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BLUESTONE INDEPENDENT BBAPTIST CHURCH
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“The Things Which Thou Hast Seen”
Revelation 1:1-20

Introduction: Is the book of the Revelation an impossible volume of the Bible to understand? Many have asked this question, and their answer was to avoid reading the Revelation. Some feel that it is deep, mystical, and secretly coded so that no one can comprehend its contents. However, even the word Revelation (“the unveiling”) informs us that it is an open book (Revelation 22:10, II Peter 1:20-21) for the saints of God to read and be blessed by (Revelation 1:3). Therefore, we must conclude that to avoid this great revelation by not hearing, reading, and studying it would be to miss a tremendous blessing. Although we may not understand every detail of the Revelation, we must remember the words of M.R. De Haan when studying this manuscript. “One need not be able to identify every tree in the forest to appreciate the beauty of the forest as a whole.” Knowing this, let us take a brief overview of the Revelation as presented in 1:19.

1. The Things Which Thou Hast Seen Chapter 1
2. The Things Which Are Chapters 2-3
 - a. Ephesus 2:1-7
 - b. Smyrna 2:8-11
 - c. Pergamos 2:12-17
 - d. Thyatira 2:18-29
 - e. Sardis 3:1-6
 - f. Philadelphia 3:7-13
 - g. Laodiceans 3:14-22
3. The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter Chapters 4-22
 - a. The Throne (mentioned 16 times) Chapters 4-5
 - b. The Tribulation Chapters 6-19
 - (1) The First Part (Tribulation) Chapters 6-9
 - (2) The Middle Pause Chapters 10-14
 - (3) The Last Part (Great Tribulation) Chapters 15-19
Ending with the battle of Armageddon
 - c. The Millennial Reign Chapter 20
 - d. The Battle of Gog and Magog Chapter 20
 - e. The Great White Throne Judgment Chapter 20
 - f. The New Heaven and the New Earth Chapters 21-22

J. Vernon McGee also offers an interesting outline:

1. The Person of Jesus Christ—Christ in glory, chapter 1.
2. The Possession of Jesus Christ—the church in the world is His, chapters 2–3.
3. The Program of Jesus Christ—as seen in heaven, chapters 4–22.

“Notice also that there is a tie between Genesis and Revelation, the first and last books of the Bible. Genesis presents the beginning, and Revelation presents the end. Note the contrasts between the two books:

In Genesis the earth was created; *in Revelation*, the earth passes away.
In Genesis was Satan's first rebellion; *in Revelation* is Satan's last rebellion.
In Genesis the sun, moon, and stars were for earth's government; *in Revelation*, these same heavenly bodies are for earth's judgment.
In Genesis the sun was to govern the day; *in Revelation*, there is no need of the sun.
In Genesis darkness was called night; *in Revelation* there is "no night there"
In Genesis the waters were called seas; *in Revelation*, there is no more sea.
In Genesis was the entrance of sin; *in Revelation* is the exodus of sin.
In Genesis the curse was pronounced; *in Revelation*, the curse is removed.
In Genesis death entered; *in Revelation*, there is no more death.
In Genesis was the beginning of sorrow and suffering; *in Revelation* there will be no more sorrow and no more tears.
In Genesis was the marriage of the first Adam; *in Revelation* is the marriage of the Last Adam.
In Genesis we saw man's city, Babylon, being built; *in Revelation* we see man's city, Babylon, destroyed and God's city, the New Jerusalem, brought into view.
In Genesis Satan's doom was pronounced; *in Revelation* Satan's doom is executed."
(McGee)

Body: After having been dipped in boiling tar and left for dead, as tradition has it, John rose from his pain to worship the Lord as the sun peaked over the horizon. It was on the Lord's Day on a small rocky island located in the Mediterranean Sea where John was in the Spirit. He was exiled there for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. However, no matter how much he was persecuted for the cause of Christ, John was determined to press on for the furtherance of the gospel. While John was worshipping the Lord, he heard a voice behind him that he had not heard in 60 years. When he turned to look, it was the resurrected Son of God in all of his glory! Having been overwhelmed by the majesty and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, John immediately fell at his feet as a dead man. It was then that the Lord touched him and brought peace to his heart. Once John had recovered from the amazing manifestation of the glorified One, he was given the Revelation. It was a book not to be sealed, but to be sent unto the seven churches for all saints to enjoy. What were its contents? Let us look at this book and be blessed, as the pages of prophecy are unfolded. Notice what John saw:

- I. The Presentation of the Revelation vs. 1-2- "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him...*"
 - A. The Source of the Revelation v. 1- "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him...*"
 1. Keep in mind that this is not the "Revelation of St. John the Divine". "John was a saint as all believers are saints. He was not a divine!" (Ironside)
 2. "The traditional view is that the date of the book is A.D. 96." (Gaebelein)
 3. "Irenaeus, the friend of Polycarp, who knew John, stated that 'the Revelation was seen at Patmos at the end of Domitian's reign.' Domitian reigned from A.D. 81 to 96. Clement of Alexandria left the

testimony that John returned from his exile on the death of the emperor, who was Domitian, in the year 96.” (Gaebelein)

4. “According to this statement, our Lord—as the Son of man—received a revelation from God.” (Gaebelein)

B. The Signification of the Revelation v. 1- “...to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass...”

1. “That the book should be shunned by many because of its mysterious character is no wonder. It is one of the ‘devices’ of Satan to get people to neglect a Book that foretells his casting as ‘Prince of the Powers of the Air,’ and the ‘God of This Age,’ out of the Heavens; of his imprisonment in the ‘Bottomless Pit’ for 1,000 years; and his final casting into the Lake of Fire.” (Larkin)

2. “While Satan hates all Scripture in general, he hates the books of Genesis and Revelation in particular. Therefore he attacks the authenticity of Genesis, and seeks to have Revelation neglected.” (Larkin)

C. The Sending of the Revelation v. 1- “...and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John”

1. From the Angel- “he sent and signified it by his angel” 22:8, 16

a. It was Sent- “he sent”

(1) “This angel was ‘sent’ (commissioned with all the rights, power, and authority of God).” (Simpson)

(2) “The same word is in John 1:6—‘There was a man sent from God’.” (Simpson)

b. It was Signified- “and signified”

(1) “He is said to have ‘signified it’—that is, He made it known by signs or symbols. It is important to bear this in mind. Revelation is a book of symbols.” (Ironsides)

(2) “The word signified is important; it means ‘to show by a sign’. This is the same word used in the Gospel of John for the miracles of Jesus Christ, for His miracles were events that carried a deeper spiritual message than simply the display of power.” (Wiersbe)

(3) According to Warren Wiersbe, John used symbolism for three reasons:

(a) “For one thing, this kind of “spiritual code” is understood only by those who know Christ personally.” (Wiersbe)

(b) “But an even greater reason is that symbolism is not weakened by time.” (Wiersbe)

(c) “There is a third reason why John used symbolism: symbols not only convey information, but also impart values and arouse emotions. John could have written, ‘A dictator will rule the world,’ but instead he described a beast. The symbol says much

more than the mere title of ‘dictator’.”
(Wiersbe)

(4) “Nearly 300 references to the Old Testament are found in Revelation! This means that we must anchor our interpretations to what God has already revealed, lest we misinterpret this important prophetic book.”
(Wiersbe)

(5) “It is calculated that there are over five hundred references or allusions to the Old Testament in Revelation and that, of its 404 verses, 278 contain references to the Old Testament. In other words, over half of this book depends upon your understanding of the Old Testament.” (McGee)

2. To the Apostle- *“unto his servant John”* 1:4, 1:9, 22:8
 - a. “There is also unquestionable historical evidence that the author is the apostle John, the beloved disciple, the son of Zebedee.” (Gaebelein)
 - b. “The author of the Gospel of John and the Epistles is also the author of the book of Revelation.” (Gaebelein)

D. The Sight of the Revelation v. 2- *“Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”*

1. Concerning the Words of the Scripture- *“Who bare record of the word of God...”*
2. Concerning the Words of the Saviour- *“...and of the testimony of Jesus Christ...”*
3. Concerning the Witness of the Sighting- *“...and of all things that he saw.”*

II. The Promise of the Revelation v. 3- *“Blessed is he that readeth...”*

A. Blessings for the Eye- *“Blessed is he that readeth...”*

B. Blessings for the Ear- *“...and they that hear the words of this prophecy...”* II Peter 1:20-21

C. Blessings for the Eager- *“...and keep those things which are written therein...”* Revelation 22:7, James 1:22

D. Blessings for the Expecting- *“...for the time is at hand.”*

1. We see, in verse one, the things that must shortly come to pass will come to pass because the time is at hand. Revelation 22:7, 10, 12, 20, James 5:7-8
2. From this verse we note the seven Beatitudes of the Revelation:
 - a. Blessed are the Reading 1:3
 - b. Blessed are the Resting 14:13
 - c. Blessed are the Regarding 16:15
 - d. Blessed are the Receiving 19:9
 - e. Blessed are the Resurrecting 20:6
 - f. Blessed are the Remembering 22:7
 - g. Blessed are the Rehearsing 22:14

- III. The Penman of the Revelation vs. 4- *“John to the seven churches...”*
- A. The Messenger- *“John”*
- B. The Message- *“...to the seven churches which are in Asia...”*
1. A Message about the Sanctuary- *“...to the seven churches which are in Asia...”*
 - a. “There is a Personal Application- These seven churches actually existed.
 - b. There is a Practical Application- The message applies to all churches of every age.
 - c. There is a Prophetic Application- Each church represents a period in the history of the church from its formation until the rapture.” (Simpson)
 2. A Message about the Support- *“...Grace be unto you, and peace...”*
 - a. “It is with a similar purpose that the Holy Spirit begins this war-filled book with the word peace!” (Phillips)
 - b. “Moreover, grace and peace win through at last.” (Phillips)
 3. A Message from the Saviour- *“...from him which is, and which was, and which is to come...”*
 - a. “The present and the future are very much alive to God as well.” (Phillips)
 - b. “He reads the past, He rides the present, and He rules the future.” (Phillips)
 4. A Message from the Spirits- *“...and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne” Isaiah 11:2*
 - a. Now we see the Trinity in heaven.
 - b. “There you have the one Spirit in the sevenfold plenitude of His power.” (Ironside)
 - c. “Until now, He has been the executor of God’s purposes in grace; He is now to be the executor of God’s purposes in government.” (Phillips)
- IV. The Person of the Revelation vs. 5-8- *“And from Jesus Christ, who is...”*
- A. The Acknowledgement of the Saviour v. 5- *“...Jesus Christ, who is...”*
1. His Reliability- *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness...” John 18:37, Revelation 19:11*
 - a. “He came to earth to be a witness to a dark and degenerate world, and His witness was both unprecedented and unpopular.” (Phillips)
 - b. According to John Phillips, He witnessed:
 - (1) the name of God
 - (2) the nature of sin
 - (3) the need for righteousness
 - (4) the nearness of judgment
 - (5) the news of salvation- the woman at the well, Nicodemus, the rich young ruler, Zaccheus

