

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION CHAPTER 3

### The Church in Sardis - Vs.1-6

Vs. 1 - Jesus describes Himself with the same terminology He used to introduce Himself to the seven churches - Rev.1:4,16. The seven spirits who stand before Him in the Rev.1:4 are said to rest on Him in Is.11:2-5; Rev.5:7.

- 1) Spirit of the Lord
- 2) Spirit of wisdom and understanding
- 3) Spirit of council and strength
- 4) Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord

He is qualified to judge righteously, and He will judge the church in Sardis. The leaders of the churches are held in Christ's hand, which means that they are responsible to Christ and will be required to give an account to the Lord Himself.

This church has a reputation - a name - the world is unimpressed, but Christ knows their deeds - that they are really dead!

NOTE: There is no commendation for this church, just judgment if she doesn't wake up - a church with a name, but no real substance; Successful in the world's eyes but empty in Gods.

Vs. 2 - Wake up (as a church) Eph.5:15-17 esp. vs.14 (as individual members of the church). Strengthen the things that remain, which are dying. Their works are not achieving God's will - Heb.10:7-10.

### Vs. 3 - Remember

- 1) what you have received - Lk.12:48
- 2) heard
- 3) keep it "and"
- 4) repent

If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief at an hour you won't expect - Mt.24:42-44; 25:13; I Thes.5:2-6; 2 Pet.3:10. (It will always be unexpected when we live not expecting).

Vs. 4 - Invitation and promise to the godly remnant. The white garment is the righteousness of the saints - not the righteousness of God - Rev.19:8. Character and service will ultimately be manifested outwardly.

Vs. 5 - To the overcomers (there are overcomers in every church).

- 1) white garments Rev.4:4; 6:11; 7:9,14.
- 2) name remains in the "book of life" - Ex.32:32-35; Ps.69:22- 28; Rev.13:7-9; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27.
- 3) confessed before Christ's Father
- 4) confessed before Christ's angels - Lk.12:8-9.

Vs. 6 - He who has an ear!

## THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA - VS.7-13

Vs.7 - He who is Holy - definition - God, morally perfect - I Jn.1:5; I Tim.6:14-16. What are the implications for us?

NOTE: The God of Israel is called "the Holy one of Israel" - Is.1:4; 5:24 etc... Is.6:1-5.

"The Holy one of Israel" is Jacob's Redeemer! Is.41:14; 43:14.

"The Holy one of Israel" is Israel's God and Savior - Is.43:3.

He is Israel's King - Is.43:15.

There is no God but Him - Is.45:5-7, 21-25.

He will enter the human race - Is.9:6 to save - Is.52:14; 53:1-12; Lk.1:26-35.

He will reign from David's throne - Is.9:7; Rev.19:11-16.

This one who is "the Holy one of Israel" in the O.T. is Jesus Christ in the N.T. For there is only one who is Holy - Lv.11:44-45; I Pet.1:14-16 (good Mt.19:16-17)

He who is Holy is the one writing to the seven churches.

He who is true - Jn.1:1, 14, 17; 5:30-34; 8:31-32, 44-47; 14:6 (Mt.22:16) Jn.19:35.

Pilate asked the question - Jn.18:38. John has given us the answer - Jn.19:35.

God planned it this way - Jn.14:25-26; I Jn.1:1-3.

He who has the key of David - Is.22:15-25 esp. vs.22 and 23.

Historical Reference:

1) Shebna - steward who is in charge of the royal household will be replaced by Eliakim - vs.15, 19-20.

2) The God of Israel will

a) clothe him - vs.21

b) give him authority - vs.21

c) the key of the house of David will be set upon his shoulder - Lord keeper vs.22

1) He will control the wealth of the house of Judah.

2) He will control the positions filled within that house.

3) He will be second only to the king.

3) Jesus Christ is the Head of the coming house to be built, all wealth and position will come from Him!

Vs. 8 - Our entire life lays open before His eyes - not what we have believed but rather what we have done.

In the context of this statement, it is the church as a body which is being spoken of.

There is a "body life" as well as an individual life; A joint testimony.

Christ has put before this body of believers an open door - no one can shut it, and they must walk through it!

The open door would not lead the body into...

1) political power

2) a social gospel

3) defending the weak

Christ's open door would lead...

This body of believers has "a little power"

(No word of rebuke – their "little strength" forms the basis for their commendation.)

