



**THE
BOOK**

The Seven Churches

REVELATION

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History Of The

SEVEN CHURCHES

BY DR. STEPHEN PHINNEY

THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS—AD 96

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: “I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.”” **Revelation 2:1-7**

The Church

Church, in the Greek (ekklēsia), means *to call out*. The modern term is to “*bring the cream to the top*.” The concept here is to call a group of unified believers to go public, as a body of *free citizens*. The word *church* is always associated with Israel. The Old Testament, or Hebrew, word means “*a fire signal*,” signifying a group that displays the *light for the ages*.

The five points of the pattern in the letter to the church of Ephesus:	
1	Portrait of Jesus, according to the spiritual state of the church «These things said He that holds the seven stars in His right hand.» (Rev. 2:1)
2	Praise, acknowledgement of the positive points «I know your works, and your labor, and your patience.» (Revelation 2:2)
3	Condemnation, identification of the negative points «You have left your first love.» (Revelation 2:4)
4	Correction, counsels to restore the situation «Remember therefore from where you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works.» (Revelation 2:5)
5	Promise, encouragement to persevere «To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life.» (Revelation 2:7)

This passage contains the message to the church of *Ephesus*, at the end of the *Apostolic Age* -- the church that left its first love of their Groom, Christ Jesus. The *message to the Seven churches* is the second phase of John's vision. The third phase is the *twenty-four elders*. The next phase is the *glorified Church with Jesus*, after the Bride has been caught up (raptured) to meet Jesus in the air.

Unfolding in the following chapters are the events of the Great Tribulation.

The seven churches depict the Church Age from the day of Pentecost to the day of the Rapture. Once the Rapture occurs, we find something significant happen for the Bride.

History of Ephesus

Neolithic Age

The area surrounding Ephesus was already inhabited during the Neolithic Age (about 5000 *BC*, or the time of Cain), as was revealed by the excavations at the nearby *hoyuk* (an ancient mound, or tell, consisting of ancient civilizations built on top of one another).

Bronze Age

Excavations in recent years have exposed settlements from the early Bronze Age at the Ayasuluk Hill. In 1954, a burial ground from the Mycenaean era (1500-1400 *BC*), was located near the ruins of St. John's basilica. This was the period of the Mycenaean Expansion during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries *BC*. Scholars believe that Ephesus was founded on the Hittite (descendants of Ham, the cursed son of Noah) settlement of the fourteenth century *BC*.

Dark Ages

The city of Ephesus itself was founded by a prince of Athens, son of King Kadros, named Androklos. He had to leave his country after the death of his father. According to history, he founded Ephesus on the place where the *oracle* (advice of a demon spirit) of Delphi became reality. He was a successful warrior. As king, he was able to join the twelve cities of lonia together into the *lonian League* (female leadership). The Greek goddess, *Artemis*, and the great Anatolian goddess, *Kybele*, led the way.

Archaic Period

About 560 *BC*, Ephesus was conquered by the Lydians under the mighty King Croesus. Although he ruled harshly, he treated the inhabitants with respect, and even became the main contributor to the reconstruction of the Temple of *Artemis* (temple of women). Later, in the same century, the Lydians invaded Persia under King Croesus. After the Persians defeated King Croesus, the Persians integrated the Greek cities of Asia Minor (known during the time of Revelation).

Classical Period

Ephesus continued to prosper. But when taxes continued to be raised, the Ionians together with Athens and Sparta, were able to overthrow the Persians from the shores of Asia Minor, or Anatolia. In 478 *BC*, the Ionian cities contributed financial support by offering the treasure of Apollo to the goddess *Athena*, the female protector of Athens. In those times, Ephesus was surprisingly modern in its society. The Ephesians permitted strangers to assimilate into their culture. Education was very important, as well. Through the cult of Artemis, the city also became a stronghold of women's rights (the first historical claim to women's rights).

Hellenistic Period

When Alexander the Great defeated the Persian forces at the Battle of Granicus in 334 *BC*, the Greek cities of Asia Minor were liberated. After the death of Alexander in 323 *BC*, Ephesus came under the rule of Lysimachus, one of Alexander's generals.

As the Cayster River was obstructing the harbor with silt, the resulting marshes were the cause of malaria and many deaths among the residents. The people of Ephesus were forced to move to a new settlement two kilometers (about 1.2 miles) further ahead. God destroyed the city by backing up sewage. The new settlement was called Arsinoe, after the king's second wife. Again,

God destroyed the new city by way of Lysimachus. The newer city was relocated and the architectural layout remained unchanged for the next 500 years. After the death of Lysimachus, the town took the name of Ephesus again.

Roman Period

Ephesus came under the Roman Republic's rule. The city immediately felt the Roman influence. The Ephesians had expected nothing good of their new Roman leader (Mithridates), so they cast him into prison and murdered him. For a short time, Ephesus became self-governing. A couple years later, Ephesus returned back under Roman rule in 86 *BC*. When Augustus became emperor in 27 *BC*, he made Ephesus the capital city, instead of Pergamum, and it became the seat of the governor. Ephesus grew into a metropolis and a major center of commerce. It was second in importance and size only to Rome, making it the largest city in Roman Asia and of the day. Ephesus was at its peak during the first and second century *AD* (the time of John's writings).

Christian History

Ephesus became an important center for early Christianity from the *AD* 50's. Paul used it as a base and spent more than two years there on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:8, 10; 20:31). He became involved in a dispute with artisans, whose livelihood depended upon selling the statuettes of *Artemis* (female goddess) in the Temple of Artemis (Acts 19:23–41). He wrote the letter of *1 Corinthians* from Ephesus, possibly from the "Paul tower" near the harbor, where he was imprisoned for a short time. Later, according to tradition, Paul wrote to the Christian community at *Ephesus*, while he was imprisoned in Rome (around *AD* 62).

Men were being challenged to be men in the midst of a female dominant society (Acts 19:35). This female goddess (*Artemis*) was in full control of men, women, and children. Paul was being used by God to accomplish a mighty work. He was feared by the political, the religious, and the locals. Power came forth from him in all that he said and did. The Holy Spirit was breaking through the powers of darkness, which bound the city. The leaders of goddess Diana hated Paul with scorn. John, too, was next in line for some local abuse. John made the city of Ephesus his ministry headquarters and lived there thirty years. God assigned him this territory for obvious reasons.

The Apostle John lived in Asia Minor (Anatolia) in the last decades of the first century *AD*. From Ephesus, he had guided the seven churches of that province. After Domitian's death, the Apostle returned to Ephesus during the reign of Trajan. John died at Ephesus at a great old age, in about *AD* 100. During John's time of writing, the Ephesus church was still strong, but losing site of its first love.

As mentioned before, "women's rights" and goddess worship were an important part of the Ephesian culture. In the vicinity of Ephesus, present-day Turkey, the *House of the Virgin Mary* is believed to have been the last home of Mary, mother of Jesus. It is a popular place of pilgrimage that has been visited by three recent popes; a place the Roman Catholic Church believes to be its heritage. In fact, the *Church of Mary*, close to the harbor of Ephesus, was the setting for the *Third Ecumenical Council of the Universal Church* in *AD* 431. This resulted in the condemnation of Nestorius for his belief of Christ being God and man.



*House of Mary
(Last Home of Jesus's Mother)*

As of recent, the Roman State Church (Catholics), have pushed for One World Religion through these *ecumenical meetings*. Pope Francis, who was Pope during the writing of this book, made some interesting comments linked to this concept.

Pope Francis intends to help the *global elite* achieve their goal of uniting all of the religions of the world under a single banner. The Vatican says that he will be instrumental in establishing a single global religion for the glorious “new age” that the *global elite* believe is coming. After he was elected, the cover of Time Magazine declared Pope Francis to be the “New World Pope”, and since his election Pope Francis has made it abundantly clear that he is going to make ecumenical outreach a top priority. He has spoken of his “*determination to continue on the path of ecumenical dialogue*”, and he has already held a number of very high profile ecumenical meetings. Not only has he worked hard to reach out to leaders from various *Christian traditions*, he has also made it a point to try to acknowledge the mutual bonds that he feels with all other religions. For example, in one recent address he made it a point to say that he believes that Muslims worship and pray to the “*one God*” that he also worships – really, the Muslims would kill to disagree with that statement. This “*all roads lead to the same God*” philosophy is a hallmark of the one world religion that the *global elite* have been slowly building toward since 13 AD. The *global elite* know that even with a one world economy and a one world government, humanity will never be truly united until there is a single global religion – for it is a known fact by historians that all forms of government and economy follow religion. Unfortunately, this one world religion that they are seeking to establish is diametrically opposed to indwelt Christianity that we find in the Bible. By throwing out Biblical truth for the sake of “*friendship between men and women of different religious traditions*,” we throw out, betray, the fundamental beliefs of True Christianity. What Pope Francis is doing is aligning himself with an antichrist that is about to sweep the world with a religion that will precede his hostile takeover of the entire world and this is what my writings are all about. Here is what Pope Francis recently had to say about all this:

I then greet and cordially thank you all, dear friends belonging to other religious traditions; first of all the Muslims, who worship the one God, living and merciful, and call upon Him in prayer, and all of you. I really appreciate your presence: in it I see a tangible sign of the will to grow in mutual esteem and cooperation for the common good of humanity.

The Catholic Church is aware of the importance of promoting friendship and respect between men and women of different religious traditions – I wish to repeat this: promoting friendship and respect between men and women of different religious traditions – it also attests the valuable work that the Pontifical Council for interreligious dialogue performs.

Shortly after the Pope gave this speech, in November of 2014, the Vatican announced the launching of their One World Religion. One might ask who the Vatican is closely partnered with in accomplishing this mission – it is none other than the World Council of Churches, who seek to (and have) formed a *worldwide fellowship of churches seeking unity – a common witness and Christian service*.

If there is going to be a one world religion, there will have to be a bond formed between Roman Catholicism and Islam – since Islam is the fastest growing religion in the entire world, yes, even over Catholicism. They are the two largest *religious traditions* on the planet, and so any truly “*global religion*” would definitely require the participation of both of them.

Conspiracy? A converted 33rd Degree Mason once said to me, *conspiracies are the perfect birthing place for reality*. He further explained that the secret society of the Masons has been active and alive for several thousand years because of the *art of conspiracies*. Through all my endless research, I have found his words to be timely and true. If you don't believe something that sounds conspiratorial, do your research and give it some time.

The town and church of Ephesus has always been a significant place for God and a birthing place for believers to transfer their love from God to another god. Things pretty much started here and much of the end-times will be focused upon this area as well.

Verse Two: “*I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false.*” God gives the church of Ephesus a compliment. Even though He gives encouragement, He addresses a major problem with the believers. They did not close their eyes toward evil. Even though they were known for testing false teachers, they acted more on an intellectual level.

Verse Three: “*‘And you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.’*” The compliments continue from the Lord. The Ephesian church has endured much and the Lord never takes persecution of His Bride lightly. They are not a church known for giving up or “jumping ship.” They are an enduring group of believers. They were an example of what endless opposition does for Christ's Church.

