



WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

Revelation 3

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Learn the Bible at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Revelation 3.

Topics

- The angel of the church in Sardis.
 - The angel of the church in Philadelphia.
 - The angel of the church in Laodicea.
-

A personal note: though I have always loved reading and studying the Scriptures and have now walked with Christ and in God's grace for around fifty years the following studies should not be taken to be dogmatic, inflexible or the final word on the matter since I am fully aware that my mind is limited by mortality and that greater understanding of God's revelation is continually becoming clearer before our eyes as we move closer to the time of Christ's glorious return in glory.

The previous chapter: began with the letter to the church in Ephesus and the promise that those who conquer will be granted to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God. Then followed the church in Smyrna and the promise those who conquer will not be hurt by the second death, after this the letter to the church in Pergamum and the promise that those who conquer will be given the hidden manna, and a new name that no one knows. The chapter ended with the church in Thyatira and the promise those who conquer will be given authority over the nations and rule them with a rod of iron and given the morning star.

1

THE CHURCH AT SARDIS

REVELATION 3:1

Him who Has the Seven Spirits of God and the Seven Stars.

- **Revelation 3:1:** And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. " I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. (thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead in KJV).

To the reader: if the explanations of the previous churches have been read, this section may be skipped as the comments are the same.

NOTE: when reading these seven letters it should be kept in mind that in some of these cities there would have been more than one Christian church, which means that each letter is probably addressed to the head or most dominant church of the city or that all who were Christians in the city were regarded as members of one church, but for convenience met for worship in different places. Whichever it may be the seven messages can be applied to any church in any city of any generation that has comparable circumstances and is in similar surroundings.

To the angel of the church in Sardis: (v1) the English word angel in the Old Testament is from the Hebrew word mal'ak. In the New Testament, the English word angel is from the Greek word aggelos. The word mal'ak in the Old Testament and the word aggelos in the New Testament have sometimes been translated to the English word messenger or messengers while at other times mal'ak and aggelos are translated angel or angels.

Malak: means to dispatch as a deputy, a messenger, an ambassador or a representative it can apply to and angel of God, a king, a prophet, a priest or teacher. The same word is used for the supernatural angels of God and for human messengers which means it can apply to God's supernatural angels or human men who are sent as messengers.

Aggelos: means a messenger or envoy sent from God to bring tidings. Aggelos is used all, of the time in the New Testament for the supernatural angels of God (except for Luke chapter twenty) but it is also used for human men (i.e., pastors, ministers and such like) which means aggelos can apply to God's supernatural angels or human messengers.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN SARDIS

The angel refers to the minister of the church. Ministers are referred to as angels, because they proclaim God's word, bring light into darkness and oversee His people and by doing so are doing heavenly work. However, the message is not limited to the minister, but applies to all those in the church who are of the same character as the minister.

Sardis: the name Sardis comes from the word sardis stone, a semi-precious orange-brown stone that reflects deep red colour when light passes through it. The city of Sardis was a natural citadel, as it was built in a mountainous region located on a, narrow plateau fifteen hundred feet above sea level, about thirty-five miles southeast of Thyatira. It was the capital of the Lydian empire and was still an important city during the Roman empire. The unfinished temple of Artemis reflects a time when pagan worship was popular, though very little remains today, if it had been completed it would have been the fourth largest Ionian temple of the Aegean coast. A Jewish synagogue dating from the 3rd century A.D. shows that a large Jewish community lived in the region. Historians say that this is the largest synagogue ever excavated, Only the walls, floors and columns and Greek and Hebrew inscriptions and mosaics remain, yet this is enough to gain a good idea of when the synagogue was at its most glorious. Today the site is a city of ruins and its present importance lies in its ancient archaeological finds. However, there is a nearby the small Turkish village that bears the name Sart, and the memory of fabled characters such as Midas and King Croesus of Sardis live on. Sardis lies about thirty-three miles from Thyatira and twenty-seven from Philadelphia.

Him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: (v1) is taken from John's majestic vision of Christ glorified. (Rev. 1:12-16). The seven Spirits of God refers to God's omniscient (all knowing and all seeing) and His omnipresent (universal and ever-present) Spirit, which is also called the Holy Spirit, the Angel of God, the Spirit of life and many other titles. God's Spirit is one Spirit, but like a single diamond has many colours and many aspects, characteristics and sides and can manifest in many different forms, appearances, countenances and expressions. It is from this Spirit that all spiritual power, gifts, prophecies, supernatural, miracles and wonders proceed and by which God brings about the eternal plans He purposed in His eternal mind before the world began. The expression, "he that has the seven Spirits of God," means that Christ has the fullness of God dwelling within. In the book of John, we read:

- For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure (not the Spirit by measure unto him in the KJV). ³⁵The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. (John 3:34-35).

This means that God has given His Son His Spirit without any limitations, Christ has the full power and authority of his heavenly Father. Jesus the slain Lamb that was slain has the whole fullness of the Spirit of God and pours it out (with limitations) upon all who love him. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians states that when God raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, He set him:

- Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. (Ephes. 1:19-21).

And in his letter to the Colossians he wrote:

- For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily. (Col. 2:9).

The seven spirits of God refer to the fullness and perfection of the love, the gifts and the grace of the Spirit of God, which Christ, as Mediator, has without measure to give to who he will.

In his right-hand he held seven stars: (v16) the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches (v20). Stars signify authority and light shining in darkness. They are emblems of the ministers of the seven churches who Christ upheld and directed and to who John was ordered to write. They refer to ministers filled with the Spirit of Christ who under his authority and by his authority bring his light into this world of darkness. The stars by extension also embrace the churches themselves. The picture presented is of Christ holding in one hand the spiritually empty vessels of the church and in the other hand the fullness of God's Spirit by which he supplies spiritual life to the empty vessels.

Christ is the perfect supply for our spiritual blindness; for wisdom to guide us; for our righteousness; for our cleansing of sin; for the comfort of our hearts and minds and for our salvation and eternal life. He will forever supply his love and his grace to those who faithfully seek him and walk with him in love.

I know your works: (v1) carries the following ideas:

- He knows the state they are in and their conduct.
- He knows that they outwardly appear righteous and holy to the neighbouring churches and to others.
- He knows they have an acceptable reputation of being spiritually alive and of possessing eternal life.
- He knows their hypocrisy, pretence and outward show of religion.

You have the reputation of being alive: (v1) (thou hast a name that thou livest, in KJV). The reputation the church of Sardis was credit with was godliness, because of their outward religious works, such as, clothing themselves in religious garments and pomp, adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and by strictly keeping religious customs and traditions and for these things they were celebrated and considered holy.

You are dead: (v1) (thou art dead in KJV) can carry any of the following ideas:

- Their hearts had no enthusiastic passion or love toward the Lord.
- Their thoughts had no clear understanding of Christ's love, grace or the Gospel.
- Their communion with him lacked any form of heartfelt zeal and passion.
- They were not prepared to sacrifice anything for Christ's sake.
- They were complacent and indifferent to upholding the true word of God and his moral laws
- They were in the ministry for self-satisfaction and selfish gain, power, superiority or money and fame.
- Their Christianity was dying, they were at the point of death, with most of their spiritual life extinct.
- They prayed and attended the Sabbaths, but they were hollow and empty of heartfelt devotion, affection and love.

- They were like the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes of Jesus generation, who appeared holy on the outside, but were utterly devoid of spiritual life on the inside.

They kept on performing Christian work from habit and tradition and not passion and love. When spiritual stagnation sets in spiritual death will naturally follow. No earthly life is maintained without food, air, and exercise, likewise, no spiritual life is maintained if we do not live on the true bread of God which came down from heaven, and if we do not breathe into our hearts the breath of his life-giving Spirit, and feed our minds with his word and his Gospel.

The lesson: we learn from this that it is the minister of the church that is responsible for a church being dead. If the head of a church has no life of Christ dwelling within them or has lost their passion for him, it is only a matter of time before the church itself will die, unless the dead minister is replaced with one that is filled with the Spirit of Christ and his love and grace.

REVELATION 3:2

Strengthen what Remains and is About to Die.

- **Revelation 3:2:** Wake up (be watchful in KJV), and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete (perfect in KJV) in the sight of my God (before God in KJV).

There is no conflict with enemies within or without the church of Sardis, its decay is a result of their own indifference toward the word of God and their lack of love and passion for him.

Wake up: (v2) (be watchful in KJV) means that they should wake up to the fact that:

- They lack passion, they have little spiritual life and have fallen into habit.
- They are prideful, self-confident, indulgent and indifferent to the salvation that they have.
- They are trusting in self-effort and religious works.
- Their religious outward works were lacking inward affections and love for Christ.
- They should return to the faith they had at the beginning and trust in Christ's righteousness and not their own self-righteousness and good works.

Strengthen what remains and is about to die: (v2) in verse one of this chapter we read that they were dead, which implies that the good that they did have remaining was not only very small, but also very weak. This means that the warning to strengthen what remains means that they should wake up to the fact that whatever there was remaining of godliness among them, it was of extreme importance to strengthen it, so that the love of the Saviour might not become fully extinct and the small glimmer of light that they do have does not go out forever. It is a warning to stop practicing outward performances of duty and tradition so that the church looks good on the outside, but on the inside, is only faintly alive. It matters not how perfect a church may appear on the outside, God's omniscient eyes perceives its true condition which in the case of Sardis was lifelessness. This warning applies to all ministers whose service before the Lord is to watch over themselves, their congregations and the word of God and the Gospel. This does not mean that those in the congregation carry no blame, since we are all responsible for our own faith and walk

with the Lord. Every believer should take care to watch over their hearts; their thoughts; their affections; their words and their actions and against sin and false teaching, so as not to spiritually fall asleep. It is a principal of faith, if an individual believer and a church does not grow in the fruit of the Spirit will slowly die.

NOTE: even in the lowest state of godliness in a church there are often a few, faithful who are mourning over the spiritual lack that exists. When Israel of the Old Testament was at its worst there was always a remnant of faithful believers.

I have not found your works complete: (v2) (perfect in KJV) meaning that what they do is not done from a principle of love toward God and man or to the glory of God, nor is it for the good name and honour of the Lord Jesus Christ or from a right spirit of humility, meekness, kindness and compassion. It is because all these things are lacking, that the good things they are doing are referred to as being incomplete. A minister may be doing a good work in preaching the Gospel, but if his heart lacks humility and love for God and compassion toward those he is preaching to, his good works can be spoken of as being incomplete or lacking even though what he is doing is good.