- 1) They have kept my Word
- 2) have not denied My name

Vs. 9 - Behold, I will cause those who bear the name "Jews" (should have rejoiced in my saving work in their life, should have known - Rom.9:1-5; Eph.2:11-22; Rom.2:17-29).

Bear the name that connects them with me and yet they belong to "the synagogue of Satan" - Jn.16:1-3 (manifesting the outward markings of Christianity but not possessing the inward life makes you an automatic member of Satan's church - there is no in between position).

lie - Jesus doesn't hold back on His judgments; liberals are not another branch of the church, they lie, they belong to Satan.

There is a promise to those who have possessed even "a little power".

- 1) Those who have belonged to Satan's synagogue will be made to come and bow down at their feet.
- 2) made to know - the Jesus Christ who has loved them.

NOTE: It won't happen to them in this life time, but there is an eternity to come and it will happen! Phl.12:5-11; Rom.8:14-18.

Vs. 10 - Because you have ... I will...

- 1) "kept the Word" - which is the foundation perseverance rests upon - Rom.15:4.
- 2) "hour of testing" Mt.24:9-28; Ezk.20:33-44; Rev.6:1 - 19:7.
- 3) "keep you from"
  - a) There is a difference between being kept from and kept through the hour. The 144,000 (Rev 7:1-8) are kept through while the church of ... is kept from (pre - tribulation rapture).
  - b) The church John. wrote to has all died and none of them will experience the hour. This argues that the church of Philadelphia is a prophetic type of a (the) church that will be in existence when the tribulation occurs.
  - c) Believers during the tribulation will experience the full effect of that hour - Rev.6:9-11. This would argue that believers of the tribulation are not a part of the church; Israel is Satan's focus and there is no indication that they will be a part of the church.

For these believers will be delivered out of the tribulation to prosper throughout the millennium.

Rev.12:1-17; Rom.11:25-29. Mt. 25 speaks of the humans who will be invited to enter the kingdom; Jews and Gentiles are the only people mentioned. (also note Deut.30:3-9). All of the above argues for a pre-tribulation rapture.

NOTE: Some additional reasons for a pre-tribulation rapture:

- 1) The "trial" that is to come upon the earth is directed toward "Jacob" (Israel), not the church - Jer.30:7.
- 2) Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week is about Daniel's People and his city - Dan.9:27; 12:1.
- 3) Revelation 6-18 speaks about it in detail, never mentioning the church unlike Rev.1:1 - 3:22.
- 4) It is stated as a time to test "those who dwell upon the earth", not the church - Rev.3:10, 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:2, 8.
- 5) Christ's bride (church) is seen as being in heaven, clothed, before the return of Christ occurs - Rev.19:7-9.
- 6) Also see II Thess.2:1-12 and I Thess.4:13-18.

Vs. 11 - (Remember II Pet.3:9-15).

Vs. 12 To the overcomer - this blessing:

- 1) He will become a pillar in the temple of Christ's God.
  - } The pillar cannot be taken literally because there is no temple in the new Jerusalem - Rev.21:22. It must, therefore, be intended to visualize a spiritual reality.
    - a) a place of prominence - Gal.2:9.
    - b) experience permanence, security, and position in God's eternal home (never to go out again) 2 Chr.3:15-17. Just as the kingdom cannot be shaken, - Heb.12:28 - neither will the overcomers be shaken.
- 2) Three names will be written upon them.
  - a) the name of Christ's God - Num.6:24-27; Jer.33:14-16.
  - b) the name of the City of Christ's God - Rev.21:9-10; 22:14; Heb.12:22-24.
  - c) Christ's new name - Rev.2:17.

Vs. 13 - He who has an ear...

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA - VS.14-22

Vs. 14 - The Amen - "so be it" of God - He is sovereign and His promises will be fulfilled - 2 Cor.1:20. When Christ speaks, it is the final word; the faithful and true witness to the church which is neither faithful nor true.

- 1) the faithful witness - Rev.1:5.

2) He who is true - Rev.3:7.

That which He is about to tell this church can be "taken to the bank".

The beginning of the creation of God - He is the source - It does not mean that Jesus was the very first being created by God. (See our notes on Rev.1:5; Jn.1:3; Col.1:15,18; Heb.1:2) says this.

Vs. 15 - 16 - Note that there is no commendation for this church, i.e... nothing good to say (If we are living in the last days, this either is or is becoming our church).

The head of the Laodicean church during the life of Paul was Archippus - Col.4:15-17 around 61AD. John is writing around 95 or 96AD. What must have happened to this church over 35 years?

