

Revelation 3

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Message to Sardis

3:1 “To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

I. Context

- A. John is writing to the 7 churches of Asia Minor to remind them that they light the way to God, so they need to be the best representatives of Jesus that they can be.
 1. Ephesus - Balance pure teaching with loving outreach.
 2. Smyrna - Hold strong in tough times and fight the enemy (Satan) not people.
 3. Pergamum - Live like Christ, not the culture around us.
 4. Thyatira - Know what you believe so that you can never be moved.
- B. The fifth church is Sardis.
 1. Jesus reminds them that He holds the churches in His hands and that He is active within their lives.
 2. He tells them that they are a popular church with the people - they are growing and seem alive, but they are Spiritually dead.
 - a) They are more concerned about being noticed by the culture around them, then by God.

II. Notes

- A. 1 Timothy 5:6 - *But she who lives for pleasure is dead even while she is still alive.*
- B. here was a church in the "second" century, of which Melito was then pastor; and he is thought by some to be the angel here intended; this man wrote upon the book of the Revelation, and an apology for the Christians, sent to the Emperor Antoninus Verus, in whose time he lived - *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*
- C. It lies about thirty-three miles to the south of Thyatira, and is called by the Turks, Sart, or Sard, - *Benson Commentary*
- D. Sardis lies almost due south of Thyatira, on the road to Philadelphia, between the river Hermus and Mount Tmolus. - *Pulpit Commentary*
- E. [He who has the seven Spirits of God] That is, the Holy Spirit, from whom alone all spiritual gifts and graces proceed; - *Benson Commentary*
- F. [and the seven stars] Which represent the ministers of the churches, all whose motions he continues to govern and direct, according to his all-wise and gracious pleasure - *Benson Commentary*
- G. it was easy to grow satisfied with the reputation, and to forget to keep open the channels through which grace and life could flow, - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- H. A fair reputation; the character of being truly alive unto God; of possessing spiritual life here, and being in the way to eternal life hereafter - *Benson Commentary*
- I. the ministry of this church had a name, that is, were reported as famous for their faith, diligence, and holiness; but their faith, without suitable works, was dead, and they were no better than hypocrites. - *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*

3:2 *Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.*

I. Context

- A. The church of Sardis is large and popular, but not focused on God. They were about getting people through the doors - not deepening faith.

- B. They are warned to wake up and focus on those parts of the church that are still strong with God. They need to get back on the mission of reaching lost people, not growing their own kingdom.

II. Notes

- A. It will not do simply to rouse and sleepily grasp at their spiritual weapons, or even to stand for once at arms; you must become of wakeful habit - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- B. improve those gifts and good habits which are left thee as yet, but are faint and ready to die, - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- C. The Church had name of being alive among men: its works therefore may have come up to their standard. - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)

3:3 So remember what you have received and heard; and keep *it*, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

I. Context

- A. The church of Sardis needs to get back on track of reaching lost people, and not be focused on growing their own kingdom.
- B. They need to remember the basics of faith and go back to that path.
 - 1. if they do not, Jesus will step through the doors and they will not recognize Him because they do not know Him.

II. Notes

- A. Matthew 24:43 - *But understand this: If the owner of the house had known in which watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.*
- B. Luke 12:39 - *But understand this: If the homeowner had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.*
- C. 1 Thessalonians 5:4 - *But you, brothers, are not in the darkness so that this day should overtake you like a thief.*
- D. 2 Timothy 1:14 - *Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.*
- E. 2 Peter 3:10 - *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be dissolved in the fire, and the earth and its works will not be found.*
- F. Revelation 16:15 - *"Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who remains awake and clothed, so that he will not go naked and let his shame be exposed."*
- G. The coming of Christ to judge His Church would be in an hour unlooked for. What kind of hour He would so come was' unknown; the sound of His approaching footsteps unheard. Shod with wool, according to the ancient proverb, stealthily as a thief, the Judge would be at the door. Yet they could not plead that they had been in darkness - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

3:4 But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

I. Context

- A. The church of Sardis need to get back on track with the basics of faith so that they recognize Jesus within its walls.
- B. There are still a few people in the church that live for Jesus - follow their example.

