

Revelation 3:7-22

The Churches at Philadelphia and Laodicea

Introduction

- We conclude the 1st Vision of the Book (1:9-3:22).
- Chapters 2-3 describe situations in the 7 churches of Asia Minor that are representative of problems that all churches from Pentecost until the Rapture will face.
- Each letter has a primary association to the local church addressed.
- Each letter has a personal application to any church anywhere as well as to the individuals in any church.

Introduction

- Today we read the letters to the churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea.
- Let's review their location on the following map.

Map of the 7 Churches



Rev 3:7-13: The Church at Philadelphia

Revelation 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":

⁸ "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

Rev 3:7-13: The Church at Philadelphia

⁹ "Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie-- indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

¹⁰ "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

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

Rev 3:7-13: The Church at Philadelphia

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."

City of Philadelphia

- Philadelphia (modern Alashehir) was founded in the third century B.C. by one of the Pergamenian kings and named after Attalus II (159–138 B.C.) who, in spite of Roman pressure, maintained “loyalty/love” for his brother, Eumenes II (197–159 B.C.)— thus the name “Philadelphia” (brotherly love) – or better “one who loves his brother”
- Located on one of the greatest highways in the world which led the East to the West.

City of Philadelphia

- It had so many gods and so many temples that it sometimes was called “Little Athens.”
- It was located in a volcanic region and experienced many earthquakes.
- The fertile volcanic soil was good for growing its main crop: grapes.
- It was a center for the worship of the Greek god Dionysius, the god of wine.
- It was founded to spread Greek culture and Greek language throughout the Roman Empire.

Rev 3:14-22: The Church at Philadelphia





The Church at Philadelphia





Explanation of Letter to Philadelphia

- **Jesus' self-identification:**
- These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":
- Church is reminded of Jesus' attributes, resources, and prerogatives.
- "key of David" – the Messianic King who controls who enters His Kingdom. They had been barred from the Jewish synagogues.

Explanation of Letter to Philadelphia

- **Jesus' affirmation:**
- ⁸ "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

Explanation of Letter to Philadelphia

- **Jesus' promise:**

⁹ "Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie-- indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

- God's promises are for "spiritual Jews."

Explanation of Letter to Philadelphia

- **Jesus' promise:**

¹⁰ "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

- Probably refers to the Tribulation period- a 7 year period of God's judgment before Jesus sets up His Millennial Kingdom on earth.

Explanation of Letter to Philadelphia

- **Jesus' warning:**

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

- There is no criticism or negative charges against this church.

Explanation of Letter to Philadelphia

- **Jesus' exhortation to be faithful:**
- 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."

Explanation of Letter to Philadelphia

- **Jesus' exhortation to be faithful:**
- “a pillar” – unshakable and secure place in God's kingdom.
- “write ... name of my God” – speaks of imprinting His character on us and identifying us as belonging to Him.
- “my new name” – a greater understanding and deeper relationship with Jesus.

The Church at Laodicea

Rev 3:14-22: The Church at Laodicea

¹⁴ "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, `These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

¹⁵ "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

¹⁶ "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

¹⁷ "Because you say, `I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'-- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--

Rev 3:14-22: The Church at Laodicea

¹⁸ "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

¹⁹ "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

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 dine with him, and he with Me.

Rev 3:14-22: The Church at Laodicea

²¹ "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

²² "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

The City of Laodicea

- It is believed it may have been the richest of the 7 cities. Earthquake in 60 AD destroyed the city and they were able to rebuild it without Rome's help.
- It was a center of banking and finance.
- Unusual flocks of black sheep were raised. The sheep had beautiful black wool of a very soft texture and a glossy sheen like satin.

The City of Laodicea

- A famous medical school was there which specialized in eye disease. They discovered a medicine (an eye salve) that was helpful to cure eye diseases.
- It is believed this church was begun through the ministry of Epaphras while Paul was ministering in Ephesus (Col 1:7).



Rev 3:14-22: The Church at Laodicea



Explanation of the Letter to Laodicea

- **Jesus' self-identification**

These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

- Jesus is the “beginning” in the sense of “beginner” or originator.
- John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16 teach Jesus is the Source of all creation.

Explanation of the Letter to Laodicea

- **Jesus' warning:**

¹⁵ "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'-- and do not know

Explanation of the Letter to Laodicea

that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- ¹⁸ "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹ "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

- Profession, Yes. Mistaken in their view of themselves.

Explanation of the Letter to Laodicea

- Not giving Jesus first place in your life.
- Must have gotten saved. Then slowly neglected their relationship and drifted with the pressure of life.
- Not fully committed – casual about the relationship.
- Not consistently following Jesus daily.

Explanation of the Letter to Laodicea

- Had not in their minds abandoned Jesus.
- Holy Spirit, who speaks to us is faithful to awaken us to our spiritual condition and urges us to repent.
- Jesus has been relegated to a position “outside” of their daily schedule. They have divided life into the “secular” and the “sacred.”
- Jesus wants to be at the center of our life.

Explanation of the Letter to Laodicea

- **Jesus' Promise:**
- 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 dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹ "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.
- ²² "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.

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