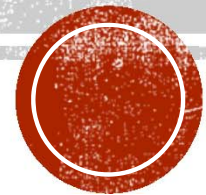


REVELATION 3

Letter to the churches – Laodicea



By Richard Osei

REVELATION “THE UNVEILING”

- The consummation of all things
- The only book promising a special blessing to the reader
- 404 verses containing over 800 allusions from the Old Testament
- It present the climax of God’s Plan for you and me



THE SEVEN CHURCHES

- Why these seven?
- One phrase that echo's through out the letters (He that heath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches)
- Levels of Application
 1. Local – Sir William Ramsay conducted an intensive archeological investigation (Had local problems that the letter address)
 2. Admonitory to all churches (all the seven letters were sent to all the seven churches, with one specifically to that church)
 3. Homiletic (Personal)
 4. Prophetic



SEVEN DESIGN ELEMENTS

- In each of the Letters to Seven Churches
 1. Name of the Church
 2. Title of Christ Chosen
 3. Commendation (2 letter - nothing good to say about them)
 4. Concerns (2 letter - nothing bad to say about them)
 5. Exhortation
 6. Promise to the Overcomer
 7. Close: "He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches."



EPHESUS

- Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.
- They are too busy on the business of the King, to have any time for the King (Example: Luke 10:38-40)

1. Name of the Church → Ephesus
2. Title of Christ Chosen → Rev. 2:1
3. Commendation → