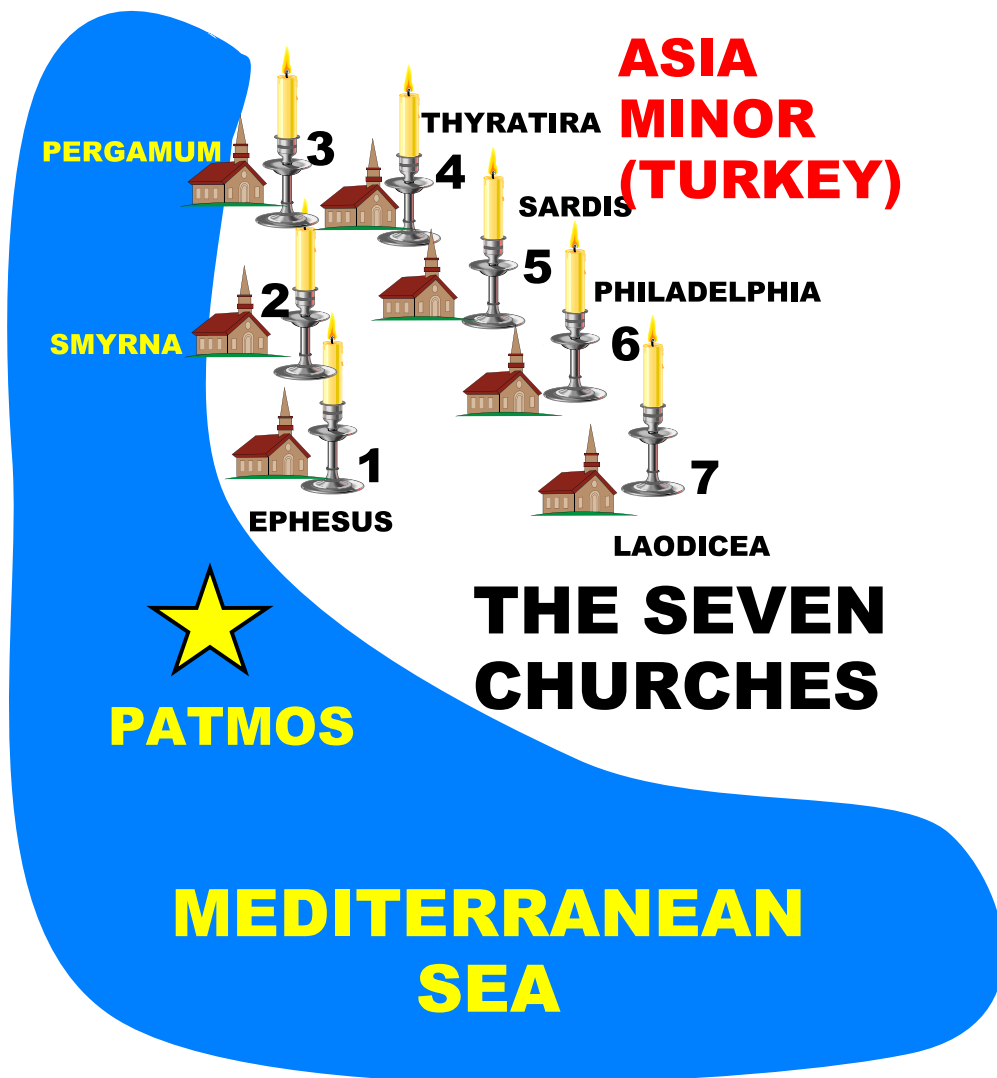


REVELATION : CHAPTERS ONE, TWO, AND THREE



A STUDY OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES
REVELATION, CHAPTERS ONE, TWO AND THREE

by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

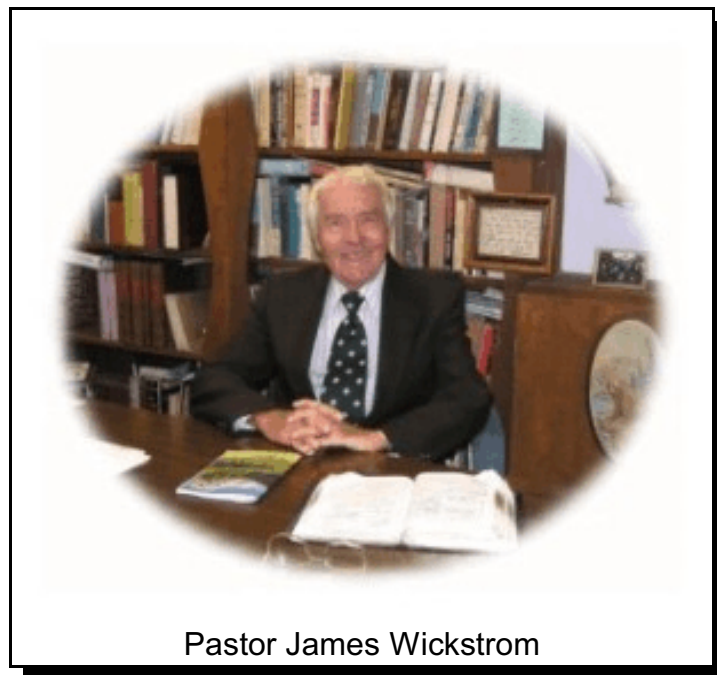
| | |
|---|---------|
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | Page 1 |
| DEDICATIONS | Page 2 |
| INTRODUCTION | Page 3 |
| EPHESUS - THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH | Page 10 |
| SMYRNA - THE PERSECUTED CHURCH | Page 18 |
| PERGAMOS - THE CHURCH LINKED WITH THE WORLD, "WHERE SATAN'S THRONE IS," | Page 21 |
| THYRATIRA : "THE CHURCH IN THE DARK AGES" | Page 25 |
| SARDIS - "THE CHURCH OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION" | Page 28 |
| PHILADELPHIA : "THE MISSIONARY CHURCH WITHIN PROFESSING CHRISTENDOM" | Page 33 |
| LAODICEA : "THE APOSTATE CHURCH" | Page 39 |
| REFERENCES | Page 44 |
| MAJOR REFERENCES | Page 45 |

DEDICATIONS

I would like to dedicate this study to the Late Dr. Louis T. Talbot whose ministry I was able to enjoy for a week many years ago. I would like to use the photo of him I took then, but you know how it is trying to find old photographs. Much of the information contained in this study was gleaned from his book, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," 1937 (Printed by The Church Press, Glendale, CA, ©1937 by the author. This book is likely Public Domain by now) Dr. Louis T. Talbot, in "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," must have been blessed with true prophetic insight in that what he described in his book, 70 years ago, is true today, every last bit of it! Dr. Louis T. Talbot went to meet his Master in 1988.



I would also like to dedicate this to me dear Friend, Pastor, and Mentor for about thirty-five years. It has been under his ministry that I have developed whatever skills I may have as a Bible Teacher.



INTRODUCTION

Many people, unknowingly, give this book an improper title. It is not “*Revelations*,” it is but one revelation. Some Bibles have “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*.” This, too, is not correct. What, then is the correct title?

“*Revelation*” is ok. “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*” which are the first three words in the Greek Text (ἀποκάλυψις ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) too, is ok. One final name is the ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ = The Apocalypse and is the best suited. What does it mean?.

apokalúptō, to reveal. Revelation, uncovering, unveiling, disclosure. One of three words referring to the Second Coming of Christ

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

If you look at the image on the cover, the seven churches (which were actual churches when John wrote this) are arranged in a clockwise order starting with the church at the lower left of Asia Minor, the Ephesian Church. That these churches were in existence when John was commissioned to write the Apocalypse (Revelation) is not in question. The information sent to these churches was meant for their benefit at that time, there is no doubt about that either. As such we may learn a number of things.

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:13-17 (NKJV)

According to Paul’s instructions to Timothy, ALL (EVERY, EACH) Scripture is profitable for one (or more) of four things:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Doctrine | What does the Bible teach about God? |
| 2. Reproof | What does the Bible say I am doing that is wrong? |
| 3. Correction | What does the Bible say I need to do to correct my errors? |
| 4. Instruction in Righteousness | What does the Bible say I should I be doing? |

If you read and study a passage of Scripture and it does not accomplish, at least, one of the above four things, you must go back and study some more because they are there - you just haven’t found them.

This applies to this present study.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which **must shortly take place**. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. *Blessed is he* who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and **keep those things which are written in it**; for the time is near.

Revelation 1:1-3 (NKJV)

Not only should this study accomplish one or more of the above four objectives, it should be a *blessing* to you as well. That is what John wrote. Of course, he also wrote that you must *keep those things which are written in it*, if you are to receive the blessing. You may say "He also wrote that these things 'must shortly take place,' and yet about 2000 years have passed and they have not yet taken place!". Well most of them have not but the things in the first three chapters have or are in the process of taking place. Before proceeding, not what Peter was instructed to write!

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, **all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.**"

2 Peter 3:3-4 (NASB)

In this study, most of the things which were prophesy in John's time are history in ours. The remainder of Revelation is yet to come. We shall see this below.

John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 1:4-8 (NKJV)

Unlike any of Paul's or Peter's, or John's other epistles, this is addressed to a group of churches. A group of SEVEN churches which were located in Asia Minor or what we call today, Turkey. Also, unlike any other epistle, John goes to great length at describing Jesus Christ (specifically) and God (in general).

In this introduction he indicates that there is contained in this book an indication of things which are to come. Since we are only covering the first three chapters, we will not come across all of these things "yet to come." But, as we shall soon learn, there is prophetic material in these three chapters as well, most of which has already taken place.

An interesting note is in order here. John wrote, "*He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him.*" When I was in high school, we had a prophetic conference in our church. One of the speakers spoke, at length, about everyone seeing His coming. He gave some preposterous explanation of some atmospheric condition which would allow people to see beyond the horizon. I don't remember the details. I do know that, today, every major event is seen around the world via TV, the Internet, and, possibly, some other technology I have not yet seen. There is a lesson in this itself. We may not, at present, see how some of the things John describes will take place, but people will when they do take place. It is not wise to speculate as this speaker did.