2. His Resurrection- *“...and the first begotten of the dead...”*
 - a. “First-begotten does not mean ‘the first one raised from the dead,’ but ‘the highest of those raised from the dead’.” (Wiersbe) Acts 26:23, I Corinthians 15:17, 20
 - b. “Firstborn is a title of honor.” (Wiersbe) Romans 8:29, Colossians 1:15, 18
 - c. “Not the first one ever raised from the dead but the first one raised with an incorruptible body that never will die again. Others were ‘revived’, Jesus was ‘resurrected’. Christ was resurrected not only first in point of time but also in rank.” (Simpson)
 3. His Reign- *“...and the prince of the kings of the earth...”* Psalm 72:11, Zechariah 14:9
 - a. According to Warren Wiersbe, “Finally, Jesus Christ is seen in His threefold office as:
 - (1) Prophet (God’s Word)- *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness...”*
 - (2) Priest (God’s Lamb)- *“...and the first begotten of the dead...”*
 - (3) King (God’s Lion)- *“...and the prince of the kings of the earth...”*
 - b. “A prince is a person of royalty in line for the throne. When he becomes King, he is no longer a prince. Don’t make Him King now because we’re not yet in the kingdom.” (Simpson)
 - c. “When He becomes King, there will be no more princes. Why? There can be no successor because He is the ‘only begotten Son of God’ and there will be no need for a successor because He never will die nor ever be defeated!” (Simpson)
 4. His Redemption- *“...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood”*
 - a. His Love- *“...him that loved us...”*
 - b. His Loosing- *“...and washed us from our sins in his own blood”*
 - (1) “The word ‘washed’ means to be ‘freed’ or ‘loosed’ from sin.” (Simpson)
 - (2) Washed us is in the aorist tense which means “once and for all”. (Simpson)
- B. The Ability of the Saviour v. 6- *“And hath made us...”*
1. The Position of the Saints- *“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father...”* I Peter 2:9, Revelation 5:9-10
 2. The Praise of the Saints- *“...to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”*
 - a. “glory” is Upward- He Reigns
 - b. “dominion” is Downward- He Rules
 - c. “for ever” is Outward- He Reaches
 - d. “Amen” is Inward- He Rewards

- C. The Advent of the Saviour v. 7- *“Behold, he cometh with clouds...”*
1. The Material of His Return- *“Behold, he cometh with clouds...”* Matthew 26:64, Mark 13:26, 14:62, Revelation 14:14, 16
 2. The Manifestation of His Return- *“...and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him...”* Matthew 24:30
 3. The Misery of His Return- *“...and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”* Zechariah 12:10
- D. The Authority of the Saviour v. 8- *“...the Almighty.”*
1. Because of His Eternal Existence- *“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord...”*
 - a. “Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet; so, God is at the beginning of all things and also at their end.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. “He is the eternal God, unlimited by time.” (Wiersbe)
 2. Because of His Everlasting Existence- *“...which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”*
- V. The Purpose of the Revelation vs. 9-11- *“...What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches...”*
- A. To Reveal a Common Battle v. 9- *“...your brother, and companion in tribulation...”*
1. It was a Shared Battle- *“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ...”*
 - a. It is evident that throughout the ages God’s children will suffer persecution. John 16:33, Acts 14:22
 - b. “John speaks of being in tribulation. There were at least four reasons why Rome persecuted Christians:
 - (1) For political purposes. The Christian took no part in the pantheon (worship of many gods). In fact, Christians were regarded as atheists, for they worshiped no visible God.
 - (2) For economic purposes. No money or sacrifices were forthcoming from believers to Roman idols.
 - (3) For ‘moral’ purposes. Christians were often looked upon as cannibals, for did they not secretly ‘eat the flesh and drink the blood’ of their religious founder?
 - (4) For scapegoat purposes. Nero attempted to blame various state problems upon the Christians living in Rome.” (Willmington)
 2. It was a Separated Battle- *“...was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”*
 - a. Divine Providence- “John was on this isle for ‘preaching’ the Word and for ‘penning’ the Word.” (Simpson)
 - (1) Paul and Silas- Their prison turned into a pulpit

- (2) Three Hebrew Children- Their roasting turned into a revival
 - (3) Daniel and the Den of Lions- What was to eat him for breakfast became his bed (Simpson)
 - b. “John wrote Revelation about A.D. 95, during the reign of the Roman emperor Titus Flavius Domitian. The emperor had demanded that he be worshiped as ‘Lord and God,’ and the refusal of the Christians to obey his edict led to severe persecution.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. “Tradition says that it was Domitian who sent John to the Isle of Patmos, a Roman penal colony off the coast of Asia Minor. This being the location of John’s exile, perhaps it is not surprising that the word *sea* is found twenty-six times in his book.” (Wiersbe)
- B. To Reveal a Comforter’s Blessing v. 10- *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day...”*
- 1. The Way of His Worship- *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day...”*
Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, 9, Luke 24:1, John 20:1, 19, Acts 20:7, I Corinthians 16:2
 - a. According to Simpson, you ought to be in the Spirit, Scriptures, and the Sanctuary (not in bed, on the beach, on the boat, or on the golf course) on the Lord’s Day.
 - b. “And I would say that the Day of the Lord and the Lord’s Day are two different things also, and that the Lord’s Day refers to what we call Sunday.” (McGee)
 - c. “We recognize that anti-fat and fat auntie are two different things...” (McGee)
 - d. “Every Christian has two locations. John was in the isle, and he was in the Spirit.” (Phillips)
 - e. “He had a human environment and a heavenly environment.” (Phillips) (Illustration: The two story shop- work on the bottom but live in the top)
 - f. Colossians 1:2- *“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse...”*
 - 2. The Words during His Worship- *“...and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet”*
- C. To Reveal a Completed Book v. 11- *“...What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia...”*
- 1. The Signature of the Book- *“Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last...”*
 - 2. The Saints of the Book- *“...and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.”*
 - a. “Asia encompassed a great deal of what we generally call Asia Minor or modern Turkey.” (McGee)

- b. "I have a notion that John was well known in these seven churches. We know that he had been pastor of the church at Ephesus, and apparently he had oversight of all the churches in that area." (McGee)

VI. The Portrait of the Revelation vs. 12-16- "*And I turned to see...And being turned, I saw...*"

A. Of the Candlesticks v. 12- "*And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks*" Matthew 5:14-16, Philippians 2:15

1. "So John saw in this first vision not one candlestick with seven branches, but seven distinct lampstands in the form of a circle." (Ironside)
2. "...we see that Jesus looks upon the churches as not the light, but simply the 'light holder'." (Larkin)

B. Of the Clothing v. 13- "*And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*"

1. His Garment- "*...clothed with a garment down to the foot...*"
2. His Girdle- "*...and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*"
 - a. "In Revelation the girdle represents a high-priestly service." (Ironside)
 - b. Our blessed Lord is now serving us at God's right hand. (McGee)
 - (1) His Intercession Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25
 - (2) His Intervention I John 2:1, 1:9
 - (3) His Inspection Revelation 1:14
 - c. "The description of Him is more that of a judge. The High Priest was girded around the waist, signifying service, but a girdle or sash over the shoulder and around the breasts is an insignia of the Magisterial Office." (Larkin) John 5:22, Revelation 15:6-7, Acts 17:31, Hebrews 9:27

C. Of the Crown v. 14- "*His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow...*"

1. "The white hair symbolizes His eternity, 'the Ancient of Days'." (Wiersbe) Daniel 7:9, 13, 22
2. Proverbs 16:31- "*The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.*"

D. Of the Cornea v. 14- "*...and his eyes were as a flame of fire*" Revelation 19:12, Hebrews 4:13, II Chronicles 16:9, Job 34:21, Jeremiah 17:10

1. "Fire burns and bores its way into the heart of the toughest timber and can even melt the strongest steel. His eyes are as a flame of fire, and they flash with holy anger as He sees the wreck and ruin that sin has made of earth." (Phillips)
2. "When He was here before, His kind but searching glance could scan the very wounds that shame would hide. John sees His eyes now

- burning like fire as He sweeps the globe with His glance, seeing all.”
(Phillips)
- E. Of the Condemnation v. 15- “*And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace...*” Zechariah 14:4, I Corinthians 15:25
1. “His feet of burning brass also suggest judgment, since the brazen altar was the place where the fire consumed the sin offering.” (Wiersbe)
 2. “Once the serpent’s fangs fastened on those feet, but now like red-hot bronze they will trample on the serpent’s head and crush him and all his works forever.” (Phillips)
 3. “In that day those feet that trod the Via Dolorosa of suffering will be like unto incandescent brass that shall tread and crush Antichrist and Satan...” (Larkin) Revelation 19:15
- F. Of the Conversation v. 15- “*...and his voice as the sound of many waters.*”
1. “Imagine arguing with Niagara Falls! Imagine standing at the foot of the falls with some 12 million cubic feet of water roaring down each minute and trying to argue with a thunderous voice like that!” (Phillips)
 2. “A mighty waterfall pours out its thundering sound with a deafening roar, unmoved alike by the apathy, the animosity, or the admiration of those that hear.” (Phillips)
- G. Of the Contents v. 16- “*And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword...*”
1. He had the Stars- “*And he had in his right hand seven stars...*”
 - a. “From the fact that Jesus speaks of ‘stars’ and ‘lampstands’ it is clear that we are living in the night of this dispensation, for ‘stars’ and ‘lampstands’ belong to the night.” (Larkin)
 - b. It is a blessing to know that, even though we are in the darkest of times, our Lord is holding His pastors in His right hand (symbolizing the hand of authority). As we look at the hand, we see what made it all possible, His piercing.
 2. He had the Sword- “*...and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword...*” Hebrews 4:12, Ephesians 6:17, Revelation 19:15
- H. Of the Countenance v. 16- “*...and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*” Matthew 17:2, Acts 9:3-4, 26:13, Revelation 21:23, Malachi 4:2
1. “The sun is a familiar image of God in the Old Testament, reminding us not only of blessing, but of judgment.” (Wiersbe)
 2. “The sun can burn as well as bless!” (Wiersbe)
 3. “When Jesus lived on earth, He was the most approachable of men. But no longer! We cannot look upon the sun shining in its strength; still less can we approach it.” (Phillips)
 4. “One pound of heat can raise twenty million tons of rock by twenty-five hundred degrees centigrade and turn it into incandescent lava. The sun is losing weight by radiation at the rate of 4,200,000 tons a second! You cannot approach a power like that.” (Phillips)
 5. Simpson describes the sun as having three rays:

- a. Heat rays you can feel, but you cannot see—God the Holy Spirit
 - b. Light rays you can see but you cannot feel—God the Son
 - c. Actinic rays you can neither feel or see—God the Father

- VII. The Power of the Revelation vs. 17-18- *“And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead...”*
 - A. The Power of Jesus’ Presence v. 17- *“And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead...”* Daniel 10:7-10
 - 1. “No believer should study prophecy merely to satisfy his curiosity. When Daniel and John received God’s revelations of the future, both fell down as dead men.” (Wiersbe)
 - 2. “We need to approach this book as wonderers and worshipers, not as academic students.” (Wiersbe)
 - B. The Power of Jesus’ Peace v. 17- *“...And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last”* Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12-13
 - C. The Power of Jesus’ Perpetuity v. 18- *“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen...”*
 - 1. “Jesus assures John that ‘I am alive!’” (Willmington)
 - 2. “The real symbol of Christianity is not the cross, but the empty tomb.” (Willmington)
 - D. The Power of Jesus’ Possession v. 18- *“...and have the keys of hell and of death.”*
 - 1. “You should not be afraid to go to any place to which I hold the key.” (Simpson)
 - 2. Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven Matthew 16:19
 - 3. Key of Knowledge Luke 11:52
 - 4. Key of David Revelation 3:7
 - 5. Key of the Bottomless Pit Revelation 9:1, 20:1
 - 6. Keys of hell and of death Revelation 1:18 (Willmington)

- VIII. The Plan of the Revelation v. 19- *“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter”*
 - A. The Past View of the Revelation- *“Write the things which thou hast seen...”*
 - B. The Present View of the Revelation- *“...and the things which are...”*
 - C. The Prophetic View of the Revelation- *“...and the things which shall be hereafter”*

- IX. The Paraphrase of the Revelation v. 20- *“...The seven stars are...the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are...”*
 - A. Concerning the Mystery- *“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.”*
 - 1. Of the Stars- *“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand...”*
 - 2. Of the Sticks- *“...and the seven golden candlesticks.”*

- B. Concerning the Meaning- *“The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”*
1. Of the Stars- *“The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches...” Daniel 12:3*
 2. Of the Sticks- *“...and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”*

Conclusion: What a tremendous sight John saw while he was exiled to the isle of Patmos. It is through this vision that the saints of God can see the panorama of the prophetic events, which are to unfold. Although we may not understand the full interpretation of every revelation in the Revelation, may we read, hear, and keep the sayings within the book without altering or changing one word. When we do this, the blessings of God will be poured out upon the studious saint.

