of testing is past and he has remained faithful. His salvation is certain. As the promise explains further, he has God’s name written upon him, and the name of God’s city, New Jerusalem, and the new name of Jesus. He is destined for never-ending joy as an honored member of God’s Kingdom.

Laodicea

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Revelation 3:14-22).

The Laodicean church is the last of the seven. There is not an eighth. It is during the time of this church that human history will end. Laodicea means, “judging of the people.” As the Philadelphia church brought us into the judg- ment, beginning with the mid-1800s and extending until the second coming of Christ. It is therefore the one message of the seven that especially addresses the church today.

A Startling Diagnosis

Each of the preceding six messages include words of commendation and praise. Not so with Laodicea. It is the only exception. Jesus has absolutely nothing good to say about Laodicea’s present condition. But the message is not entirely negative. Christ holds before them great hope of healing, a perfect cure. He has prescribed the perfect cure.

That this spiritual treasure is faith made pure by testing (see 1 Peter 1:6-9). Paul tells us that “faith...worketh by love” (Galatians 5:6). The love of Christ is the motive power that strengthens faith to endure its trials. Gold tried in the fire is faith that endures because of love.

The second element of the prescription is “white raiment” (Revelation 3:18). A later verse in Revelation plainly states that the white raiment represents “the righteousness of saints” (19:8). But don’t misunderstand. It is not their righteousness by virtue of their personal goodness. One of the twenty-four elders explains to John that God’s people will not be white hot or cold. I would thou wert white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14). It is the blood of Jesus that gives us innocence before our heavenly Father. When the Bible speaks of the blood of Jesus, it means His voluntary sacrifice of His life for our salvation. We receive the white raiment by allowing the love of that Sacrifice to permeate our hearts and awaken a passionate desire to embrace the seriousness of human guilt. In the light of such love all boasting and dependence on personal attainments will be banished.

The third and final healing remedy is the “eyesalve.” It is a direct prescrip- tion for the spiritual blindness for which Jesus reproved the Laodiceans. She needs to see herself as Christ sees her, with “open eyes,” and recognize that she is spiritually rich and in need of nothing. Far from it, she is “wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.” So sick is Laodicea that Jesus says she makes Him sick.

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The Overcomer’s Reward

As the seventh church brings us to the climactic period of human history, so the reward promised to the end-time overcomer is also climactic. It rises like a crescendo. It shines like the clear sun at noonday. It is the most exalted promise made to redeemed humans in all of Scripture. As if it were not enough to promise us eternal life, the new earth, and the privilege of fellowship with Himself forever! Above and beyond all this, He invites us to occupy His throne with Him.

Can you imagine—fallen, sinful, unworthy rebels, not only saved, but honored with a seat in the very throne of God? Shake your head, rub your eyes and read it again and again. Each time it will be just as much a wonder and just as true.

It is not likely that Christ is here inviting us to merely lounge in an extreme- ly large, literal throne. The throne represents the point from which flows God’s authority, by which He orchestrates and orders the system of His kingdom’s government. The promise to occupy enforcement status is a promise of special participation in the governing of the universe.

The Faithful and True Witness offers more than an honest diagnosis of our condition. He has prescribed the perfect cure.

First He says we need “gold tried in the fire.” The apostle Peter explains that this spiritual treasure is faith made pure by testing (see 1 Peter 1:6-9). Paul tells us that “faith...worketh by love” (Galatians 5:6). The love of Christ is the motive power that strengthens faith to endure its trials. Gold tried in the fire is faith that endures because of love.

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Sardis

A

nd unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things sayth He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. He watchful, and strengthens the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remem-ber therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Revelation 3:1-6).

The message to Thyatira addressed the papal church of the Dark Ages. The message of Sardis is applicable to the Protestantism that separated itself from the mother church. These were the faithful ones who resisted the corrupting influence of “Jezabel” as it invaded the church.

The darkness was first preceded by John the Baptist, named “the morning star of the Reformation,” as he translated the Bible into the English lan-guage. His writings became popular. Many began to believe that the Bible could be read and understood by common people.

