

Behold, I Come Quickly...

A Study of Revelation

PART 1

Revelation 1:1 - 3:22

The Seven Churches

LESSON 6

Revelation 3:1 - 3:22

The Seven Churches - Part 3

Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. (Revelation 22:7)

REV 3:1-22

To the Church in Sardis - Dead Orthodoxy

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

Sardis was the old capital of the Lydian empire (ca. 680-547 BC). It was a leading city of the Roman province of Asia.¹ Today, it is the small village called Sart (Sert-Kalessi).² The art of dying wool was invented there.³ It became famous for its red dye and woven goods, especially carpets.⁴

The prophetic age was the Reformation 1517-1750 AD. Sardis means, "escaping ones," or those who "come out." This name describes the Reformation churches that left the works system and some of the paganism of the Roman Catholic Church and returned to "the just shall live by faith." The church of Sardis had a reputation that it was alive, but in fact it was dead.⁵ The tragedy of the Reformation churches being "dead" was that they became state churches. Luther and others sought approval of the political leaders. This establishes the church as the entire population rather than a personal acceptance and relationship with Jesus Christ. The Reformation churches retained many customs and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus some paganism remained. Ritual and formality are characteristic of pagan worship. Ritual and ceremony often crowd out true life underneath making it ineffectual, impotent, or dead. The Reformation leaders stopped short of total reform based on Scriptural standards. The Reformation church was reformed, but not revived. Some essential doctrines were reclaimed, such as justification by faith, but the church retained its rituals and human traditions. Complacency and a new legalism set in. Few knew the power of the Holy Spirit.⁶

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

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

¹ Freedman, "Sardis," THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY, Vol. V, p. 982.

² "Sardis," SMITH'S BIBLE DICTIONARY, p. 268. Levy, REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word, p. 51.

³ "Sardis," SMITH'S BIBLE DICTIONARY, p. 268.

⁴ Gregg, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: A PARALLEL COMMENTARY, p.73. LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, p.49.

⁵ Gregg, REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: A PARALLEL COMMENTARY, p. 73.

⁶ Lindsey, THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING, p. 45. LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, pp. 50, 51.

Reformation churches, like many today, were not grounded in Bible prophecy, and therefore were not watchful. Prophetically instructed Christians are more likely to be focused on spiritual rather than worldly matters, living their lives based on the imminent return of Jesus Christ. We need to "strengthen" sound doctrinal teaching - salvation by faith, the total depravity of man, and the authority of the Word of God.⁷ If you are not a prophecy student, you are not watching! The Bible contains one-third prophecy, but many seldom go there.

We are to study the Scriptures and "hold fast" to its sound doctrinal teachings. We are to repent and turn away from false teachers and doctrines. If we are willing to forsake false teaching and repent, the Holy Spirit will show us the truth.

JOH 14:26 But the Comforter, which is **the Holy Ghost**, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

JOH 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even **the Spirit of truth**, which proceedeth from the Father, **he shall testify of me**:

JOH 16:13 Howbeit when he, **the Spirit of truth**, is come, **he will guide you into all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and **he will shew you things to come**.

Notice that not only will he guide us into truth; he will show us "things to come." Now look as Paul speaks of the difference between those that watch and those that do not watch. Notice the contrast of the pronouns in these verses.

1TH 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, **ye** have no need that I write unto **you**. **2** For **yourselves** know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. **3** For when **they** shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon **them**, as travail upon a woman with child; and **they** shall not escape. **4** But **ye**, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake **you** as a thief. **5** **Ye** are all the children of light, and the children of the day: **we** are not of the night, nor of darkness. **6** Therefore let **us** not sleep, as do **others**; but let **us** watch and be sober. **7** For **they** that sleep sleep in the night; and **they** that be drunken are drunken in the night. **8** But let **us**, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. **9** For God hath not appointed **us** to wrath, but to obtain salvation by **our** Lord Jesus Christ, **10** Who died for **us**, that, whether **we** wake or sleep, **we** should live together with him.

In order to watch we need to be grounded in prophecy and aware of the events of the world around us. Look with skepticism upon those that cry "peace and safety." Do not be deceived by propaganda and agendas for world oneness, ecumenism, and peace.

