

“I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see” (Rev 3:18).

SEVEN CHURCHES

I. MESSIAH’S MESSAGE TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

A. LETTER TO EPHEBUS 2:1-7

B. Letter to Smyrna 2:8-11

C. LETTER TO PERGAMUM 2:12-17

D. LETTER TO THYATIRA 2:18-29

E. LETTER TO SARDIS 3:1-6

F. LETTER TO PHILADELPHIA 3:7-13

G. LETTER TO LAODICEA 3:14-22

1. The Church at Laodicea

As we have stated, the seven churches form a geographic arc beginning with Ephesus, winging upward and east ward through Smyrna to Pergamum and downward to Laodicea.

Thus this last city is about ninety miles due east of Ephesus and about forty-five miles southeast of Philadelphia.

The last and seventh letter is to the church at Laodicea. The city was built by the Seleucid monarch, Antiochus II (261-246 B.C.) and named after his wife, Laodicea.

It was a wealthy city of considerable size with trading opportunities specializing in the manufacture of wool. The city was susceptible to earthquakes and completely destroyed in Nero’s era.

Wealthy residents were able to rebuild the city in 60 A.D. without the aid of Rome.

Laodicea means *rights of the people*.

Laodicea has a medical center known for an ointment for treating ears and a powder for the eyes. In the city tepid water flowed from underground aqueducts. If a citizen or visitor tried to drink from this source the natural response was to spit it out as it produced a nauseating effect.

The city was destroyed by the Moslems in the Middle Ages, today the site of the once wealthy city is a mass of ruins, however there is interest in there renovation.

2. Salutation to the Angel at Laodicea

And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Words of the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of God's creation (Rev 3:14).

Like Philadelphia, the salutation to Laodicea goes beyond the description of Christ Messiah given in the first chapter.

As in the other six church salutations, our Savior calls attention to those specific areas needing attention.

The Lord identifies Himself *The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.*

These titles emphasize the Lord’s ***faithfulness, sovereignty, and power*** to bring all things to their proper completion.

The church at Laodicea had gained worldly success which most often makes believers tone deaf to the things of the Spirit.

Soon to follow comes doubting the absolute and unique authority of the Word of God.

Dr. Henry Morris points out “The church at Laodicea had imbibed much of the humanistic philosophy of the intellectual world of that day. Thirty years earlier Paul had written the church at Colosse urgently warning them against all philosophies of men (Colossians 2:8-10).”

Dr. Morris continues, “all false philosophies of past and present have been based on evolutionism, the denial of an ultimate Creator transcendent to His Creation...Not only was He the Alpha (Alef) but also the Omega (Tav)—the Amen. ”

The Hebraic teaching is: *Creatio ex Nihilo*, Creation from nothing; the theological concept that God created the world out of nothing.

Dr. Morris points out, “The compromising position of the church at Laodicea characterizes a great numbers of so called evengelical churches in our present day. Like the church at Laodicea they are in need of being called back to thru creationism and true biblical authority.”

3. Condemnation versus Commendation

Though outwardly this church must have appeared strong and prosperous, the Lord finds nothing to commend. Rather His strong condemnation is focused in two areas:

• **Grossly Indifferent (3:15-16).**

The Laodiceans lacked fervor and zeal for the Lord as well as discernment concerning their great spiritual depravity, apathy, and complacency.

The lukewarm mineral springs near Laodicea if drunk became nauseating, becomes the Lord’s teaching tool.

He uses the familar natural occurance to illustrate His teaching seeking to help them see how blind and spiritually malnourished they really were and in danger of their candlestick being removed. Time and again He takes the natural setting, positive or negative, to undergird His poignant message to the believer(s) with the purpose that His church might awaken, repent and turn to doing His works in His Name by the power of His Spirit.

• **Spiritual Poverty and Self-deception (3:17).**

I am rich, and have become wealthy, implies the Laodicea church equated their financial status with spiritual success and indicates they were even deceived in believing their wealth came through self-efforts (I Chron 29:11-14).

How easy it is to be misguided, thinking we have or are something we are not, causing us to drift further into a state of carelessness with ears dull and our hearts desensitized and unchanged on hearing His plea.

If we receive His corrections our attitude and behavior are transformed by the power of the Spirit.

4. Admonition & 5. Correction:

I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see (Rev 3:18).

Christ Messiah gives His correction concerning their desperate, but unrecognized need.

He is our *Wonderful Counselor* (Isa 9:6) and loves this church *Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent* (Rev 3:19). The Laodiceans will need to awaken to their needy condition in order to walk out His ways, acknowledging their wrong doing (Lev 26:40-41).

The Purchase Price connects to **recognizing** one’s spiritual condition, **willingness** to repent and **forsake** all to gain His Presence.

Three Purchases:

- **Gold**
- **White Garments**
- **Eye Salve**

A. First Purchase, Gold - Seek His Presence:

"I counsel you buy from Me Gold refined by fire..." Gold is the metal that distinctively marks the Sanctuary, and its furnishings. **Gold represents the Father's Presence.**

His Presence is the heavenly sanctuary where He and the Son make their eternal abode.

