

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

Message 18

Words: 6162

Scripture: Revelation

INTRO: We are in the second to last church as found in Revelation 2-3. We have looked at each of these with regard to the reason that the Lord wrote to each of these churches some 2,000 years ago. In the historical purpose we looked at the counselee. That is, we looked at each church in its historical situation. Then we looked at the description of the counselor, as He describes Himself to each church, and we found the reasons why He describes Himself like that. Then we looked at the commendation, and we found one church, the church of Sardis, that received no commendation. Then we looked at the criticism of each church, and we found two churches to which no criticism was directed. The first was Smyrna, the bitter church that gave off the sweet smell because of the persecution. Smyrna was the second church, and we are now in the second to last church, Philadelphia, and no criticism is given to this church either. Then we have looked at the counsel and comfort given to each church. All of this is in the Lord's historical purpose for writing to these churches.

Then we looked at the typical purpose. These seven churches typify seven kinds of churches that have existed throughout the past 2,000 years. For example, of the seven we have found two with no criticism. It is possible for a church to be like that. Then there are persecuted churches and so on.

One of the outstanding features of these seven churches, in my estimation is that they give a chronological, prophetic picture of what will happen in the Church age. This morning we will recommend that picture of this sixth church has been fulfilled. It is past. If that is correct, when we look at the last church we will find the prophetic picture of the church age we are in right now. This also means that we are in the time of the last church. This also means that we always need to be lifting up our heads for our redemption draws nigh.

We have now been in the Church of Philadelphia for two messages. This is the third and last. In the historical purpose of the letter to this church we will look at the counsel and comfort and then at the typical, prophetic, and personal purposes of the letter to Philadelphia.

4. The counsel (3:11)

For the counsel, we go to verse 11.

11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

What does it mean that He comes quickly? Probably the most common explanation is that He is coming soon. That is what we would naturally understand. As I began to ponder this I questioned, where does the Bible say Jesus is coming soon? Let me ask you, does anyone here know a reference that says Jesus is coming soon? I couldn't find a reference that said that, so I checked on-line for one. I went to a site called "Got Questions.org". It says:

Question: "Is Jesus coming soon?"

Answer: *"Soon is a relative term. If you are microwaving popcorn, soon means within the next three minutes. If you are awaiting the birth of a child, soon can mean anything up to nine months. So when we ask, "Is Jesus coming soon?" we have to qualify the meaning of soon.*

Jesus Himself said that He is coming soon: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon'" (Revelation 22:20). And then John adds these words: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." John's book was penned nearly two thousand years ago, which leads many people to wonder what Jesus meant by "soon", end quote.

In 1947 a certain group started what they call the doomsday clock. I think it started around 7 minutes before 12, or doomsday. Doomsday means man is going to cause some catastrophic thing like blow up an atomic bomb. Well, last year the clock was changed from 2 ½ minutes to 12 to 2 minutes to 12. If we are at 2 minutes to 12, then I suppose it would be correct to say Jesus

is coming soon. But soon is still a relative term.

The apostle Peter says in 2 Peter 3:3-4:

3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

I had never before thought through this question before: Does the Bible ever say Jesus is coming soon? We believe He will be coming soon, but I couldn't find a reference that says that. When we look at what is happening in the world today we do have reason to think that it looks like He will be coming soon. If we are anywhere near being correct with the seven churches of Revelation 2-3 picturing seven church ages, and if the sixth church age came to a close around 1900-1950, that would mean we are about 70-120 years into this last time period. Some of these church ages lasted several hundred years, although the first one was much shorter. So we would conclude that Jesus is coming soon.

However, I cannot find that the Scripture says anywhere that Jesus is coming soon. What I do find is that it says Jesus is coming quickly. Now consider this. The word 'soon' is an adverb. Adverbs answer these questions: where, when, why, how, or how much. The adverb 'soon' answers when. But the adverb 'quickly' answers, not 'when', but 'how.' It is easy to mix these two up.

Let me mention one other thing. To say Christ's coming is imminent and to say He is coming soon, are two different things. That Christ's coming is imminent is taught in many places.

Turn to Matthew 24 for an example. In Matthew 24-25 Jesus covers, as I understand the passage, the three questions the disciples had asked Him. In verse 3 of this chapter they asked, 1 Tell us, when will these things be? 2 And what will be the sign of Your coming, and 3 and will be the sign of the end of the age?