I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I

was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

Revelation 1:9-11 (NKJV)

John is writing from the Island of Patmos which is off the coast of Turkey.

PAT´MOS (pat´mos). A small, rocky island belonging to the group called "Sporades," in that part of the Aegean known as the Icarian Sea. On account of its rocky, barren, and desolate nature the Roman government used the island as a place of banishment for criminals. The prisoners were compelled to work the mines of the island. The emperor Domitian banished the apostle John to this island (Rev. 1:9), a.d. 95

—New Unger's Bible Dictionary

John was instructed to write in a book and send it to seven churches as named. The NIV calls it a "scroll." The term used is biblion from which we get the word "Bible." It was, no doubt in the form of a scroll, but for practical purposes we shall call it a "book." I must point out an inconsistency in some commentaries which I shall attempt to avoid. You you find in them references to the "Seven Letters." John did not write "seven letters" – he wrote one epistle or one long letter. In chapters 2 and 3 there are "seven messages." If you find references to "letters" in this study, I apologize for erring myself!

One would ask the question, why these churches in particular and, is there a reason there are seven? You find the number seven, which is the number of completeness in the Scriptures is also significant here. Why these particular seven churches?

(i) These Churches might be regarded as the centres of seven postal districts, being all on a kind of ring road which circled the interior of the province. Troas was off the beaten track. But Hierapolis and Colossae were within walking distance of Laodicea; and Tralles, Magnesia and Miletus were close to Ephesus. Letters delivered to these seven cities would easily circulate in the surrounding areas; and since every letter had to be hand-written, each letter would need to be sent where it would reach most easily the greatest number of people.

—Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT)

This is a plausible explanation with one exception. Barclay refers to "Letters." John was told to write the entire message in a book, not in a number of letters. The correct term is "message" which may be contained within a book.. There is no question that these messages to these seven church are to be taken literally, just as we all take all of Paul, Peter, and John's epistles to the other churches. As such, we may learn from what is written. But there is more to it than this. Most Bible scholars believe that there is a long term significance here in that these seven churches represent the Bride of Christ from the Apostolic Church to the Apostate Church (try not to confuse these two terms). It is this view that we shall take in this study.

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as

if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. **The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.**

Revelation 1:12-20 (NKJV)

Note that this book is to cover the past, the present, and the future (*Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this*). In this study, we shall see mostly what has been, but, more important, from there we shall see what is yet to come. One item should be clarified here. He refers to "angel of the church of . . ." Were angels actually involved in the transmission of this scroll? The Greek term is ἄγγελος (pronounced "angelos") from which, obviously, we get the word "angel." The Greek word simply means "a messenger." It may be a human messenger or a "heavenly" messenger, an "angel." How it is translated is determined by how it is used. In this context, it is not possible to be positive, but the most common interpretation is that they were representatives (or even the pastors) of the seven churches.

Angel of the Church here answers exactly to that officer of the synagogue among the Jews called שְׁלִיחַ חַיִּל sheliach tsibbur, the messenger of the Church, whose business it was to read, pray, and teach in the synagogue.

Adam Clarke's Commentary

The Late Dr. Talbot wrote,

A FOREVIEW OF ALL CHURCH HISTORY

We have observed in our former lessons that these two chapters record the messages of the risen Christ to the seven churches in Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (1 :11). We have seen that these local assemblies were chosen because the conditions existing within them aptly represented the seven periods of church history, from Pentecost to the rapture. Thus we have, in these two chapters which we are to consider today, the history of the church on earth as our risen Lord saw it from the beginning.

We believe that we are now living near the end of this church age. Therefore, most of chapters two and three, practically all of which were prophecy in the days of the Apostle John, are now history; for nearly two thousand years have passed since "this prophecy" (1 :3) was uttered by the risen Christ to His exiled apostle on the Isle of Patmos. This is not speculation or fanciful interpretation, for **no summary of church history that has ever been written by man can compare with these divinely inspired words in accuracy or comprehensiveness.** This is all the more remarkable when we remember that God wrote them before they came to pass. But so also is all prophecy; for "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world"

Louis T. Talbot

Whether John made seven copies of the scroll and they each went to the seven churches is not

known but, seeing as how there were no copy machines in those days, he probably made one copy and the messengers were to see that it circulated to the seven churches or, perhaps, each of the messengers was to make a copy.

Talbot and Ramsay both gave names to these churches in terms of church history as given below.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. The message to Ephesus | The apostolic church, 2: 1,7. |
| 2. The message to Smyrna | The persecuted church, 2:8,11. |
| 3. The message to Pergamos | The church linked with the world, "where Satan's throne is," 2:12,17. |
| 4. The message to Thyatira | The church in the Dark Ages, filled with corruption, 2:18,29. |
| 5. The message to Sardis | The church of the Protestant Reformation, 3: 1,6. |
| 6. The message to Philadelphia | The missionary church within professing Christendom, 3:7,13. |
| 7. The message to Laodicea, | The apostate church, with the risen Lord on the outside, entering into the hearts of individuals who will "open the door to Him, 3 :14,22. |

Louis T. Talbot

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Ephesus: | The City of Change. |
| 2 Smyrna: | The City of Life. |
| 3 Pergamum: | The Royal City: The City of Authority |
| 4 Thyatira: | Weakness Made Strong. |
| 5 Sardis: | The City of Death. |
| 6 Philadelphia: | The Missionary City. |
| 7 Laodicea: | The City of Compromise. |

The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, W. M. Ramsay

The names given by Talbot are more in fitting with my viewpoint and what will be presented here.

Louis T. Talbot, in "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," also makes the following observation:

-
-
- 1 The risen Lord Jesus begins each message with a reference to Himself, to some attribute of His Person or some phase of His work that aptly meets the particular need of that local church, symbolic of a specific period of all church history,
 - 2 He closes each message with a promise "to him that overcome."
 - 3 He makes a special appeal or sounds a warning that fits the need of each local church-again, symbolic of the respective periods of church history.
 - 4 He utters the same striking exhortation to all seven: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Louis T. Talbot - "The Revelation of Jesus Christ"

If you study the seven churches, side-by-side-, you will discovered an even more detailed format.

Each letter follows a certain format as shown below.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| • The Address | “To the angel of the church. . . |
| • The Sender | “These things says . . . |
| • The Evaluation | “I know your. . . |
| • The Exception | “I have a few things against you . . . |
| • The Warning | “Repent, Overcome, etc. |
| • The Advice | “Hold fast, Be Zealous, etc. . . . |
| • The Conclusion | “He who has an ear . . . |
| • The Post Script | “He who overcomes . . . |

- The “address” is always the same (except, of course, for the name)
- The sender is always the same (Christ) but He is described differently in each letter

Obviously, the rest of the parts will be different except for

- the conclusion.

None of the churches have all eight parts listed above. The ones with the post script are the first three which lack something else, usually the warning. The Post Scripts are not addressed to the churches but to individuals within the church. The fact that there are only seven parts in each letter (except one) is another case of the number seven - completeness! I would have liked to divide the parts of this one church so it had seven parts as well, but I do not believe that would be proper.

As we begin to study the seven churches, a review by Dr. McGEE would be useful.

These seven letters have a threefold interpretation and application:

1. Contemporary -- they had a direct message to the local churches of John's day. I intend to take you to the location of these seven churches in these next two chapters. I have visited the sites of these churches several times, and I want to visit them again and again, because it is such a thrill and because it brings me closer to the Bible. You can get closer to the Bible by visiting these seven churches than you can by walking through the land of Israel. The ruins have an obvious message. John was writing to churches that he knew all about. In *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia* Sir William Ramsay said, "The man who wrote these seven letters to the seven churches had been there, and he knew the local conditions."

2. Composite -- each one is a composite picture of the church. There is something that is applicable to all churches in all ages in each message to each individual church. In other words, when you read the message to the church in Pergamum, there is a message for your church and a message for you personally.

3. **Chronological -- the panoramic history of the church is given in these seven letters, from Pentecost to the Parousia, from the Upper Room to the upper air. There are seven distinct periods of church history. Ephesus represents the apostolic church; Laodicea represents the apostate church. This prophetic picture is largely fulfilled and is now church history, which**

makes these chapters extremely remarkable.

—J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible

I have put part 3 in bold type as this is the way we shall be viewing the messages to these churches. The other views are very correct as well and worthy of our study, but I shall just use the third. At this point I would like to include a few remarks from a remarkable man of God as he considered what these messages mean..

Were it not for these reassuring truths, we might well become discouraged as the age of apostasy brings ever increasing spiritual darkness. Seeing "the wheat and the tares" growing together, as it were, we should be in utter confusion, but for this prophecy concerning "the things which are." . . .

I refer especially to the efforts of many in professing Christendom toward the union of all churches, regardless of creed Unitarian or Trinitarian; Catholic or Protestant; orthodox or apostate. Priding themselves on their broad-mindedness, so called, they rob Christ of His deity and trample under foot the atoning blood of Calvary's cross. Some would unite Christians and Jews in one vast religious organization, regardless of their respective attitudes toward Jesus, the eternal Son of God.

Louis T. Talbot - "The Revelation of Jesus Christ"

I suspect, if Dr. Talbot - were he alive today, he would have written, "Some would unite Christians, Jews, and Muslims in one vast religious organization, with Allah as the name of God!"

EPHESUS - THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

1. ADDRESS: "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,

2. SENDER 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

3. EVALUATION "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.



4. EXCEPTION "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand from its place--unless you repent.

5. ADVICE "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

(6.) <missing warning>

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

8. P.S. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

The "Sender" in this case is the one referred to in Chapter 1. ***The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands which you saw are the seven churches.*** This is the most general of the seven identities of the sender. This was a church in relatively good standing. As the Apostolic Church, it had the Apostles to look after the churches. Paul looked after those he was responsible for and wrote epistles to some of them. The other apostles did likewise. Did you ever stop the think that there were TWELVE apostles, but the book of Acts, and the epistles in the New Testament are in reference to only a few of them, Paul in particular. Where the other Apostles failures? Have you ever considered that there are four points on a compass. Paul took care of the North-West. Who carried the gospel in the other directions? The reason we do not read about them is that we need not know about them for "doctrine, reprove, correction, or instruction in righteousness."