Verse Four: “*‘But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.’*” Even though the church was devoted and dedicated to the work and service of Christ, they had a problem. The first fruit of the Holy Spirit is love (Gal. 5:22). During Paul's involvement in this church, they were known for their love. John is commissioned to speak to this church; but now, they have lost their love for each other and the sinners of its day. Since love is at the heart of true Christianity, their lack of love is jeopardizing the Church as a whole. Once the Church, or Christian, leaves its first love, it becomes a set up for *apostasy* (leaving the foundation of the Church).

This was a critical issue with Christ. He gave them an ultimatum; so much so, that it was going to affect their entrance into the Kingdom of God.

Verse Five: “*‘Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.’*” Judgment is put in front of them. The Lord is not quick to forget His first love for us and He expects the same devotion in return.



Source: World Council, Oikoumene.org

As most know, the first commandment is to *love the Lord with your whole heart*. Similarly, the second commandment is to *love your neighbor as yourself*. Love is the pinnacle of all of life. Without it, we have no place in Heaven.

Christ gives a twofold admonishment: *remember and repent*. Remember, the childlike devotion and commitment to His heart was so critical to Christ. He said that we cannot even enter Heaven, unless *we become like little children*. He is asking the church to evaluate the motives of its heart and then repent. The Hebrew word picture here for repent is *burn the tent in which you came from*. True repentance is being required of Ephesus or . . .

Key Note: This message is to the church of Ephesus, not to individual Christians. The meaning of *remove your candlestick out of its place* is literal. The church of Ephesus did not take heed to Christ's words! Their candlestick was removed. Upon John's death, this city was taken over by the *Goths* (a Germanic people), who ushered in Arianism.

The foundation of Arianism is of the "Christian" theologian, Arius (250-336 AD). He lived and taught in Alexandria, Egypt, in the early fourth century. The most controversial of his teachings was the relationship between God the Father and the Person of Jesus. He taught that Jesus was not God, nor was He One with the Father. He preached that Jesus was not Divine in nature, nor was He the literal Son of God. Arius exonerated a local deacon by the name of Nicolas (Nicolaitans, Saint Nick – Santa Clause) and considered his teachings *harmless*. This transition of religious belief changed the face of Christianity in Ephesus forever. The Arian movement was a predecessor of the now ever-present religion of the *Islamic Nation*—the religion of Ishmael, the illegitimate son of Abraham.

The message to Ephesus affects all nations and all Christians. Individual Christians may not be removed, but the Church's ability to be *light unto the world* will be. This is the action behind the *Great Apostasy*, or the falling away of the Church.

Verses Six and Seven: " *Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'*"



Catholic Saint Nicholas

The church of Ephesus hated the teachings and works of deacon Nicolas of Antioch and the Nicolaitans (cultish followers) and so did Jesus (Rev. 2:6). The goal of Deacon Nicolas was to set up rule over the ordinary believers in the church. This probably marked the beginning of the priestly order in the church, which continues to this day in the Roman Catholic Church, as well as others. His impact on the church is profound. He arranged a system that puts a man as the mediator (priest) between man and God. This removes Christ from the role of being the High Priest, as well as, the priesthood of Christians themselves and it certainly deletes the focus of Christ in the believer – one of the first historically noted attacks against indwelt Christianity. This is one of the most significant and detrimental actions established in church history. This system is critical for the Antichrist to rule in the final days. With this system in place, the people will have to go through the Antichrist in order to get to god—Satan.

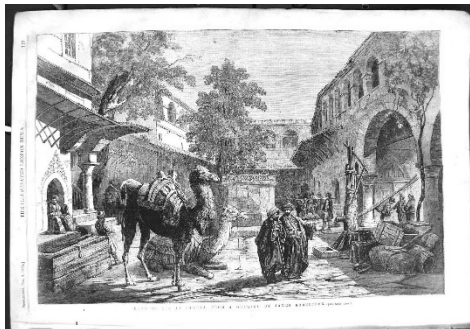
God's design is to establish shepherds to care for the sheep (Body of Christ), not leaders to lord over them and act as mediators between them and the Living God. God makes it clear that the Christians who do not "buy into" this deception will be eating from the Tree of Life.

We have reviewed the past, present, and future history of the church of Ephesus. Consider the content and evaluate your heart, family, community, and nation.

MESSAGE TO SMYRNA—CHURCH #2, 303 AD

Verses 8-11: *"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'"*

Some Local History



Print by: James Robertson

Smyrna (Greek: Σμύρνη) is an ancient city (present-day Izmir, Turkey). Izmir also incorporates the nearby ancient Biblical cities of Ephesus, Pergamon, and Sardis. Smyrna was founded by the *Ionians* (Coastal Greeks) at a central and strategic point on the Aegean coast of Anatolia (Asia Minor). Smyrna rose to prominence before the Classical Era. Its importance has remained practically uninterrupted to this day. Its initial location, at the northeast corner of the tip of the Gulf of Smyrna, is commonly called "Old Smyrna." At the time of Alexander the Great, "New Smyrna" comprised the city after its move to a new location on the slopes of Mount Pagos (*Kadifekale* today). The heart of the new city essentially dates from the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods.

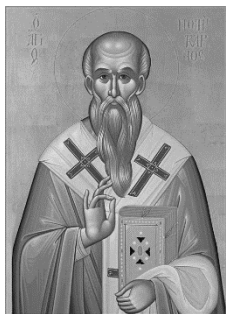
Key Note: This is the second church named in our study. The message to this church represents a period of unbelievable persecution, starting AD 303. Constantine (a known Catholic political) had returned to Nicomedia (Smyrna) from the eastern front by the spring of AD 303, in time to witness the beginnings of Diocletian's "Great Persecution," the most severe persecution of Christians in Roman history. In late AD 302, Diocletian and Galerius sent a messenger to the oracle of Apollo, at Didyma, with an inquiry about Christians. Constantine remembered being at the palace when the messenger returned, when Diocletian accepted his court's mandates for universal persecution. On (AD) 23 February 303, Diocletian ordered the destruction of Nicomedia's (Smyrna) Christian church by condemning and burning the Scriptures, and seizing its treasures. Additional churches and Scriptures were destroyed in the following months. Christians were deprived of official ranks and were imprisoned and/or put to death.

It is unknown whether Constantine played any role in the persecution. Although, it must be noted that Constantine was a loyal to the Roman State Church (Catholics) and the church of Smyrna was not under the formal Roman rule of Catholics. He most likely turned his head! After the massacre, he wrote in his *guilt* writings that he opposed Diocletian's "sanguinary edicts" against

the "worshippers of God." But history shows he did NOTHING to oppose the Christian persecution at the time. History does indicate his passivity regarding the event. It ended his trust with the indwelt Christians globally, although the Catholics remained loyal to him to the end!

Personal Note: To this very day, many Christians consider *Constantine the Great* to be one of the greatest Christian leaders in history. I do not hold to such a belief! I believe Constantine was a devout loyalist to the empirical and political control of the new Roman State Church (Catholicism). I hold him responsible for the greatest persecution known in the history of the early Christian church. He did more damage to the authentic Christians of his day than any other leader in church history. His passivity of Diocletian's abuse initiated 250 years of ruthless persecution. The Church of Smyrna has never recovered as a formal gathering of believers, to this very day.

Smyrna was known for the practice of idolatry; primarily Catholic symbolism and religious artifacts. The worshippers of such idols put pressure on the government to rid the Christians from the community. The Christians were strong, sturdy, and carried a favorable reputation of good works. They survived rejection and could live with meager means. They refused to "buy into" the local prosperity of Nicomedia and were "a force that had to be dealt with." Greeks, Romans, Jews, and politics came against them with everything they had. The results were a prophetic compliment from Christ in AD 96.



Saint Polycarp

Polycarp, John's beloved disciple, was most likely the last person to speak to John before he died. While it is a bit annoying to me, the Catholic Church turned him into a "Pope like figure displaying the secret hand symbol of the Pope," which he had no connection with the teachings of Nicolas (Catholics) – outside of coming against them. In fact, Polycarp was slain in Smyrna in his nineteenth year of serving in this city by the Roman state church, as was the habit of the Roman state church for all those who would refuse to join the teachings of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6). While they failed to burn him at the stake, it was decided to stab him to death. This man's beloved devotion to John and the church is considered to be the tender recordings of loyalty in church history. Due to Polycarp's passion for Truth and his ability to proclaim it, Christian persecution was magnified. The true followers of John simply could not be shut up!

Smyrna means bitterness and myrrh (oil associated with death). Like all the names of the Seven churches, each name prophetically describes the outcome of each church. This church comes in first place in receiving the crown of life. The Smyrna church is alive today! There are suffering saints all over the globe and have been throughout the generations. John's faithful followers cannot be stopped. The more suffering, the more obedient they have become.

The Smyrna church was suffering from the hands of the Roman pagans (state church) and supposed Jews. They were pretenders who, in the day of persecution, would side with the enemy. Why? Because they were of the synagogue of Satan. *Synagogue* means Jewish house of prayer. This Revelation statement of the synagogue of Satan means only one thing; non-messianic Jews or pretenders who serve Satan. It also implies that Satan will be portraying himself as a Jew, an "antichrist," as such. Most likely in the final days, many Jews will receive this Antichrist as the "messiah" for whom they have long waited. This grouping is who Jesus refers to in Rev. 2:9 as "those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." In the end, true Jews will be Messianic Jews who follow Jesus Christ and have His indwelling Life. The rest, I hate to say, will follow Satan to the pit of hell.

The seriousness of God stating that no man can come unto the Father except by Christ seems horrifically rude, but it is not. This is the blunt reality of the Gospel that hurts. Many of the people or races that we love, i.e. the Jews, will be faced with the second death and will be cast into the lake of fire because of their disbelief in *no man comes unto the Father but through Jesus*.

The church of Smyrna's faith cost them their families, friends, community, security of possessions, occupations, and even their lives. What a message for the believers of today! Most "Christians" in the Western Hemisphere sue other Christians for statements of rejection or defamation of character. Most of us have no idea what the church of Smyrna is all about. Take great confidence in this - we will.

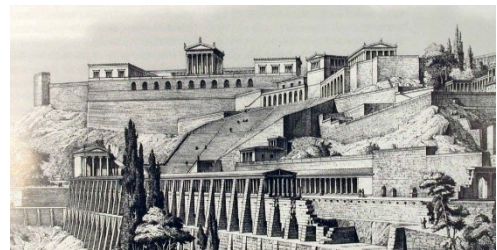
Beloved indwelt Christian, take joy in the power and strength of the Lord. Take courage in the everlasting covenant of God's eternal protection; not of your body, but of your hearts. Jesus wants all believers to know He is in the midst of their pain. He will meet them there, in spite of the persecution.