Three states of the church are given.

- 1) Cold - the gospel leaves them unmoved and arouses no interest in the things of God.
- 2) Hot - on fire for Christ - leaves no one wondering where they are in their spiritual commitment.
- 3) Lukewarm - What would this church look like?

This state is not a transitional state, but rather became the permanent state of this church - when this happens, God's response is described. He vomits! Apparently the lukewarm state is an obnoxious state to God. Better is the one who makes no profession than the one who has made a profession and yet demonstrates no outward life.

It is also interesting to note that Jesus does not condemn this church for any particular acts; they are lukewarm and this is a change that is sufficient to remove their candlestick.

Vs. 17 - Their problem - their attitude, their perception of themselves.

They are materially rich which cloaks their spiritual poverty.

Spiritually they are...

- 1) wretched - our permanent moral condition rather than our actual transgressions - Rom.7:15-25; Ps.51:5; Eph.4:22.
- 2) miserable - Jms.4:9.
- 3) poor - lacking in spiritual goods - living in a state of poverty when spiritual wealth is available for the asking.
- 4) blind (2 Cor.4:4; those who live like mere men) - I Jn.2:9-11; Rom.2:17-29; 2 Pet.1:5-11.
- 5) naked - they have made no clothes - Rev.19:7-8.

Vs. 18 - Three things this church lacks –they need to obtain: gold, clothes, and eye salve.

1) gold - material wealth, vs.17, has left this church in no better condition. Their belief that they are in need of nothing has missed the truth of their impoverished condition. They are exhorted to buy the gold that comes from Christ - I Pet.1:6-9; 2 Cor.4:16-18.

2) clothes - white garments - Rev.19:6-9; Eph.2:10 - again bought from Christ.  
Only those that come from Him enter eternity. The shame of man's nakedness is his natural contribution.  
The finest clothes produced by man always end up as filthy rags - Is.64:6. "All our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment".  
They may look good to us (seem right) – Prov.14:12, "but it's end is the way of death".

3) eye salve - from Christ is needed. Both pastor and people of this church seem to have become blind to the things of God and they are not aware of their own blindness (I Jn.2:9-11).  
The church of the last days will become very much like Israel at the time of Christ - Mt.15:12, 14; II Pet.1:5-11; Rom.2:17-29.  
Does this passage not describe the church in America?

Vs. 19 - The objects of God's love become the objects of His reproof and discipline - Heb.12:5-11.  
In context He is dealing with the church not individuals!  
Also note that being lukewarm places the church in the position of needing to be dealt with.

NOTE: "love" is from the word "phileo" not "agapao", a Greek term for affection with less depth - Why the choice of word?  
reprove - (rebuke) when the Lord does it, more than talk is involved.  
discipline - Hebrews 12 makes it clear that the fact that God does not give up the believer becomes a sign that we are owned by Him. Also, note I Cor.11:31-32 - being lukewarm must be synonymous with sin!  
There is always an alternative to sin followed by judgment! It is repentance.  
Repentance results in a removal of the need to judge with temporal judgment by God. (again see II Pet.3:9-12).

Darby is quoted as saying,

"The immediate occasion, object, inner spring of all the terrible judgment which is coming is the professing church itself. It ought to have been God's witness on the earth... but, having become corrupt... brings down the wrath of God."

Babylon the whore - false Christendom - will ride upon the government of antichrist and be destroyed by God before the tribulation ends - Rev.19:1-3.

Vs. 20 - This invitation is offered to the church and needs to be acted upon by the members of it. No one is compelled to obedience. No one is saved against his will. No group of believers must open their door of worship to Christ. The only cure for being lukewarm is the re-admission of the excluded Christ. Christ remains on the outside unless He is welcomed in. This is the church of the last days. It will not remain forever - Lk.12:35-40. The idea of dining with God reflects the ultimate relationship that exists with those we share a meal with.

Vs. 21 - He who overcomes

- 1) The Father's response to the Son - Phil.2:9-11; Heb.2:9-11 who overcame - Heb.5:7-10.
- 2) The Son's response to the believer who overcomes!
  - a) The church of this present age - Mt.19:27-30.
  - b) The tribulation saints - Rev.20:4.

This invitation is to the church that is "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked". The church age is God's age of grace! As long as breath is in us, grace is offered. There will be no more grace offered once the breath is gone. Today is the day for the believer to repent.

Vs. 22 - He who has an ear, let him hear... Remember Rom.10:13-14.