What does Christ, through John have to say about the state of this church?

"I know

- your works,
- your labor,
- your patience,

- that you cannot bear those who are evil.
- you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;
- and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.”

The first three things mentioned are the “works,” “labor” and “patience.” What does this tell us about the church?

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your **work of faith**, **labor of love**, and **patience of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-4 (NKJV)

Paul lists the same three actions and links them with their source. First “works” comes from faith. James spoke on this issue.

What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he **has faith but does not have works**? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James 2:14-17 (NKJV)

No, we are not saved by our works, but by our works people can see that we have faith. As a matter-of-fact, the fact that we are willing to work hard is the outworking of faith. So the Apostolic Church (Ephesus) possessed faith, saving faith.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. . . . And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13 (NKJV)

The Apostolic Church demonstrated their love through the labor that helps the church to grow.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the **earnest expectation** of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who **subjected it in hope**; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **eagerly waiting for the adoption**, the redemption of our body. For **we were saved in this hope**, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? **But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.**

Romans 8:18-25 (NKJV)

Paul wrote at length to the church at Rome concerning hope. He wrote that “we earnestly hope,” we “eagerly wait,” and, in fact, we were saved “in hope.” The Apostolic Church had all three of these qualities and the Lord acknowledged it in this message.

As a result of these three characteristics, they could not **bear those who are evil**. And they had **tested those who say they are apostles and are not**. Armed with faith, hope, and love, they were able to separate the good from the evil. They were able to evaluate a man’s preaching. In the Apostolic church, an apostle was the leader (often from another place). Today it is the pastor who shepherds the flock. O for a church like that. These are few and far between in the 21st century.

Well all the news was not good, we get to a notable exception. ***“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*** Commentators have expressed various thoughts on what “first love” might be. I may as well add another.

I am my beloved's, And my beloved is mine. He feeds his flock among the lilies.

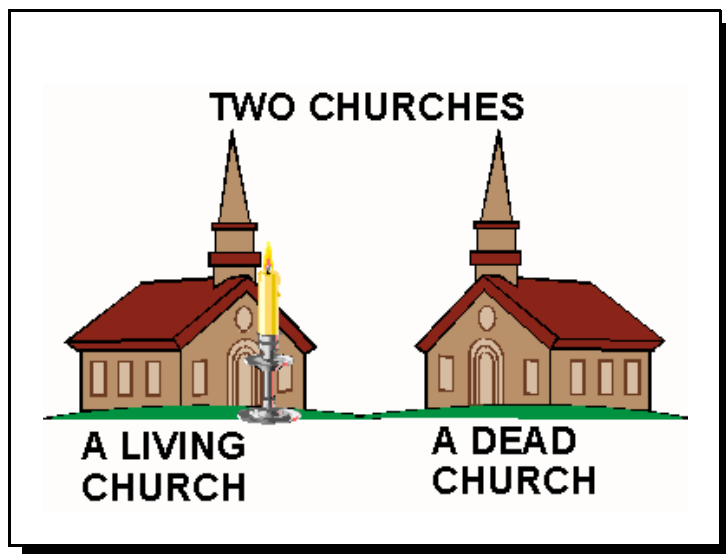
Song of Songs 6:3 (NKJV)

Have you read the Song of Songs lately. If you want to know what “first love” is, read through it one more time. The message does not say they no longer love. As a husband and wife grow together that first initial love begins to wane and is followed by a more “practical” form of love. The same can happen with a church. Do you get up on Sunday morning and hurry to get ready because you can’t wait to get to church or are you the type that comes in during the second hymn? Do your Elders have difficulty in finding people to do various tasks around the church? Chances are your church has also left its “first-love.”

“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.

Note that this is not a message to individual believers in the church but to the church as a whole. If this sounds a bit like your church, perhaps you need to regain that “first-love” through prayer and effort. Do you think I am picking on your church? Remember we are talking about the Apostolic Church, the church age in the first one hundred years or so.

They must have failed in doing first works because the Lord did remove their lamp stand and ushered in the next church, the “Persecuted Church.”



There is an exception noted in this message.

“But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

The deeds of the Nicolaitanes—These were, as is commonly supposed, a sect of the Gnostics, who

taught the most impure doctrines, and followed the most impure practices. They are also supposed to have derived their origin from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons mentioned Acts 6:5 (note). The Nicolaitanes taught the community of wives, that adultery and fornication were things indifferent, that eating meats offered to idols was quite lawful; and mixed several pagan rites with the Christian ceremonies.

—Adam Clarke's Commentary

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. This is the close of the message. It is common to all seven message. If you have an ear, Listen!

A Post Script is added to this message. These post scripts are not meant for the church's as a whole, it is advice for the individual Christian in that church, and in **any** church. Note the wording, "To **him**," the word to the individuals in the church.

To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Why is this a "Post Script" Because it is not addressed to the church as a whole, it is addressed to individuals in that church. Church membership does not save you. It is only your personal relationship with the Savior that you will get you to Paradise.

The LORD God planted a garden (Paradise) eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:8-9 (NKJV)

God forbade Adam and Eve from eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil but there was no such restriction on the Tree of Life. They could have partaken of its fruit and lived forever but, No, they ate of the fruit of the wrong tree! So now we can only look forward to partaking of the fruit of the tree of Life.

Of this church age, Talbot wrote (concerning the Nicholaitans),

When we come to the study of the situation existing in the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira, we shall find this system in full bloom, with bishops, archbishops, and other religious dignitaries domineering over the people, and claiming a unique place in the body of Christ, to which they were not justly entitled. God says He "hates" "the deeds" and "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" (2 :6, 15), So also did the church at Ephesus-the apostolic church! There were no such distinctions in the body of Christ in the beginning,

Louis T. Talbot

True, the church had lost its first-love but other than that it was a good church. Good things always seem to come to and end and thus the Apostolic Church gave way to the Persecuted Church. As long as the Apostles looked after the church, it remained in reasonably good shape. This is true today - we need men of the same caliber as the Apostles to keep the church where it should be. How long were the Apostles around? Fox lists the Apostles as the first martyrs.

I. St Stephen

St. Stephen suffered the next in order.[after Christ] (I have omitted the details here since they are recorded in Acts.

II. James the Great

The next martyr we meet with, according to St. Luke, in the History of the Apostles' Acts, was James the son of Zebedee, the elder brother of John, and a relative of our Lord; for his mother Salome was cousin-german to the Virgin Mary. It was not until ten years after the death of Stephen that the second martyrdom took place; for no sooner had Herod Agrippa been appointed governor of Judea than, with a view to ingratiate himself with them, he raised a sharp persecution against the Christians, and determined to make an effectual blow, by striking at their leaders. The account given us by an eminent primitive writer, Clemens Alexandrinus, ought not to be overlooked; that, as James was led to the place of martyrdom, his accuser was brought to repent of his conduct by the apostle's extraordinary courage, and fell down at his feet to request his pardon, professing himself a Christian, and resolving that James should not receive the crown of martyrdom alone. Hence they were both beheaded at the same time. Thus did the first apostolic martyr cheerfully and resolutely receive that cup, which he had told our Savior he was ready to drink. Timon and Parmenas suffered martyrdom about the same time; the one at Philippi, and the other at Macedonia. These events took place in AD 44.

III. Philip

Was born at Bethsaida, in Galilee and was first called by the name of "disciple." He labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom at Heliopolis, in Phrygia. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified, A. D. 54.

IV. Matthew

Whose occupation was that of a toll-gatherer, was born at Nazareth. He wrote his gospel in Hebrew, which was afterwards translated into Greek by James the Less. The scene of his labors was Parthia, and Ethiopia, in which latter country he suffered martyrdom, being slain with a halberd in the city of Nadabah, AD 60

V. James the Less

Is supposed by some to have been the brother of our Lord, by a former wife of Joseph. This is very doubtful, and accords too much with the Catholic superstition, that Mary never had any other children except our Savior. He was elected to the oversight of the churches of Jerusalem; and was the author of the Epistle ascribed to James in the sacred canon. At the age of ninety-four he was beat and stoned by the Jews; and finally had his brains dashed out with a fuller's club.

VI. Matthias

Of whom less is known than of most of the other disciples, was elected to fill the vacant place of Judas. He was stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded.

VII. Andrew

Was the brother of Peter. He preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations; but on his arrival at Edessa he was taken and crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed transversely in the ground. Hence the derivation of the term, St. Andrew's Cross.

VIII. St. Mark

Was born of Jewish parents of the tribe of Levi. He is supposed to have been converted to Christianity by Peter, whom he served as an amanuensis, and under whose inspection he wrote his

Gospel in the Greek language. Mark was dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria, at the great solemnity of Serapis their idol, ending his life under their merciless hands.

IX. Peter

Among many other saints, the blessed apostle Peter was condemned to death, and crucified, as some do write, at Rome; albeit some others, and not without cause, do doubt thereof. Hegeippus saith that Nero sought matter against Peter to put him to death which, when the people perceived, they entreated Peter with much ado that he would fly the city. Peter, through their importunity at length persuaded, prepared himself to avoid. But, coming to the gate, he saw the Lord Christ come to meet him, to whom he, worshipping, said "Lord, whither dost Thou go?" To whom He answered and said, "I am come again to be crucified." By this, Peter, perceiving his suffering to be understood, returned into the city. Jerome saith that he was crucified his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord was.

X. Paul

Paul, the apostle, who before was called Saul, after his great travail and unspeakable labors in promoting the Gospel of Christ, suffered also in this first persecution under Nero. Abdias, declareth that under his execution Nero sent two of his esquires, Ferega and Parthemius, to bring him word of his death. They, coming to Paul instructing the people, desired him to pray for them, that they might believe; who told them that shortly after they should believe and be baptized at His sepulcher. This done, the soldiers came and led him out of the city to the place of execution, where he, after his prayers made, gave his neck to the sword.

