

Chapter 3:

Sardis: Name means “Remnant”

John shows it is Jesus speaking to them by referencing Jesus holding the Holy Spirit and the seven angels of the seven churches. Jesus states that by reputation the church is alive and doing the right things, but the truth, is they are dead. Jesus tells them to wake up and strengthen the good things they are doing, because He finds their deeds unfinished according to God. Jesus tells them to listen to what is being said and repent or he will come like a thief in the night, and take what they have. Jesus then states there are some there that are doing well and are worthy to be by His side. Jesus speaks of them being dressed in white which represents righteousness. Their names will not be removed from the book of life. These are those who are victorious from this church. Again, Jesus says, whoever is listening and understanding what is being said, let the Holy Spirit minister to you, listen and obey.

Philadelphia: Name means “Brotherly Love”

John uses a description of Jesus Christ holding the key of David. This refers to Jesus’s absolute authority over God’s kingdom. Jesus possessing the key of David shows that he has all authority, control, and the right to rule over David’s house and kingdom. Because of our deeds, commitment to, and faith in Jesus, He has placed an open door before us that no one can shut. This door undoubtedly refers to heaven. “I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.” In their weakness they have still lived according to the teachings of Christ and have never turned away from Him. Because of this, the Philadelphia church has been promised to be kept from the hour of trial that will come upon the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. There are people that believe this means the Philadelphia church is going to miss the entire seven-year tribulation; especially people who believe in the pre-tribulation rapture. There are others that believe this means the Philadelphia church will be taken out at some other point in time after the start of the tribulation, but before things get “really bad”. I have yet to find a scripture that specifically states when the rapture of the saints will occur. There is a lot of speculation about this topic from everyone who has written about the events of Revelation. I will delve into this topic more in a specific section about the rapture and resurrection of saints. However, I want to call out the Olivet Discourse spoken by Jesus in Matthew 24. I would recommend reading, meditating, and praying for the Holy Spirit to minister to you on this topic. This passage of scripture directly ties to Revelation, the end times, Jesus’ return, and is from Jesus himself.

Jesus reminds the Philadelphia saints that he is coming soon, He tells them to hold on to what they have so that no one can take their crowns. This specific group of overcoming believers have crowns as indicated by Jesus’s statement. “The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will

also write on them my new name.” Amazing promises are given to this group of overcomers. Some Christians who believe in different “ranks” within the church body believe this church represents the bride of Christ. I believe there is plenty of reference within the Bible to support different heavenly rewards based on our deeds on earth. I have a hard time believing that Billy Graham would deserve the same rewards as the 50-year believer whom never matured beyond salvation and never became the disciple that we are all called to be. For the time being we will table the “Bride of Christ” discussion and just acknowledge that the Philadelphia saints are truly a blessed group of overcomers that have led a righteous walk and will be well rewarded for doing so. Again, Jesus says, whoever is listening and understanding what is being said, let the Holy Spirit minister to you, listen and obey.

Laodicea: Name means “Rule of the People”

John again references that it is Jesus speaking to them. Jesus has nothing to praise this church on. They are neither hot nor cold and are likened to being lukewarm. Jesus wishes they were either one or the other and states He is about to spit them out of His mouth. These people are rich financially and because of that, they have become comfortable in their wealth and do not rely on Jesus the way they should. Jesus states they are: “wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked”; essentially that they have and are nothing. Jesus goes on to state: “I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.” Refined gold in the Bible symbolizes spiritual riches attained through trials and tribulations. A believer becomes purified over time through their faith in God and allowing Him to work in their lives through those trials. The white clothes symbolize righteousness or the putting on of Christ’s righteousness. The Laodiceans believed they were “enlightened”. Jesus is stating they are blind and need His salve so that they might see the truth.

Jesus then reminds them that those whom He loves, He rebukes, or disciplines. He tells them to be honest with themselves and repent of their sins. Jesus is trying to reach them; all they must do is answer and let Him into their lives. To those who are victorious will earn the right to sit with Jesus on His throne. For the 7th time, Jesus says, whoever is listening and understanding what is being said, let the Holy Spirit minister to you, listen and obey.