REV 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

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

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

All churches have those that remained faithful regardless of the circumstances.

REV 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, **and keepeth his garments**, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

REV 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and **his wife** hath made herself ready. **8** **And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.** **9** And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

⁷ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, pp. 51, 52.

Notice that the "fine linen" garments "clean and white" represents the purity and righteousness of the saints. Defiled garments would be the opposite. Pagan religions in Sardis forbade wearing soiled or stained clothing before their gods. Christians must not soil their garments by mingling in pagan life and compromising with sin.⁸

JOH 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**

1JO 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that **is begotten of him.** **2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. **3** For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. **4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.**

It is only through Christ that we are justified, **"I will confess his name before my Father."**

2CO 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Jesus Christ is our advocate, our defense attorney, and He never loses a case. Overcomers will not have their name blotted out of the "Book of Life."

1TI 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; **6 Who gave himself a ransom for all,** to be testified in due time.

Contrary to Catholic teaching, Mary is not "mediatrix." We have only one mediator, "Christ Jesus."⁹

To the Church in Philadelphia - Revival and Evangelism

REV 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

The name "Philadelphia" means "brotherly Love." This church was located in the center of Greek civilization. The city was founded by King Attalus of Pergamum in 140 BC on a volcanic mountain range 900 feet high. Philadelphia suffered many earthquakes over the years.¹⁰ Philadelphia remained an independent Christian city until the close of the 14th century when the Turks conquered it.

The prophetic church of Philadelphia represented the period from 1750 to 1925 AD. This was a period of vitality and life marked by revivals in Europe and the British Isles, which would spread to America. These revivals sparked the modern missionary movement. Thousands of missionaries went to remote places such as Africa, India, China, Japan, Korea, South America, and the Pacific Islands.

The printing of the Bible in the language of the people with the natural tendency of the ordinary individual to take the Bible literally spurred this movement. This resulted in the mass fulfillment of the Great Commission.

MAR 16:15 And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**

About 1800 another factor that spurred this missionary fervor was the revival of the doctrine of the pre-millennial return of Christ, which had been dead since the end of the third century. This contributed to a consecrated and separated church willing to do whatever the Lord commanded in preparation for his imminent return. It wasn't until after World War I that missionary zeal began to wane.¹¹

In this verse we see four aspects of Christ's nature revealed, two of which are not previously mentioned in chapter 1.

⁸ Levy, REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word, p. 52.

⁹ CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, pp. 274, 275.

¹⁰ Levy, REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word, p. 53. Walvoord, THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, p. 83.

¹¹ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, pp. 54, 55. Lindsey, THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING, pp. 48, 49.

Christ's Nature and the Philadelphia Church¹²

1. He is Holy.

1PE 1:16 Because it is written, **Be ye holy; for I am holy.**

The Philadelphia church was separated from the world unto holiness.

2. He is True.

JOH 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life:** no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

JOH 6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34** Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. **35** And **Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life:** he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Christ is not only truth, He is the ultimate truth. This part of His nature alludes to the movement toward doctrinal separation that characterized the Philadelphia age.

3. He that hath the key of David.

This relates to Christ's authority and His eventual rulership of the world.

MAT 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**

"He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."

"The doors of opportunity for preaching the Gospel are controlled by the Lord Jesus Christ."

This is true of the missionary movement and also of the individual witness.

"There is a tendency to compromise in order to gain opportunities, whereas in truth it is our responsibility to do right and God's responsibility to open the doors of opportunity."

It is only up to us to obey the Great Commission.

MAT 28:19 **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,** baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you I, even unto the end of the world.** Amen.

The doors are Christ's responsibility.

REV 3:8 **I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.**

Christ set the door open for Philadelphia that "no man can shut." In this verse Christ has four things about which to commend this church.

¹² LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, pp. 55, 56. Levy, REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word, pp. 54, 55..

Four Commendations of Philadelphia¹³

1. **I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:**

The open door represents the opportunity for Christian service and for the proclamation of the Gospel. To take advantage of the opportunities is faithful service. The Philadelphia church took advantage of these opportunities. Paul wrote:

1CO 16:9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

2. **for thou hast a little strength,**

They were a minority group. Small, but faithful, numbers characterizes the Philadelphia church age.

3. **and hast kept my word,**

In contrast to the Reformation churches, they not only believed the Word of God, but obeyed it.

4. **and hast not denied my name.**

Notice back in 1 Corinthians 16:9 we saw that Paul faced many adversaries at the open door. The interesting thing with the Philadelphia age is that at the time of the greatest missionary zeal, the adversaries were legion. Many false christs and false religions began to come on the scene at this time of history. The Philadelphia church refused to cave in to the denial of Christ's name and true Gospel. As we approach the end of this age we are faced with the same challenges of false christs and false religions. The tendency today is to worship the creature (environment) rather than the Creator.

REV 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.
10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation [trial], which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Christ makes two promises to His true followers.

Two Promises to Philadelphia¹⁴

1. **Vindication**

Those false religionists, who persecute the true believers, will someday be subdued before them.

1CO 6: 2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?...

2. **Preservation**

The world has never known a time of universal tribulation. This then obviously refers to that future time of universal tribulation known as the Great Tribulation. God has promised that the true believers will be preserved from that.

1TH 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

In Revelation 3 verse 10, the preposition **from** is the Greek word **ek**. It means “out of” or “out of the midst of.” This is a clear indication that the church will not go through any portion of the Tribulation from the Seal

¹³ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, pp. 56, 57.

¹⁴ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, p. 57.

judgments of Revelation chapter 6 through the vial (bowl) judgments ending with the Second Coming of Christ. In the same verse, it is **the** hour of trial (Gr: *peirasmos* – trial, temptation). It is a specific time of Tribulation that they will be preserved out of. Christ is promising to **keep**, or preserve, this church from **the** hour of **the** trial. The hour of the trial will come **“upon all the world.”** The words **“try them that dwell upon the earth”** “refers, not to the church, but to unbelievers (earth dwellers) who will be settled into the world’s system during the Tribulation.”¹⁵ See Figure 1 in the Appendix.

REV 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

"Behold, I come quickly": The Philadelphia church is to be based on the faith in the imminent return of Jesus Christ. We are to "hold fast" to our missionary zeal until He returns. The formula for spiritual growth of the church is evangelism and missions.¹⁶

Those that are overcomers (born again) will be pillars or have stability in their life in Christ. They shall not be outsiders in the life to come, even though they are rejected in this world. Believers will not only have the name of God that entitles them entrance into the City of God, but also they will have the name of Christ, which entitles them to be His servants.¹⁷

REV 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. **10** And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me **that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,....**

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. **22** And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. **23** And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. **24** **And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it:** and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. **25** And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. **26** And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. **27** **And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

REV 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: **4** **And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.**

We shall see His face!

To the Church in Laodicea - Compromise and Apostasy

REV 3:14 **And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;**

The Seleucid king, Antiochus II, in honor of his wife Laodice, named the city of Laodicea sometime between 261 and 253 BC. Previously its names were Diospolis and later Rhoas. The name Diospolis means "City of Zeus," Zeus being the chief deity of Diospolis as well as of Laodicea.¹⁸

Laodicea was located about forty miles east of Ephesus. It was known for its medical school, which specialized in treating eye ailments with a special ointment. It had a huge racetrack and three theaters, one the size of a football field.¹⁹

¹⁵ Levy, *REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word*, p. 56. Walvoord, *THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST*, pp. 86, 87.

¹⁶ LaHaye, *REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN*, p. 57.

¹⁷ LaHaye, *REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN*, p. 58.

¹⁸ Freedman, "Laodicea," *THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY*, Vol. IV, p. 229.

¹⁹ Lindsey, *THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING*, p. 50.

Laodicea was a wealthy city, a center of industry and steeped in Greek culture and learning.²⁰ Laodicea produced black wool clothing and carpets. It was also a banking center.²¹ There are ruins of three churches located there dating to the earliest days of Christianity.²²

The prophetic period of this church is 1925, or possibly as early as 1900 to the Tribulation. We are now in the Laodicean age.²³

Before the close of the Philadelphia church age, beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth and before the turn of the twentieth century, we see that many theological seminary scholars, particularly European, began to introduce what is known as "Higher Criticism" of the Bible. "Higher Criticism" began calling into question the authorship, construction, historicity, and truth of the Scriptures, saying that it was re woven from stories and myths. Skepticism began to deny the supernatural and had demoted Jesus to just a good man. The church got sucked into scientific and philosophical rationalism.²⁴

Rationalism is a product of Darwin's Theory of Evolution, which cast doubt on the Biblical view of origins of the universe and mankind. We began to see ourselves, not as created in God's image, but as something that crawled forth from the primordial soup. Theologians caught up in Darwin's theory, convinced that "science" overruled the Bible, began attempting to rationalize the creation narrative of Genesis chapter 1 to fit the "assured fact" of evolution.

This rationalization produced various schemes to fit the so-called "assured facts." The "Gap Theory," produced to account for the existence of unaccounted for fossils, said that there was a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 in which the original world was destroyed and the present one reformed. Scofield and the notes in his Bible popularized it, and Barnes, Bullinger, J. Vernon McGee, Fructenbaum, and others were or are proponents of this theory. This theory, despite its defects, persists in some well-known fundamentalist circles to this day.

"Theistic evolution" said that the "days" of Genesis were long time periods, and that God used evolution to create man and animals that we see today. This has been the position of the Roman Catholic Church. These and other theories were panic attempts by theologians to rationalize evolution to the Scriptural account. This has produced much confusion and the acceptance of evolution by many today. The problem today is essentially that the only alternative to "God created" (supernatural) is some form of evolution. Since science cannot investigate the supernatural, scientists **choose** to ignore God as the "First Cause." As a result then, evolution becomes the only possibility acceptable. Anything else must be a myth. Any line of scientific research that does not support evolution is quickly abandoned, or unfunded. These scientists have not allowed for even the remote possibility that God exists and that He created. According to an evolution scientist, D.M.S. Watson, in his 1929 article in *Nature* magazine, titled *Adaptation*:

Evolution [is] a theory universally accepted not because it can be proven, but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible.

Many cults teach that the words "the beginning of the creation of God" indicate that Jesus was the first of God's creation. In light of parallel passages, this could be translated "the beginner of the creation of God." This indicates that all things were created through Him.²⁵

COL 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: **16** For **by him were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: **17** And **he is before all things, and by him all things consist.**

JOH 1:3 **All things were made by him;** and without him was not any thing made that was made.

REV 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.
16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.
17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

²⁰ LaHaye, *REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN*, p. 60.

²¹ Gregg, *REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: A PARALLEL COMMENTARY*, p. 78.

²² LaHaye, *REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN*, p. 60.

²³ LaHaye, *REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN*, p. 61.

²⁴ Lindsey, *THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING*, p. 54.

²⁵ LaHaye, *REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN*, p. 61.

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

The city's water supply originated from some distance away. Water was routed to Laodicea by aqueduct, and as a consequence became, "neither cold nor hot."²⁶ The Laodicean church had become like its water supply, lukewarm. "This state refers to those who have manifested some interest in the things of God.... But it is not clear whether they really belong to Christ." They are "those who participate in the outer religious worship without the inner reality.... without a true state of being born again into the family of God." It is noteworthy that the minister or angel of this church himself is described as being lukewarm.²⁷

They were blind to the things of God and needed "eyesalve" to anoint their spiritual eyes. This was undoubtedly a reference to the famous medical school located in the temple of Asklepios in Laodicea.²⁸

Because of its prosperity the church became self-satisfied and complacent. Its comfort and prosperity led to a diminished zeal for the things of God.²⁹ Prosperity in our modern society has caused the same diminished zeal today. People don't need God because they can provide for themselves. People return to God only when they can't help themselves and have exhausted all other avenues. In times of personal persecution and tribulation the church is full. Churches were full for a short while after 9/11. With the advent of insurance, retirement benefits, welfare, and Social Security, the corporation and the government (Caesar) have replaced dependence on God and His providence.