XI. Jude

The brother of James, was commonly called Thaddeus. He was crucified at Edessa, AD 72.

XII. Bartholomew

Preached in several countries, and having translated the Gospel of Matthew into the language of India, he propagated it in that country. He was at length cruelly beaten and then crucified by the impatient idolaters.

XIII. Thomas

Called Didymus, preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, which exciting the rage of the pagan priests, he was martyred by being thrust through with a spear.

XIV. Luke

The evangelist, was the author of the Gospel which goes under his name. He traveled with Paul through various countries, and supposed to have been hanged on an olive tree, by the idolatrous priests of Greece.

XV. Simon

Surnamed Zelotes, preached the Gospel in Mauritania Africa, and even in Britain in which latter country he was crucified, AD 74.

XVI. John

The "beloved disciple," was brother to James the Great. The churches of Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Thyatira, were founded by him. From Ephesus he was ordered to be sent to Rome, where it is affirmed he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. He escaped by miracle, without injury. Domitian after wards banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of

Revelation. Nerva, the successor of Domitian, recalled him. **He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death.**

—Fox's Book of Martyrs

If John had not escaped the death like the others, there would be no book of Revelation to study today!

It is time for the Persecuted Church to appear on the scene. Fox gives us the date and a description of it. I have included the details of the first, the one most known by people in general. It gives a picture of what is meant when we say "Persecuted."

The First Persecution, Under Nero, AD 67

The first persecution of the Church took place in the year 67, under Nero, the sixth emperor of Rome. This monarch reigned for the space of five years, with tolerable credit to himself, but then gave way to the greatest extravagancy of temper, and to the most atrocious barbarities. Among other diabolical whims, he ordered that the city of Rome should be set on fire, which order was executed by his officers, guards, and servants. While the imperial city was in flames, he went up to the tower of Macaenas, played upon his harp, sung the song of the burning of Troy, and openly declared that 'he wished the ruin of all things before his death.' Besides the noble pile, called the Circus, many other palaces and houses were consumed; several thousands perished in the flames, were smothered in the smoke, or buried beneath the ruins.

This dreadful conflagration continued nine days. when Nero, finding that his conduct was greatly blamed, and a severe odium cast upon him, determined to lay the whole upon the Christians, at once to excuse himself and have an opportunity of glutting his sight with new cruelties. This was the occasion of the first persecution; and the barbarities exercised on the Christians were such as even excited the commiseration of the Romans themselves. Nero even refined upon cruelty, and contrived all manner of punishments for the Christians that the most infernal imagination could design. In particular he had some sewed up in skins of wild beasts, and then worried by dogs until they expired; and others dressed in shirts made stiff with wax, fixed to axletrees, and set on fire in his gardens, in order to illuminate them. This persecution was general throughout the whole Roman Empire, but it rather increased than diminished the spirit of Christianity. In the course of it, St. Paul and St. Peter were martyred.

To their names may be added, Erastus, chamberlain of Corinth; Aristarchus, the Macedonian, and Trophimus, an Ephesian, converted by St. Paul, and fellow-laborer with him, Joseph, commonly called Barsabas, and Ananias, bishop of Damascus; each of the Seventy.

The Second Persecution, Under Domitian, AD 81

The Third Persecution, Under Trajan, AD 108

The Fourth Persecution, Under Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, AD 162

The Fifth Persecution, Commencing With Severus, AD 192

The Sixth Persecution, Under Maximus, AD 235

The Seventh Persecution, Under Decius AD 240

The Eighth Persecution, Under Valerian, AD 257

The Ninth Persecution Under Aurelian, AD 274

The Tenth Persecution, Under Diocletian, AD 303

—Fox's Book of Martyrs

Using a very unscientific method of averaging the dates of the ten persecutions, you come up with AD 192. One can safely say that, by AD 200 the persecution had grown greatly. With that in mind, let us go on to the church at Smyrna. I should note that the first and second persecutions listed above occurred before John wrote this.

SMYRNA - THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

1. ADDRESS And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,

2: SENDER 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:

3. EVALUATION "'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.



(4) <missing exception>

(5) <missing warning>

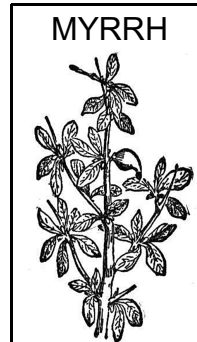
6.ADVICE Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

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

8. P.S. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." '

The name of the church itself is descriptive. It is the Greek word for Myrrh. If you know anything about myrrh, you know it is of little value until it is crushed and pulverized. Then is when it gives forth a beautiful aroma. This was what went on at Smyrna.

The Lord refers to Himself here as the *"First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life."* I can not think of a more fitting introduction. Christ knew what persecution was as he hung on the cross - one of the cruelest deaths man has devised, not to mention His carrying our sins on Himself which was far worse!



'I know your ~~works~~, tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Revelation 2:9 (NASB)

Only the KJV and the NKJV of the twenty or so translations I have include "works." All of the Greek texts, the ones that came along after the Textus Receptus (Received Text) was written, omit the word for work.

Compare two characteristics of Ephesus with Smyrna.

| | | |
|----------|--------------|----------|
| Ephesus: | labor, | patience |
| Smyrna: | tribulation, | poverty |

The church went from "Toils to Tribulation," (using toils as it starts with t). It went from "Patience to

Poverty.”

First mentioned is their tribulation (not to be confused with The Tribulation).

θλιψις (so L Tr) . . . properly, “a pressing, pressing together, pressure” (Strabo, p. 52; Galen); in Biblical and ecclesiastical writings, a Greek metaphor, “oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon

This is followed by their labor.

Properly speaking, penēs refers to one who is so poor that he earns his daily bread by his labor. Hesychius called such a person autodiakonos, one who provides for his own necessities

Trench's Synonyms of the New Testament

The student of church history will recall that during that period of time—the first and second centuries, to A. D. 316—there transpired the martyr period, when literally thousands and thousands of men and women sealed their faith with their blood. In those days the Christians did not worship in great cathedrals, but they met in places like the catacombs of Rome. Nero and Diocletian, obsessed with a fiendish desire, tried by means of every conceivable invention to wipe the followers of Christ from off the face of the earth.

One of the first martyrs was Polycarp. He was the bishop of Smyrna, and his death was the forerunner of that of thousands. The friends of Polycarp persuaded him to take refuge on a farm, but his persecutors searched him out and arrested him. When they tried to get him to blaspheme the name of his Lord, with a courage born of faith in the Son of God, he answered them, "Eighty and six years have I served my Lord, and He has been my truest Friend. How then can I blaspheme Him who shed His blood to wash away my sins?" They tied him to a stake, and built a fire around him; but long before his suffering body was reduced to ashes, his triumphant soul was at home with his God!

Louis T. Talbot

I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. One account of this is below.

Jews by national descent, but not spiritually of "the true circumcision." The Jews blaspheme Christ as "the hanged one." As elsewhere, so at Smyrna they bitterly opposed Christianity; and at POLYCARP'S martyrdom they joined the heathens in clamoring for his being cast to the lions; and when there was an obstacle to this, for his being burnt alive; and with their own hands they carried logs for the pile.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

I think we have a pretty good concept of what life was like for the persecuted church. Today, as you read this, there are Christians who hold the church services in hidden places and are careful what they say in public. Today it is not “Jews” that are doing the greatest persecuting, it is the Muslim. The media refers to them as “Muslim Extremists.” If that is what they really are, then you and I are “Christian Extremists!” The only reason there is not a lot more attempts to slay Christians and Jews

is that most Muslims do not know the Qûran any better than most Christians know their Bibles.

There is no “exception” listed for this church. There was nothing to say that was not in their favor. Likewise there was no advice as they were doing all they could to hold on. Wiersby noted

Admonition (vv. 10-11). No words of accusation are given to the congregation in Smyrna! They may not have enjoyed the approval of men, but they certainly received the praise of God. However, the Lord did give them solemn words of admonition as they faced increased suffering: "Don't be afraid!" He assured them that He knew the devil's plans and was in complete control of the situation. Some of the believers would be imprisoned and tried as traitors to Rome. Yet their tribulation would not be long; in the Bible, ten days signifies "a brief time" (Gen. 24:55; Acts 25:6). The important thing was faithfulness, standing true to Christ no matter what the government might threaten to do.

The Bible Exposition Commentary.

PERGAMOS - THE CHURCH LINKED WITH THE WORLD, "WHERE SATAN'S THRONE IS,"

1 ADDRESS: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

2 SENDER 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

3 EVALUATION: "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.



4 EXCEPTION: "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. "Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

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

(6) <missing advice>

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

8 P.S.: 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." '

We shall consider the sword a bit later. John was instructed to write, as an introduction, "*I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is.*" Satan has been persecuting people from times even before Abraham!

The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause." Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. "However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face." So the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life."

No one knows for sure when Job lived. It was certainly before Abraham but when we do not know. Even back then, Satan has always persecuted God's people. He has tried but without much success. I have heard it said, and I believe it in general, the best way to get a church to grow is to persecute it. We get too settles in our weekly "routines" that we tend to forget the real reason for the Church..

Like Ephesus and Smyrna it was a wealthy city, but it was wicked. People in its pagan cults worshiped Athena, Asclepius, Dionysus, and Zeus. Pergamum was famous for its university with a library of about 200,000 volumes, and for manufacturing parchment resulting in a paper called pergamena. The atmosphere of this city was adverse to any effective Christian life and testimony.

Bible Knowledge Commentary

Even where Satan's seat is. A place of peculiar wickedness, as if Satan dwelt there. Satan is, as it were, enthroned there. The influence of Satan in producing persecution is that which is particularly alluded to, as is apparent from the reference which is immediately made to the case of Antipas, the "faithful martyr."

Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

Some regard the term "Satan's seat" as referring to the worship of Aesculapius, the god of medicine, whose common emblem was the serpent. Others think it denotes the particular wickedness of the city with its various idolatries and the trials which had come upon the Church, one faithful member (Antipas) having already suffered martyrdom

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

So the introduction was certainly fit. It would be hard for a church to survive in a place such as this. Never-the-less, the church was surviving.