Now many pre-trib teachers understand the passage I am about to read to speak of the end of the tribulation. I see it as speaking of the rapture. We begin in verse 37:

37 *"But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

38 *"For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,*

39 *"and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

The picture is of an imminent coming. It could happen at any time. He further describes it like this in verses 40-41:

40 *"Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.*

41 *"Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.*

Again, the picture of imminence is clearly there. Verse 42:

42 *"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.*

43 *"But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*

44 *"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

Matthew 25:13 says:

13 *"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.*

So clearly Christ's coming is imminent. But imminence does not mean soon. It could happen at any time, but it could be a long time away yet. When it teaches that He is coming quickly, the word 'quickly' does not mean soon either. So, just what do these words mean, "Behold, I am coming quickly"?

Here is my conclusion. It means that when He does come, His coming is very quickly. Why is that important? That is important because He could come at any time, and when He comes it is so quickly there is no time to get ready. For those who are not ready, it is too late, because His coming is quickly.

And so, is there any evidence for this view? Turn to 1 Corinthians 15. We begin in verse 51:

51 *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—*

52 *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

The Lord's coming described there is so quickly that it is said to happen in the twinkling of an eye. I think the emphasis in, "Behold I come quickly" means, be ready at all times because when I come there will be no time to repent or repair. When I come, it is so quickly that you have to be ready before I come. If you are not

ready the moment I come, neither will you then have time to get ready.

I have mentioned that many things in the book of Revelation are mentioned seven times. Seven times the word quickly is used and six times it is speaking of the Lord's coming. Let me read those for you:

Re 2:5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Re 2:16 'Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

Re 3:11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Re 11:14 The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

Re 22:7 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

Re 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

Re 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

I was told a while ago that I use the words "I think" too much. When I express a view that has other good views, or it cannot be stated decisively, I express my view by saying, "I think" or "I believe". When there is no question about the truth I am expressing I will say something like, "Thus says the Lord" or, "These are not my words but the words of Scripture." And so, 'I think' the idea behind the words that

Jesus is coming quickly, means when He comes it is quick and there is no time to change anything, so be ready at all times.

The counsel further reads like this:

11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

The first counsel here is to hold fast. We saw that the name of the city of Ephesus meant to 'let go', 'to relax'. When what we have is truth, we need to hold fast. The idea is that it will be challenged and we will find pressure to let go.

Now the reason to hold fast is so that no one may take your crown. We have seen the *stephanos* crown before. This is the kind of crown received at the Olympics. It was a crown of leaves and soon faded away. But Peter, in 1 Peter 5:4, says the Christian's crown, which he also calls a *stephanos* crown, is a crown that does not fade away. It is an everlasting crown. We see here again that it is possible that this crown may be taken away. We looked at the crown of life in the messages to the church at Smyrna.

Let me give part of what I said regarding Revelation 2:10:

Now look at wonderful promise that follows this bit of instruction: Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. Be faithful until death! If you do that, you will receive the crown of life! Now in these letters to the seven churches the Lord often uses things common in their area to help them understand the significance of things. Barclay says, "Smyrna had games which were famous all over Asia. As in the Olympic Games, most famous of all, the reward of the victorious athlete was the laurel crown", end quote. You see, there are crowns of gold and jewels; these are diadem crowns. But the crown here spoken of is the stephanos crown.

We get our name Stephen from the stephanos crown. It was a crown of leaves that soon faded. But the crown of life does not fade. And the Christian runner could win this crown, if he was faithful until death.

Furthermore, Barclay says that when a man had diligently and faithfully performed the work of a magistrate, at the end of his service he was granted a crown of faithful service. Also, he says they were in the habit of wearing crowns at banquets. It was a sign of festal joy. They also wore crowns when they approached the gods in their temples. So they were familiar with crowns, but not this crown that is the crown of the life which is given if one is faithful to the end.

Now let me point out something from the original language here. This actually reads, "Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of the life!" Well, what life is 'the life'? We say sometimes, "This is the life!" No, we do not yet know what 'the life' is. If we should die a martyr, immediately we would receive 'the life'. This is what is called, eternal life. It really means the life of the age, or aionios zowee. It is the life of the age to come.

But let me note yet that it says, "Be faithful until death..." Is it possible to be a believer and not be faithful until death? Of course. I don't know anything could be more plain. There is no reason for a warning like this if it was not possible to fail God when it comes to facing death.