PERGAMUM—CHURCH #3, AD 313

Verses 12-17: “ *And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: “I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.”* ’

The Throne of Satan

Pergamon or **Pergamum** (Greek: Πέργαμος,) was an ancient Greek city in modern-day Turkey. It was located in the northwestern part of Anatolia (Asia Minor), 26 km (16 miles) from the Aegean Sea, positioned on a promontory on the north side of the Caicus River (modern-day Bakırçay). It became an important kingdom during the Hellenistic period, under the Attalid dynasty, in the period 281–133 BC. Today, the modern city of Bergama is located nearby.



Pergamum was considered the greatest worship center of all ages. The city was not known for commerce, but was the capital of learning and educational expansion, much like America. It was embraced as the land of refinement, science, and particularly medicine. People traveled from all over the world, as they knew it, to receive healing.

Diana was the idol (goddess) choice of Ephesus and the god, Dionysus, was Smyrna's choice. Pergamum was the most ungodly, as they worshipped idols at Satan's throne. Jesus tells us in

Rev. 2:13 that this was *the place of Satan's dwelling*. The Temple Aesculapius was the *bragging rights* of the locals. Within this temple was the wreathed serpent and behind this serpent was Satan (the old serpent). This idol was used in rituals for healing the sick.



Special Note: Our medical symbol of the two serpent snakes comes from this temple. The staff is historically described as Moses' staff and the two snakes represent the Pharaoh's magicians' two snakes, which attempted to devour Moses. The winged symbol behind the snakes and rod represents the wings of the *angel of light*, Satan himself.

Satan not only tried to bring the church of Pergamum down through persecution, but also through education. This cultural and educational center of the world tried to infiltrate the church, to destroy its true character and living testimonies by way of *education equals transformation*. He (Satan) used highly trained and educated religious men to cause the members to question the simplicity of their faith.

The Pergamum church began to “buy into” the Satanic beliefs of Balaam. Balaam (700 BC) originally was a non-Israelite demonic prophet (antichrist) whom Balak (king of Moab) urged to curse the Israelites, who were about to invade Moab. God stopped Balaam and did not grant him permission to curse His people (Numbers 22:21-30). The king of Moab (Balak) was the eternal symbol of the Beast and Balaam was the eternal symbol of the False Prophet. The reason we know this is because they keep popping up in continuous history. Peter spoke of them in the New Testament, as well.

The time stamp on the address of Pergamum is about AD 313. Since the teachings and practices of Balaam and Balak were the ruling doctrines during this time, the spread of those teachings went throughout all of Asia Minor. We learn in this passage that Satan *does* have an earthly throne at all times.

The church of Pergamum held fast to their faith, in spite of Satan having his headquarters right there in their city. In fact, the indwelt Christian church worshipped and housed itself in the Red Basilica (Temple Serapeum). But the church, as a whole, was struggling with embracing the teachings from the Temple Aesculapius. The appeal was the educational aspect of this “university of Satan.” It sounded right, as they had stories of healings. The majority of the people followed the teachings of this temple. God also addresses the fact they were holding to the teachings of the Nicolaitans, who put a priest between God and man. This is what God classifies as *spiritual fornication & formation*. The Church is married to Christ. Any other relations with other gods is immorality to God. Pergamum's greatest downfall was the toleration of evil men and allowing these Satanic graduates to teach in their fellowship.

We have Balaam representatives in our churches today. They are everywhere. They use their Satanic graduate degrees to convince the Body of half-baked truths. The “truths” sound good and seem to work; but they're not blessed by God. Pergamum is still with us!

While it is true that America closely resembles Pergamum, I would not call the United States the modern day Pergamum. One of the most alarming facts for the church today is – the standard and requirements our churches have placed on *pastors* getting a *degree* in theology before being accepted as an *ordained pastor*. Yes it is true that America is one of the only countries that require, by law, pastors to be certified/licensed by their state in order to perform the sacraments. How we got from God picking His pastors to the state approving our pastors is a short walk in the park – the Pergamum Park.

God challenges the Pergamum church to repent quickly, because He is about to come and make war with them with His own mouth. Their rewards were supernatural provisions: a white stone with their name written on it and eternal life.

THYATIRA—CHURCH #4, AD 500—1500

Verses 18-29: " *And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: "I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*



Thyatira means a “worthless feminine thing.” The town was the most important center in north, ancient Lydia. Findings suggest a possible earlier period of preeminence under the Hittites (Sons of Ham). Persian occupation of the region took place around 500 BC. Thyatira was later conquered by Alexander the Great. In later years, Thyatira was captured successively by the Seleucid Empire (ban on Judaism), the Attalid dynasty of Pergamum, and by Mithridates VI of Pontus, until the Roman Era that started in 80 BC.

In AD 214, the Roman Emperor Caracalla promoted the town to the status of a regional and administrative center, with powers of adjudication (known for resolving disputes). The city flourished considerably under the Romans and became a large metropolis. This city has classified that the road from Thyatira to Pergamum is the most beautiful in all the world. As of the second century AD, Christianity spread in western Anatolia by the actions of apostles like John and Paul.

Thyatira is mentioned twice in the New Testament. The first mention is of one of the seven churches in Asia Minor, which references a woman from Thyatira named *Jezebel*, who is said to have fought against Christians (Revelation 2:18-29). The second mention refers to another woman from Thyatira named *Lydia*, a merchant trader. She is said to be Paul’s first convert and also helped him (Acts 16:14). Lydia’s type of work is seen throughout the world today.

Thyatira’s primary trade industry was of women producing cloth, cords, and other items relating to working women. The women had primary rule, due to their ability to produce fortune for the

men. As stated before, Thyatira actually means *worthless feminine thing*. The name, like all of the seven churches, describes the condition of the church at the time Jesus spoke of them in Revelation.

Thyatira is also the inventor of money (seventh century BC). Economics is one of the primary targets for Satan and his Beast. This is where the men came in. The men of Thyatira were lovers of money. They took great pride in being the authors of currency. God gave us direct warnings of what the *love of money* does—it is the root of all evil. *“For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs”* (1 Timothy 6:10).



John begins by giving the normal blessing and encouragement from the Lord. Christ commends them for their love, faith, service, and perseverance. He reminds them their deeds are greater now, than when they first came to Him. But, He does have something against them.

His primary issue with this church is that it is being lead and taught by women, which is primarily the influence of Jezebel. First, let's look at the Old Testament Jezebel. The Old and New are so much alike, we can only surmise that the enemy is again playing a significant role in the seduction of false Christianity.

Old Testament Jezebel: In the Tanakh (the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Old Testament), Jezebel is a queen of ancient Israel. Her story is told in *1 and 2 Kings*. She is introduced as a Phoenician princess, the daughter of King Ithobaal I of Sidon, who marries King Ahab. (The Phoenician city of Tyre was once Satan's kingdom.) She turns Ahab away from the God of the Israelites and of the Jews (being the inhabitants of Judah) and toward the worship of the Phoenician god, Baal. Ahab and Jezebel assist in establishing the temples of Baal in Israel and the pagan religion receives royal support and financial care. Furthermore, the queen uses her control over Ahab to lead the Hebrews into sin and subjects them to tyranny and persecution. After she has the prophets of God slaughtered, the prophet Elijah challenges 450 prophets of Baal to a God-ordained test (*1 Kings 18*) that exposes their god as powerless. Then, Elijah has *them* slaughtered (*1 Kings 18:40*) and incurs Jezebel's furious anger and revenge. After Ahab's death, Jezebel continues to rule through her son, Ahaziah. When Ahaziah is killed in battle, she exercises control through her other son, Jehoram. Jezebel's predominate sin is the manipulative control through men -- a grave offense to a Hebrew God!

As recounted in *2 Kings 9:1-10*, God speaks through the prophet Elisha (Elijah's successor), and has one of his servants anoint Jehu as king, in Jehoram's place; adding, *“thou shall smite the house of Ahab thy master”* (verse 7, KJV). Acting on this divine commission for revolution, Jehu kills King Jehoram, as he attempts to flee in his war chariot. Jehu then confronts Jezebel, in Jezreel, and urges her eunuchs to kill the queen mother by throwing her out of a window (mission accomplished). They comply by tossing her out of the window and leaving her in the street to be eaten by dogs. Only Jezebel's skull, feet, and hands remained. Her bitter end fulfilled Elijah's prophecy in *1 Kings 21:22-26*.

New Testament Jezebel: In Revelation 2:20, a prophecy is uttered against a prophetess, named Jezebel, in the church of Thyatira. She is accused of inducing church members to commit acts of sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

The name *Jezebel* has come down through the centuries, to be used as a general name for all wicked women. In modern usage, the name Jezebel is sometimes used as a synonym for sexually promiscuous or controlling women. This image is epitomized by the phrase "painted Jezebel." The "painted" part refers to a line in the book of 2 Kings, when she applies her makeup, just before she is killed (2 Kings 9:30).

From a Biblical and Christian point of view, a comparison to Jezebel would suggest that a person would be a pagan or an apostate, masquerading as a servant of God. By manipulation and/or seduction, one misleads the saints of God into sins of idolatry and sexual immorality, making them ineffective. From a Christian point of view, it has also been used to reference those who challenge evidence and belief in God.

The great offense here is God's local church being led by a woman; a woman, I might add, who leads His people into sexual promiscuity. The difference between Lydia and Jezebel is that Lydia was converted to true Christianity and became a faithful supporter of Paul, whereas, Jezebel did not convert to Christianity (that we know of) and used her feminine powers to lead the people of the church astray. One led people to Christ and the other led people away from Him.

The message to this church doesn't seem too encouraging. It gives all appearances of hopelessness. Although, there are a few in this church *who do not hold to this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan*, who hold fast to the Truth of Jesus Christ. The distinction here is different than the first three churches. In the first three churches, the *call to hear My voice* is for the church as a whole. Starting with the church of Thyatira, the remaining four churches' call is to the remnant of believers, within these churches.

We will discover more about this in Revelation 17 and 18, but the figure of Jezebel is most likely the beginning state of the Papal system (Roman Catholic Church), which is classified in church history as a *she*. Even during this period, and to date, the Roman Church calls itself the *mother church*. When Rome says "the church," they mean the Roman Papacy system. The church, during the time of Thyatira, was under heavy influence of the Nicolaitans beliefs. The "Nicolaitans" were directly influencing the local churches to set up a mediator priest structure, to stop the people from going to God directly. This system was not only adopted by the Roman church, their leader, deacon Nicolas, got it from the school of Alexandria, which to this day is known for their education based on paganism (Babylonian practices). Rome has always claimed to be THE CHURCH, and any other church not connected or put under their system, is classified as the false church. She presents herself as being without error, i.e. the Pope is infallible. This teaching is in direct opposition to what Christ says. We are commissioned by Christ to come to Him directly and to have a personal relationship with Him. Therefore, the Jezebel in this passage most likely is twofold: female leadership and the influence of the Church of Rome.

All religions on earth can be described by one of two words: fear or love. Christianity is the only belief that is founded and based in love. Since *God is Love* (1 John 4:8), the Christian Church is the only group that can fall into this description! The Papacy has always used fear to control their followers.