And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

With regard to Satan, McGee wrote,

"Even where Satan's seat [throne] is" reveals that religion was big business in Pergamum and that Satan's headquarters were there. This ought to settle the question for those who think that Satan is in hell at the present time. He has never yet been in hell because hell hasn't opened up for business yet. Satan will not be in hell until much later, as we shall see in chapter 20. At the present, Satan is loose and is the prince of this world, controlling kingdoms and going up and down the earth as a roaring lion, hunting for whom he may devour

J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible

The church at Pergamos had been through a lot and survived, but still, there was an exception. *But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.* The church was not pure. There were those who were going in the wrong direction. Some were holding to the "Doctrine of Balaam." What is that? A. W. Tozer, in his personal

style wrote.

Now it is possible to have religious experience without Jesus Christ. It's not only possible to have religious experience, it's possible to have worship without Jesus Christ. That is, it is possible for a man to have an experience of talking with God or being talked to by God. Look at Cain. Cain had a religious experience, but God did not accept him. Look at Balaam, son of Beor. He had an experience and yet God was not pleased with him,

The Best of A. W. Tozer

The story of Balaam, son of Beor, is told in Numbers 22-24. It is an interesting account but not the subject of this lesson other than to note one exceptional event.

When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam was angry and struck the donkey with his stick. And the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" Then Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a mockery of me! If there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now." The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?" And he said, "No." Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed all the way to the ground.

Numbers 22:27-31 (NASB)

I think sometime we need to talk with our donkeys! . . . our cars?! Anyway, there is no direct reference in the Old Testament concerning this. Josephus takes an entire chapter to describe it in *"The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 4, chapter 6."* Space will not permit me to go into details here - only that he led Israel away from God. There were those in Pergamum that were doing likewise.

With regard to the fact that some held to the *"hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans,"* please refer to page #12.

Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. The Lord says he will fight against "them." To whom does "them" refer? Those who were not following Christ and going these other ways, The word here is "Repent!" The Greek word is:

metanoéō; from metá , denoting change of place or condition, and noéō, to exercise the mind, think, comprehend. To repent, change the mind, relent. Theologically, it involves regret or sorrow, accompanied by a true change of heart toward God. It is distinguished from metamélomai, to regret

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

Note the last few words - it doe NOT mean to "regret!" It means to completely turn ones thinking around. There is a verse that very well illustrates this.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears **from** the truth and will turn aside **to** myths.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 (NASB)

The process described here involves two things. (1) “turning away from,” and (2) “turning to.” Our minds and souls can not stand to be void. We have to believe in something. If we do not believe in one thing, we will believe in another!

The conclusion is the same as for the previous churches.

The “P.S.” is *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.* ’

This statement is rather mysterious. What is this “manna” and the “white stone?” As far as the white stone is concerned, The Greek word is:

psáō (n.f., see psēlapháō, to lightly touch. A small stone or pebble. In Rev. 2:17, an allusion to the ancient custom among the Greeks of acquitting with a white stone or pebble and condemning with a black one.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

But the more probable interpretation is

(iv) In the ancient world objects called tesserae were much used. A tessera was a little tablet made of wood or metal or stone; it had writing on it; and, generally speaking, the possession of a tessera conferred some kind of privilege upon a man. Three of these tesserae add something to the picture.

(a) In Rome the great houses had their clients, dependents who every morning received from their patron food and money for the day. They were often given a tessera by which they identified themselves as having the right to the free gifts. This would mean that the Christian has the right to the free gifts for life which Christ can give.

—Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT)

as for the manna,

Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. "For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

John 6:32-35 (NKJV)

THYRATIRA : “THE CHURCH IN THE DARK AGES”

REFERENCE 2:18-29

1. ADDRESS: "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,

2. SENDER: 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:

3. EVALUATION: "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.



4. EXCEPTION: "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. "And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. "Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. "I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

5. WARNING: "Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

6. ADVICE: "But hold fast what you have till I come. "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'-- as I also have received from My Father; "and I will give him the morning star.

7. CONCLUSION: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

<missing post script>

Dr. Talbot, with his acute observations, wrote,

But even to Thyatira, which means "continual sacrifice," and represents the papacy with all her corruption, especially, in this connection, with the "continual sacrifice" of the mass, the Lord commended that which deserved His approval: "I know thy works," He said, "and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first:' Before the Reformation period, the only hospitals were the monasteries, and those who looked after the sick were the monks and nuns. Many of those faithful servants of the Lord gave their lives for their fellowman. The early schools and libraries were connected with these religious houses. So we find our Lord, before He begins to point out the shortcomings and serious faults of Thyatira, commending her works.

Louis T. Talbot

This church age was the age when Roman Catholicism rose to the forefront. As Dr. Louis T. Talbot pointed out, there was some good done by this church. Our Lord to John to write, "*I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.*"

The humanitarian aspects of this church were good. They continued to be good with the like of Mother Teresa. Their works are to be commended. BUT, we do not belong to a faith that is obtained by good works.

The spiritual aspects of this church led it into the Dark Ages. One commentator noted that this church, which was the worst of the seven, received the longest message. I would suppose this is because it was needed!

Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. The things against this church have to do with someone called Jezebel. She is first mentioned below.

And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.

1 Kings 16:31 (NKJV)

She was the virtual ruler of Israel. She introduced the worship of Baal and other idols, maintaining four hundred priests of Astarte at her own expense while Ahab maintained 450 priests of Baal (1 Kings 18:19). She resolved to exterminate all the prophets of God.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

Not being much of a historian, I must rely on men I can trust to fill in some of the historical aspects of these messages. I refer to Dr. Louis T. Talbot - "The Revelation of Jesus Christ again.

You will recall how Jezebel persecuted the true prophets of God. (See [1 Kings 18:1,21](#) :29.) In that also she was a true type of the system which reached out over Europe during the period covered by the years between A. D. 500 and 1500, and persecuted Christians. God says, "I gave her space to repent and she repented not" (2 :21). Rome is the same today as she was five hundred years ago. She does not change. God gave her a chance to repent in the days of Luther. Luther did not start out with the idea of bringing about a Reformation. His purpose was to bring about a change within the church. He saw, from his study of God's Word, just how the church had gone away from the truth of God. He went to Rome, intending to do all he could to awaken the leaders of the church, in an effort to bring the church back to God's Word. But instead of repenting, they excommunicated him, and sought not only to put him to death, but also to destroy all who left the fold of Romanism.

Louis T. Talbot

There is an important point that most overlook here. We say the Church at Philadelphia is the true church and will be raptured before the time of the Tribulation. What does John write here? *I . . . will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into **great tribulation**.* The Roman Church will not see heaven. There are, I am sure, some in that church who know the Lord Jesus Christ in spite of the church they attend and they will be raptured, but only those. Dr. McGee made one mistake here.

"Great tribulation" could refer to the persecution which Rome is enduring under communism. Or it

may mean the Great Tribulation into which the apostate church will go.

J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible

However, I must forgive him this error as he died in 1988 so he could not have known of the fall of communism (although it may raise its ugly head again!)

I have to ask an important question. If you were a born again Christian and lived prior to the Reformation, where would you go to church? I do not know the answer to that but there were those who survived somehow because the Lord says to them, *"Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden."* There would not have been much they could do but attempt to survive.

Finally, the "Advice" given this church, : *"But hold fast what you have till I come. "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'-- as I also have received from My Father; "and I will give him the morning star.*

We owe our privilege of studying the Word of God and worshiping according to the dictates of our conscience to Luther and to those brave spirits who, like him, were:.. ready to die for their faith. And yet, strange to say, there are actually Protestants in the world today who are talking about a "union with the system which tried to stamp out those who believed in the "freedom to worship God" according to their own conscience! Remember that if the Protestant Church ever goes back into the arms .of the Roman Catholic Church, she will have to leave her faith behind her, for Rome never changes. "I gave her space to repent," says the Son of God. . and she repented not"

Louis T. Talbot

SARDIS - "THE CHURCH OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION"

REFERENCE 3:1-6

1. THE ADDRESS: And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,

2: THE SENDER: 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars:

3: THE EVALUATION: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.



(4): <missing exception>

5: THE WARNING: "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

6: THE ADVICE "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

7: THE CONCLUSION: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

<missing post script>

In the introduction, Ramsey called this: **Sardis: The City of Death**. How can that be if this represents the church of the Reformation? Let me begin with Louis T. Talbot - "The Revelation of Jesus Christ again. It is significant that there is no exception in this message. The church was uniformly in shambles.

To the church at Sardis our Lord sent this message, "*Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*" What did He mean by that statement? What happened just after the Protestant Reformation? You will recall from your study of church history that, when the reformers went out to preach, their watchword was: "The just shall live by faith." They were called "Protestants," because they protested against the existing evils and corruption in the church. They threatened to wipe everything represented by Thyatira from the face of the earth. But, strange to say, the Reformation suddenly came to a close. Why? Because the devil got the "Protestants" back into the old rut from which the early reformers had delivered them. The name they had was one which meant something but spiritually they were dead. "*Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*"

Louis T. Talbot

Warren Wiersbe stated it as below.

The message to Sardis is a warning to all "great churches" that are living on past glory. Dr. Vance Havner has frequently reminded us that spiritual ministries often go through four stages: a man, a movement, a machine, and then a **monument**. Sardis was at the "monument" stage, but there was still hope!

Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament

Sad to say, there are buildings today that are called churches but, in reality are nothing more than monuments to their past glory. They had been active and alive. Now they are living on their past glory and doing nothing.

Catholicism and Protestantism represent two distinct types of Christianity which sprang from the same root, but differ in the branches.

Catholicism is legal Christianity which served to the barbarian nations of the Middle Ages as a necessary school of discipline; Protestantism is evangelical Christianity which answers the age of independent manhood. Catholicism is traditional, hierarchical, ritualistic, conservative; Protestantism is biblical, democratic, spiritual, progressive. The former is ruled by the principle of authority, the latter by the principle of freedom. But the law, by awakening a sense of sin and exciting a desire for redemption, leads to the gospel; parental authority is a school of freedom; filial obedience looks to manly self-government.

