



## The Final Four Churches

**Lesson3: Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia & Laodicea** (Rev. 2:18–29; 3)

### INTRODUCTION

Each of the seven letters follows a recognizable pattern:

1. **A description of Christ** — tailored to the church's condition
2. **A commendation** — if faithfulness exists (not always present)
3. **A rebuke** — if correction is needed (not always present)
4. **A call to repent or remain faithful (Exhortation)**
5. **A promise to the overcomer**



These letters operate on **four levels simultaneously**:

1. **Local** — real historical churches in Asia Minor.
2. **Personal** — application to each believer in all churches.
3. **Church-wide** — recurring strengths and failures across all congregations.
4. **Prophetic** — They represent unique eras in the history of the Church (in a certain order).

All four layers remain active throughout the study.

As the **first three churches** formed a natural unit. The final four churches—**Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea**—form a second natural unit. Unlike the first three, which unfold in a largely sequential progression, these churches **overlap and continue together until the return of Christ**. Think of them as not stages that, for the most part, replace one another, but **conditions that coexist** within the Church Age up to the tribulation period:

- **Corruption tolerated** (Thyatira)
- **Life professed but largely absent** (Sardis)
- **Faithfulness preserved despite weakness** (Philadelphia)
- **Comfort and self-sufficiency replacing dependence on Christ** (Laodicea)

Rather than showing a single downward or upward movement, the final four churches present a **composite picture of the church near the end of the age**, with a remnant of true believers, compromised systems, and spiritual deadness all existing simultaneously.



# Thyatira




## The Corrupted but Continuing Church (Revelation 2:18-29)

### Local (Historical Context)

Thyatira was an important city long before Bible times, even though today it is just a small town called Akhisar in modern Turkey. In the New Testament period, Thyatira sat at a crossroads of major roads connecting key cities like Pergamos, Sardis, and Smyrna, which made it valuable for military defense and travel. The city changed hands many times—ruled by the Lydians, who changed its name from Pelopia to **Semiramis**, and then Euhippia. It was then ruled by the Persians and Greeks—until it became a frontier fortress under Seleucus I, who renamed it Thyatira, a word meaning “daughter.”

As the city grew, Thyatira became famous not for politics or religion, but for business. It was a center of trade guilds, which were like ancient labor unions. If you wanted to work as a baker, metalworker, or cloth maker, you had to belong to a guild. These guilds provided protection and benefits, but there was a catch: each one honored a pagan god, and meetings and feasts often included idol worship. This put Christians in a difficult position—earn a living or stay faithful to Christ.

 Note: In our last lesson, we read about the migrating Babylonian priesthood from Babylon to Pergamos to Rome. This name, **Semiramis**, was the wife of Nimrod and the mother of Tammuz. She was worshipped as a pagan god. This shows that there was a strong pagan influence, and it ties Thyatira to the Babylonian cults.

Thyatira was especially well known for making purple and scarlet dyes, which were expensive and used by wealthy people. The dyes came from local plants and shellfish and were prized throughout the region. A woman named Lydia, mentioned in Acts 16:14–15, was a seller of purple goods from Thyatira, showing how far the city’s influence reached. This strong mix of commerce, compromise, and pressure helps explain why Thyatira receives such a serious and detailed message in Revelation.

### Title of Christ



**Revelation 2:18]** *And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;*



Jesus identifies Himself as “**the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like burnished bronze.**” This title emphasizes **penetrating judgment** and **unmovable authority**. Christ sees beneath appearances and will judge corruption within His church.

### Commendation



**Revelation 2:2,3]** *I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.*





Thyatira is praised for:
 


- ✓ Love
- ✓ Faith
- ✓ Service
- ✓ Perseverance


Notably, Jesus says their later works exceed their earlier works. On the surface, this church appears active, compassionate, and growing.

After this commendation, the very serious rebuke that follows is very sobering:

### Rebuke

 **Revelation 2:20]** *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman **Jezebel**, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* 

 **Revelation 2:21,22]** *And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into **great tribulation**, except they repent of their deeds.*

 **Revelation 2:23]** *And I will kill **her children** with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

The deeds of the Nicolaitans, which the Church of Ephesus had rejected, became the doctrine in Pergamos. From a prophetic view, the ideas of an organized hierarchical clergy, largely rejected in the 1st century, were integrated into the church between A.D. 312 and A.D. 600. **This signified a shift in Satan’s tactics:** instead of persecution, he succeeded by causing the church to align with the world. What began as compromise had become embedded.