Since Messiah's death, burial and resurrection, the believer is also a temple where Christ Messiah and the Father dwell. (Read Jn. 14:20-26; 15:1-7).

To experience the fullness of His Presence, the believer's life and ways must be pure even as gold refined in fire is made pure. We are to be free of a mixture of self and the world system.

Therefore, as we diligently seek His face, Christ Messiah will release the Spirit to bring forth His Word in the believer (Ps 27:4; Jn 15:4-5, 7). **If we have His Presence we are rich.**

B. Second Purchase - Acts of Righteousness Orchestrated by the Spirit of His Presence.

"I counsel you to buy from Me...White Garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness might not be seen" (Rev 3:18).

White Garments symbolizes the **righteous acts** of the **saints**.

Nakedness represents **sin** in the life of the **believer**.

Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined... Dan 12:10

Let your garments be always white... Eccl 9:8

He was transfigured before them, and His clothes became radiant, intensely white... Mark 9:3

*Torah Anthology Jeremiah 3:20-23 (Sin and Nakedness)

The LORD'S Word to Israel: *"Surely, as a treacherous wife leaves her husband, so have you been treacherous to Me, O house of Israel declares the LORD."* A voice on the bare heights is heard, the weeping and pleading of Israel's sons because they have perverted their way they have forgotten the LORD their God. *"Return, O faithless sons; I will heal your faithlessness"* (Jer 3:20-22).

*If one sins and later repents, he may take comfort in the fact that his repentance can "cover" his earlier "shame." (I Jn. 1:9) Repentance provides a covering of white (garment).

However, if one never repents, then his shame remains exposed in all its nakedness, covered only by his disgrace.

C. Third Purchase - Anoint Your Eyes with Salve comes from the Study of the Treasures of His Word and Prayer:

"I counsel you to buy from Me...Salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see" (Rev 3:18).

Sin scales the eyes and hardens the heart.

Pr. 16:2 *"All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes but the LORD weighs the spirit."*

Pray for a Teachable heart, open to correction:

"Open my eyes that I might behold wondrous things out of Your law" (Psalm 119:18).

Seek His guidance:

2 Timothy 2:15 *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

Repent, repentance removes scales from one's eyes and restores vision.

• **Rev 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 eat with him, and he with Me."*

6. Reward:

The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with Me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with My Father on His throne (Rev 3:21).

II. MESSIAH’S CORRECTIONS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

OVERCOMER	MESSIAH’S MILLENNIAL REIGN	AGE TO COME
Ephesus - Rev. 2:7	You have forsaken your first love	Rev. 2:4
Smyrna - Rev. 2:11	No Correction (Failed to repent leaving their first love).	Rev. 2:4
Pergamum - Rev. 2:17	Doctrine of Balaam & Teaching of Nicolaitans	Rev. 2:14-15
Thyatira - Rev. 2:28	Tolerating the spirit / teaching of Jezebel	Rev. 2:20-21
Sardis - Rev. 3:5	Dead, need to wake-up	Rev. 3:1-2
Philadelphia - Rev. 3:12	No Correction ((Failed to repent leaving their first love)	Rev.2:4
Laodicea - Rev. 3:21	Lukewarm, wretched, pitiable, poor, blind & naked	Rev. 3:17

III. REWARDS FOR OVERCOMERS

OVERCOMER	MESSIAH’S MILLENNIAL REIGN	AGE TO COME
Ephesus - Rev. 2:7	Eat of the Tree of Life	Rev. 22:2
Smyrna - Rev. 2:11	Receive Crown of Life, Escape second death	Rev. 20:6
Pergamum - Rev. 2:17	Eat hidden manna, receive white stone, new name	Rev. 22:4
Thyatira - Rev. 2:28	Authority over nations, Morning Star	Rev. 22:16
Sardis - Rev. 3:5	White Garments, Name in Book of Life	Rev. 19:8
Philadelphia - Rev. 3:12	Escape Tribulation, be pillar in Temple, New name Jerusalem	Rev.22:2
Laodicea - Rev. 3:21	Share His Throne	Rev. 20:4; 21:7

IV. THE SEVEN CHURCHES HISTORICALLY PARALLEL THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AGE

LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT	ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY	PERIOD IN CHURCH HISTORY
1. EPHESUS (2:1-7) REPRESENTS LEADERSHIP: JEWISH TO APPROX. 65 A.D.;	APOSTOLIC AGE	30 - 100 A.D.
2. SMYRNA (2:8-11) REPRESENTS	AGE OF PERSECUTION	100 - 313 A.D.
3. PERGAMUM (2:12-17) REPRESENTS CONSTANTINIAN ERA	IMPERIAL CHURCH AGE	313 - 606 A.D.
4. THYATIRA	AGE OF PERSECUTION	606 - 1517 A.D.
5. SARDIS	REFORMATION AGE	1517 - 1730 A.D.
6. PHILADELPHIA	MISSIONARY AGE	1730 - 1917 A.D.
5. LAODICEA	AGE OF APOSTASY	1917 - ? A.D.