The characteristic features of mediaeval Catholicism are intensified by Romanism, yet without destroying the underlying unity.

Romanism and orthodox Protestantism believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in one divine-human Lord and Saviour of the race. They accept in common the Holy Scriptures and the oecumenical faith. They agree in every article of the Apostles' Creed. What unites them is far deeper, stronger and more important than what divides them.

But Romanism holds also a large number of "traditions of the elders," which Protestantism rejects as extra-scriptural or anti-scriptural; such are the papacy, the worship of saints and relics, transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, prayers and masses for the dead, works of supererogation, purgatory, indulgences, the system of monasticism with its perpetual vows and ascetic practices, besides many superstitious rites and ceremonies.

Protestantism, on the other hand, revived and developed the Augustinian doctrines of sin and grace; it proclaimed the sovereignty of divine mercy in man's salvation, the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith, and the sufficiency of Christ's merit as a source of justification; it asserted the right of direct access to the Word of God and the throne of grace, without human mediators; it secured Christian freedom from bondage; it substituted social morality for monkish asceticism, and a simple, spiritual worship for an imposing ceremonialism that addresses the senses and imagination rather than the intellect and the heart.

The History of the Christian Church

The time of the Reformation was a very busy time in terms of various epics. In his History of the Christian Church, Dr. PHILIP SCHAFF, writes,

The situation of Protestantism in 1530 was critical. The Diet of Speier had forbidden the further progress of the Reformation: the Edict of Worms was in full legal force; the Emperor had made peace with the Pope, and received from him the imperial crown at Bologna; the Protestants were divided among themselves, and the Conference at Marburg had failed to unite them against the common foe. At the same time the whole empire was menaced by a foreign power. The Turks under Suleiman "the Magnificent," who called himself, Lord of all rulers, Dispenser of crowns to the monarchs of the earth, the Shadow of God over the world," had reached the summit of their military power, and approached the gates of Vienna in September, 1529. They swore by the beard of Mohammed not to rest till the prayers of the prophet of Mecca should be heard from the tower of St. Stephen. They were indeed forced to retire with a loss of eighty thousand men, but threatened a second attempt, and in the mean time laid waste a great part of Hungary.

The History of the Christian Church

This abstract from the book is taken from near the end of the Reformation. I include it just to indicate that the Reformation Church was one long series of crises and battles and controversies.

It is not strange that this should happen. I have seen with my own eyes a Protestant church, part of a large denomination, decide the denomination was corrupt and pull out of the organization. It was fortunate in one sense in that it successfully pulled out of the denomination without losing its building and assets. But, like most other similar situations, it is like jumping off a sinking ship into a life boat. THEN what do you do. With no "parent organization," each elder wanted to go another way and many problems arose.

This is not to say that good did not come from the Reformation, but the good that came from it was not really manifested until things settled down to some sort of normal situation.

However, instead of replacing the Roman Church with another "good" church, the result was a whole series of denominations, each believing differently in one aspect or another. In spite of that, the church moved on to its next stage. For a period of several centuries, there were conferences, arguments, edicts almost without end.

The one that is curious to me is the "Diet of Worms." No, that was not a new food trend. What it really was is listed below

The Diet of Worms (Reichstag zu Worms) was a general assembly (a Diet) of the estates of the Holy Roman Emperor that took place in Worms, a small town on the Rhine river located in what is now Germany. It was conducted from January 28 to May 25, 1521, with Emperor Charles V presiding. Although other issues were dealt with at the Diet of Worms, it is most memorable for addressing Martin Luther and the effects of the Protestant Reformation.

Wikipedia

Next is the "Advice" (the P.S. in the case of the first three churches). *"Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy."*

The Message has an interesting translation of this.

"Up on your feet! Take a deep breath! Maybe there's life in you yet. But I wouldn't know it by looking at your busywork; nothing of God's work has been completed. Your condition is desperate. Think of the gift you once had in your hands, the Message you heard with your ears—grasp it again and turn back to God. "If you pull the covers back over your head and sleep on, oblivious to God, I'll return when you least expect it, break into your life like a thief in the night.

Revelation 3:2-3 (MSG)

I really don't think I can improve on that. Dr. McGee's translation is similar to this. Luther and the others had a right idea and they acted upon it. As noted earlier, there were various types of meetings held over the years but no solid foundation came from them. Fortunately some of the groups (denominations) did move forward and became the next "church." Included in this warning is a sentence I would have put in the P.S. since it is not in reference to the church but to individuals.

You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. It is interesting that the Lord says they shall "walk with Me." I recently did a short study on men who walked with God: Adam (by implication) Enoch, and Noah. These were men who walked with God here on Earth. The promise given in this passage refers to the future, not the present.

The fact they had not "defiled their garments," does not mean they knew a good cleaning establishment or were careful where they sat so as to not get dirty.

One might think that we are living in the age of the protestant movement - just by reading the news.

SAN FRANCISCO — An Episcopal diocese in central California voted Saturday to split with the national denomination over disagreements about the role of gays and lesbians in the church. Clergy and lay members of the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin voted 173-22 at their annual convention to remove all references to the national church from the diocese's [constitution](#), according to **spokeswoman Joan Gladstone**.

The Fresno-based congregation is the first full diocese to secede because of a conservative-liberal rift that began decades ago and is now focused on whether the Bible condemns gay relationships. The diocese, in a later vote, accepted an invitation to join a conservative South American congregation of the Worldwide Anglican Communion. The Episcopal Church is the U.S. member of the global Anglican Communion.

The decision is almost certain to spark a court fight over control of the diocese's multimillion-dollar real estate holdings and other assets.

The head of the U.S. denomination had warned Bishop John-David Schofield of the Fresno-based diocese against secession.

"I do not intend to threaten you, only to urge you to reconsider and draw back from this trajectory," **Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori**, head of the U.S. denomination, wrote in a letter to Schofield earlier this week.

Schofield responded that the Episcopal Church "has isolated itself from the overwhelming majority of Christendom and more specifically from the Anglican Communion by denying Biblical truth and walking apart from the historic Faith and Order."

The Fresno diocese has explored breaking ties with the American church since 2003, when

Episcopalians consecrated the church's first openly gay bishop, V. Gene Robinson of [New Hampshire](#). The resulting uproar throughout the world Anglican fellowship has moved the 77-million-member communion toward the brink of schism.

San Joaquin is one of three Episcopal dioceses that will not ordain women. Last year the Episcopal Church elected Jefferts Schori as its first woman primate.

Christian advocates for accepting gay relationships, including Jefferts Schori, say they are guided by biblical teachings on social justice and tolerance. But Schofield and other conservatives believe Scripture bars same-sex relationships.

The diocese's holdings include 48 church buildings, including its [Fresno](#) headquarters, a series of mission-style buildings surrounded by olive, Chinese elm and cherry trees. Its total assets are worth millions, said the Rev. Van McCalister, a diocesan spokesman.

About 55 conservative Episcopal parishes have split from the church in the last few years and some have affiliated directly with Anglican provinces overseas, according to national church statistics. But the courts have mostly ruled against them.

San Joaquin is one of four full dioceses out of 110 in the nation — along with [Fort Worth](#), Texas; Quincy, Ill., and Pittsburgh — that has taken steps toward breaking with the U.S. church.

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,316224,00.html>

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, spokeswoman Joan Gladstone, I seem to believe that Katharine and Joan are women's names. It is a little late to have a split in a church that has already become apostate in its teachings and operations. "Gay Bishops," "women Bishops?" The Bible does not even teach that there are any offices higher than the pastor of the local church but, even if this were permissible, women would certainly be excluded as well as homosexuals.

I suppose one might say the "Protestant Movement" has never ended. If you take this attitude, you also have to assume that the protesting is going, for the most part, in the wrong direction today!

**PHILADELPHIA : “THE MISSIONARY CHURCH WITHIN PROFESSING
CHRISTENDOM”
REFERENCE 3:7-13**

1: THE ADDRESS: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

2: THE SENDER: '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":



3: THE EVALUATION: "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.

4: THE EXCEPTION: "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.

5" THE PROMISE¹: "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. "Behold, I am coming quickly!

6. THE ADVICE: Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. "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.

7: THE CONCLUSION: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

(8.) <missing post script>

Christ is identified as "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens." This is appropriate for the one and only church that will not have an end. Indeed, it is this church to which the promise is given, *I also will keep you from the hour of trial*. This is one of the promises upon which we say that the true church will be raptured and not see the seven years of tribulation. This church was (obviously) not in Philadelphia Pennsylvania. The name means

¹This is a deviation from the general plan. There was no warning needed for this church.

“brotherly love.” It is also referred to as the “Church of the Open Door,” as found in the “evaluation.” It has not changed since the beginning. The door is still open - but for how long?

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, **that God will open up to us a door for the word**, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

Colossians 4:2-4 (NASB)

Paul prayed this in the Apostolic Church. It was not until the “Church of the Open Door” that the Lord answered in abundance.

Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it," we hear Him say ([Rev. 3](#) :8), It is only a little more than one hundred years ago [170 years today] that the great missionary movement began with **William Carey**. Before that, the heathen nations were without a missionary among them. When people were concerned about them, the elders of the church argued, "When God wants to convert the heathen, He will do it without any assistance from you." During the last hundred years, however, we have seen a great movement in the way of missionary endeavor, and missionary societies like the China Inland Mission, the African Inland Mission, and many others

Louis T. Talbot



William Cary

Calvin is to be highly praised for his protest against the Roman Church. But Calvin did not go from a theology that was completely wrong to one that was completely right.

CALVINISM. A doctrinal system expressed in the following five points formulated by John Calvin. (1) total depravity of man; (2) unconditional election; (3) limited atonement; (4) irresistible grace; (5) perseverance of the saints. The sovereignty of God is central in Calvinism.