Despite its good works, Thyatira tolerated false teaching personified as **“Jezebel.”**

Jezebel represents a corrupting influence that:
 

- ✓ Claimed spiritual authority.
- ✓ Led believers into immorality and idolatry.
- ✓ Was allowed to continue unchallenged.



The issue was not ignorance, but toleration. Leadership failed to confront what Christ clearly condemned. Jesus warns of severe direct discipline, making clear that He **judges His own church** and searches “minds and hearts.”

In His warning to Thyatira, Jesus says that those who refuse to repent will be cast into **“great tribulation.”** The **“great tribulation”**, which we will discuss from Chapters 4 through 19, describes a unique period of divine judgment that comes upon the world.

Verse 23 teaches that Jesus Christ will actively judge unrepentant corruption within this church during the present age. *“Her children”* are the large body of followers of the false teachings this church professes. The severe language emphasizes real, visible discipline meant to warn all churches. **Within this church was an evil for which no remedial measures were sufficient.**



## Exhortation



**Revelation 2:24, 25]** *But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known **the depths of Satan**, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.*



Christ acknowledges that **not all in Thyatira were corrupt**. A remnant within this church had not embraced what He calls “*the deep things of Satan*”—a reference to secret or elitist teaching that replaced simple obedience with hidden knowledge (think Babylonian pagan influence).

To these believers, Jesus gives a simple command: “**Hold fast what you have until I come.**”

This phrase is significant. It suggests continuity—Thyatira’s condition persists **until Christ’s return**, making it one of the churches that overlap into the end of the Church Age.

## Promise



**Revelation 2:26-29]** *And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*



To those who overcome, Christ promises:

- ✓ Authority over the nations.
- ✓ Participation in His future rule.
- ✓ The gift of the Morning Star.

This is a **kingdom promise**, pointing forward to Christ’s reign and the believer’s future role with Him.

## Our Personal Application

Thyatira teaches that:

- ✓ Good works can coexist with deep corruption.
- ✓ Growth can mask decay.
- ✓ Orthodoxy can become a shield for disobedience.
- ✓ Authority can become the enemy of truth.



A Christian may be loving, active, and outwardly fruitful, yet still be accountable for what they knowingly allow to remain unaddressed in the church.

## Church-Wide Pattern Application

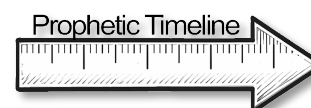
Thyatira represents churches that:

- ✓ Emphasize love, service, and growth in ministry.
- ✓ But downplay doctrinal boundaries.
- ✓ Tolerate error for the sake of unity, influence, or peace.



## Prophetic Picture

Prophetically, Thyatira is commonly associated with the long institutional phase of church history from about A.D. 600 onward, represented by the Roman Catholic Church or medieval system.



During this time, religious authority became centralized, corruption was systemically tolerated, pagan influences (“*deep things of Satan*”) incorporated, and faithful believers existed within a broader, compromised structure. Jesus, using the phrase “*until I come,*” indicates that this church type persists into the final period of the Church Age. Thyatira, therefore, overlaps with later churches and extends to the time of Christ’s return.



### Who was Jezebel, and why was she so dangerous?

Jezebel was a powerful and dangerous queen in Israel’s history. She was the daughter of Eth-Baal, king of Sidon, and a priest of a pagan goddess, and she married King Ahab of Israel to secure a political and trade alliance. Instead of honoring Israel’s God, she worked to eliminate God’s prophets (1 Kings 18:13) and used deceit and abuse of power to seize land, most famously in the case of Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kings 21). Jezebel effectively controlled the kingdom and represents ruthless leadership that used authority to silence truth and promote evil.