II. Notes

- A. Ecclesiastes 9:8 - *"Let your clothes always be white, and never spare the oil for your head."*
- B. Jude 1:23 - *save others by snatching them from the fire; and to still others, show mercy tempered with fear, hating even the clothing stained by the flesh.*

- C. Revelation 4:4 - Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and on these thrones sat twenty-four elders dressed in white, with golden crowns on their heads.
- D. Revelation 6:11 - Then each of them was given a white robe and told to rest a little while longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers, were killed, just as they had been killed.
- E. Revelation 7:9 - After this I looked and saw a multitude too large to count, from every nation and tribe and people and tongue, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.
- F. Revelation 14:4 - These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They have been redeemed from among men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.
- G. Revelation 19:14 - The armies of heaven, dressed in fine linen, white and pure, follow Him on white horses.
- H. Their praise is that, in the deathlike, self-complacent lethargy around, they had kept earnest in the pursuit of holiness, and had not forgotten Him who could cleanse and revive. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- I. They were like persons clothed in white walking in the midst of the defiled, yet keeping their raiment from being soiled. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- J. It is well known that white robes were worn on occasions of great joy, and sometimes in triumphal processions; to both which there is probably a reference here. Priests also were clothed in white; and the addition of that dignity may likewise be implied as certainly coming within the scheme of Christ with regard to his people - [Benson Commentary](#)
- K. Some think here is an allusion to the custom of the sanhedrim, when they examined the candidates for the high-priesthood; if they judged the candidate worthy, they gave him a white garment; if unqualified, he was sent out from among them in mourning. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- L. The merit is not theirs, but Christ's, in whose blood they have washed their robes - [Pulpit Commentary](#)

3:5 He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

I. Context.

- A. The church of Sardis is warned to stop focusing on their own popularity, but to encourage those that are living for Jesus.
- B. When they do this, they will find a popularity in Heaven.
 - 1. They will be clothed in white garments - of purity.
 - 2. They will never lose their place in Heaven.
 - 3. And Jesus will tell everyone (in Heaven and on Earth) how proud He is of them.

II. Notes

- A. Exodus 32:32 - Yet now, if You would only forgive their sin... But if not, please blot me out of the book that You have written."
- B. Exodus 32:33 - The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will erase from My book.
- C. Psalm 69:28 - May they be erased from the book of life and not listed with the righteous.
- D. Matthew 10:32 - Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father in heaven.
- E. Luke 10:20 - Nevertheless, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."
- F. Luke 12:8 - I tell you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will also confess him before the angels of God.

- G. Revelation 6:11 - Then each of them was given a white robe and told to rest a little while longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers, were killed, just as they had been killed.
- H. Revelation 13:8 - And all who dwell on the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.
- I. Revelation 17:8 - The beast that you saw--it was, and now is no more, but is about to come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. And those who dwell on the earth whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet will be.
- J. Revelation 20:12 - And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. And there were open books, and one of them was the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their deeds, as recorded in the books.
- K. Revelation 20:15 - And if anyone was found whose name was not written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
- L. Revelation 21:27 - But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who practices an abomination or a lie, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.
- M. On this glistening appearance comp. Dante's words, "robed in hue of living flame," - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- N. The body transfigured into the likeness of Christ's body, and emitting beams of light reflected from Him, is probably the "white raiment" promised here. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- O. This passage plainly implies, that some names shall be blotted out from the book of life: that is, some who, in consequence of their adoption and regeneration, were entitled to and fitted for eternal life, shall, through falling from grace, lose these blessings, and come again under guilt, condemnation, and wrath. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- P. A register was kept in ancient cities of their citizens: the names of the dead were of course erased. So those who have a name that they live and are dead (Re 3:1), are blotted out of God's roll of the heavenly citizens and heirs of eternal life; not that in God's electing decree they ever were in His book of life. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

3:6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

I. Context

- A. The Church of Sardis is warned to seek popularity with Jesus, not with the culture around them.