Even today there are preaches who proclaim God's word, not from passion and love for God and the lost, but for their own gain, for the fame, esteem, importance and worldly riches.

REVELATION 3:3

I will Come Like a Thief, and You Will Not Know What Hour I Come.

- **Revelation 2:3:** Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

Remember how humbly, zealously, affectionately, and gratefully you received the Lord's forgiveness and grace at the beginning and hold fast that passion and life changing knowledge. These words are primarily addressed to the minister himself, but apply to all the members of the church that have the same character and lack of spiritual life. Counsellors often use this principle for a husband and wife that has lost their first love for each other. Looking at photos of past happy moments and reflecting on them helps the couple see how far they have fallen from their first love and what they need to do to restore it.

Keep it and repent: (v3) the word "keep" carries the idea of holding fast to the good things they had and joyfully and continually keep them as an abiding habit, but there must be the sorrow for the past that manifests itself in action that forsakes the sin. Repentance involves a change of the heart and a change, of mind, of attitude, of purposes and of actions and behaviour. There must be a deep conviction and sorrow over the decline of the love and passion they had at the beginning. In this way, they would recover their first passion and gratitude for the high price their Redeemer paid to save them. When we lose our gratitude toward Christ for the salvation and grace, he achieved for us on the bloodstained cross of Calvary we should not expect to sense his presence or his love.

Nor should any minister expect his congregation to be zealous and passionate for Christ if he is not passionate and zealous for the Lord himself. This, is why the Lord is rebuking him and calling him to repent. Repentance is not only about feeling your first feelings, but also includes doing the first works. It involves both an inward change of heart and attitude and an outward change of behaviour. Outward behaviour fitting for repentance, evidences the inward change of heart and mind. It is not enough for this minister to only emotionally feel his first love, he must also accompany it with works flowing from that love. Though repentance is the gift of God, we are left free to refuse it, God will not force us.

You will not know at what hour I will come against you: (v3) if they do not watch or wake up Christ will come upon them as a thief, this warning is an echo of the following verses:

- Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. (Matt. 24:42-43) (Luke 12:39-40).

There will be no excuse for those who are taken by surprise when the Lord returns in glory, they will not be able to say that they were in darkness, since the only reason such a thing should happen, is because they were not watching and that they had no present consciousness in their mind of his return or excitement and joy in their heart of his coming. Paul wrote:

- You are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. (1 Thess. 5:4).

This verse clearly shows that the faithful should not be taken by surprise and that the Lord will not come upon them like a thief in the night. The expression, "I will come like a thief," (v3) carries the idea that the Lord will come in a sudden and unexpected manner.

- For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. (1 Thess. 5:2)

But, unlike those who give no thought to the Lord's return those who consciously and joyfully look forward to it will not be taken by surprise. Throughout Scripture God forewarned His people of His impending judgments long beforehand, and that they would suffer the consequences of their sin if they did not repent and turn from their wicked ways. No one should think that they will have time to repent and be spared when the Lord comes to gather the faithful to himself. The Lord will only come like a thief in the night to those who have no inward excitement and joy at the thought of his return in glory. An owner of a house who gives no thought to their home being robbed is taken by total surprise and shock when they find their house emptied of what they treasured, whereas those who are fully aware that they could be robbed, take precautions (i.e., locks on doors and windows, security alarms etc.), and are not taken by the same surprise. Likewise, those who are not prepared and give no thought to Christ return will be taken by surprise when he does return, while those who are prepared and look forward to his return with excitement and joy will not.

- Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure. (Rev. 19:7-8).
- I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 19:7-8).
- One of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" ¹⁴I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:13-14).

Those who have kept their garments undefiled and white through the blood of the Lamb will walk with the Lord here in this world and in the world to come.

REVELATION 3:4

Those in Sardis who have Not Soiled their Garments.

- **Revelation 3:4:** Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled (defiled in KJV) their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

The expression, "you have still a few names in Sardis," refers to the few in the church that not only have an inward passion and communion of love with the Lord Jesus Christ, but whose outward actions and behaviour are also in accordance with the teachings of Jesus. It refers to those who have kept themselves unspotted from the world, meaning that they have not given themselves up to live a lifestyle of indulgent excess, or to the sinful pleasures of this world. Even in such a spiritually dead place where the light of Christ had almost gone out, there were still a few who had kept themselves free from the apathy and worldliness of this church.

They have not soiled (defiled in KJV) their garments: (v4) the word soiled here comes from the Greek word (*moluno*) it means to soil, defile and blacken. For the Lord to speak so harshly, highlights how apathetic and spiritually dead this church was. The garments here refer to their Christian faith and the righteousness the Lord clothes them with.

They will walk with me: (v4) here is the great blessing and comfort to all the faithful, the piercing eyes of the Saviour not only sees their love, their devotion and their passion for him, but also sees their earnest pursuit of him and his ways no matter how dark or godless the world around them maybe.

To walk with Christ: (v4) carries the following six ideas:

1. To walk in companionship, vitality, love and joy with the him.
2. To walk with him by faith and in character and in spirit.
3. To walk before him (meaning, to be consciously aware we are in his sight).
4. To walk worthy of him and in his ways in all we say and do.
5. To walk with him in an individual, personal, unique spiritual relationship.
6. To walk with him wherever he may lead us.

Walking in white with the Lord on earth: (v4) can apply to the faithful walking with the Lord here on earth and to walking with him in heaven, so we will look at both scenarios.

1. **They will walk with me in white:** (v4) the Romans used to clothe their nobles, and victorious competitors deserving of honour in white garments and when the priests and the Levite singers ministered before God they were clothed in white and white garments were worn as a token of joy at festivals, and on birthdays, and at weddings, and such like celebrations.

- The Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets. (2 Chron. 5:12).

God and his holy angels are in Scripture set out to us as clothed in white.

- As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. (Daniel 7:9).

Jesus after being resurrected appears clothed in white.

- And he was transfigured before them, (Peter and James and John) and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. (Matt. 17:2).

White garments are emblems of, holiness, innocence, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control and purity of moral character and of faith. (Gal. 5:22-23). The

expression, “they will walk with me in white,” when applied to the faithful here on earth does not mean that they are absolutely-free from sin, but that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb and continued keeping them white by trusting in the blood that cleanses from all sin and trusting in Christ’s righteousness and not their own self-righteousness. These are the ones who the Lord calls worthy and his friends and who are his companions.

2. **Walking in white with the Lord on earth:** (v4) since white robes were commonly worn on occasions of celebration and great joy this expression also means that those counted worthy will walk in eternity with the Lord in glory, in joy and in perfect holiness.

- I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, (Rev. 7:9)
- It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. (Rev. 19:8).

They have shown themselves worthy to be regarded as followers of the Lamb and to have a character suited for heaven. This does not mean that they have any claim to heaven on the bases of their own merit, or by any virtue of their own works since we are all personally unworthy to be admitted into heaven except on, the basis of our faith and God’s grace. It means that their faith and their character is in line with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who overcome and conquer and are counted worthy and resurrected to glory with Christ will no longer walk by faith in the robe of Christ’s righteousness, since they will be raised in a perfect immortal pure body utterly free from all sin. Future eternal life in heaven is perfected by the absence of all inward and outward sin. It should always be kept in mind that to attain to this glorious eternal state was made possible for us through the suffering of God’s Son on the bloodstained cross of Calvary. It is his cleansing blood and faith in him and God’s grace and a character down here on earth that endeavours to live a life that brings a good testimony to his name that makes us worthy of a white robe of eternal glory.

REVELATION 3:5

I will Never Blot His Name out of the Book of Life.

- **Revelation 3:5:** he one who conquers (he that overcomes in KJV) will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

The promise to the overcomer includes all who have fallen, but have endured in faith and overcome whatever it may have been that caused them to go astray. All who endure in faith to the end will be clothed in white garments meaning they will be made perfect in righteousness and rewarded with eternal glory.

Clothed in white raiment: white, is the heavenly colour, the book of Revelation speaks of white thrones; white horses; white hair; white as snow and white stones. When white is spoken of in a heavenly context it carries the idea of a brilliant and glistening white, like that of snow when the rays of the sun shine upon it, or like the light that dazzled the eyes of Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, when they saw the white robes of the glorified Christ. It symbolises, purity, festal joy, victory and radiant glistening and dazzling glory.

I will never blot his name out of the book of life: (v5) Christ has a Book of Life, which contains a record of all who all in his Kingdom, on the great day of the resurrection he will open this book, before God and all the angels and all those asleep in Christ will rise from the grave and be rewarded according, to what is recorded in this book. The Bible speaks of

two main books, the Book of Life and the Book of the Lamb, plus some other books that record the good and bad people do. When a person is born, their name is written into the Book of Life, if they accept Christ during their life their name is transferred to the Book of the Lamb. If their name is in the Book of the Lamb, they are guaranteed eternal salvation and will be rewarded for their good deeds or suffer loss because of a lack of them, but they will be saved. Paul wrote:

- If anyone builds on the foundation (being the Lord Jesus Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—³each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

This means that those who have their name written in the Book of the Lamb are not judged for salvation by their deeds, but by their faith, but they will be rewarded or suffer loss according, to how they have lived before Christ (i.e., with integrity, honesty, faithfulness and such like things) and how they have lived according, to the law of love. The book of Revelations not only speaks of those who belong to Christ being raised in the first resurrection and reigning with the Lord as priests of God and kings with Christ for a thousand years (signifying a long age of time), but also speaks of a second death that will have no power over those raised in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5-6).

The second death refers to the Great White Throne judgment). At the end of Christ thousand-year reign God Himself descends to earth on a Great White Throne and opens the Book of Life. This book has the names of those not blotted out of the Book of Life and the names that were never entered, into the Lamb's Book of Life. Those whose names have remained in the Book of Life (i.e., kept in the memory of God) are judged by God Himself at the Great White Throne judgment according, to how they have lived their life and according, to their deeds or lack of them which the following verse shows are recorded in another set of books.

- I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. (Rev. 20:12).