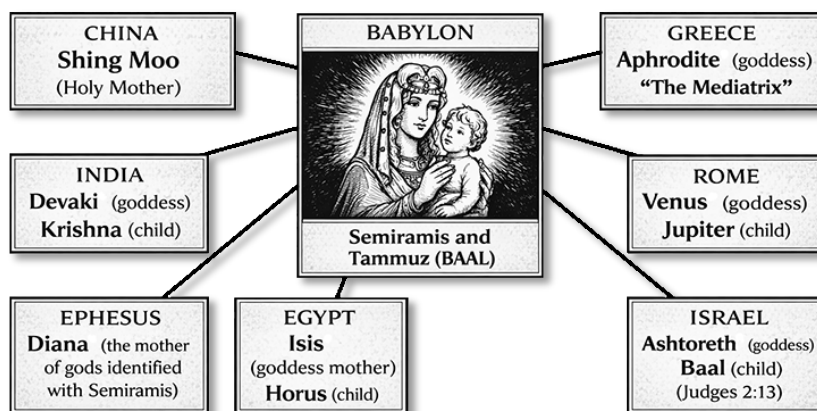


Jezebel aggressively introduced pagan worship into Israel. She promoted the worship of Baal and Astarte (1 Kings 16:30, 33), along with Ashtoreth, a fertility goddess widely worshiped by surrounding nations (Judg. 2:13; 10:6; 1 Sam. 31:10; 1 Kings 11:5, 33). Under her influence, “groves” became common—hilltop shrines tied to fertility rituals that God explicitly forbade (Deut. 16:21). These practices blended immorality with religion and pulled Israel away from obedience to the Lord.

A key part of Jezebel’s influence was the worship of the so-called “Queen of Heaven,” a Babylonian religious idea that became popular even among the Israelites (Jer. 7:18; 44:15–30). This false worship appealed especially through promises of fertility and prosperity. Long after Jezebel’s death, godly reformers like King Josiah worked to undo the damage by destroying pagan altars, groves, and priests linked to her influence (2 Kings 23:3, 6–7; Ezek. 36:15). Because Jezebel combined power, false worship, and persecution of truth, her name became a lasting symbol of corrupt spiritual authority—here echoed in Jesus’ warning to the church in Thyatira.

The religious system Jezebel promoted belonged to a broader Mesopotamian tradition that repeatedly reappeared under different names across cultures.

Jezebel did not merely commit sin. She **reframed evil as legitimate worship and used authority to silence truth.** She also **merged pagan practice with**



**covenant religion and then protected false prophets and persecuted true ones. This same pattern is present in Thyatira type church system. In this church, it was not simply an issue where “people fell into sin,” but it was a corrupt system that granted permission to define what sin was.**



# Sardis



## The Church That is Alive and Dead (*Revelation 3:1-6*)

### Local (Historical Context)

**Sardis** was once one of the greatest and richest cities in the ancient world, but by the time of the New Testament, its glory had mostly faded. Long before John wrote Revelation, Sardis had been the capital of the powerful Lydian Empire and a major center of trade. It sat at a crossroads of important roads and became famous for its wealth, so much so that its king, Croesus, became a symbol of riches. In fact, the first gold and silver coins in history were minted there. Sardis looked strong, important, and successful, and for centuries, people admired it.

The city was built high on a steep hill, making it seem impossible to conquer. The people of Sardis felt safe and confident because of their natural defenses. But this confidence turned into carelessness. Twice in its history, enemies climbed the cliffs that Sardis thought were impregnable and captured the city because the people failed to keep watch. Again and again, Sardis fell—not because it lacked strength, but because it relied on its reputation instead of vigilance. Over time, the city became known for looking impressive on the outside while being weak and unprepared underneath.

By the time Jesus addressed Sardis in Revelation, the city had already experienced long decline. Earthquakes, wars, and repeated conquests had stripped away its former greatness. What remained was a city living on its past reputation. Ancient writers eventually used “Sardis” as a byword for promise without performance and appearance without reality—an exact match for Jesus’ warning that the church there had “a name that you live, but you are dead” (Rev. 3:1).

Even the stone associated with Sardis reflects this theme. The city was named after the sardius (or carnelian) stone, once considered precious and prized for its beauty. Over time, however, the stone became common and lost its special value. This mirrors Sardis itself: once rare and glorious, later ordinary and unimpressive. The history of the city perfectly sets the stage for Christ’s message—calling a church that looked alive to wake up before what little remained was lost.

### Title of Christ & Rebuke



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



### Title of Christ

Jesus presents Himself as “*He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.*” This title emphasizes full spiritual life and authority. Christ possesses the complete work of the Spirit and holds church leadership accountable. The contrast is intentional: Sardis looks alive but lacks what Christ alone supplies.

## The Rebuke

Sardis has a name and yet is dead! What's missing? **Sardis receives no commendation!** Yikes! Jesus doesn't say they are ill, He doesn't say they require a remedy...**He says they are dead.** Sardis receives one of the most direct rebukes in Revelation. This is a very serious indictment coming from Christ.

This church had a strong reputation—perhaps, for orthodoxy, history, or influence—but inwardly it lacked spiritual vitality. There is no mention of persecution, false teachers, or external pressure. The problem is complacency and self-deception.