— Moody Handbook of Theology

What about these five points (some say Calvin had only four)? Surely man is totally deprived, receiving upon himself the sin of Adam. Unconditional Election means that you have no choice in accepting Christ as Savior. Limited Atonement means that Christ’s work on the cross was effective for the Elect only and not the whole world. Irresistible Grace means that the Holy Spirit brings you to salvation and you have no part in it.

For by grace you have been saved through **faith; and that not of yourselves**, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB)

God even, through the Holy Spirit, gives you the ability to receive Him.

Finally the Perseverance of the Saints means you can not loose your salvation.

The one point that I, and many others, disagree on is that Christ died for the WHOLE world, not just

the Elect. The other four points are true but must be accepted in a certain way.

“I can’t see any point in sending missionaries to Africa. If there are those who are of the Elect there, they will be saved someway. If they are not Elect, why go?” A strong emphasis on Calvinism is fatal to the missionary movement (the next of the seven churches.) What is wrong with the above statement, Not long ago I find a straightforward answer in the Book of Esther.

“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish.

And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”

Esther 4:14 (NASB)

I have deliberately divided this into three sections. The Jews were sentenced to be slain. Mordecai wanted Queen Esther to go before the king and plead for the Jews. She said she could not do that because, unless the king should extend his golden scepter toward her, she would die! Mordecai sent the above message to her. What does he say?

(1) He has faith that the Jews will be spared somehow, they are God’s Chosen People and He will spare them. He had no doubt about that.

(2) The point he makes is that God has appointed her to save the Jews and if she refuses to do so, what will happen to her?

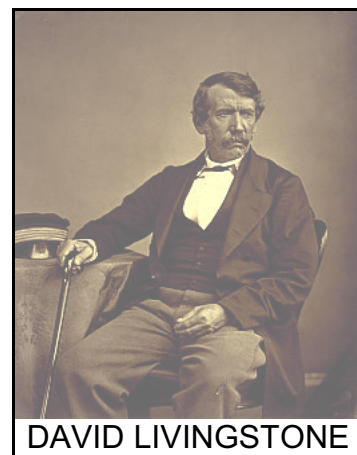
If you do not respond to a missionary call, the Elect will still be saved, but where will YOU stand before God?

So, as the Missionary Church began to emerge, noted missionaries arose. It began with William Cary (above) and he was followed by men such as those that follow.

Livingstone, David (1813-1873), was a Scottish missionary and African explorer. He discovered: Lake Ngami and the Zuga River in 1849; the Zambezi River in 1851; Victoria Falls in 1855; and Lake Nyasa and Lake Shirwa in 1858-62. His wife, Mary Moffat Livingstone, died in 1862 and was buried at Shupanga. In 1866-73 he ventured forth searching for the source of the Nile, and was met by Henry M. Stanley, a correspondent of the New York Herald, at Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika in late 1871.

So loved was Dr. Livingstone by his African followers, that when he died on the shore of Lake Bangweulu in 1873, they buried his heart in Africa, and sent his body, packed in salt, back to England to be buried in Westminster Abbey. David Livingstone once declared:

“All that I am I owe to Jesus Christ, revealed to me in His divine Book.”



DAVID LIVINGSTONE

In his work, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, David Livingstone wrote:

Great pains had been taken by my parents to instill the doctrines of Christianity into my mind, and I had no difficulty in understanding the theory of free salvation by the atonement of our Savior; but it was only about this time that I really began to feel the necessity and value of a personal application of the provisions of the atonement to my own case. The change was like that of "colorblindness."

The perfect fullness with which the pardon of all our guilt is offered in God's Book drew forth feelings of affectionate love to Him who bought us with His blood, and a sense of deep obligation to Him for His mercy has influenced, in some small measure, my conduct ever since. This book will speak, not so much of what has been done, as of what remains to be performed before the Gospel can be said to be preached to all nations.

In the glow of love which Christianity inspires I soon resolved to devote my life to the alleviation of human misery.

David Livingstone expressed:

God had an only Son, and he was a missionary and a physician.

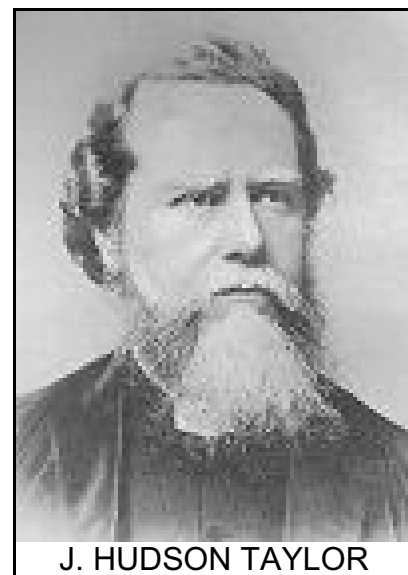
In 1872, Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904), the English correspondent for the New York Herald, found David Livingstone at Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika in the heart of Africa. He greeted him with the now-classic salutation, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" Henry M. Stanley described the famous old missionary:

Here is a man who is manifestly sustained as well as guided by influences from Heaven. The Holy Spirit dwells in him. God speaks through him. The heroism, the nobility, the pure and stainless enthusiasm as the root of his life come, beyond question, from Christ.

There must, therefore, be a Christ;—and it is worth while to have such a Helper and Redeemer as this Christ undoubtedly is, and as He here reveals Himself to this wonderful disciple.

American Quotations

JAMES HUDSON TAYLOR: Founder of the China Inland Mission; born at Barnsley (18 miles south. of Leeds), Yorkshire, England, May 21, 1832; died at Changsha (340 miles north of Canton), China, June 3, 1905. His father was an eloquent and able Methodist local preacher and his mother a woman of more than ordinary sweet and patient spirit. Hudson Taylor combined the ability of his father with the gentle disposition of his mother. He was converted through the reading of a tract at the age of fifteen, and not long afterward passed through a remarkable experience, at which time he dedicated himself to God for whatever service might be appointed. Unknown to himself, his father, who had been deeply interested in China, had prayed that his son might go to that land as a missionary, and very early, through the reading of Walter Henry Medhurst's *China* (London, 1838), the thoughts of young Taylor were directed to that country.



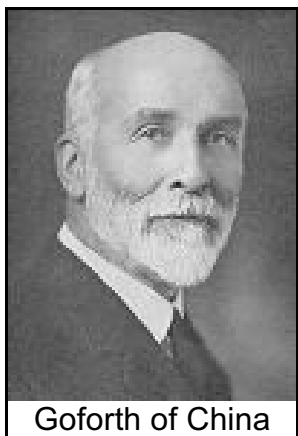
J. HUDSON TAYLOR

With a view to preparing himself for his lifework, he engaged as assistant to a physician at Hull, and subsequently studied medicine at the London Hospital. The great

interest awakened in China through the Taiping Rebellion, which was then erroneously supposed to be a mass movement toward Christianity, together with the glowing but exaggerated reports made by Carl Friedrich August Gutzlaff concerning China's accessibility, led to the founding of the China Evangelization Society, to the service of which Hudson Taylor offered himself and on September 19, 1853, he sailed for China before the completion of his medical studies. The six years from 1854 to 1860 were spent in Shanghai, Swatow, and Ningpo, working sometimes in company with older missionaries of other societies and especially with William Chalmers Bums of the English Presbyterian Mission. During this period he retired from the China Evangelization Society, which subsequently ceased to exist, and continued as an independent worker, trusting God to supply his need. His experiences of God's faithfulness in meeting his own personal needs and the needs of a hospital at Ningpo, of which he had taken charge, had much to do with the subsequent step of founding the China Inland Mission. While at Ningpo he married Miss Maria Dyer, daughter of the Rev. Samuel Dyer of the London Missionary Society. Of the children born by this marriage, three survive their father's decease, and two are today missionaries in China.

Invalided home in 1860, he spent the next five years in England, and, in company with the Rev. Frederick Foster Gough of the Church Missionary Society, completed the revision of a version of the New Testament in the colloquial of Ningpo for the British and Foreign Bible Society, and also finished his medical course. To arouse interest in the great Middle Kingdom he published a book entitled *China, its Spiritual Need and Claims* (London, 1865, 8th ed., 1890), which has been much used in calling forth sympathy for China and volunteers for the field, who began to go out in 1862, the first being James J. Meadows. In 1865, at Brighton, Taylor definitely dedicated himself to God for the founding of a new society to undertake the evangelization of inland China. In May, 1866, he, with his wife and children and a party of sixteen missionaries, sailed for China. Thus was definitely launched that organization which, on January 1, 1911, had 968 missionaries (including wives) connected with it, and in the support of which more than £1,471,000 had been contributed in answer to prayer and without public or private solicitation of funds. From the founding of the mission in 1865 Taylor's time became more and more occupied as general director of a growing work. His duties necessitated extensive journeys in China and frequent visits to the home country. In 1888 a wider ministry was commenced through the formation of a home center in North America. This arose through Taylor's presence at the Northfield Convention. Two years later another center was founded in Australasia. Various visits to the continent of Europe led to the inception of associate missions, which recognized Taylor as their general director on the field. In January, 1911, these associate missions had 216 workers on the field.

The constant pressure and increasing strain inseparable from such a work frequently threatened a serious breakdown; but Taylor, though far from strong as a child, manifested remarkable recuperative powers. In 1900, however, at the New York Conference, the first serious signs of failing health began to manifest themselves. Having already associated Dixon Edward Hoste with himself in the directorate of the mission, he slowly resigned his great responsibilities, still seeking to assist the work as consulting director while living quietly in retirement in Switzerland. His second wife (née Faulding), to whom he had been married in 1871, and by whom he had two children, died in the summer of 1904. Early in 1905 Taylor determined, though extremely feeble, to pay another visit to China. After visiting various centers he reached Changsha, the capital of the previously anti-foreign province of Hunan, where he suddenly and peacefully passed from his labors. His remains were interred at Chinkiang, by the side of his first wife and those of his children who had died in China.



Goforth of China

<http://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/biotaylor4.html>



Borden of Yale

Here are two more of these men of whom Dr. Louis T. Talbot - "The Revelation of Jesus Christ in "The Revelation of Jesus" refers to, Goforth of China and Borden of Yale.