Verse 21: " *I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.* ' "

The Jezebel (the Papacy) of the last thirteen hundred years is the Babylon of Revelation. This is clearly why you see the Roman state church adopting and promoting so many pagan holidays,

beliefs and imagery. Study ahead in chapters 17 and 18, if necessary. In these chapters, one will find a clear picture of the progress, growth, power, and ultimately, the destruction of this Jezebel who first revealed herself in the church of Thyatira. God has given the Roman church many opportunities to repent and renounce the ways of Jezebel. She doesn't, because God says she doesn't. Her doom is near and certain. If I would have said that back in Martin Luther's day, I would have been hunted down, bound and burned at the stake. Outside of the Islamic community, Catholics are known for killing more indwelt Christians than any other religion. A truth that secular, Christian and even Vatican history proves.

I know this message is offensive to many, particularly if they come from a Catholic background. This message is true and history proves it. Study the Scriptures and find out the Truth about her—they are undeniable. Prepare yourself; much more will be said about the Roman Catholic Church later in this study. Any church that makes the claim that Christianity comes only through them, purposes themselves to be a harlot. Jesus said that **he who confesses with their mouth that He is the Son of God shall be saved**. No individual church or denomination can make a claim such as this. Keep your eyes on Rome and NO, don't do as the Romans do!

We know from all Scripture that Jesus is the answer—not Mary, not the Pope or priest, not even a pastor. The concept of the pope exists in all denominations: pastors, teachers, and preachers billing themselves as the ultimate authority in whom and what is preached. I have no respect for any leader who portrays himself as a pope.

Revelation 3:1-6

"To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: "I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' ' "

After The Reformation

The last three churches are prophetically unfolding the times and troubles of the Church, post-Reformation. The *Protestant Reformation* was a reform movement in the Holy Roman Empire, which began in 1517, although this movement started much earlier. The Reformation involved cultural, economic, political, and religious ideologies. It began with Martin Luther and ended with the Peace of Westphalia (new order in central Europe), in 1648. The movement initially started as an attempt to bring the Catholic Church back to its Christian roots (if there were any). Many Catholics were troubled by what they saw as false doctrines and malpractices within the Church, particularly involving the teaching and sale of indulgences, killing of Christians and idolizing (canonizing saints) dead people. Another major issue was the practice of buying and



selling church positions, in order to build the political structure of the Roman church. This corruption was seen by many at the time as political and only advancing the position of the Pope.

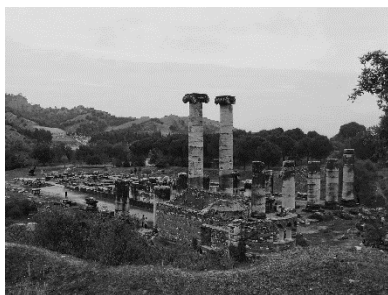
Interesting note: all capital building in the United States, including the US Capitol are all based on the design (inside and out) of the Vatican city main church – St Peters.

On October 31, 1517, in Saxony (modern-day Germany), Martin Luther nailed his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church, which served as a notice board for university related announcements. These were points for debate, which criticized the church and the Pope. The most controversial points centered on the practice of selling indulgences and the church's policy on purgatory (birthed at Pergamum). Luther's spiritual predecessors were men such as John Wycliffe and John Calvin. Church beliefs and practices under attack by protest (Protestant) reformers included: purgatory, believer's judgments, and the worship of Mary (Catholics making her "holy"). Intercession and devotion to dead followers of Christ, Catholic sacraments, mandatory celibacy, the role of a priest mediating for Christ, and of course, the authority of the Pope, were all critical doctrines being opposed.

The most important factor, regarding our study, is that the denominational movement emerged directly from the Reformation, i.e.: the Lutherans, the Reformed/Calvinists/Presbyterians, and the Anabaptists (baptism for converted believers, not infant baptism). There are presently over 300 primary denominations worldwide today, since the great Reformation. The process of reform had decidedly different causes and effects; but, the primary factor we need to know at this point of our lesson, is that all the existing denominations can be placed within the final three churches of our study—Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. We can safely see the Reformation was a significant part of God launching the final churches, stated in chapter three of Revelation.

SARDIS—CHURCH #5, AD 1500 FORWARD

In the church of Sardis, "Protestantism" is the primary force of power; whereas, in the church of Thyatira, the Roman papacy was in full rule. These churches overlap each other to this very day. The Reformation was certainly used by God to bridge the gap between the Roman ruled church and the Free Church. In many respects, the Reformation brought the True Church back to its original position and condition.



The city of Sardis is about 27 miles south of Thyatira. It was the capital of the Kingdom of Lydia. Lydia arose as a Neo-Hittite (people of Ham, son of Noah) kingdom, following the collapse of the Hittite Empire, in the twelfth century BC. Later, Herodotus added that the "Meiones" were renamed Lydians after their king, Lydus, son of Attis. The Hebrew term for Lydians, *Lûdîm* (as found in Jeremiah 46.9), is considered to be derived from Lud, son of Shem (son of Noah). In Biblical times, the Lydian warriors were also famous archers. The Bible mentions *Lud* in three different places. The only instance, generally agreed to refer to the Anatolian Lydia, occurs in Isaiah 66:19: Lud, is listed with Javan (Ionia), as being one of the people who "draws the bow" to those who have not heard of God.

Once Cyrus conquered Sardis, the Lydian empire came to an end. This once proud and central city became no more. History books tell us that by 1850, not one person was found living in Sardis; thus, the new city of Sart was founded.

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

What are these Seven Spirits of God? Throughout the New Testament, we hear of One Spirit—the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the living Spirit of God. We are all baptized into this Spirit, although Revelation repeatedly talks about the Seven Spirits. These Spirits are used to assure us of the completeness, the fullness, and the diversified actions and ministries of the One and only Holy Spirit. Like the Nature of God, He reveals to us the Divine purpose of each of these Spirits. They all have a direct purpose and calling.

The fullness of the Spirit is in Christ. We can be certain that when Christ is standing in the midst of the Seven churches and holding their Seven stars (angels), He is in full power over them and meets the churches' needs by way of them.

John not only talks about the Seven Spirits of God, He also speaks of the Seven angels (stars) of the churches. The stars are the points of lights (light bearers) of the local assemblies. The assignment for these angels is to shine Christ into each assembly and community. They serve like stars in the night.

Each of the Seven churches were assigned a specific ministry, to accomplish the missions given to the Seven angels of the Lord. God rarely, if ever, speaks in general terms. Most, I believe all, of His actions are specific and ordained with a particular mission assigned to each; especially when it comes to Spirits, angels, and leaders.

Sardis carried a reputation of being a church that was alive; although, God points out clearly it is "just a reputation" and they are as dead as a church doornail. Sardis took advantage of *man looking upon the outward appearance* and forgot that *God looks upon the inside of man—the heart*. In modern times, we are quite guilty of this: big churches, nice clothes, published books, radio/television ministries, fancy houses, and believe it or not, ministers being ushered around in limos.

America has more millionaire ministers than all the world's countries combined. We have the largest buildings of worship and the biggest ministerial budgets. But yet, financial reports show we are more in debt as a Christian body than all the churches, ministries, and fellow believers in the world collectively! Most American churches are one offering away from becoming homeless. In fact, your average church would have no idea how to function as a church without their church buildings. The most ignored and rejected Christian groups in America are those who meet in homes. So here is my question; if by some prophetic reason, the local church would lose their buildings, what would the traditional church do? I will tell you exactly what they would do, they would join the state approved world religious place of worship. That list can presently be found in the website of the World Council of Churches, monitored and managed by the Vatican Ecumenical Society. Who knows, maybe you are already attending one of these "churches." Statistics show the American churches are in a perfect place to adopt the Universal Church.

Most theologians regard the Reformation as the most significant blessing to the Christian faith, while declaring the biggest hindrance to the Roman papacy. It needs to be noted what the primary

difference is between the Reformation and the movement of “Protestantism.” The Reformation was God’s Divine work to establish the three final churches stated in the book of Revelation. “Protestantism” is a man-made system, which proved itself to be dead! The initial act of the Reformation was for God to break the True church away from the Roman Empire once and for all.

The church of Sardis may be labeled as asleep; but know this, Satan is not. He is active and working at using the church, which is asleep, to accomplish his will. The Reformation leaders would *rollover in their graves*, if they saw what their sacrifice for the original message had accomplished. Their efforts of reestablishing the original church was not meant for the establishment of 320 denominations. Their passion was to unite the Body of Christ under one banner—the church of Philadelphia, not the Roman State Church. Even though this was accomplished through Christ, their dedication to the cause was not to breed more separation through denominational sects. Instead of uniting through the Scriptures, the majority of the “Christians” composed doctrines, dogmas, and traditions to support their individualism. When the enemy became effective at denominational divisions, the believers’ dedication to the Spiritual power of Christ and their zealous devotion to Him became dead.

“Protestantism” did not promote corruption, or the immorality seen in the Middle Ages but rather it produced a spiritual lethargy within the church; what Christ now calls the *dead church*. The Sardis church was alive in reputation only! Lethargy is required to be rooted in a human soul before spiritual death can take that soul.

Verse Two: “*Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.*”

We are commanded by the Lord to be awake and sober until the final hour. We are not to be slumbering, like many other Christians.

Do you ever wonder how many believers are actually watching, praying, and eagerly awaiting the coming of our Groom? The Second Coming of Jesus is the only Truth that can stir the hearts and minds of True believers in *preparing the way of the Lord*.

According to this passage, there is not much zeal left in the church of Sardis. But, for what is left, Christ is requesting this body to *strengthen the things which remain*. There is fruit of the Spirit in this body of believers and Christ is appealing to those who have such fruit.

Verse Three: “*So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.*”

The Lord is asking this church to *remember what you have received*, hold on to it, and repent of any and all attitudes or actions that produce death in the soul. The commission here is if they do not, He will come in a moment’s notice to gather only the True believers within this church. Those that did not *wake up* will not be part of such a rescue. The truth being revealed here is the Christians of slumber are not actual Christians, but are those who live off the Christianity of other Christians. The number will be great!

Warning: We live in times of “Protestantism” (Sardis) and Romanism being merged and presented as one church. The difference between the two is difficult to define. The Roman church is in such a habit of adopting the beliefs of other faiths; it is becoming more and more difficult to

deny the heresy of the Roman empirical church. Therefore, we can see the mandate set forth by Christ to be separate. Since the first day of the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church has been active at recapturing their lost sheep. The primary tool this church is and has been using to accomplish this objective is the Ecumenical Council, or known by many as, the World Council of Churches.

The **World Council of Churches (WCC)** is an international “Christian” ecumenical organization, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. It has been reported to have over 340 churches and denominations as members. The council claims to manage about 550 million Christian members scattered throughout 120 countries. The first conception of the *Ecumenical Council of the Universal Church* was established by the Roman Catholic Church, around AD 400. In fact, the third meeting was held in the town of *Ephesus*, which is believed to be the holy resting place of the mother of Jesus. Therefore, the Catholics take ownership of the actual *ecumenical movement* and the official council. The Pope is not an official member of the WCC. He “monitors and gives counsel” to the WCC, as needed, and sends observers to all major conferences, as well as to the WCC’s *Central Committee* meetings and *Assemblies*. The Vatican’s *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity* also nominates 12 members to the WCC’s *Faith and Order Commission*, as full members. With the Roman church being an official member, they have great power and influence over the WCC through their *Pontiff Council* appointees.