### Exhortation



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



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

### The Call from Christ to Its Members to Wake Up:

Christ issues a series of urgent commands:

- ✓ Wake up!
- ✓ Strengthen what remains.
- ✓ Remember what you have heard.
- ✓ Repent!



These commands show that Sardis is not beyond hope. Some life remains, but it is fragile. Failure to respond will result in Christ coming **“like a thief”**—a warning of sudden accountability for those who assume safety without vigilance (ref. to the end of the age & the Rapture).



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

**There is a Faithful Remnant** - Even in Sardis, Christ recognizes a faithful few:

- They have not soiled their garments
- They will walk with Him in white

Although a majority of this church is dead, this reminder reinforces the idea that **true believers can exist within spiritually weak churches.**

### The Promise



**Revelation 3:5, 6]** *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*



To those who overcome, Christ promises: **White garments** (purity and victory), **assurance of belonging**, and **public acknowledgment before the Father and angels.** This promise is meant to encourage perseverance in the remnant.

## Our Personal Application

Sardis warns believers that spiritual appearance is not the same as spiritual life. **Routine, tradition, or reputation** can quietly replace dependence on Christ. The call to “*wake up*” applies to any believer who assumes maturity without ongoing vigilance.



## Church-Wide Pattern Application

Churches like Sardis often:

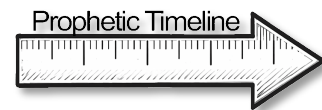
- ✓ Have a respected name or history.
- ✓ Maintain outward structure and activity.
- ✓ Lack spiritual urgency and vitality.



This pattern recurs wherever churches rely on past faithfulness that substitutes for present lack of obedience.

## Prophetic Picture

Prophetically, Sardis is commonly associated with the Reformation period from A.D. 1500 onward. It is marked with **incomplete reform**—times when important truths were recovered, yet spiritual life lagged behind doctrinal correction. It reflects churches that looked renewed but failed to remain watchful.



## The Faithful Church (Revelation 3:7–13)

### Local (Historical Context)

**Philadelphia** was the youngest of the seven cities, founded in 189 B.C. by the kingdom of Pergamos. It was named after Attalus II, who was known as Philadelphus for his strong loyalty and affection for his brother, King Eumenes II. The name Philadelphia reflects this idea of friendship and brotherly love. The city sat on an important road system and served as a gateway to the highlands of Asia Minor, making it a key center for spreading the Greek language and culture into surrounding regions.

The area around Philadelphia was fertile and well-suited for growing grapes, so wine production was important, and the local culture honored Dionysus, the god of wine. However, the land was also volcanic and unstable. A massive earthquake in A.D. 17 nearly destroyed the city, and smaller tremors continued for years, making life difficult and uncertain. Although Roman emperors helped rebuild the city and even renamed it for a time, Philadelphia never fully recovered its earlier prosperity and remained under the authority of the nearby city of Sardis.

The Christian church in Philadelphia faced pressure and persecution, especially from a strong local Jewish community. Even so, the church remained faithful, and later writings show that some of those who had opposed the Christians eventually repented. This background helps explain why Jesus speaks so positively to the church in Revelation.

The city's name, often understood as "brotherly love" or "friendly fellowship," fits well with Christ's promise to give faithful believers a new and lasting name—"the name of My God"—that honors, affirms belonging, and endures despite hardship.

## Title of Christ



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



Jesus identifies Himself as "**He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shuts, and shuts, and no one opens.**" This title emphasizes:

- Christ's moral perfection (**holy**)
- Christ's trustworthiness (**true**)
- Christ's sovereign authority over access, opportunity, and destiny:

Philadelphia's security rests not in its power, but in **Christ's authority**.

The phrase "*key of David*" is found in Isaiah 22:19-25. Eliakim is chosen by God to replace Shebna as the king's treasurer and is given full authority to manage access to the king. He carried a large key on his shoulder, showing that he alone could open or close the way into the king's presence. While this passage speaks historically about Eliakim, it also points forward to Jesus Christ. The language in Isaiah 22:22 is echoed by Jesus when He describes His own authority, confirming its Messianic meaning (Isa. 9:6-7; Luke 1:32-33; Matt. 28:18; Rev. 1:18).



## Commendation



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



**Philadelphia receives unqualified praise:**

- They have **little strength**
- They have **kept Christ's word**
- They have **not denied His name**

**Philadelphia receives no rebuke.** This church is not impressive by worldly standards, yet it is **fully approved by Christ**. Faithfulness, not influence, is the measure.

