** - He who invokes a blessing on himself in the land shall do so by the **God whose name is Amen**, and he who utters an oath in the land shall do so by **the God of Amen;** the former troubles are forgotten and they are hidden from my sight.

2 Corinthians 1:20KJV+ For all the promises of God in him are ***yea*** (that is the possibility of their being fulfilled), and in him ***Amen*** (the certainty and actuality, of their being fulfilled), unto the glory of God by us.

Lycus Valley in Center - Green Line marks the aqueduct that brought likely lukewarm & impure water from South.
See Hierapolis 6 mi to the North & Colossae 10 mi to the East

THE CHURCH
OF THE TARES

Mattoon calls this "The Church That Made Christ Sick."

Warren Wiersbe - The name “Laodicea” means “the rule of the people” and suggests a democratic church that no longer follows spiritual leaders or the authority of the Word of God

William Newell on **Laodicea** - The name comes from laos, people, and dikao, to rule: the rule of the people: “democracy,” in other words. (It is the exact opposite of Nicolaitan!) We come now to the sad and awful end of church testimony. That leaving of first love in Ephesus, comes now to being left by the Lord!

HCSB - The Laodicean church was probably planted by Epaphras (Col 1:7), along with the churches of Hierapolis and Colossae, during Paul's three-year ministry at Ephesus (Ac 19:8-10; Acts 20:31).

Pulpit Commentary - The importance of this Church continued for some time, the celebrated Council of Laodicea being held there in A.D. 361, and a century later its bishop held a prominent position (Labbe, 4. p. 82, etc.). But its influence gradually waned, and the Turks pressed hardly upon it; so that at the present time it is little more than a heap of ruins. The warnings of the Apostles SS. Paul and John, if heeded at all for a time, were forgotten, and her candlestick was removed.

To the angel (aggelos - messenger) **of the church** (ekklesia) **in Laodicea write** (grapho): While some think the **angel** was a literal angel, most writers (and I agree) favor this as either the one who carried the letter from John on Patmos or the head of the local church (aka "pastor"). **The Amen** (amen) - It is interesting that Jesus even call this a "church" for there is no evidence of spiritual life. The real church is the body of Christ composed of born again followers of Christ, but this church is simply an assembly of lost souls. We might as well call it "The Church of the Tares." **Write** is a command in aorist imperative meaning "Do this now! Don't delay!" The need is especially urgent for this church which has no followers of Jesus! **Amen** is a title of Christ, because through Him the purposes of God are established (cf 2Co 1:20KJV+).

On this verse **Newell** comments "This is a great announcement, for in ourselves we are worse than failures, but in Christ all God’s plans are made good!" **Amen** is a word signifying the acknowledgment of that which is sure and valid, and is often spoken as response to revelation of divine truth - "It is true! So be it!" In sum, **Amen** is a title which affirms that all Jesus says and promises is true (and all God's children cry "Amen!" to that statement!). To say it another way **Amen** says the faithful God brings things to pass just as He has promised.

John MacArthur adds that **Amen** "is a unique title. And it probably reflects a Hebrew origin. Isaiah 65:16 says, “The God of**truth** (amen).” **Amen** is Hebrew for truth or affirmation or certainty. God was called the God of truth, the God of certainty, the God of affirmation. Whatever God says is so, whatever God says is true, whatever God says is certain; therefore, He’s the **God of amen**. **Amen** is often used in Scripture as a word to affirm the veracity of a statement. Sometimes it is used before a statement...usually translated “verily, verily,” or “truly, truly,” but in the Greek is “amen, amen.” You often see before a significant statement “**amen, amen**” to affirm the truthfulness of what is to be said. (**ED**: 25x AND ONLY IN GOSPEL OF JOHN - E.G., Jn 1:51, 3:3, 5, 11; Jn 5:19, 24, 25, etc) Sometimes you see **amen** at the very end....to seal the certainty of what has been said. **Amen** means firm, fixed, certain, faithful, unchangeable....How is Christ the **Amen**? We could say that He is the **Amen** in the sense that He is God....He is the **Amen** because He is true, He is the **Amen** because He is certain....Scripture tells us in 2 Corinthians 1:20 “For all the promises of God in Him are **amen**.”....That means that all God’s promises and all God’s covenants are guaranteed and affirmed by the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, God said, “I will forgive your sins.” God could never do that if it were not for the person and work of Christ. Right? Because forgiveness was purchased by His atoning death....So that everything that God ever planned or purposed for man, everything that God ever promised for man, finds its **amen** in Jesus Christ. (The Lukewarm Church part 1)

The faithful (pistos) **and true** (atethinos) **Witness** (martus) - Jesus' testimony is supremely credible based on His past earthly life of perfect obedience to His Father, for He was loyal (faithful) to the point of death.. Jesus did not dilute the truth (faithful) nor distort the truth (true). In simple terms this title of Jesus says we can trust Him implicitly and fully to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth! The phrase **faithful and true** occurs only 4 times in the entire Bible and all 4 are in this last book (Rev 3:14, 19:11, 21:5, 22:6), twice referring to Jesus Himself and twice to refer to His Word, an association which makes sense because ultimately Jesus is the living Word (Jn 1:1)! And in Rev 1:5 He is the "faithful witness." Clearly the Spirit wants the church to be fully confident and convinced that Jesus' Word is trustworthy, and everything He is saying is absolutely true (inerrant). Laying hold of these attributes of Jesus strengthens our faith. He said it, that settles it, whether I can fully understand it or not (and some things in the

Revelation are difficult to understand)! **Faithful** conveys the basic idea of trustworthiness and describes Jesus as reliable, worthy of belief and totally dependable. **Vincent** adds that pistos used of Jesus describes Him as "True to his own nature and promises; keeping faith with Himself and with man." **Faithful** (pistos) is used 8x in Revelation (Rev 1:5; 2:10; 2:13; 3:14;17:14; 19:11; 21:5; 22:6), 3 times to refer to Jesus, 3x to His saints and 2x to His Word (study the passages).

Newell on **faithful and truth witness** - As the Faithful and True Witness, Christ is giving now this seventh one of the searching messages to His assemblies on earth: He will see all; He will withhold nothing profitable; He will warn with perfect fidelity; He will commend with absolute kindness. This is why we can delight in The Revelation. It is not only the word of God, but it is the testimony of Jesus. He speaks all with unswerving faithfulness....To Philadelphia our Lord had spoken in personal fellowship, "I am he that is **true**" To Laodicea, lukewarm, having no real heart for Him, He says, "I am the **true witness**": solemn difference!

The Beginning (arche) **of the creation** (ktisis) **of God** - **HCSB** = "the **Originator** of God's creation." Jesus did not HAVE a **beginning**. He IS the **beginning**! **Beginning** speaks of Jesus as the origin of the creation, not the product of creation.If you were the member of a cult that believes Jesus was a created being, you might twist this verse to undergird that false teaching! You might say look what the text says "Jesus is the beginning of the creation" which you might falsely think shows that the Bible says Jesus was created. That is clearly incorrect and shows an ignorance of the meaning of **Beginning** (arche). Zodhiates (see note below) says "**Arché** denotes an active cause, as in Col. 1:18; Rev. 3:14 (cf. Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13). Christ is called "**the beginning**" because He is the efficient cause of the creation; "the head" (Col 1:18) because He is before all things, and all things were created by Him and for Him (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:10)."

Swindoll - When Christ identified Himself as the **Amen, the faithful and true Witness**, and the supreme Source and Ruler of all creation, the church at Laodicea must have bristled. They may have even squirmed. He was preparing to speak the truth, to bear true **witness** against their falsehood. And as He outlined the real situation in Laodicea, He did so not as a casual observer giving a few pieces of constructive criticism. He was their sovereign Lord, Who could make or break that church in an instant. (See Insights on Revelation)

MacArthur on **Beginning** (arche) **of the creation** - This corrects a heresy (**ED**: SEE What is Arianism? See also note below), apparently present in Laodicea as in Colossae, that Christ was a created being (cf. Col 1:15-20+). Instead, He is the "**Beginning**" (lit. "beginner, originator, initiator") of creation (cf. Jn 1:3+) and the "firstborn of creation"; that is, the most preeminent, supreme person ever born (Col 1:15+). As a man, He had a **beginning**, but as God, He was the **beginning**. Sadly, this heresy concerning the person of Christ had produced an unregenerate church in Laodicea. (BORROW The MacArthur Study Bible)

David Reed addresses the phrase **the Beginning of the creation of God** - This verse is one of the Jehovah's Witnesses' favorites, in their attempt to "prove" that Jesus Christ is a mere created being, the first angel that God made. "Look!" they say. "Jesus is 'the beginning of the creation.' " But they should be careful. They will tell you that **God the Father** is the speaker at Revelation 21:6 and Revelation 22:13, yet in both verses he calls himself "**the beginning**." Therefore, "the **beginning**" must mean something else other than the first thing created. Actually, in each of these cases, the Greek text says **arche**, a word listed in Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words as having such varied meanings as "beginning," "power," "magistrate," and "ruler." The Watchtower Bible translates the plural of the same word as "government officials" at Luke 12:11. It is the root of our words archbishop, architect, and other words referring to someone who is chief over others. Thus, the New International Version at Revelation 3:14 says that Christ is "the ruler of God's creation." So there is no basis for claiming that Revelation 3:14 makes Jesus Christ a created being. (BORROW Jehovah's Witnesses : answered verse by verse)

CARM addresses the phrase **the Beginning of the creation of God** - The Greek word translated "**beginning**" here is the word "arche." Arche certainly can mean "beginning" as in "the first in series," which is how the Jehovah's Witness understands it here. But it can also mean "beginning" in the sense of the "origin" or "source" of a thing, or can carry the sense of "the one with whom a process begins." It even can mean "ruler" or "authority," from which we get words like "archbishop", "archangel", or "arch enemy." In Greek philosophy, the "arche" was the eternal absolute from which all created things are derived,[5] from which we get words like "archetype". So it is not enough merely to note that Jesus IS the "beginning of the creation of God." We have to ask in what sense is Jesus the "arche" of creation? How is He using the word here? (click for full article)

Amen (281) amen [OT = **Amen** (0543) amen] is a transliteration from the Hebrew word **amen** which in turn is from the Hebrew verb **aman** = to be firm, to believe, this word conveying the idea of certainty)**Amen** is transliterated into Latin and English and many other languages, so that it is practically a universal word. In fact **amen** has been called the best-known word in human speech. To say "**Amen**" confirms a statement by someone else. **Renn** notes that **Amen** "indicates the solemn affirmation of the divine will and purpose in about one-third of the nearly 150 occurrences of the term. The remaining uses of the term yield the adverbial meaning "**truly**." (Expository Dictionary of Bible Words) Surely acknowledges that which is valid and binding. The OT often used "amen" at the end of a sentence (truly, surely, certainly) to confirm the preceding words and invokes their fulfillment. Only the Lord Jesus uses amen (truly) at beginning of a sentence. His "Amen" guarantees the truth of His saying and affirms His authority. **Friberg**

(BORROW - Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament) summarizes amen - Amen is transliterated from the Hebrew amen; usually translated into Greek by genoito (let it be so, truly); (1) liturgically, used as a particle of strong affirmation and assent at the end of a doxology this is indeed true (Ro 11.36) or a prayer of thanksgiving that is the way it should be (1Cor 14.16); (2) used with lego (to speak) to emphasize that what is being said is a solemn declaration of what is true (Jn 1.51); (3) figuratively and substantivally the Amen, used by Christ of himself as the one speaking what is true (Rev 3.14) **Amen** is a response to something that has just been said, except in Jesus' teachings. Jesus, the ultimate "Amen" (Rev 3:14), is the supreme authority and so it is clearly apropos that His teachings be introduced by **amen**. John's Gospel has 25 uses of "amen" and every use is a double **amen** (or double "**truly**" in the **NAS** - 25 times). None of the other 3 Gospels use a "double amen." It is also notable that in the four Gospels, **amen** is used only by our Lord Jesus Christ, almost always "to introduce new revelations of the mind of God." (Vine) Every use of "amen" or "truly" by Jesus serves to affirm what follows and by extension to cause us to pay close attention to the teaching. The Pauline uses of **amen** occur primarily at the close of his prayers or doxologies, and as such serve to confirm them as "it is firm" (or "so let it be").

> **Amen in the Revelation** - Rev. 1:6; Rev. 1:7; Rev. 3:14; Rev. 5:14; Rev. 7:12; Rev. 19:4; Rev. 22:20

Faithful (4103) **pistos** rom **peitho** = to persuade - induce one by words to believe, have confidence) is something or someone who is worthy of faith or keeps promises and is applied to God, humans, His Word, etc Pistos means dependable (worthy of reliance or trust), trustworthy, steadfast, unswerving. **Webster** says that "**Faithful**" means firm in adherence to whatever one owes allegiance and implies unswerving adherence to a person or thing or to the oath or promise by which a tie was contracted.

> **Pistos in the Revelation** - Rev. 1:5; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 3:14; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 19:11; Rev. 21:5; Rev. 22:6

Witness (noun) (3144) **martus/martys** basically describes one who remembers something and testifies concerning what they remember. Notice that **martus** has a two fold meaning of (1) describing one who has seen and/or experienced something or someone and (2) one who testifies to what he or she saw. The testimony could be in a legal setting (Mk 14:63; Acts 6:13; 7:58; Heb. 10:28) or in the general sense of recounting firsthand knowledge (Lk 11:48; 1Ti. 6:12; Heb 12:1; 1Pe 5:1). A **martus** is one who attests to a fact or event, one who gives evidence (testifies in a court to the truth of a fact or event), one who has seen or has personal knowledge of something or someone, especially as an "eye witness" (eg, the apostles in Acts having and relating their personal knowledge of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances). A witness is one who furnishes evidence or proof, confirming the truth by verbal testimony.

> **Martus in the Revelation** - Rev. 1:5; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 3:14; Rev. 11:3; Rev. 17:6

Beginning (746) arche refers to the commencement of something as an action, process, or state of being. Here arché refers to first in relation to time (priority in time, the beginning of anything, the origin and by far the most common use in the NT) Arche has three main nuances - (1) beginning, origin Mt 19:4; 24:8; Mk 1:1; 13:8; Lk 1:2; Jm 1:1 ; 15:27; Acts 11:15. Heb 2:3. (2). ruler, authority, official Lk 12:11; 20:20; Titus 3:1. Of angels and demons Ro 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Col 2:10, 15.(3) Rule, domain, sphere of influence Jude 1:6.

> **Zodhiates adds Arche** is "Spoken by metonymy of persons indicating not time but priority and preeminence (Col. 1:18, "who is the beginning," meaning the ruler). See prototokos <G4416>, firstborn; Sept.: Gen. 49:3; Deut. 21:17. In Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13, "the beginning and the end" means the first and the last indicating the One who created the beginning and the One who will bring about the end of what He originally created, not through elimination but change. **In Rev. 3:14,** "the beginning of the creation" means the active beginning of the creation, the One who caused the creation, referring to Jesus Christ not as a created being, but the One who created all things (John 1:3)." (BORROW Complete Word Study Dictionary)
>
> See SPECIAL TOPIC: *ARCHĒ*
>
> **Arche in the Revelation** -
>
> 1. Rev. 3:14 = "the **Beginning** of the creation of God"
> 2. Rev. 21:6+ = "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the **beginning** and the end."
> 3. Rev. 22:13+ = "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the **beginning** and the end."
>
> **Beginning of the creation of God** - Some writers point out that Rev 3:14 was used as a "proof-text" to support the false teaching of **Arianism**. Dr Wayne Grudem writes " **Arianism** Denies the Full Deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. a. The Arian Controversy: The term Arianism is derived from Arius, a Bishop of Alexandria whose views were condemned at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, and who died in A.D. 336. Arius taught that God the Son was at one point created by God the Father, and that before that time the Son did not exist, nor

did the Holy Spirit, but the Father only. Thus, though the Son is a heavenly being who existed before the rest of creation and who is far greater than all the rest of creation, he is still not equal to the Father in all his attributes—he may even be said to be "like the Father" or "similar to the Father" in his nature, but he cannot be said to be "of the same nature" as the Father. The Arians depended heavily on texts that called Christ God's "only begotten" Son (John 1:14; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). If Christ were "begotten" by God the Father, they reasoned, it must mean that he was brought into existence by God the Father (for the word "beget" in human experience refers to the father's role in conceiving a child). Further support for the Arian view was found in Colossians 1:15, "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation." Does not "first-born" here imply that the Son was at some point brought into existence by the Father?24 And if this is true of the Son, it must necessarily be true of the Holy Spirit as well. (For more explanation see page 200 Systematic Theology; See also What is Arianism?)

FACTS ABOUT LAODICEA

- Watch this excellent 10 minute video from Faithlife ministries.
- It is located at what is known as the "Gate of Phrygia." Out of the oriental East, the great camel caravans came down through the Gate of Phrygia and through Laodicea. This road came out of the East and went to Ephesus, to Miletus, and also up to what is called Izmir today but was Smyrna in that day. Laodicea was in a spectacular place, a great valley. (J. Vernon McGee.)
- Two important imperial trade routes converged in Laodicea making the city a wealthy commercial center, the richest in Phrygia. **Osborne** says "The same major Roman road that went south from Pergamum through Philadelphia passed through Laodicea 45 miles later. It was also 100 miles east of Ephesus, near the eastern border of the Roman province of Asia. It was in perfect position to become a wealthy city due to the convergence of trade routes from the east. (Revelation - Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament)
- Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake in 60 AD, but the citizens were so wealthy that they refused any aid from the Romans to rebuild their city. **Akin** adds "The Roman historian Tacitus said of her, "*Laodicea arose from the ruins by the strength of her own resources, and with no help from us*." (Ann. XIV. 27). The city and church alike saw themselves as self-sufficient. They did not need the help of anyone including God. They were just fine all by themselves." Although Laodicea's attitude of self-sufficiency was respected by Rome, the church of Laodicea would be rebuked for such self-reliance.
- Laodicea had one major weakness which was a lack of an adequate and convenient source for water.See picture above with the **green line** marking the track of the six-mile-long aqueduct that supplied water from the south but was lukewarm by the time it reached the city (SEE REMAINS OF THE AQUEDUCT). The water was so distasteful that visitors, not prepared for its tepid flavor, would often vomit after tasting.
- We also know that there were hot springs in Hierapolis 6 miles north (SEEPICTURE OF HOT SPRINGS WITH Calcium Carbonate DEPOSITS) and cold springs in Colasse about 10 miles to the east. Here is a very interesting article entitled Hot or Cold at Laodicea."
- Luxurious black wool was produced in Laodicea (cf Jesus provision of white garments - Rev 3:18).
- Laodicea was widely known for its medical school and it's famous ear ointment and eye salve, the latter made from Phrygian powder mixed with oil. (cf Jesus advise to buy His "brand" of "eye salve." - Rev 3:18 and "ears to hear" in Rev 3:22).

Danny Akin's Outline of "The Church that Makes God Sick" (Rev 3:14-22)

I. Christ is characterized by His dependability. Rev 3:14

1. You can trust what He says.
2. You can trust what He starts.

II. Christ condemns those who are deceived. Rev 3:15-17

1. Don't be indifferent to your spiritual condition. Rev 3:15-16
2. Don't be ignorant of your spiritual condition. Rev 3:17

III. Christ counsels those who are deficient. Rev 3:18-19

1. You need Christ's riches. Rev 3:18
2. You need Christ's righteousness. Rev 3:18
3. You need Christ's restoration. Rev 3:18
4. You need Christ's rebuke. Rev 3:19

IV. Christ challenges those who need direction. Rev 3:20-22

1. I will come in if you invite me. Rev 3:20
2. You can reign with me if you trust me. Rev 3:21-22

Revelation 3:15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

BGT Revelation 3:15 ο δ σου τ ργα τι ο τε ψυχρ ς ε ο τε ζεστ ς. φελον ψυχρ ς ς ζεστ ς.

KJV Revelation 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

NET Revelation 3:15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot!

CSB Revelation 3:15 I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot.

ESV Revelation 3:15 "'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!

NIV Revelation 3:15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!

NLT Revelation 3:15 "I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other!

NRS Revelation 3:15 "I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot.

NJB Revelation 3:15 I know about your activities: how you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other,

NAB Revelation 3:15 "I know your works; I know that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot.

YLT Revelation 3:15 I have known thy works, that neither cold art thou nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot.

GWN Revelation 3:15 I know what you have done, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot.

BBE Revelation 3:15 I have knowledge of your works, that you are not cold or warm: it would be better if you were cold or warm.

RSV Revelation 3:15 "`I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot!

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

ASV Revelation 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

MIT Revelation 3:15 I know your activities to be neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other.

- **I know**: Rev 3:1 2:2
- **that**: Rev 2:4 Mt 24:12 Php 1:9 2Th 1:3 1Pe 1:22
- **I wish**: De 5:29 Ps 81:11-13 2Co 12:20
- **you were cold or hot.**: Jos 24:15-24 1Ki 18:21 Pr 23:26 Ho 7:8 10:2 Zep 1:5,6 Mt 6:24 Mt 10:37 Lu 14:27,28 1Co 16:22 Jas 1:8
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

WHAT IS THE TEMPERATURE OF YOUR DEEDS?

I know (eido) **your deeds** (ergon) **- Know** is perfect tense, signifying ongoing intimate, infallible knowledge, beyond a shadow of a doubt type knowledge (which one would expect given Jesus' omniscient eyes!) Note that Jesus says nothing else about this church's **deeds** (ergon) and specifically *does not commend* their **deeds** as He did every other church (Ephesus = Rev 2:2, 6; Smyrna = Rev 2:9; Pergamum = Rev 2:13; Thyatira = Rev 2:19, 26; Sardis = Rev 3:1, 2; Philadelphia = Rev 2:8). Laodicea was busy commending themselves! But their **deeds** (works) told a different story and gave evidence of their inner spiritual condition

because one's deeds ultimately prove what one is. **Deeds** do not save but they show salvation is real. Faith alone saves, but the faith that truly saves is not alone! Jesus penetrating gaze leads to give His scathing assessment of their **deeds**.

That you are neither cold (psuchros) **nor hot** (zestos) - Jesus the Great Physician takes their spiritual temperature and finds it unacceptable and unpalatable. Jesus compares them with **cold** and **hot**. The question is this -- Is Jesus using the comparison of the people or of their deeds?

There are two ways the hot/cold comparison has been interpreted. One way (see Swindoll, Akin) is to take the hot/cold as referring to their deeds, as "hot" deeds like the hot healing waters at Hierapolis and refreshing works like the cool waters at Colossae. The other interpretation (see Walvoord, MacArthur, Donald Barnhouse) interprets the metaphors of **hot**/**cold** as referring more to the people in the church, as either zealous (hot) or uninterested (cold).

