

JESUS CHRIST EXAMINES THREE MORE CHURCHES

Summary and Historical Background

This chapter concludes with Christ's report on the last three churches that He examined. The church at Sardis represents churches that are active with social programs, but are dead spiritually. The church at Philadelphia is like any church that is alive and well spiritually. The church at Laodicea symbolizes any church that depends on wealth, health and physical goods to satisfy her spiritual needs. Christ's report on His examination of the seven churches is a clear signal on how He will judge all churches and their members that are like these churches.

I. SARDIS – 3:1-6

A. The Church with a Faulty Reputation – 3:1

3:1 – Sardis was about 30 miles south of Thyatira. It was one of the greatest cities of the world in the days of Daniel until it was defeated by Cyrus, the Great, in 549 B.C. It was built on a spur of land branching out from a mountain with a plateau. The sides of this spur were sheer rock, which rose 1500 feet above the valley. The city was almost impenetrable. However, overconfidence in this natural protection led to its defeat on two occasions in her history. The first was by Cyrus and the second was 335 years later by Antiochus, the Great, in 214 B.C. Both armies discovered a way to scale the rock walls and when they reached the top there was no guard posted to alert the city of their presence. They had failed to watch and it was defeated. During the Roman rule, an earthquake devastated it in A.D. 17. Tiberius rebuilt the city with a large donation, so Sardis was restored with little sacrifice. Its prosperity also was restored since it was located on a trade route, but prosperity made its citizens soft and sapped the life out of it.

Nothing definite is known concerning the establishment of the church. During the early Christian era, two cults flourished there: Caesar-worship and Cybele-worship. Cybele-worship involved hysteria and bodily mutilation. Today, there is no Christian testimony there and only a small village remains, called Sart.

B. Christ, the Leader – 3:1; cf. 1:4, 16

3:1 – Christ identified Himself as the one that has the seven Spirits of God and holds the seven stars. The use of seven in each case suggests fullness: He has the fullness of the Spirit and has authority over all pastors. The seven Spirits of God was a part of the greeting from God to the seven churches in the introduction (1:4). Seven Spirits refers to the Holy Spirit (Zech 4:1-10). This title does not mean that the Holy Spirit is seven persons, but this designation refers to the power and knowledge of the Holy Spirit that is at work in Christ's ministry (see a fuller explanation in Rev 1:4). This work of the Spirit will enable Christ to be an omnipotent and omniscient leader so that He can rule the churches in righteousness.

The seven stars refer to the messengers (pastors) of the churches that Christ holds in His right hand (1:20). He is the Leader that every pastor needs to follow to do his work well. Christ is telling the pastor of the church in Sardis the results of His examination of the church and it is not good news.

C. Sin – 3:1

3:1 – There is an ominous change in Christ's approach to this church. He gives no commendation to this church as a whole because the great majority of the people in the church were unbelievers. Many may have grown up in the church, but had never truly received Christ as their Savior. They had a name that they were alive, but they were dead. This church was known in the city as a place of life, but it was

known to the Lord as a place of death. They had had a good testimony in the past, but now that testimony was almost gone as those original members passed this life to be with their Savior. The new members were not saved and did not have the seven-fold ministry of Holy Spirit at work in their lives. Now their works were not sufficient to meet God's standards. As a result the church was dying from within like the widow that was dead while she lives (1 Tim 5:6). These kinds of churches may have elaborate ceremonies and great programs, but all of their work is done without the power of the Spirit. They appear to be alive, but they are dead, because the Spirit of Christ is not present in their ministries.

D. Charge – 3:2-3

3:2 – Christ warned the pastor and his church to be watchful, to wake up, and strengthen the things that remain and were about to die. The warning to wake up was reminiscent of the city's' past history when they were not watching for the enemy and were defeated first by Cyrus and later by Antiochus. Christ's warning was to wake up this church so it would not be destroyed by a spiritual attack. The church members had to wake up and realize that their good works were no substitute for the Spirit's good works. They needed the Spirit to convict them of their sin so they would see their desperate condition. Then they needed the Spirit to exalt Christ as their Creator and Savior so they would fully trust Him for salvation. Then they needed the Spirit to convince them that the penalty for their sins would be the destruction of their church and it would send them to certain death in the Lake of Fire (cf Jn 16:7-11). It was not good enough for them to be active church members. They needed to trust in Christ to receive the Holy Spirit and have spiritual life (Jn 3:5-7). In the beginning, their church was a living organism through the work of the Spirit, but now without the work of the Spirit, their church was basically a dead secular organization with no spiritual impact. They still had a few true believers in the church (3:4), but they were about to die. The church needed members with life from the Spirit to keep it alive.

Christ said He had not found their works perfect. That did not mean He demanded sinless works from them, but He wanted them to have spiritual works. They had works, but their works were dead. Their works were acceptable to the people of Sardis, but their works were not acceptable to Christ. There was no spiritual life in their works. They needed works that were produced by the Holy Spirit.

3:3 – Christ exhorted them to remember the messengers of the Gospel that the church had received and heard when their church began. They were told to hold fast to that message and repent, that is, they were to change their mind about their present way of life and choose the Spirit's way of life. They needed to receive Christ as their Savior and Leader.

E. Threat – 3:3

If the church members would not wake up to their spiritual need of salvation, He would come on them like a thief at a time when they would least expect it. It is no easy task to wake up unsaved church members to see that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father in Heaven (Jn 14:6). They find it hard to believe that Christ is only one way to Heaven. They feel secure in their good works, because the people of the community accept them as good people and this eliminates persecution. It is difficult for them to believe that their good works are insufficient to save them. Since God is good and full of love, surely He will accept them for all the good works that they have done. They fail to understand the holiness of God, that He cannot tolerate any sin in His presence. They must have Jesus Christ as their Savior to remove all of their sins.

F. Praise – 3:4

3:4 – Christ acknowledged that there were a few people in the church who truly were saved, but they were about to die (3:2). They might have been the members that came to Christ when the church was begun. Even though they were now in the minority, they had not defiled their garments, a figure of

speech for their godly lives. They had remained true to Christ and had maintained a godly lifestyle (Jam 1:27). Good works do not save sinners, but good works do save the testimony of believers (Eph 2:8-10). Christ promised that these few godly believers would walk with Him in white. "Walk" has the idea of fellowship with Christ. "White" speaks of the pure garments that Christ would provide for them when they were saved (3:5). These Christians were worthy to receive white garments, not by their works of righteousness, but by accepting the mercy of God (Tit 3:5). This is true for all believers.

G. Promises – 3:5-6

3:5 – Christ gave several promises to the overcomer. First, he will receive white garments. This refers to the future glory of all believers (overcomers), when they will reign with Christ in His Kingdom. All of the redeemed will be clothed in white to symbolize the cleansing of their sins by the blood of Jesus Christ. Second, the believers will never, never (double negative in Greek) have his name removed from the book of life. This guarantees the eternal security of all believers. However, it also means that all unbelievers will have their names removed from the book of life. Then the question is raised, "How do unbelievers get their names in the book of life?" Here is one possible answer: their names were put in the book of life when Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world by His death on the cross (Jn 1:29; 1 Jn 2:2). The names of unbelievers are removed when they refuse to accept His payment for their sins. Third, Christ will confess the name of an overcomer before His Father and before His angels (Mt 10:32). The confession of a believer's name indicates that Christ is declaring His union with him. This is another guarantee of the eternal security of all believers.

CHURCH	CHRIST	PRAISE	SIN	CHARGE	THREAT	PROMISE
SARDIS 3:1-6 Faulty Reputation	He has the 7 Spirits of God and the 7 stars (pastors). He is the LEADER 3:1; 1:4, 15	For a few mem- bers that had not defiled their garments (testi- mony). Church received no praise. 3:4	She had a re- putation for life, but she was spiritually dead; her works did not please God. 3:1	Be alert; revive things still alive; remember and hold unto past lessons; repent. 3:2-3	Christ will come to judge her at a time that she least expects it. 3:3	Believers will receive white garments; their names are in the book of life; they are con-fessed before God. 3:5-6

II. PHILADELPHIA – 3:7-13

A. The Church with a Faithful Testimony – 3:7, 10

3:7 – Philadelphia was located 28 miles southeast of Sardis. The king of Pergamos was given the nickname, Philadelphos, for the love that he showed his brother. He named the city, Philadelphia, after his nickname, which means "brotherly love." It was located on a main trade route and was a rich agricultural area so it became quite wealthy.

Philadelphia was founded by colonists from Pergamos from 159 B.C. to 138 B.C. with the purpose of opening a door into that part of Asia for the spread of the Greek language and culture. They were successful in fulfilling their purpose. Two centuries later the church of Philadelphia was founded with the purpose of opening a door in that part of Asia for the spread of the Gospel. That purpose also was fulfilled.

Philadelphia was destroyed by a devastating earthquake in A.D. 17 that also destroyed Sardis and ten other cities. For many years afterward, Philadelphia experienced minor shocks causing panic among the people. They fled to the countryside for fear of the crumbling walls falling on them in the city. When the Gospel was brought to the city many years later, the believers in the city found spiritual security in Jesus Christ who would keep them from the hour of trial and He would make them a sure pillar in the Temple of God so they would be safe forever.

The city changed its name several times in honor of those who befriended it, but in the end it came back to the name it originally had. From this experience the Christians could appreciate the new names they will receive from God, who had befriended them with His love and protection, but these spiritual names will never be changed; they will last forever.

B. Christ, the Guard or Gatekeeper – 3:7; cf. 1:16, 18

3:7 – Christ introduced Himself as the one who is holy. Negatively, the holiness of Christ means there is no sin in His life (1 Pet 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5). There is no darkness of sin in His thoughts, words or deeds. He is sinless. Positively, the holiness of Christ means He is absolutely pure. He is like the glory of the sun in brightness (cf. 1:16; Isa. 6:3; 40:25). His thoughts have always been pure, even when Satan sent wicked men to attack and falsely accuse Him. His speech was totally pure, so that every word that came through His lips was pure. His pure words tell the way of salvation and they guide the believer after he is saved. His works have been entirely perfect; whether it is in creation or in salvation. The imperfections that are seen in creation today were caused by sinful men and women, beginning with Adam and Eve. The same is true in salvation. Christ's work of salvation is complete and holy, but wicked men have devised many false ways of salvation.

Christ will have the key of David. This key is a symbol of David's authority. The name of David brings to mind his authority as king of Israel. Christ will sit on David's throne forever (2 Sam 7:16; Isa 9:7; Dan 2:44; 7:14), but His authority will extend beyond Israel to all nations. David conquered a few nations and put their riches into his treasury. Eliakim had the key to the treasure house of David (Isa. 22:22). When Christ returns to earth to sit on David's throne, He will rule all nations from Jerusalem. Rulers from these nations will bring their treasures to Him when they come to worship Him. The wealth in Christ's treasure house will be much greater than it ever was in David's. When Christ has the key of David, it will have access to greater wealth than it had when Eliakim had it in David's kingdom. Christ will be the richest, most powerful king of all time when He comes to rule from David's throne (Isa 9:6-7).

This key also gives Christ the authority to open a door and no man can shut it, and to shut a door and no man can open it. This is a strong reference to His authority to open and shut the door to His Kingdom (Mt 25:10-12). When He introduced Himself to John in chapter one, He declared that He had the keys to death and Hades (1:18). Hades refers to the place of the dead, where the dead bodies of believers and unbelievers will lie. Christ also has authority over the eternal place of each person. He is the sovereign Gatekeeper, not Peter, that determines who enters His Kingdom and who does not (Jn 14:6; Act 4:12). He will not allow anyone into His Kingdom that does not have faith in the truth of His promise to give believers eternal life. .

C. Praise – 3:8-10

1. The faith of her members is revealed – 3:8

3:8 – Christ knew with pleasure what the members of the church at Philadelphia had done, so He set before them an open door that neither Gentiles nor Jews could shut. This open door relates to their ministry of the Gospel that would bring sinners into Christ's Kingdom. Since Philadelphia was a door for traders to pass into central Asia, the Christians in this church had an effectual door opened unto them to propagate the Gospel in Asia Minor. Even though they had little strength, which suggests that they had a small congregation, Christ would reward their faithfulness and keep the door open for them. Not even persecution could close this door of opportunity.

2. The faith of her members is rewarded – 3:9-10

3:9 – Satan actively opposed the believers in Asia. "The throne of Satan" was in Pergamos where he charged the idolaters and worshippers of Caesar to persecute the church (2:13). "The deep things of Satan" were taught by a false prophetess in Thyatira and it lured some members of the church into idolatry and immorality (2:24). "The synagogue of Satan" was a gathering place of Jews where Satan

aroused them to viciously attack the believers in Smyrna and Philadelphia (2:9; 3:9). These Jews were of the lineage of Abraham by natural birth, but they were not children of God by spiritual birth. Jesus told the Jews who opposed His ministry that they were children of Satan (Jn 8:42-44).

Christ promised the believers two blessings, but it is apparent for the most part that these promises extended far into the future to the end times. First, Christ promised believers that He would make unbelieving Jews, who viciously opposed them, worship at their feet. This may have happened to some degree in their day when Jews converted to Christ as Paul did (Acts 9:11-16), but most of the Jews will not do this until Christ comes again to judge the unbelievers. Then the unbelieving Jews will realize that Jesus was their Messiah (Christ) and they will bow before Him (Zech 12:10-14; Phil 2:9-11). This may be the time when they realize that the Christians they persecuted were loved by their Messiah and will bow before them.

3:10 – Second, since they faithfully kept His word and endured persecution from the Jews as He did, He promised to keep them from the hour of trial, when He would try all the unbelievers in the Tribulation. They may have been kept from some severe trial in their day, but the great trial when Christ will try the whole world is still in the future. The believers in Philadelphia and all believers in the church-age are given the promise that they will be kept from this trial. The hour of trial that will test the whole earth with suffering never before known to mankind refers to the Tribulation judgments, which will precede the coming of Christ to set up His Millennial Kingdom. The blessed hope of believers is to be saved from this time of God's wrath against unrepentant sinners (1 Th. 1:10; 5:9). Christ promises the believers of the church-age that they will be taken to Heaven in the Rapture before the Tribulation that is described in Revelation 6-19.

Since there are some believers that dispute the interpretation of the "hour of trial" as given above, five details are presented to support the interpretation that it refers to the Tribulation and the Rapture of the church-age believers before the Tribulation. First, the context of the end-time promises that Christ gave to the other churches in Revelation 2-3 are in harmony with this interpretation. Also the context of the Tribulation in Revelation 6-18 fits well with the interpretation that it is the "hour of trial" in Revelation 3:10.

Second, it is the hour of trial or testing. The emphasis is on the hour, not on the trial. Trial is the genitive of hour. The article with "hour" indicates it is a specific time of testing, not a general time of testing. Jesus was telling the believers about a particular time when there would be a trial or testing. The hour in this case is not a sixty-minute hour, but it is a figure of speech for the Tribulation.

Third, it is the hour of trial or testing that will come upon the whole inhabited world at that time. It will affect the whole earth as the flood did in Noah's day. This cannot refer to local trials that believers endure. The only trial that will encompass the whole earth is the future seven-year Tribulation that is described in Revelation 6-18.

Fourth, it is the hour of trial that will test those who dwelt on the earth. This is a specific term used to designate the unbelievers in the book of Revelation (6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:2, 8). These unbelievers will live during the Tribulation that is described in the book of Revelation. This trial is for the judgment of unbelievers living during the Tribulation. It is not for the judgment of believers; they will not suffer the wrath of God (Rom 5:9; 1 Th 1:9-10; 5:9). Nor is it for the purification of believers in the church. The Church has already been sanctified and cleansed by the blood of Christ so that it is a glorious Bride without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish for Jesus Christ (Eph 5:26-27). No amount of troubles and persecution during Tribulation could ever improve on what Jesus Christ has already done for His church-age believers. Furthermore, the church-age saints will not be tried on earth. They will be tried in heaven at the judgment (bema) seat of Jesus Christ, not to purify them, but to determine their rewards (2 Cor 5:10). It is the unbelievers that will be tried during this hour of trial. The design of the Tribulation is to bring unbelievers to repentance and to punish those that are unrepentant. Many unbelievers will repent

and be saved during the Tribulation: Jews (Zech 12:10; Rev 7:1-8; 12:6, 13-17) and Gentiles (Rev 7:9-17), but many will not repent and will die under the wrath of God (Rev 6:8; 9:18-21; 11:13; 14:19-20; 16:8-11; 19:11-21).

Fifth, it is the hour related to the imminent return of Jesus. He did not set a time for His coming. He simply said, "I come *quickly*" (Rev 3:11; 22:20). When He comes, it will be done quickly, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor 15:51-52). This gives imminence to His return. He said He is coming soon so that it might cause the carnal Christian to repent and the spiritual Christian to remain steadfast. His imminent coming will happen before the Tribulation. That is when the church-age believers will be caught up to Heaven in the Rapture. They will be kept from that hour of trial.

D. Charge – 3:11

3:11 – Christ has promised to come quickly. He did not promise to come soon, but that He would come imminently--at any moment. Elsewhere the Scripture teaches the imminency and rapid action of the Rapture (1 Th. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-52).

Christ told them to hold fast to what they had, that is, their faith and practice. This was spoken as an encouragement to them, so they would not lose their crown. The crown would be their reward for faithful service. The crown would be useful in serving Christ during His Kingdom. A lost crown would limit their ability to serve Him and bring glory to God.

E. Promises – 3:12-13

3:12 – Christ promised the overcomer that he would be a pillar in the temple of God. The pillar is a metaphor of the overcomer and the temple is a metaphor of God. It is a figure of speech to denote the bond between the believer and God. Philadelphia experienced a great earthquake in A.D. 17 that destroyed many of the buildings in the city, but the believer is promised that nothing will be able to destroy the bond that the overcomer has with God. He has an eternal union with God.

The overcomer will never go out of the temple of God. The metaphor continues; it is not a literal temple. It refers to a believer's eternal union with God and the safety that He would provide for him. The people of Philadelphia went out of their city when the great earthquake and its after-shocks toppled its buildings and walls; they were afraid that they would be killed in the city by falling debris and sought for safety in the countryside. The overcomer will never be forced to leave his God; he will be safe in Him forever.

Christ promised to write on the overcomer three names: the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem and His own new name. The name of God signifies he is owned by God. The name of the New Jerusalem proves he is a permanent citizen of the eternal city that will come down from Heaven after the Millennial Kingdom (Rev 21-22). The new name of Jesus Christ indicates the fullness of Christ that the overcomer has not yet experienced, but he will experience it when he meets Him in Heaven. Then he shall see Him and know Him in His fullness (1 Jn 3:2). The three names guarantee that the overcomer is eternally secure.

CHURCH	CHRIST	PRAISE	SIN	CHARGE	THREAT	PROMISE
PHILADELPHIA 3:7-13 Faithful Testimony	He is holy & true; has David's key to shut & open doors; He has final authority. He is the GATEKEEPER 3:7; cf 1:16,18	For persevering in keeping the word of Christ; for not denying His name. 3:8-10	She is not charged with any sin.	She was to hold to what she had so no one could take her crown. 3:11	No threat was needed.	Believers will be a pillar in God's temple; the names of God, NJ, & Christ will be on them; given an open door of service; kept from the Tribulation. 3:12

III. LAODICEA – 3:14-22

A. The Church with Futile Confidence – 3:17

Laodicea was located 45 miles southeast of Philadelphia and 90 miles straight east of Ephesus. It was founded about 250 B.C. by Antiochus of Syria and he named it after his wife, Laodice. Its original purpose was to be a fortress, but it had no water in the city. Water had to be brought from springs six miles away by an underground aqueduct. Laodicea was located on three important roads that made it a prosperous commercial and financial center. It also was famous for its black wool and poultice to treat eye and ear ailments. This wealth may have been the cause for the church's two great spiritual problems: indifference (3:15-16) and self-confidence (3:17-18). This is the only church for which Christ has no praise – only His condemnation.

The church may have heeded the Christ's rebuke, because it still existed in A.D. 361, when an important church council met there to deal with the canon of Scripture. But both the city and the church lie in ruins today. Paul was well aware and concerned about this church (Col. 2:13; 4:13, 15-16).

B. Christ, the Witness – 3:14; cf. 1:5

3:14 – Christ introduced Himself as “The Amen.” It means, “So let it be,” and shows His immutability and the finality of His decisions.

Christ also called Himself “the faithful and true witness” (cf. 1:5). Christ was a faithful and true witness of His Father, so that those who knew Him also knew the Father and those who heard Him also heard the Father (Jn 14:8-11). When He returns to earth, He is called Faithful and True (19:11). This time He will be a faithful and true warrior, doing His Father's will. He will be faithful to His Father's will when He destroys Antichrist and his allies at the end of the Tribulation.

Christ identifies Himself one more time as the “Beginning of the creation of God.” Christ is the Alpha, who is before all things, and the Almighty, who created all things (1:8). He is the active Source, the Originator of all things that were created (Jn 1:1-3; Col 1:15, 18).

C. Sin – 3:15

3:15 – Christ knew all about their deeds and said that they were neither hot nor cold. To be hot refers to spiritual believers who are zealous for the Word of God and the work of God (cf. Acts 18:24-26; Rom. 12:11). To be cold refers to the spiritually hostile sinners who are against the Gospel.

D. Threat – 3:16

3:16 – Christ said that they were lukewarm; they were professing believers who lacked interest in the business of God. They may have attended church, but had little interest in the message of the Bible, the new birth, the blood atonement, witnessing, prayer, sacrificial giving, holy living and the claims of Christ on their lives. The problem with a lukewarm person is not the lack of discipline in his life or the failure to conquer some sins in his life. The problem of the lukewarm person is the absence of the Spirit in his life. He is not a Christian. This is why Christ could not praise the lukewarm members of this church.

As a result of their lukewarm condition, Christ would spit them out of His mouth, a vivid warning to every church member. To be spit out of Christ's mouth indicates they were as repulsive to Him as a drink of lukewarm water. Christ appealed to these Laodiceans for repentance. If they refused to repent, they would be separated from Christ forever and be sent to the Lake of Fire for their sin of unbelief.

E. Charge – 3:17-19

3:17 – Christ knew the Laodicean church members well and repeated what they were saying: they said that they were rich, had become wealthy, and had need of nothing. Their words revealed their feeling of self-sufficiency. These church members approached life with a materialistic philosophy. They thought that their possessions were a sure sign of God's favor. They failed to heed Christ's words about the rich young ruler when He told His disciples that it is difficult for a rich man to enter heaven. This surprised the disciples (Mt 19:23-26). He also had taught them that money is a master against God (Mt. 6:19-20). Paul told Timothy to warn rich people about the love of money (1 Tim. 6:6-11). Money in itself is not sinful, but the love of money is sinful. The wealth of the Laodiceans gave them a futile confidence.