Christ sets before Philadelphia an **open door** that no one can shut. This speaks of:

- Opportunity for witness
- God-given access, not self-created success
- Fruitfulness determined by Christ, not circumstances

Their effectiveness flows from obedience, not resources.





**Revelation 3:9]** *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*

The Synagogue of Satan was also referred to in the letter to Smyrna (Rev 2:9). This may be a reference to the legalists and those who want to be under the law, which is denying the completed work and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

This could also be a reference to Replacement Theology. Most denominational churches teach a view of the scripture that, because Israel rejected her Messiah, the promises she was heir to fall upon the church. Their whole theological system is built on the idea that the church has replaced Israel, a view also called replacement theology (more on that in the next lesson).



**Revelation 3:10]** *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, **to try them that dwell upon the earth.***

Christ makes a distinctive promise here: **“I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world.”** The Bible clearly teaches that a future day of judgment and vengeance is coming (Isa. 61:2; Luke 4:18-20; 2 Thess. 1:7-8).

This verse (Rev. 3:10) highlights a very important promise for believers who patiently remain faithful, reflecting Christ’s own patience over the last 2,000 years (2 Thess. 3:5). One of the principal truths that was lost by The Medieval Church (Thyatira) and not recovered by the Denominational Church (Sardis) but has been recovered in the nineteenth century was the Lord’s return for His Church. Today, believers are reminded that Christ is waiting for the time when His kingdom is established (Ps. 110; Heb. 10:12–13).

“*Them that dwell upon the earth*” is a specific group of people who have rejected God and are judged by Him during the Tribulation.

### Exhortation



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



Philadelphia is urged to hold fast to what they have. Unlike Sardis, there is no call to repent—only to persevere. The danger is not loss of salvation, but loss of an eternal reward if faithfulness is abandoned.

### Promise



**Revelation 3:12, 13]** *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*



The overcomer is promised: {
 

- ✓ A permanent place in God’s presence
- ✓ Stability (“never go out”)
- ✓ A new name identifying belonging and honor

These promises emphasize **security, permanence, and identity.**

**Personal Application**

Philadelphia encourages believers who feel weak or insignificant. Christ values **obedience over strength** and faithfulness over visibility. Limited ability does not limit usefulness when obedience is present.



**Church-Wide Pattern**

Churches like Philadelphia:

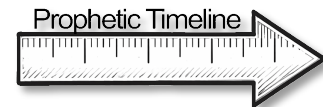
- May be small or overlooked
- Remain loyal to Scripture
- Value obedience over innovation



This pattern reappears wherever faithfulness is maintained without compromise, regardless of size or recognition.

**Prophetic Picture**

Prophetically, although Philadelphia-type churches have been around for hundreds of years, this church is associated with the **evangelistic or missionary church era** (A.D. 1800-Rapture), representing faithful believers and churches that persist to the end of the Church Age.



**The Self-Sufficient Church** (*Revelation 3:14–22*)

**Local (Historical Context)**

Laodicea was an old city that changed hands many times over the centuries. It began as a small Ionian town, was later controlled by the Hittites, then the Phrygians and Lydians, and eventually rebuilt and renamed by Antiochus II after his wife, Laodice. Over time, it became part of the kingdom of Pergamon and, finally, the Roman Empire. By the time of the New Testament, Laodicea was well established and included a large Jewish population.

One unusual feature of Laodicea was its water supply. The city sat between two neighbors—Hierapolis, famous for its hot springs, and Colossae, known for its cold, refreshing water. Laodicea received its water through aqueducts from Hierapolis, but by the time it arrived, it was lukewarm. This everyday problem became a powerful illustration later when Jesus described the church there as neither hot nor cold.

Laodicea was extremely wealthy and proud of it. It was a major center for banking, trade, and gold refining, and sat on important trade routes that brought money from faraway regions. When an earthquake destroyed the city in A.D. 62, the citizens rebuilt it themselves without help from Rome. The city was also famous for its soft black wool textiles and a well-known medical school that produced eye ointment—both of which Jesus later alludes to in His letter to the church.

Spiritually, the church in Laodicea reflected the city’s self-confidence. The church was likely connected to the ministry of Epaphras and had ties to nearby Colossae, but it seems to have lacked strong leadership and urgency. Even the city’s name hints at the problem: “Laodicea” means “rule of the people.” Instead of being governed by Christ, the church was shaped by comfort, culture, and self-satisfaction—leading Jesus to warn them that their independence and pride had left them spiritually empty.