Christ is not involved in this judgment this is God the Father Himself descending and judging. If a person's name is not found in the Book of Life they are automatically cast into the lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15) (a symbol of eternal death) (i.e., total annihilation and extinction). Those who are judged favourably according, to what they had done are seen dwelling outside the Holy city the New Jerusalem in which God and Christ are the light of. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life dwell in this heavenly Holy City of God the New Jerusalem with the Lord Jesus Christ and with God.

- Nothing unclean will ever enter it, (the New Jerusalem) nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. 21:27).

The New Jerusalem is the inheritance and reward for those who have remained faithful to Christ from the beginning of time to the end of Christ's glorious millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords on earth, which takes place after the first resurrection. The rest of the dead do not come to life until Christ's millennial Kingdom reign as King of kings and Lord of lords is ended. (Rev. 20:5). For further information concerning The Book of Life and the Book of the Lamb, click or tap [Various Topics](#) and select the title: The Book of Life and the Book of the Lamb.

I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels:
(v5) this is an echo of the following words of Christ's on earth:

- Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 10:32) (Luke 12:8).

This shows that Christ not only has a perfect knowledge of all the faithful and a strong affectionate love for them, but also shows that he knows them by name and approves of them and will before his heavenly Father and the angels declare them as his own. However, in the second half of this Jesus says:

- Whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 10:33) (Luke 12:9).

The general spirit of the church of Sardis was indifference and apathy toward the things Christ valued. Christ will count the few amongst their midst who had not succumbed to this spirit of apathy, worthy and confess their name before his Father and before the angels.

REVELATION 3:6

He who Has an Ear, Let Him Hear what the Spirit says to Churches.

- **Revelation 3:6:** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The expression, "he who has an ear let him hear," carries the idea of having a humble attitude and a mind that is open to listen and believe as they read or hear the word of the Lord, the Gospel message or God's prophetic truths. Without these qualities, the spiritual truths of Christ word cannot be discerned or received. The statement, "he who has an ear let him hear," is used at the close of each of the seven letters to draw attention to what is about to be said, and to denote that it is of special importance and worthy of attention. The statement, "let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches," could also be expressed in the following way, "let him hear what Christ says to the churches."

THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA

REVELATION 3:7

The Holy One, has the Key of David, and Opens and No One Shuts.

- **Revelation 3:7:** "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

To the reader: if the explanations of the previous churches have been read, this section may be skipped as the comments are the same.

NOTE: when reading these seven letters it should be kept in mind that in some of these cities there would have been more than one Christian church, which means that each letter is probably addressed to the head or most dominant church of the city or that all who were Christians in the city were regarded as members of one church, but for convenience met for worship in different places. Whichever it may be the seven messages can be applied to any church in any city of any generation that has comparable circumstances and is in in similar surroundings.

To the angel of the church in Philadelphia: (v1) the English word angel in the Old Testament is from the Hebrew word mal'ak. In the New Testament, the English word angel is from the Greek word aggelos. The word mal'ak in the Old Testament and the word aggelos in the New Testament have sometimes been translated to the English word messenger or messengers while at other times mal'ak and aggelos are translated angel or angels.

Malak: means to dispatch as a deputy, a messenger, an ambassador or a representative it can apply to and angel of God, a king, a prophet, a priest or teacher. The same word is used for the supernatural angels of

God and for human messengers which means it can apply to God's supernatural angels or human men who are sent as messengers.

Aggelos: means a messenger or envoy sent from God to bring tidings. Aggelos is used all, of the time in the New Testament for the supernatural angels of God (except for Luke chapter twenty) but it is also used for human men (i.e., pastors, ministers and such like) which means aggelos can apply to God's supernatural angels or human messengers.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA

The angel refers to the minister of the church. Ministers are referred to as angels, because they proclaim God's word, bring light into darkness and oversee His people and by doing so are doing heavenly work. However, the message is not limited to the minister, but applies to all those in the church who are of the same character as the minister.

Philadelphia: comes from the Greek word (*philadelphos*), from Greek (*philos*) and (*adelphos*). *Philos*, means dear, to be friendly and fond of; it can refer to an associate, a neighbor or a friend. *Adelphos*, means brother, it carries the idea of brotherly and friendly love. The town of Philadelphia was the second city in Lydia. It was built by king Attalus Philadelphus, the king of Pergamos, from who it received its name. The town lay in Lydia about twenty-eight miles southeast of Sardis and was built on high ground nine-hundred feet above sea-level, of the seven churches Philadelphia and Smyrna are the only two that received praise without rebuke and of all seven churches Philadelphia had the longest life as a Christian city.

Philadelphia still exists today as a Turkish town, under the name of Allah Shehr meaning, City of God (i.e., the High Town). It covers a considerable expanse of ground, on one hill with four flat summits on it. From these summits the view of the country, is extremely magnificent. There are gardens and vineyards lying at the back and the sides of the town, and before it one of the most beautiful and extensive plains of Asia. Next to Smyrna, this city has the greatest number of Christians, mostly Greeks, who for the most part speak only Turkish.

The key of the house of David: (v7) the master of a family has the key that opens and shuts all the doors of his house, likewise, David had the key to his royal palace and Christ, the Son of David has the key to his own royal palace, the spiritual city of David, the New Jerusalem. The key in all cases signifies, supreme authority and power. Whoever has the key to the house, not only has the authority and control over that house, but also has unlimited access to it. The expression, "the key of the house of David," carries the idea that in the same way that God called David to be the king of Israel and reside in a Royal Palace, so that he had the sovereign power and authority over his kingdom, likewise in the same way God called Jesus to be the King over his Kingdom so that he has sovereign power and authority over it. Even today when a person does something magnificent to enhance a city or its reputation the Mayor will often give them the key to the city, signifying that they have total access and freedom to go anywhere in the city.

Jesus is the key, he has the supreme and sovereign administration of the key of David in his own hands to open or shut all doors, but it would not be wrong to also say that the Gospel is the key to God's Kingdom. This is because just as there would be no salvation without Jesus, without the Gospel there would be no understanding of God's salvation or knowledge of His grace in Christ, which means that when the focus is salvation, Jesus and the Gospel cannot be separated. With these things in mind it may be best to picture Jesus as the head of the key and the Gospel the stem of the key that unlocks the door and Jesus being the head of the key the one who opens the door. After calling his apostles Jesus gave them the stem of the key (the Gospel) which has the power to save all who would come

to the head of the key, (the Lord Jesus Christ). Jesus can also be, seen as the head of the key in that though he entrusted the Gospel to the apostles they had no power to change or add to any part of it.

Who shuts and no one opens: (v7) the sovereign power to open or shut the door to God's heavenly palace lies solely in the hands of Christ. Only he has the power to decide who is, and who is not to be admitted as only he has the keys of death and eternal life (Re 1:18). He opens the door of heaven by his blood and his righteousness, and gives his people liberty and boldness to enter, into the holiest of all. The power of the keys was given to Peter and the apostles when Christ called them, and to all who share the Gospel, but whatever levels of power Christ gives to his servants, he remains the supreme power, as he is the door to God's heavenly Kingdom, no one can enter except through him. The Gospel is not the door, but it does lead the way to the door and through the Gospel the Lord brings many to the door. Jesus has all authority and power over his church on earth, so that no one can deny any one from entering it who he counts worthy and likewise, no one can allow anyone into it who he deems unworthy.

When he opens the door for the progress of his work, no one can shut it, and on the day of judgment when he returns in glory and raises the faithful and shuts the door no one will be able to open it. Christ has free and unrestrained access to the heavenly palace and the power to admit anyone, or exclude anyone. This means that in his Kingdom he has the absolute control in, regard to admission or exclusion of anyone. He can invite who he chooses and can exclude those who he judges should not be admitted. He will shut the door against the foolish, who sleep away their day of grace and against workers of wickedness, but will open it to the wise and the faithful. In the book of Isaiah, the LORD said He would call his servant Eliakim and clothe him with David's robe and commit David's authority into his hand and that he would be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. The LORD then says:

- I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. ²³And I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place, and he will become a throne of honor to his father's house. ²⁴And they will hang on him the whole honor of his father's house. (Isaiah 22:20-24).

In the same way that the LORD gave the key of David to Eliakim, He gave it to His Son the Lord Jesus Christ who in turn gave it to Peter and the apostles and to all the faithful who share the Gospel. Peter being called of God opened the Gospel door to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1-48); (Acts 11:17-18) especially (Acts 14:27-28). All who have this Gospel key are, able to open the door to God's Kingdom. It should be mentioned: though the Gospel is the key to the Kingdom, if distorted in any way it is robbed of its power to open the door. In Galatians, we read of Paul rebuking Peter, because he was wrongly using the key the Lord had given him (Gal. 2:11-18).

Even today there are ministers who distort the Gospel, by turning it into a message of prosperity, success, good health and a charmed life or rob it of the grace it teaches and turn it into a Gospel of salvation by works. Though such teaches may have brilliant oratory skills and proclaim messages that sound good to the ears and have large followings, it is not the golden key of the Gospel that opens the door to God's Kingdom that they have in their hands, but a useless and rusted key that cannot even unlock the lock on the door let alone open it. (Also, see verse eight).

He that is holy, he that is true: these are two great and glorious titles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

REVELATION 3:8

You have Little Power and Kept my Word and Not Denied My Name.

- **Revelation 3:8:** I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power (little strength in KJV), and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

The statement, "I know your works," refers to their works of faith, love, patience and charity and shows that the Lord sees all that the faithful do for him, especially when they do not hide or keep secret their faith in him when facing ridicule, mockery or persecution as the Philadelphians were doing.

I have set before you an open door: (v8) is a reference to the following verses:

- When they (Paul and Barnabas) arrived, and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. (Acts 14:27).
- I (Paul) will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. (1 Cor. 16:8-9).
- When I (Paul) came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, ¹³my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there, so I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia. (2 Cor. 2:12-13).
- At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I (Paul) am in prison. (Col. 4:3).

These verses show that the open door in this context refers to the faithful having effective opportunities to share the Gospel and share the good God has done for them. (Also, see verse seven).

No one is, able to shut: (v8) how true are these words, the Gospel started with one man the Lord Jesus Christ and his twelve apostles, the prideful and hypocritical Jews and the powerful Romans did all in their power to destroy the Christian faith and throughout its following history it has continually faced opposition and persecution, yet today it is in almost every country worldwide. Truly no man has been able to shut the door on the Gospel going out into the world and neither will any man ever be able to stop it going out into the nations.