Presently here are some of the members according to the World Council of Churches website:

- Roman Catholic Church
- [African Christian Church & Schools](#)
- [Church of Christ Light of the Holy Spirit](#)
- [African Church of the Holy Spirit](#)
- [African Israel Nineveh Church](#)
- [Council of African Instituted Churches](#)
- [The African Church](#)
- [Church of Christ - Harris Mission \(Harrist Church\)](#)
- [Church of the Lord \(Aladura\) Worldwide](#)
- [Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu](#)
- OAIC
- [Church in Wales](#)
- [Anglican Church of Tanzania](#)
- [Anglican Church of Southern Africa](#)
- [Church of Melanesia](#)
- [Church of Nigeria \(Anglican Communion\)](#)
- [Church of Ireland](#)
- [Lusitanian Church of Portugal](#)
- [Province of the Anglican Church in Rwanda](#)
- [Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church](#)
- [Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East](#)
- [Scottish Episcopal Church](#)
- [Anglican Church](#)
- [Episcopal Church](#)
- [Church of the Province of Myanmar](#)
- [Anglican Church of Australia](#)
- [Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil](#)
- [Church of Ceylon](#)
- [Church of the Province of Central Africa](#)
- [Church in the Province of the West Indies](#)

- Anglican Church of Canada
- Church of Uganda
- Church of the Province of West Africa
- Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean
- Church of Christ in Congo - Anglican Community of Congo
- Episcopal Church in the Philippines
- Anglican Church of Burundi
- Anglican Church of Korea
- Anglican Church of the Southern Cone of America
- Anglican Church of Kenya
- Church of England
- Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia
- The Episcopal Church
- Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East
- Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy
- Native Baptist Church of Cameroon
- Baptist Union of Great Britain
- Baptist Union of New Zealand
- Baptist Convention of Nicaragua
- Baptist Union of Denmark
- Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda
- Union of Baptist Churches in Cameroon
- Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches
- National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.
- Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola
- Baptist Convention of Haiti
- Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
- National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.
- Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches
- Myanmar Baptist Convention
- Baptist Union of Hungary
- Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha
- Jamaica Baptist Union
- Nigerian Baptist Convention
- Baptist Association of El Salvador
- Church of Christ in Congo - Protestant Baptist Church in Africa / Episc
Baptist Community in Africa
- Church of Christ in Congo - Baptist Community of Congo
- Bengal-Orissa-Bihar Baptist Convention
- American Baptist Churches in the USA
- BWA
- Churches of Christ in Australia
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States
- Church of Christ in Congo - Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada
- Evangelical Church of the Disciples of Christ in Argentina
- Christian Churches New Zealand
- Holiness Churches
- Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Romania
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile
- Church of Sweden
- EKD - Evangelical Church in Central Germany
- EKD - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick

- EKD - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
- Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)
- Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil
- Batak Christian Community Church
- Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession
- Church of Norway
- Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land
- Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad
- Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland
- Lutheran Church in Liberia
- EKD - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover
- Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia
- EKD - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg*
- Protestant Church in Sabah
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
- EKD - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
- EKD - Evangelical Church in Württemberg*
- Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Simalungun Protestant Christian Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
- Indonesian Christian Church (HKI)
- Christian Protestant Angkola Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
- Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM)
- Nias Christian Protestant Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania
- United Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)
- EKD - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria
- Lutheran Church in Hungary
- Protestant Christian Batak Church
- Salvadorean Lutheran Synod
- EKD - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo (ELCCo)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana
- Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia & Mo
- United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Mennonite Church in the Netherlands
- Church of Christ in Congo - Mennonite Community in Congo
- Mennonite Church in Germany
- Methodist Church, Sri Lanka
- Methodist Church of Uruguay

- Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina
- Evangelical Methodist Church in Italy
- Korean Methodist Church
- Evangelical Methodist Church in the Philippines
- Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia
- Methodist Church (America)
- Protestant Methodist Church of Benin
- African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
- Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
- Methodist Church of Togo
- Methodist Church of Mexico
- Methodist Church in Singapore
- Methodist Church Nigeria
- Methodist Church of Samoa
- United Methodist Church of Ivory Coast
- United Methodist Church
- Methodist Church Sierra Leone
- Methodist Church Ghana
- Methodist Church in Indonesia
- Methodist Church, Upper Myanmar
- Methodist Church in India
- Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma
- Methodist Church in Ireland
- Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas
- Methodist Church of Southern Africa
- Methodist Church of Puerto Rico
- Methodist Church in Kenya
- Methodist Church of Chile
- Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (Methodist Church in Tonga)
- Methodist Church of Peru
- African Methodist Episcopal Church
- Methodist Church of New Zealand
- Methodist Church in Brazil
- Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
- Methodist Church in Malaysia
- Moravian Church in Suriname
- Moravian Church in Jamaica
- Moravian Church in Nicaragua
- Moravian Church in South Africa
- Moravian Church in America
- Moravian Church in Tanzania
- Moravian Church in Western Europe
- Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies Province
- Church of Cyprus
- Orthodox Church of Finland
- Orthodox Church in Japan
- Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa
- Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania
- Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia
- Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church
- Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
- Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem
- Church of Greece

- Romanian Orthodox Church
- Ecumenical Patriarchate
- Orthodox Church in America
- Serbian Orthodox Church
- Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
- Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
- Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
- Coptic Orthodox Church
- Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church
- Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia)
- Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)
- Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
- Free Pentecostal Missions Church of Chile
- Evangelical Pentecostal Mission of Angola
- Pentecostal Mission Church
- Association The Church of God
- Pentecostal Church of Chile
- International Evangelical Church
- Christian Biblical Church
- African Protestant Church
- Reformed Church in Zimbabwe
- Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu
- Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa
- Karo Batak Protestant Church
- Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East
- Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola
- Maohi Protestant Church
- Union of Welsh Independents
- Christian Church of Sumba
- Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
- East Java Christian Church
- Waldensian Church
- Presbyterian Church of Liberia
- EKD - Church of Lippe*
- Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago
- Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea
- Presbyterian Church of Ghana
- Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera
- Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana
- Christian Evangelical Church of Sangihe Talaud
- Indonesian Christian Church (GKI)
- Protestant Church in Western Indonesia
- Church of Christ in Congo - Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa
- Church of Christ in Congo - Evangelical Community of Congo
- Reformed Christian Church in Serbia & Montenegro
- Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua
- Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor
- Reformed Church in Hungary
- Christian Church of Central Sulawesi
- United Church of Christ - Congregational in the Marshall Islands
- Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Isles
- Lesotho Evangelical Church

- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa
- Church of Scotland
- Reformed Church in America
- Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba
- Kalimantan Evangelical Church
- Evangelical Church of Cameroon
- Presbyterian Church in Rwanda
- Church of Christ in Congo - Presbyterian Community of Congo
- Presbyterian Church of Colombia
- Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
- Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil
- Greek Evangelical Church
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Iran
- Presbyterian Church in Canada
- Presbyterian Church of Mozambique
- Presbyterian Church of Africa
- Protestant Church in the Moluccas
- Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches
- Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa
- Congregational Christian Church in Samoa
- United Free Church of Scotland
- Protestant Church of Algeria
- Congregational Christian Church of Niue
- Presbyterian Church of Aoteroa New Zealand
- United Presbyterian Church of Brazil
- Spanish Evangelical Church
- Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan
- Association of Evangelical Reformed Churches of Burkina Faso
- Toraja Church
- Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt Synod of the Nile
- Reformed Church in Romania
- Presbyterian Church (USA)
- EKD - Evangelical Reformed Church in Bavaria and North-Western Germany
- Protestant Christian Church in Bali
- Pasundan Christian Church
- Protestant Church in Indonesia
- Mara Evangelical Church
- Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola
- Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia
- United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
- National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon
- Kiribati Protestant Church
- Protestant Church in Timor-Leste
- Evangelical Church of Gabon
- Remonstrant Brotherhood
- Presbyterian Church of Wales
- Cook Islands Christian Church
- Reformed Church in Zambia
- Javanese Christian Churches
- Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria

- Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
- Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
- Hungarian Reformed Church in America
- Protestant Church in South-East Sulawesi
- Presbyterian Church of East Africa
- Czechoslovak Hussite Church
- Presbyterian Church of Cameroon
- Presbyterian Church of Korea
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal
- Evangelical Church of Congo
- Salvation Army
- Seventh-day Adventist Church (all of them)
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions in Austr
- EKD - Evangelical Church in Rhineland*
- Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China
- Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace and Lorraine
- United Church in the Solomon Islands
- United Church of Christ in the Philippines
- Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
- Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
- United Church of Zambia
- EKD - Evangelical Church of Westphalia*
- Korean Christian Church in Japan
- EKD - Evangelical Church in Baden*
- Church of Pakistan
- Church of Bangladesh
- EKD - Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck*
- United Church of Christ
- Church of Christ in Thailand
- Uniting Church in Sweden
- EKD - Evangelical Church Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Oberlausitz*
- United Protestant Church of France
- EKD - Evangelical Church of Anhalt*
- United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
- Evangelical Church in Germany
- United Church of Christ in Japan
- Uniting Church in Australia
- EKD - Evangelical Church of the Palatinate*
- United Protestant Church
- United Church in Papua New Guinea
- Church of North India
- Church of South India
- United Protestant Church of Belgium
- Protestant Church in the Netherlands
- United Church of Canada
- EKD - Evangelical Church in Hesse and Nassau*
- Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren
- United Reformed Church
- EKD - Bremen Evangelical Church*
- Evangelical Church of the River Plate
- United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
- Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM)
- Philippine Independent Church

- Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
- Church of the Brethren
- Polish National Catholic Church
- Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (EYN)
- International Council of Community Churches
- China Christian Council

The WCC began as a “Protestant” council; but as of late, they are showing signs of merging with the Roman Catholic *Ecumenical Council of the Universal Church*. If your church is a member of the *World Council of Churches*, you are of the 500 million members they claim as their own, plus you are of the church of Sardis.

Verses Four through Six: “*But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*”

In these verses, Jesus tells us there are a faithful few who have not stained their lives with the *ecumenical* stains of the world church of the Antichrist. Those who walk with Jesus, in spite of their churches’ politics, are worthy of the love and affection of Christ Himself.

All overcomers will wear white in the end; the garment of praise dipped in the blood of Jesus. Their names will be recorded in the *Book of Life* and will be proven victorious by the possessing life of Jesus. Count your blessings if you are one of them!

A Great Mystery: Remember the story of Judas Iscariot, the “disciple” of Jesus who *was a devil*? How can it be that one of the disciples would be *a devil*? It is simple, my friend. Judas was assigned a mission to complete; even though God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit knew he was an antichrist. God has always used Satan and his forces to accomplish His end-time goals. The Word is filled with such examples: Cain, Ham, Saul, Jezebel, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, and many more.