So when it says: "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown, I would take it we are speaking of the same crown. No indication of change is given.

5. The comfort (3:12)

We come then to the comfort in verses 12-13. It says:

12 *"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.*

13 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

We are in the sixth church, and for the sixth time we meet the overcomer, the victor. And the Lord's first comfort is that He will make the overcomer a pillar in the temple of His God. So let me begin with identifying this temple. The word here is *naos*. The *naos* is the inner part of the tabernacle, the two rooms with their utensils. Now go to Revelation 21:22. We are here in the New Jerusalem, the final heavenly Jerusalem and note what it says of the temple:

22 *But I saw no temple (naos) in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (naos).*

John saw no *naos* in the New Jerusalem. But look now at 21:3:

3 *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

Here it says of this same city, the *tabernacle* of God is with them. But the word for *tabernacle* here is not the same. So let me explain something about the different words translated *temple*. Go to John 2. Jesus had just cleansed the *temple* for the first time. This is very early in His ministry. In the last few days

before He was killed, He cleansed it twice more.
But look at John 2:13-21:

*13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand,
and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

*14 And He found in the temple those who sold
oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers
doing business.*

You may want to note in your Bibles that the
word for temple here is *hieros*. It speaks about
all the buildings surrounding the holy place.
Nobody ever sold things in the holy places, or
the *naos*. Verse 15:

*15 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove
them all out of the temple (hieros), with the
sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers'
money and overturned the tables.*

*16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take
these things away! Do not make My Father's house
a house of merchandise!"*

*17 Then His disciples remembered that it was
written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."*

*18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What
sign do You show to us, since You do these
things?"*

*19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy
this temple, and in three days I will raise it
up."*

Now the word for temple in verse 19 is *naos*. It
speaks of the holy place and the holy of holies.
Verse 20:

*20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six
years to build this temple (naos), and will You
raise it up in three days?"*

21 But He was speaking of the temple (naos) of His body.

Now the temple (hieros) was the permanent buildings around the *naos*. But when the tabernacle moved about in the wilderness, that which covered the holy place and the holy of holies was the *skeenee*. It is a tent. A tent is a movable house.

Now when it says John saw no tabernacle in the New Jerusalem, that word is *naos*. But the word for tabernacle when he saw this city coming down from heaven is *skeenee*. It is the covering, the tent. So our bodies are called a *skeenos*, a tent. So this temple is the movable tent. And this city is movable, but it has no *naos* in it. This city is the where Jesus went to prepare a place for us and now He is bringing it to earth. It is the movable tent. And why does it have no *naos* in it? God set it up in the first place to deal with sin, and there will be no more need to deal with sin.

So what does it mean that he will make the overcomer of our text a pillar in His temple, His *naos*? I think it has reference to the millennium. Ezekiel gives us a detailed description of the millennial temple. It will have a *naos*.

So, to see the use of the word *pillar* like this, listen to Galatians 2:9:

9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

James and Peter were pillars in the Church. But the Church is not part of the millennium. The members of the Church who are in the millennium reign with Christ. And I think that the believer will be the pillar of God's work in the

millennium. So like Galatians 2:9, this is not speaking of being a literal pillar.

So let me read a little further in verse 12:

12 "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more.

Now I think the going out here may mean they will evangelize no more. It may be this that is pictured by the history of Philadelphia. Because of the earthquake and the aftershocks that happened for so long and so often. The church in this city is the church of evangelism. Could the indication here be that the discomfort of hearing of the lost caused them to go out again and again with the Gospel? They went out and came back in. In the OT, going out and coming in had to do with going to war and coming back. Going out with the true Gospel is like going out to battle. And now the promise is they will go out no more.

I believe these promises are related to the millennium. Go to Jeremiah 31. In the millennium there will be no missionaries. They will go out to evangelize no more. In Jeremiah 31 he speaks of the new covenant. There are aspects of the new covenant that have not yet been fulfilled, but they will be fulfilled in the millennium. We begin in verse 31:

31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—

32 "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says

the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

34 "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Now verse 34, as I understand it, speaks of what it will be like in the millennium. It certainly does not speak of our day. Don't you long for the day when the Lord will rule, and wrong will not forever be on the throne, and there will be no need for evangelism? What a time that will be and it will be especially good for those who overcome in our age. Our text says they will go out no more, and I think it may be referring to evangelism.