I know that you have little power: (v8) (little strength in KJV) may refer to the fact they had:

- No outward power or authority in the city they lived in.
- They were small, in number compared to the other six churches.
- They lacked financially and were poor in worldly goods.
- Due to struggles, hardships and persecution they had little outward help.

You have kept my word and have not denied my name: (v8), in the early era of the church, during times of persecution, Christians were brought before pagan magistrates and required to renounce the name of Christ, and to disown him in a public manner. It is possible that, amidst the persecutions that raged in the early times, the members of the church at Philadelphia had been summoned to such a trial, and they had stood the trial firmly. Even if this was not the case it is certain they would have faced aggressive brutal and cruel persecution and that they did not deny Christ, neither in their confession; in their preaching; in their sharing the Gospel; in their behaviour and speech, nor did they distort Christ's word for their own gain and, advantage and because of their faithfulness a door remained open for them to effectively proclaim the Gospel.

REVELATION 3:9

Jews of the Synagogue of Satan, Will Learn, I have Loved You.

- **Revelation 3:9:** Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet (worship before thy feet in KJV), and they will learn that I have loved you.

The synagogue of Satan refers to the synagogue in their city filled with hostile, fanatical Jews who aggressively set about to destroy all who proclaimed the Christian faith. These Jews no doubt strongly believed themselves to be God's people, because they were descendants of Abraham, and worshipped God, but from heavens view they were in, reality doing the work of Satan, which was aggressively persecuting those proclaiming Christ. Though they were of Jewish descent, and boasted of being Jews, they were not under the influence of God, but under the influence of Satan and doing his work and because of this their assembly deserved to be called Satan's synagogue.

Who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie: (v9) their claim to being a Jew was a false claim. Paul wrote:

- For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God. (Rom. 2:28-29).

They were Jews by name and nation and Jews outwardly who pretended to be religious men, and worshippers of God, but inwardly were prideful hypocrites and spiritually carnal wicked men, under the influence of Satan. John in his letter wrote the following:

- If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (1 John 1:6).

I will make them come and bow down before your feet: (v9) (worship before thy feet in KJV) the promise to Philadelphia church is larger than the promise to Smyrna in that the promise to Smyrna was that the synagogue of Satan would not prevail against the faithful, while the promise to Philadelphia, is that the faithful would cause some of the synagogue of Satan to humble themselves and confess that Christ is in the church. Amongst commentators the two most common thoughts concerning the expression, "they will worship before their feet," are:

1. When Christ returns in glory to gather the faithful to himself, he will receive and exalt into his eternal Kingdom, both Jews or Gentiles, both will be counted as equal and blessed brothers and sisters of Christ. For this reason, it is reasoned by some that the expression, "I will make them bow down before your feet," does not refer to the world to come, but carries the idea that the convinced and converted Jews that were once hostile toward the Christian faith will come to the church and in a lowly and respectful manner acknowledge their former spiritual blindness and confess their sin and faith in Christ and in humble submission join themselves to his church, and worship God and Jesus Christ, their Messiah, King and Saviour. In this context, it also means that those Jews who do convert to the Christian faith will willingly and humbly take the lowest place in the church they were once hostile toward.
2. The second idea is that it applies to the end of the age when Christ returns in glory to judge the world, in this context the expression, "I will make them come and bow down before your feet," would not necessarily mean they would be converted, but that they would be compelled to come and give honour to those they persecuted. It means that they will see that instead of persecuting the faithful church they should have honoured, respected and loved it.

- **Revelation 3:10:** Because you have kept my word about patient (word of my patience in KJV) endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial (temptation in KJV) that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

The church of Philadelphia stands alone in the abundance of praise that Christ passed upon it, but this does not mean that they lived sin free or angelic lives. However, it does show that the Lord recognizes that the dominant focus and central motive of the church was good.

You have kept my word of my patience in: (v10) patience comes from the Greek word (*hupomeno* and *hupomeno*), it means cheerful or hopeful endurance, it carries the idea of constancy in enduring and remaining continually patient while waiting. The Greek word (*hupomeno*), means to stay under and remain. Figuratively it carries the idea of undergoing trials, bearing trials and having fortitude and perseverance and to endure, abide and endure patiently while suffering hardships and trials. In this context, it not only embraces endurance and persistence which the Philadelphians needed to overcome all opposition and sufferings that came against them, but also carries the idea that no trial, no temptation, no bitterness, hatred, opposition or hostility will have any power to turn them away from their faith and doing what is right. The thing that is being kept is "the word of the Lord's patience," this can refer to the following two things:

1. To having patience to overcome trials and temptations.
2. To having patience to remain true to God's word through all the years of faith and continually holding fast to all the Lord said and the Gospel message through the highs and lows, the sorrows and joys and the exciting and mundane seasons of life.

To keep the word of the Lords patience we must inwardly treasure and value the word of the Lord and outwardly obey it. The Psalmist says:

- How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. (Psalm 119:9).

To patiently keep the Lord's word there should be an inward distain toward anything that is contrary to it and a passion to do all that is possible to outwardly keep it. The faithful who love the Lord do not keep the word, because the law demands it, but from the love of Christ and for Christ dwelling in their heart, it is from this love that the word of the Lord is patiently kept. If there is no inward love for the author of the word, there will be no heartfelt value place upon his word and without an inner passion for the Lord's word, there will be no patient, persistence and endurance to keep it when trials, sorrows, hardships and temptations come. To overcome and be victorious the inward must precede the outward. All Christian fruit stems from an inward love, devotion and passion for the Saviour. There is no growth of character without persistent adherence in the face of all opposition and there is no persistent adherence when there is no inward reality of the Saviour who spoke the words. The Philadelphians manifested the patience that the Lord requires in their trials which they had experienced and because they had patiently kept his word, he will keep them during future trials that come upon the world. The fact that they had been patient and submissive is proof that they will be patient and submissive in future trials that are to come, and the fact that the Lord had kept them in their earlier trials is proof that he will keep them in future trials. The Lord does not leave those who have shown that they will not leave him. John is a perfect example of a faithful Christian that showed patient endurance during great tribulation.

- I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. (Rev. 1:9)

The Lords patience is the endurance that he requires from those who follow him, and which he himself practiced as he ministered amongst those who sought, to have him put to death. It is also the patience he

now endures, while waiting until all his enemies be made his footstool and he can be united with the Bride he so earnestly loves. Likewise, his faithful Bride is enduring while they patiently wait for the Groom they deeply love to return in glory and gather them to himself.

All the world: (v10) the following verses show that the expression, “all the world,” can refer to a large district of country, the land of Judah and Israel or the whole Roman Empire or the entire world.

- In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. (Luke 2:1)
- One of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). (Acts 11:28).
- First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. (Rom. 1:8).
- Which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, (Col. 1:6).
- Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing. (Col. 1:5-6).
- All who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain. (Revelation 13:8).

The expression, “all the world,” in the context of this chapter, may only mean that the trial would be so widespread that it embraced all the world, as it was known to be, by those to who this letter was addressed to. It does not have to literally refer to the whole world, or even to all the Roman Empire, but simply to the world or region that was known to them. If there was a widespread calamity in all the country where they resided, it would be biblically right for the inhabitants to say that the calamity came upon all the world. We are not told what the trial refers to, it may have been some form of persecution, or some calamity by disease, earthquake, or famine that was to occur. However, considering the armies of the Roman Empire were aggressively marching across the land destroying those confessing to believe in Christ and their churches the most likely scenario is that it was some form of Roman aggression and persecution.

I will keep you from the hour of trial: (v10) (temptation in KJV), this could apply to either of the following:

1. To the Roman aggression and persecutions that raged in the surrounding regions.
2. To the great trial and temptation that is coming on earth before Christ's returns in glory.

I will keep you from the hour of trial: (v10) (temptation in KJV), the fact that this trial is referred to as an hour could simply mean that it will be a short period, of time or a fixed season of time that will come to an end. Some feel that it may have been during the reign of emperor Trajan who ruled nineteen years from A.D. 98 to 117 He considered Christianity a threat to the Roman Empire and during his reign over ten thousand Christians were put to death. The promise, “I will keep you from the hour of trial,” does not mean that the LORD would literally keep them from the bloody persecutions of the Roman emperors, because the church at Philadelphia was not preserved, nor does it mean that he will keep the Philippians at a distance from temptation, so that they do not have to face it, but that he will save them out of it. It carries the idea that the hour of temptation, trial or testing will not be the hour of them forsaking their

faith. No matter how dark the situation or how great the temptation those whose heart is filled with Christ's love and who are patient and passionate to keep his word, will not succumb to those things that are contrary to his word or an offense to their Saviour. Whatever power this trial or temptation is to come on the earth its power will be distinguished in those who keep their hearts in the love of God and their minds in his word. The power of outward circumstances will always come to tempt the faithful, and their susceptibility to them will be deadened in proportion to the love they have for Christ and his word. The strength of fleshy and sinful passions, envies and longings, will be greatly diminished over those who remain close to their Master. It means that the faithful will be kept from the temptation of apostasy during any trial, troubles or crisis that may come upon the world and not that the LORD would keep them from all calamities, disasters and misfortunes.

I will keep you from the hour of trial means that during such a trial the Lord would keep them by his presence, his love, his grace, his Spirit and his comfort in such a manner that their salvation would in no way be endangered. Though multitudes may forsake their faith, they will not; though they may be afflicted and persecuted with others, they will remain secure in their faith and their salvation.

To try them that dwell upon the earth: (v10) to test or prove who was deeply devoted to the Lord and had true faith and whose faith was only lip service and hypocritical pretence. Hardships and troubles reveal who are lukewarm believers that the Lord will cast out and who are the truly devoted and faithful believers who the Lord will not only keep secure in their salvation, but will also keep them near to him and they will by faith keep themselves close to him, despite fierce persecution and hardships. It would be biblically correct to say that the widespread fierce and powerful invasions of the Roman armies though towns, villages and cities and their persecution of Christians came upon the whole world. It would also be correct to refer to it as a trial that came upon all the earth and there is no doubt that all who confessed to be Christians, but had no love for him dwelling within them would have forsaken their faith in the face of such a trial.

It could also be said that the widespread persecutions that befell Philadelphia sometime later, were a precursor of the great last tribulation to come before Christ's return in glory.