Swindoll says it this way "When Christ wished that the Laodiceans were either cold or hot rather than lukewarm, He could have been referring to their **hypocritical nature**—they claimed to be a certain way, but their words and their deeds didn't match. Or He could have been saying that the Laodiceans were simply useless in their **works**. A little geography and history help us better understand the analogy. Ten miles to the east was Colossae, known for its refreshing cold springs. Six miles to the north was Hierapolis, which had hot springs. Laodicea, located on a high plateau far from any springs, had to pipe in its water through stone aqueducts. By the time it reached the city, the water was always tepid, lukewarm, and sometimes even bitter or chalky to the taste after traveling for miles through all that stone. Like their municipal water, Laodicea's works were lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. Cold water had therapeutic and culinary uses, as did hot water, but lukewarm water was unpleasant, insipid, and useless. **Similarly, the book of James addresses the issue of those who profess to have faith but fail to demonstrate it in their works.** James calls such fruitless faith "useless" (Jas. 2:14). Christ expressed disdain for the same type of sin in Laodicea: The works of the Christians there were done solely in the flesh and therefore were halfhearted, insincere, and self-indulgent. They reflected nothing of the love that comes from Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ's reaction to the complacent, listless spiritual condition of the Laodiceans could not have been more vivid: "I will spit you out of My mouth" (Rev. 3:16). It's hard to think of a less flattering reaction, especially from the only Man in the universe whose opinion really matters. Put bluntly, He said, "You make Me sick!" (See Insights on Revelation)

John Walvoord favors the **cold/hot comparison** as a reference to **one's state of spirituality** writing "It is obvious that in this portion of Scripture Christ is referring to three different spiritual states which may be enumerated respectively as a state of coldness, a state of warmth or fervor, and a state of lukewarmness. Christ had reference to the fact that many in the world are cold to the things of Christ, that is, the gospel leaves them totally unmoved and arouses no interest or spiritual fervor. Such were many who were later won to the gospel, but in their prior cold state they had no evidence of grace or of salvation. By contrast those who are described as hot are those who show genuine spiritual fervor and leave no question as to the presence of eternal life, the sanctifying power and presence of the Holy Spirit, and a fervent testimony manifesting to all that they are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ." (Revelation 3: The Letters To Sardis, Philadelphia, And Laodicea)

MacArthur is similar to **Walvoord** - The church at Laodicea was neither cold, openly rejecting Christ, nor hot, filled with spiritual zeal. Instead, its members were lukewarm, hypocrites professing to know Christ, but not truly belonging to Him (cf. Mt 7:21ff.). (BORROW The MacArthur Study Bible)

I wish (ophelon) **that you were cold** (psuchros) **or hot** (zestos) - The idea of "**I wish**" means something like "If only..." or "Would that...." It is an expression of a fruitless wish that something would take place, but is generally impossible to attain. In other words ophelon ordinarily denotes an unattainable wish. Jesus wishes this church would either cool off or heat up. He is much more likely to be able to save someone in a cold church and He is able to use a hot church. A "*Mr In Between*" church is in a deceived state and a dire strait (see note).

Know (1492) **eido, oida** - eido is used only in the perfect tense = oida) means in general to know by perception. **Eido**/**oida** is distinguished from ginosko (epiginosko, epignosis - the other major NT word group for knowing) because **ginosko** generally refers to knowledge obtained by experience or "experiential knowledge". On the other hand, **eido**/**oida** often refers more to an intuitive knowledge, although this distinction is not always clear cut. **Eido**/**oida** is not so much that which is known by experience as an intuitive insight that is drilled into one's heart.

Wish (3785)(**ophelon** from **opheilo** - to owe) is a fixed form, functioning as an interjection to introduce an unattainable wish. The idea is "O that," "would that," "if only!" It describes that which one wishes that a thing had happened which has not happened or a thing be done which probably will not be done. In its earlier forms **ophelon** may have been an unaugmented verb used with an infinitive to express a wish. However, many scholars do not think it was an aorist form of opheilō without the augment but instead was a participle (cf. Bauer). Later the word was used as a particle to introduce wishes that are difficult or seemingly unattainable to fulfill and was usually translated "Oh that" or "would that" (ibid.). It can express such a wish for the past ("I would to God ye did reign"

[KJV], “I would indeed that you had become kings” [NASB], 1 Corinthians 4:8); for the present (“I would thou wert cold or hot,” Revelation 3:15); or for the future (“I would they were even cut off” [KJV], “Would that those … would even mutilate themselves” [NASB], Galatians 5:12). The only other reference is also future. In 2 Corinthians 11:1 Paul asked that the Corinthians would “put up” with him as he presented his argument. 4 Uses in NT - 1Co. 4:8; 2Co. 11:1; Gal. 5:12; Rev. 3:15

Either Cold Or Hot

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

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

I like soup when it is steaming hot and a soft drink when it is icy cold. I can’t stand either one lukewarm. Jesus has the same attitude toward people who profess to be His children. He detests lukewarmness. He said He wished they would be either cold or hot (Revelation 3:15).

Although some people believe the term cold refers to hostility toward Jesus and the gospel, I don’t believe He prefers hostility to halfheartedness. Rather, in His message to the church in Laodicea, Jesus may have had in mind two springs in the region—the hot mineral springs at Hierapolis and the pure cold water springs in Colosse. The hot springs were seen as having healing powers. The cold springs provided refreshment. The Christians in the church at Laodicea brought neither healing to the spiritually ill nor refreshment to the weary. They were lukewarm and of no help to anyone.

You and I must ask ourselves these questions: Do I provide refreshment to the spiritually weary by bringing them encouragement, joy, and hope? Do I bring healing by challenging the careless, correcting the erring, and motivating the indifferent? Remember, we can’t help anybody if we are lukewarm. The Lord wants us either cold or hot—whatever is needed at the moment. By: Herbert Vander Lugt

O God, grant me the strength of heart,
Of motive, and of will
To falter not but do my part
Your purpose to fulfill.
—Anon.

A half-hearted Christian needs to regain a heart for God.

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The Problem With Self-Sufficiency

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

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

The city of Laodicea had a water problem. One nearby town had fabulous hot springs and another had cold, clear water. Laodicea, however, was stuck with tepid, mineral-laden water that tasted like sulphur. Not hot. Not cold. Just gross.

Given those facts, the words of Jesus to the Laodicean believers in Revelation 3 must have stung. Jesus rebuked them for being “neither cold nor hot” (v.15). And when He thought of them, He felt like vomiting (v.16)—like the effect of their drinking water.

What was their problem? It was the sin of self-sufficiency. The Laodiceans had become so affluent that they had forgotten how much they needed Jesus (v.17).

When we say we have everything we need, but Jesus isn’t at the top of the list, He is deeply offended. Self-sufficiency distracts us from pursuing the things we really need that only He can give. If you’d rather have cash than character, if your credit cards are maximized and your righteousness is minimized, if you’ve become smart but aren’t wise, then you’ve been shopping in all the wrong places. Jesus offers commodities that are far better (v.18).

He’s knocking at your heart’s door (v.20). Let Him in. He will give you all you really need!Joe Stowell

We must be careful to avoid
All self-sufficiency;
If sinful pride gets in the way,
God’s hand we will not see.

—Sper

We always have enough when God is our supply.

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Revelation 3:16 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

BGT Revelation 3:16 ο τως τι χλιαρ ς ε και ο τε ζεστ ς ο τε ψυχρ ς, μ λλω σε μ σαι κ το στ ματ ς μου.

KJV Revelation 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

NET Revelation 3:16 So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth!

CSB Revelation 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth.

ESV Revelation 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

NIV Revelation 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

NLT Revelation 3:16 But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!

NRS Revelation 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

NJB Revelation 3:16 but since you are neither hot nor cold, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth.

NAB Revelation 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

YLT Revelation 3:16 So -- because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit thee out of my mouth;

GWN Revelation 3:16 But since you are lukewarm and not hot or cold, I'm going to spit you out of my mouth.

BBE Revelation 3:16 So because you are not one thing or the other, I will have no more to do with you.

RSV Revelation 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.

NKJ Revelation 3:16 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

ASV Revelation 3:16 So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

MIT Revelation 3:16 Therefore, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spurt you out of my mouth.

DBY Revelation 3:16 Thus because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spue thee out of my mouth.

NIRV Revelation 3:16 But you are lukewarm. You aren't hot or cold. So I am going to spit you out of my mouth.

RWB Revelation 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

WEB Revelation 3:16 So then, because thou art luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit thee out of my mouth:

BYZ Revelation 3:16 Ο τως τι χλιαρ ς ε , κα ο ζεστ ς ο τε ψυχρ ς, μ λλω σε μ σαι κ το στ ματ ς μου.

- **I will spit you out:** Rev 2:5 Jer 14:19 Jer 15:1-4 Zec 11:8,9
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A Dramatic Declaration!

MR IN-BETWEEN
REJECTED WITH DISGUST!

This is not an easy passage to exposit. As I have read numerous commentaries and sermons, there seem to be two main thoughts about **lukewarm**. Probably the majority of writers/speakers interpret **lukewarm** as a state that any true believer can fall into over time. While I think that is true in the Christian life (i.e., one can be zealous for Jesus and over time cool off to the point that there is virtually no spiritual activity), one takes that general truth and applies it to this specific historical church to guide one's interpretation. The idea is that the Laodiceans are truly born again and just "sit and soak", and are apathetic and indifferent toward Christ, the Bible, etc. In short, the Laodiceans sort of just "exist," and they are unaware of their lack of spiritual inertia. This is a sad state of affairs at best because such an attitude forfeits all the joy of this present life and all the rewards of the future life which Jesus would generously give them if they simply got off the bench and into the game! On the other hand, at worst, a lukewarm state could be deceptive and deadly, for without any "fruit" production ("good deeds"), one cannot really be sure that such a person is genuinely born again. Such individuals need to read and apply Paul's sobering commands in 2Co 13:5. And then follow that passage with Jesus' even more frightening words in Mt 7:21-23. In this latter passage note that the adjective in Mt 7:22 is not "a few" but "many." Jesus warms that there will be **many** souls who thought they were saved when in fact they had never been born again. And so "**lukewarm**" is a dangerous position to remain in because there is really no evidence that such a person is genuinely saved.

The other way "**lukewarm**" is interpreted is by taking that word in the context of this specific church and identifying "**lukewarm**" as lost individuals, not as hot (saved) individuals who have "cooled off." Jesus does not say they Why would Jesus offer "white garments" to those who are already saved and clothed in the righteousness of Christ? Why would He spew them out? That's a frightening thought. Something we spew out literally no longer has any association with our body. Therefore this metaphor would seem to indicate that lukewarm is a description of unsaved individuals, those who have no association with Him. That description cannot apply to a true believer because we can never lose our salvation. We are in an everlasting, immutable, unbreakable covenant with Jesus. The other question to ask is why is the Head of the church outside of the church? If one believer were in that church, Jesus would have been present in the church not outside the church.

So because (term of explanation) **you** (**you** is singular = collectively the entire church; present tense - continually) **are lukewarm** (chiliaros), **and neither hot** (zestos) **nor cold** (psuchros) - Jesus' hearers would have grasp His comparison immediately because they drank lukewarm water every day! The hot medicinal waters of Hierapolis (about 6 miles north) conveyed therapeutic and potential healing effects. The cold, pure waters of Colossae (about 10 miles east) brought physical refreshment.

Some writers feel that Laodicea received water from these hot springs of Hierapolis and the cool waters of Colossae and that the temperatures of the water from both sources were **lukewarm** by the time they arrived at Laodicea. Even excellent commentators like **Warren Wiersbe** says "Both the cold water from Colossae and the hot water from Hierapolis would be lukewarm by the time it was piped to Laodicea." The problem with this interpretation (as appealing as it is) is the fact that there is **no archaeological evidence to support this supposition**. See the technical note below for support of the premise that neither Hierapolis or Colossae piped water via an aqueduct tor Laodicea.

There is one other variation in the way this passage is interpreted and it has to do with whether one interprets these **lukewarm** individuals as genuine believers or as non-believers (MacArthur which he defends with 2 passages - Rev 3:18, 20). While I like David Guzik, he confounds the issue stating "The *lukewarm Christian* has enough of Jesus to satisfy a craving for religion, but **not enough for eternal life**." The last phrase would support the interpretation that the lukewarm individual is non-Christian. It would probably be better to call them "lukewarm professing Christians" who were not possessing Christ! Their "tribe" is greatly enlarged in the modern church in America (IMO)!

Even the excellent commentary by **R L Thomas** seems to have missed the point regarding hot and cold writing "Neighboring Hierapolis had hot, spring water, valuable for its medicinal effects. In its journey to Laodicea it lost some of its heat and consequently medicinal value by the time it arrived either overland or by aqueduct in Laodicea. Nearby Colosse had cool, life-giving water that was refreshing as a beverage (Hemer). The water in Laodicea was somewhere between these two in temperature. Such tepid water was sickening to drink on either a hot or a cold day. The metaphorical meaning of this divine estimate of the church portrays most vividly the revulsion Laodicea provoked in Christ." As discussed below, there is no solid evidence that Laodicea received their water supply from either Hierapolis or Colossae.

Guzik - In this spiritual sense, lukewarmness is a picture of indifference and compromise....Satan will have us any way he can get

us, but he prizes a lukewarm religionist far above a cold-hearted sinner.

NIV Study Bible - The church in Laodicea supplied neither healing for the spiritually sick nor refreshment for the spiritually weary.

The Wycliffe Bible Commentary - The lukewarm person does not become greatly disturbed at hearing heretical teaching, and is not vigorous in the defense of the truth. This spirit of indifference is the most tragic thing that can happen to a church.

Mattoon on **lukewarm** - They were straddlers, fence sitters, middle of the roaders and useless.

William MacDonald - it was **lukewarm** enough to deceive people into thinking that it was a church of God, and so disgustingly **lukewarm** about divine things as to nauseate the Most High. Furthermore, the church was characterized by pride, ignorance, self-sufficiency, and complacency. (BORROW Believer's Bible Commentary)

Pulpit Commentary - The lukewarmness of which the Epistle complains was produced by a fallacious sense of security, begotten of ease and prosperity. In truth those "secure," without care, had become the careless ones.

R L Thomas - **Lukewarm** is a description of church people who have **professed Christ hypocritically** but do not have in their hearts the reality of what they pretend to be in their actions. Such hypocrisy offers the only possible reason Christ would prefer coldness to lukewarmness. In fact, the spirit of Rev 3:15–16 resembles His denunciation of the religious authorities of His day because of their hypocrisy, in contrast with His hopeful expectations with regard to harlots and tax-gatherers. A person who professes to be a Christian, but secretly has not believed in Christ, thinks that such a profession is enough to get him by. Nothing can be done with a nominal Christian who cannot recognize that he needs repentance and that Jesus is really outside His life (Moffatt). The five adjectives that describe this church in Rev 3:17 make it quite evident that, corporately speaking, **they did not have a relationship with Christ as Savior.** (**ED**: I AGREE AND YET IT IS AMAZING THAT CONSERVATIVE COMMENTATORS STILL CALL THEM GENUINE BELIEVERS!) This probably cannot be pressed to mean that there were no genuine Christians there. It simply means they were so few in number and insignificant in influence that the Lord did not find it necessary to acknowledge their presence as He did in a similar situation with the church of Sardis (cf. 3:4). By and large, the church had come under the dominance of pretending Christians. (See Revelation Exegetical Commentary)

John MacArthur favors the **hot/cold** comparison as referring primarily to their spiritual state pointing out that '**Deeds** always reveal people's true spiritual state, as indicated by the Lord's words "you will know them by their fruits" (Mt. 7:16; cf. Ro 2:6–8). Though salvation is wholly by God's grace through faith alone, **deeds** confirm or deny the presence of genuine salvation (James 2:14ff+). The omniscient Lord Jesus Christ knew the Laodiceans' deeds and that they indicated an unregenerate church. Christ rebuked them for being neither **cold** nor **hot** but **lukewarm**. His metaphorical language is drawn from Laodicea's water supply. Because it traveled several miles through an underground aqueduct before reaching the city, the water arrived foul, dirty, and tepid. It was not hot enough to relax and restore, like the hot springs at Hierapolis. Nor was it cold and refreshing, like the stream water at Colossae. Laodicea's lukewarm water was in a useless condition....**Hot** people are those who are spiritually alive and possess the fervency of a transformed life. The spiritually **cold**, on the other hand, are best understood as those who reject Jesus Christ. The gospel leaves them unmoved; it evokes in them no spiritual response. They have no interest in Christ, His Word, or His church. And they make no pretense about it; they are not hypocrites. The **lukewarm** fit into neither category. **They are not genuinely saved, yet they do not openly reject the gospel.** They attend church and claim to know the Lord. Like the Pharisees, they are content to practice a self-righteous religion; they are hypocrites playing games. (See Revelation Commentary

No one is harder to reach for Christ than a false Christian.
- John MacArthur

TDNT on **lukewarm** as a description of the church at Laodicea - The point is that the gospel calls for unconditional self-offering to the Lord who even now knocks at the door. A commitment that is rendered lukewarm by secular concerns is worse, and harder to overcome, than complete alienation. (BORROW Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament)

John R. W. Stott "Perhaps none of the seven letters is more appropriate to the twentieth-century church than this. It describes vividly the respectable, sentimental, nominal, skin-deep religiosity which is so widespread among us today. Our Christianity is flabby and anaemic. We appear to have taken a lukewarm bath of religion."

Michael Andrus - You're lukewarm. This church is full of respectable, nominal, self-satisfied churchgoers who are inoculated with skin-deep religiosity. They are flabby and anemic. They have compromised with the culture and are comfortable with it....Friends, if nothing else comes through to us from this Scripture passage, this must: Christ hates apathy and He threatens to spit it out.

C.S. Lewis speaks to **LUKEWARM** in *The Screwtape Letters* when he described Wormwood's job -- "I, the devil, will always see to it that there are bad people. Your job, my dear Wormwood, is to provide me with the people who **do not care**."

"*Alas, this state of lukewarmness is so congenial with human nature*

that it is hard to fetch men from it."
-- C H Spurgeon

> **THOUGHT** - The danger for lukewarm professors. As a retired medical doctor who specialized in infectious diseases, I knew that if we could immunize with the proper vaccine those people who were vulnerable to contracting a disease (e.g., old people with compromised pulmonary function, the immunocompromised, etc), we would likely be able to protect them from that specific disease. Unfortunately, by analogy, in the spiritual world, those who are the most resistant to the real Gospel, are those who have been "vaccinated" and are thus "immunized" with a false Gospel that is really no Gospel at all! They belong to a church and may claim to **KNOW** Jesus, but they are deceived, not realizing that Jesus does not **KNOW** them! They are those who will hear from Him "Depart from Me (cf "spit them out"). I never **KNEW** you!" (Mt 7:23+) I share the Gospel as often as the Spirit opens a door, but sadly have repeatedly found that the people who are most resistant (sometimes even antagonized) by the true Gospel are those who think they are okay because they have been raised in a particular denomination, been baptized, prayed a prayer to ask Jesus into their heart, walked an aisle, etc, etc. I cannot count the times those people have turned and walked away not wanting to hear anymore about the way of salvation, by grace through faith in Christ alone. They are like the church at Laodicea, lukewarm, indifferent, apathetic, deceived! And in grave danger of perishing forever.

Danny Akin - This text has been misinterpreted in my opinion more often than not. Many believe what Jesus means is I would rather you be **cold** and in opposition to me or **hot** and on fire for me. However, it is hardly conceivable that Jesus would say to His church be **cold** and oppose me. It is better to interpret the statement against the historical and geographical background of Laodicea.**Hot**, medicinal waters bubbled up at nearby Hierapolis, while **cold**, pure waters flowed at Colossae. Our Lord's point to them is something like this: You are providing neither refreshment for the spiritually thirsty nor healing for the spiritually sick. You may not care about your spiritually lukewarm status but I do and I will not tolerate you. If you do not repent (v. 19) I will spew you, vomit you out of my mouth. You are sickly and insipid, and I will put up with you in this condition no longer. You are flat and unsavory. You have sat, soaked and soured and are content to be as you are.

Zodhiates on **lukewarm** - In Rev. 3:16 the church at Laodicea is likened to lukewarm water, an emetic, something good for little more than inducing vomiting, and is censured for this blighted condition. God expresses His desire that they be cold or hot. This has been frequently misunderstood to mean that God would rather they hate Him or love Him than remain indifferent. However, it would be contradictory for God to rebuke the Laodiceans for not hating Him and to prefer that they recede from indifference to hatred. Rather, hot and cold represent beneficial qualities just as hot water soothes the body and cold water slakes one's thirst. God cannot find any redeeming feature in this church; it is spiritually bankrupt. (BORROW The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament)

D A Carson in a sermon on the "Flow of Thought in 1 Timothy" sees hot/cold as - I'm sure we're all familiar with the text in Revelation 3 that depicts the church in Laodicea. "I wish you were hot or cold; because you are not hot or cold, I will vomit you out of my mouth." Now for many, many, many centuries people argued that what the exalted resurrected Jesus is saying through the visions of John, is that Jesus himself, the exalted Christ himself, would prefer for Christians to be spiritually hot or spiritually cold rather than spiritually lukewarm. Various devices are used to justify that pastorally, and you can make a sort of case. Nevertheless, in more recent times, people have done some first-class archaeological work that has shown that nearby Colossae had wonderful fresh, cold water. Nearby Hierapolis had hot springs. You can still go and swim in them today. But Laodicea had neither. It had water piped in in these Roman stone pipes. It wasn't piped in from Hierapolis, but from another place with hot water, and calcium carbonate actually built up in the pipes so that Laodicea was known throughout the ancient Roman world for having the most disgusting water in the universe. Cicero, when he was traveling east, comments on how revolting it was. So in the context of living in Laodicea, the text is saying something like, "I wish you were hot and enjoyable and useful or cold and enjoyable and drinkable (**ED**: REFERRING TO THEIR DEEDS) but, in fact, you're just revolting and disgusting. In other words, it's not recommending **cold spirituality** above **lukewarm spirituality** at all. It just misses the point. As soon as you understand where this lukewarm language comes from (you can see the pipes still laid out on the ground), then the exact meaning of that text becomes just a little bit clearer.

Brian Bell - A **lukewarm** person is tepid, lacking enthusiasm, halfhearted about what he or she believes. They may possess some sense of duty to the church, but lack true conviction & commitment! Imagine a **Salesman** lukewarm about sales! An **Electrician** lukewarm about electricity! A **Fighter** lukewarm against his foe! Imagine a **Doctor** lukewarm about disease! - Imagine a **Church** lukewarm about Christ? It makes as much sense!