We go on in verse Revelation 3:12 once more:

12 "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name."

Now if I am right that the comfort here comes from what happens in the millennium, I think these words become more meaningful. During the millennium, resurrected and un-resurrected people will be living side by side. However, those who are mentioned as overcomers in our passages will have the name of Jesus' God written on them. In my understanding, that is the name Jehovah God. When they have His name on them, it will mean: possession of Jehovah God. Then the name of the city of Jesus' God will be on the overcomer to. I expect that means: citizen of the New Jerusalem.

Here is what I firmly believe. The overcomer who enters the millennium will never be tempted to sin and will never fall into sin again. He has permanently become God's possession and he is permanently a citizen of that great city, the New Jerusalem, which will come down after the millennium.

And last it says, *And I will write on him My new name.*

Now here is the question, will this new name be the one spoken of in Revelation 2:17, which we studied already? It says:

2:17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

Will it be this new name? Or will it be the new name that is given to Jesus? Turn to Revelation 19:12. We find this name mentioned just before Jesus comes back down to earth at the end of the tribulation. It says:

12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

So here is the question. When Jesus says, *And I will write on him My new name*, is it the new name that is given to Jesus, is it the new name that Jesus gives to the believer? Well, as JB Smith says, "What is not revealed cannot be known" (91). But I rather think it will be the new name of 2:17, the new name that Jesus gives to each overcomer.

What is further interesting about the city of Philadelphia is that it got a new name several times. So receiving a new name was not new to this city.

B. Typically

Well, that covers the historical aspect of the letter to Philadelphia. And now we ask, what church is typified by this church? It is an evangelistic church, committed to holiness and truth. Now, as I have looked at churches and people who are evangelistically minded, it is a general tendency for such evangelistically minded churches and individuals to be theologically weak. I don't say that to run them down. We are in great need of such people. However, churches that are theologically strong are often evangelistically weak. But the church of Philadelphia, if I see it right, was sound in both. That is amazing. This church typifies a church that remains true to the Lord and keeps the Lord's Word, while it has evangelistic zeal.

Many years ago I wrote this of the church of Philadelphia. *Those committed to truth and holiness may be few in number but they should maintain their stand. Those who oppose truth and holiness will someday bow before righteousness, so be patient. The strength of the righteous against the wicked seems small but do not give up. Again, faithfulness will be rewarded.*

C. Prophetically

So we ask, what time period does this church picture? I have mentioned that most do not see the reformation of 500 years ago as part of the time period pictured here. That could be correct. Somehow I cannot yet see it like that. Before Martin Luther came on the scene the winds of change had already begun to blow. Luther changed his view on Catholicism around 1515-1520. And although I confess I am not very versed in history, I do think that those who later became known as the Mennonites set in motion the things that later became the norm for true evangelicalism.

Not long after the Anabaptists came on the scene the Baptists came into being. I think that they, more than any other denomination represented the

evangelicalism that impacted the world the most. I may be wrong on that. But through the denominations that began during this early time came a movement that has affected our world more than any other I am familiar with, and that is the missionary movement that took place and that was an outstanding part of the church of Philadelphia.

On August 17, 1761, a man by name of William Carrey was born. He would later become known as the father of modern missions. He was a Baptist minister, and amazingly he was both a postmillennialist, and a Calvinist, or at least he came from such a church. He was not a likely candidate for missions. But God laid on his heart the need to evangelize. Let me read for you part of an article on William Carrey:

It was probably while Carey was an apprentice that he read Captain Cook's "Voyages Around the World," which awakened his interest in heathen lands. As early as 1782 he prayed in his family and in public for the heathen.

Before he was ordained, an incident occurred to which reference is often made. It is thus introduced by J. W. Morris, the biographer of Fuller:

"Before the end of 1786, Mr. Carey, accompanied by another minister of the same age and standing with himself, went to a ministers' meeting at Northampton. Toward the close of the evening, when the public services were ended, and the company engaged in a desultory conversation, Mr. Ryland, senior, entered the room, and, with his accustomed freedom, demanded that the two junior ministers, Mr. Carey and his friend, should each propose a question for general discussion. Mr. Carey pleaded several excuses, but a question was imperiously demanded. At length he submitted, 'Whether the command given to the apostles to "teach all nations," was not obligatory on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world, seeing that the accompanying promise was of equal extent?'"