It is no different in the end-times of Revelation. God uses the people, place, and things of the trio of Satan (Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet), to purify His beloved children.

The difference between Salvation and Reward: There is a distinct difference between being saved from the lake of fire and receiving the full reward. Many, if not most, Christians do not like discussing the reward system of eternity. They should; in fact, they should carefully study 2nd John. Yes, the author is the same as Revelation. It is entirely possible for a person to be a True believer, but yet not receive his full reward.

In Acts 2:47, we learn how we become Bridal members of Jesus Christ. When we are saved, the Lord Jesus Christ adds us to the True Church, registered in the *Lambs Book of Life*. Whoever confesses before Christ that He is the Son of God and there is no other god besides God the Father; He (Christ) will confess him before His Father, as a True Bridal member of the eternal Groom of Heaven. Now that’s what I call a marriage made in Heaven!

It’s not too late to repent of our deadness! We can be made alive in Christ Jesus. Only a faithful few of the entire assembly of Sardis were overcomers. Let us be some of those faithful few who are overcomers of the world, the flesh, and the schemes of the devil!

PHILADELPHIA—CHURCH #6, AD 1750—1948



Verses 7-13: *"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 'Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you. Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"*

The message to the church of Philadelphia is the message to the True Church. This church was 25 miles south of Sardis. It was named after its founder, Attalus II Philadelphus (the king of Pergamum), because of his loyalty to his elder brother, Eumenes II (king of Lydia).

Philadelphia is a young city compared to the other churches we have discussed. It was established around 189 BC, on one of the highways, which led to the interior of Asia Minor. The names given to this city through the centuries were: Decapolis (considered as one of the ten cities of the plain); in the first century AD, Neo-kaisaria, appearing on the coins struck during that period; Flavia, during the reign of Vespasian; and finally, its modern name, Ala-shehir, "the city of God."

Philadelphia quickly became an important and wealthy trade center. As the coastal cities declined, it grew in power and retained its importance, even until late Byzantine times. During the reign of Tiberius, the city was destroyed by an earthquake; yet, it was quickly rebuilt. Twice, in 1306 and 1324, it was besieged by the Seljuk Turks. It retained its independence, until after 1390, when it was captured by the combined forces of the Turks and Byzantines. In 1403, Tamerlane (one of the greatest and ruthless military commanders in Turkish history) captured it; it is said, he built about it a wall of the corpses of his victims.

Ala-shehir is a Christian town to this very day. On the terrace upon where the ancient city stood, the ruins of a castle and the walls may still be seen. Among them is the foundation of the early church.



*Great Pillar:
Church of Philadelphia*

Interesting Note: To this day, the Turkish government barely acknowledges the existence of this community. They place no link or ads to this community whatsoever. In spite of all their refusal to acknowledge the one and only True Christian community of Turkey, the town still prospers in faith. It is one of the great wonders of church history!

The church in Philadelphia was the "cream of the crop" regarding the Seven churches. It was one of only two churches that had no rebukes; Smyrna (the church of poverty and persecution) was the other. Both churches were

accused of being Jewish, because of their beliefs in the doctrine of being grafted into the Jewish body—that of Christ. The word "repent" is not used by Christ for the church of Philadelphia.

The Philadelphian church heeded the advice given to the previous church, Sardis. They strengthened those things that Sardis would not. As Sardis protested against Thyatira, Philadelphia protested, and came out of the dead Protestant and state church, called Sardis. Here was a church that had returned to sound doctrine. There became a renewed focus on evangelism and a revival of Purity, Holiness, and Truth. It had "little power." But, they kept the Word of the Lord, by making use of the power they did have. They refused to deny God's Word or the name of Jesus. It was a persevering church of brotherly love.

The "synagogue of Satan" refers to the Jews who might have been the church of God, but by opposition, had become the "synagogue of Satan." To Smyrna, the promise is: "the synagogue of Satan" should not prevail against her faithful ones. To Philadelphia: she should even win over some of "the synagogue of Satan" to "fall on their faces and confess God is in her of a truth" (1 Cor 14:25).

Many great evangelistic revivals and missionary efforts came forth from this revived church. The city of Philadelphia continued, and by all respects, continues to this day.

Jesus holds the keys to David and He decides who will enter the gates of David, Heaven, or Hell. Remember when Jesus gave Peter those keys, in Acts 2, to open the Kingdom of Heaven, so the Jews on the Day of Pentecost could enter? In Acts 10, we find those keys used again for the Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius. Peter left those doors open and the keys have never been mentioned again in Scripture, until now. This is why it is so offensive to Jesus when the Pope, a priest, a bishop, a preacher, or an evangelist thinks he has the prerogative to decide who enters those gates. Salvation belongs to the Lord. It is He, who decides who enters; and it is He, who will close the door at its chosen time.

The church of Philadelphia was given an open door to serve. They have shown the faithfulness necessary to serve in the service of Christ. God's calling on a faithful believer is ordained; he is given a "pulpit" to spread the news, which God gives him to deliver. In order for each of us to reach the right pulpit for service, we must be lead to do so.

The time-stamp for the church of Philadelphia covers from approximately AD 1750, through the end of World War II, and up to the time of Israel becoming a nation. It does need to be noted the church at Philadelphia and the church of Laodicea will coexist, until the True Church is caught up in the rapture. Keep in mind: coexist does not mean "partnership." It is simply, both will remain on earth until that time. The True believers are extracted from both. What remains will be, well, too unpleasant to write.

The last revival of the church of Philadelphia was led by men like Whitfield, Wesley, Finney, and Moody. What a team! Can you imagine those men on our streets today? They would be shot, imprisoned, or considered radicals, even by their own church members. We have not seen a worldwide revival like that since. God, please make me like Charles Finney!

I don't know about you, but I want to be one of those to whom Jesus sends the members of the synagogue of Satan to come and worship before our feet. What a day that would be! Not that we should want people serving us at our feet, but serving Christ at our feet. Wow! What a privilege given to the church of Philadelphia. Also, keep in mind, the members of the synagogue

of Satan are not Satanists in black robes. These are church members who think or pretend to be saved; when in reality, they are promoting the prince of the air—Satan.

A great price was paid for you and me, to be Bridal members of Christ. He is not about to have an enemy steal His Bride before the Wedding Feast. It just simply is not going to happen. He purchased us with His own blood, according to Acts 20:28. Those who counterfeit the True Church (Bridal Members) will pay dearly for their evil deception!

Verse 10: Two great things are being delivered to us here. First, “because you have kept the Word of My perseverance, I will also keep you from the hour of testing.” It is absolutely critical we keep God’s Word holy and intact. If one word failed His Word, all of Christianity would crumble under our feet. Satan knows that and he pushes to test all Christians to deny God’s Holy Word. Since that will never happen, every Word will be fulfilled by the hand of Christ Himself. God is the Word and He is not up for a rewrite. That completely torches the enemy. Praise God!

Secondly, this church not only kept His Word, but they kept His name. They did not deny the name of our Lord, but kept it lifted high, above all else. They were not “pushed” to their knees; they chose to stay on their knees, for Christ’s sake.

Exactly what does Christ mean by “I will also keep you from the hour of testing?” Here is where the theologians like to “play.” There are some leaders that preach ideas, “doctrines,” and dogmas regarding the Church having to go through the full Tribulation. Some preach that the Church will only have to go through the first 3 1/2 years of the great Tribulation and there are those who preach the Truth. According to this verse, the promise comes to the church of Philadelphia to keep from the hour of Tribulation. This is called the Rapture. For many years, I preached “mid-trib” theology; that was before I studied the Truth. Arrogance in action is how I refer to it now.

You can join me in the assurance that all True Born-again Believers will not enter or go through any, and I mean any, portion of the Tribulation. Not one piece of evidence matches the Truth for those “mid” and “post-toastie” types. I am embarrassed to say I was once one of them. Ignorance is not bliss!

Verse 11: “I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown.” When Christ says He is coming quickly, He means quickly. Our time on earth seems so long and hard; but in the timeline of God, it all happens rather quickly. In God’s view, it is like a “twinkling of an eye,” according to 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. Our crown is our Salvation. This verse states “crown” (singular), not crowns. Crowns (plural) are rewards; but crown (singular) is Salvation. He instructs us not to allow anyone, spirit or human, to steal the joy of our Salvation. The joy of the Lord is our strength and when our joy is taken from us, so is our strength.

Verses 12 and 13: These verses reveal to us some profound, yet simple, Truths. Those of us who overcome will be made pillars in His temple. He will also write His name on that pillar and the name of the holy city of New Jerusalem. The great exchange will occur about the same time, probably the same second. When the True Church is raptured from this dark world, the Lord will be spitting the church of Laodicea from His mouth. We are living in the very hour (God’s clock) of the coming of our Groom for the True Church. Just about every detail of prophecy has already been fulfilled. There are few details remaining to accomplish for the Lord. So many prophecies have been fulfilled, just in the past couple of generations. If you have an ear, listen. The sounds of fulfillment are all around us. Our reward is right around the corner.

I hate to say it, but yes, a believer can lose part or all of his reward, while he is able to keep his Salvation. We are strongly encouraged to hold fast to what we have.

There are five crowns talked about in the New Testament that can be earned, yes earned, by a believer through faithfulness and stewardship.

Some believers will receive a full reward. Others will lose all or part of their reward because their works were not Christ doing the doing through them; they had self-life works. Don't despair over this! For you to actually lose your reward would mean you are committing acts of not living and practicing the True Gospel of Jesus. These rewards are not based upon a life of sinless perfection; they are acts of functioning in support of the synagogue of Satan. Jesus did not put this in place to have His Bride perform for their crown. It is more of a warning of participating in acts, deeds, and doctrines of the Antichrist.

As I write this portion of the book, I am under conviction to challenge a few readers who may not be saved. If you are one of them, you have never asked Jesus into your life as your personal Savior, and you're under conviction by the Holy Spirit to do so, read the following prayer aloud.

PRAYER

Loving heavenly Father, I take by faith the helmet of salvation. I recognize that my salvation is the Person of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I cover my mind with Him. I desire that He put His mind within me. Let my thoughts be His thoughts. I open my mind fully and only to the control of the Lord Jesus Christ. I replace my own selfish and sinful thoughts with His. I reject every projected thought of Satan and his demons and request instead the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant me the wisdom to discern thoughts that are from the world, my old sin nature, and Satan's kingdom.

I believe Jesus is Your Son, He died on the cross for my sins, and Jesus is God. I believe in the Trinity, You as the Father, Jesus as the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. I confess I have been a sinner – totally separated from You. I choose to accept Your forgiveness for my sins, through the power of the blood of Jesus which was shed for me on the cross. I now ask that you send the Holy Spirit to live inside my mortal body. (Pause for a moment)

I praise You, heavenly Father, that I may know the mind of Christ, as I hide Your Word within my heart and mind. Open my heart to love Your Word. Grant to me the ability and capacity to memorize large portions of it. May Your Word be ever over my mind like a helmet of strength, which Satan's projected thoughts cannot penetrate. Cause me to allow the Holy Spirit (the Life of Christ) within me to fulfill the discipline of daily living, to appropriate Your Salvation. These things I lay before You in the precious name of my new Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

If you prayed this pray—praise God! You are now a Bridal member of Jesus Christ. Your Salvation is forever and no man or spirit can take it from you. Congratulations on being a part of the family of God. He will now grow you into being a faithful member of the True Church of Philadelphia. May you have five crowns to place at the feet of Jesus before you die or are raptured. I will be seeing you either here, there, or in the air.

