

Small Group

March 7, 2018



Revelation Chapter 3: Revelation of Jesus Christ: Of Kings and Kingdoms

The last three churches addressed in
Revelation chapter 3:

Sardis: Falling Asleep

Philadelphia: Open Door

Laodicea: Lukewarm

There are no "perfect" churches and every church has its weakness and blind spots. The warnings and condemnations given to these churches however go beyond an individual congregation. They are given to every congregation and denomination throughout the ages who stand against the powers of this world that rise up against the authority of God.

As with the previous four churches the encouragement and exhortation is the same:

Bible Study Questions



. Read Revelation 3 (see pages 4 - 5)

1. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941 our country was put on high alert. Then we fell asleep and 52 years later the World Trade Center was bombed on Feb. 25, 1993. Then we fell asleep again and 18 years later 9/11 occurred. In light of the fact that the city of Sardis was attacked twice in its recent history (victims of “sneak attacks”: In 549 B.C. by King Cyrus (Persia) and in 218 B.C. by Antiochus The Great (Greek), how do they hear the words in verse 2: **“Wake up; strengthen what remains that is about to die.”**?

2. The church at Sardis had a reputation of being alive but they were dead. The sermon mentioned the Potemkin Village (Catherine The Great deceived by her lover Grigory Potemkin). The church at Laodicea thought they were doing great. They could not see their own faults and areas of weakness. Not only could they not see them they actually saw themselves the opposite of how God saw them: (v.17: **“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”**).

Discuss how a Church (and individual Christians) can put up a façade to look good but actually be more show than substance. How can a church look alive but actually be dead (or dying?)

3. The hot and cold springs running into Laodicea both had their purpose. The hot was supposed to be hot and the cold were supposed to be cold. But as far as the church there was concerned, Jesus said they were neither hot nor cold but instead they were lukewarm. What does it mean to be lukewarm? How does a church (or a Christian) become lukewarm?

4. What are the similarities and differences between Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea?

5. Jesus threatens to “Come like a thief” (v. 3) to Sardis (remember the “sneak attacks”) and to “vomit” Laodicea from his mouth. (v.16). The imagery is certainly symbolic but Is the judgment symbolic or real?



Personal Application Questions

Please answer the questions below as they best apply to you personally. Speak in the “I”. There is no obligation to answer any question.

1. Which church situation do you relate to more in this season of your life, the Church at Sardis, The Church at Philadelphia or the Church at Laodicea? Discuss a particular verse that you relate to at this time.
2. What do you do to keep the passion and not let your faith become lukewarm?
3. “Open Doors” have to do with being a witness for Jesus. Have there ever been any “open doors” that you think you should have taken but didn’t? What is an “open door” in your life now that you believe God is calling you to walk through?

4. What has God built you for? What is it that you are most passionate about?

5.. Study the William Holman Hunt (1851) painting of Jesus knocking on the door. Remember, it is for Christians, not the unbeliever. What thoughts come to mind when viewing this painting?

5. **Assignment:** Read Revelation chapters 4 & 5 and Psalms 145 – 150. Pray this part of the Lord’s prayer every day: ***“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”***

To the angel of the church in Sardis write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.² Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. ³ Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

⁴ Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. ⁶ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

⁷ “To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. ⁸ I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹ I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. ¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ¹² 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. ¹³ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

¹⁴ “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. ¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. ²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

²¹ To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.

²² Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”