Today we cannot speak publically about religion or politics for fear of offending the listeners. We are told not to impose our beliefs on others. How can we fulfil the Great Commission of "going into all the world to preach the Gospel," or learn about the attributes and positions of political candidates, proposed laws, or issues if we cannot have an open forum among ourselves and acquaintances? The church has entered into contract with the government for their tax exemption status (501C3). In return the pastor is not free to speak his mind on certain political issues that might sway a voter. We may not all agree with one another's positions, but we should all have the right to express those opinions without fear of offence or reprisals. Why does the government use the tax code to muzzle the church? Could it be that the government fears the power that resides in the collective body of Christ?

It's sad, but the complacency and prosperity of today's organized Christian churches have acquiesced with their silence. Caesar has silenced the Church, not by throwing them to the lions, but by threatening their prosperity. The organized Church today, by their silence, has chosen to serve mammon rather than God. We are without excuse. We have allowed it through our laziness and apathy, which has produced our ignorance of the operation of our government and the ideology of our leaders. We are also responsible for the condition of the church today. We have allowed the perversion of the Gospel through that same laziness and apathy. Only a handful of people dedicated to getting prayer out of the schools succeeded without a whimper from the church. If we truly served Jesus Christ, we would have joined together and raised such a cry that the Judges would have feared to oppose us. Instead, we were blind or apathetic, and left the fight to others. We needed "eyesalve" so that we could see the shame of our nakedness. Our children suffer because of it. I believe that decision is directly responsible for the slaughter at the high school at Littleton, Colorado.

Where is the Christian ethic when we elect ungodly pro-choice candidates to public office? Does it matter whether our candidate supports traditional Christian values, or do we vote the way we do because we are supporting the "party," or we want simply a "change." Christian apathy elected President Bill Clinton in two elections. The desire for an undefined change and the longing for a sense of racial equality elected President Barack Obama. We, as Christians, either didn't show up or we didn't care or we didn't understand the stakes.

There are more than 300 million Christians suffering today for the Gospel of Christ. While we today complain about our petty inconveniences, Christians are being sold into slavery, persecuted, forced into underground churches, and martyred for their faith by crucifixion (in Africa) and other tortures.

"Muslim militiamen pierce and padlock the lips of black Christians so that they may not talk about the horrors they have seen and endured [such as] crucifixion, enslavement, beheadings, systematic genocide with the aid of helicopter gunships and bombers of Soviet, Chinese and Libyan provenance?"³⁰

²⁶ Gregg, *REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: A PARALLEL COMMENTARY*, p. 78. Levy, *REVELATION: Hearing the Last Word*, p. 61. Freedman, "Laodicea," *THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY*, Vol. VI, pp. 230, 231.

²⁷ Walvoord, *THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST*, pp. 92, 93.

²⁸ Walvoord, *THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST*, p. 95.

²⁹ Gregg, *REVELATION, FOUR VIEWS: A PARALLEL COMMENTARY*, p. 78.

³⁰ <http://www.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2001/4/4/202524.shtml>; <http://www.hvk.org/articles/0802/218.html>.

“Jubilee Campaign, a Christian human rights organization, has noted ‘mounting evidence of the crucifixion of the male populations of entire villages.’ When the Vatican protested in 1992, Khartoum replied, ‘The Catholic Church has become the enemy of the Sudanese government. We know how to deal with it.’ What was meant was apparent. Last summer, according to Vatican Radio, four Catholics were arrested, flogged a hundred times, and then crucified.”³¹

“Sudan is one of the fastest growing churches in Africa today, yet Sudanese Christians daily face murder, torture, enslavement and even crucifixion. Militant forces consider Sudan the gateway for Islamic expansion into the rest of Africa, the Middle East and the rest of the world.”³²

Our faith, by the grace of God, has never truly been tried. That situation may soon change.

JOH 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, **the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.**

LUK 12:1 In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, **Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.** **2** For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

MAR 8:15 And he charged them, saying, **Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.**

We are to take heed of the evil of the religious and political leaders.