REVELATION 3:11

Hold Fast What You have, so that No One May Seize Your Crown.

- **Revelation 3:11:** I am coming soon (quickly in the KJV). Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

Things that must soon take place: (v11) (shortly come to pass in KJV) the word quickly comes from the Greek word (*tachu*) it means shortly, soon, without delay, swiftly and quickly, it carries the idea of coming suddenly and by surprise. In this verse, it carries the idea that the hour of trial will begin to take place very soon and will continue for a short or set or fixed period in its due season and order until its purpose was accomplished.

I am coming soon: (v11) means that this trial is coming soon and that the LORD will not allow it to go on forever, but will bring an end to it.

Hold fast what you have: (v11) when a person walks through a crowd holding something very precious to them, they grip onto it with a very tight hand, so it cannot be taken from them. Likewise, we should hold fast what Christ has given us in his Gospel and hold fast to him as our Saviour and hold fast to his truth, to his grace and to our faith and hold fast to honesty and integrity. We should keep our wills, mind and heart fixed

upon our Redeemer who laid down his life for us and never let the things of this world so crowd our hearts and minds that he slowly fades away. The sure way to obtain the crown is to never forsake the Lord and Saviour, but patiently endure in faith, then the crown of life and of eternal glory will be our everlasting reward. Worldly temptations, corrupt men, seductive women and things may try to take the crown of the faithful, but nobody can take it from them unless they allow them. This, is why the Lord warns the faithful to hold fast to what they have and to be watchful. Those who holds fast to Christ in this mortal world cannot fail to receive the eternal crown of the future life.

No one may seize your crown: (v11) the crown in focus is not the crown of royalty that kings and emperors wear, but the floral wreath or garland which was laid on the heads of the winners of the Olympic Games and triumphant Commanders of armies and the heads of brides as a symbol, not of dominion, but of a of a festal day of joy, or of a great victory or of a race won. This is the picture that John is presenting to the overcoming Christian in this apocalyptic vision. In, Scripture the crown is spoken of in the following three ways:

1. As a crown of life.
2. As a crown of righteousness.
3. As a crown of glory.

The crown of life: signifies life and glory

The crown of righteousness: signifies reward in that the righteousness we now have on earth by faith will in the resurrection be crowned by the more perfect and spotless righteousness that will be totally free of all blemishes, spots and stains of sin and be far greater in heavenly radiant glory.

The crown of glory: signifies the future and everlasting glory which all those who hold fast to their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and his Gospel will receive as their great eternal reward. This is the inheritance reserved in heaven for all who labour and struggle here in this world as they walk by faith as Abraham did toward the Promised Land. The reward of the overcomer is certain and sure it lays safely guarded in the treasure-house of God with their name engraved upon. Paul in his letter to Timothy wrote:

- There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. (2 Tim. 4:8)

The truth which is taught here is, that we need to be on our constant guard, that, in a world of temptation, where the enemies of truth abound, we are not be robbed of the crown that we might have worn forever. Paul in his letter to the Colossian church wrote:

- Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism (i.e. harsh self-denial) and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind. (Colossians 2:18).

And John in his letter warned:

- Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. (2 John 1:8).

Following are four things that have the potential to take the crown of the faithful:

1. False and deceptive teachers who are skilled in oratory and for their own worldly gain, and advantage distort the Scriptures to proclaim a gospel that appeals to self, pride and ego and promises wealth, health and a charmed life.
2. The lure and enticements of this world to indulge in excessive luxury and sinful worldly pleasures.

3. The believers' own apathy and indifference toward the Gospel and the word of God.
4. Trial's hardships, suffering, grief and troubles.

Notice: in all these things the power to keep ones' crown is in the hands of the believer and no one else. The good news is that as, long as a believer keeps watch against these things and treasures their salvation and the word of God as gold, they will not fall to any of these enticements and have their crown taken from them.

A crown laid up in heaven: though there is a crown laid up in heaven for us, it is possible that it may never come to be our actual possession in the future. This is because the Christian life is lived amongst a multitude of corrupt men and women and a world full of things that have the potential to rob us of our faith and make us unfit to receive the crown. If, in our minds eye we viewed temptations of prideful ambition and of sinful pleasures that gratify the many passions of our fleshy nature and promise so much, as temptations trying to destroy our faith we would see that the purpose of all temptations that surround us is to rob us of our eternal crown that Christ has laid up for us in heaven

REVELATION 3:12

I will Write on Him the Name of My God and the City of My God.

- **Revelation 3:12:** The one who conquers (overcomes in KJV), I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, 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 from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

The one who conquers applies to those who have endured in faith and overcome all trials, hardships, temptations, grief and sorrows and all opposing power that life brought against them.

19

I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God: (v12) the Philadelphian Christians lived amongst stately Greek architecture so they would have been very familiar with the glorious pillars in the temples. The promised reward of those who overcome is that they will be honoured as a pillar in the temple of God. In this context to be as a pillar in the temple of God, can carry the following ideas:

1. Since the promise is to all who overcome the pillar is not a symbol of pre-eminence above others as it sometimes is, but signifies stability and permanence. It carries the idea of all the redeemed permanently dwelling with God and Christ in the eternal temple of God and of Christ, permanently dwelling with the redeemed.
2. Pillars were architecturally designed to support the structure and as an ornament of beauty designed to enhance a, buildings majestic furnishings. The idea here is: God will firmly fix the overcoming and resurrected believer in His Heavenly Kingdom so that they will be immovable. They will shine as brilliant lights of radiant beauty and enhance the royal beauty of God's heavenly temple. This idea is supported by the fact that the resurrected redeemed will be exalted above the angels and be counted as the Lords friends and greatly loved by God the Father.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ would make those who overcome a people of honour and renown in in the Kingdom of heaven. This idea is supported by the following verses:
 - Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:19).

And Jesus will give them a throne to sit upon:

- Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matt. 19:28).

The promise is of the faithful dwelling with God and with Christ in such a glorious, intimate and joyful manner that is far beyond anything that our mind can conceive of on earth. Our mortal, limited mind can only imagine and speculate what life will be like when our body takes on immortality and is utterly free of sin of every kind and we are in the eternal heavenly abode of God and His angels with our King and Saviour.

Never shall he go out of the temple: (v12) carries the following two ideas:

1. Those who overcome will have steady, permanent communion with God and His Son. In the New World, every nerve of our eternal immortal body will be permanently filled with the presence and glory of God and every cell filled with the Spirit of Christ.
2. Those who overcome will be a permanent part of God's heavenly temple, their happiness will be secure forever and there will no more suffering, pain, sorrow or death. They will forever be with God's in His eternal temple in the heavenly city the New Jerusalem.

For further information concerning the glorious and beautiful eternal Holy City New Jerusalem click or tap [Revelation](#) and select chapter 21.

I will write upon him the name of my God: (v12) in ancient times, it was common for the names and cities of victorious conquerors and generals who triumphed in battle and of prominent kings and eminent nobles and persons that were honoured and memorialised to be inscribed upon the temples of their deities or upon memorial stones and placed in or near the temple of their deities. They did this to signify that they were under the protection of the deity. A great number of these inscriptions have been brought from Grecian cities of Europe and Asia, and some from islands in the neighbourhood of Patmos. The expression, "I will write upon him the name of my God," carries the following four ideas:

1. Jesus is so overwhelming thrilled with the faith and character of the overcoming believer that he wants to give them the highest honour, which is to give them his Father's name.
2. When a person writes their name on their possessions it not only declares to all that they belong to them, but also shows that they greatly value them. Likewise, for Jesus to write God's name upon the redeemed, not only expresses how greatly he values and loves them, but also declares to all, that they belong to his heavenly Fathers family.
3. It signifies Jesus complete love toward them and God's complete acceptance of them. There is only way possible by which a spirit can possess another spirit and by which one person can possess another and by which we can all fully possess and belong to God and God can fully possess and belong to us and that way, is by love. It is by God's love that the overcomer surrenders themselves to Him and it is by this love that they desire and are motivated to obey.
4. It may be an allusion to the pure golden plate that had the words, "Holy to the LORD," engraved upon it that the high priest wore on his forehead when he stood before the LORD.
 - You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, 'Holy to the LORD.'³⁷ And you shall fasten it on the turban by a cord of blue. It shall be on the front of the turban.³⁸ It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall bear any guilt from the holy things that the people of Israel consecrate as their holy gifts. It shall regularly be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. (Exodus 28:36-38).

It is certainly true that the resurrected redeemed will be counted Holy to the LORD and established as His perfect heavenly royal priesthood. In chapter twenty-two it is written:

- They (God's resurrected servants) will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. (Rev. 22:4).

Jerusalem was the place where God's temple was built, and where the worship of God was celebrated and because of this, it came to symbolise the church which is the dwelling-place of God on earth. At the moment, the church is made up of mortal, sinful members saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace. In contrast to this the New Jerusalem (or New Church) will be made up of immortal perfect members made perfect in every way. When the name of God, the name the new Jerusalem and Jesus new name is written on the overcomer it will signify that they belong to the Eternal Heavenly City and the City belongs to them. Today we would say they are given the key to the city, meaning they have complete access to all that is within the city. At this present time, the citizenship of the faithful is now hidden, but when they enter through the gates into the Heavenly City their citizenship will be clearly visible for all to see. This was the city that Abraham looked for, spoken of in the following verses:

- By faith he (Abraham) went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:9-10).
- Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. (Rev. 22:14).

The idea of having the name of the City of God written on the overcomer, may indicate that wherever the resurrected, immortal faithful go in all earthly and heavenly worlds they will be clearly recognized as people belonging to the Holy City New Jerusalem and as those who have all the royal rights to enjoy its privileges. We cannot know what the name of God, the name the new Jerusalem and Jesus new name will be until that glorious day when our mortal bodies put on immortality, and we are free of every kind of indwelling sin and made utterly clean and pure. Until then only our Saviour knows what this new name will be. We may make some good suggestions, but no matter how good they maybe they still, remain speculations. However, what we can know for sure is that the receiving of these names signifies that we will be completely bonded by love to God forever. The last stamping of these three inscriptions, (i.e., the name of God, the new name of Christ and the name of the City) being stamped upon the victor, is the final perfecting and seal of the Christian's faith and life. It will stand as a declaration to all who look upon them that they are the exalted eternal sons and daughters of God. Jesus said:

- Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. (John 12:25)

If we yield ourselves to God and depart from being our own masters we will reach that glorious eternal state when we will be wholly God's and His name will be stamped on us in such a manner that every eye that looks, whoever they may be, shall know whose we are and who we serve.