LAODICEA—CHURCH #7, FINAL THINGS

Revelation 3:14-22

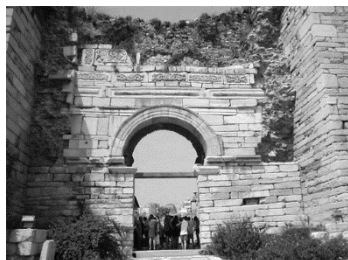
"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' "

The church of Laodicea reveals the details of the final state of apostasy. Laodicea was located about 40 or 50 miles east of the church of Ephesus. The city's name comes from the wife of Antiochus II (Laodice), the Syrian who ruled in the early days of the city in and around 261 BC. The town didn't amount to much until it came under the rule of Achaesus in 220 BC. The town became a city and the city became known for their wealth, and I mean wealth. In fact, by the time of John, it became the most important and flourishing commercial city of Asia Minor.



Laodicea: Print by Wikipedia

Laodicea had a small problem: earthquakes. This area seems to be plagued with natural disasters. Every time this great city began to enjoy their wealth, wham, another disaster. By the time John began to write about this church, they had regained their glory and wealth lost during the great earthquake of AD 62. From all accounts in Revelation, this wealth greatly affected the condition of the church. It appeared strange that their riches and sorrow were consistently in harmony with each other. God said that *the love of money is the root of all evil* and that certainly was the case with Laodicea. Very few rich people serve God and very few rich churches serve God. Money is a compulsive substance, which acts like a master all by itself. Jesus stating that *it was easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into Heaven* clearly communicates the problem with Laodicea. We could actually rephrase the statement to be "It is easier for camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich church to get into Heaven." A fact that is difficult for us to understand is that riches and True Spirituality somehow do not mix. They are like oil and water; as long as you shake it up (earthquakes), you can eat from it.



Laodicea: Print by Wikipedia

This church was known for its luxury, self-satisfaction, pride, and worldly Christians. Today, God has completely leveled the city; several times in fact. Its wealth is no more, the people are scattered (we find them in the church down the street), and their splendor lies in a pile of dust. Yes, there are ruins showing signs of the Romans' extreme lust for going over the top; but God did not allow another city to take its place.

Verses 14-16 tell us there was a local assembly at Laodicea. In Paul's day, some thirty years before John was put on the island of Patmos, the conditions of that assembly bothered Paul tremendously (Colossians 2:1). Paul was troubled over their pride, material idolatry, and selfishness. They clearly did not need God. Why

should they? They were able to buy anything and everything they needed. Paul noted they found glory in what they had and not in what they possessed in Christ Jesus.

The struggle Paul experienced in his day, is no different than today. Since the church of Laodicea is the symbolic period of the day of Pentecost to the Rapture, we are in need of evaluating the same issues this early church faced many years ago.

Christ introduces a new title for Himself: the Amen. This title is a Hebrew word meaning both the True unchangeable nature of Christ and the unchanging message of God's Word. Scholars of Hebrew tell us the actual meaning for the word Amen is literally translated: *Truth* or *Believe*. Therefore, Christ is starting His introduction to the Laodicea church as *The Truth*.

The second title Christ gives Himself is: *The Faithful and True Witness*. Because of the sins and frailties of man, Christ is the One and only True Witness. Finally, He refers to Himself as *The Beginning*, representing the Alpha and the Omega (the beginning and the end).



Now comes the rebuke. He states, "*I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold. I will spit you out of My mouth.*" Not good! If you're like most people, a cold drink is refreshing and a hot drink is comforting; *but* a lukewarm drink is distasteful. This is the message being communicated here. Christ would actually prefer this church to be one or the other. Lukewarm is indifference! They were without the Spirit of fire; but they did not run around publicly following Satan either. They were just indifferent to the power and conviction of the Holy Spirit and the angel who was assigned to this group of "believers."

The Laodicean members were indecisive, spineless, and not willing to take a stand for anything representative of Christ Himself. They feared losing their wealth and possessions, over the fear of God. The Seventh church is in the worst condition of them all. This church has the greatest impact on our churches today. It is like a cancer that has a mission to steal, kill, and destroy.

Recently I came across an article by David Servant that bent my mind a bit and I would like to share it with you:

Some years ago I was admonished by one of the wealthiest men in my city, a retired CEO of a huge multi-national company, with the following words, "It is the responsibility of guys like you to tell guys like me what God expects of us, lest we not be ready to stand before Him one day." It seemed, he elaborated, that too many preachers patronized "guys like him," fearful of offending and hopeful of gaining something---and in the process ultimately sealing the eternal doom of "guys like him." Sobering words to a patronizing preacher like me (at the time).

Emboldened by that old admonition, I'd like to address the subject of stewardship. I want to focus specifically on the questionable example of stewardship being set by some spiritual leaders---because the church follows its leaders. There isn't any doubt in my mind that Jesus would address this issue if He were personally preaching on the planet today, because when He was preaching on the planet, He quite often made sobering statements about stewardship, and He also exposed the money-loving spiritual leaders of His day (see Matt. 23:14; Luke 16:13-15). Imitating Christ, Paul also lamented that many in his day were "peddling the word of God" (2 Cor. 2:17). He required that spiritual leaders be "free from the love of money" (1 Tim. 3:3). Peter, too,

warned against false teachers who, motivated by greed, would exploit believers with false words (see 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

Last year I read Forbes Magazine's listing of some of the top-paid leaders of non-profit organizations. Forbes obtained its information from public records, primarily from the 990 forms that must be filed annually by every U.S. non-profit organization (with the exception of churches). The entire point of the 990 form is to inform the public of the financial affairs of non-profit organizations so that potential donors can make intelligent decisions about contributions. The U.S. government believes donors should have the right to know the salaries of those who head non-profit organizations if those heads receive more than \$50,000 in annual compensation. All of the information about the salaries of ministry leaders which I report in this article is derived from the 990 forms of the actual ministries headed by those ministry leaders. I only report what the non-profits themselves have reported about the salaries of those who head them.

Reading Forbes' list, I wasn't surprised to see that Paul Crouch, head of the Trinity Broadcasting Network, was near the top, with an annual salary of \$409,306. His wife, Jan, was paid \$361,000. Making almost \$3,000 per work day, they bring new meaning to the phrase "daily bread." Public records also indicate that they live in a five-million dollar, 9,500 square-foot house in Newport Beach that has nine bathrooms, an elevator, a six-car garage, tennis court and pool with fountain. But there is more. A TBN-owned, 80-acres estate in Dallas is worth \$10 million. And there are 30 ministry-owned houses in California and scattered across the country at the Crouch's disposal. They can easily travel to those homes using the ministry's \$7 million Canadair jet.

Naturally, the Crouches are under the frequent scrutiny of Christian watchdog groups and the secular press. But they can ignore their critics, as contributions continue to flow into their coffers. And it isn't as if TBN actually needs money, as their own reported financial data indicates they have \$341 million in cash and near-cash investments. Without collecting another dime, TBN could continue just as it does for two-and-a-half years.

What is perhaps most amazing is not the Crouch family, but the people who continue to funnel their contributions to TBN. Although Jesus plainly told His followers not to lay up treasures on earth and declared that those who do are full of darkness, serving Mammon, and not serving God (Matt. 6:19-24), and although Paul warned that no greedy person will inherit God's Kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Eph. 5:3-5), people who profess to believe in Jesus keep sending checks to TBN--headed by people who are laying up treasures on earth, full of darkness, serving Mammon, and whom Scripture says will not inherit God's kingdom.

Like most prosperity preachers these days, the Crouches often report the good they are doing around the world for the poor with some of the money contributed to TBN. But we can't help but wonder, if they are so concerned about the poor, why are they receiving salaries that put them in the top 1% of all Americans, the top .001% of the world's population, and living in very lavish luxury? Is this a picture of self-denial, something Jesus said is required of all those who would follow Him (see Matt. 16:24)?

The Crouches are not alone among prosperity preachers who frequently report of the good that is being done for the poor by their ministries. Many prosperity preachers do so as a means to motivate people to give to their ministries. ("Your gifts are not only helping us proclaim our life-changing message around the world, but are also helping us care for orphans in Haiti. Please send your most generous gift today!") Yet they themselves live extravagantly from the contributions that are given to their ministries. Thus, in reality, they are simply exploiting the poor

as a means to further exploit their constituency in order to further enrich themselves. That is no exaggeration. Simply put, what should we conclude about someone who motivates people to give to his ministry using photos of impoverished Africans, but who keeps for himself large sums of what is contributed in order to sustain an extravagant lifestyle? Are we to think that such people go to heaven when they die?

Perhaps equally as troubling is the fact that also high on Forbes' list were two men who head large Christian relief ministries (ministries that are admittedly doing lots of good around the world for the poor and worthy to be supported). Richard Stearns, president of World Vision, received \$384,772 in annual compensation, and Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse, received \$368,115. In one sense, what they are doing is of even greater concern than what prosperity preachers are doing, because prosperity preachers don't claim to be heading ministries whose primary purpose is to help the poor. Yet World Vision and Samaritan's Purse do. These organizations that are raising money to help the poor are using a portion of what is being given to help the poor to make those who head them incredibly rich.

Both World Vision and Samaritan's Purse are charter members of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA), which makes that organization's stamp of approval seem rather meaningless in my mind. How are such exorbitant salaries justified? It is sometimes argued that if the very talented heads of these organizations were working in corporate America, they could command even larger salaries. But so what? Who, in any industry, is paid based on what he could make in another field? I suspect that Jesus, a fairly talented guy, could have made more money doing something other than what He did when He was on the earth. He wasn't in it, however, for the money. If the only way to attract the kind of talent that is needed to head such ministries is through \$375,000 salaries, then those who accept such positions are clearly in it for the money, because they wouldn't take those positions otherwise.

It is sometimes argued that only a small portion of every person's donation ends up as part of the huge salaries of such ministry heads. That is true, but that is not the point. Why must those ministry heads receive so much money, especially money that is given to help those suffering in deep poverty? If what they are doing is justifiable and they aren't ashamed of it, I challenge them to report their salaries openly in their ministry magazines alongside the photos of starving children. If they did, is it possible that donations might drop? Not only are these individuals accountable before God for their exorbitant salaries, but so are the boards of directors who set their salaries.