Spurgeon points out the deadly effect of "lukewarm professors" - "Now, lukewarm **professor**, what do worldlings see in you? They see a man, who says he is going to heaven, but who is only travelling at a snail's pace. He **professes** to believe that there is a hell, yet he has tearless eyes, and never seeks to snatch souls from going down into the pit. They see before them one who has to deal with eternal realities, yet he is but half awake; one who **professes** to have passed through a transformation so mysterious and

wonderful that there must be, if it is true, a vast change in the outward life as the result of it; yet they see him as much like themselves as can be. He may be morally consistent in his general behavior, but they see no energy in his religious character.....The careless worldling is lulled to sleep by the lukewarm **professor**, who, in this respect, acts the part of the **syren** to the sinner, playing sweet music in his ears, and even helping to lure him to the rocks where he will be destroyed (Syren mythology). This is a solemn matter, beloved. In this way, great damage is done to the cause of truth; and God's name and God's honor are compromised by inconsistent **professors**. I pray you either to give up your **profession**, or to be true to it (**ED**: "BE BORN AGAIN!"). If you really are God's people, then serve him with all your might; but if Baal be your god, then serve him. If the flesh be worth pleasing, then serve the flesh; but if God be Lord paramount, then cleave to Him....."Alas, this state of lukewarmness is so congenial with human nature that it is hard to fetch men from it. Cold makes us shiver, and great heat causes us pain, but a tepid bath is comfort itself. Such a temperature suits human nature. The world is always at peace with a lukewarm church, and such a church is always pleased with itself."" (Bolding added)

YOU MAKE ME
WANT TO VOMIT!

I will spit you out (emeo) **of My mouth** (stoma) - "You make me vomit" Note that this has not yet happened but is clearly a vivid, strong warning! "**I will**" identifies a prophetic promise! Jesus says He would spew them from His mouth like undrinkable water which speaks of His utter abhorrence of the spiritual state of the Laodicean church. This figure of speech parallels the fact that the Laodicean water supplies were known to have an emetic character.

John Stott - It is of course metaphorical language, but this does not empty the expression of its meaning. Lukewarm liquids create nausea. They are not only tasteless but positively distasteful. Christ's forceful expression is one of disgust. **He will utterly repudiate those whose attachment to him is purely nominal and superficial.** One is reminded of the description in Psalm 95 of God's attitude to Israel in the wilderness: "For forty years I was angry with that generation" (Ps 95:10). The verb used is almost shocking. The Revised Standard Version translates it "loathed." Not that God's wrath is ever tinged with personal malice, spite, or vindictiveness. But the Hebrew word here conveys distaste and disgust, and indicates God's strong moral revulsion to human hypocrisy and sin. (Borrow What Christ thinks of the church : Revelation 1-3 expounded)

William Newell - Christ does not say, "I will"; but, (mello) "I am about to." He says, "I am ready to: I have it in my mind, implying graciously the possibility of the threat not being executed if only they repent at once. His dealings towards them will depend on theirs toward Him." These words from Fausset more nearly express what the text sets forth.

Michael Andrus - Friends, if nothing else comes through to us from this Scripture passage, this must: Christ hates apathy and He threatens to spit it out. Thankfully this is a threat, not a promise. The KJV reads, "I will spit you out," but the NIV correctly reads "I am about to spit you out." This is a very strong warning, but it is still a warning. Perhaps the question comes to your mind, "But can't I still be saved even if I'm lukewarm?" I think that is an illegitimate question–it's almost like asking, "How little can I get by with? How uncommitted can I be and still get to Heaven? How ungodly can I be and still be saved?" Instead we should be asking, "How close to Jesus can I get?"

> **Technical Note** - There is good evidence that the water supply of Laodicea was rich in **Calcium Carbonate** (same ingredient is "Tums for your tummy!") hot springs nearby at Hierapolis had large deposits of this mineral; the aqueduct remnants around Laodicea had deposits of this mineral). Here is a note from Medline Plus - "*Calcium carbonate is a dietary supplement used when the amount of calcium taken in the diet is not enough. Calcium is needed by the body for healthy bones, muscles, nervous system, and heart. Calcium carbonate also is used as an antacid to relieve heartburn, acid indigestion, and upset stomach. It is available with or without a prescription.....Calcium carbonate may cause side effects. Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away: upset stomach. **vomiting***."

ARE LAODICEANS BELIEVERS
OR UNBELIEVERS

At this point the reader should be aware that there are diametrically different interpretations of the church at Laodicea

There are many (probably the majority of commentaries) who say this church was composed of saved people (or mostly saved people) who had just lapsed and were half-hearted and in need of fellowship with Christ (as suggested by I will come in and dine with you in Rev 3:20) (Hampton Keathley,).

There are others who say this church was composed completely of unbelievers, not just Christians who were spiritually "lukewarm." (John MacArthur, David Thompson, Gotquestions.org, John Stott, Precept Ministry International, Alan Johnson, yours truly -

preceptaustin.org, et al) You will need to read the text for yourself and not the commentaries (including this one!) and ask the Spirit of Truth to guide you into all truth concerning Rev 3:14-21.

> It is fascinating that many writers seem to be hesitant to state flat out that there were no genuine believers in the Laodicean church. However, I cannot find the Scriptural support for this premise. **Robert Ramirez** (The Complete Layman's Guide to End Times Prophecy) writes "Lukewarm is a description of church people who have professed Christ hypocritically, but do not have in their hearts the reality of what they pretend to be in their actions. The genuine Christians in this church were so few in number that they were inconsequential in influence that Christ did not find it necessary to acknowledge their presence." There is simply has **no Scriptural support** for this statement. He seems to be paraphrasing **R L Thomas'** comment "Lukewarm is a description of church people who have professed Christ hypocritically but do not have in their hearts the reality of what they pretend to be in their actions....A person who professes to be a Christian, but secretly has not believed in Christ, thinks that such a profession is enough to get him by. Nothing can be done with a nominal Christian who cannot recognize that he needs repentance and that Jesus is really outside His life (Moffatt). The five adjectives that describe this church in Rev 3:17 make it quite evident that, corporately speaking, they did not have a relationship with Christ as Savior. **This probably cannot be pressed to mean that there were no genuine Christians there**. It simply means they were so few in number and insignificant in influence that the Lord did not find it necessary to acknowledge their presence as He did in a similar situation with the church of Sardis (cf. 3:4). By and large, the church had come under the dominance of pretending Christians."

Here are some who say the Laodiceans were believers...

> **Henry Morris -** It is obvious that these lukewarm, compromising Christians in Laodicea are, indeed, Christians. Otherwise Christ would not rebuke and chasten them. (**ED**: Morris is very conservative, but clearly he is staking his conclusion on one verse and seems to minimize the fact that Jesus says they need to buy white garments. Clearly they do not now possess them! White garments in the Revelation are repeatedly seen with true believers. This alone strongly implies this church is filled with dead souls, not compromising Christians.)
>
> **Monty Mills** - The appeal of Rev 3:20 is addressed to the Church, not to the unsaved; **it is an invitation to wayward believers** to participate in the deep and wonderful relationship which Jesus Christ longs to have with each believer.
>
> **Moody Bible Commentary** - The Laodicean congregation, like all the churches addressed, consisted of Christians.
>
> > THOUGHT- DOGMATIC STATEMENTS LIKE THIS FROM AN EXCELLENT CONSERVATIVE COMMENTARY BEG THE QUESTION - WHERE IN THESE 8 VERSES IS THERE UNEQUIVOCAL EVIDENCE THAT THEY WERE GENUINE BELIEVERS? I THINK YOU CAN CLEARLY FIND PASSAGES IN THE OTHER 6 CHURCHES THAT DOCUMENT PRESENCE OF GENUINE BELIEVERS, EVEN IN SARDIS THE "CHURCH OF THE LIVING DEAD." DEAR READER, IF YOU FIND A PASSAGE THAT SUPPORTS THE PREMISE OF BELIEVERS IN LAODICEA PLEASE EMAIL ME AND I WILL ADD THAT COMMENT. THANK YOU. JUST TRYING TO LET THE LITERAL TEXT SAY WHAT IT SAYS AND NOT ADD TO IT OR TAKE AWAY FROM IT LEST WE ARRIVE AT AN INACCURATE INTERPRETATION WHICH THEN POTENTIALLY RESULTS IN A MISLEADING APPLICATION.
>
> **Alan Carr** on Rev 3:20 - A Personal Promise – "if any man hear my voice, and open the door…" – Jesus does not need for the whole church to get on fire so that He can come in; He merely needs just one person to hear him and to open the door. By the way, this is not a verse calling lost people to come to the Lord. This verse is calling the church to open the door to allow Him back inside. This verses is not about regeneration; it is about repentance.
>
> **Swindoll's** comment is interesting as he describes the deeds of unbelievers and then seems to call them believers - "Similarly, the book of James addresses the issue of **those who profess to have faith** but fail to demonstrate it in their works. James calls such fruitless faith "useless" (Jas. 2:14). Christ expressed disdain for the **same type of sin in Laodicea**: The works of **the Christians there** were done solely in the flesh and therefore were halfhearted, insincere, and self-indulgent."
>
> **Here are other writers** who feel there are believers in the church at Laodicea - George Ladd (A Commentary of the Revelation of John), Robert Mounce (NICNT), G K Beale (The Book of Revelation, A commentary on the Greek Text), Robert Bratcher (Handbook on the Revelation to John), Leon Morris (The Book of the Revelation).

Here are some who say the Laodiceans were unbelievers...

Spurgeon points out the deadly effect of "lukewarm professors" - “Now, lukewarm **professor**, what do worldlings see in you? They see a man, who says he is going to heaven, but who is only travelling at a snail’s pace. He **professes** to believe that there is a hell, yet he has tearless eyes, and never seeks to snatch souls from going down into the pit. They see before them one who has to deal with eternal realities, yet he is but half awake; one who **professes** to have passed through a transformation so mysterious and wonderful that there must be, if it is true, a vast change in the outward life as the result of it; yet they see him as much like themselves as can be. He may be morally consistent in his general behavior, but they see no energy in his religious character.

John Stott certainly appears to be of this persuasion describing the lukewarm Laodiceans as "beggars because they have **nothing** with which to purchase their forgiveness or an entry into the kingdom of God. They are naked because they have no clothes to fit them to stand before God.....He will utterly repudiate those whose attachment to him is purely nominal and superficial.(Borrow What Christ thinks of the church : Revelation 1-3 expounded)

R C H Lenski - To buy, and that of Me, thus includes **true contrition and true faith, a complete inner change**. They are no longer to be lukewarm but now hot, indeed, fervent and glowing for Christ. (BORROW The Interpretation of St. John`s Revelation) (Bolding added)

William MacDonald seems to favor that there are no believers in Laodicea writing "With lingering tenderness, He calls on this **nominal church** to be zealous and repent." (BORROW Believer's Bible Commentary)

R C H Lenski - As the works are always the open and the indisputable evidence, thus they are also in the final judgment (Matt. 25:35, etc.); they evidence the inward condition which the Lord alone sees and knows directly but which he reveals to us by means of the evidential works. The Laodiceans, no doubt, imagined themselves to be fervent believers. They were like so many who are blind both to what they are and to what their works proclaim about them....Gold makes rich, white garments cover nakedness, eyesalve supplies sight. The three figures spread out the saving effects, which, however, are always inseparable. Salvation is gold in that it removes our poverty, white robes in that it covers our nakedness, eye-salve in that it gives us sight and knowledge. (BORROW The Interpretation of St. John`s Revelation)

David Thompson - The image presented by Jesus Christ is that it is spit out in rejection and is not in the place where it should have been. Eschatologically and theologically, the only thing that this can have church reference to is not being raptured but being thrust out into the Great Tribulation. As Thomas said, this is a serious warning of “eschatological wrath” (Vol. 1, p. 309). In other words, the people of this church were all lost and they would not be raptured, but would be forced to go into a world-wide wrath judgment of God known as “the Great Tribulation.” This was a totally useless church in the eyes of Jesus Christ. **It was very religious but it was not comprised of true believes who love the Word of God and who loved Jesus Christ. This was a very wealthy church comprised of all unbelievers, which is confirmed by Revelation 3:17-18, 20. Christ was not in this church at all; He was on the outside looking in.** Not all people who go to church are going to be raptured. Not all churches are going to be raptured, even those places that have Bibles. Laodicea had access to the written Word of God - this letter and the Colossian letter. Only believers who trust in Jesus Christ will be raptured and the rest are lost, no matter how rich they are or how spiritual they pretend to be; they will be thrust into the Great Tribulation. There will be many religious people who went to church who will be in the Tribulation.

Gotquestions.org - Their lukewarm faith was hypocritical; their church was **full of unconverted, pretend Christians**....Clearly, the lukewarm deeds of the Laodiceans were not in keeping with true salvation....The lukewarm are those who claim to know God but live as though He doesn’t exist. They may go to church and practice a form of religion, but their inner state is one of self-righteous complacency. They claim to be Christians, but their hearts are unchanged, and their hypocrisy is sickening to God.

John MacArthur - The picture of Christ outside the Laodicean church seeking entrance strongly implies that, unlike Sardis, there were no believers there at all.

Alan Johnson - While most commentators have taken this invitation as addressed to lapsed, half-hearted Christians, the terminology and context (Rev 3:18) **suggest that these Laodiceans were, for the most part, merely professing Christians who lacked authentic conversion to Christ**, which is the essential prerequisite for true discipleship. Rev 3:20 is, therefore, more evangelistic than admonitory. Those who find in

it an allusion to the Lord's Supper may be right. (See Revelation in Expositor's Bible Commentary)

Tony Garland - The Laodicean church had religion, but was lacking relationship. They had attempted to substitute their own righteousness (Pr. 20:6; 21:2; Mtt. 5:20; Luke 10:29; 18:9) for the righteousness that can only come from God (Rom. 10:3). They were clothed in see-through garments of their own works—naked but unable to see their condition. They needed to purchase from God the robes of righteousness.

The following favor non-believers (and Rev 3:20 is addressed to them) - Henry Alford/

Grant Osborne is non-committal but does write "But you are neither; you are totally ineffective, **devoid of works** and useless to God, and you make me sick."....Rev 3:20, is one of the most famous passages in Scripture, but it is often misunderstood as referring to evangelism when it really deals with church revival."

COMMENT - Beloved, if one is "**devoid of works**" what does James says "that faith without works is useless...For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." (James 2:20,26+) Osborne seems to imply the church does not need to be evangelized, but that they are already born again and just need to be revived from their complacent state.

Lukewarm (5513)(chliaros from chlio = to become warm) of temperature between cold and hot lukewarm, tepid; metaphorically, of a half-hearted condition of love and loyalty. Literally moderately warm, figuratively showing little enthusiasm. The only use in the Bible.

Chliaros - 1x - Rev 3:16. Not used in the Septuagint.

Hot (2200)(zestos) means boiling, boiling hot, hot (cf English "zest") and in Rev 3:15-16 figuratively speaks of spiritual fervor. Fervent in spirit. Zealous. The rare word zestós occurs for "cooked" meat, "glowing" sand, and "boiling" water. It has the sense of "hot" as distinct from "tepid" or "cold." No uses in the Septuagint. **R L Thomas** - "Zestos ("hot") is...derived from zeō ("I boil"), which in its participial form is usually translated "fervent" (cf. Acts 18:25; Ro 12:11). Hot describes a person characterized by a healthy spiritual fervor. The picture is of one who has been heated to a boiling point by some outside source and has maintained that state (Alford; Charles; Beckwith; Lenski)"

Zestos - 3x/2v - hot Rev. 3:15; Rev. 3:16. Not used in the Septuagint.

Cold (5593) (psuchros from **psucho** - to breathe, blow) means cold, chilly, cool. Literally **psuchros** refers to a cup of cold water (Mt 10:42) where Jesus told His disciples that doing acts of benevolence for those in need is equivalent to doing them for Christ himself. **Psuchros** is used metaphorically in Rev 3:15-16 to describe one's life as cold (or hot) and thus devoid of any good quality. In classical Greek **psuchros**, is an adjective that describes things as "cold" (water, air, dead things, meat, etc.;*Liddell-Scott*). **Psuchros** is used more often in a figurative way to describe things as ineffectual or vain, feelings as cold, people as heartless or vain, jokes and literature as flat or insipid. Once in the Septuagint of Pr 25:25.

Psuchros - 4x/3v - Matt. 10:42; Rev. 3:15; Rev. 3:16. Septuagint - Pr 25:25

Spit (1692)(emeo) means to spit out, vomit, throw up. Related to the Latin vomere. Reject with extreme disgust or contempt. Once in the Septuagint in Isaiah 19:14. This gives us our English emetic which is used in medicine of a substance that induces vomiting often in order to purge something toxic that has entered the stomach (e.g., Syrup of Ipecac which is used to induce vomiting).

Emeo - 1x in Rev 3:16. Once in the Septuagint - Isa 19:14.

Dictionary of Biblical Imagery - VOMIT - Vomiting is one of numerous biblical images of revulsion (see DISGUST, REVULSION). The image is usually used in relation to sin or its disgraceful punishment. Proverbs 26:11 likens a persistence in sin and folly to "a dog that returns to its vomit" (RSV), and 2 Peter 2:22 compares the apostate who abandons the Christian faith to a dog that "turns back to his own vomit" (RSV).

> The word is found most often in the OT prophets as a part of God's judgment on the nations. In such passages vomiting is often a natural result of drunkenness and a sign of defilement and excess that God views as disgraceful. In Jeremiah, God declares that the nations he is judging will be forced to drink a "cup of the wine of wrath" that will cause then to "drink, be drunk and vomit, fall and rise no more, because of the sword" God is sending to destroy them (Jer 25:15, 27 RSV). Similarly, God promises to punish Egypt with a spirit of confusion that will make it "stagger … as a drunken man staggers in his vomit" (Is 19:14 RSV), and the drunkards of Ephraim will find that "all tables are full of vomit" (Is 28:8 RSV). God also promises to make Moab drunk to "wallow in his vomit, and … be held in derision" (Jer 48:26 RSV). In such prophetic visions of judgment, drunkenness and its attendant vomiting are vividly symbolic of both the depravity into which nations have fallen and the punishment and disgrace to which God appropriately subjects them.

In another type of image, people under judgment are not pictured as themselves vomiting but as being vomited out, again a picture of revulsion. In Leviticus, God declares that the Promised Land vomited up its previous inhabitants because of their depravity (Lev 18:25). God promises similar rejection to the children of Israel if they defile the land with their sins (Lev 18:28; 20:22). When Israel disobeyed God, he allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to devour and crush the nation, so that it lamented, “He has swallowed me like a monster; he has filled his belly with my delicacies, he has spewed me out” (Jer 51:34 NRSV). In Revelation, God threatens a similar judgment to those who refuse to take their faith seriously, declaring that because the Laodiceans are lukewarm, he will spew them out of his mouth (Rev 3:16). Vomiting is here a gesture of disgust, as when the fish expelled Jonah on the land (Jon 2:10); while the act rescued Jonah from his watery threat, the word used is a term of repulsion that suggests that Jonah was nauseating to the fish.

At times vomiting graphically portrays the biting betrayal of sin, especially overindulgence in its various forms. Thus the sages promise that the wicked must vomit up the wealth they have swallowed (Job 20:15) and that vomiting is the gruesome penalty for overindulgence (Prov 25:16; 23:8). See also DISGUST, REVULSION; DUNG; EATING; MOUTH; SPIT. (BORROW - see page 3086)

TECHNICAL NOTE - "**There Was No Aqueduct From Hierapolis to Laodicea**. If an aqueduct had ever been built from Hierapolis to Laodicea, there would be some evidence of it. Furthermore, it would have been the most impressive Roman aqueduct ever built! The distance from the springs at Hierapolis to Laodicea is approximately 6 miles. Roman aqueduct systems were regularly this long and longer, but not over an open expanse. Aqueducts typically followed the terrain to minimize the work required. If necessary, the channel could cross a canyon on a bridge, or even a plain on a series of arches known as an arcade. The longest known arcade is part of the Zaghouan aqueduct that fed Carthage in North Africa, stretching 6.9 miles. At it’s highest, though, this arcade is only 65 feet tall. (Section of the longest Roman aqueduct arcade, leading to Carthage) By contrast, a hypothetical aqueduct from Hierapolis to Laodicea would need to cross 6 miles, but at a sustained height of over 330 ft! (See this very interesting Google Earth view of a hypothetical line from the hot springs at Hierapolis to Laodicea, with an elevation profile)

The white travertine pools of Heirapolis/Pamukkale are easily visible from Laodicea on a normal day. This photo shows the view toward Hierapolis from the large theater on the north side of Hierapolis. The travertine terraces of the hot springs at Hierapolis/Pamukkale are visible as a **white splotch** across the valley. Imagine the magnitude of an aqueduct bridge that would span this distance at eye level! The tallest known Roman aqueduct bridge is the Pont d’Ael, in northern Italy (see picture). This bridge carried water 216 ft above the canyon floor, but the bridge is only 198 ft long from end to end, making it taller than it is wide. The better known Pont duGard is 899 ft long, and 161 ft tall (See picture). It is an impressive bridge, and one of the best preserved Roman aqueduct bridges, but it pales in comparison to the bridge that would have been needed to bring water from Hierapolis to Laodicea. An aqueduct bridge from Hierapolis to Laodicea would have needed to be more than twice this tall, and 35 times as long!

The Romans sometimes used an inverted siphon to cross valleys, allowing them to use a reduced height bridge system. The problem with this kind of system was that water pressure became an issue as the height increased. In fact, such a system was used at Laodicea to cross the short saddle between the city and the hills to the south, but it was a relatively short and shallow siphon. It was made of large blocks of limestone, each with a hollow center, that were fitted tightly together. (See picture).....