REVELATION 3:13

Let them Hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.

- **Revelation 3:13:** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The statement, "he who has an ear let him hear," is used at the close of each of the seven letters to draw attention to what is about to be said, and to denote that it is of special importance and worthy of attention. The

proclamation, "let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches," could also be expressed in the following way, "let him hear what Christ says to the churches." It carries the idea of having a humble attitude and a mind that is open to listen and believe, as the Lord's message of truth, the Gospel and his prophetic word is proclaimed. Without these qualities, the spiritual truths of Christ's word cannot be discerned or received.

THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA

REVELATION 3:14

The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness.

- **Revelation 3:14:** "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.'

To the reader: if the explanations of the previous churches have been read, this section may be skipped as the comments are the same.

NOTE: when reading these seven letters it should be kept in mind that in some of these cities there would have been more than one Christian church, which means that each letter is probably addressed to the head or most dominant church of the city or that all who were Christians in the city were regarded as members of one church, but for convenience met for worship in different places. Whichever it may be the seven messages can be applied to any church in any city of any generation that has comparable circumstances and is in similar surroundings.

To the angel of the church in Laodicea: (v1) the English word angel in the Old Testament is from the Hebrew word mal'ak. In the New Testament, the English word angel is from the Greek word aggelos. The word mal'ak in the Old Testament and the word aggelos in the New Testament have sometimes been translated to the English word messenger or messengers while at other times mal'ak and aggelos are translated angel or angels.

Malak: means to dispatch as a deputy, a messenger, an ambassador or a representative it can apply to an angel of God, a king, a prophet, a priest or teacher. The same word is used for the supernatural angels of God and for human messengers which means it can apply to God's supernatural angels or human men who are sent as messengers.

Aggelos: means a messenger or envoy sent from God to bring tidings. Aggelos is used all of the time in the New Testament for the supernatural angels of God (except for Luke chapter twenty) but it is also used for human men (i.e., pastors, ministers and such like) which means aggelos can apply to God's supernatural angels or human messengers.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA

The angel refers to the minister of the church. Ministers are referred to as angels, because they proclaim God's word, bring light into darkness and oversee His people and by doing so are doing heavenly work. However, the message is not limited to the minister, but applies to all those in the church who are of the same character as the minister.

Laodicea: was situated on six or seven hills and encompassed a large space of ground half way between Philadelphia and Colossae, and not far from Hierapolis. It received its name from Laodice, wife of Antiochus the second king of Syria, by whom it was rebuilt and beautified. Its trade prospered the city and enriched the population. Its many remaining ruins of stone columns and of three theatres and a circus arena with fifty steps

leading down into it which was, capable of containing about thirty-thousand people show that at one-time Laodicea would have been a very great city. However, of the seven churches, the doom of Laodicea seems to have been the most severe. It is now called Eski Hisar, or the Old Castle; and though it was once the mother church of sixteen bishops, it now lies desolate, not even inhabited by shepherds; and does not even have chapel, where God is praised.

The words of the Amen: (v14) the word amen means true and certain. It is a very apt title for the Lord Jesus Christ as he is the way the truth and the life, (John 14:4) and this church is the last of the seven churches of Asia. It is a title most likely used to show that what he was about to say was final and true and to give special force to his message to the Laodicean church and impress it on their minds.

The faithful and true witness: (v14) this is an extension and amplification of the title, "The Amen," and refers to Jesus who while on earth was a faithful the true witness for God and His truth and His revelations. Jesus approves of nothing except what His Heavenly Father approves of and testifies only of what he has seen and knows and is true. He will also be a swift and true witness against the ungodly at the day of judgment.

The beginning of God's creation: (v14) amongst theologians there are various ideas as to what this verse means, the five most common are: -

1. Jesus existed prior to the beginning and created the universe and is the author of all things and is therefore God.
2. Jesus was the first created being and as such is the head of the universe and supreme ruler over all.
3. Jesus was not created, but existed with God from the beginning and together they created the universe.
4. Jesus is the beginning of creation in the sense that he was the central and principal focus of God's eternal mind and foreordained eternal plan for the earth and mankind's salvation.
5. Jesus is the beginning and head of God's spiritual creation since he rose from the dead as the first-fruits of the faithful.

To discover which of these five fit the words, "the beginning of God's creation," let's begin at Revelation chapter thirteen which says:

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

Here we read that Jesus was slain from the foundation of the world, meaning, the beginning of time, yet we know that this was not so. Peter wrote:

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

This verse speaks of Jesus death being in the eternal mind of God and His eternal foreordained plan of salvation for mankind, before the foundation of the world, meaning, before the beginning of time, yet the previous verse speaks of Jesus death being from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8). It can be spoken of this way because Jesus was the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation from the very beginning. Jesus death and resurrection, was not an after-thought on God's part, it was certain to happen, and because of this certainty it could be spoken of as having happened from the beginning of time. This same principal applies to the words, "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation." This proclamation means that from the foundation of the world (i.e., before the beginning of time), it was planned and purposed in God's eternal mind and eternal

foreknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ would be the faithful and true witness for mankind's salvation. Peters words, "Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for your sake," (1 Peter 1:20) does not mean that Jesus existed before the foundation of the world, but that he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, meaning Jesus was the central focus of God's eternal plan that He purposed in His eternal and divine mind before the world began. It is in this sense that Peter says Jesus was foreknown and, in this sense that John wrote the words, "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation." Consider the following:

- An architect long before a building is constructed plans the entire structure in his mind, he sees every detail of it in vivid clarity long before the builders begin to construct it and long before the workers even set foot on the site where it is to be built.
- An excited expectant mother plans in her mind her baby's room long before the baby is born, she not only sees in her mind the design and colours of that room, but also the lighting, furniture and clothing long before the child is born. In the same manner, God planned and purposed in his timeless mind that Christ would be the central focus of His sovereign plan for mankind's eternal salvation long before Jesus came into the world.

NOTE: the cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like an unseen spiritual river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ. (Rev. 13:8) (1 Peter 1:18-20). This shines a glorious spotlight on the truth that whether a man or woman is of the Old or New Testament we are all saved by the same cleansing power, the same cleansing blood and the same Deliverer, King and Saviour. This is because God in his eternal mind planned and purposed before time began that His Son the Lord Jesus Christ would be the Saviour of all mankind for all eternity. Truly, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22).

Words of comfort and encouragement: since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has, to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states:

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim:

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

REVELATION 3:15

You are Neither Cold nor Hot, I would that You Were Cold or Hot!

- **Revelation 3:15:** I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!

Cold: in this context denotes the state of the unsaved, it refers to those who are spiritually lifeless and spiritually dead toward Christ. There is no hypocrisy or pretence of belonging to the Christian faith. It is the same language we use when we speak of a person being cold toward another or as having a cold or icy heart.

Hot: in this context denotes a person having a warm and zealous passion in their love for Christ and an intensity of faith, and a zeal and fervent spirit in their service for the Lord, spoken of in the following verse: -

- Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. (Rom. 12:11).

The word hot is translated, zealous it literally means boiling with heat. The zeal and fervency Paul speaks of is not emotion and zeal that is worked up, as this type of emotion and zeal will sooner or later fade, nor is it pretended emotion and zeal, as this type of emotion breeds hypocrisy. The zeal Paul has in focus is that zeal that stems from knowledge of the Lord, especially of the Gospel and from a heartfelt love of Christ and gratitude for the sacrifice that he made so that we may be saved by his righteousness and not our own. True Christian passion and zeal stems from the head and the heart working together. Knowledge touches the heart and the heart responds according, to the knowledge. The only way in which a Christian can whole-heartily increase their zeal and passion is by increasing their knowledge of the truths that feed it. To do this a believer needs to meditate upon the great truths of Scripture, especially the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Gospel until its message becomes a reality in the heart.

I know thy works: (v15) their ministry, service, nature, character, personality and behaviour, conduct, actions and deeds. Good or bad, there is nothing that is hidden from the Lord's eternal and piercing eyes.

You are neither cold nor hot: (v15) meaning that they were without affections and love toward God and Christ, and toward his people, his ways and his truths and were devoid of any fervency of spirit in the service of the Lord and for the truths of the Gospel. Though they had an outward form of godliness they had no inward passion for it. They were indifferent to the things that the Lord values and holds dear and gave no thought toward him during their daily lives. They no doubt adhered to their outward religious ceremonial rites and kept the holy days and their religious customs and traditions and thought of themselves as being godly, but their faith was devoid of inward spiritual life. Following are three reasons why the Lord would have such a disdain for this type of Christian:

1. Their indifference and apathy to what the Lord values brings a bad testimony to his name and the Christian faith.
2. Their lack of inward spiritual life gives a false opinion of the Christian faith to the world, since those who see such apathy toward God would view the Christian faith as having no value, no joy and no impact for good upon the heart, and others could conclude that it had no real power to bring any comfort or satisfaction to the inner most being.
3. Those seeking God and spiritual truth would have no interest in seeking the Lord Jesus Christ and Christianity when they see such heartless and apathetic Christians.

If they were cold (i.e., unsaved), without any thought, confession or pretence of belonging to the Christian faith, there would be more hope of them being saved, than those who perform all the outward religious practises, but have no inward spiritual life and love toward Christ. The reason for this is that those who are unsaved know they are unsaved, whereas those who outwardly adhere to religious practices, believe that by doing them they are made right with God and therefore see no need to change.

I would that you were: (v15) the wish here is not that they would grow cold rather than remain in their lukewarm state, it is more an expression of regret that they are among those who are in a condition which is liable to self-deception and to bringing shame to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. Added to this as, long as they are in this state of self-deception, apathy and indifference there is nothing the Lord can do with them and nothing more that God can bring upon their conscience to spiritually awaken them. The Lords words, "I would that you were," shine a light upon the reality that the Lord will not force himself or his ways upon any of us. The Lord would prefer that they were either cold or hot to the state they are now in. Anything is better than this condition of luke-warmness, where love is professed, but does not exist and where vows have been made, but are not fulfilled. It is clear why the Lord would prefer that they would be hot; but perhaps for some, no so clear as to why he would prefer a state of utter coldness, rather than a state where there was a confession of Christ, but no inward spiritual life or real love?