“The Church of Ephesus”

Revelation 2:1-7

Introduction: For the next two chapters, John pens the messages to the seven churches, which are in Asia (1:4, 1:11, 1:19-20). Each of these was literal local New Testament churches referring to the present period (1:19- “...and the things which are...”). Further, they also represent a timeline of the church dispensation describing their spiritual history. Therefore, three views should be taken when studying all seven churches. First, they should be looked at historically as being seven literal churches in Asia. Secondly, they should be perceived as prophetically giving a sketch of the church dispensation. Thirdly, they should assert as personally asking what personal application is given to the individual believer. The following is the basic outline that will be given for all seven churches. Although the last two points may be reversed, this is the basic structure of the message that the Lord had for each church. Then, a second outline is given for the space of time that each church represents. Notice:

1. The Overseer of the Church- *“These things saith he...”*
 2. The Occupation of the Church- *“I know thy works...”*
 3. The Obligation of the Church- *“He that hath an ear, let him hear...”*
 4. The Overcoming of the Church- *“To him that overcometh...”*
-
1. Ephesus- “Desirable” A.D. 30-100
 - a. The Careless Church
 - b. The Apostolic Church
 - c. The Fallen Church
 2. Smyrna- “Crushed; Myrrh” A.D. 100-300
 - a. The Crowned Church
 - b. The Afflicted Church
 - c. The Fearful Church
 3. Pergamos- “Married to Worldliness” A.D. 300-500
 - a. The Compromising Church
 - b. The Associated Church
 - c. The Faltering Church
 4. Thyatira- “Continual Sacrifice; Odor of Affliction” A.D. 500-1500
 - a. The Corrupted Church
 - b. The Agnostic Church
 - c. The False Church
 5. Sardis- “Remnant” A.D. 1500-1700
 - a. The Feeble Church
 - b. The Absent Church
 - c. The Fruitless Church
 6. Philadelphia- “Brotherly Love” A.D. 1700-1900
 - a. The Faithful Church
 - b. The Adored Church
 - c. The Feeble Church

7. Laodicea- “Rule of the People” A.D. 1900-Rapture
 - a. The Foolish Church
 - b. The Apostate Church
 - c. The Fashionable Church

(The information to the last outline was taken from Warren Wiersbe, John Phillips, and Ronnie Simpson)

Body: The first church in our study is the church of Ephesus. It was a church that was commenced by Paul, cultivated by Timothy, and concluded with John. Even the physical characteristics of the city allude to its removal. This city was located at the chief port in Asia Minor. John Phillips describes, “Its harbor was given to change because of its continual silting. What was water became land; what was land became water. This shifting character of the city is reflected in the Lord’s letter for the Ephesian assembly.” Although Ephesus was strong in standards, they were drifting in their love for the Master. They even drifted to the point that her tides never came back to the shore. They lost their first love, which led to their removal of their candlestick out of his place. Observe how a serving church turned into a soon removed church.

- I. The Overseer of the Church v. 1- *“These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks”*
 - A. He Is Preserving the Minister- *“These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand...” I Chronicles 16:22*
 1. “This portrayal of Christ corresponding to that given early in the first chapter of Revelation is a symbolic presentation of the fact that Christ holds the messengers of these churches in His right hand, a place of sovereign protection as well as divine authority over them.” (Walvoord)
 2. “The messengers, therefore, are held in divine protection and under divine control.” (Walvoord)
 - B. He Is Present in the Meetings- *“...who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks”*
- II. The Occupation of the Church vs. 2-6- *“I know thy works...”*
 - A. Their Assessment v. 2- *“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars”*
 1. Assessment of their Toiling- *“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience”*
 2. Assessment of their Taking- *“and how thou canst not bear them which are evil”*
 3. Assessment of their Trial- *“and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” Acts 20:29-30, II John 1:7-11*
 - B. Their Advancement v. 3- *“And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.”*

1. They Advanced in Service- *“And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured”*
 2. They Advanced in Strength- *“and hast not fainted”*
 - a. *“It was not at all easy going at Ephesus.”* (Phillips)
 - b. *“They may not have been very fruitful, but they were certainly faithful.”* (Phillips)
- C. Their Abandonment v. 4- *“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”*
1. The Outcome of their Abandonment- *“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee”*
 2. The One that they Abandoned- *“because thou hast left thy first love”*
Ephesians 3:17-19, I Thessalonians 1:3, I Corinthians 13:13
 - a. *“The word for love is the deepest and most meaningful word for love found in the Greek language.”* (Walvoord)
 - b. *“Though they had not departed completely from love for God, their love no longer had the fervency, depth, or meaning it once had had in the church.”* (Walvoord)
 - c. Luke 10:38-42
 - d. *“The furnace was still there, but the fire had gone out.”* (Phillips)
 - e. *“Labor is no substitute for love; neither is purity a substitute for passion.”* (Wiersbe)
 - f. *“It is only as we love Christ fervently that we can serve Him faithfully.”* (Wiersbe)
- D. Their Answer v. 5- *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”*
1. The Remembrance of the Ephesians- *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen”*
 2. The Repentance of the Ephesians- *“and repent”* I John 1:9
 - a. *“Religious activity without love is a sin that calls for repentance!”* (Simpson)
 - b. *“America is filled with ‘Ecclesiastical corpses in beautiful caskets’.”* (Simpson)
 3. The Repeating of the Ephesians- *“and do the first works”*
 4. The Removal of the Ephesians- *“or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”*
 - a. *“The church that loses its love will soon lose its light, no matter how doctrinally sound it may be.”* (Wiersbe)
 - b. The phrase, “I will come” is referring to the Lord coming in judgment to the church at Ephesus instead of His Second Coming.
 - c. I Corinthians 11:31- *“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”*

- E. Their Abhorrence v. 6- *“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”*
1. The Unveiling of their Abhorrence- *“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans”* Psalm 139:21-22
 - a. “Here Paul’s ‘wolves’ are called Nicolaitanes.” (Larkin)
 - b. “They were not a sect, but a party in the Church who were trying to establish a ‘Priestly Order’.” (Larkin)
 - c. “The object was to establish a ‘Holy Order of Men’, and place them over the laity, which was foreign to the New Testament plan, and call them not pastors, but—Clergy, Bishops, Archbishops, Cardinals, Popes.” (Larkin)
 2. The Unity of their Abhorrence- *“which I also hate”*
 - a. “All too often those who have forgotten how to love specialize in hating error.” (Phillips)
 - b. “Even the endorsement He does give comes almost as an afterthought.” (Phillips)
- III. The Obligation of the Church v. 7- *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”*
- A. The Prerequisites of Hearing- *“He that hath an ear...”*
 1. “Love is a personal matter.” (Phillips)
 2. “We are saved one by one; we must be restored one by one.” (Phillips)
 - B. The Purpose of Hearing- *“let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”*
- IV. The Overcoming of the Church v. 7- *“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”* I John 5:4-5
- A. The Conqueror’s Provision- *“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life...”*
 1. The Banning from the Tree Genesis 3:22-24
 2. The Bringing to the Tree Revelation 22:1-2
 - B. The Conqueror’s Position- *“...which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”*
 1. “When Adam fell, he lost Paradise, and he lost access to the tree of life.” (Phillips)
 2. “Here is a fallen church. It too has lost the paradise of bliss that comes from walking with God. The Lord’s call here is a call to individual believers to get back to the daily quiet time with Himself.” (Phillips)

Conclusion: What a stern warning to the church at Ephesus, and to all believers, for forsaking their first love! Did Ephesus ever return? History informs us that they never did. Their light was removed and the city lies in ruins today. Some writers even state that there is not even one witness within its borders. How great the need for Bible believers to labor in love and not forget how important it is to weep and pray, not just work and pray!

“The Church in Smyrna” **Revelation 2:8-11**

Introduction: We now come to our second church mentioned in Revelation known as Smyrna. According to Wiersbe, “The city remains a functioning community today called Izmir [Turkey].” This church went through severe persecutions, imprisonments, and martyrdoms, being one of the first churches to experience the fires of persecution. Smyrna is the model church for which others can mimic when they go through fiery trials. Notice what is written to this poor but prosperous congregation.

1. The Announcement v. 8- “*And unto...*”
 - a. A Divine Announcement Revelation 1:11- “*I am Alpha and Omega*”
 - b. A Direct Announcement- “*unto the angel*”
2. The Angel v. 8- “*...the angel of...*”
 - a. The Meaning of an Angel
 - (1) “angel” (Strong’s)- “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, a messenger from God”
 - (2) “angel” (Webster’s)- “A minister of the gospel, who is an ambassador of God. Literally, a messenger; one employed to communicate news or information from one person to another at a distance.”
 - b. The Message of an Angel- “*write*” Revelation 1:11- “*write in a book*”
3. The Assembly v. 8- “*...the church in Smyrna write...*”
 - a. The Explanation of Smyrna
 - (1) According to Strong’s, Smyrna means “myrrh”. It relates to being crushed.
 - (2) Smyrna was, “an Ionian city of Asia Minor, on the Aegean Sea, 40 miles (65 km) north of Ephesus”. (Strong’s)
 - b. The Era of Smyrna- A.D. 100-300

Body: Why did Smyrna undergo such malicious maltreatment? What was the reason why they had to endure such extreme hardships? Probably the answer to these questions was that they were located at the “center of the Roman imperial cult, and anyone refusing to acknowledge Caesar as Lord would certainly be excluded from the guilds.” (Wiersbe) This act of dedication to the Lord that the saints at Smyrna displayed led to their unemployment and unpopularity. However, throughout the ages, God’s people have always chosen to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as their only Lord. Despite the severe hardships they would have to endure, the believers at Smyrna proved faithful unto death. Observe the message that the Lord had for such a faithful people.