There Was No Aqueduct From Colossae to Laodicea. The reasons for this are quite practical. There were good sources of water closer to Laodicea than the streams that fed Colossae, some 9 miles distant. There was no point in building an aqueduct from Colossae to Laodicea when closer water sources were at hand, and in fact there are no traces of any aqueduct from Colossae to Laodicea. Laodicea’s Water Came From the South. Laodicea’s water supply system has been discovered and traced, and it carried water from the hills to the south, the logical direction. Two springs are known to have been used; the Kara Huseyin Pinari spring, 2.8 miles away, and the larger Baspinar spring, approximately 5 miles away. The portion of the aqueduct system that has been traced at Laodicea is shown in blue on the photo (See picture); it was likely much longer originally. Most of the aqueduct follows the contour of the land, more like a canal, and did not require the construction of any bridge or supporting arches. (discussion)

ILLUSTRATION - John Phillips - Imagine a doctor being lukewarm about disease. You feel sick, so you drag yourself along to his office. He feels your pulse, takes your temperature, and tells you to pay the nurse on the way out. You say, "Well, just a minute, what's wrong with me, doctor?" He looks up from the papers on his desk and says, "What's wrong with you? Oh, there's nothing to worry about. You've got a bad case of bubonic plague." You look at him in astonishment and say, "But aren't you going to give me an injection or put me in the hospital? People don't just walk around with bubonic plague, do they? It's catching, isn't it? What about my family? What about all those people in your waiting room? What about me? People die of bubonic plague, don't they?" The doctor just looks at you mildly and says, "That's all right, my friend. You have to die sometime. It might just as well be of bubonic

plague as cancer or a coronary. Diseases don't interest me too much. Now, if you needed surgery, well, that's more my line." Imagine a doctor lukewarm about disease! Imagine a church lukewarm about Christ! It makes as much sense.

A little girl came home from Sunday school, and her mother asked her to recite the text she had learned: "Many are called but few are chosen." It came out like this: "Many are cold and a few are frozen!"

"**Apatheists**"

Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. — Revelation 3:16

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-19

Most people profess belief in God, meaning they are theists. True atheism is a rarity.

Recently, however, it has been suggested that we need a new term for the multitude who are theists but are indifferent to God in daily living. They ought to be called apatheists. That word is built on the noun apathy, which means “indifference,” a sort of sluggish unconcern. And sadly, whatever belief an individual professes, he may be living as an apatheist. His faith may make only a minimal difference in his behavior.

The apostle John recorded that Jesus described the church at Laodicea as neither hot nor cold (Revelation 3:16). They were lukewarm or, as we might say, they were apatheists.

What about those of us who profess faith in Jesus? Are we lukewarm? We pray, but is our praying a mere obligation? We attend church and may even engage in some form of Christian service. Yet is all of that a matter of routine, like brushing our teeth or cleaning our house? Have we lost our first love, the zeal we had early in our spiritual journey?

Today, let’s make the psalmist’s prayer our own: “Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?” (Psalm 85:6).

By: Vernon Grounds

Revive us again,
Fill each heart with Thy love,
May each soul be rekindled
With fire from above.
—Mackay

Without a heart aflame for God, we cannot shine for Jesus.

(Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets. Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

QUESTION - Why did Jesus speak so strongly against lukewarm faith? Watch the Accompanying Video

ANSWER - In Revelation 3:14–21, the Lord is describing the “lukewarm” heart attitude of those in the Laodicean church, an attitude manifested by their deeds. The Laodiceans were neither cold nor hot in relation to God, just lukewarm. Hot water can cleanse and purify; cold water can refresh and enliven. But lukewarm water carries no similar value. The Laodiceans understood the Lord’s analogy because their city drinking water came over an aqueduct from a spring six miles to the south, and it arrived disgustingly lukewarm. Laodicean water was not hot like the nearby hot springs that people bathed in, nor was it refreshingly cold for drinking. It was lukewarm, good for nothing. In fact, it was nauseating, and that was the Lord’s response to the Laodiceans—they sickened Him, and He said, “I am about to spit you out of my mouth” (Rev 3:16).

The letter to the church at Laodicea is the harshest of the seven letters to the churches in Asia Minor. By His indictment of their “deeds” (Revelation 3:15), Jesus makes it clear that this is a dead church. The members of this church see themselves as “rich” and self-sufficient, but the Lord sees them as “wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked” (Rev 3:17). Their lukewarm faith was hypocritical; their church was full of unconverted, pretend Christians.

Jesus frequently equates **deeds** with a **person’s true spiritual state**: “By their fruit you will recognize them,” and “Every good tree bears good fruit” (Matthew 7:16–17). **Clearly, the lukewarm deeds of the Laodiceans were not in keeping with true salvation The deeds of the true believer will be “hot” or “cold”—that is, they will benefit the world in some way and reflect the spiritual passion of a life transformed. Lukewarm deeds, however—those done without joy, without love, and without the fire of the Spirit—do harm to the watching world. The lukewarm are those who claim to know God but live as though He doesn’t exist. They may go to church and practice a form of religion, but their inner state is one of self-righteous**

complacency. They claim to be Christians, but their hearts are unchanged, and their hypocrisy is sickening to God.

The fact that the lukewarm individuals to whom Christ speaks are not saved is seen in the picture of Jesus standing *outside of* the church (Revelation 3:20). He has not yet been welcomed into their midst. In love, the Lord rebukes and disciplines them, commanding them to repent (Rev 3:19). He sees their lukewarm attitudes as "shameful nakedness" that needs to be clothed in the white garments of true righteousness (Rev 3:18). He urges them to be earnest, or zealous, and commit themselves totally to Him. Our Lord is gracious and long-suffering and gives the lukewarm time to repent.

The Laodiceans enjoyed material prosperity that, coupled with a semblance of true religion, led them to a false sense of security and independence (see Mark 10:23). The expression "I am rich; I have acquired wealth" (Revelation 3:17) stresses that the wealth attained came though self-exertion. Spiritually, they had great needs. A **self-sufficient attitude** and **lukewarm faith** are constant dangers when people live lives of ease and prosperity. GotQuestions.org (BOLDING ADDED)

David Guzik summarizes key points on **lukewarmness** from Spurgeon's sermon **An Earnest Warning Against Lukewarmness** writing "In his sermon...Spurgeon described the lukewarm church:

1. They have prayer-meetings, but there are few present, for they like quiet evenings home
2. When more attend the meetings they are still very dull, for they do their praying very deliberately and are afraid of being too excited
3. They are content to have all things done decently and in order, but vigor and zeal are considered to be vulgar
4. They may have schools, Bible-classes, preaching rooms, and all sorts of agencies; but they might as well be without them, for no energy is displayed and no good comes of them
5. They have deacons and elders who are excellent pillars of the church, if the chief quality of pillars be to stand still, and exhibit no motion or emotion
6. The pastor does not fly very far in preaching the everlasting Gospel, and he certainly has no flame of fire in his preaching
7. The pastor may be a shining light of eloquence, but he certainly is not a burning light of grace, setting men's hearts on fire
8. Everything is done in a half-hearted, listless, dead-and-alive way, as if it did not matter much whether it was done or not
9. Things are respectably done, the rich families are not offended, the skeptical party is conciliated, and the good people are not quite alienated: things are made pleasant all around
10. The right things are done, but as to doing them with all your might, and soul, and strength, a Laodicean church has no notion of what that means
11. They are not so cold as to abandon their work, or to give up their meetings for prayer, or to reject the gospel
12. They are neither hot for the truth, nor hot for conversions, nor hot for holiness, they are not fiery enough to burn the stubble of sin, nor zealous enough to make Satan angry, nor fervent enough to make a living sacrifice of themselves upon the altar of their God. They are 'neither cold nor hot.

> **THOUGHT** - DO SPURGEON'S POINTS DESCRIBE YOUR CHURCH DEAR READER? IF THEY DO, THEN FLEE FOR YOUR LIFE!

Revelation 3:17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

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> BGT Revelation 3:17 τι λ γεις τι πλο σι ς ε μι κα πεπλο τηκα κα ο δ ν χρε αν χω, κα ο κ ο δας τι σ ε ταλα πωρος κα λεειν ς κα πτωχ ς κα τυφλ ς κα γυμν ς,
>
> KJV Revelation 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:
>
> NET Revelation 3:17 Because you say, "I am rich and have acquired great wealth, and need nothing," but do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked,
>
> CSB Revelation 3:17 Because you say, 'I'm rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing,' and you don't know that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked,
>
> ESV Revelation 3:17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.
>
> NIV Revelation 3:17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

NLT Revelation 3:17 You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

NRS Revelation 3:17 For you say, 'I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.' You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

NJB Revelation 3:17 You say to yourself: I am rich, I have made a fortune and have everything I want, never realising that you are wretchedly and pitiably poor, and blind and naked too.

NAB Revelation 3:17 For you say, 'I am rich and affluent and have no need of anything,' and yet do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

YLT Revelation 3:17 because thou sayest -- I am rich, and have grown rich, and have need of nothing, and hast not known that thou art the wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,

GWN Revelation 3:17 You say, 'I'm rich. I'm wealthy. I don't need anything.' Yet, you do not realize that you are miserable, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

BBE Revelation 3:17 For you say, I have wealth, and have got together goods and land, and have need of nothing; and you are not conscious of your sad and unhappy condition, that you are poor and blind and without clothing.

RSV Revelation 3:17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

NKJ Revelation 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--

ASV Revelation 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked:

MIT Revelation 3:17 You say, "I am wealthy, indeed, rich and in need of nothing," but you do not know you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

- **I am rich**: Rev 2:9 Pr 13:7 Ho 12:8 Zec 11:5 Lu 1:53 6:24 18:11,12 Ro 11:20,25 Ro 12:3 1Co 4:8-10
- **have need of nothing**: De 8:12-14 Pr 30:9 Jer 2:31 Mt 9:12
- **you do not know** : Ro 2:17-23
- **wretched**: Mt 5:3 Ro 7:24
- **blind**: Isa 42:19 Joh 9:40,41 2Pe 1:9
- **naked**: Rev 16:15 Ge 3:7,10,11 Ex 32:35
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Revelation 2:9 (**SMYRNA THE ANTITHESIS OF LAODICEA**) 'I know your tribulation and your **poverty** (but you are **rich**), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Romans 7:24 **Wretched** (talaiporos) man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

Laodiceans Like Emperor with No Clothes

THE SELF-DECEPTION OF SELF-CONTENTMENT

Because you (present tense - continually) **say, "I am** (present tense - continually) **rich** (plousios) - Jesus begins with a **term of explanation** and in this passage gives multiple reasons for His wise counsel in Rev 3:18. The one who says "I am rich" is the sad individual who says "my wealth is due to my own exertion." No, your wealth is because God allowed you to attain wealth! This description is perfect for Laodicea for the city was known for its banking business and its wealth. In this verse we see their pride, arrogance, sense of self-sufficiency and sense of self-reliance (after all they even rebuilt their earthquake devastated city in 60-61 AD without a drachma of Roman financial aid!)

George Ladd writes astutely, "The church that is prosperous materially and outwardly can easily fall into the self-deception that her outward prosperity is the measure of her spiritual prosperity."i

And have become wealthy (plouteo)**, and** (present tense - continually) **have need** (chreia) **of** (absolutely) **nothing** (oudeis) - Their ignorance is not bliss! **Become wealthy** is in the perfect tense describing a time in the past when they "hit it big" financially and this wealthy state continues to the present. It is like Laodicea is experiencing a perpetual "bull market!" O, the deceitfulness of riches for they embalm one's soul in a deadly deception of comfort and ease (cf Mk 4:19+)! Jesus said "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Lk 18:25+) They are clearly ignorant of the fact that God even gives us our breath (Da 5:23+) and yet they have the hubris and stupidity to think they need absolutely **nothing** from the One in "in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col 2:3+)! The fact is we need **EVERYTHING** from God that is worth **ANYTHING** in time and eternity!

What a contrast between the foolish words of the Laodiceans "Have need of **nothing**" and the words of Jesus declared "apart from Me you can do (ABSOLUTELY) **nothing** (OF ETERNAL VALUE)" (Jn 15:5)!

And you do not know (eido) **that you are wretched** (talaiporos) **and miserable** (eleeinos) **and poor** (ptochos) **and blind** (tuphlos) **and naked** (see depiction above) - Note **know** (eido) speaks of absolute assurance, something of which they are absolutely devoid! Jesus knew but they did not know! Jesus knew them (us) better than they knew themselves (ourselves)! He is saying "Don't flatter yourselves, Laodiceans!" They were thoroughly self-deceived! This church is so self-inflated and self-contented, that they do not have a clue (eido) as to their desperate, dangerous spiritual state! All 5 descriptions (wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked) emphasize the completeness of their spiritually destitute condition. **Naked** speaks of shame and humiliation (see 2Sa 10:4-5+). They are in danger of having to stand before Jesus at His Great White Throne judgment in essence "naked," clothed only in their transparent, worthless rags of self-righteous deeds! (Rev 20:12+).

Jesus diagnoses their materially rich condition with a spiritual "CAT Scan" of their heart which demonstrates the fact that they are extremely poor, poor as a beggar spiritually speaking. **Ptochos** focuses on one's state of dependence, and so we see that in Mt 5:3 "the poor in spirit" are those who have learned to be completely dependent on God for everything and these are the ones who possess the kingdom of heaven. The church at Laodicea was the polar opposite of the church at Smyrna about which Jesus said "I know your tribulation and your **poverty** (but you are **rich**)." (Rev 2:9)

Jesus' diagnosis of their being spiritually **blind** had an ironic twist for Laodicea was widely known for its medical school and particularly famous for an eye salve made from Phrygian powder mixed with oil. Their famous potion was useless for their type of blindness, but their blindness was spiritual, not physical (cf Jn 9:39-41)

Nominal Christians...are Christians in name only
-- Gotquestions.org

John Stott on **naked** - This then is Christ's view....of **nominal Christians** who are neither *really* nor *wholeheartedly* committed to Him. Morally and spiritually such people are naked, blind beggars. They are beggars because they have nothing with which to purchase their forgiveness or an entry into the Kingdom of God. They are nake because they have no clothes to fit them to stand before God. They are blind because they have no idea either of their spiritual poverty or of their spiritual danger....To contradict the considered judgment of a skilled physician is the surest road to disaster. (BORROW What Christ thinks of the church : Revelation 1-3 expounded, page 118).

Brian Bell - We laugh at the story of the Emperor with no clothes! (picture above) - 2 guys who bamboozled the king with invisible clothes that "any fool could see". He paraded himself in his skivvies', while all the people were saying look at his clothes one boy shouted the king has no clothes! Jesus was like the lil boy who yelled, "Laodicea has no clothes". They're "naked as a jaybird" spiritually!

In sum, the final diagnosis Jesus gives to the church at Laodicea (recall this letter was read to the congregants!!!) should have been devastating to the church members because to be poor, destitute, and blind in the ancient world—or in any society—is to be at one's wits end, without hope, destitute and in dire need! Jesus did not say they were spiritually deaf, but one wonders if His scathing words fell on any who had ears to hear what the Spirit was saying to this seventh church!

Rich (4145) **plousios** from **ploutos** = wealth, abundance, riches) is an adjective which defines that which exists in a large amount with implication of its being valuable. Literally **plousios** refers to having an abundance of earthly possessions that exceeds normal experience. As used in Eph 2:4 plousios refers to being plentifully supplied with something. **Rich** is used most often in the NT in the sense of having abundant possessions and especially material wealth and was a frequent topic addressed by the Lord Jesus. It is used figuratively in James to describe those who are **rich** in faith (Jas 2:5, cp similar use to describe the believers in Smyrna, Rev 2:9)

Plousios in the Revelation - Rev. 2:9; Rev. 3:17; Rev. 6:15; Rev. 13:16

Become wealthy (4147) **plouteo** from **ploutos** = wealth) means to be or become rich or wealthy (Lk 1:53, 1 Ti 6:9) and is used figuratively of spiritual riches (cp Lk 12:21, Rev 3:18 and literally in Rev 3:17!) 2 Corinthians 8:9+ says "*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might* ***become rich***." Plouteo describes the entities that have become rich by consorting with the whore Babylon (Rev. 18:3; Rev. 18:15; Rev. 18:19).

> **Plouteo** - 12x/12v - abounding in riches(1), become rich(4), become wealthy(1), get rich(1), rich(5). Lk. 1:53; Lk. 12:21; Rom. 10:12; 1 Co. 4:8; 2 Co. 8:9; 1 Tim. 6:9; 1 Tim. 6:18; Rev. 3:17; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 18:3; Rev. 18:15; Rev. 18:19

Need (5532) **chreia** from **chraomai** = to use, make use of or **chreos** = a debt) means a necessity, what is needed or the occasion of need. **Chreia** refers in (Acts 6:3) to the needful matter, duty or task. **Friberg** - (1) need, lack, necessity; have need of someone or something (Mt 3.14; Mk 2.25); plural needs, necessities of life (Acts 20.34); (2) abstractly what is needed, what is useful (Eph 4.29); (3) needful matter, business, duty (Acts 6.3) (BORROW Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

> **Chreia in the Revelation** - Rev. 3:17; Rev. 21:23; Rev. 22:5

Wretched (5005) **talaiporos** from **tálas** = suffering, wretched or according to A T Robertson from **tlao** = to bear + **poros** = a callus) means afflicted, miserable, in a distressed condition, beaten down from from continued strain and leaving a person literally full of callouses (= deep misery). **Wretched** describes a very unhappy or unfortunate state in poor or pitiful circumstances. **Talaiporos** is an expression used in pagan Greek drama to express tragic misfortune and woe. The verb and noun are used in the LXX to refer to ravaged lands, devastated countries, and pillaging and ravaging (Mic. 2:4; Joel 1:10; Jer.4:20; Zech. 11:2-3)

Miserable (1652)(eleeinos from eleos = mercy, pity, compassion) pertains to being deserving of sympathy for one's pathetic condition. The word indicates one set forth as an object of extreme pity; it is the feeling of one who is moved by the sight of another's suffering and in a way shares in it—compassion. Used twice in NT. In 1 Corinthians 15:19 Paul describes those that are "most miserable" or "pitiable" of people. Paul emphasized that believers are not only "miserable" but "of all men (the) most miserable" if the Resurrection has not occurred.

Poor (4434) **ptochos** from **ptosso** = crouch, cringe, cower down or hide oneself for fear, a picture of one crouching and cowering like a beggar with a tin cup to receive the pennies dropped in!) is an adjective which describes one who crouches and cowers and is used as a noun to mean **beggar**. These poor were unable to meet their basic needs and so were forced to depend on others or on society. Classical Greek used the **ptochos** to refer to a person reduced to total destitution, who crouched in a corner begging. As he held out one hand for alms he often hid his face with the other hand, because he was ashamed of being recognized. Only other use in the Revelation in Rev 13:16.

Blind (5185) **tuphlos** from **tuphlóo** = envelop with smoke, be unable to see clearly) can refer to literal blindness (Mt 9:27, 28; 11:5; 12:22; Lk 7:21, 22; Jn 9:1, 2, 3.; Acts 13:11 Lv 19:14; Job 29:15) but more often is used to describe spiritual blindness. Figuratively then tuphlos picture one's mind as blind, ignorant, stupid, slow of understanding, being unable to understand, incapable of comprehending (see Mt 15:14; 23:16, 17, 19, 24, 26; Lk 4:18; Jn 9:39,40,41; Ro 2:19; 2Pe 1:9; Rev 3:17; Isa 42:16,18,19; 43:8) This sense speaks of both mental and spiritual blindness, often the result of self-deception so that one is unable to understand (spiritual truth). The Greek writers used tuphlos to describe those who were "mentally blind".

Naked (stripped) (1131) **gumnos** cp our English "**gym**") means not covered, nude or naked but not necessarily descriptive of absolute nakedness as it was used of a person wearing only an under-tunic (descriptive of the mode of dress in the ancient gymnasiums in Greece and Rome). As such it could mean one who was comparatively naked or scantily dressed. It was used of one poorly dressed (Jas 2:15). Figuratively in this verse gumnos means uncovered, manifest, disclosed, exposed, not hidden and easy to be known. **Gumnos** can refer to being inadequately clothed (Mt 25:36, 38, 43,44) or lightly clothed (Jn 21:7)

> **Gumnos** - Matt. 25:36; Matt. 25:38; Matt. 25:43; Matt. 25:44; Mk. 14:51; Mk. 14:52; Jn. 21:7; Acts 19:16; 1 Co. 15:37; 2 Co. 5:3; Heb. 4:13; Jas. 2:15; Rev. 3:17; Rev. 16:15; Rev. 17:16

QUESTION - What is nominal Christianity? What is a nominal Christian?

> (**ED**: WEBSTER'S 1828 DICTIONARY - **Nominal** - 1. Titular; existing in name only; as , a *nominal* distinction or difference is a difference in name and not in reality. 2. Pertaining to a name or names; consisting in names).

ANSWER - Outside of arcane discussions in medieval philosophy, **nominalism** is the possession of a baseless name, title, or description. A **nominal** presidency, for example, is one in which the president is nothing more than a figurehead. A **nominal** vacation is one in which the vacationers must still work. **Nominalism** has to do with empty formalities, things so-called, and meaningless

labels.

Nominalism exists in religious circles. **Nominal Christians** are church-goers or otherwise religious people whose "faith" does not go beyond being identified with a church, Christian group, or denomination. They are Christians in name only; Christ has no bearing in their lives. **Nominal Christians** may attend church and Christian functions, and they self-identify as "*Christians*," but it is just a label. They view religion primarily as a social construct, and they do not allow it to require much of them in terms of morality or responsibility. **Nominalists** take a minimalist approach to their faith.

Nominalism is of concern to many pastors, preachers, and Christian theologians, as it appears to be on the rise today. Many identify themselves as *Christians*, but the overall impact of Christianity in the West is not what it once was. But what causes **nominalism**? Why do people prefer a **nominal** or in-name-only type of Christianity?

> (1) One possible reason is that **nominal** religion is easy. It does not require a changed life (ED: cf Jesus' radical call in Mk 8:34-36+!). A **nominal** Christian can point to membership in a church as *evidence* of his salvation. Church attendance and participation in routines, activities, and programs become the measuring stick rather than a **changed life, a new heart, a love for God, and obedience to the Word** (see 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 14:23).
>
> (2) Another cause of **nominal Christianity** is the habit of declaring oneself a *Christian* because of custom or culture. Whole countries, including Costa Rica, Norway, Denmark, and England, have a form of Christianity as the official state religion. This allows a Norwegian, for example, to culturally identify as a *Christian*—he is a member of the Church of Norway by default, having been registered in infancy when he was baptized. Even in countries with no state religion, such as the United States, cultural Christianity can lead to **nominalism**. Someone who was reared in a Christian family, attended church all his life, was baptized, lives in the Bible Belt, etc., often claims allegiance to the Christian faith, in spite of evidence in his life to the contrary.
>
> (3) Another cause of **nominalism** within the church is legalism, the attempt to transform oneself (or others) inwardly by working on the outward behavior. Some people, especially those raised in the church, conform to standards imposed upon them by parents, other Christians, or the church hierarchy without the inner transformation that can only be produced by the Spirit through the Word (Galatians 6:15+). Legalists substitute good deeds for saving faith and compliance for conversion. This naturally leads to nominal Christianity, as church-goers and rule-keepers claim the label "Christian" but have no relationship with Christ.