The Missionary church is still very much alive. I am told that there are more missionaries waiting to go to the field than there is money to send them. Today, Guadalupe Community church is helping with the support of:



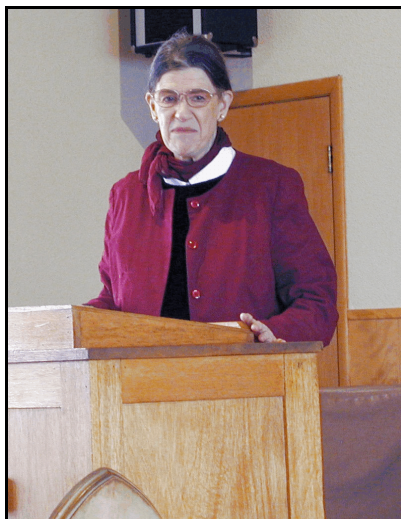
Pete & Joy Palmer



Jeff & Naomi Palmer



THE HOCHSTETLERS WITH MISSION AVIATION FELLOWSHIP IN CONGO. Rod & Valerie with Lydia (6), Austin (11), Mitchell (16) & Emily (13)



Ellen McGuire

A photograph of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark blazer, smiling. The background is a cityscape with a large dome, viewed through a decorative window frame.

Please Pray for
CHERYL HANCOCK
FAST For Life
P.O. Box 4909
Paso Robles, CA 93447
USA
contact@fastforlife.org

LAODICEA : “THE APOSTATE CHURCH” REFERENCE 3:14-22

1: THE ADDRESS: "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,

2: THE SENDER: 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

3: THE EVALUATION: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.



4: THE EXCEPTION: "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--

5: THE PROMISE: "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. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

6: THE ADVICE: Therefore be zealous and repent. "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. "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.

7: THE CONCLUSION: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' "

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I can not think of a better example of the state of this church: *you are neither cold nor hot*. I think we all like a nice cold glass of water, juice, or soda pop. Most people enjoy hot water with coffee or tea in it. (If God meant for us to drink dirty water, He would have given us dirty water!) COLD is good. HOT is good. But I can not think of anything we eat or drink that tastes good when it is lukewarm!" I have some medicine I need to take several times a day. The spout in our dressing room has a big bowl at the bottom of it and, as a result, it stores a fair amount of water. The problem with this is that Gail will have been in there a short time before and run the hot water. When I come in, what is left in the bowl is lukewarm. Not knowing, I take a big gulp of water with the medicine and - YUK! It is horrible to have a mouthful of warm water. It is even worse when you can not spew it out our your

mouth because it has your medicine in it! The following shows the significance of the Greek word here.

chliarós; fem. chliará, neut. chliarón, adj. from chliáinō (n.f.), to warm, make warm. Lukewarm, tepid. In Rev. 3:16 the church at Laodicea is likened to lukewarm water, **an emetic, something good for little more than inducing vomiting**, and is censured for this blighted condition. God expresses His desire that they be cold or hot. This has been frequently misunderstood to mean that God would rather they hate Him or love Him than remain indifferent. However, it would be contradictory for God to rebuke the Laodiceans for not hating Him and to prefer that they recede from indifference to hatred. Rather, hot and cold represent beneficial qualities just as hot water soothes the body and cold water slakes one's thirst. God cannot find any redeeming feature in this church; it is spiritually bankrupt.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

The message continues with the Exception: *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--*

Dr. McGee, in his typical, style has this to say:

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." They believed that the dollar was the answer to every problem of life. After World War II that was the assumption that the American government was run on. All we did was dole out dollars all over the world, thinking that we would buy friends, make peace, and settle the problems of the world. Very frankly, I believe that our nation has probably complicated the world more than anything else. We thought that all we had to do was to allocate money and we would solve the problems of the world. My friend, riches never solved any problem. This church in Laodicea tried it: "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."

—J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible

Apparently the members of this church had paid no attention to Christ! The name says it all - Laodicea = "the rule of the people" or, in other words, a "democratic church." God did not set up a democracy, he set up a Theocracy with Him as the head. It all started with:

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations." But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. The Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, **but they have rejected Me from being king over them**." "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also.

1 Samuel 8:4-8 (NASB)

Today, churches are doing what they think is right rather than to consult the Scriptures for answers.

And Jesus, looking around, said* to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are **wealthy** to enter the kingdom of God!"

Mark 10:23 (NASB)

And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for **those who are wealthy** to enter the kingdom of God!

Luke 18:24 (NASB)

I believe it is just our human natures to trust in riches. I am always receiving junk email on how to invest my savings wisely. While our boys were growing, the only investment we could afford was in the lives of our two boys. Where better can you invest?

The recent California Fires (2007) were a great indication how you may have a great wealth invested in your mansion and yet, the following day, have only a pile of ashes!

Why is it that new Christians create problems in the church?" a young pastor once asked me. "They don't create problems," I replied. "They reveal them. The problems have always been there, but we've gotten used to them. New Christians are like children in the home: they tell the truth about things!"

The Laodicean church was blind to its own needs and unwilling to face the truth. Yet honesty is the beginning of true blessing, as we admit what we are, confess our sins, and receive from God all that we need. If we want God's best for our lives and churches, we must be honest with God and let God be honest with us.

The Bible Exposition Commentary

And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Matthew 19:23-26 (NASB)

It is strange how men, even those who are professing Christians, and even Bible Scholars try to water down the Word of God. A search of various dictionaries and handbooks shows some saying that "camel" is not the word here but a similar looking word for "rope." Obviously the metaphor seems more reasonable but not as impossible. Others claim there was a gate into Jerusalem called "The Eye of the Needle" and was for pedestrians. Trying to get a camel through it would be nearly impossible. There was no such gate! But watering down Christ's intentions here is wrong. I always think of the "Emperor and his new clothes."

Many years ago, there lived an emperor who was quite an average fairy tale ruler, with one exception: he cared much about his clothes. One day he heard from two swindlers named Guido and Luigi Farabutto that they could make the finest suit of clothes from the most beautiful cloth. This cloth, they said, also had the special capability that it was invisible to anyone who was either stupid or not fit for his position.

Being a bit nervous about whether he himself would be able to see the cloth, the emperor first sent two of his trusted men to see it. Of course, neither would admit that they could not see the cloth and so praised it. All the townspeople had also heard of the cloth and were interested to learn how stupid their neighbors were.

The emperor then allowed himself to be dressed in the clothes for a procession through town, never admitting that he was too unfit and stupid to see what he was wearing. He was afraid that the other people would think that he was stupid.

Of course, all the townspeople wildly praised the magnificent clothes of the emperor, afraid to admit that they could not see them, until a small child said: "But he has nothing on!"

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emporer%27s_new_clothes

THE PROMISE: *"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. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*

Since the Apostate Church will extend through the tribulation, the above promise has probably not been fulfilled. It is likely that this refers to the following.

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed **in white robes?** and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, **and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Revelation 7:13-17 (KJV)

The advice begins with, *"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."* This is Rev.3:20 which people often use as an invitation to accept Christ as Savior. It is not improper for them to do that, but the passage is really describing the Apostate Church with Christ on the outside. He is willing to come back inside if they will but open the door to him - but they do not.

Finally, an invitation (Rev. 3:20-22). We often use these verses to lead lost people to Christ, but the basic application is to the believer. The Lord was outside the Laodicean church! He spoke to the individual—"if any man"—and not to the whole congregation. He appealed to a small remnant in Sardis (Rev. 3:4-5), and now He appeals to the individual. God can do great things in a church, even through one dedicated individual.

Christ was not impatient. "I have taken My stand" is the sense of the verb. He "knocks" through circumstances and He calls through His Word. For what is He appealing? Fellowship and communion, the people's desire to abide in Him. The Laodiceans were an independent church that had need of nothing, but they were not abiding in Christ and drawing their power from Him. They had a "successful program" but it was not fruit that comes from abiding in Christ

The Bible Exposition Commentary – New Testament

"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

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

We have looked at the message to the seven churches. I pray that you have "had an ear to hear what the Spirit says."

Author's note: This study has been prepared using WORDsearch 8. As such it has numerous references including some from the Internet (under "OTHER REFERENCES").

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| Revelation 1:4-8 | Page 4 |
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| | |
|------------------|---------|
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About the Author

Sir William Mitchell Ramsey (1851-1939) was a British archaeologist who served as a professor at Oxford University and then the University of Aberdeen. From 1880 onwards he traveled widely in Asia Minor and rapidly became the recognized authority on all matters relating to the districts associated with St Paul's missionary journeys and on Christianity in the early Roman Empire. Some of Ramsey's well know works are: St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen, Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, The Church in the Roman Empire, Pauline and other Studies in Early Christian History, Historical Commentary on Galatians and many others. He was eventually knighted in 1906.

“HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH”

chronicles the history of Apostolic Christianity A.D. 1-100, through the Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene and through the history of the reformation. For over 100 years, many serious students of the Bible consider this work to be the standard for exploring and researching church history.

About the Author

Philip Schaff (1819-1893) was a Swiss-born American theologian and Church historian, born in Chur, Switzerland. Schaff's contribution to the Christian community on historical works is unparalleled; here are just a few of his famous works: Creeds of Christendom, History of the Christian Church, The Christ of the Gospels, Christ and Christianity. He was also a contributing editor to the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge and the American Standard Version 1901, which was a revision of the English Revised Version.

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Author: Joseph Seiss

“THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST”

The lectures printed in this volume were given over Radio Station KMPC, Beverly Hills, California, over a period of some weeks. It is the desire of the author to thank the members of the radio audience who have made this ministry possible by their gifts and prayers. For many of the facts herein presented, grateful acknowledgment is made to the Rev. George W. Davis, D.D.; Revelation H. A. Ironside, D.D.; and Professor Hyslop, author of "The Two Babylons." That the Spirit of God may use this message to open blinded eyes to the grace of God in this age of ever-increasing apostasy, is the prayer of the author. (Hardback) 1937.

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