- I. The Overseer of the Church v. 8- “*These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive*”
 - A. He is Ancient- “*These things saith the first and the last*”
 - B. He is Alive- “*which was dead, and is alive*” Revelation 1:18

- II. The Occupation of the Church vs. 9-10- *"I know thy works..."*
- A. Their Pressure v. 9- *"I know thy works, and tribulation"* John 16:33, Hebrews 11:34, 37-38, II Timothy 3:12
1. "First he underscores the persecution at Smyrna and brings comfort with the words 'I know'." (Phillips)
 2. What an encouragement to the believers at Smyrna to be reassured of the fact that the Lord knows what they are going through! (Phillips)
- B. Their Poverty v. 9- *"and poverty, (but thou art rich)"* II Corinthians 6:10, 8:9, Matthew 6:20
- C. Their Pretenders v. 9- *"and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan"*
1. The Pretender's Speech- *"and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not"*
 - a. "A true Jew is not one physically or racially, but spiritually (Rom. 2:17-29)." (Wiersbe)
 - b. "Any religious group, Jewish or Gentile, that does not acknowledge Jesus Christ as God's Son is certainly acting contrary to God's will." (Wiersbe)
 - c. "This statement refers to the Judaizing movement that came into the early church, the mixing of the law with grace." (Horton)
 - d. "It was the leaven of Galatianism that substituted works (keeping the law) for grace." (Horton)
 2. The Pretender's Synagogue- *"but are the synagogue of Satan"*
 - a. Matthew 7:15- *"they are ravening wolves"*
 - b. Matthew 16:3- *"O ye hypocrites"*
 - c. Matthew 23:27- *"ye are like unto whited sepulchers"*
 - d. Matthew 23:33- *"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers"*
 - e. I John 3:10- *"the children of the devil"*
- D. Their Peace v. 10- *"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer"* I Peter 4:12-16, 3:17
1. We can understand why the ungodly would suffer, but why would a godly people like the saints at Smyrna have to suffer? (Walvoord)
 - a. Suffering is for discipline I Corinthians 11:30-32, Hebrews 12:3-13
 - b. Suffering is for prevention of pride and for humiliation II Corinthians 12:7
 - c. Suffering is for teaching and admonition Hebrews 5:8, Romans 5:3-5
 - d. Suffering is for a better testimony Acts 9:16
 2. "Christians were hunted down, arrested, tortured, burned alive, and fed to hungry lions. Roman citizens gathered as spectators at a sporting event to see lions turned loose on Christian families." (Horton)
 3. "By the middle of the second century, Christians in Rome began secretly meeting together in catacombs (underground burial

chambers) for fellowship and worship. The markings on the walls of these catacombs remain today to testify of the persecuted Christians' strong faith in Christ and their love for God's Word." (Horton)

4. There were three reasons why Christians were persecuted:
 - a. The Romans were involved in idolatry. When Christians opposed this, and other practices, they were tortured.
 - b. The Roman economy was being affected because when people would convert over to Christianity, it would hurt the idolatry business.
 - c. The Romans worshiped Caesar (the emperor) as god. However, Christians rejected this practice recognizing only the Lord Jesus Christ as God. Romans accused Christians as being atheists for not worshipping the emperor. (Horton)
- E. Their Prison v. 10- *"behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried"*
- F. Their Persecution v. 10- *"and ye shall have tribulation ten days"*
 1. The Period of their Persecution- *"ten days"* (ten periods of intense persecution)
 2. The People of their Persecution- According to Beka Horton, there were ten Roman emperors that launched merciless assaults on the Christians. The following is a list of these men as presented by Horton.
 - a. Nero (A.D. 54-68)
 - (1) "He was just three years old when his father died. It was little loss to the boy, for his father had been a killer, a bully, and a cheat. His mother took over the family trade and continued the boy's education. She murdered his stepfather with a dish of poisoned mushrooms. He was reared in squalor and proved a notable son to his parents. While still young, he committed his first murder, killing a teenage boy who stood in his way and watching him die with callous indifference. He married at fifteen but soon had his wife killed. He married again and slew his second wife too. In order to marry a third time, he murdered the husband of the woman he wanted. His mother annoyed him; so he arranged her murder, first by guile, but when that was unsuccessful, without pretense. He was an ugly man with a bull neck, beetle brows, a flat nose, and a tough mouth. He had a potbelly, spindly legs, bad skin, and offensive odor. At the age of thirty-one, he was sentenced to death by flogging. He fled to a dingy basement and, in the house of a slave, cut his own throat. He gave the infant church its first taste of things to come. His name was Nero. He was the first of the persecuting Caesars of Rome." (Phillips)

- (2) Refer to *Martyrs Mirror* on page 79 for further accounts of Nero's persecution.
- b. Domitian (A.D. 81-96)
- (1) "He [John] was exiled there [the isle of Patmos] from about A.D. 86 to 96. Patmos was a rugged, volcanic island off the coast of Asia Minor. It was about ten miles long and six miles wide. He was probably put there by the Roman Emperor Domitian." (Willmington)
 - (2) Domitian was the brother of Titus (who destroyed the city of Jerusalem)." (Willmington)
 - (3) Domitian thought Christianity was atheistic. (Willmington)
 - (4) "Killed thousands of believers." (Willmington)
- c. Trajan (A.D. 98-117)
- (1) Trajan "was the first to pass laws against Christianity". (Willmington)
 - (2) Trajan "burned Ignatius at the stake". (Willmington)
- d. Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161-180)
- (1) Marcus Aurelius "thought Christianity an absurd superstition". (Willmington)
 - (2) "Beheaded the great writer and defender of the faith, Justin Martyr." (Willmington)
- e. Septimius Severus (A.D. 193-211)—Killed Origen's father
- f. Maximinus (A.D. 235-238)
- g. Decius (A.D. 249-251)—determined to exterminate Christianity. (Willmington)
- h. Valerian (A.D. 253-260)—killed Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (Willmington)
- i. Aurelian (A.D. 270-275)
- (1) "Emperor Aurelian commenced the ninth persecution against the Christians. He was by nature inclined to tyranny, and was a furious bloodhound, as Eutropius writes, so that he did not hesitate to kill his sister's son, and finally, through the atrocity of his own wicked nature, and evil counsel suggested to him, he became an enemy and persecutor of the Christians. He sent letters to the Governors of the Roman country, that they should vex the Christians; but when he was about actually to carry the persecution into effect, he could not sign the decrees which were to be issued against the Christians, because God smote him, so that his hand was paralyzed." (Martyrs Mirror)
 - (2) "Through divine judgment he was terrified by thunder, lightning, and fire-darts, at the time that he was constantly meditating how he might slay and

exterminate the Christians; and shortly after was himself killed by his notary.” (Martyrs Mirror)

j. Diocletian (A.D. 284-305)

- (1) “The emperor Diocletian and his co-emperor Maximian proclaimed themselves officially ‘Our Lord,’ and Diocletian demanded worship as Jupiter incarnate, the father and king of the gods.” (Horton)
- (2) “In 303, he outlawed Christianity entirely and ordered all copies of the Scriptures to be surrendered for public bonfires in the city squares. He prohibited all meetings of Christians and commanded that all church buildings be destroyed.” (Horton)
- (3) “The goal was to eradicate Christianity from the face of the earth. Homes of Christians were set on fire, and many Christians were burned alive. In Phrygia, an entire city of Christians was burned along with all of its residents, but not a single man, woman, or child renounced Christ or surrendered to the enemy. Other believers were weighted with stones and cast into the waters.” (Horton)
- (4) “So many Christians were thrown to the wild beasts in the arenas that the animals became sick of human flesh and would no longer attack. Soldiers, too, became weary of killing helpless, unarmed people and threw their swords away.” (Horton)
- (5) “Diocletian's own wife and daughter accepted Christ.” (Willmington)

G. Their Promise v. 10- *“be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”* James 1:12

1. “Ease and prosperity are nowhere promised the Christian as a reward for his faith. On the contrary, he is warned to expect persecution in this hostile world.” (Phillips)
2. The Lord informed the saints to be faithful “unto” death and not “until” death. “They were not to recant when called upon to face a Martyr’s death, but remain faithful until death relieved them of their suffering.” (Larkin)
3. Ignatius- Ignatius was a pupil of the apostle John that was thrown to the wild beasts in the Roman Colosseum A.D. 111. His last words were, “I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou has vouchsafed thus to honor me. I am God’s grain, to be ground between the teeth of wild beasts, so that I may become a holy loaf for the Lord.” (Horton)
4. Polycarp- Polycarp also was a student of the apostle John. [Polycarp assumed the office of Bishop at Smyrna.—Walvoord] He was arrested and martyred in A.D. 155 at Smyrna. The Roman governor told him to deny Christ while he threatened to burn him alive. His response was, “Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and He has

done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King who has saved me? You threaten the fire that burns for an hour and then is quenched; but you know not the fire of the judgment to come, and the fire of the eternal punishment. Bring what you will.” (Horton)

5. Justin Martyr- Justin Martyr was a Christian philosopher that was beheaded at Rome in A.D. 167. His last words were, “I am a Christian, having been freed by Christ, and by the grace of Christ, I partake of the same hope.” (Horton)
6. Blandina- Blandina was a Christian slave of Gaul that was tortured from morning until night. Her only response before they cut her throat was, “I am a Christian; among us no evil is done.” (Horton)
7. Perpetua and Felicitas- “Two young women, Perpetua and her faithful slave Felicitas were gored to death by wild beasts at Carthage on March 7, 203. Although Perpetua was nursing an infant son and Felicitas had given birth to a daughter in prison, the women received no mercy from the Roman officials and had to appear before a bloodthirsty mob at the games.” (Horton)
8. Tertullian once said, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” (Phillips)
9. “The world offers the believer death by torture, death in a thousand fiendish ways. Christ crowns him with life, with a crown that will outlast the universe itself.” (Phillips)

III. The Obligation of the Church v. 11- “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches...*”

A. The Prerequisites of Hearing- “*He that hath an ear*”

B. The Purpose of Hearing- “*let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*”

IV. The Overcoming of the Church v. 11- “*...He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*”

A. Their Personal Decision- “*He that overcometh*”

B. Their Powerful Deliverance- “*shall not be hurt of the second death*”
Revelation 20:6, 14, 21:8

1. “The victorious believer is promised eternal security.” (Phillips)

2. “The promise here has to do, not with the grounds of eternal security, but with the assurance of it. Death is the gateway to life.” (Phillips)

Conclusion: Out of the seven churches mentioned, it is amazing that the church in Smyrna did not receive any accusations against them. They were truly a church that was being crushed like myrrh, yet being triumphant in the end. The only thing that came from them during their persecution was the sweet fragrances of Christianity. Certainly, the motivating factor that kept these saints pressing on was the comforting words spoken unto them by their Saviour “*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer*”. With the

Lord's help, the saints at Smyrna was able to face any tribulation that came their way, faithfully remaining loyal to their Saviour.

“The Church in Pergamos” **Revelation 2:12-17**

Introduction: Similar to the church in Smyrna, Pergamos had their round of persecutions. However, after Constantine ascended the throne in Rome, things began to change. It was during his conquest to conquer the world, around A.D. 312, that he supposedly saw a cross in the sky. The words “In this sign thou shalt conquer” were over the cross suggesting to Constantine that if he would embrace the cross that he would be victorious. When he consented to this supposed vision, Constantine proclaimed that Christianity would be the religion for the Roman Empire. His first attempt to “Christianize” Rome would be to baptize his armies, making them “Christians”. Through his efforts, he tried to combine the state and the church, making them one. (DeHaan) With the emperor as the head of the “church”, things began to become intolerable. Roman Emperors would now dictate not only the powers of government, but also the powers of religion. The “churches” became filled with unregenerate sinners that tried to lead the nation, and church, spiritually. Only complete chaos and heretical doctrines followed. This was where the doctrines of the Nicolaitans and Balaam took root in the church in Pergamos. Several professed Christ, but only few possessed Christ. This is why the Lord had a few things against the saints at Pergamos, because they too began to mix paganism with Christianity. By way of introduction, notice:

1. The Announcement v. 12- “*And to the angel...*”
 - a. A Divine Announcement Revelation 1:11- “*I am Alpha and Omega*”
 - b. A Direct Announcement- “*to the angel*”
2. The Angel v. 12- “*...the angel of...*”
 - a. The Meaning of an Angel
 - (1) “angel” (Strong’s)- “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, a messenger from God”
 - (2) “angel” (Webster’s)- “A minister of the gospel, who is an ambassador of God. Literally, a messenger; one employed to communicate news or information from one person to another at a distance.”
 - b. The Message of an Angel- “*write*” Revelation 1:11- “*write in a book*”
3. The Assembly v. 12- “*...the church in Pergamos write...*”
 - a. The Explanation of Pergamos
 - (1) “The chief city of Mysia, in Asia Minor.” (Online Bible)
 - (2) “This city stood on the banks of the river Caicus, about 20 miles from the sea. It is now called Bergama, and has a population of some twenty thousand, of whom about two thousand profess to be Christians. Parchment was first made here, and was called by the Greeks *pergamene*, from the name of the city.” (Online Bible)
 - (3) “Located on the western part of Asia Minor north of Smyrna and about twenty miles from the Mediterranean Sea, it was a wealthy city with many temples devoted to idol worship and full of statues, altars, and sacred groves.” (Walvoord)

- (4) “The city also had a temple dedicated to Aesculapius, the god of healing, whose insignia was the entwined serpent on the staff. (This is still a medical symbol today.)” (Wiersbe)
- b. The Era of Pergamos- A.D. 300-500

Body: Although Pergamos was being pulled to the ways of the world, our Lord offers them a warning to repent. How many times do we begin to drift the wrong direction and the Lord sends a message at the right time to pull us back on course? Worldliness was wrapping its fingers around the church and was about to choke the life out of them until God gave them a sermon through their pastor. Through this message, Pergamos would have another chance to serve the Lord without suffering the consequences of backsliding. Observe the admonition delivered to the saints at Pergamos.