Jesus dealt with **nominal** Christianity in one of His letters to the churches. The church in Sardis wore a Christian label, but Jesus saw the truth behind the label: "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead" (Revelation 3:1). Or, as the KJV says, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." God is not interested in the labels we tag ourselves with. Having a "name" that we belong to Christ is not enough. Nominal faith is not faith. GotQuestions.org (**BOLDING ADDED** - I WOULD ALSO ADD "NOMINAL FAITH IS NOT SAVING FAITH!")

Related Resources:

- What is nominalism? What is a nominalist? GotQuestions.org
- What does the Bible say about responsibility? GotQuestions.org
- What does the Bible say about personal responsibility? GotQuestions.org
- What did Jesus mean when He said, "Take up your cross and follow Me"? GotQuestions.org

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One of Aesop's fables is the story of the dog who saw his image reflected in a pool of water beneath his feet. Though he already had a bone, he was jealous of the bone he saw in the "other" dog's mouth. He opened his jaws to snarl and snatch at the bone's reflection—and of course lost his bone when it fell into the water. How accurately this pictures the "church in Laodicea"! Not satisfied with the promises of God, the church in this wealthy Roman city sought for and acquired earthly power through wealth. But she had in reality become poor, and in the end her wealth would be denied her.

Poor Little Rich Church

> You say, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing." — Revelation 3:17

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

The city of Laodicea was rich, and so were the people of its church. The area thrived on three enterprises: finance, textiles, and eye salve. The city was a major banking center, and the most popular clothes among Rome's upper class were black wool garments

made in Laodicea. Pharmaceuticals were doing well because the eye salve made in the city was sold far and wide. The people of this rich church bragged that they had “need of nothing” (Revelation 3:17).

How wrong they were! Jesus accused them of being spiritually “lukewarm.” He was ready to vomit them out (vv.15-16). Using illustrations He knew they would understand, He said they needed to buy from Him “gold refined in the fire”—the riches of heaven. They should obtain robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb. They needed to anoint their eyes with eye salve (allowing the Holy Spirit to give them spiritual sight), so they could accept and understand the truth of God (v.18).

Are you spiritually poor? Do your physical goods and assets far outweigh your spiritual wealth? Christ stood at the door of the Laodicean church and kept knocking, waiting for them to recognize their need of Him (v.20). Is He waiting for you as well? —David C. Egner

What Christ will say on judgment day
Will finally make life's values clear;
He'll show that we were rich or poor
By what on earth we held most dear.
—D. De Haan

The richest people on earth are those who invest their lives in heaven.

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Revelation 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

BGT Revelation 3:18 συμβουλε ω σοι γορ σαι παρ μο χρυσ ον πεπυρωμ νον κ πυρ ς να πλουτ σ ς, κα μ τια λευκ να περιβ λ κα μ φανερωθ α σχ νη τ ς γυμν τητ ς σου, κα κολλ[ο] ριον γχρ σαι το ς φθαλμο ς σου να βλ π ς.

KJV Revelation 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

NET Revelation 3:18 take my advice and buy gold from me refined by fire so you can become rich! Buy from me white clothing so you can be clothed and your shameful nakedness will not be exposed, and buy eye salve to put on your eyes so you can see!

CSB Revelation 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire so that you may be rich, white clothes so that you may be dressed and your shameful nakedness not be exposed, and ointment to spread on your eyes so that you may see.

ESV Revelation 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

NIV Revelation 3:18 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.

NLT Revelation 3:18 So I advise you to buy gold from me-- gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see.

NRS Revelation 3:18 Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

NJB Revelation 3:18 I warn you, buy from me the gold that has been tested in the fire to make you truly rich, and white robes to clothe you and hide your shameful nakedness, and ointment to put on your eyes to enable you to see.

NAB Revelation 3:18 I advise you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich, and white garments to put on so that your shameful nakedness may not be exposed, and buy ointment to smear on your eyes so that you may see.

YLT Revelation 3:18 I counsel thee to buy from me gold fired by fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white garments that thou mayest be arrayed, and the shame of thy nakedness may not be manifest, and with eye-salve anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see.

GWN Revelation 3:18 I advise you: Buy gold purified in fire from me so that you may be rich. Buy white clothes from me. Wear them so that you may keep your shameful, naked body from showing. Buy ointment to put on your eyes so that you may see.

BBE Revelation 3:18 If you are wise you will get from me gold tested by fire, so that you may have true wealth; and white robes to put on, so that your shame may not be seen; and oil for your eyes, so that you may see.

RSV Revelation 3:18 Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich, and white garments to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

NKJ Revelation 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.

ASV Revelation 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see.

MIT Revelation 3:18 I counsel you to purchase from me gold refined by fire that indeed you might be rich; and white robes that you might be clothed, so that the shame of your nakedness would not be uncovered, and an eye solution to treat your eyes that you might see.

- **I advise you**: Ps 16:7 32:8 73:24 107:11 Pr 1:25,30 19:20 Ec 8:2
- **buy**: Pr 23:23 Isa 55:1 Mt 13:44 25:9
- **gold**: Mal 3:3 1Co 3:12,13 1Pe 1:7
- **that you**: Rev 2:9 Lu 12:21 2Co 8:9 1Ti 6:18 Jas 2:5
- **white**: Rev 3:4,5 Rev 7:13 Rev 16:15 Rev 19:8 2Co 5:3
- **the shame**: Rev 16:15 Isa 47:3 Jer 13:26 Da 12:2 Mic 1:11 Na 3:5
- **anoint**: Joh 9:6-11 1Jn 2:20-27
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Matthew 13:44-46+ "The **kingdom of heaven** is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and **buys** (agorazo) that field. 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and **bought** (agorazo) it.

Revelation 5:9 And they *sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and **purchased** (agorazo) for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Isaiah 55:1-3 (**BUY FROM ME GOLD..** **RED** = COMMANDS) "Ho! Every one who thirsts, **come** to the waters; And you who have no money **come**, **BUY** (Lxx = agorazo) and **eat**. **Come**, **buy** wine and milk Without money and without cost. 2 "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? **Listen** carefully to Me, and **eat** what is good, And delight yourself in abundance. 3 '**Incline** your ear and **come** to Me. **Listen**, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David.

Ephesians 1:17; 18 (I PRAY) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Revelation 3:4 ('But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. (3:5) 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Revelation 4:4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, **clothed in white garments,** and golden crowns on their heads.

Revelation 6:11 (MARTYRS KILLED IN THE TRIBULATION) And there was given to each of them a**white robe**; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

Revelation 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, **clothed in white robes**, and palm branches were in their hands;

Revelation 7:13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are**clothed in the white robes**, who are they, and where have they come from?" (**ANSWER**? SEE Rev 7:14 = SAVED OUT OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION).

Revelation 19:8 It was given to her (THE CHURCH) to clothe herself in fine linen, **bright** (LAMPROS - TRANSLATED "**WHITE**" IN KJV, NJB) and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Revelation 19:14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.

GRACIOUS WISE ADVICE FROM JESUS

Note how Jesus directly addresses three items which were sources of great pride for Laodicea - banking industry, garment industry and their famous eye salve. Jesus offered 3 pictures each of which speak of genuine salvation. As an aside, there was no need to commend this church because it was so busy commending itself!

Michael Andrus - He says, "I counsel you." I like that. Here is the God of the immense, unfathomable universe, with countless galaxies at His fingertips, who enjoys the right to issue orders and expect them to be obeyed, saying to this sorry church, "I counsel you." He could command them, order them, and enforce His will with ruthless power and be totally justified, but instead He counsels. He always respects the freedom with which He has endowed His creatures. He doesn't push His way into our lives. But in light of who He is (verse 14), wouldn't it be the height of lunacy to disregard His counsel?

R C H Lenski has an interesting comment - In Rev 3:17 the voice of the law disillusions this church and reveals its miserable sin; but now **the voice of the gospel speaks**. "I counsel" is friendly, it leads and draws. The Lord is not commanding. The gospel is never a stern command. Faith is indeed obedience, but it is the obedience of trust and confidence. (BORROW The Interpretation of St. John`s Revelation) (Bolding added)

Notice that the "**because**" (term of explanation) in Rev 3:17 gives the reasons for Jesus' wise advice in this passage.

I (present tense - continually) **advise** (sumbouleuo) **you to buy** (agorazo) **from Me gold** (chrusion) **refined** (puroo in perfect tense) **by fire** (pur) **so that** (hina purpose clause) **you may become rich** (plouteo) - Here we see the great grace and boundless mercy of the "Wonderful Counselor" (Isa 9:6) Jesus Christ Who gives words of wisdom and life to a self-sufficient church! **From Me** is a direct affront to their sense of need of nothing! The Laodiceans needed to humble themselves in order to find their true sufficiency in Christ! Jesus gives a "stock tip" to this rich church that they need to make an investment that will yield them benefits for all eternity! This is another of those great paradoxes of Christianity (which befuddle the lost world!), for Smyrna (Rev 2:9+) was literally in poverty but was spiritually rich (plousios - cognate of "become rich" plouteo) while Laodicea was literally rich, but spiritually was "dirt poor!" As Paul says "a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God (LIKE SPIRITUAL PARADOXES), for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot (IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO) understand them, because they are spiritually appraised (THEY LACK THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ILLUMINATION)." (1Co 2:14+)

John Stott writes - Jesus Christ had to humble that boastful personal pronoun and lay it in the dust, and say "it is from me that**your salvation** comes."....But why does he recommend the Laodiceans to buy from him? Can salvation be bought? No. Certainly not. It is a free gift to us because it was purchased by Christ on the cross. His invitation buy from me should not be pressed. He is doubtless using language appropriate to the commercially-minded Laodiceans. He likens himself to a merchant who visits the city to

sell his wares and goes into competition with other salesmen. “I advise you to forsake your former suppliers,” says the divine merchant, “and come trade with me.” Perhaps also he is thinking of Yahweh’s appeal: “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost” (Isa 55:1).” (Borrow What Christ thinks of the church : Revelation 1-3 expounded)

MacArthur - They needed gold that was free of impurities, representing the priceless riches of true salvation. Peter wrote of a *"faith … more precious than gold*" (1Pe 1:7+), while Paul defined saving faith as “rich in good works,” having the “treasure of a good foundation for the future” (1Ti 6:18–19+). Christ offered the Laodiceans a pure, true salvation that would bring them into a real relationship with Him.

R C H Lenski - The counsel is “**to buy from Me**.” The aorist is effective to indicate an actual purchase. Only he will buy who sees his need and stops saying, “I have need of nothing.” Only he will come and buy “of Me” who sees that the Lord alone has these treasures (cf Col 2:3). To buy, and that of Me, thus includes **true contrition and true faith, a complete inner change**. They are no longer to be lukewarm but now hot, indeed, fervent and glowing for Christ....But how shall these beggarly, blind, and naked ones “buy”? The answer is found in Isa. 55:1: “Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money! Come ye, buy, and eat! Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!” Buy for nothing! This is the strange, wonderful gospel buying. It must be thus. First, because these buyers have nothing with which to buy; secondly, because what they are to buy is priceless so that it would be a farce to offer anything as a price; thirdly, because in his infinite grace the Lord cannot allow this grace to be disparaged by any pretended merit of ours, as the Amen of absolute verity no such pretense and lie could possibly be allowed in this buying. “To buy” is “to find” (Matt. 13:44) the priceless treasure. We buy without work-righteousness. To offer works is to purchase nothing.(BORROW The Interpretation of St. John`s Revelation) (Bolding added)

Grant Osborne on **buy from Me gold refined by fire** - But in reality they were poverty-stricken because all their worldly wealth was nothing but fool’s gold. “**Gold refined in the fire**” is similar to 1 Peter 1:7, in which the saints who have passed through fiery trials have become pure gold. Christ is then referring to the purifying effects of suffering and a life lived entirely for God. This is true wealth and will never perish like worldly riches do. (Revelation)

Henry Morris on **buy from Me gold refined by fire** - The purchase price is merely to recognize their wretched condition and come to Him in repentance, forsaking their riches and prestige for the true riches (faith tried in the fire—1 Peter 1:7) and their worldly wisdom for true wisdom (Colossians 2:3) in Christ. They must receive the pure white garments of His righteousness to replace the filthy rags of their own righteousnesses (Isaiah 64:6). (BORROW The Revelation Record)

John Stott writes - Here is welcome news for naked, blind beggars! They are poor; but Christ has gold. They are naked; but Christ has clothes. They are blind; but Christ has eye ointment. Let them no longer trust in their banks, their Phrygian eye powders and their clothing factories! Let them come to him! He can enrich their poverty, clothe their nakedness and heal their blindness. He can open their eyes to perceive a spiritual world of which they have never dreamed. He can cover their sin and shame and make them fit to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. He can enrich them with life and life abundant. **In a word, he can save them.** He has died for them and risen again. Through his death they can be cleansed, and through his living presence within them they can be changed. (Borrow What Christ thinks of the church : Revelation 1-3 expounded)

R L Thomas - The word agorasai (“to buy”) is full of sarcasm. The substance of the counsel is to buy. The Lord asks those who live in a city noted for its riches to buy what they cannot afford (cf. Isa. 55:1). This is language that materialistic people can understand (Trench; Alford; Moffatt; Lenski). The counsel is to buy three items, the first of them being chrysion pepyrōmenon ek53 pyros (“gold refined by fire”). This is pure gold, all dross having been removed through the refining process. The picture of obtaining purity through a refining process is frequent in Scripture (cf. Ps. 66:10; Zech. 13:9; 1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12). Whether or not the purification comes through trials as it does elsewhere depends upon what symbolism is entailed in the chrysion (“gold”).....The best identification is to interpret gold as a picture of high quality faith, a faith capable of withstanding trials and one that results in works. This symbolism was apparently common among early Christians (cf. Luke 12:21; 1 Tim. 6:18; James 1:3; 2:5; 1 Pet. 1:7; cf. Prov. 17:3; Zech. 13:9). It should be remembered, however, that associated with this purified faith that the Lord offers is a new heart. The new heart is also implied in the two symbols yet to come.

Peter says the trials in our lives are "so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than **gold** (chrusion) which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

And white (leukos) **garments** (himaton) **so that** (hina purpose clause) **you may clothe** (periballo) **yourself, and that the shame** (aischune) **of your nakedness** (gumnotes) **will not be revealed** (phaneroo) - Keep the interesting historical fact in mind that Laodicea was famous for its black wool. Jesus recommends they buy **white garments**, which speak of purity and righteousness in the Revelation (see passages above and note below). Ultimately they are "**white**" because they have been "made white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14+) resulting in their receipt of His imputed righteousness (2Co 5:21). Paul explained this new "garment" to the believers in Gal 3:27+ stating that they "were baptized (identified spiritually, not water baptized) into Christ" (the Spirit brought them

into the new covenant, and into oneness with Christ) and thus they had "clothed (themselves) with Christ." **Clothe** is periballo and while most of the NT uses mean to literally be clothed, 12 times in Revelation this verb refers to supernatural clothing! Normally **shame** (aischune) is an emotion that one feels when he or she knows that they have sinned against God (all sin is against God!). In that context shame is a good thing for it drives us to repent and seek God's forgiveness. But the Laodiceans were so hardened to God's truth that they did not even recognize that they were spiritually naked before a Holy God. As Jesus declared their spiritual **nakedness** would one day be **revealed**, "For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light." (Mk. 4:22+) In the culture of the day **nakedness** was a symbol of judgment and humiliation, so surely the Laodiceans understood what Jesus was alluding to.

Grant Osborne - The principle here is that, contrary to popular wisdom, clothes do not make the person. Looking good is not the same as being good. You can wear Armani suits and Dior dresses and yet be "shamefully naked" to God. The imagery here is that of exposure, disgrace, and judgment. When God exposes a person's **shame** in Scripture, **judgment always results** (Isa 20:1–4; Ezek 16:3; 23:10). White garments, on the other hand, indicate honor, symbolizing righteousness (Rev 3:4–5; 6:11), being washed in the blood of the Lamb (7:13–14), and eternal glory (4:4; 19:14).(Revelation)

Alan Carr - Come To Jesus For Spiritual Garments – He invites them to come to Him for spiritual garments. This is an invitation to come to Him for salvation. They are naked and lost in their sins. If they will come to Him, He will cloth them in robes of righteousness and they will be no longer naked in the sight of God, Isa. 61:10; Rev. 19:8.

MacArthur- Laodicea's famed black wool symbolized the filthy, sinful garments with which the unregenerate are clothed (Isa. 64:6; Zech. 3:3–4). In contrast, God clothes the redeemed with white garments (Rev 3:4–5; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13–14; cf. Isa. 61:10), symbolizing the righteous deeds that always accompany genuine saving faith (Rev 19:8).

Leon Morris - Nakedness was in the ancient world the ultimate humiliation (cf. 2 Sam. 10:4; Isa. 20:4; Ezek. 16:37–39; Nah. 3:5; etc.), while contrariwise to be clothed in fine clothing was to receive honour (Gen. 41:42; Esth. 6:6–11; Dan. 5:29) (Borrow Revelation of St John)

Regarding nakedness, recall that before sin entered the world, Adam and Eve "were both **naked** and were **not ashamed**." After sin entered the world, shame came coupled with sin, because "the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were **naked**; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings." (Ge 3:7, 10,11+) In other words, they tried to hide their sense of shame with fig leaves.

Warren Wiersbe - The Laodiceans could go to the market and purchase fine woolen garments, but that would not meet their real need. They needed the white garments of God's righteousness and grace. According to Revelation 19:8, we should be clothed in "fine linen, clean and white," and this symbolizes "the righteous acts of the saints" (NASB). Salvation means that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, put to our account; but sanctification means that His righteousness is imparted to us, made a part of our character and conduct. (BORROW Be Victorious)

And eye salve (kollourion) **to anoint your eyes so that you may see**- (See interesting article on ancient eye salves) Clearly Jesus is referring not to physical healing, but healing from their spiritual blindness, their inability to see the truth in the Word of God. Eye salve (kollouvrion) was used of a yellow salve to treat discharges, wounds, bruises, and weals (Oxyrhynchus Papyri, 8:110-15, # 1088); but it was also used for eye salve (DMTG, 207; KP, 3:272; RAC, 1:972-75; KGH, 2:432-33; NDIEC, 3:56-57; LSCA, 196-99; LSC, 419, 429; Pliny, NH, 34:105-6). An inscription mentions four types of eye salve, such as myrrh and nardensalve (RI, 298). The Phrygian powder was apparently applied to the eyes in the form of a doughy paste

MacArthur -Blindness represents lack of understanding and knowledge of spiritual truth (cf. Matt. 15:14; 23:16–17, 19, 24, 26; Luke 6:39; John 9:40–41; 12:40; Rom. 2:19; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 2:11). Like all unregenerate people, the Laodiceans desperately needed Christ to "open their eyes so that they [might] turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in [Him]" (Acts 26:18; cf. 1 Pet. 2:9).

Grant Osborne - This parallels John 9, which contrasts the man born blind, who was given first physical sight and then spiritual insight, with the Pharisees, who claimed spiritual sight but were blind to the things of God. The key verse is John 9:39 The Laodiceans needed to be anointed with God's eye salve so they could **see their true spiritual condition**, **repent**, and **receive healing from Christ.** (Revelation)

Christ is Source of spiritual sight as John records -

> And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that (PURPOSE) **those who do not see may see**, and that those who see may become blind." (John 9:39)

Advise (4823) **sumbouleuo** from **sun** = together + **bouleuo** = to take counsel) in the active sense means to advise or give advice

on a course of action, tell them what they should plan to do ("advised" in Jn 18:14, "advise" in Rev 3:18; Lxx - 1 Ki 1:12). In the middle voice it means to consult usually in a negative sense to consult with intent to harm thus translated to plot (against Jesus - Mt 26:4, Jn 18:14, against Saul - Acts 9:23). (Used 4x - Matt. 26:4; Jn. 18:14; Acts 9:23; Rev. 3:18) **Gilbrant** notes that **sumbouleuo** "can be found in classical Greek since the Fifth Century B.C. meaning (in the active voice) “advise one to do” and (in the middle voice) “consult with” (*Liddell-Scott*). Sumbouleuō is also found in the Greek tragedies. Josephus used sumbouleuō in both the Antiquities of the Jews and Wars of the Jews, but there is no difference in meaning in his use of this word (cf. Bauer). (Complete Biblical Library)

Buy (purchase) (59) **agorazo** from **agora** = the market place, place of public assembly, town square where things such as slaves were presented for sale or where trials were held) literally means to buy or make purchases in the marketplace, doing business in the agora (Mt 13:44), acquiring something (goods or services) in exchange for money, transferring ownership from seller to buyer. **Agorazo** meant to secure the rights to someone by paying a price and thus acquiring them as one's property (as here in 1Co 6:20 and 1Co 7:23, referring to false teachers in 2Pe 2:1-note). **Gerald Cowen** notes that **agorazo** "is especially common in deeds of sale, such as in the purchase of houses; however, its most noted use is to refer to the purchase of slaves. This use is cited by Deissmann in a will dated around 133 B.C. He expresses the opinion that Paul used the very formula found in these records in the New Testament. The third word is lutroo. This means "to redeem by paying a price." It is commonly used in connection with redeeming articles that had been pawned, such as a cloak (Moulton and Milligan). It is also used in pagan religion to express the idea "freeing a soul from death." (Salvation Word Studies)

> **Agorazo** - 30v - bought(9), buy(11), buying(3), buys(2), make the purchase(1), purchased(3), spend(1). Matt. 13:44; Matt. 13:46; Matt. 14:15; Matt. 21:12; Matt. 25:9; Matt. 25:10; Matt. 27:7; Mk. 6:36; Mk. 6:37; Mk. 11:15; Mk. 15:46; Mk. 16:1; Lk. 9:13; Lk. 14:18; Lk. 14:19; Lk. 17:28; Lk. 22:36; Jn. 4:8; Jn. 6:5; Jn. 13:29; 1 Co. 6:20; 1 Co. 7:23; 1 Co. 7:30; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 5:9; Rev. 13:17; Rev. 14:3; Rev. 14:4; Rev. 18:11

Gold (5553)(**chrusion** from **chrusos** = gold) the most highly prized metal in most of the ancient world. Gold as raw material, (1Co 3:12.; Heb 9:4; 1Pe 1:7; Rev 3:18; 21:18, 21). Gold ornaments, object smade of gold or adorned with gold, jewelry (1Ti 2:9; 1Pe 3:3; Rev 17:4; Rev 18:16). Coined gold (Acts 3:6 (Peter said, “I do not possess silver and **gold**, but what I do have I give to you"); Acts 20:33 (“I have coveted no one’s silver or **gold** or clothes."); 1Pe 1:18 ("you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or **gold**")

> **Chrusion - 13x - gold(12), gold jewelry(1).** Acts 3:6; Acts 20:33; 1 Co. 3:12; 1 Tim. 2:9; Heb. 9:4; 1 Pet. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18; 1 Pet. 3:3; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 17:4; Rev. 18:16; Rev. 21:18; Rev. 21:21

Refined (4448) **puroo** from **púr** = fire; cf **purosis**) means to be ignited or set on fire, to be kindled, to burn, to set on fire. Paul used **puroo** figuratively to describe "missiles" or "darts" undoubtedly referring to thoughts and in the perfect tense describe these missile as having been set on fire and still burning, speaking of the permanence of the burning effect (Eph 6:16). Figuratively means to be inflamed with anger, be incensed (2Co 11:29) or Burn with lust (1Co 7:9). In Pr 30:5 "Every word of God is **tested** (**puroo** - refined, pure, flawless)." Rev 1:15 says the glorified Christ's "feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been **made to glow** (**puroo**) in a furnace."