Message to Philadelphia

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

I. Context

- A. John is writing to the 7 churches of Asia Minor to remind them that they light the way to God, so they need to be the best representatives of Jesus that they can be.
 - 1. Ephesus - Balance pure teaching with loving outreach.
 - 2. Smyrna - Hold strong in tough times and fight the enemy (Satan) not people.
 - 3. Pergamum - Live like Christ, not the culture around us.
 - 4. Thyatira - Know what you believe so that you can never be moved.
 - 5. Sardis - Seek popularity in Heaven, not on Earth.
- B. The sixth church is Philadelphia.
 - 1. Jesus reminds them that He speaks for God (He is Holy and true) and that He is King of the Jews (He has the key of David), and He chooses who will enter Heaven and who will not.

II. Notes

- A. Job 12:14 - What He tears down cannot be rebuilt; the man He imprisons cannot be released.
- B. Isaiah 22:22 - I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. What he opens, no one can shut; what he shuts, no one can open.
- C. Matthew 16:19 - I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
- D. John 6:69 - We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.
- E. 1 John 5:20 - And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true--in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.
- F. Revelation 6:10 - And they cried out in a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge those who live on the earth and avenge our blood?"
- G. Revelation 19:11 - Then I saw heaven standing open, and there before me was a white horse. And its rider is called Faithful and True. With righteousness He judges and wages war.
- H. The town of Philadelphia derived its name from Attalus Philadelphus, the king of Pergamos, who died B.C. 138. It was situated on the slopes of Mount Tmolus, in the midst of a district the soil of which was favourable to the cultivation of the vine. On the coins of the town are to be found the head of Bacchus. The town was built on high ground—upwards of 900 feet above the sea-level. The whole region, however, was volcanic, and few cities suffered more from earthquakes; the frequent recurrence of these considerably reduced the population. But its favourable situation and fertile soil preserved it from entire desertion. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- I. distant from Sardis about twenty-seven miles to the south-east. It is called by the Turks Alah Shahr, or the beautiful city, on account of its delightful situation, standing on the declivity of the mountain Tmolus, and having a most pleasant prospect on the plains beneath, well furnished with divers villages, and watered by the river Pactolus - [Benson Commentary](#)
- J. [Holy] The main idea of the word here used is that of consecration. It is used of what is set apart to God; it does not assert the possession of personal holiness, but it implies it as a duty. It becomes, therefore, pre-eminently appropriate to Him who was not only consecrate, but holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- K. [True] A favourite word with St. John, and expressing more than the opposite of "false." It implies that which is perfect in contrast with the imperfect; the reality in contrast with the shadow; - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- L. in contrast with the flower that fadeth here. Christ, then, in calling Himself the True, declares that "all titles and names given to Him are realised in Him; the idea and the fact in Him are, what they can never be in any other, absolutely commensurate" - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- M. Greek, "alethinos": "VERY God," as distinguished from the false gods and from all those who say that they are what they are not - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- N. Jesus Christ is the true Steward of the house of David. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- O. the antitype of Eliakim, to whom the "key," the emblem of authority "over the house of David," was transferred from Shebna, who was removed from the office of chamberlain or treasurer, as unworthy of it. Christ, the Heir of the throne of David, shall supplant all the less worthy stewards who have abused their trust in God's spiritual house, and "shall reign over the house of Jacob," literal and spiritual - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

3:8 *I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.*

I. Context

- A. The Church of Sardis is reminded that Jesus is in charge of the Jewish people and who can go to Heaven.
- B. Jesus knows the situation of the church and has given them a huge opportunity to reach people, even though it seems like they do not have much strength. This opportunity comes because the church has been faithful to its mission and to Jesus.