- I. The Overseer of the Church v. 12- *“These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges”*
 - A. The Possession of the Sword- *“he which hath the sharp sword”*
 - B. The Power of the Sword- *“the sharp sword with two edges”*
 - 1. The Effectiveness of the Sword- *“the sharp sword”*
 - 2. The Edges of the Sword- *“sword with two edges”* Hebrews 4:12
- II. The Occupation of the Church vs. 13-16- *“I know thy works...”*
 - A. The Seat of Satan v. 13- *“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is”*
 - 1. The Disciples’ Seat- *“and where thou dwellest”*
 - 2. The Devil’s Seat- *“even where Satan's seat is”*
 - a. “Called ‘the greatest city in Asia Minor,’ Pergamos had the first temple dedicated to Caesar and was a rabid promoter of the imperial cult.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. “This is probably what is meant by ‘Satan’s seat’.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. “When Attalus III, the Priest-King of the Chaldean Hierarchy, fled before the conquering Persians to Pergamos, and settled there, Satan shifted his capital from Babylon to Pergamos.” (Larkin)
 - d. “At first he [Attalus III] persecuted the followers of Christ...but soon he changed his tactics and began to exalt the Church, and through Constantine united the Church and State, and offered all kinds of inducements for worldly people to come into the Church.” (Larkin)
 - B. The Strength of the Saints v. 13- *“and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith”*
 - 1. They Held His Person- *“and thou holdest fast my name”*
 - 2. They Heralded His Precepts- *“and hast not denied my faith”*
 - C. The Slaying of a Saint v. 13- *“even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth”*
 - 1. The Legacy of Antipas’ Death

- a. A Description of his Authenticity- *“Antipas was my faithful martyr”*
- b. A Description of his Assassination- *“who was slain among you”*
- 2. The Location of Antipas’ Death- *“where Satan dwelleth”*
- D. The Straying of the Saints vs. 14-15- *“But I have a few things against thee...”*
 - 1. The Doctrine of Compromise v. 14- *“the doctrine of Balaam”*
Numbers 22-25
 - a. It Teaches Purposeful Stumbling- *“thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel”*
 - (1) Notice Balaam’s teachings in the Scripture:
 - (a) II Peter 2:15- *“following the way of Balaam”*
 - (b) Jude 1:11- *“the error of Balaam”*
 - (c) Revelation 2:14- *“the doctrine of Balaam”*
 - (2) “Balaam was a true prophet who prostituted his gifts in order to earn money from King Balak, who hired him to curse the people of Israel. God prevented Balaam from actually cursing the nation—in fact, God turned the curses into blessings!—but Balak still got his money’s worth. How? By following Balaam’s advice and making friends with Israel, and then inviting the Jews to worship and feast at the pagan altars.” (Wiersbe)
 - (3) “If you cannot curse these people, then corrupt them.” (Phillips)
 - (4) “They ate meat from idolatrous altars and committed fornication as part of heathen religious rites. Twenty-four thousand people died because of this disobedient act of compromise.” (Wiersbe)
 - (5) “Why did this bit of ancient history apply to the believers at Pergamos? Because a group in that church said, ‘There is nothing wrong with being friendly to Rome. What harm is there in putting a pinch of incense on the altar and affirming your loyalty to Caesar?’ Antipas refused to compromise and was martyred; but others took the ‘easy way’ and cooperated with Rome.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. It Teaches Perverted Sacrificing- *“to eat things sacrificed unto idols”*
 - c. It Teaches Personal Sensuality- *“and to commit fornication”*
 - (1) “Fornication was a tolerated practice in this town.” (Simpson)
 - (2) “Demosthenes stated, ‘We have prostitutes for the sake of pleasure. We have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation. We have wives for the purpose of having

- children legitimately and of having a faithful guardian of our household.” (Simpson)
2. The Doctrine of Conquering v. 15- *“the doctrine of the Nicolaitans”*
 - a. The Design of their Teaching- *“So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans”*
 - (1) The word Nicolaitan means: Niko—to conquer; Laos—the people
 - (2) According to Strong’s, Nicolaitans means, “destruction of people” or “victor of the people”.
 - (3) When leaders become lords, man becomes the head of the church instead of Christ.
 - b. The Detesting of their Teaching- *“which thing I hate”* Matthew 23:8, I Peter 5:3, Matthew 20:28, III John 1:9-10
 - (1) Revelation 2:6- *“deeds of the Nicolaitans”*
 - (2) Revelation 2:15- *“doctrine of the Nicolaitans”* (Deeds lead to a doctrine.)
- E. The Sermon to the Saints v. 16- *“Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”*
1. Concerning their Failure- *“Repent”*
 2. Concerning their Fight- *“or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”*
 - a. The Speed of the Fight- *“or else I will come unto thee quickly”*
 - b. The Superiority of the Fight- *“and will fight against them”*
 - (1) The Lord does not accept toleration of sin. I Corinthians 5:6-7
 - (2) *“Either you deal with the Balaamites or I will.”* (Simpson)
 - c. The Sword of the Fight- *“with the sword of my mouth”* Revelation 1:16, 2:12, 19:15
- III. The Obligation of the Church v. 17- *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”*
- A. The Prerequisites of Hearing- *“He that hath an ear”* Matthew 13:9
 - B. The Purpose of Hearing- *“let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* Matthew 11:15
- IV. The Overcoming of the Church v. 17- *“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”*
- A. The Victor’s Substance- *“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna”*
 1. “God fed the Israelites with manna during their wilderness travels, and a pot of the manna was placed in the ark of the covenant.” (Wiersbe) Exodus 16:32-36, Hebrews 9:4
 2. “Instead of eating ‘things sacrificed unto idols’, the believers in Pergamos needed to feast on God’s holy food, the bread of life found

in Jesus Christ through the Word.” (Wiersbe) Matthew 4:4, John 6:32

3. “To eat of the hidden manna is to express in a symbolic way that the overcomer may feast upon Christ in the hidden place.” (Phillips)

B. The Victor’s Stone- *“and will give him a white stone”*

1. The Color of the Stone- *“and will give him a white stone”*
 - a. “In those days, a white stone was put into a vessel by a judge to vote acquittal for a person on trial.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. “It was also used like a ‘ticket’ to gain admission to a feast.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. The white stone that was given represented happiness. (Walvoord)
 - d. The white stone that was given was a symbol of friendship. (Walvoord)
2. The Caption of the Stone- *“and in the stone a new name written”*
3. The Confidentiality of the Stone- *“which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it”*
 - a. “In the Old Testament the high priest had the names of the twelve tribes of Israel inscribed upon the stones carried upon his breast, symbolic of the fact that whenever he appeared before God he was a mediator representing the entire twelve tribes of Israel.” (Walvoord)
 - b. “Whatever its character, the name symbolizes the personal heritage of the glories that are beyond this world and the assurance of eternal salvation.” (Walvoord)

Conclusion: As we look at the word Pergamos, we see what their problem was. According to Ironside, the two meanings of Pergamos are “marriage” and “elevation”. It depicts the church at Pergamos as being elevated to a place of prestige, having married themselves to worldliness. Uniting with the Roman government, Pergamos mixed their faith with paganism. Doing so brought the judgment of God on the believers. God desired to purify His church by sending His sword against “them”. The compromisers were punished while the overcomers were blessed with manna and a white stone. One of the greatest attributes of God is His forgiveness when saints do wrong. When the sincere saints at Pergamos repented, the Lord forgave them and continued His church.

“The Church in Thyatira”
Revelation 2:18-29

Introduction: Is love a means by which we can excuse sin in our congregation? If a believer has charity, does this suggest that they must overlook the faults of another, not dealing with their error? These unanswered questions were the contributing factors that led our Lord to send a fiery message to the saints in Thyatira. The saints at Ephesus were a complete contrast with the believers at Thyatira. Those in Ephesus would not tolerate heresy, but they had no love, while the assembly at Thyatira had love without dealing with the corruption in their congregation. This is the sum of the message sent to Thyatira, that there must be a balance in the Christian life when relating to love and separation. Our Lord was trying to get them to understand that love without separation was just as wrong as separation without love. Therefore, we see the stern warning sent to the church to repent, or face the consequences. By way of introduction notice:

1. The Announcement v. 18- *“And unto the angel...”*
 - a. A Divine Announcement Revelation 1:11- *“I am Alpha and Omega”*
 - b. A Direct Announcement- *“unto the angel”*
2. The Angel v. 18- *“the angel of”*
 - a. The Meaning of an Angel
 - (1) “angel” (Strong’s)- “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, a messenger from God”
 - (2) “angel” (Webster’s)- “A minister of the gospel, who is an ambassador of God. Literally, a messenger; one employed to communicate news or information from one person to another at a distance.”
 - b. The Message of an Angel- *“write”* Revelation 1:11- *“write in a book”*
3. The Assembly v. 18- *“the church in Thyatira write”*
 - a. The Explanation of Thyatira
 - (1) “A city of Asia Minor, on the borders of Lydia and Mysia. Its modern name is Ak-hissar, i.e., ‘white castle’.” (Online Bible)
 - (2) “The city had been established as a Macedonian colony by Alexander the Great after the destruction of the Persian empire.” (Walvoord)
 - (3) “It was and still is famous for its dyeing. Among the ruins, inscriptions have been found relating to the guild of dyers in that city in ancient times.” (Online Bible)
 - (4) “Thyatira was a military town as well as a commercial center with many trade guilds. Wherever guilds were found, idolatry and immorality—the two great enemies of the early church—were almost always present too.” (Wiersbe)
 - (5) “...there is a possibility that the testimony of Lydia might have played a part in the founding of the church at Thyatira.” (Phillips) Acts 16:14-15
 - b. The Era of Thyatira- A.D. 500-1500

Body: The Bible is clear to teach that women are to be in silence in the church (I Corinthians 14:34- *“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.”*), not usurping authority over the man. (I Timothy 2:11-12- *“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”*) When a woman oversteps her boundaries within an assembly, Satan can use this to lead the congregation astray. This was the scenario at Thyatira. They had allowed a woman, typified as Jezebel, to lead their congregation into false doctrine and lewdness. Through her seduction, saints were leaving the precepts of God’s Word and following false prophecy. Our Lord, in response to their straying, gave them an allotted amount of time to repent, or He would bring great tribulation on them. Because they would not repent as a whole, they faced the period known as the “Dark Ages” (from Constantine to the Reformation), the time of their great tribulation. Let us look at the ignored message sent to them in order to prevent this great time of persecution.