> **Puroo** - 6x - 1 Co. 7:9; 2 Co. 11:29; Eph. 6:16; 2 Pet. 3:12; Rev. 1:15; Rev. 3:18

Become rich (4147) **plouteo** from **ploutos** = wealth) means to be or become rich or wealthy (Lk 1:53, 1 Ti 6:9) and is used figuratively of spiritual riches (cp Lk 12:21, Rev 3:18 and literally in Rev 3:17!)

> **Plouteo** - 12x - abounding in riches(1), become rich(4), become wealthy(1), get rich(1), rich(5). Lk. 1:53; Lk. 12:21; Rom. 10:12; 1 Co. 4:8; 2 Co. 8:9; 1 Tim. 6:9; 1 Tim. 6:18; Rev. 3:17; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 18:3; Rev. 18:15; Rev. 18:19

Garments (2440) himation describes a garment of any sort, but especially an outer garment and in the plural (ta himatia) for clothes in general. In contrast the Greek word **chitin** refers to the garment worn under the outer cloak. The **himation** was something thrown over the inner tunic (chitin) and in secular Greek was sometimes used for the Roman toga. The outer garments were often laid aside (Mt. 21:7, 8; Acts 7:58; 22:20; Ex. 22:26, 27; 1Sa 21:9; Is. 3:6, 7). The smell of garments deceived Isaac into believing it was Esau rather than Jacob (the deceiver) (Ge 27:27) **Himation** is used figuratively of the "clothing" of the created heavens (Ps 102:26, Heb 1:11-12). Joseph's loose outer garment saved him from the clutches of Potiphar's wife (Ge 39:12-13) but ironically were the evidence to substantiate her false accusation (Ge 39:18). The prophet Joel says "rend your heart and not your **garments**." Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness, And relenting of evil." (Joel 2:13) Jesus used himation figuratively to describe the minority of believers at "**Sardis** who have not soiled their **garments**; and they will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy." (Rev 3:4,5, cp Rev 3:18) which resulted in their future state of being "clothed in white garments." (Rev 3:5). See Sketches of Jewish Social Life by Edersheim (go to paragraph "eighteen garments.")

Himaton in the Revelation - Rev. 3:4; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 4:4; Rev. 16:15; Rev. 19:13; Rev. 19:16

Clothe (wear, wrap)(4016) periballo from **peri** = around, about + **ballo** = throw) means literally to cast or throw around, to throw up a rampart around, to encompass by erecting something around, to build an embankment around as in Lk 19:43 ("your enemies will throw up a barricade against you") (Lxx of Ezek 4:2). In the active voice it means to put (throw) a garment around or upon someone, to clothe (Luke 23:11; John 19:2). M In the middle voice (AS IN ACTS 12:8) it means to put on one's own garments, to clothe oneself, to be clothed (Mt. 6:29; Lk 12:27; Rev. 3:18; 19:8).

> **Periballo - NOTE 11/22x in the RevelationA** - Matt. 6:29; Matt. 6:31; Matt. 25:36; Matt. 25:38; Matt. 25:43; Mk. 14:51; Mk. 16:5; Lk. 12:27; Lk. 23:11; Acts 12:8; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 4:4; Rev. 7:9; Rev. 7:13; Rev. 10:1; Rev. 11:3; Rev. 12:1; Rev. 17:4; Rev. 18:16; Rev. 19:8; Rev. 19:13

Shame (152) **aischune** from **aíschos** = shame) means disgrace (loss of reputation as the result of a dishonorable action) or ignominy (a deep personal humiliation). **Aischune** describes **shame** resulting from exposure of one's weaknesses or sins. It is not a feeling one has but an experience which comes to someone. In the Bible **shame** most frequently denotes the guilt a person feels or should feel for having sinned against God. **Friberg** - (1) as a feeling shame, embarrassment, humiliation (Lk 14.9); (2) as an experience that comes to one, either deservedly (Jude 1:13) or undeservedly (Heb 12.2) -- shame, disgrace; (3) of conduct that causes shame -- shameful ways, dishonorable deeds (2Co 4.2) (BORROW Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

> **Aischune - 6v - disgrace (1), shame (5).** Lk. 14:9; 2 Co. 4:2; Phil. 3:19; Heb. 12:2; Jude 1:13; Rev. 3:18

Nakedness (1132)(gumnotes) (1) nakedness; figuratively, of spiritual unpreparedness (Rev 3.18); (2) lack of sufficient clothing, destitution (Ro 8.35)

> **Gumnotes - exposure(1), nakedness(2).** Ro 8:35; 2Co 11:27; Rev 3:18. Septuagint - Dt 28:48

Revealed (5319) **phaneroo** from **phanerós** = manifest, visible, conspicuous in turn from **phaino** = give light; become visible in turn from **phos** = light) is literally "to bring to light" and primarily means "to make visible" or to cause to become visible. The basic meaning of **phaneroo** is to make known, to clearly reveal, to manifest, to cause to be seen or to make something clear.

> **Phaneroo** - Mk. 4:22; Mk. 16:12; Mk. 16:14; Jn. 1:31; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 3:21; Jn. 7:4; Jn. 9:3; Jn. 17:6; Jn. 21:1; Jn. 21:14; Ro 1:19; Ro 3:21; Ro 16:26; 1Co 4:5; 2Co 2:14; 2Co 3:3; 2Co 4:10; 2Co 4:11; 2Co 5:10; 2Co 5:11; 2Co 7:12; 2Co 11:6; Eph 5:13; Col. 1:26; Col. 3:4; Col. 4:4; 1Ti 3:16; 2Ti 1:10; Titus 1:3; Heb. 9:8; Heb. 9:26; 1Pe 1:20; 1Pe 5:4; 1Jn 1:2; 1Jn 2:19; 1Jn 2:28; 1Jn 3:2; 1Jn 3:5; 1Jn 3:8; 1Jn 4:9; Rev. 3:18; Rev 15:4

Eye salve (2854)(**kollourion**) Only used in Rev 3:18. Here is the note from the **NIDNTT** - "The substance after which our modern English word for an eye-wash or salve, **collyrium**, is derived was common in ancient times. It was used for various purposes, but especially for application to the eyes. References to it are numerous, found in Greek, Latin, and rabbinic literature. The sole use of **kollourion** in the NT is Rev. 3:18. Since the context is the letter to the church at Laodicea, it is assumed that the writer had especially in mind a preparation made from powdered Phrygian stone used at the medical school there. Its significance must be understood together with that of the gold, which would call to mind the prosperity of the city of Laodicea, and the white clothing, which contrasts with the famous black wool of that area. The three items mentioned represent a spiritual value which the church failed to realize was missing (v. 17). Apparently this was a worldly prosperous church whose members mistook both the nature and source of true well being."

> **Merrill Unger** adds "(Gk. kollourion, diminutive of kollura, coarse bread of cylindrical shape). A preparation shaped like a kollura, composed of various materials and used as a remedy for tender eyelids (Rev. 3:18). (BORROW New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

> **Ramsay** - The only medicine which is expressly quoted as Laodicean seems to be an ointment for strengthening the ears made from the spice nard; Galen mentions it as having been originally prepared only in Laodicea, though by the second century after Christ it was made in other cities.6 But a medicine for the eyes is also described as Phrygian: Galen describes it as having the form of a tabloid made from the Phrygian stone, while Aristotle speaks of it as Phrygian powder; the two are probably identical, Aristotle describes the powder to which the tabloids were reduced when they were to be applied to the eyes. (The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and Their Place in the Plan of the Apocalypse - page 419)

QUESTION - What is the significance of the white garments in Revelation 3:18?

ANWER - Being commissioned directly by Jesus, the apostle John writes to seven churches in Asia Minor (Revelation 1:11). The seventh of those churches is Laodicea, and the message to that church is troubling. The churches in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1–7), Pergamum (Revelation 2:12–17), Thyatira (Revelation 2:18–29), and Sardis (Revelation 3:1–6) all had deficiencies they needed to

resolve. Smyrna (Revelation 2:8–11) and Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7–13) were only commended and encouraged. Laodicea (Revelation 3:14–22), on the other hand, was warned that their situation was dire, and, among other things, they were told to buy white garments from Jesus (Revelation 3:18).

The deeds of the Laodiceans were lukewarm—neither hot nor cold, and because of this Jesus was disgusted with them (Revelation 3:15–16). They were prideful, thinking they were rich, but He says that in fact they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked (Revelation 3:17). Contrast this with the church at Smyrna who, even though they were in poverty, are described as rich (Revelation 2:9). To remedy the Laodiceans' condition, Jesus advises them to buy from Him refined gold in order to become rich, white garments for clothing so they would not be naked and ashamed, and eye salve so that they would be able to see (Revelation 3:18).

Because of the sorry state of affairs in Laodicea, some have assumed this to be a false church. But Jesus characterizes them as "the church in Laodicea" (Revelation 3:14), and there are no references in the New Testament to any such thing as a false church, so there is no biblical precedent for a group that is called "the church" to not actually be part of the church. Also, God never requires that people "buy" salvation or anything related to salvation—it is always by grace through faith (e.g., Genesis 15:6; Habakkuk 2:4; Ephesians 2:8–9). The metaphor Jesus uses—that He would spit them out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16)—speaks to the level of disgust Jesus has with them, not to any impending loss of position in Christ or loss of personal salvation of the members there. Still, it is a serious matter that Jesus exhorts the Laodiceans to buy gold, white garments, and eye salve. There is nothing else mentioned of the eye salve, other than in this context. It was apparent that the Laodiceans needed to be able to see from God's perspective rather than their own, as they did not prioritize what God prioritized. They needed to be able to see the value of His gold and His white garments.

Peter characterizes the proof of believers' faith as more precious than gold tested by fire (1 Peter 1:7). That proof is faith put into action. The action isn't the faith itself, but it demonstrates the faith. Peter encourages his readers that, even though they were encountering trials and distress, they loved Jesus and believed in Him, and they could rejoice greatly (1 Peter 1:8). In Revelation 3, Jesus prescribes a transaction wherein the Laodicean believers would trade Him something for that gold—perhaps the cost was similar to what Paul prescribed in Romans 12:1 when he challenged believers to present their bodies as a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God. That was their reasonable service of worship.

Jesus also prescribes that the Laodiceans should purchase white garments to clothe the shame of their nakedness. White garments are prominent in Revelation, and they are illustrative of an important idea. Earlier, in the letter to Sardis, Jesus commended a few there who had white garments (Revelation 3:4), and He added that those who overcome will be clothed in white garments (Revelation 3:5). Later, we see that the twenty-four elders around the throne are clothed in white garments (Revelation 4:4). At the end of the tribulation, when the armies in heaven—including believers from all the previous eras—come to earth with Jesus, they are clothed in white and clean linen (Revelation 19:14). The bride of Christ is clothed in fine, bright, clean linen, and that linen is described as "the righteous acts of the saints" (Revelation 19:8). If the Laodiceans were to "buy" righteous acts from Jesus, then it would seem a similar prescription to buying gold refined with fire. The Laodiceans should trade in their own selfish pursuits, giving themselves to God in order to gain not positional righteousness (they already had that) but righteous deeds, for which there would be great reward. GotQuestions.org

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Through His Eyes

> Anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. — Revelation 3:18

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

When a woman from another country lived in our home for a few weeks, she kept asking questions I had never thought about. At a drive-in restaurant, she said, "Why would anyone want to eat in the car?" As she glanced at the church page in the Saturday newspaper, she asked, "Why do the ministers put their own photographs in the ads for their churches?" Through her eyes, we began to see aspects of our culture that were so familiar we had never noticed them before.

Christ warned the Christians at Laodicea that they were in great spiritual peril because they couldn't see themselves as they really were. He told them, "You say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17). Jesus urged them to come to Him for what they needed, including salve to put on their spiritual eyes so they could see (v.18).

When we read the Bible, we see ourselves through God's eyes—not only our sinfulness but also the righteousness He has provided for us through faith in Christ.

Ask the Lord to help you see yourself and your world through His eyes today.David C. McCasland

O send Thy Spirit, Lord, now unto me,

That He may touch my eyes and make me see;
Show me the truth concealed within Thy Word,
And in Thy Book revealed I see Thee, Lord.
—Lathbury

To see yourself as you really are, look into the mirror of God's Word.

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Go For The Gold!

I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich. — Revelation 3:18

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

Carl Lewis won four gold medals in the 1984 Summer Olympics. Despite his outstanding performance, he was accused of holding back in the long jump. Instead of going for the world record, he stopped competing after his first jump, confident that he would win the gold. Carl said that the Olympic trials had taken more out of him than he had expected, so he decided to save his strength for the other events. He explained that he was there to win gold medals—not to set records that would probably last only a short time.

This reminds me of what the Bible says about making the choice to use our time and energy for actions that have lasting value. The people in the church at Laodicea failed to do this (Revelation 3:14-22). Our Lord saw that their values were misplaced, for they took pride in their riches and self-sufficiency. So He told them they were lukewarm spiritually and were not relying on God (vv.15-17). They had to decide—would they keep pursuing temporal things, or would they go for the eternal gold of God's approval?

That's the challenge we face today. Our task is not to please the people around us. Our purpose is to win the eternal approval of our Lord.

By: Mart DeHaan

Do we spend ourselves on what will last
Or what will fade away?
Let's not strive to win the world's gold,
But Christ's "well done" one day.
—Sper

Our real wealth is what we invest for eternity.

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Jon Courson - Revelation 3:18

In Bible days, smelters would take the gold brought in from the mines and heat it by fire until it liquefied. After stirring it until the impurities were burned out, they would know the process was complete when the smelter could look into the pot of liquid gold and see the reflection of his own face.

Because Jesus is the Master Smelter, He uses heat as well. So to these people who were impure, carnal, indecisive, and lukewarm, He says, 'Get into the fire. Get into the battle. Engage yourself like you once did in ministry.'

Before the Battle of Trafalgar, knowing this particular battle would determine the fate of Europe, Lord Nelson assembled his men and said, 'In the event you cannot see or read the signals in the heat of battle, know this: no captain in this fleet can do wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy.'

I like that! 'Captains, if you can't read my signals and you don't know what to do, the answer is very simple: engage in battle the first enemy you can find.'

So too, when you feel yourself becoming complacent, get involved in serving, in sharing, in ministering. Determine in your heart to engage yourself once more in the fire of ministry—not because God wants to watch you burn, but because He wants to warm your heart and get you going again. A Day's Journey

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Jon Courson - Revelation 3:18

The same Jesus who says, 'Anoint your eyes with eyesalve,' is the One who put mud in the blind man's eyes in John 9. The way of the Great Physician is to allow irritation to produce illumination. 'You're seeing everything in a carnal way,' He says, 'and you need to humble yourself before Me and deal with the mud.'

'Ouch,' we say. 'That mud hurts.'

But in reality, there must be an awareness of the problems in our hearts and the troubles in our souls before we can see.

'Search me, O God,' cried David, 'and see if there be any wicked way in me' (Psalm 139:23-24). Listen, if you're feeling Laodicean, if you feel lukewarm, you need to ask the Great Physician to search you, for that will be the eyesalve which will allow you to see clearly.

How long has it been, dear saint, since you've been on your face before the Lord saying, 'Search me concerning the words on my lips, the bitterness in my heart, the thoughts on my mind'? Truly, confession precedes vision as surely as irritation precedes illumination.A Day's Journey

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James Smith - BUY OF ME Revelation 3:18

In addressing the Church of Laodicea our Lord uses terms that must have been very familiar to them. The city was noted for wealth, wool, and ointment, while the Church was charged with lukewarmness and self-satisfaction. The message of the Saviour was tender, timely, and merciful. In this great world's "vanity fair" there are many voices clamouring for patronage, so that the still small voice of the heavenly merchantman is but seldom heard. These simple words, "Buy of Me," constrain us to think of—
1. Our need. Why does He ask us to buy? Just because He sees our nakedness and need, and knows that we are ignorant of our own condition. Can you afford to do without Him and His gifts?

2. The wares He offers. What are they?

> 1. GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE. His precious Word (Psa. 19:8–10) that has passed through the fiery trials of many a persecution. The word of the Gospel of Salvation that brings life and comfort to the believing heart.
>
> 2. WHITE RAIMENT. Robes washed in the Blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14). The righteousness of God which is unto all and upon all that believe. Not the withering fig leaves of man's making (Rev. 19:8).
>
> 3. EYE SALVE. This wonderful "eye salve" is the Holy Spirit, who is offered to all who have believed His Word and been adorned with the "white raiment" of justification before God. This holy eye salve enables us to discern the things freely given us of God (1 John 2:20–27; Eph. 1:18).

3. The Merchantman Himself. "Buy of ME." He is the alone agent for these precious things. No servant of His can bestow them, although they may speak much about them. There must be personal dealing with the Lord Himself. The goods He wishes to sell are the purchase of His own Blood.

4. The price quoted. "Come, buy, without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1). Buying implies claiming after the conditions have been fulfilled. The condition is come without money, without any price, for such priceless gifts cannot be bartered for anything of man's, and claim on this condition His offered gifts. A king does not sell, he gives (Rom. 6:23).

5. Our present opportunity. "Buy of Me." "Now is the day of salvation." "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." This is the world's market day, when God's gifts of grace are being sold without money. Happy is the man that findeth this merchandise (Prov. 3:13–17).

6. The possibility of losing such a bargain. It is said that a man on a wager failed to sell real sovereigns at one penny each. The people would not believe him, and the opportunity was soon gone. How shall ye escape the suffering of eternal loss if ye neglect so great Salvation? Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light (John 12:35; Luke 19:42).

Revelation 3:19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

> BGT Revelation 3:19 γ σους ν φιλ λ γχω κα παιδε ω· ζ λευε ο ν κα μεταν ησον.
>
> KJV Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

NET Revelation 3:19 All those I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent!

CSB Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be committed and repent.

ESV Revelation 3:19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

NIV Revelation 3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.

NLT Revelation 3:19 I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference.

NRS Revelation 3:19 I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent.

NJB Revelation 3:19 I reprove and train those whom I love: so repent in real earnest.

NAB Revelation 3:19 Those whom I love, I reprove and chastise. Be earnest, therefore, and repent.

YLT Revelation 3:19 'As many as I love, I do convict and chasten; be zealous, then, and reform;

GWN Revelation 3:19 I correct and discipline everyone I love. Take this seriously, and change the way you think and act.

BBE Revelation 3:19 To all those who are dear to me, I give sharp words and punishment: then with all your heart have sorrow for your evil ways.

RSV Revelation 3:19 Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent.

NKJ Revelation 3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

ASV Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

MIT Revelation 3:19 As many as I love I correct and discipline; so be eager to repent.

- **Those whom I love**: De 8:5 2Sa 7:14 Job 5:17 Ps 6:1 39:11 94:10 Pr 3:11,12 15:10 Pr 15:32 22:15 Isa 26:16 Jer 2:30 7:28 10:24 30:11 31:18 Zep 3:2 1Co 11:32 2Co 6:9 Heb 12:5-11 Jas 1:12
- **be zealous**: Nu 25:11-13 Ps 69:9 Joh 2:17 Ro 12:11 2Co 7:11 Ga 4:18 Tit 2:14
- **repent**: Rev 2:5,21,22
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE CHARGE TO REPENT

MacArthur - Some argue that the language of Christ's direct appeal to the Laodiceans in verse 19, those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, indicates that they were believers. Verses 18 and 20, however, seem better suited to indicate that they were unregenerate, desperately in need of the gold of true spiritual riches, the garments of true righteousness, and the eye salve that brings true spiritual understanding (v. 18). (See Revelation Commentary)

John Stott writes - There can be no glossing over this charge. The Christ who warns them that he will spit them out of his mouth if they do not stir themselves, nevertheless loves them. Indeed, it is because he longs to save them from final judgment that he now reproves and chastens them. They must be earnest and repent. The tenses change significantly. Let them repent at once and irrevocably; then let them continue always to be fired with zeal. To repent is to turn with resolution from all that is known to be contrary to God's will. Like the Laodiceans we have to renounce the old life of easy-going complacency. Smug self-satisfaction is not appropriate in one who bears the name of Christ. **Shallow piety never saved anyone. There will be no hypocrites in heaven. So we have to break with these things. We must spit them out of our mouths lest he spit us out of his.** I (Borrow What Christ thinks of the church : Revelation 1-3 expounded)

Those whom I love (phileo) - John 3:16 indicates God loves the unredeemed, but the verb in this famous verse is .

I (present tense - continually) **reprove** (elegcho) **and** present tense - continually) **discipline** (paideuo) - Jesus is continually convicting them (in concert with the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit - Jn 16:8 also uses elegcho). There are some writers who feel Jesus' use of this particular verb supports their presumption that the lukewarm are just believers who need a little child training. That is a weak and specious (superficially plausible, but actually wrong) argument because even the first NT use of paideuo refutes that manner of argumentation, for Luke 23:16 records the words of Pilate declaring "Therefore I will **punish** (paideuo) Him and release Him." In 2Ti 2:25 Paul uses the same verb instructing Timothy "with gentleness **correcting** (paideuo) those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth." Finally, in the Septuagint in Leviticus 26:18 we read 'If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will **punish** (paideuo) you seven times more for your sins." Yes (paideuo) does refer to "child training" but it also refers to punishment, and in the present context is used by Jesus to encourage

the lukewarm nominal *professers* to become true children of God and *possessors* of eternal life!