This is the first time Carey had ventured to lay bare the burden of his heart in public, though he had

frequently urged the subject in private. As soon as Dr. Ryland could command sufficient composure to reply, he exclaimed, "Young man, sit down; when God is pleased to convert the heathen world, He will do it without your help or mine."

He also said that nothing could be done before another Pentecost; and it is claimed that he called Carey "a most miserable enthusiast" for asking such a question. The cause of earth's perishing millions had evidently not rested very heavily upon Mr. Ryland's conscience up to this time.

Carey was very much mortified and abashed; but the load was in no wise lifted from his heart. His friend, the devoted Fuller, sympathized with him, and "offered several encouraging remarks, and recommended it to him to pursue his inquiries;" though he too confessed that when the subject was first mentioned to him he felt to exclaim, "If the Lord should make windows in heaven, then might this thing be!" end quote.

<https://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bcarey10.html>

William Carey is known as the father of modern missions. God had begun a new era. It required the reformation to bring this about. Carey lived from 1761-1834. God had set before the Church an open door, and used men we would never have expected Him to use. And an unparalleled missionary movement began that was unstoppable for almost 200 years. The sacrifices made by some of these men are absolutely staggering. If you read their stories you say, "How did they keep going? How could they handle what they went through?" If you read their stories you would say like I have, "I would never leave my children behind to do mission work. I would never leave my children with others and do mission work." But they did, and whether we agree with what they did or not, they went in and they went out. They were in the thick of the battle. There are amazing stories. Today, modern missions, by and large, is a business with retirement programs, and there is the keen smell of death in almost, if not all, old missions that are still going.

Lehman Strauss, in his commentary gives some interesting insights. He starts the time period of Philadelphia about 200 years later than I do and he has a lot of support for his view. But let me read what he says. What I quote he says in his commentary regarding the words of Christ to Philadelphia: "See, I have set before you an open door and no one can shut it." He views this as an open door to missionary endeavor. He says:

Christ has opened many doors of service, but too many of us have been so blinded by greed, selfishness, and the lust for pleasure that we fail to see the open door. Many doors that were open at one time our Lord has now shut. He has shut the door to China, parts of Europe and Latin America. Other doors are being shut. I wonder how many doors, that are now shut, we have failed to enter while they were open. (Let me just add that he wrote over 50 years ago.) I continue the quote:

Our study of church history leads me to believe that this period described by the letter to Philadelphia followed that of the Reformation. The period of the open door extended from about 1750 A.D. to approximately 1950 A.D. During that time God raised up men like William Carey, John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Adoniram Judson, Charles Finney, Dwight Moody, 'Billy' Sunday and many more. The great missionary movements were full swing. No one could ever stop the forward movement of the gospel when the Church took advantage of the open door to service.

But a great tragedy has struck the Church of Christ. We as Christians have gone soft and indifferent. After World War II Japan was a wide open door to Christian workers. General Douglas MacArthur called upon Christians of America to send five thousand missionaries through that open door. We failed to answer that call. In 1960 the President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, was prevented from visiting Japan by several hundred thousand demonstrating communists.

Many church pulpits that at one time were occupied by men of God who loved and preached the Bible as God's Word, are now taken over by modernists who ridicule any literal belief in the Bible. We are now in the Laodicean period. True, Christ has kept a few doors open. But prophesied apostasy is increasing, and the icy fingers of Romanism, modernism, and communism are putting the death grip on opportunities of service in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We seem to be approaching the end of the Age of grace. I believe the world is getting its last chance to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved..." (83-84).

D. Personally

Well, this letter has personal applications for each one of us to make. How might we apply this message personally? What is the Lord's intent of this letter to me? Well, the letter to the Philadelphians may be applied in many ways. But here is one we can all take to heart. It is possible to live the Christian life in such a way that the Lord has no criticism of us. And it is possible to live in such a way that He has a lot to commend us for.

And then I might ask myself, am I making use of any open doors to reach others with the Gospel?

CONCL: And let me just say briefly in conclusion, that we have covered almost 2,000 years of church history, if these churches picture the Church age. And if that is correct, the best age has just come to a close, and we are left with the last, and worst of all seven; Laodicea. I have read through the message to the Laodiceans many times, but I was shocked anew as I studied it. It is a sad way to end the Church age, and if we are right that these churches are prophetic, then it will end on a sad note.