### Title of Christ



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



Jesus introduces Himself as **“the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”**

This title emphasizes **absolute truthfulness and authority**. Christ stands as the final standard of reality, exposing the gap between Laodicea’s self-assessment and His evaluation.

### Rebuke



**Revelation 3:15, 16]** *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*



Laodicea receives one of the most severe rebukes of all seven churches:

**“You are neither cold nor hot... because you are lukewarm, I will spit you out of My mouth.”**

This church is characterized by **indifference and apathy**. They are not openly hostile to Christ, but neither are they dependent on Him. Their greatest sin is **self-sufficiency**.



**Revelation 3:17]** *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

Laodicea believed itself to be:

- 👍 Rich
- 👍 Prosperous
- 👍 In need of nothing

Christ’s assessment is the opposite:

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 👎 Wretched  | 👎 Poor  |
| 👎 Miserable | 👎 Blind |
|             | 👎 Naked |

The main danger is not immorality or false doctrine, but **spiritual complacency masked by material success**. These things lead to immorality, false doctrine, and other problems.

**Laidecia receives no “Commendation...”**

## Exhortation



**Revelation 3:18, 19]** *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*



**Jesus offers corrective counsel, not abandonment. He urges them to:**

- Buy refined gold (true spiritual riches)
- Receive white garments (righteousness)
- Anoint their eyes (spiritual perception)

These are invitations to **dependence**, not self-improvement.



**Revelation 3:20]** *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

This is not an evangelistic appeal to unbelievers, but a picture of **Christ excluded from His own church! Jesus is outside**, calling “any man...” He offers restored fellowship, not forced entry. In the Laodicean type of church, although they believe they are doing God's will, **Jesus is not in their church**; He is on the outside. In chapter one and throughout the other letters, Jesus speaks of them “in His hand” or “He is in the midst” of them. But not here, as He is calling from outside.

## Promise



**Revelation 3:21, 22]** *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*



To those who overcome, Christ promises:

- Fellowship with Him now
- Authority with Him later
- A share in His future reign

Even the most compromised church is not beyond repentance if it responds to Christ’s voice.

## Personal Application

Laodicea warns believers that **comfort can dull spiritual urgency**. Material blessing, success, or stability can quietly replace reliance on Christ. Lukewarm faith is dangerous because it feels sufficient.



## Church-Wide Pattern

Churches like Philadelphia:

- Measure success by numbers, entertainment, or resources
- Emphasize positivity over repentance
- Lose urgency for truth and holiness
- Become apostate due to loss of truth and humanistic influence.



This pattern reappears wherever faithfulness is maintained without compromise, regardless of size or recognition.

### Prophetic Picture

Prophetically, although Laodicea-type churches have been around for hundreds of years, they are commonly associated with the **final phase of the Church Age – the apostate church era** (A.D. 1900-rapture). They are marked by widespread complacency, prosperity, humanism, spiritual indifference, and apostate behavior. Christ’s position outside the church underscores the urgency of repentance as the end approaches.



**Why are the churches of Rev. 2 & 3 separated into two groups by the Holy Spirit?** In the first three churches (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum), the call to hear comes before the promise, reflecting churches that are still broadly responsive to Christ as a body.

Beginning with Thyatira and continuing through the final four churches, the promise is embedded within the letter, and the call to hear follows, signaling a transition to increasingly compromised or abnormal church conditions.

The emphasis shifts from church-wide faithfulness to individual perseverance, where overcoming is no longer assumed but tested within flawed systems marked by corruption, dead orthodoxy, complacency, or last-day apostasy. The Spirit still invites hearing, but it is no longer presumed—highlighting that in later church conditions, true faithfulness belongs to a discerning remnant rather than the church as a whole.

With the messages to the seven churches complete, Revelation now shifts its focus. The church is no longer addressed on earth; instead, John is called upward to witness events in heaven, where God’s sovereign plan for judgment and redemption begins to unfold. What follows in chapters 4 and 5 is not instruction for the church, but preparation for what is about to come upon the world – **The Tribulation Period**.

**Next Lesson:** Read Revelation Chapters 4 & 5. We will be discussing the Rapture of the Church and the Seven Sealed Scroll. All lesson materials available at: [www.TrustingInGrace.com](http://www.TrustingInGrace.com)