MacArthur - To **reprove** means to expose and convict. It is a general term for God's dealings with sinners (cf. John 3:18–20; 16:8; 1 Cor. 14:24; Titus 1:9; Jude 15). **Discipline** refers to punishment (cf. Luke 23:16, 22) and is used of God's convicting of unbelievers (2 Tim. 2:25). Thus, the terminology of verse 19 does not demand that Christ be referring to believers. (See Revelation Commentary)

Therefore be zealous (zeloo) **and repent** (metanoeo) - Jesus then gives two commands to this lukewarm church and the first is to **be zealous** or "hot" for Jesus and the present imperative calls for this mindset to be their habitual practice. The verb zeloo is a bit ironic for He is commanding these slothlike lukewarm professors to be burning with zeal, fervent in spirit, "boiling hot" for Jesus, the antithesis of their current indifferent, self-sufficient attitude. Then He calls them to **repent** (metanoeo) where the aorist imperative demands they do this immediately, even with a sense of urgency, lest He vomit them out of His mouth! They need to have a Spirit energized change of mind that results in a new life in Him. As John Stott says "If the first step is repentance, the second is faith," which Stott feels is what Rev 3:20 alludes to.

MacArthur - But in order for the Laodiceans to be saved, they would have to be zealous and repent. That is tantamount to the attitude of mourning over sin and hungering and thirsting for righteousness of which Jesus spoke (Matt. 5:4, 6). While repentance is not a meritorious work, the New Testament call to salvation always includes it (e.g., Matt. 3:2, 8; 4:17; Mark 6:12; Luke 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10; 2 Tim. 2:25; 2 Pet. 3:9). In repentance, the sinner turns from his sin to serve God (1Th 1:9). (See Revelation Commentary)

John Stott - "Whether the Laodicean church heeded this warning we cannot say (**ED**: BUT SEE COUNCIL OF LAODICEA IN 364 AD SUGGESTING AT LEAST SOME VESTIGE OF THE CHURCH REMAINED). Certainly the city, once prosperous and complacent, is now a miserable waste. "Nothing can exceed the desolation and melancholy appearance of the site of Laodicea" says a nineteenth-century traveller.4 Archbishop Trench vividly portrays the scene: "All has perished now. He who removed the candlestick of Ephesus, has rejected Laodicea out of his mouth. The fragments of aqueducts and theatres spread over a vast extent of country tell of the former magnificence of this city; but of this once famous church nothing survives." (Borrow What Christ thinks of the church : Revelation 1-3 expounded)

Love (5368) **phileo** from **phílos** = loved, dear, friend) means to be a friend to another, to be fond of (have a liking for) an individual or an object, to have or show affection for. In some contexts it means to kiss another as a mark of tenderness for that person. **Phileo** denotes personal attachment and is more a matter of sentiment or feeling. It is devotion based in the emotions distinguished from agapao which represents devotion based in the will. Stated another way **phileo** is chiefly of the heart whereas agape is chiefly of the head. **Phileo** is a love which is the response of the human spirit to what appeals to it as pleasurable. **Phileo** is a love which consists of the glow of the heart kindled by the perception of that in the object which affords us pleasure. **Phileo** is the response of the human spirit to what appeals to it as pleasurable. The Greeks made much of friendship. Phileo was used to speak of a friendly affection. Phileo is a love called out of one in response to a feeling of pleasure or delight which one experiences from an apprehension of qualities in another that furnish such pleasure or delight. **Phileo** is friendship love, this "friendship factor" sadly often missing in marriages. In Scripture phileo is used to describe the love of God the Father and the Son, of Jesus and Peter, and of Jonathan and David. **Phileo** love is basically emotional. **Phileo** cannot be commanded but it can be developed in relationships. **Phileo** is based on the qualities in another person that you find admirable or attractive. **Phileo** is a fellowship type love manifested in a living and growing relationship between two friends. **Phileo** love does feed on response, and it cannot survive long without response from the other. Friendship love requires attention.

> **Phileo** - Matt. 6:5; Matt. 10:37; Matt. 23:6; Matt. 26:48; Mk. 14:44; Lk. 20:46; Lk. 22:47; Jn. 5:20; Jn. 11:3; Jn. 11:36; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 15:19; Jn. 16:27; Jn. 20:2; Jn. 21:15; Jn. 21:16; Jn. 21:17; 1 Co. 16:22; Tit. 3:15; Rev. 3:19; Rev. 22:15

Reprove (convict, expose) (1651) **elegcho** is a primary verb but is related to **elegchos** = bringing to light) means to **bring to the light** (to reveal hidden things) with the implication that there is adequate proof of wrongdoing. To expose, to convict, to reprove, to shame or disgrace and thus to **rebuke** another in such a way that they are compelled to see and to admit the error of their ways. To show someone that they have done something wrong and summon them to repent. **Gary Hill** on **elegcho** - properly, to *convince* by solid, compelling *evidence* which especially exposes what is wrong or right....preeminently used of the Holy Spirit *producing conviction* in the heart. The Holy Spirit produces inner conviction, i.e. convinces people about what: misses God's mark ("sin"); has His approval ("righteousness"); and the eternal consequences of this (for everlasting punishment or reward). We constantly need the Holy Spirit to convict us about what is right as well as what is wrong so we don't hate what is wrong . . . more than love what is right!

> **Elegcho** - 17x/17v - convict(2), convicted(2), convicts(1), expose(1), exposed(2), rebuke(1), refute(1),

reprimanded(1), reprove(4), reproved(1), show...fault(1). Matt. 18:15; Lk. 3:19; Jn. 3:20; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 16:8; 1 Co. 14:24; Eph. 5:11; Eph. 5:13; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:15; Heb. 12:5; Jas. 2:9; Jude 1:15; Rev. 3:19

Discipline (chasten, correct, educate, instruct, teach, punish) (3811) paideuo from **país** = child) refers primarily to the training or discipline of children (whether in the schools of men - Acts 7:22, Acts 22:3 or in the school of God, Titus 2:12, et al), at one end of the spectrum training by teaching, instructing, educating or nurturing and at the other end of the spectrum utilizing correction and punishment if necessary (which it usually is for children) as a part of the training or child rearing process bringing them to maturity (this end of the spectrum conveyed by English words like chastise or chasten - see below - as morally disciplining an adult, correcting them and giving them guidance). In that regard we will briefly look at some of the most common English words used to translate paideuo and will attempt to draw out the sometimes subtle differences in meaning. From this introduction, you can see that the meaning of **paideuo** is dependent on the **context**.

Paideuo - 13v - Lk. 23:16; Lk. 23:22; Acts 7:22; Acts 22:3; 1 Co. 11:32; 2 Co. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:25; Tit. 2:12; Heb. 12:6; Heb. 12:7; Heb. 12:10; Rev. 3:19

Be zealous (2206) **zeloo** from **zelos** = zeal in turn from **zeo** = boil; source of our English word "zeal") properly, to bubble over from getting so hot (boiling) and figuratively to burn with zeal (or intensity), to be fervent, to "boil" with envy, to be jealous. It can be used commendably to refer to a striving for something or showing zeal. Zeloo is (an onomatopoeic word imitating the sound of boiling water! The idea is to be deeply committed to something, with the implication of accompanying desire – 'to be earnest, to set one's heart on, to be completely intent upon'

Acts 7:9; Acts 17:5; 1 Co. 12:31; 1 Co. 13:4; 1 Co. 14:1; 1 Co. 14:39; 2 Co. 11:2; Gal. 4:17; Gal. 4:18; Jas. 4:2; Rev. 3:19

God's Heart Revealed

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. —Revelation 3:19

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

It's easy to think of God as a divine fly-swatter, just waiting for you to land so that—whap—He can nail you for your sins. But that's not what we see in Revelation 2–3 in His letters to the seven churches. The pattern of the letters demonstrates God's loving heart for wayward people.

Jesus began many of these letters by affirming the good things His people had done. This shows us that when we do what is good and right, the Lord is pleased.

But Jesus is also concerned about the faults in our lives. His commendation in these letters was often followed by clear words of reproof. And while it's not comfortable to hear Him say, "Nevertheless I have this against you" (2:4; see vv.14,20), He reveals what needs to be changed in our lives to keep us from self-deceit.

This moves us to the real heart of the matter—repentance. When the Lord told these churches to repent, He was revealing His love for wayward saints. His goal was not to condemn but to restore them to intimate fellowship with Him.

And don't miss the fact that each letter ends with a specific promise for the "overcomers." Clearly God desires to reward those who live lives that are pleasing to Him.

What's He saying to you today? Joe Stowell

To live a life that pleases Christ,
It's crucial to obey His voice;
When He reveals our sin to us,
Repentance is the wisest choice.
—Sper

Repentance restores and renews our intimacy with the Lord.

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Crooked House

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. —Revelation 3:19

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-20

When Robert Klose first moved into his 100-year-old house, its strange sounds were disconcerting. A carpenter told him the house was crooked. Klose admitted, “I could see it in the floors, the ceilings, the roofline, the door jambs, even the window frames. Drop a ball on the floor and it will roll away into oblivion.” Seventeen years later, the house is still holding together and he has gotten used to it and even grown to love it.

In Revelation, Jesus confronted a church that had become accustomed to its crooked spirituality and had even grown to love its inconsistencies. Laodicea was a well-to-do city. Yet that very wealth led to its delusion of self-sufficiency. This had bled into the culture of the church and produced a crooked, “we don’t need Jesus” type of spirituality. Therefore, Jesus rebuked these believers, calling them “lukewarm, . . . wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (3:16-17). He rebuked them because He loved them and still wanted an ever-deepening communion with them. So He gave them opportunity to repent (v.19).

If self-sufficiency has skewed your fellowship with Jesus, you can straighten it through repentance and a renewal of intimate fellowship with Him.

By: Marvin Williams

Not to the world is the portion
Of fellowship sweet with God,
But to the humble believer
Who trusts in His faithful Word.
—Anon.

Repentance is God’s way of making the crooked straight.

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Revelation 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 will dine with him, and he with Me.

BGT Revelation 3:20 δο στηκα π τ ν θ ραν κα κρο ω· ν τις κο σ τ ς φων ς μου κα νο ξ τ ν θ ραν, [κα] ε σελε σομαι πρ ς α τ ν κα δειπν σω μετ α το κα α τ ς μετ μο .

KJV Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

NET Revelation 3:20 Listen! I am standing at the door and knocking! If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into his home and share a meal with him, and he with me.

CSB Revelation 3:20 Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and have dinner with him, and he with Me.

ESV Revelation 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 eat with him, and he with me.

NIV Revelation 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

NLT Revelation 3:20 "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.

NRS Revelation 3:20 Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.

NJB Revelation 3:20 Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share a meal at that person's side.

NAB Revelation 3:20 " '"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, (then) I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me.

YLT Revelation 3:20 lo, I have stood at the door, and I knock; if any one may hear my voice, and may open the door, I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

GWN Revelation 3:20 Look, I'm standing at the door and knocking. If anyone listens to my voice and opens the door, I'll come in and we'll eat together.

BBE Revelation 3:20 See, I am waiting at the door and giving the sign; if my voice comes to any man's ears and he makes the door open, I will come in to him, and will take food with him and he with me.

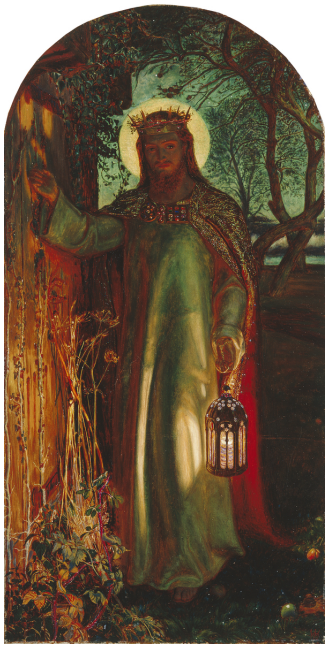
RSV Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

NKJ Revelation 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.

ASV Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

MIT Revelation 3:20 Pay attention: I have taken my position at the door, and I am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter for fellowship with him and for dining with him and he with me.

- **I stand:** Song 5:2-4 Lu 12:36
- **I will:** Joh 14:21-23
- **will dine**: Rev 19:9 Lu 12:37 17:8
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



**"The Light of the World,"
William Holman Hunt, 1851-56,
Manchester City Art Gallery.**

JESUS OFFER TO
DINE WITH ANYONE

"The Light of the World" Painting - "In its heyday in the early 20th century, the painting "**The Light of the World**" (1851-53) was probably more famous than any of the works of the great masters of the Renaissance. As difficult as it is to imagine today, millions of people around the world flocked to see what was known as the "**SERMON IN A FRAME**." The allegorical painting that captured the imagination of so many was created by the English artist William Holman Hunt, who began the work at the age of 21 and finished it when he was 29. The painting illustrates the biblical passage in Revelation 3:20. Jesus, carrying a lantern, is depicted knocking at a door with no handle on the outside. The door is overgrown with weeds, and the nails and hinges are rusted, implying that the door has never been opened.**The message**: it is up to the person on the other side of the door to let Jesus in....The painting went on a world tour from 1905 to 1907, visiting the hometowns of millions of people in Canada, South Africa, and beyond. On its tour of Australia, it's estimated that 4/5 of the population of the country saw it. The industrialist Charles Booth purchased the painting from Hunt and Hughes and donated it to St. Paul's Cathedral in London where it hangs today. According to St. Paul's, the painting is "the most traveled art work in history." (Aleteia)

Behold (idou) - **Listen**! = NET, CSB, NRS; **Look**! = NLT, NJB; **See**! - **Behold** is an attention getting command! This church desperately needed to hear and heed this command for there were no believers in the entire church!

I stand at the door (thura) **and knock** (krouo) - What **door**? Not so much the "door" of one heart (as is commonly thought), but the **door** of the entire church. The Head of the church is not even in the church! He is knocking at the **door** of the church and will enter if **ANYONE** hears and opens! Remember that although Jesus has the keys that open and shut, He will not force His way in! **Stand** is in the perfect tense indicating He took His position and is still standing there ("I stand and continue to stand"). **Knock** is present tense indicating Jesus continues to knock (even today!)

As noted above **John Stott** - says they have taken the first step (**repent**) in Rev 3:19 and now they are to take the second step of faith (cf Jesus' words in Mk 1:15+). **Stott** writes "This is a personal appeal. Although the words are addressed to the church, they apply to individual members of the church. **If anyone** …, Christ says. Our heart or soul is likened to a dwelling. Each of us likes to rule our own roost and be king of our own castle. But the living Christ comes to visit us. He who threatens that he may have to spit us from his mouth now stands on our front doorstep. He knocks. He wants to be admitted. It is a visit from the lover of our soul. The love scene in the Song of Songs repeats itself. "*Listen! My beloved is knocking: 'Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my flawless one …' My beloved thrust his hand through the latch-opening; my heart began to pound for him. I arose to open for my beloved*" (Song 5:2, 4, 5). (Borrow What Christ thinks of the church : Revelation 1-3 expounded)

MacArthur - The picture of Christ outside the Laodicean church seeking entrance strongly implies that, unlike Sardis, there were no believers there at all. (See Revelation Commentary)

Gotquestions.org - In Revelation 3:20, Jesus is not pleading with an individual to be saved; He's seeking admittance to a church! It's alarming to think of Jesus standing *outside* of the church and knocking, but that's the position He was in. The Laodicean church had shut the door on the Head of the church; they were smug in their prosperity, but Jesus was left standing in the cold. **He was an outsider to the hearts of the entire congregation**. Christ's appeal was heartfelt and urgent: "Listen! I am standing at the door and knocking! If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into his home and share a meal with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20NET). The Lord's plea was also personal. He spoke to individuals using singular words like *anyone*, *his*, *him*, and *he*. He was inviting everyone in the church to experience intimate fellowship with Him. And even though His desire was for the whole church to respond and open the door to Him, ultimately it was up to the individual to decide. Jesus knows that not everyone will answer His invitation and open the door to a relationship with Him. Many, like those living in Laodicea, will choose to reject His call. **Lukewarm, and with hardened hearts, they will remain blind to the fact that they have accepted a false righteousness** (Hebrews 3:7–8). To these Jesus will say, "I never knew you, depart from me" (Matthew 7:21–23). **Sadly, they will not enter the kingdom of heaven**.

If anyone hears (akouo) **My voice and opens** (anoigo) **the door** (thura) - Jesus gives two conditions that must be met - **hears** and **opens**. Is it possible to hear His voice and yet not open the door? Note that all of the words in the Greek text after "**Anyone**..." are singular, and none are plural. The point is that while Jesus is speaking to the entire church, He is also speaking to any single male or female in that church that **hears** (active voice = a choice of one's will) His message and **opens** (active voice = a choice of one's will) the door figuratively speaking. One is reminded of Lydia from Thyatira who was "**listening** (same verb akouo and in active voice) and the Lord opened (dianoigo) her heart to respond (**NOTE**: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN SALVATION = HE OPENED THE DOOR! WOMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY = LYDIA RESPONDED! = MYSTERY OF MYSTERIES!) to the things spoken by Paul." (Acts 16:14)

I will come in to him and will dine (deipneo) **with him, and he with Me** - **Come** in in context would be through the "figurative" door, but spiritually when one believes on Jesus, He comes to live within His Temple (Col 1:27). **Will dine** speaks of close communion and fellowship and is the verb deipneo used twice elsewhere in the context of the Passover feast. So in a sense Jesus is inviting this "**anyone**" to participate in a meal with the Passover Lamb (1Co 5:7+).

MacArthur - Christ's offer to **dine** with the repentant church speaks of fellowship, communion, and intimacy. Sharing a meal in ancient times symbolized the union of people in loving fellowship. Believers will dine with Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9), and in the millennial kingdom (Luke 22:16, 29–30). **Dine** is from deipneo, which refers to the evening meal, the last meal of the day (cf. Luke 17:8; Lk 22:20; 1Co 11:25, where the underlying Greek is rendered "sup," "supper," and "supped," respectively)." (See Revelation Commentary)

The Lord Jesus Christ urged the "LL's" (lukewarm Laodiceans) to repent so that they might feast in fellowship with Him before the night of judgment fell and they were forever spit out of His mouth!

Note a number of commentators do not feel this is an invitation to become a believer in Christ, but rather an invitation for the church members to return to fellowship with Christ. I cannot see any evidence in Jesus' preceding statements that they were ever in "**fellowship**" with Jesus! To the contrary, Jesus is offering them to be clothed in white garments (Rev 3:18) which in the

context of the Revelation speaks of the garments of righteousness that are obtained only by believing in Jesus Christ. Rev 7:14 says "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." What could wash away the sin of the Church of the Lukewarm? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

Knock (2925) **krouo** means seeking entrance by knock (at a door or gate. Figuratively, krouo speaks of seeking spiritual access and so to ask to be accepted (Rev 3.20+) **BDAG** - "to deliver a blow against something, strike, knock." The English word "knock" comes from German word meaning to press! “Knock” means to stand at a door and repeatedly rap with your knuckles. You knock and wait, then you knock again, then you say, “I know you’re in there,” then you knock again and say, “I can hear your voice. Come on, open the door.” Then you knock again. If you’re on the other side, you know how annoying it can be to listen as someone knocks and knocks and keeps on knocking. Thankfully as Luke goes on to say Peter kept on knocking!

> **Krouo - 9x/9v - knock(4), knocked(1), knocking(1), knocks(3).** Matt. 7:7; Matt. 7:8; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 12:36; Lk. 13:25; Acts 12:13; Acts 12:16; Rev. 3:20

Dine (1172)(deipneo from deipnon = dinner) means to dine or take the main meal and in classical Greek was the word for “eating a meal,” generally the largest meal of the day.

> During classical times a deipnon was important in the worship of Greek deities. Participating in a religious “meal” meant one actually participated in the god’s nature (Behm, “deipnon,” Kittel, 2:34f.). In ancient times Jews placed great importance on social interaction through meals. To offer or accept a dinner invitation signaled intents of goodwill, trust, and prosperity. To decline or forbid such an opportunity indicated ill will and also the highest insult (e.g., Luke 14:16-24).
>
> **Deipneo** - Lk. 17:8; Lk. 22:20 = related to the Passover; 1 Co. 11:25 = related to Passover; Rev. 3:20. In Septuagint = Pr 23:1, Da 11:27.
>
> > Luke 22:20 And in the same way He took the cup after **they had eaten** (deipneo), saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.
> >
> > 1 Corinthians 11:25 In the same way He took the cup also after **supper** (deipneo), saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

QUESTION - What did Jesus mean when He said, “I stand at the door and knock” (Revelation 3:20)?

ANSWER - Through the apostle John in Revelation 2—3, Jesus addressed seven letters to seven churches in Asia Minor. They were individualized letters of instruction, rebuke, and encouragement to the local congregations. To the last church, the lukewarm church in Laodicea, Jesus made this urgent plea: “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me” (Revelation 3:20).

The idea of Jesus standing at a door and knocking is often used as an illustration of Jesus’ offer of **salvation to individuals**: if you would only “open your heart’s door” and let Jesus into your life, all will be well. **But in Revelation 3:20, Jesus is not pleading with an individual to be saved; He’s seeking admittance to a church!** It’s alarming to think of Jesus standing *outside* of the church and knocking, but that’s the position He was in. The Laodicean church had shut the door on the Head of the church; they were smug in their prosperity, but Jesus was left standing in the cold. He was an outsider to the hearts of the entire congregation.

Most of the seven letters contained a compliment, a complaint or criticism, a command, and a commitment from Jesus. But the church of Laodicea, like their spiritually dead sister church in Sardis, merited no words of approval from Jesus. The Laodiceans were guilty of self-reliance, self-righteousness, and spiritual indifference. Even worse, the church was unaware of their wretched condition.

To the congregation at Laodicea, Jesus issued this scathing criticism: “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked’” (Revelation 3:15–17).

In their proud, self-satisfied, and spiritually blind state, the church of Laodicea was useless in God’s kingdom. Using figurative language, Jesus issued His command, beckoning the members of the church to exchange their counterfeit righteousness for genuine righteousness (Revelation 3:18). He called the church to be zealous and repent (verse 19).

Christ’s appeal was heartfelt and urgent: “Listen! I am standing at the door and knocking! If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into his home and share a meal with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20NET). **The Lord’s plea was also personal. He spoke to individuals using singular words like *anyone*, *his*, *him*, and *he*. He was inviting everyone in the church to experience intimate fellowship with Him. And even though His desire was for the whole church to respond and**

open the door to Him, ultimately it was up to the individual to decide.

Jesus knows that not everyone will answer His invitation and open the door to a relationship with Him. Many, like those living in Laodicea, will choose to reject His call. Lukewarm, and with hardened hearts, they will remain blind to the fact that they have accepted a false righteousness (Hebrews 3:7–8). To these Jesus will say, "I never knew you, depart from me" (Matthew 7:21–23). Sadly, they will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

During His ministry on earth, Jesus went to great lengths to demonstrate that righteousness comes to us as a gift through faith alone. Having Christ's righteousness, by grace through faith, is the only way to enter the kingdom of heaven (Romans 3:24–25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:4–8).