II. Notes

- A. Acts 14:27 - *When they arrived, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.*
- B. I Corinthians 16:9 - *for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.*
- C. 2 Corinthians 2:12 - *Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord,*
- D. Colossians 4:3 - *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;*
- E. Revelation 21:25 - *In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;*
- F. the open door was not simply a way of escape from difficulties, but an opening for preaching the gospel, an opportunity of doing good, as well as an abundant entrance into the kingdom. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- G. The "open door" here evidently refers to the enjoyment of some privilege or honor; and, so far as the language is concerned, it may refer to any one of the following things either:... the ability to do good... [or] the privilege of access to the heavenly palace; that is, that they had an abundant opportunity of securing their salvation, the door being never closed against them by day or by night... [or] it may mean that they had before them an open way of egress from danger and persecution. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- H. Through which thou mayest enter into the Kingdom, into the house of David. - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)
- I. so as it should not be in the power of adversaries to hinder his success. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- J. Probably the false Jews mentioned in the next verse denied the title of the Christians in Philadelphia to the privileges of brotherhood—whence we may suppose that they were mostly Gentiles. Christ answers, that He would grant what they refused. - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)
- K. being consciously weak herself, she is the fitter object for God's power to rest on [so Aquinas], that so the Lord Christ may have all the glory. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- L. When Christians were brought before pagan magistrates in times of persecution, they were required to renounce the name of Christ, and to disown him in a public manner. It is possible that, amidst the persecutions that raged in the early times, the members of the church at Philadelphia had been summoned to such a trial, and they had stood the trial firmly. It would seem from the following verse, that the efforts which had been made to induce them to renounce the name of Christ had been made by those who professed to be Jews, though they evinced the spirit of Satan. If so, then the attempt was probably to convince them that Jesus was not the Christ. This attempt would be made in all places where there were Jews. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

3:9 *Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.*

- I. Context
 - A. Even though the church of Philadelphia is small, it is powerful because it has kept its focus on Jesus, not being popular with the culture around it.
 - B. The church is tested by the Jewish leaders
 - 1. Who have been telling a lie (most likely that the Christians will go to hell because they have denied the laws of Moses).
 - 2. Because the church remains faithful to Jesus, there will come a time in which the Jewish leaders will regret having attacked the church.
 - a) Very likely this was when the Jewish synagogues were destroyed in a massive earthquake and the Christians helped them rebuild.
- II. Notes
 - A. Isaiah 43:4 - *Because you are precious and honored in My sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you and nations in place of your life.*
 - B. Isaiah 49:23 - *Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow to you facedown and lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in Me will never be put to shame."*
 - C. Isaiah 60:14 - *The sons of your oppressors will come and bow down to you; all who reviled you will fall facedown at your feet and call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.*
 - D. John 17:23 - *I in them and You in Me--that they may be perfectly united, so that the world may know that You sent Me and have loved them just as You have loved Me.*
 - E. The word implies that he had power to do this, and consequently proves that he has power over the heart of man, and Call secure such a result as he chooses. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
 - F. The meaning is, that, though they were of Jewish extraction, and boasted much of being Jews, yet they were really under the influence of Satan, and their assemblages deserved to be called his "synagogue." - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
 - G. under all the solemn guise of religious worship are carrying on Satan's cause and interest - [Benson Commentary](#)
 - H. time would transform the suspected into the respected - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
 - I. It does not mean necessarily that they would themselves be converted to Christ, but that, as they had been accustomed to revile and oppose those who were true Christians, they would be constrained to come and render them the respect due to those who were sincerely endeavoring to serve their Maker. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
 - J. he means that the enemies of his church will yet be constrained to acknowledge that it enjoys the smiles of God, and that instead of being persecuted and reviled, it should be respected and loved. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

3:10 *Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

- I. Context
 - A. The Church of Philadelphia will overcome persecution by staying true to Jesus and its mission to love the lost.
 - B. The rest of the world will have its faith challenged, but not this church because they have been focused - it has been seen every day through every challenge they faced.
- II. Notes
 - A. Matthew 24:14 - *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*
 - B. 2 Peter 2:9 - *if all this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.*

- C. Christ Himself now endures, patiently waiting until the usurper be cast out, and all "His enemies be made His footstool." So, too, His Church, for the joy before her of sharing His coming kingdom, endures patiently. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- D. One of the highest rewards of patience in one trial is the grace that God gives us to bear another. The fact that we have been patient and submissive may be regarded as proof that he will give us grace that we may be patient and submissive in the trials that are to come. God does not leave those who have shown that they will not leave him. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- E. The one who keeps God's word is kept... The promise does not mean the being kept away from, but the being kept out from the tribulation. The head should be kept above the waters; - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- F. the hour of temptation—the appointed season of affliction and temptation (so in De 4:34 the plagues are called "the temptations of Egypt"), literally, "the temptation": the sore temptation which is coming on: the time of great tribulation before Christ's second coming. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

3: 11 I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

I. Context

- A. The Church of Philadelphia strong because it is focused on Jesus.
- B. But they need to be diligent and stay focused until the end.