Also weighing in high on Forbes's list was Charles Stanley of In Touch Ministries at \$299,512 and Pat Robertson of CBN at \$306,293. There was Dennis Rydberg, head of Young Life at \$272,127, Billy Graham at \$451,707, Wes Stafford of Compassion International at \$202,679, Chuck Colson of Prison Fellowship, before he died, was at \$218,614 and James Robison of Life Outreach International at \$195,500. Other websites, using 990 forms as their source, reveal that Peter Popoff of Peter Popoff Ministries made \$425,019 and R.C. Sproul of Ligonier Ministries made \$221,576. I suspect that most of these men would not want to be classed with typical prosperity preachers, yet they make salaries that would make welter-weight prosperity preachers salivate.

The Christian Research Institute's 990 form indicated that president Hank Hannegraaff, who is often critical of prosperity preachers, earned a total of \$280,331 in 2002. But his salary was only part of his perks. An 2003 article in Christianity Today reported that the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability found fault with C.R.I., citing among other things the ministry's purchase of a \$66,000 Lexus for Hannegraaff use and \$8,000 of ministry money used to purchase flooring for Hannegraaff's house in a gated community.

So I hope I've made it clear that very high salaries are very common among heads of many high-profile Christian ministries. Why, I must ask, do these ministry heads need so much money? The average household income in the U.S. (where just about everyone is rich by world standards) is around \$45,000. That means half of us live on less than \$45,000 a year.

It could be argued that we have no right to judge these ministry heads, because we don't know what they are doing with the sizable salaries they receive. Perhaps they are giving all their money away. But we do have some idea of what they are doing with their money from looking at their lifestyles. And if they wanted to give a significant percentage of their salaries away, they would do it simply by taking a lesser salary, because that would enable them to give away much more---due to the fact that they must pay taxes on their incomes. Being in the highest tax brackets, as much as half of what they receive goes to income taxes. Thus they could give away considerably more by taking smaller salaries and designating the reduced portion to charity. By doing so, they might also give unbelievers less reason to be offended at the gospel, those who otherwise might cynically reject it, convinced that those who proclaim it are only in it for the money. These ministry heads know that their salaries are a matter of public record. And before anyone judges me for being judgmental, please read my article, "Judge Not" by clicking here. Christ commanded us to judge all spiritual leaders (Matt. 7:15-23).

Forbes' list doesn't include such well-known prosperity preachers as Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Joyce Meyer, and Creflo Dollar, whose salaries are essentially hidden from public view because their organizations obtained I.R.S. designations as churches (which is certainly questionable for all of them but Creflo Dollar). That means they don't have to reveal publicly their financial data each year as do all other non-profit organizations. But their lavish lifestyles are well documented. Some of them even boast of their extravagant lifestyles in order to prove how well their theology works. (Dallas News report on Copeland's \$20 million jet) (CBS News on Benny Hinn)

Joyce Meyer, for example, lives like a queen. The St. Louis Dispatch reported, "Minutes of ministry board meetings show that for 2002 and 2003, the board approved compensation packages of up to \$900,000 for Joyce Meyer and up to \$450,000 for her husband." More recently, she and her board cut her salary to a humble \$250,000, but she formed a private for-profit company from which she now receives royalties from her many books, royalties that were previously received by her. Her ministry's financial report that is posted on her website informs readers that besides her salary, her board also grants her use of the "ministry-provided parsonage". It fails, however, to mention that the "ministry parsonage" is 10,000 square feet, has an 8-car garage, and is worth two million dollars (for a photo, click here). And this is not a two-million dollar home in Southern California, but in Fenton, Missouri. Meyer also personally owns a \$500,000 vacation home on Lake of the Ozarks with a \$105,000 boat parked at her dock.

John Hagee, television preacher and pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio---perhaps milder in his preaching about wealth than other prosperity preachers but certainly not so in practice---was paid a total of \$1.3 million from his ministry (GETV) and Cornerstone Church in 2003. Again, this is from GETV's own 990 form. According to a June, 2003 article in the San Antonio Express-News, "Hagee and his wife are listed in the Bexar County Appraisal District database as owners of their six-bedroom, 5,275-square-foot house in one of San Antonio's most exclusive gated communities, The Dominion."

One common justification that some popular televangelists, like both of those just mentioned, offer for their sizable salaries is that their book and CD sales bring more money into

their ministries than they receive in salaries. So they are supposedly giving more to their ministries than their ministries are giving to them, because those books and CDs are products of their personal labor. But they fail to acknowledge that the major reason they sell so many books and CDs is because of the marketing of those books and CDs on their TV shows and in their ministry magazines, marketing that is primarily paid for by contributions from donors. Without such exposure, sales would not be near as brisk. A televangelist claiming that he is entitled to all the profits from his books and CDs is like the CEO of McDonald's ignoring the contributions of all McDonald's employees and shareholders and claiming that he is entitled to all the profits from the sale of his hamburgers.

Ministers who capitalize on their God-given influence to obtain wealth put themselves in the same category as Balaam, a for-profit prophet who is now in hell (2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 1:11). And isn't it true that Jesus could have capitalized on His gifts and opportunities to make Himself immensely wealthy?

Beyond all of this, does Christ's prohibition against laying up earthly treasures have any application? Where are the modern Christian leaders like John Wesley of old, who could have become extremely wealthy from the sale of his books, but who lived very simply and gave the large majority of the profits from his book sales to charity? He did so out of obedience to Christ and died owning very little.

The New Testament instructs Christians not to associate with any so-called brother who is greedy or covetous, just as it instructs Christians to not associate with any so-called brother who is a homosexual, a drunkard, an idolater, or an adulterer (see 1 Cor. 5:9-13). In order for Christians to obey this very clear instruction, there must be some valid criteria they can use to determine if someone is greedy. What could that criteria be but the actions of those they evaluate? That being so, would it be wrong to conclude that a spiritual leader is greedy if he accepts a salary that puts him in the top .001% of the world's population and uses that exorbitant salary primarily for his own extravagant lifestyle? If the answer is yes (and what else could it be?), then Scripture says we shouldn't associate with such a person. He brings reproach to Christ, as his selfishness is the antithesis of everything Christ taught and lived. If we shouldn't associate with such a person, should we listen to his sermons and support his ministry? (If you are among those who have been misled into believing that greed is only an attitude of the heart that has nothing to do with what one does with his money.

Another common justification for laying up immense earthly treasures by spiritual leaders is that their luxuries were gifts from generous donors. Creflo Dollar, for example, says that the two Rolls Royce's he drives were gifts, so he can hardly be accused of greed for accepting gifts.

How much better it would have been if he had said to his confused benefactors, "Thank you for this gift, but because I love Christ and I love you, I must tell you the truth. By doing this, you are bringing a curse upon yourself. The Bible promises, 'He who oppresses the poor to make more for himself, or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty' (Prov. 22:16). So let's sell these Rolls Royce's and give the money to Jesus incarnated in some of 'the least of these His brethren' who need food and shelter. That way we can be sheep and not goats when we stand before Jesus, and you can avoid bringing a curse upon yourself on your way to that judgment."

Incidentally, the curse of poverty that the Bible promises to those who give to the rich is the only valid promise that applies to those who give to the prosperity preachers. While they promise their donors riches, the Bible promises them poverty. (I wonder why prosperity preachers, who almost

exclusively find their proof texts in the Old Testament, never quote Proverbs 22:16? He that oppresses the poor to increase his riches, and he that gives to the rich, shall surely come to want.

Finally, and most importantly, does it not seem odd that all of the ministers whom I've mentioned (and there are thousands and thousands of others who fall into the same category) say they believe in a book that says, "Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have" (Heb. 13:5) and, "Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction" (1 Tim. 6:9) and, "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you" (Jas. 5:1)? Isn't it odd that they claim to follow the One who commanded, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21) and, "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys" (Luke 12:33)? Isn't it strange that they claim to represent the One who required a rich man seeking eternal life to sell everything and give the proceeds to charity, the same One who told a story of a rich fool who laid up treasures for himself, built bigger barns, and who died and went to hell, and the same One who once said, "Woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full" (Luke 6:24)?

The secular media often points out this hypocrisy among high-rolling Christian leaders. And while the "Satan-controlled" secular media demonstrates some biblical spiritual discernment, professing Christians keep writing checks to promote what is, according to Jesus, detestable in God's sight:

Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God" (Luke 16:14-15).

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I deeply appreciate David's writing and his boldness in revealing a simple principle given to us the scriptures; *for the love of money is the root of all evil.*"

My goal in sharing David's article was not to judge or "put down" any those leaders, in fact a couple of them are friends of mine. My goal is to simply show you the perspective of "Christian wealth" is viewed by our present society much different than during the days of the writing of the book of Revelation. Yes, many of these leaders and their ministries fall into the category of being Laodicean but the truth is – prosperity doctrines only work in a prosperous society. If the Bible is correct in God bringing a close to such "Christian prosperity," then the church is going to be in deep despair, soon.

Verse 17 shows us Christ's primary concern: *"Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."* Wow! Talk about reading the hearts of modern Americans. Because of their wealth, they needed nothing; at least in their eyes. Wealth has a way of covering our wretched and miserable condition. It makes us *feel* good and *look* good, but in the end, we are still blind and naked before the Lord.

Many times I have questioned the Lord why He keeps our little ministry living *hand to mouth*. After studying the historical elements of the church of Laodicea, I have no further questions regarding this issue. Needs create dependency and dependency forms intimacy with a provider. Christ is offering this challenge to all of us, not just this lukewarm church. I have come to realize that whenever I am well content, with my lack of need to depend on the Lord, I am lukewarm.

Verse 18: Christ offers this church some counsel. *“I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed: and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.”* The refined gold is the purification process of their souls, most likely persecution. His offer of white garments can only be obtained through Salvation. Therefore He is requiring of them to have a Born-again conversion through Him. The white robe is offered to us because He dipped His robe in His own blood. This is the one and only way they can cover their nakedness before God. The eye salve is the anointing oil of the Holy Spirit in touching their eyes, opening them to the Truth, and healing them, in order to see the truest things of God.

Now comes the repentance part. He said; *“Those whom I love I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.”* Jesus is obviously communicating His great love for this church. He wants them to be HOT for Him. The only way this can occur is by the conditions He just established. He warns them of the process; being disciplined. He now sets them up for the way out.

Verse 20: *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.”* This is the infamous verse of Salvation; used by Bridal members throughout all the generations, since the day of John’s writings. Jesus is unfolding His gracious offer. He stands, He knocks, and He waits. If we do not open the door, we lose. Jesus coming into us is our sealed hope of eternal life and blessings. This church is being offered the most gracious act of all eternity. Let’s hope they hear the knock, open the door, and allow Him to come in and dine with them. This is a message for all unbelievers living in the church; thinking they are saved, but they are not. He even speaks of their reward, *“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”* We could easily paraphrase this as: *if any of you overcomes this lukewarm state you are in and accepts Me as your Lord and Savior, I will give to you the right and privilege to sit with Me on My throne as my Beloved Bride.*

May we all have ears to hear this message – each and every believer suffers with moments, days, months, or years of being lukewarm. This is one message we cannot pass off as being for “that lukewarm church in Revelation.” We all need to be heated up!