When Jesus said, "I stand at the door and knock," He was inviting the members of the Laodicean church to recognize their miserable spiritual condition and receive His authentic gift of salvation. Like the apostle Paul, the Laodiceans needed to realize their absolute dependence on Christ: "What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith" (Philippians 3:8–9).

To those who would open the door, Jesus promised a close fellowship, pictured as enjoying a meal together. And He offered this great reward: "To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne" (Revelation 3:21). These words were Christ's commitment to the Laodicean church.

Today Jesus continues to say, "I stand at the door and knock!" To churches who are filled with nominal Christians, He sends out His earnest invitation for full fellowship. The One who holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:19; Revelation 1:18; 3:7) calls us all to hear His voice and open the door so that He can come in and share an intimate union with us. To those who respond, Jesus Christ guarantees the open door of eternal life and the reward of ruling with Him in heaven. GotQuestions.org (BOLDING ADDED)

QUESTION - What happened at the Council of Laodicea?

ANSWER - The Council of Laodicea was held in AD 364 and is considered a minor convention in historical Christianity. The meeting featured only about thirty members, all from the local Middle Eastern churches. The city of Laodicea is in the southwestern part of modern-day Turkey and is mentioned as one of the seven churches of the book of Revelation (Revelation 3:14–15).

The Council of Laodicea produced sixty rulings, or canons, covering a broad range of topics. These rulings prohibited certain foods during Lent, discussed whether or not to minister to Jews and heretics, explicitly condemned astrology, specified the correct Christian "Sabbath day," and emphasized the importance of modesty. The council also produced two rulings referencing the canon of Scripture.

The 59th ruling of the Council of Laodicea declared that only canonical books should be read in church. The 60th ruling specified this canon as the traditional 27 books of the New Testament, **minus Revelation**; and the 39 books of the Old Testament, plus the book of Baruch and its extended ending, the Epistle of Jeremiah.

In harmony with the writings of early Christians such as Origen, Melito, Jerome, Cyril, and Athanasius, early conventions such as the Council of Laodicea generally treated the Apocrypha as a separate category from inspired Scripture. The apocryphal books were considered useful, even sacred, but not inspired and not on the same level as the traditional canon.GotQuestions.org (BOLDING ADDED)

Related Resources:

- What is the epistle to the Laodiceans mentioned in Colossians 4:16? | GotQuestions.org

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Religion And Reality

> 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. —Revelation 3:20

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 58:1-9

"Religion and reality don't mix"—that's what a group in Grand Rapids, Michigan, believes. These 24 people call themselves "freethinkers" who have chosen "reality over religion." Most of them grew up in churchgoing families but have left their faith.

Like those freethinkers, two Filipino students from prominent families became deeply disturbed by religious people who exploited the poor. They too rejected all religion. They sought reality in alleviating the suffering of the masses. But eventually they began to sense that life without God left them empty. Through a series of near-miraculous events, both students came to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord. They continued to work among the poor, but with a new perspective. They found the reality of a living faith in contrast to mere external religion.

The Israelites also wondered why God seemed unreal to them. They had gone through the motions of religion but continued to live for themselves (Isaiah 58:2,4). Isaiah told them to repent and become real—to free the oppressed, to share their bread with the hungry, to house the poor, and to clothe the naked. Only then would God be real to them (vv.6-9).

If we truly know Jesus, religion and reality do mix. By: Herbert Vander Lugt

When people turn away from God,
They think they will be free,
But only Christ who died for them
Will bring reality.
—D. De Haan

Unless Christ is the center of interest,
life will be out of focus.

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Love That Won't Quit

> If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him. —Revelation 3:20

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

Day after day, the loving father came to the hospital, often with flowers in his hand. He would sit beside the bed of his comatose 6-year-old daughter, talking to her about the wonderful world outside her window. Sometimes he would tell her a story. But in her unconscious state, the only sound she ever made was her labored breathing.

One day her nurse, touched by the father's unrewarded faithfulness, ventured to say, "It must be hard giving so much love when she's like this."

He quickly responded, "I'm going to keep on coming and bringing flowers and telling her stories even if she's oblivious to it because I love her whether or not she loves me back."

What a tender and poignant picture of God's love! Patiently, untiringly, He is in love with us. We may be unaware of His presence, as though we are spiritually comatose. But we don't have to be that way. What our loving Lord said to the church of Laodicea He says to each of us: "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" (Rev. 3:20).

Today, as always, God is reaching out to you. Respond now to the love that won't quit loving.

By: Vernon Grounds

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Dashboard Dining

> If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. —Revelation 3:20

Today's Scripture:Revelation 3:14-22

The term "dashboard dining" has come to signify the growing practice of eating while driving to save a little time. Popular freeway fare includes yogurt in squeeze tubes, soup in heat-and-sip containers, and small cookies that fit in cup holders. One US consumer products analyst says that people increasingly want food items that can be eaten quickly and easily while on the road. In some cultures, a leisurely meal at a table is becoming an endangered practice.

This eat-and-run mentality can also invade our spiritual thinking. Do we set aside daily time for an unhurried meeting with Jesus? Is our Bible reading and prayer time rushed or relaxed?

The risen Christ told the lukewarm church of Laodicea, “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” (Revelation 3:20). When we open our hearts in surrender to the Lord, He promises to come in for a meal, not a snack. His offer to dine with us holds the promise of a nourishing meal with relaxed conversation, not a quick hello and goodbye.

While modern culture worships efficiency and speed, God invites us to slow down and sit down for a spiritual feast of fellowship with Him.

By: David C. McCasland

We need to set aside the time
To read God's Word and pray,
And listen for the Spirit's voice
To guide us in His way.
—Sper

Time is a friend when you use it to strengthen your friendship with Jesus.

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Finding Jesus

> 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. —Rev. 3:20

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

If I asked the question, “Where’s Waldo?” you might recall those popular children’s picture books from the 1980s. That little guy in the red-and-white-striped shirt and hat loved to hide in the pages amid a busy blur of images that made it nearly impossible to find him.

Thankfully, finding Jesus is a lot easier than finding Waldo. Jesus doesn’t play hide-and-seek. He says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock” (Rev. 3:20). You can find Him at the door of your heart—the core of your existence—waiting to come in. He doesn’t just want to meet you at church, or to be kept at bay on the outer edges of your life. Rather, He longs to be in the center of your dreams, deliberations, and desires. He wants a real relationship with the real you.

And as wonderful as that is, I need to warn you that it may be a little unsettling. Your heart is no doubt harboring a few things that He will want to deal with. But there is nothing that is more valuable than intimacy with Him. Welcome Jesus in and He will clear out the clutter until the air is fragrant and fresh with the purity, power, and pleasure of His presence.

Who’s knocking at your heart’s door? It’s Jesus! How wonderful is that! By: Joe Stowell

Sweetest of all of life’s blessings,
Communion with Christ above,
Assured of His constant presence,
His matchless, eternal love.
—Anon.

Jesus is standing at the door of your heart—welcome Him in!

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Light of the World

> Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in. Revelation 3:20

Today's Scripture & Insight: Revelation 3:14–22

One of my favorite pieces of art hangs in the Keble College chapel in Oxford, England. The painting, The Light of the World by English artist William Holman Hunt, shows Jesus holding a lantern in His hand and knocking on a door to a home.

One of the intriguing aspects of the painting is that the door doesn't have a handle. When questioned about the lack of a way to open the door, Hunt explained that he wanted to represent the imagery of Revelation 3:20, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in."

The apostle John's words and the painting illustrate the kindness of Jesus. He gently knocks on the door of our souls with His offer of peace. Jesus stands and patiently waits for us to respond. He does not open the door Himself and force His way into our lives. He does not impose His will on ours. Instead, He offers to all people the gift of salvation and light to guide us.

To anyone who opens the door, He promises to enter. There are no other requirements or prerequisites.

If you hear the voice of Jesus and His gentle knock on the door of your soul, be encouraged that He patiently waits for you and will enter if you welcome Him in. By: Lisa M. Samra

Lord, thank You for the gift of salvation and Your promise to enter when we open the door. Please help me to respond to this gift and open the door for You today.

Open the door to Jesus; He is patiently waiting for you.

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Today, as always, God is reaching out to you. Respond now to the love that won't quit loving.

By: Vernon Grounds

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Don't Bother Me

> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. — Revelation 3:20

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

As a young man, C. S. Lewis abandoned his childhood faith in God and declared his belief in no religion, saying they were all myths created by man. Years later, after acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God and his Savior, Lewis wrote of that time in his book Surprised By Joy. He said:

"No word in my vocabulary expressed deeper hatred than the word Interference. But Christianity placed at the center what then seemed to me a transcendental Interferer. There was no region even in the innermost depth of one's soul which one could surround

with a barbed wire fence and guard with a notice 'No Admittance.' And that was what I wanted; some area, however small, of which I could say to all other beings, 'This is my business and mine only.'"

Every person has the right to say to God, "Leave me alone. Don't bother me." But it is the Lord's right to pursue us with His persistent mercy. To the self-satisfied church at Laodicea, the risen Christ said: "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" (Revelation 3:20).

By His grace, the Lord keeps knocking, ready to fill our lives with His love. By: David C. McCasland

What joy and blessings we can know
When Jesus comes to dine!
He brings His riches and His love
And fellowship divine.
-Branon

God's love is persistent but never pushy.

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Our Heart—His Home

> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to Him. — Revelation 3:20

Today's Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

In a conversation with a 9-year-old boy, a youth worker was telling the story of Adam and Eve and how sin entered the world. He told the boy that Jesus died to pay the penalty for his sins, and that if he would ask Him into his heart He would come in. That night the boy invited Jesus to save him.

A few days later the youngster said to the youth worker's wife, "I don't have to talk to God long distance anymore." "Why not?" she asked. Pointing to his heart, he replied, "Because He's only 10 inches away."

Amazing! Christ, by whom all things were created (Col. 1:16), comes to live in a sinner's heart so that he or she senses a close relationship with God. That's the miracle of the new birth.

This closeness, however, can be lost if we become lukewarm in our love for Jesus. That's why He portrays Himself as standing outside the door of our heart waiting to be invited in so that this sense of intimacy can be renewed (Rev. 3:20). Disobedience can break that close fellowship, but it can be restored by repenting, opening our heart's door anew to Him, and letting Him take full control once more. Jesus wants us to have the abiding assurance that He is even closer than 10 inches away. By: Dennis J. DeHaan

How sad when flames of love burn low
In hearts that once their warmth did know!
But Christ will freely grace bestow
And cause that love again to glow.
—DJD

To renew your love for Christ, review Christ's love for you.

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Revelation 3:21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

> BGT Revelation 3:21 νικ ν δ σω α τ καθ σαι μετ μο ν τ θρ ν μου, ς κ γ ν κησα κα κ θισα μετ το πατρ ς μου ν τ θρ ν α το .
>
> KJV Revelation 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame,

and am set down with my Father in his throne.

NET Revelation 3:21 I will grant the one who conquers permission to sit with me on my throne, just as I too conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

CSB Revelation 3:21 The victor: I will give him the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I also won the victory and sat down with My Father on His throne.

ESV Revelation 3:21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

NIV Revelation 3:21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

NLT Revelation 3:21 Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.

NRS Revelation 3:21 To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

NJB Revelation 3:21 Anyone who proves victorious I will allow to share my throne, just as I have myself overcome and have taken my seat with my Father on his throne.

NAB Revelation 3:21 I will give the victor the right to sit with me on my throne, as I myself first won the victory and sit with my Father on his throne.

YLT Revelation 3:21 He who is overcoming -- I will give to him to sit with me in my throne, as I also did overcome and did sit down with my Father in His throne.

GWN Revelation 3:21 I will allow everyone who wins the victory to sit with me on my throne, as I have won the victory and have sat down with my Father on his throne.

BBE Revelation 3:21 To him who overcomes I will give a place with me on my high seat, even as I overcame, and am seated with my Father on his high seat.

RSV Revelation 3:21 He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

NKJ Revelation 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.

ASV Revelation 3:21 He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne.

MIT Revelation 3:21 To the one who conquers I will give a seat with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and took a seat with my father on his throne.

- **him**: Rev 2:7 12:11 1Jn 5:4,5
- **to sit:** Rev 1:6 Rev 2:26-27 Mt 19:28 Lu 22:30 1Co 6:2,3 2Ti 2:12
- **as I also overcame**: John 16:33
- **and sat down with My Father on His throne**: Rev 5:6-8 Rev 7:17 Da 7:13-14 Mt 28:18 John 5:22,23 Eph 1:20-23 Php 2:9-21
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

John 16:33 “These things (John 13-16 UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE) I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation (thlipsis), but **take courage** (present imperative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey); I have **overcome** (perfect tense = victory at Calvary which will endure eternally!) the world.”

Revelation 1:6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father–to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 2:26-27 ‘He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27 AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father;

Revelation 5:10 “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luke 22:29-30 and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you 30that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Romans 8:17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and **fellow heirs with Christ,** if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

2 Timothy 2:12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

Revelation 20:4-6 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and **reigned with Christ for a thousand years.** 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and **will reign with Him for a thousand years**.

1 Corinthians 6:3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

AMAZING GRACE:
A PROMISE TO REIGN WITH THE
KING OF KINGS, LORD OF LORDS

He (singular) **who** (present tense = continually) **overcomes** (nikao) **-** See note above for more detailed discussion on **overcomes**.

I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne (thronos)**, as I also overcame** (nikao - aorist tense - on the Cross) **and sat down with My Father on His throne** (thronos) - Jesus **will grant** signifies this gift is a choice of His perfect will. Because Jesus overcame, we overcome (by grace through faith), and have the amazing promised privilege of sitting down on the throne of the One Who saved us! The word that comes to mind is magnanimous which generous or forgiving, especially toward a rival (at one time we hated Christ!) or less powerful person (we had no power to save ourselves!). Here is **Webster's 1828 definition** of magnanimous (which blows away most modern dictionaries!) - "*Greatness of mind; that elevation or dignity of soul, which encounters danger and trouble with tranquillity and firmness, which raises the possessor above revenge, and makes him delight in acts of benevolence, which makes him disdain injustice and meanness, and prompts him to sacrifice personal ease, interest and safety for the accomplishment of useful and noble objects*." That's a beautiful description of our Jesus! What a Savior! What a Friend!

As I overcame refers to the crucifixion of Christ as John describes in Revelation 5:5,9+...

> and one of the elders *said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, **has overcome** so as to open the book and its seven seals.” 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for **You were slain**, (sphazo in perfect tense = completed in past with enduring effect for eternity!) and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

The verb **sat down** refers to Jesus ascension to take His seat at the right hand of His Father (cf. Ps. 110:1; Matt. 22:44; Acts 2:34; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).

Henry Morris - This is an amazing manifestation of grace. One who was about to be spewed out of His mouth is invited to sit with Him on His throne. (The Revelation Record - BORROW)

Steven Lawson writes "Overcomers are promised the privilege of sitting down with Christ on His throne. If that promise was not stated her in the Bible, I would say such a statement is blasphemy!

Adam Clarke adds "“This is the worst of the seven Churches, and yet the most eminent of all the promises are made to it, showing that the worst may repent, finally conquer, and attain even to the highest state of glory.”

John MacArthur - To enjoy fellowship with Christ in the kingdom and throughout eternity is sufficient blessing beyond all comprehension. But Christ offers more, promising to seat believers on the throne He shares with the Father (cf. Matt. 19:28; Luke

22:29–30). That symbolizes the truth that we will reign with Him (2Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10; 20:6; cf. 1Cor. 6:3). (See Revelation Commentary)

Charles Swindoll - Just as Christ overcame sin and death to sit at the right hand of the Father, believers in Christ will one day rise from the dead and sit with Christ on His throne in the future earthly kingdom (Rev 2:26–27; 20:6). (See Insights on Revelation)

R L Thomas says this promise to overcomers "is an extension of the promise that Christ made to the Twelve while on earth that they would not only eat and drink with Him in His kingdom, but also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (cf. Mt. 19:28; Lk 22:29–30). Paul expanded the promise to include all Christians as rulers and the broadened domain of the world, not just Israel (cf. 1Co 6:2). The implementation of this promise is a central focus as the message of the Apocalypse progresses, culminating with Christ's reign in the millennial kingdom (cf. Rev 5:10; Rev 11:15; Rev 20:4). (See Revelation Exegetical Commentary)

John Stott - This prospect exceeds in glory all the other promises to the victor. A throne is a symbol of conquest and authority. Jesus had promised the Twelve that "at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne," they who had followed him would "also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt 19:28). This pledge is now given to every faithful and overcoming Christian. As Christ overcame the world and the devil, and was exalted to the Father's right hand, so the Christian who overcomes shall also be honoured. As Christ shares the Father's throne, so Christians will share Christ's. Exactly what authority will be entrusted to them is not disclosed, but in some way they will be given responsibility in the kingdom of heaven. (Borrow What Christ thinks of the church : insights from Revelation 2-3)

Lehman Strauss - As Christ shared the Father's throne, both before His incarnation in eternity past (John 17:5), and after His ascension (Revelation 3:21), so the Christian will share Christ's throne in the coming manifestation of His kingdom. Dare we assume that association with Christ in His kingdom is for some of the redeemed only and not for all? We dare not assume any such thing because there is no scriptural authority for it. This promise is not given to those who successfully struggle to the end; it is assured every one who has been born again into that kingdom. In that day Christ's prayer will be answered, namely, that all believers may be one (John 17:21). The throne of Christ will be shared with all His followers....These promises to the overcomers form the fullest description to be found in all the Word of God of those things which God has prepared for His redeemed ones. They open to us the bright prospects of the life to come for all the saved. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things" (Revelation 21:7), a statement set in contrast, not with failing Christians, but with the "unbelieving" who "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). **Let all who read these words and who have not yet yielded to Jesus Christ, receive Him at once. The dispensation of grace is coming to a close. Do not delay your decision to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved**. (Borrow The Book of the Revelation: Outlined Studies)

Herbert Lockyer - A "throne" is the sign and symbol of royal authority and dominion, and the Laodicean conqueror was promised association with Christ in His Kingdom and glory. Overcomers are to share Christ's throne, even as He shares His Father's throne. On the difference between the two thrones mentioned in this portion, Ellicott observes: "My throne, saith Christ: this is the condition of glorified saints who sit with Christ in His throne. But My Father's, that is, God's throne, is the power of divine majesty. Herein none may sit but God, and the God-Man Jesus Christ. The promise of sharing the throne is the climax of an ascending series of glorious promises, which carry the thought from the Garden of Eden (2:7) through the wilderness (2:17), the temple (3:12), to the throne. The promise bears marked resemblance to the language of Paul (Ephesians 2-6). "The crowning promise is made to the most unpleasing of the churches. But it is well that thus the despondency which often succeeds the sudden collapse of self-satisfied imaginations should be met by so bright a prospect. The highest place is within the reach of the lowest: the faintest spark of grace may be fanned into the mightiest name of divine love." (Borrow All the promises of the Bible)

Throne (2362) **thronos** (See Throne of God below) describes a seat of authority as with the throne of God (Heb. 4:16, "the throne of grace," Heb 8:1; Heb 12:2; Rev 1:4; Rev 3:21; Rev. 4:2; Rev. 5:1 Rev. 20:12; Lxx - Ps 47:8, Ps 103:19), the throne of Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:8; Rev. 3:21; Rev. 22:3; in the Millennium = Mt 19:28), by metonymy (or figuratively) used for angelic powers (Col. 1:16), of the apostles (Mt 19:28, Lk 22:30), elders in heaven (Rev 4:4), of the throne of David (Lk 1:32, Acts 2:30), of the throne of Satan (Rev 2:13), of the throne of the beast, the antichrist (Rev 13:2, Rev 16:10).

> **Thronos** occurs over 55 times in the New Testament; of these more than 40 appear in the Book of Revelation. The word most generally refers to the "throne" of God or the "throne" of Christ. Jesus declared that the Son of Man would sit on the right hand of power (Matthew 26:64), an allusion to His sharing in the authority of God. He received the throne of His father David, said Luke (1:32); He has established himself on the throne of His Heavenly Father (Revelation 3:21; cf. Psalm 110:1f.; Hebrews 8:1). Those who are conquerors like Him will be granted a place beside Him on His throne (Revelation 3:21; cf. the phrase "reign with him," 2 Timothy 2:12; cf. also Matthew 19:28; Revelation 4:4). In another sense thronos signifies the angelic powers (Colossians 1:16) or the "throne" (i.e., authority) of the dragon which will be handed over to the beast (Antichrist; cf. Revelation 13:2). But the reign of evil will be short. In the final great scene of the Book of Revelation there is a glimpse of the throne of God, the Lamb, and the river of life which flows from there (Revelation 22:1-3). This testifies that God will ultimately gather everything in heaven and on the

earth under His dominion.

> **Gilbrant** - Thronos originally denoted a chair with a footstool and later a chair with a high back and arms. Initially thronos held no special symbolic value; however, gradually it came to symbolize “authority.” In time it became the “seat of honor” reserved for the master of a household. As a special gesture of respect and honor, certain guests were invited to sit upon the thronos of a household.

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

> BGT Revelation 3:22 χων ο ς κουσ τω τ τ πνε μα λ γει τα ς κκλησ αις.
>
> KJV Revelation 3:22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.
>
> NET Revelation 3:22 The one who has an ear had better hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"
>
> CSB Revelation 3:22 "Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."
>
> ESV Revelation 3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"
>
> NIV Revelation 3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."
>
> NLT Revelation 3:22 "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches."
>
> NRS Revelation 3:22 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."
>
> NJB Revelation 3:22 Let anyone who can hear, listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches." '
>
> NAB Revelation 3:22 " '"Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'"
>
> YLT Revelation 3:22 He who is having an ear -- let him hear what the Spirit saith to the assemblies.'
>
> GWN Revelation 3:22 Let the person who has ears listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."
>
> BBE Revelation 3:22 He who has ears, let him give ear to what the Spirit says to the churches.
>
> RSV Revelation 3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"
>
> NKJ Revelation 3:22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'"
>
> ASV Revelation 3:22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.
>
> MIT Revelation 3:22 One who has capacity to hear should listen to what the spirit is saying to the churches.

- Rev 3:6,13 2:7,11,17
- Revelation 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE FINAL CALL TO THE CHURCHES

H e (singular) **who has an ear, let him hear** (akouo in aorist imperative = calls for urgent response!) **what the Spirit** (pneuma) (present tense - continually) **says to the churches** (ekklesia) - See detailed note above on this command. It is fitting that this is the last clarion call, like a Paul Revere warning that the British are coming, but in this context, the warning is that the wrath of God is coming upon the whole world! So listen to what God says while you still have a window of opportunity!