II. Notes

- A. 1 Cor. 9:25 - [Everyone who competes in the games trains with strict discipline. They do it for a crown that is perishable, but we do it for a crown that is imperishable.](#)
- B. 2 John 1:8 - [Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.](#)
- C. Revelation 22:12 - ["Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to each one according to what he has done.](#)
- D. Behold, I come quickly - That is, in the trials referred to - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- E. No other coming of Christ, but his coming to the last judgment, can be here meant. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- F. To bring on this hour of temptation on the reformed churches, which will be at the beginning of this period; - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- G. The truth which is taught here is, that by negligence or unfaithfulness in duty we may be deprived of the glory which we might have obtained if we had been faithful to our God and Saviour. We need to be on our constant guard, that, in a world of temptation, where the enemies of truth abound, we may not be robbed of the crown that we might have worn forever. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

3:12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; 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 My new name.

I. Context

- A. The church of Philadelphia is strong because it is focused and disciplined.
- B. If they hold onto this until Jesus returns
 - 1. They will be set up as a strength (pillar) and example (wearing God's name) of the entire Church (the new Jerusalem).
 - a) People will see Jesus all over this church.
 - (1) Note; The church of Sardis was at risk of missing Jesus when He walked in the door (they are cold toward God), while you can't miss Jesus at the church of Philadelphia (they are hot).

II. Notes

- A. I Kings 7:21 - Thus he set up the pillars at the portico of the temple. The pillar to the south he named Jachin, and the pillar to the north he named Boaz.
- B. Psalm 46:4 - There is a river whose streams delight the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- C. Jeremiah 1:18 - Now behold, this day I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land--against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land.
- D. Ezekiel 48:35 - The perimeter of the city will be 18,000 cubits, and the name of the city from that day on will be: THE LORD IS THERE.
- E. Galatians 2:9 - And recognizing the grace I had been given, James, Cephas, and John--those reputed to be pillars--gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the Jews.
- F. Galatians 4:26 - But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.
- G. Hebrews 13:14 - For here we do not have a permanent city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.
- H. Revelations 21:2 - I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- I. Revelation 21:10 - And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,
- J. Revelation 22:4 - They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.
- K. A pillar, and an unshaken one. There may be reference to the frequent earthquakes which had shaken down buildings in their city. Those who overcome will prove real supports to the great Christian temple - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- L. On the sides of the four marble pillars which survive as ruins of Philadelphia inscriptions are to be found. The writing would be the name of God, the name of the heavenly Jerusalem and (omit the repetition, "I will write upon him") the new, unknown name of Christ Himself. The allusion is to the golden frontlet inscribed with the name of Jehovah. He will reflect the likeness of God; and not only so, he will bear the tokens—now seen in all clearness—of his heavenly citizenship - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- M. The meaning is, that he would be known and recognized as belonging to God; - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- N. The idea would seem to be, that in this world, and in all worlds wherever he goes and wherever he abides, he will be recognized as belonging to that holy city; as enjoying the rights and immunities of such a citizen. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- O. Jerusalem was the place where the temple was reared, and where the worship of God was celebrated. It thus came to be synonymous with the church - the dwelling-place of God on earth - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- P. It is as if it had been constructed there, and then sent down to earth ready formed - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

3:13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

I. **Context**

- 1. The Church of Philadelphia is an example to all Christians that there is power in staying focused and disciplined.

Message to Laodicea

3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

I. Context

- A. John is writing to the 7 churches of Asia Minor to remind them that they light the way to God, so they need to be the best representatives of Jesus that they can be.
 - 1. Ephesus - Balance pure teaching with loving outreach.

2. Smyrna - Hold strong in tough times and fight the enemy (Satan) not people.
3. Pergamum - Live like Christ, not the culture around us.
4. Thyatira - Know what you believe so that you can never be moved.
5. Sardis - Seek popularity in Heaven, not on Earth.
6. Philadelphia - their is power in staying focused and disciplined.

B. The 7th church is Laodicea

1. Jesus reminds them that He is the heart of all things.

II. Notes

- A. Proverbs 8:22 - *The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His work, before His deeds of old.*
- B. Proverbs 14:5 - *An honest witness does not deceive, but a dishonest witness pours forth lies.*
- C. Isaiah 65:16 - *"Because he who is blessed in the earth Will be blessed by the God of truth; And he who swears in the earth Will swear by the God of truth; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My sight!*
- D. John 1:3 - *Through Him all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that has been made.*
- E. John 3:11 - *"Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.*
- F. John 8:14 - *Jesus replied, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is valid, because I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I came from or where I am going.*
- G. 2 Corinthians 1:20 - *For all the promises of God are "Yes" in Christ. And so through Him, our "Amen" is spoken to the glory of God.*
- H. Colossians 1:18 - *And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He may have preeminence.*
- I. Colossians 4:17 - *Say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."*
- J. Situated half way between Philadelphia and Colossae, and not far from Hierapolis. It received its name from Laodice, wife of Antiochus the second king of Syria, by whom it was rebuilt and beautified. It had borne in earlier times the names of Diospolis and afterwards Rhoas. It shared with Thyatira and Sardis in the dye trade; the woods grown in the neighbourhood were famous for their quality and the rich blackness of their colour. Prosperity in trade had so enriched the population that when their city suffered in the great earthquake (A.D. 60) they were able to carry on the work of rebuilding without applying, as many of the neighbouring towns were compelled to do, to the Imperial Treasury for aid. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- K. By the angel we understand the presiding pastor. There is some ground for identifying him with Archippus. It is too much to dismiss this as a baseless supposition. It is a well-supported view which understands the passage (Colossians 4:17) to mean that Archippus was a minister or office-bearer in the Church at Laodicea. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- L. Laodicea lay south of Philadelphia in the way to return to Ephesus: for the seven churches lay in a kind of circular form, so that the natural progress was from Ephesus to Smyrna, and so forward in the order in which the cities are here addressed, which probably was the order in which St. John used to visit them. - *Benson Commentary*
- M. The "Amen," used only here as a personal name. It is the Hebrew word for verily, and may have some reference to Isaiah 65:16; but more certainly it seems chosen to recall the frequent use of it by our Lord Himself. He who so often prefaced His solemn utterance by "Verily, verily," now reveals Himself as the source of all certainty and truth. In Him is Yea, and in Him Amen (2Corinthians 1:20). In Him there is no conjecture, or guess-work; for He is (and the Greek equivalents of the Hebrew Amen are used following) the faithful and true witness, who speaks what He knows, and testifies what He has seen (John 3:11). - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*

- N. "Faithful" is to be taken here as meaning trustworthy. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- O. The "beginning," not meaning that Christ was the first among the created, but that He was the origination, or primary source of all creation - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

3:15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

I. Context

- A. The church of Laodicea was reminded that Jesus is the heart of all things.
- B. Jesus wishes Christians were either hot or cold
 1. Hot - like Philadelphia - means they are focused and disciplined towards Him.
 2. Cold - like Sardis - means that they can be heated up by better teaching.

II. Notes

- A. Romans 12:11 - [Do not let your zeal subside; keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.](#)
- B. The word "cold" here would seem to denote the state where there was no pretension to religion; where everything was utterly lifeless and dead. The language is obviously figurative, but it is such as is often employed, when we speak of one as being cold toward another, as having a cold or icy heart, etc. The word "hot" would denote, of course, the opposite - warm and zealous in their love and service. The very words that we are constrained to use when speaking on this subject - such words as ardent (that is, hot or burning); fervid (that is, very hot, burning, boiling) - show how necessary it is to use such words, and how common it is. The state indicated here, therefore, would be that in which there was a profession of religion, but no warm-hearted piety; in which there was not, on the one hand, open and honest opposition to him, and, on the other, such warm-hearted and honest love as he had a right to look for among his professed friends - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- C. The wish is not that they might grow cold rather than remain in this lukewarm state, it is more a regret that they are among those who are in a condition which is so liable to self-deception; such a state is "both to God displeasing and to His foes." - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- D. For then there would not be the same "danger of mixed motive and disregarded principle" [Alford]. Also, there is more hope of the "cold," that is, those who are of the world, and not yet warmed by the Gospel call; for, when called, they may become hot and fervent Christians: such did the once-cold publicans, Zaccheus and Matthew, become. But the lukewarm has been brought within reach of the holy fire, without being heated by it into fervor: having religion enough to lull the conscience in false security, but not religion enough to save the soul - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

3:16 So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

I. Context

- A. A church needs to be either hot (focused) or cold (teachable).
- B. But not lukewarm (having enough heat to think they are hot, but really cold) because they are not willing to change and this means that Jesus cannot use them - He will spit them out.

II. Notes

- A. It is remarkable that the Greek adjectives are in the masculine, agreeing with the angel, not feminine, agreeing with the Church. The Lord addresses the angel as the embodiment and representative of the Church. The chief minister is answerable for his flock if he have not faithfully warned the members of it. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

- B. A lukewarm professor is one that serves God and mammon; that halts between two opinions, and knows not what religion is best, and cares little for any, yet keeps in a round of duty, though indifferent to it, and contents himself with it; and is unconcerned about the life and power of godliness, and takes up with the external form of it; and has no thought about the glory of God, the interest of Christ and truth; and this was too much the case of this church, at least of a great number of its members; wherefore it was very loathsome to Christ - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- C. Referring, perhaps, to the well-known fact that tepid water tends to produce sickness at the stomach, and an inclination to vomit. The image is intensely strong, and denotes deep disgust and loathing at the indifference which prevailed in the church at Laodicea. The idea is, that they would be utterly rejected and cast off as a church - a threatening of which there has been an abundant fulfillment in subsequent times. It may be remarked, also, that what was threatened to that church may be expected to occur to all churches, if they are in the same condition; and that all professing Christians, and Christian churches, that are lukewarm, have special reason to dread the indignation of the Saviour. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- D. Physicians used lukewarm water to cause vomiting. Cold and hot drinks were common at feasts, but never lukewarm. There were hot and cold springs near Laodicea. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

3:17 Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

I. Context

- A. Christians need to either be focused on Jesus (Hot) or teachable (cold), but they should never think that they are perfect (lukewarm).
- B. When we think we are rich, we do not work anymore and end up starving. We need to realize that we are in need so that we seek help. Churches should never think that they understand God so that they quit learning because they will end up missing God due to pride.

II. Notes

- A. Hosea 12:8 - [And Ephraim boasts: "How rich I have become; I have found wealth for myself. In all my labors, they can find in me no iniquity that is sin."](#)
- B. Zechariah 11:5 - [whose buyers slaughter them without remorse. Those who sell them say, 'Praise the LORD, for I am rich!' Even their own shepherds have no compassion for them.](#)
- C. Matthew 5:3 - ["Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.](#)
- D. I Corinthians 4:8 - [Already you have all you want. Already you have become rich. Without us, you have become kings. How I wish you really were kings, so that we might be kings with you.](#)
- E. in the instance of this lukewarm angel; he said he was rich in a spiritual sense, in his state as a Christian, in spiritual gifts and endowments. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- F. and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked
- G. The words should, I think, be taken as an amplification of the reason for their rejection. Christ was about to reject them for being in that tepid state which, beginning with self-satisfaction, led on to self-deception. They were rich in worldly goods (unlike the Church in Smyrna), but their very wealth led them into a quiet unaggressively kind of religion; they were proud also of their intellectual wealth; self-complacent because in comfortable worldly circumstances, and became puffed up with a vain philosophy, they learned to be satisfied with their spiritual state, and to believe the best of themselves, and then to believe in themselves. Hypocrites they were, who did not know they were hypocrites. They thought themselves good; and this self-deception was their danger. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

- H. “why should a man repent of his goodness? He may well repent, indeed, of his falsehood; but unhappily the falsehood of it is just the thing he does not see, and which he cannot see by the very law of his character. The Pharisee did not know he was a Pharisee. If he had known it, he would not have been a Pharisee. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

I. Context

- A. Don't be the type of person that is unteachable - thinking you already know it all and have everything you need.
B. Instead ask God to help you see what you need - and be taught.