- I. The Overseer of the Church v. 18- *“These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass”*
 - A. A Description of His Family- *“These things saith the Son of God”*
 1. “The city boasted a special temple to Apollo, the “sun god,” which explains why the Lord introduced Himself as “the Son of God” (the only time in Revelation this title is used).” (Wiersbe)
 2. “Why did the Lord Jesus Christ in writing to this church emphasize the fact of His deity? Because Rome everywhere has accustomed people to think of Him as the Son of Mary.” (Ironsides)
 - B. A Description of His Fire- *“who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire”*
Revelation 1:14
 1. “There was more than enough in this church to make the Lord’s eyes blaze with indignation.” (Phillips)
 2. “This speaks of His holiness and righteousness.” (Ironsides)
 - C. A Description of His Feet- *“and his feet are like fine brass”*
 1. “Bronze, in the Scriptures, is always a symbol of judgment.” (Phillips)
 2. “As the Lord looks at Thyatira and sees what a harvest of wickedness will grow from this Satanic seed being sown by the woman Jezebel, He shoes His feet with bronze. Judgment must begin in the house of God.” (Phillips)

- II. The Occupation of the Church vs. 19-25- *“I know thy works...”*
 - A. The Continuation of their Faith v. 19- *“...and the last to be more than the first.”*
 1. Growth of their Love- *“and charity”*
 2. Growth of their Loyalty- *“and service”*
 3. Growth of their Learning- *“and faith”*
 4. Growth of their Load- *“and thy patience”*

5. Growth of their Labor- *“and they works”*
- B. The Compromise of their Faith v. 20- *“...thou sufferest that woman Jezebel... to teach and to seduce my servants...”*
 1. The Liability for their Compromise- *“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee”*
 2. The Leader of their Compromise- *“because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess”*
 - a. “The name is symbolic: Jezebel was the idolatrous queen who enticed Israel to add Baal worship to their religious ceremonies (see 1 Kings 16-19).” (Wiersbe)
 - b. “She taught believers how to compromise with the Roman religion and the practices of the guilds, so that Christians would not lose their jobs or their lives.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. “Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, was not by birth a daughter of Abraham, but a princess of idolatrous Tyre, at a time, too, when its royal family was famed for cruel savagery and intense devotion to Baal and Astarte. Her father, Eth-baal, a priest of the latter deity, murdered the reigning monarch Phales, and succeeded him. Ahab, king of Israel, to strengthen his kingdom, married Jezebel, and she, aided and abetted by Ahab, introduced the licentious worship of Baal into Israel, and killed all the prophets of the Lord she could lay her hands on. And this influence she exercised, not only while her husband was alive, but also during the reign of her two sons, Ahaziah and Jehoram. Moreover, the marriage of her daughter Athaliah to Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, introduced idolatrous worship into Judah, and it was not long before there was a house of Baal built in Jerusalem, and so Jezebel caused all Israel to sin after the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.” (Larkin) I Kings 16:29-33
 - d. “Ahab, the king of Israel, married Jezebel to strengthen his kingdom—Just as Constantine, the Roman Emperor married the Church to strengthen the Roman Empire.” (Simpson)
 - e. “Old Testament Jezebel was a colorful character in more ways than one. She would spend the first part of the day putting on her war paint and the rest of the day on the warpath!” (Phillips)
 - f. “Jezebel’s spiritual heir and successor was in the church at Thyatira. She was the ultimate source of all the trouble.” (Phillips)
 3. The Lessons of their Compromise- *“to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols”*
 - a. Lessons on Sensuality- *“to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication”*

- (1) "...the Scripture teaches that a woman is susceptible to error in spiritual things, and for that reason the woman is refused permission to teach in the church." (Phillips)
- (2) "Idolatry and compromise are, in the Bible, pictured as fornication and unfaithfulness to the marriage vows (Jer. 3:6ff; Hosea 9:1ff)." (Wiersbe)
- (3) "The worship of God was swept aside and idolatry put in its place." (Phillips)
- (4) "The word 'Thyatira' means literally 'a continual sacrifice'. It was during the centuries typified by the Church of Thyatira, called the Dark Ages, that the completeness of the finished work of Christ was denied, and to it were added works, ceremonies, rituals and sacrifices." (DeHann)
- (5) "Jezebel was the wife of the wicked king of Israel, Ahab, and she caused Ahab to commit idolatry and to turn from the pure worship of the true God." (DeHann)
- (6) "It was during these years that the Vandals, the Huns and the Goths overran Europe and brought with them their own idolatrous pagan worship." (DeHann)
- (7) "The Church, in a spirit of compromise, seeking to win them to professing Christianity, adopted part of their pagan idolatrous religion of these heathen, with the result that there emerged from this age a Church that was partly Christian, partly Judaistic and partly pagan." (DeHann)

b. Lessons on Sacrifices- *"and to eat things sacrificed unto idols"*
Exodus 20:4-5

C. The Corruption about their Faith v. 21- *"she repented not"*

1. The Time for Repentance- *"And I gave her space to repent of her fornication"*
2. The Turning from Repentance- *"and she repented not"*

D. The Condemnation about their Faith v. 22- *"...I will cast her into... great tribulation..."*

1. The Expulsion for their Condemnation- *"Behold, I will cast her into a bed"*
 - a. "Jezebel's bed of sin would become a bed of sickness!" (Wiersbe)
 - b. "Three things are revealed about the Lord's ways in judgment in the enunciation of these 'I will's'." (Phillips)
 - (1) v. 22- *"I will cast her into a bed"*
 - (2) v. 23- *"I will kill her children"*
 - (3) v. 23- *"I will give...according to your works"*
 - (4) v. 24- *"I will put...none other burden"*
 - (5) v. 28- *"I will give him the morning star"*

2. The Extent of their Condemnation- *“and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation”*
 - a. “Judgment is not only disciplinary; it is exemplary.” (Phillips)
 - b. I Timothy 5:20- *“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”*
 3. The Exception to their Condemnation- *“except they repent of their deeds”*
 - a. “Prophecies of doom are usually uttered in hopes that they might never have to be fulfilled.” (Phillips)
 - b. “The Lord would much rather pardon than punish.” (Phillips)
- E. The Commendation for their Faith v. 23- *“I will give unto every one of you according to your works”*
1. The Assassination of the Seducers- *“And I will kill her children with death”*
 2. The Awareness of the Saviour- *“and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts”*
 3. The Awards for the Saints- *“and I will give unto every one of you according to your works”*
- F. The Certainty about their Faith v. 24- *“I will put upon you none other burden”*
1. They have a Separate Doctrine- *“But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine”*
 2. They have a Separate Depth- *“and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak”* (Contrast I Corinthians 2:10)
 3. They have a Sure Deliverance- *“I will put upon you none other burden”*
- G. The Contending for the Faith v. 25- *“But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.”*
1. Their Possession- *“But that which ye have already”*
 2. Their Protection- *“hold fast till I come”*
- III. The Overcoming of the Church vs. 26-28- *“And he that overcometh...”*
- A. Their Persistency v. 26- *“and keepeth my works unto the end”*
 - B. Their Power v. 26- *“to him will I give power over the nations”* Revelation 20:4
 - C. Their Presiding v. 27- *“And he shall rule them with a rod of iron”* Psalm 2:8-9
 - D. Their Pulverizing v. 27- *“as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers”*
 1. “Rebellious men will be like clay pots, easily broken to pieces!” (Wiersbe)
 2. “The ironic here is that of the vessel of a potter—a fragile vessel of clay—struck with a rod of iron and broken into fragments. That is, as applied to the nations, there would be no power to oppose His rule; the enemies of his government would be destroyed. Instead of

remaining firm and compacted together, they would be broken like the clay vessel of a potter when struck with a rod of iron.” (Barnes)

- E. Their Potentate v. 27- “*even as I received of my Father*” John 5:22
 - F. Their Promise v. 28- “*And I will give him the morning star.*” Revelation 22:16
 - 1. “Morning Star is proverbial for brightness and beauty.” (Source Unknown)
 - 2. “It is the forerunner or the messenger sent ahead of a new day.” (Source Unknown)
- IV. The Obligation of the Church v. 29- “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*”
- A. The Prerequisites of Hearing- “*He that hath an ear*” Matthew 13:9
 - B. The Purpose of Hearing- “*let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*” Matthew 11:15

Conclusion: What could the one thousand year period, known as the “Dark Ages”, been like if only Thyatira would have repented? How many churches could have been planted and mighty works accomplished if only the congregation turned from their wicked ways? Untold multitudes of Christians were martyred and tortured during this time, but would this have occurred, if Thyatira heeded the voice of the Spirit? Certainly, it is unimaginable what could have been done during this time, but we must remember Thyatira is now history. Those valuable years will never be reclaimed. It is over. However, in our days, the Spirit is still speaking. The Lord, even today, desires to work through His church. How much damage can we avoid if we listen to the Spirit?

“The Church in Sardis”
Revelation 3:1-6

Introduction: As we come to the third chapter of Revelation, we catch a glimpse of the last three churches of the church dispensation. The first, being Sardis, covers the era known as the Reformation. After coming out of the fires of persecution during the Dark Ages, the church fell into a sleeping state. While Luther and Calvin were trying to purify the Catholic organization from within, God’s children fell asleep allowing their ministry to die. Our Lord’s warning to them was to repent or face the judgment of God. Notice how this letter unfolds to the church and the sacred promise given to the remnant that remained.

1. The Announcement v. 1- “*And unto the angel...*”
 - a. A Divine Announcement Revelation 1:11- “*I am Alpha and Omega*”
 - b. A Direct Announcement- “*unto the angel*”
2. The Angel v. 1- “*the angel of*”
 - a. The Meaning of an Angel
 - (1) “angel” (Strong’s)- “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, a messenger from God”
 - (2) “angel” (Webster’s)- “A minister of the gospel, who is an ambassador of God. Literally, a messenger; one employed to communicate news or information from one person to another at a distance.”
 - b. The Message of an Angel- “*write*” Revelation 1:11- “*write in a book*”
3. The Assembly v. 1- “*the church in Sardis write*”
 - a. The Explanation of Sardis
 - (1) “Ancient Sardis, the capital of Lydia, was a most important city. It lay about fifty miles east of Ephesus at the junction of five main roads; so it was a center for trade.” (Wiersbe)
 - (2) “It was also a military center, for it was located on an almost inaccessible plateau. The acropolis of Sardis was about 1,500 feet above the main roads, and it formed an impregnable fortress.” (Wiersbe)
 - (3) “The main religion in the city was the worship of Artemis, one of the “nature cults” that built on the idea of death and rebirth.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. The Era of Sardis- A.D. 1500-1700

Body: What was the reason for writing to the assembly at Sardis? Was it to correct some false doctrine? Could it have been to commend them for a well-done service during times of persecution? Possibly, could it have been to recognize their great accomplishments as a soul-winning church? Sadly, none of these was the motivation for this letter. The main grounds they received an epistle from the Lord was to wake them up to the fact that they were dead, living on past memories. Warren Wiersbe states that, “There was reputation without reality, form without force.” Their problem was that they were riding on past visions without having present victories. They were, as Luke describes, unfit for the

kingdom of God (Luke 9:62- “*And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*”). Was there any hope for the ever-dieing remnant at Sardis? Could they recover from this comatose state? Let us look at this letter and observe what our Lord offers them as a means of revival.