Prosperity does not in and of itself produce happiness. The people of the Laodicean church were unhappy, and through their riches were poor, blind, and naked. What Jesus was saying to them was that they needed persecution to refine them as "gold tried in the fire." Eternal riches have been purchased by the blood of Christ, and are available by faith. Man needs spiritual illumination to see clearly.³³

1CO 2:14 **But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

REV 3:19 **As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.**

20 **Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.**

Jesus loved them. Because of that, He rebuked and would chasten them. He pleaded with them that they repent. Like the emperor's new clothes, the Laodicean church was clothed with transparent religious robes. She was not clothed by solid faith with garments of righteousness.³⁴

Today we say that education will solve the world's problems. Men can get better and better if only we provide more money for education. Education without Christ only produces more spiritual blindness. Man's nature must be changed internally, not externally.³⁵ The quality of man's surroundings has nothing to do with his spiritual wellbeing.

The message to this church is that at the end of this age we can expect that apostasy, deadness, and indifference will increase.³⁶

Rebuke and chastening are a wake up call, like a knock on the door. Christ has taken the first step. The rest is up to us. If we respond He will "sup" with us.³⁷

REV 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, **Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.** And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

³¹ <http://www.hvk.org/articles/0802/218.html>.

³² <http://www.hvk.org/articles/0802/218.html>.

³³ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, p. 64.

³⁴ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, p. 63.

³⁵ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, p. 63.

³⁶ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, p. 66.

³⁷ Morris, THE REVELATION RECORD, p. 78.

MAT 24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

REV 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

This is a promise that "born again" believers will rule and reign with Christ.³⁸

Summary

All of these churches represent churches today even though they also represented and continue to represent specific periods of the Church Age.

The following is quoted from John Walvoord in summary of the lessons of the seven churches:

Dangers³⁹

The churches represented the following dangers that face Christians down through the ages:

- **Ephesus** - The danger of forsaking the love that characterized believers when they first trusted Christ.
- **Smyrna** - The danger of fear though otherwise they were faithful to God.
- **Pergamum** - The danger of doctrinal compromise.
- **Thyatira** - The danger of moral compromise.
- **Sardis** - The danger of spiritual deadness.
- **Philadelphia** - The danger of not holding fast to the things they believed.
- **Laodicea** - The danger of lukewarmness, of outer religion without inner zeal and reality. "Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof..." 2 Timothy 3:5

Let's now see what John Walvoord has to say about the Book of Revelation:

Though the Book of Revelation deals primarily with prophecy concerning the future, it was written to help the churches of the present age understand the purposes of God and the great events that will characterize the end of the age.⁴⁰

APPENDIX

Figure 1 – Revelation 3:10⁴¹

	25	4571/3754	5083	3056	5281	3450
10	ἠγάπησά	σε.	ὅτι	ἐτήρησας	τὸν	λόγον
	loved	you.	Because	you kept	the	word
	2504/4571/	5083/1537	5610	3986	3195	of Me,
	καγὼ	σε	τηρήσω	ἐκ	τῆς	ᾠρας
	I also	you	will keep	out of the	hour	of trial
	2064	1909	3625	3650	3985	being about
	ἔρχεσθαι	ἐπὶ	τῆς	οἰκουμένης	ᾧλης,	πειράσαι
	to come	upon	the habitable	world	all,	to try
	1909	1093/2400	2064	5035	2902/3739/2192/2443	those dwelling
11	κοῦντας	ἐπὶ	τῆς	γῆς.	ἰδοῦ,	ἔρχομαι
	on	the earth.	Behold,	I am coming	quickly;	hold what you have that

³⁸ LaHaye, REVELATION ILLUSTRATED AND MADE PLAIN, p. 66.

³⁹ Walvoord, THE PROPHECY KNOWLEDGE HANDBOOK, p. 539.

⁴⁰ Walvoord, THE PROPHECY KNOWLEDGE HANDBOOK, pp. 539, 540.

⁴¹ Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, THE INTERLINEAR HEBREW-GREEK-ENGLISH BIBLE, Hendrickson Publishers, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1984, 2nd edition 1985, Vol. IV, p. 662.