Then arose John Huss in Bohemia, boldly preaching the Word of God in the language of the common people, a practice forbidden by the church.
The Protestant churches.

on dead works from which the Reformers fled settled like a dark cloud on church from which they separated. Much of the formalism and dependence separation from Rome, were themselves divided and often exercised the enlightenment. These churches, so exalted in their own eyes for their defend their distinctive points of doctrine and closed their minds to fur-

brought to light by the various Reformers. The churches became content to mark, and Wesley one hundred years later in England—all contributed greatly

ters. He settled in Geneva to aid Farel, a Swiss reformer. From there Calvin

conversion of France to the Protestant faith. Eventually he became a source of not in exchange for their righteous deeds. John Calvin set his heart on the

boldly stepped forward from the masses of helpless, deluded souls. He held

devoted Catholic monk, came to religious convictions wholly contrary to denouncing the oppressive power of the church he loved. Finally he was

Huss obtained the writings of Wycliff and read them with great interest.

and the others was not “complete in the sight of God” (Revelation 3:2, NIV),

Behold, An Open Door

The Coming of Christ as a Thief

Jesus warned that the Sardis church was so spiritually dead that they were liable to be caught by surprise when He would come to them as a thief. Refer-

ence to names being blotted out of the book of life and other names to be con-

firmed before God by Christ’s coming which is said to be a thief mentioned here is not His second coming, but rather His coming to each soul for judgment. Before Christ comes in glory to reward His people and consume His foes, He first will perform a work of judgment to determine whose gar-

ments are spotless and whose are defiled (see Malachi 3:1-2, 5).

The Overcomer’s Reward

Can the human mind set itself on any more precious hope than to have one’s name confessed before the Father by Jesus, to have Him who is the unerring Judge, whose decisions count for eternity, come upon one’s name in His book and smile with approval? Such will be the reward of every faithful Protestant?

Philadelphia

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He that is holy, that He that is true, that He hath the key of David; He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth no man, which thou hast set before thee, no man can shut it for: thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name. Behold, I will make you a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Revelation 3:7-13).

In the late 1700s and the first half of the 1800s a remarkable revival of prophetic goddess worship swept churches around the world. Philadelphia means “brotherly love,” an apt description of that movement. A surge of inter-

est in the prophecies of Revelation and the Old Testament book of Daniel was awakened in many congregations.

Behold, An Open Door

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Each of the seven churches moves us through Christian history toward the judgment hour, to be consummated by the second coming of Christ. As we come to the Philadelphia period, Jesus indicates that we have entered the hour of final judgment. “Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” What is this door that Jesus has opened?

The Overcomer of Philadelphia

The overcomer of Philadelphia is to be made a pillar in the temple of God. He will occupy a place of honor in God's eternal government. The promise continues on to say he will “go no more out.” This must mean that he is no longer in danger of falling away from Christ, eternally secure from Satan’s temptations. The hour of judgment has found him worthy in Christ. The hour

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Behavioral standards around the world became convinced that the history of this old world was fast wrapping up and soon Jesus would come in all His glory to take His people to their eternal home. A spirit of repentance and reconciliation ushered the people into a new love for Christ and for one another. Not since the early apostolic church had God’s people manifested such a spirit of brotherhood. This was a time of great spiritual advancement and enlightenment. Many gems of truth that had been lost were recovered. And various points that had caused division among the Protes-

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In order to understand, we must remember the symbolic Old Testament sanctuary that we considered in Study 2. You will recollect that the sanctu-

ary service was divided into two basic phases: (1) the daily service and (2) the yearly service. The prophetic symbols are: (1) the Holy of Holies, (2) the Holy Place, and (3) the Most Holy Place. The daily service extended to the first room and provided forgiveness of sins. The yearly service, or Yom Kippur, extended to the second room. It also provided forgiveness, but went a significant step beyond. It was the day of judgment for Israel. Every case would be decided for well or woe. A final atonement was made for the repentant believers, while the unrepentant were cast from the camp to die in the heat of the desert. Until that day of ultimate reckoning had arrived, not one soul was allowed to enter beyond the veil that barred the way into the Most Holy Place. Even then, only the high priest entered, and the people were, through faith, represented by him.

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