II. Notes

- A. Isaiah 55:1 - "Come, all of you who thirst, come to the waters; and you without money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without cost
B. Matthew 13:44 - The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and in his joy he went and sold all he had and bought that field.
C. I Peter 1:7 - so that the authenticity of your faith--more precious than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
D. There is, perhaps, a touch of irony here. How could the poor and naked buy? But the irony has no sting, for the counsel but recalled the invitation of the prophet to buy “without money and without price” - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
E. Trench suggests that “gold” here stands for faith. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
F. The putting on of apparel and the stripping of it off were tokens of honour and humiliation. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
G. They were blind; they were proud of their intellectual wealth; they boasted of their enlightenment. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

3:19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

I. Context

- A. Don't be unteachable, but seek Jesus to learn and grow.
B. It is not easy to change your path - and the path of Christ is hard, but it is worth it for the love of Jesus.

II. Notes

- A. Deuteronomy 8:5 - So know in your heart that just as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.
B. Proverbs 3:12 - for the LORD disciplines those He loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.
C. John 16:8 - And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;
D. I Corinthians 11:32 - But when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.
E. Hebrews 12:6 - For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and He chastises everyone He receives as a son.”
F. The first word is that used in the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8), and signifies to bring conviction; it is not empty censure. The second word signifies to educate by means of correction. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
G. The meaning is, that it is a proof of love on his part, if his professed friends go astray, to recall them by admonitions and by trials. So a father calls back his children who are disobedient; and there is no higher proof of his love than when, with great pain to

himself, he administers such chastisement as shall save his child.- [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

- H. Be earnest, strenuous, ardent in your purpose to exercise true repentance, and to turn from the error of your ways. Lose no time; spare no labor, that you may obtain such a state of mind that it shall not be necessary to bring upon you the severe discipline which always comes on those who continue lukewarm in religion - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- I. The opposite of "lukewarm." - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

I. Context

- A. Take the hard path of discipline and focus - be taught and don't believe you already have everything you need.
- B. Jesus is nearby and He is calling to us - we need to act. We need to reach out to Him.

II. Notes

- A. Matthew 24:33 - [So also, when you see all these things, you know that He is near, right at the door.](#)
- B. Luke 12:36 - [Then you will be like servants waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks, they can open the door for him at once.](#)
- C. John 14:23 - [Jesus replied, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make Our home with him.](#)
- D. James 5:9 - [Do not complain about one another, brothers, so that you will not be judged. Look, the Judge is standing at the door!](#)
- E. Intimating that, though they had erred, the way of repentance and hope was not closed against them. He was still willing to be gracious, though their conduct had been such as to be loathsome, - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

3:21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

I. Context

- A. Take the hard path and follow Jesus. Make the effort.
- B. And you will achieve Heaven.

II. Notes

- A. Matthew 19:28 - [Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, in the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.](#)
- B. 2 Timothy 2:12 - [if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us;](#)
- C. "The highest place is within the reach of the lowest; the faintest spark of grace may be fanned into the mightiest flame of divine love." - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- D. As I gained a victory over the world, and over the power of the tempter. As the reward of this, he is exalted to the throne of the universe - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

I. Context

- A. John is writing to the 7 churches of Asia Minor to remind them that they light the way to God, so they need to be the best representatives of Jesus that they can be.
 - 1. Ephesus - Balance pure teaching with loving outreach.
 - 2. Smyrna - Hold strong in tough times and fight the enemy (Satan) not people.
 - 3. Pergamum - Live like Christ, not the culture around us.

4. Thyatira - Know what you believe so that you can never be moved.
5. Sardis - Seek popularity in Heaven, not on Earth.
6. Philadelphia - there is power in staying focused and disciplined.
7. Laodicea - Be teachable and reach out to Jesus.