The reason for this is that those who openly proclaim they have no interest in religion are being honest, there is no concealment or pretence and because of this there is still hope of them being converted and saved. We must never think that Christ wishes that any person would be cold, the statement implies that the condition of an atheist, or non-believer, is more hopeful than that of a cold hearted, formal hypocrite that has an outward form of godliness. Neither the godly pretender or the atheist please God and both are destined to condemnation, but it is better not to have known the truth than knowing it and then to live contrary to it. Jesus said:

- The one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more. (Luke 12:48).

And Peter wrote:

- It would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. (2 Peter 2:21).

Generally, speaking it is more agreeable to have a thing entirely hot, or entirely cold, than to be neither and so the Lord uses this expression to show his loathing toward luke-warmness, and that it is better to be ignorant of the Christian faith than to be a vain, carnal professor of it. This type of self-deception was the Laodiceans danger, because no one who believes they are good sees any need for change. The prideful and the hypocrite do not know that they are prideful and a hypocrite and therefore cannot see any need for repentance.

REVELATION 3:16

I will Spit You Out, because You are Neither Hot nor Cold.

- **Revelation 3:16:** So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit (spue in KJV) you out of my mouth.

Luke warmness carries the idea of indifference, insincerity and lacking vitality, passion, devotion and earnestness. In the context of this verse it carries the idea that though the Laodiceans were not utterly indifferent to God, they were not sincere in their confession of Him. They could be best

described as being of that group that has an interest in religion or to that group who though they lack inner spiritual life, they adhere to outward religious practises, believing that by doing so it will secure their entry into heaven. The fact they said they were rich when in, reality they were spiritually poor shows how much they had their hearts set upon worldly riches. They could be likened to Christians who would rather keep in good with the world, and seek pleasure and happiness from the world than suffer any inconvenience for Christ, or face any criticism, or abandon any comfort for the Lord's sake. Like those who love the things of the world they saw themselves clothed in rich and beautiful garments, but Christ saw them as being naked. They valued their worldly rags more than they valued the righteous garments of Christ. They confessed to be of the Christian faith which should fill the heart with love and zeal in the service of the Lord, but there was only deadness and indifference to Christ and his cause.

They were like those who confess to follow Christ, but place more value upon worldly riches more than they value the word and the Lord himself. Their love for prosperity and the things of the world spiritually paralysed them and hardened their hearts toward the love of God. A lukewarm heart prevents a believer from experiencing the presence and the love, grace and joy of the Lord. Due to this and a lack of commitment those who are lukewarm live a life of religious pretence and a worldly lifestyle contrary to Christ's word and his character and by doing so they bring a bad testimony to his name and turn the unsaved against the Christian faith. A lukewarm heart stems from the love for secular things and worldly riches, pleasures, luxury and possessions and placing great value upon what self-desires rather than what the Lord desires. The Laodiceans were blind to their pathetic spiritual state believing they were secure in Christ. Their spiritual state was so bad that if they did not repent and change their attitude and their ways, they were in danger of hearing the Lord say:

- I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. (Matt. 7:21-23).

NOTE: if the lukewarm state is a transitional stage leading to a far warmer spiritual state as a believer grows in the Lord then it is a desirable state, but if it is an abiding ongoing state and is believed to be a safe state (as it was with the Laodiceans) then it is a most fatal state. This, is why Christ desired that they were cold rather than lukewarm. Had they been cold (unsaved) there would be a consciousness of their lack and some hope that they could be revived, because there is more hope of salvation for those who are of the world who have never heard the Gospel of grace than for those who have, but are indifferent to the call and gift of God that they have been given.

I will spit (spue) you out of my mouth: (v16) the word spue comes from the Greek word (*emeo*) and means to vomit, this extremely harsh language shines a spotlight upon how much disdain the Lord has toward prideful, hypocritical believers confessing to be Christian, but giving it only lip service and living as they please.

REVELATION 3:17

I am Rich, I have Need of Nothing, but You are Wretched.

- **Revelation 3:17:** For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable (miserable in KJV), poor, blind, and naked.

Their boasts that they are rich, prospered and need nothing, are not verbal boasts, but express the inward and mental attitude of their mind, it means that they believed they had everything and were, in need of nothing. They were rich in worldly goods (unlike the church in Smyrna), but their very wealth led them into a lukewarm kind of religion. Being comfortable and at ease in this world they were comfortable and at ease with their spiritual state. They were like those in Christ Kingdom, who

even today believe they are spiritually rich, because they are worldly rich. They believed (as many do today) that worldly success and prosperity was a sign of godliness and, because of this mistaken belief supposed themselves to be spiritually rich. Even today there are religious churches that feel they are spiritually rich and blessed by God, not because of the spiritual growth amongst their members, but because of their opulent buildings, vast amounts of money and enormously large congregations. There is a danger that those who possess great wealth, especially if they are lukewarm, to become self-complacent and satisfied and feel that although they may not give much thought to the things of God or to the Lord himself, yet they are on, the whole blessed and spiritually rich.

If they are not already at that stage were the Lord would spew them out of his mouth, they are in great danger of becoming such a believer if they don't change their mindset. A common attitude and illusion amongst many of those who have abundance and who crave after worldly wealth and riches and are satisfied and feel that they have enough of everything, not knowing they are almost spiritually dead is to become self-complacent and indifferent to the things of the Lord and the things he values. Those who do have such an abundance are, able to sit down in contentment and ease. This, is why there is a universal desire to be rich, but with such worldly wealth comes the danger to indulge in excess, indulgent luxury and worldly pleasures and being fulfilled with these, seeing no need to seek after anything else, much like the rich man in the following parable Jesus taught.

- The rich man thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?'
¹⁸And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry. (Luke 12:17-19).

The Laodiceans like the rich man in this parable, had no idea how spiritually blind and how spiritually lacking their condition was. It was so lacking that the Lord refers to them as being wretched and miserable to highlight their dismal spiritual state, and perhaps in the hope that such strong language would awaken them to it, since they thought the exact opposite. It should be mentioned here that though the Lord refers to them as being in a wretched and miserable state it does not mean that they were miserable in themselves in fact they were happy with themselves. They are referred to as being wretched and miserable, because all their religious works had no power to save them and therefore their entire church life and all they did in the name of Christ was vain (i.e., counted for nothing).

You are naked: (v17) the following verses show that salvation is often represented as a garment:

- When the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. ¹²And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. (Matt. 22:11-12).
- They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been. (Rev. 6:11).
- I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, (Rev. 7:9).
- One of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" ¹⁴I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:13-14).

The declaration that the Laodiceans were naked is equivalent to saying that they had no faith and no salvation. They were without the covering of Christ's righteousness and therefore like one that had no clothing. They were like those in Christ's Kingdom who adorned themselves with

gorgeous worldly robes and their spirit with rags. It appears that they were so puffed up in their own self-righteousness that they lacked one of the greatest blessings of life, which is to have insight into ones' own spirit and character. Without this insight, there is no perception of what is wrong or lacking in one's own nature, and because of this blindness there is no inward motivation to change what is wrong. This is one of the major reasons adults often continue in the bad habits they developed as a child and teenager (i.e., anger, jealousy, lack of communication skills or self-control etc.). If there is no insight into seeing that something is wrong, there is no motivation to change it.

REVELATION 3:18

Buy from Me Gold Refined by Fire, so You Maybe Clothed in White.

- **Revelation 3:18:** I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

Gold: in this context signifies faith and love which produces passion and zeal.

Gold refined by fire: (v18) fire burns off the dross (everything that is worthless) and leaves only pure gold.

In the context of the unsaved, the expression, "buy gold refined by fire from the Lord," means, lay aside whatever stands in the way of accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as ones Saviour, Lord and King and do everything that is needed to accept him. In the context of those who already believe it means, to lay aside everything that hinders them from being fully committed to him and hinders them from following him in a manner that brings a good testimony to his name. It means to lay hold of all the truth concerning Christ and meditate on them until they kindle a flame of passion in the heart and keep the flame burning until the Lord is made their own personal Saviour and he becomes their true treasure.

29

Possessing the Lord's wealth makes even the lowest paupers truly rich. There is nothing else that satisfies the hearts craving or that supplies our every spiritual need as the love and grace of Christ does. To buy the gold Christ offers one must do what the apostle Paul advised the Ephesians to do in the following verses:

- Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-23).

But it does not stop at accepting the Lord in the beginning, but is an ongoing process. As we journey toward our eternal homeland our faith is constantly being purified by the furnace of affliction, grief, sorrow and troubles that we encounter. Buying from Christ, does not refer to works and deeds, but to faith, it is responding to the Gospel invitation. It is giving self away that we may be filled with the riches of Christs Spirit; it is abandoning all trust in self and coming to the Lord with nothing in our hand, but a desire to know him.

Peter in his letter wrote:

- The tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:7)

Gold is the most precious of the metals, and the most valued, spiritually it signifies faith that possesses Christ. It is only this faith that can make the Laodiceans truly rich with the favour and friendship of the Redeemer, they would have all that they really needed to be spiritually fulfilled.

NOTE: it should be highlighted here that the gift of God is salvation and that the word buy does not imply that we can, by any work or self-effort, purchase God's free-gift. The purchase money consists in the laying aside of all self-righteousness to earn Christ's salvation and forsaking ones' own self-sufficiency and giving up of all things that would prevent us from receiving his gift.

Cloth yourself in white that your nakedness is not seen: (v18) the wealth that the Lord calls the Laodiceans to buy from him belongs mostly to their inward life; the white garments that he offers them to wear is his own perfect righteousness which they are to put on by faith. They are to remove their garments of self-righteousness and replace them with Christ's righteousness the true and perfect righteousness that Christ clothes the faithful with and that leads to salvation and eternal life. Without being covered with Christ's robe of righteousness we all stand naked before God, meaning our sin is uncovered before His eyes. It is Jesus righteousness and not our own that makes us acceptable to God. Everyone who stands before God clothed in their own righteousness will be standing before him in filthy rags and in this sense, will not only be found naked, but also be ashamed.