- I. The Overseer of the Church v. 1- “*These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars*”
 - A. A Reminder of His Possession of the Spirits- “*These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God*” Revelation 1:4, Isaiah 11:2
 1. “There is only one Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:4), but the number seven demonstrates fullness and completeness.” (Wiersbe)
 2. “The sevenfold Spirit of God is pictured as seven burning lamps (Rev. 4:5) and as seven all-seeing eyes (Rev. 5:6).” (Wiersbe)
 - B. A Reminder of His Possession of the Stars- “*and the seven stars*” 2:1
 1. “In one might hand, the Lord held the seven spirits of God; in the other, the seven stars.” (Phillips)
 2. “The church is to be weighed against all that is implied by the sevenfold Spirit of God.” (Phillips)
- II. The Occupation of the Church vs. 1-4- “*I know thy works...*”
 - A. The Reality about Sardis v. 1- “*I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead*”
 1. Their Declaration- “*thou hast a name that thou livest*”
 - a. “A ‘rocking chair’ has motion but no movement.” (Simpson)
 - b. “What good is a water fountain if it’s not hooked up to the well?” (Simpson)
 - c. “By making a lot of religious racket we assure our faltering hearts that everything is well...” (Simpson)
 2. Their Deadness- “*and art dead*”
 - a. “Astronomers tell us that the light from the polar star takes thirty-three years to reach the earth. That star could have been plunged into darkness thirty years ago, and its light would still be pouring down to earth. It would be shining in the sky tonight as brightly as if nothing had happened. It could be a dead star, shining solely by the light of a brilliant past. The church at Sardis was like that. It had a name, but it was dead. It was shining solely by the light of a brilliant past.” (Phillips)
 - b. “The message to Sardis is a warning to all ‘great churches’ that are living on past glory.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. “...a church is in danger of death when it begins to worship its own past...” (Barclay)
 - d. “Dr. Vance Havner has frequently reminded us that spiritual ministries often go through four stages: a man, a movement, a machine, and then a monument.” (Wiersbe)
 - e. “Do an autopsy on the church: no movement- fellowship; no senses- see, hear, feel, smell, respond, touch.” (Simpson)

B. The Remains at Sardis v. 2

1. The Slothfulness of the Remains- *“Be watchful”* Romans 13:11, Judges 16:20

- a. “Although the situation of the city was ideal for defense, as it stood high above the valley of Hermus and was surrounded by deep cliffs almost impossible to scale, Sardis had twice before fallen because of overconfidence and failure to watch. In 549 B.C. the Persian King Cyrus had ended the rule of Croesus by scaling the cliffs under the cover of darkness. In 214 B.C. the armies of Antiochus the Great (III) captured the city by the same method.” (Walvoord)
- b. “The first step toward renewal in a dying church is honest awareness that something is wrong.” (Wiersbe)
- c. “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.” (Wiersbe)

2. The Strengthening of the Remains- *“and strengthen the things which remain”*

- a. “At Sardis, even the things that remained were in danger and needed strengthening.” (Phillips)
- b. Matthew 12:20- *“A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.”*
- c. “The bruised reed represents things that have never been of any use; and the smoking flax, the smoking lamp, represents things that have been useful but are no longer so. From the bruised reed He can make a flute from which can flow the very harmony of heaven, and from the smoking flax He can make a lamp to light the world. Yet without the restoration, little of good could be found in this church.” (Phillips)

3. The Situation of the Remains- *“that are ready to die”*

4. The Slackness of the Remains- *“for I have not found thy works perfect before God”*

C. The Remedy for Sardis v. 3

1. They Must Remember- *“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard”*

- a. “The Lord is ever calling our wandering thoughts and affections back to Himself.” (Phillips)
- b. “His last act before He went to Calvary was to institute a feast of remembrance to draw us back to Himself again and again during our pilgrimage on earth.” (Phillips)
- c. II Peter 3:1- *“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance”*

2. They Must Retain- *“and hold fast”*

3. They Must Repent- *“and repent”*
4. They Might Regret- *“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”*
 - a. Their Lack of Attention- *“If therefore thou shalt not watch”*
 - b. Their Lesson of an Arrival- *“I will come on thee as a thief”*
 - c. Their Lack of an Announcement- *“and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee”*

(1) “The Lord warned the Ephesian saints that He would come and remove their lampstand if they did not repent (Rev. 2:5). He warned the church at Pergamos that He would come and make war with the sword of the Spirit (Rev. 2:16).” (Wiersbe)

(2) “If the believers at Sardis did not follow His orders, He would come as a thief, when they least expected Him; and this would mean judgment.” (Wiersbe)

(3) “A thief comes to spoil and to remove everything of value.” (Phillips)

(4) “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.” (Phillips)

D. The Remnant at Sardis v. 4- *“Thou hast a few names...”*

1. The Remnant’s Purity- *“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments”*

a. “Where there is life, there is hope!” (Wiersbe)

b. “What was different about this dedicated remnant? They had not defiled their garments. There is some evidence from antiquity that temple worshipers were not permitted to approach their gods and goddesses wearing dirty garments. The remnant in the church at Sardis had not compromised with the pagan society around them, nor had they grown comfortable and complacent. It was this devoted spiritual remnant that held the future of the church’s ministry.” (Wiersbe)

2. The Remnant’s Promise- *“and they shall walk with me in white”*
Matthew 17:2

3. The Remnant’s Prestige- *“for they are worthy”*

III. The Overcoming of the Church v. 5- *“He that overcometh...”*

- A. The Clothing of the Overcomer- *“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment”*

1. “Sardis was also known for its manufacture of woolen garments, a fact that has bearing on Christ’s message to the church. Sad to say, the city at that time was but a shadow of its former splendor; and the

- church, unfortunately, had become like the city—it was alive in name only.” (Wiersbe)
2. “The promise in Revelation 3:5 (“clothed in white raiment”) would have been especially meaningful to people who lived in a city where woolen garments were manufactured.” (Wiersbe)
- B. The Continuation of the Overcomer- *“and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life”*
1. “And the statement about the names being blotted out would also be significant to people in the Roman Empire, where citizenship was vitally important (see Acts 22:24-30).” (Wiersbe)
 2. “Is there a warning here that a true believer might lose his salvation? I don’t think so. It would appear that God’s ‘Book of Life’ contains the names of all the living, the wicked as well as the righteous (Ps. 69:28).” (Wiersbe)
- C. The Confessing about the Overcomer- *“but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels”*
1. Before the Almighty- *“but I will confess his name before my Father”* Matthew 10:32
 2. Before the Angels- *“and before his angels”* Luke 12:8
- IV. The Obligation of the Church v. 6- *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”*
- A. The Prerequisites of Hearing- *“He that hath an ear”* Matthew 13:9
 - B. The Purpose of Hearing- *“let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* Matthew 11:15

Conclusion: Many times ministries “survive” off past blessings without realizing that they are dead. They become cold, complacent, and comfortable without even knowing their own wretched condition. However, no matter how lax any congregation becomes, there is always hope. If Sardis would remember, repent, and revive, God would give them a refreshing that would salvage their ministry. We ought to be thankful that we serve a God of a second chance, even in times of our slothfulness!

“The Church in Philadelphia” **Revelation 3:7-13**

Introduction: As we come to the sixth church in the church age, we understand their nature by their name. Philadelphia, according to Strong’s, means “brotherly love”. They were a church that allowed the love of God the Father (I John 4:19- “*We love him, because he first loved us*”), God the Son (John 13:34- “*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another*”), and God the Spirit (Romans 5:5- “*And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*”) to radiate through their lives. As a result, God set before them an open door that no man could shut. The Lord helped them reach sinners by the multitudes because they displayed the love of God and utilized this important resource to reach the world. Let us look at this church and learn the vital lessons for reaching the field for our Father.

4. The Announcement v. 7- “*And to the angel...*”
 - a. A Divine Announcement Revelation 1:11- “*I am Alpha and Omega*”
 - b. A Direct Announcement- “*to the angel*”
5. The Angel v. 7- “*the angel of*”
 - a. The Meaning of an Angel
 - (1) “angel” (Strong’s)- “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, a messenger from God”
 - (2) “angel” (Webster’s)- “A minister of the gospel, who is an ambassador of God. Literally, a messenger; one employed to communicate news or information from one person to another at a distance.”
 - b. The Message of an Angel- “*write*” Revelation 1:11- “*write in a book*”
6. The Assembly v. 7- “*the church in Philadelphia write*”
 - a. The Explanation of Philadelphia
 - (1) “The city of Philadelphia itself, known in modern times as Alasehir, is located in Lydia some twenty-eight miles southeast of Sardis and was named after a king of Pergamos, Attalus Philadelphus, who built the city.” (Walvoord)
 - (2) “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’.” (Wiersbe)
 - (3) “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)
 - b. The Era of Philadelphia- A.D. 1700-1900

Body: The Philadelphia church age is known as one of the greatest movements of evangelism and missions ever in history. It was during this era that George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards saw the first great awakening. Great preachers like Shubal Stearns, Jabez Swan, Samuel Harris, and others saw God do a work that no man could stop. The

Lord utilized their love to thrust His church further west into America, and beyond. Notice some of the great attributes of such a great church age as Philadelphia.

- I. The Overseer of the Church v. 7- *“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”*
 - A. His Attribute- *“he that is holy”*
 1. II Corinthians 5:21- *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin...”*
 2. I Peter 2:22- *“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth”*
 3. I John 3:5- *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin”*
 4. Hebrews 4:15- *“...but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”*
 5. Hebrews 7:26- *“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens”*
 - B. His Authenticity- *“he that is true”* John 15:1
 1. “True means that He is the original, not a copy; authentic and not manufactured.” (Simpson)
 2. “There is a difference between ‘holy’ and ‘true’. Holy means He is right in His character. True means He is right in His conduct.” (Simpson)
 - C. His Authority- *“he that hath the key of David”* Matthew 16:18-19
 1. The Key of Resurrection Revelation 1:18
 2. The Key of Royalty Revelation 3:7
 - a. “Here the allusion seems to be to Isaiah 22:22 where, speaking of Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, it is recorded that ‘And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open’.” (Walvoord)
 - b. “Eliakim had the key to all the treasures of the king, and when he opened the door it was opened, and when he closed the door it was closed. Christ, the antitype of Eliakim, has the key to truth and holiness as well as to opportunity, service, and testimony.” (Walvoord)
 - D. His Ability- *“he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth”*
- II. The Occupation of the Church vs. 8-11- *“I know thy works...”*
 - A. Their Door v. 8- *“behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it”*
 1. The Setting of the Door- *“behold, I have set before thee an open door”*
 - a. “In the New Testament, an ‘open door’ speaks of opportunity for ministry.” (Wiersbe)

- b. “Christ is the Lord of the harvest and the Head of the church, and it is He who determines where and when His people shall serve.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. Acts 14:27, I Corinthians 16:9, II Corinthians 2:12, Colossians 4:3
 - 2. The Shutting of the Door- *“and no man can shut it”*
- B. Their Diligence v. 8- *“for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name”*
 - 1. Concerning their Capacity of Strength- *“for thou hast a little strength”* Revelation 3:2
 - 2. Concerning their Consecration in the Scriptures- *“and hast kept my word”*
 - 3. Concerning their Conversation about their Saviour- *“and hast not denied my name”*
- C. Their Deceivers v. 9- *“them of the synagogue of Satan”*
 - 1. They have a False Witness v. 9- *“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie”* Romans 2:28-29
 - a. “Four of the seven churches—Satan was found in them.” (Simpson)
 - b. “There’s going to be impostors, liars in every church who will ridicule, lie, make fun, seek to do you harm.” (Simpson)
 - c. “How were these Jews opposing the church at Philadelphia? For one thing, by excluding Jewish believers from the synagogue. Another weapon was probably false accusation, for this is the way the unbelieving Jews often attacked Paul.” (Wiersbe)
 - 2. They will have a Forced Worship v. 9- *“behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee”* Genesis 42:6, Isaiah 60:14, Philippians 2:9-11
- D. Their Dedication v. 10- *“Because thou hast kept....”*
 - 1. The Endurance of their Testimony- *“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience”*
 - 2. The Escape from Temptation- *“I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation”*
 - 3. The Extent of the Temptation- *“which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”*
- E. Their Duty v. 11- *“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”*
 - 1. Need to Look- *“Behold, I come quickly”*
 - 2. Not to Lose- *“hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”*
 - a. The Crown of the Prevailer I Corinthians 9:25-27
 - b. The Crown of the Prudent I Thessalonians 2:19-20
 - c. The Crown of the Prepared II Timothy 4:8
 - d. The Crown of the Pastor I Peter 5:2-4

e. The Crown of the Persecuted Revelation 2:10, James 1:2-3

III. The Overcoming of the Church v. 12- *“Him that overcometh...”*

A. The Position of the Overcomer- *“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God”* Galatians 2:9

1. “It’s not my job to make myself a Christian, that’s God’s job.” (Simpson)
2. “A pillar supports, rather than being supported. There are two classes in every church, those who lift and those who lean.” (Simpson)
3. “The symbolism in this verse would be especially meaningful to people who lived in constant danger of earthquakes: the stability of the pillar, no need to go out or to flee, a heavenly city that nothing could destroy.” (Wiersbe)
4. “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. His pillars are faithful people who bear His name for His glory.” (Wiersbe)