Christ told them the real condition of their spiritual life. His evaluation of them shows that they were not true Christians. They were wretched; they had a despicable spiritual condition that needed a complete transformation. They were depending on riches for security, so they were without hope. They really were poor; living in spiritual poverty and did not know it. They were blind to spiritual truth because the Spirit was not in them. They were naked; because they did not have white spiritual robes to cover them. Their nakedness is a picture of the pathetic condition of a lost soul. This was the condition of the Laodicean church.

3:18 – Christ counseled them in love to make some important decisions that would save them. He wanted the church and its members to be prepared for eternity. He urged them to buy from Him gold refined by fire so they might truly be rich. This gold signified eternal life that has been refined by the fire of Christ's suffering on the cross. This gold can be obtained only from Jesus Christ.

Then He told them to buy from Him white robes to cover their nakedness. The best robe that a man can produce by his good works is filthy with sin (Isa 64:6). But these filthy robes can be made white by washing them in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ (7:14; Jn 1:29). He shed His blood and died on the cross to pay the penalty of death for every person (Rom 6:23; 1 Pet 2:24; 1 Jn 2:2; Rev 1:5). In order for them to buy a white robe from Christ, they must exchange their sins for His righteousness (2 Cor 5:21). That is the only way a sinner can purchase a white robe from Christ. A person must have a white robe to be accepted by Christ. Laodicea was famous for their black wool, which clothed people with elegance on earth, but they needed the white robes of Christ's righteousness to enter the glory of Heaven.

Finally, He told them to anoint their eyes with eye salve so they could see. This was an ironic statement because Laodicea was world-famous for their eye salve. However, these people needed spiritual eye salve so they could see their sinfulness, their errors and their materialistic goals (2 Cor 4:4-6). Then they needed to see Jesus Christ crucified for their sins and resurrected with power to defeat sin and Satan (1 Cor 15:3-4). This was their only hope for eternal life.

3:19 – Christ's strong words of rebuke were given because He loved them and desired for them to repent and be saved. Notice that Christ's love was consistent with His chastening. Biblical love never overlooks sin, but deals with it so His grace can be administered to the sinner.

F. Promises – 3:20-22

3:20 – Christ gave the members of this local church an invitation to be saved so they could eat with Him in His Kingdom. He desires to have close fellowship with each person, but He will not force it. He simply knocks and asks to be admitted. The decision rests with each individual as to what he will do with His offer. If a sinner opens the door of his life to Christ, He will come into his life and save him so they can eat together, that is, have fellowship with each other. The reference to eating with each other suggests that this includes the marriage supper of the Lamb in the Millennial Kingdom.

3:21 – Christ promises the overcomer that he will reign with Him in His Millennial Kingdom. How does a person become an overcomer? He must invite Jesus Christ into his life so he can be born into the family of God (Jn 1:12-13). A child of God overcomes Satan and the world and his sinful flesh by his faith in Christ. He is an overcomer by trusting in the Overcomer, Jesus Christ. Anyone who receives Jesus Christ as his Savior is an overcomer (1 John 5:4-5) and he will rule with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom.

CHURCH	CHRIST	PRAISE	SIN	CHARGE	THREAT	PROMISE
LAODICEA 3:14-22 Futile Confidence	He is the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the maker and ruler of God's creation He is the WITNESS 3:14; cf 1	She got no praise (no members were praised).	She was neither hot nor cold in her testimony; felt sufficient in herself; needed nothing from God. 3:15 (17)	She needed to buy gold, white garments & eye salve from God; needed to be zealous and repent. 3:17-19	Christ will spit them out of His mouth (they were repulsive to Him). 3:16	Salvation offered to her members so they could eat with Him at the marriage supper. Believers will rule in His Kingdom. 3:20-21