Anoint your eyes, so that you may see: (v18) (anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see in KJV), the word eye-salve occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It was type of eye ointment or compounded of various substances supposed to have a healing quality for diseased, sore or weak eyes. Applying the eye-salve helped the eyes to heal and to see clearly, much like our eye drops and sprays today. The reference is, to healing their spiritual vision. It carries the idea that the grace of the Gospel enables people who were before blind to see clearly the character of God and convict their conscience of their own sin and open their mind to see the glory of Christ and his love, righteousness, grace and salvation. The Lord here is telling the Laodiceans to recognize their true apathetic spiritual state and to stop living in the illusion that they are united to him, when all the while he is about to spew them out of his mouth (i.e., cast them out of his Kingdom).

REVELATION 3:19

As many as I Love I Reprove and Discipline, so Repent.

- **Revelation 3:19:** Those whom I love (as many as I love in KJV), I reprove (Rebuke in KJV) and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

This verse could be expressed in the following manner, "Do not imagine that this severe rebuke, proceeds from any unkindness toward you, rather it stems from love and a deep concern for your immortal inheritance. My desire is not to harm you, but to heal you." Even an earthly father who loves his children disciplines them for their own well-being, if he did not they would never learn self-control, never learn that they cannot do as they please and never grow to a mature adult. All parents who love their children know that it is important and wise to disciple their children and if they fail to do so they will have problems with them as they grow older.

Be zealous and repent: (v18) following are the two stages to repentance:

1. A serious consciousness of present sin and a clear vision of past shortcomings, and an abhorrence of these.
2. There is a determined change of attitude in the mind and heart that results in a change of purpose and a new spiritual beginning.

Repentance is sorrow for the past, blended with a steadfastness to begin a new way of life and fresh beginnings. True heartfelt repentance will be followed by joyful gladness and a change of mind and purpose and a heartfelt personal self-consciousness of Christ's great and infinite love.

When a person gives themselves up to the Lord's word and his Spirit their eyes are opened to see spiritual things, but to be filled with Christ's hidden treasure they must repent of their indifference and lack of love to receive from Christ the white raiment he purchased and provided for them on the bloodstained cross of Calvary. There will never be any great outburst of spiritual life in an individual or in a lukewarm church without humble repentance preceding it. Prior to the Lord telling the Laodiceans, "to be zealous and repent," he warned them that, he disciplines those he loves, which means that the Lord is warning them to be quick and enthusiastic to feed upon the great truths of the Gospel and repent, before he comes with his hand of discipline.

REVELATION 3:20

I Knock at the Door, if Anyone Opens it, I will Eat with Him.

- **Revelation 3:20:** Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

There are two different interpretation of this verse, some make it a declaration of Christ's readiness to come into the hearts of those who will receive him and to give them spiritual life, communion and fellowship with himself, while others apply it to Christ's return in glory to gather those in his Kingdom to himself and the last judgment. The problem with applying it to Jesus return in glory is that he is not returning to gather sinners to himself, but to gather the faithful who already belong to his Kingdom so there will be no knocking at any door, but the sound of the last trumpet calling them to himself. For this reason, we will apply it to Christ by his Gospel and Spirit graciously coming to the door of the heart and conscience of sinners and knocking, signifying his gentle voice crying, "Open! Open unto Me."

Following are six things to notice with this interpretation in mind:

31

1. The door is closed, and that it is not those behind the door seeking Jesus, but Jesus coming to them, he is the initiator of salvation and not the sinner.
2. Jesus knocks, and then it is up to the sinner to open the door, Jesus will never force the door open or impose himself upon anyone. He stands outside the door knocking with the desire the door will be opened. He invites, but it is up to the sinner to accept the invitation.
3. The entire responsibility of accepting or rejecting Jesus gift of salvation lies within the power of the sinner standing behind the door.
4. Jesus never stops knocking, his voice (through the preaching of the Gospel) has continually gone out through his faithful churches, ministers and followers in all generations and is still going out.
5. When the door is opened, the resurrected Lord comes by his Spirit, his presence, his love, his grace and his comfort and in this way, he feasts with the one who opened the door. This carries the idea that Jesus by his Spirit of love, comfort and grace will spiritually abide with the one who opened the door until he returns in glory to gather them to himself.
6. No one is without hope, if they open the door Jesus will willingly enter and fill the heart of even the lowliest of Adam's children with his love and grace and receive them to himself. When we keep in mind that it is the Laodiceans who this letter is addressed to and that their conduct had been so loathsome and offensive to him who stands outside the door we get an insight into his enormous grace, especially when we see that should they open the door he will enter in and feast with them.

I stand at the door, and knock: these words of Jesus shine a spotlight upon the truth that the attempt at reconciliation begins with the Saviour, it is not the sinner going out to meet him, but the Saviour presenting

himself at the door of the heart of the sinner desiring their friendship. This is in harmony with the following verse:

- God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).

Christ came to seek and to save the lost. The Gospel invitation is universal and to be made to all the world and not just a part of it. This invitation is the common theme throughout the Bible.

- Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. (Isaiah 55:1).
- On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. (John 7:37).
- The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. (Revelation 22:17).

Though this message was originally addressed to the Laodicean church it is a universal message, the invitation of the Gospel goes out to every human being worldwide. Every individual of every nation should know that it is Jesus desire to enter through the door as their friend, if the heart is willing the Lord will enter with joy.

If anyone hears my voice: (v20) meaning if anyone embraces the voice of his word, his Spirit, his Gospel, his love, his grace, displayed on the bloodstained cross of Calvary and proclaimed through his faithful ministers and all who share the Gospel and open the door to him, he will joyfully enter with affection and dwell in their heart by faith, love and grace.

I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me: (v20) in this world and in the next. This is an image of intimacy and friendship. During these early years' supper was the principal social meal. The idea is, that between the Saviour and those who would receive him there would be the intimacy that friends who sit down to eat a meal together have. It is common in all countries in all generations, to eat together, to break bread together as an act of friendship, this is what the Saviour is promising those who open the door to him. Following are three universals truths that are taught here:

1. The invitation of the Gospel is made to all people (if any man hears my voice).
2. It is Christ who originates and moves toward reconciliation and friendship (behold, I stand at the door and knock).
3. We are all free to choose to open the door or not, we are the only ones who have control over our will and what we do (if any man will hear my voice, and open the door).

Should anyone reading this feel that they have fallen too far to be received again into Christ's Kingdom and family, they should be encouraged by the knowledge that this crowning promise was originally made to the Laodiceans, the most loathing of the seven churches, but even though their faith was greatly lacking, they were given a great hope which if embraced would dispel all despair. Though the Laodiceans love for their Saviour had sunk low, it often only takes the smallest spark of grace to fan dying love into the mightiest flame.

REVELATION 3:21

I will Grant them to Sit on My Throne.

- **Revelation 3:21:** The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

NOTICE: there are two thrones God the Fathers throne and Christ His Sons throne. Christ himself had temptations and conflicts; he overcame them all, and was more than a conqueror, those made like to him in his trials, shall be made like to him in glory and share his throne. To share Christ's throne is the crowning promise and climax of the faithful's salvation. The apostle Paul wrote:

- We would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. (2 Cor. 5:8).
- If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. (Philip. 1:22-23).

Paul's attitude toward death was that if he died it would not be loss, but gain for him. (Philip. 1:21). It should also be highlighted here that the focus of Paul's gain was not all the glory, beauty and majesty of heaven, but being with the Lord he so deeply loved and who so deeply loved him. This is the difference between the Christian faith and most other religions and spiritual movements. The primary theme of most religions and spiritual movements is about adhering to religious or occult rites and practices or making oneself worthy by keeping laws or obtaining some spiritual state in the mind through meditation, whereas the primary theme of the Christian faith is falling in love with the Saviour who ascended from the bloodstained cross of Calvary and clothes those who come to him with his perfect and royal robes of righteousness.

All those who sit down on the Lord's throne will be made kings and priests to him during his millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords establishing God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, peace and joy on earth, during this age Christ will reign gloriously and set up God's Kingdom amongst the nations.

- The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations. (Rev. 2:26).

NOTE: the words "I will grant him to sit with me on my throne," are highly figurative (i.e., not all the faithful will be able to sit on a single throne), the idea is that they will all be highly exalted and forever near to their King. The Bible gives us glimpses of heaven and eternity, but the reality of what heaven will look like is far beyond our comprehension and because of this truth, we should always keep in mind that no matter how breathtakingly beautiful the interpretation we may present, it most likely falls far short of what heavens beauty and glory will be.

Following are the seven stages from Christ's return in glory to eternity.

1. Jesus returns in glory and those who died in faith come to life and the faithful who are alive are gathered up to be with them in glory to reign with Christ as kings and priests during his millennial reign, this is the first resurrection. The second death will have no power over those who attain to this resurrection.
2. Jesus millennial reign begins, during this new Kingdom age everything that withstands and opposes God, and is wicked and corrupt is restrained by the authority and rule of the Lord Jesus Christ who is reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords over the nations.
3. The Kingdom age of Christ comes to an end and the armies of the rebellious and self-willed nations who refuse to submit to God and who defy Christ's rule attempt to attack Jerusalem, but fire comes down from heaven and consumes them.
4. God Himself descends on a great White Throne and the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead and they stand before the Throne of God.

5. The Book of Life and some other heavenly books are opened and those standing before God are judged, according, to what they had done and according, to what is written in the other heavenly books. Those counted unworthy are cast into the lake of fire (a symbol of eternal death) (i.e., total and utter extinction) this is called the second death.
6. The Holy City New Jerusalem: comes down to earth out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
7. Eternity begins there is no more death, sorrow, suffering, weeping and pain and ETERNITY begins in all its majestic royal fullness.

For further information, click or tap [Various Topics](#) and select the title: The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

REVELATION 3:22

He who has an Ear, Let Him Hear: (v22)

- **Revelation 3:22:** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

The expression, "he who has an ear let him hear," carries the idea of having a humble attitude and a mind that is open to listen and believe as they read or hear the word of the Lord, the Gospel message and God's prophetic truths. Without these qualities, the spiritual truths of Christ word cannot be discerned or received. The statement, "he who has an ear let him hear," is used at the close of each of the seven letters to draw attention to what is about to be said, and to denote that it is of special importance and worthy of attention. The statement, "let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches," could also be expressed in the following way, "let him hear what Christ says to the churches." It, is interesting to notice that the last church of the seven is the lowest in spiritual state.

34

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