B. The Presence of the Overcomer- *“and he shall go no more out”*

C. The Penning of the Overcomer- *“and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name”*

1. The Name of the Creator- *“and I will write upon him the name of my God”*
2. The Name of the City- *“and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God”*
3. The Name of the Christ- *“and I will write upon him my new name”*

IV. The Obligation of the Church v. 13- *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”*

A. The Prerequisites of Hearing- *“He that hath an ear”* Matthew 13:9

B. The Purpose of Hearing- *“let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* Matthew 11:15

Conclusion: It is a blessing to know that the church revived from the Sardis state to the Philadelphian era. Many souls were saved and churches planted because a righteous remnant heeded the warning of the Lord and strengthened the things that remained. Therefore, the Philadelphians had a little strength to accomplish great works for God. They went to their power, and then the Lord thrust them beyond their power. Certainly, it is imperative for us to maintain this type of assembly if we are to continue the great work of God.

“The Church of the Laodiceans”
Revelation 3:14-22

Introduction: What will the church be like at the end of the church dispensation? Will they be a lighthouse for the gospel before the second coming of the Lord? Are they a congregation winning thousands of souls to the Lord daily? Unfortunately, as we read about the last church, we see that they are an indifferent, lukewarm, and spiritually malnourished assembly. Apathy and worldliness has crept into their hearts as the fire of God has dwindled down to just a flicker every now and then. Their fervency has been traded for finances and their burden for souls for blindness of their spirit. The Laodiceans have “dropped the ball” when it comes to the Lord’s work and they are a horrible testimony for the cause of Christ. Let us look at their condition and try to avoid this terrible state in our lives.

7. The Announcement v. 14- *“And unto the angel...”*
 - a. A Divine Announcement Revelation 1:11- *“I am Alpha and Omega”*
 - b. A Direct Announcement- *“unto the angel”*
8. The Angel v. 14- *“the angel of”*
 - a. The Meaning of an Angel
 - (1) “angel” (Strong’s)- “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, a messenger from God”
 - (2) “angel” (Webster’s)- “A minister of the gospel, who is an ambassador of God. Literally, a messenger; one employed to communicate news or information from one person to another at a distance.”
 - b. The Message of an Angel- *“write” Revelation 1:11*- *“write in a book”*
9. The Assembly v. 14- *“the church of the Laodiceans write”*
 - a. The Explanation of the Laodiceans
 - (1) “This city founded by Antiochus II in the middle of the third century before Christ and named after his wife Laodice was situated about forty mile southeast of Philadelphia on the road to Colossae. Under Roman rule Laodicea had become wealthy and had a profitable business arising from the production of wool cloth.” (Walvoord)
 - (2) “Laodicea is a compound word and means ‘the rights of the people’.” (Ironsides)
 - (3) “As with some of the previous churches, the Lord adapted His words to something significant about the city in which the assembly was located. In this case, Laodicea was known for its wealth and its manufacture of a special eye salve, as well as of a glossy black wool cloth.” (Wiersbe)
 - (4) “It also was located near Hieropolis, where there were famous hot springs, and Colossae, known for its pure, cold water.” (Wiersbe)
 - (5) “Both the cold water from Colossae and the hot water from Hieropolis would be lukewarm by the time it was piped to Laodicea.” (Wiersbe)

b. The Era of the Laodiceans- A.D. 1900 until the Rapture

Body: While the Lord stands outside the church knocking at the door to come in, the Laodiceans are continuing in their carnal practices. It is hard to recognize the knocking on the door because they are consumed with their wealth, wardrobe, and worldliness. Not even realizing their own condition, the Laodiceans are continuing their religious motions without having the fire of God in their lives. Observe the state that the Laodiceans is in as the Lord tries to woo them back into His bosom.

V. The Overseer of the Church v. 14- *“These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God”*

A. The Trustworthiness of the Overseer- *“These things saith the Amen”* II Corinthians 1:20

1. “The Lord presented Himself as ‘the Amen,’ which is an Old Testament title for God (where the word *truth* is the Hebrew word *amen*).” (Wiersbe)
2. “The Lord was about to tell this church the truth about its spiritual condition; unfortunately, they would not believe His diagnosis.” (Wiersbe)

B. The Truthfulness of the Overseer- *“the faithful and true witness”* Isaiah 65:16, I John 1:9, John 18:37-38, John 14:6

1. “Christ is called the faithful and true Witness in contrast to the church in Laodicea which was neither faithful nor true.” (Walvoord)
2. “He is the faithful witness, which means He will not dilute the truth.” (Phillips)
3. “He is the true witness, which means He will not distort the truth.” (Phillips)

C. The Timeline of the Overseer- *“the beginning of the creation of God”* John 1:3

1. “The beginning of the creation of God does not suggest that Jesus was created, and therefore not eternal God.” (Wiersbe)
2. “The word translated *beginning* means ‘source, origin’.” (Wiersbe)

VI. The Occupation of the Church vs. 15-20- *“I know thy works...”*

A. The Condition of their Works vs. 15- *“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.”*

1. The Degree of their Labor- *“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot”*
 - a. The Burning Heart Luke 24:32
 - b. The Cold Heart Matthew 24:12
 - c. The Lukewarm Heart Revelation 3:16

2. The Desire of their Lord- *“I would thou wert cold or hot”*

B. The Consequences of their Works v. 16- *“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”*

1. The Slothfulness It Is- *“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot”*

- a. “The second law of thermodynamics requires that a ‘closed system’ eventually moderates so that no more energy is being produced. Unless something is added from the outside, the system decays and dies. Without added fuel, the hot water in the boiler becomes cool; without electricity, the refrigerant in the freezer becomes warm.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. “The church cannot be a closed system. The Laodicean church was independent, self-satisfied, and secure. But all the while, their spiritual power had been decaying; their material wealth and glowing statistics were but shrouds hiding a rotting corpse.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. “A little girl came home from Sunday school, and her mother asked her to recite the text she had learned. It came out like this, ‘Many are cold and a few are frozen!’” (Phillips)
2. The Sickness It Caused- *“I will spue thee out of my mouth”*
- a. “It is apparent that there is something about the intermediate state of being lukewarm that is utterly obnoxious to God.” (Walvoord)
 - b. “The Lord warns Laodicea that this state of affairs can have only one conclusion. He will spew this church out of His mouth.” (Phillips)
 - c. “It would be hard to find a stronger or more expressive term of revulsion anywhere in the New Testament.” (Phillips)
- C. The Carnality of their Works v. 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”*
1. Their Belief- *“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing”*
 - a. “Laodicea was a wealthy city and a banking center. Perhaps some of the spirit of the marketplace crept into the church so that their values became twisted.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. “The board at the Laodicean church could proudly show you the latest annual report with its impressive statistics; yet Jesus said He was about to vomit them out of His mouth!” (Wiersbe)
 2. They were Broken- *“and knowest not that thou art wretched”*
 3. They were Blue- *“and miserable”*
 4. They were Broke- *“and poor”* (Compare to Revelation 2:9)
 5. They were Blind- *“and blind”*
 - a. They could not See Self Revelation 3:17
 - (1) “The Laodiceans were ‘blind.’ They could not see reality. They were living in a fool’s paradise, proud of a church that was about to be rejected.” (Wiersbe)
 - (2) “The Apostle Peter teaches that when a believer is not growing in the Lord, his spiritual vision is affected.” (Wiersbe) II Peter 1:5-9
 - b. They could not See the Saviour Revelation 3:20

- a. “These people could not see themselves as they really were. Nor could they see their Lord as He stood outside the door of the church. Nor could they see the open doors of opportunity.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. “They were so wrapped up in building their own kingdom that they had become lukewarm in their concern for a lost world.” (Wiersbe)
6. They were Bare- *“and naked”*
- D. The Counsel for their Works v. 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.”*
1. Concerning their Riches- *“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich”* I Peter 1:7
 2. Concerning their Raiment- *“and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear”* Revelation 19:8
 - a. “Like the emperor in Hans Christian Andersen’s story, these Christians thought they were clothed in splendor when they were really naked! To be naked meant to be defeated and humiliated.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. “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.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. “There is no divine commendation given to this church. Of course, the Laodiceans were busy commending themselves! They thought they were glorifying God, when in reality they were disgracing His name just as though they had been walking around naked.” (Wiersbe)
 3. Concerning their Remedy- *“and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see”*
 - a. “The city of Laodicea was noted for its eye salve, but the kind of medication the saints needed was not available in the apothecary shop.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. “The eye is one of the body’s most sensitive areas, and only the Great Physician can ‘operate’ on it and make it what it ought to be.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. “As He did with the man whose account is told in John 9, He might even irritate before He illuminates!” (Wiersbe)
- E. The Chastisement because of their Works v. 19- *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”*
1. Concerning the Rebuke- *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten”* Proverbs 3:11-12, Hebrews 12:5-6, I Corinthians 11:31-32
 2. Concerning the Repentance- *“be zealous therefore, and repent”*

- F. The Communion during their Works v. 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.”*
1. The Standing- *“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock”*
 - a. “What a tremendous view it gives us of the Lord Jesus, the patient, pleading, promising Saviour of men.” (Phillips)
 - b. “There stands the Lord of glory, the altogether lovely One, the chiefest among ten thousand, the one whom angels worship. There He stands, the marks of the nails in His hands, a look of love upon his face.” (Phillips)
 - c. “And this church shrugs its shoulders and offers Him a lukewarm interest at best.” (Phillips)
 2. The Summons- *“if any man hear my voice, and open the door”*
 - a. “But how is Christ to get back into His church?” (Larkin)
 - b. “Does it require the unanimous vote or invitation of the membership?” (Larkin)
 3. The Supper- *“I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me”*
 - a. “Note that when we invite Him in, the supper room becomes a throne room!” (Wiersbe)
 - b. “It is through communion with Christ that we find victory and become overcomers indeed.” (Wiersbe)
- VII. The Overcoming of the Church v. 21- *“To him that overcometh...”*
- A. The Position for the Saint- *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne”* Revelation 2:26, 5:10, 20:4, Matthew 19:27-28, Luke 22:29-30, I Corinthians 6:2
 - B. The Power of the Saviour- *“even as I also overcame”* Revelation 1:18
 - C. The Place of the Saviour- *“and am set down with my Father in his throne”* Romans 8:34, Ephesians 1:20, Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 1:3
- VIII. The Obligation of the Church v. 22- *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”*
- A. The Prerequisites of Hearing- *“He that hath an ear”* Matthew 13:9
 - B. The Purpose of Hearing- *“let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* Matthew 11:15

Conclusion: Is there hope for this failing and faltering church? Will they ever recover from their wretched condition? Certainly, the only prospect that this assembly has is to heed the knocking upon the door. They must let Jesus back into His church that they may sup together again. If they do not repent, then their loving Master will chastise them. They must awake out of their slumbering state and return to God if they plan to have future spiritual victories in their lives.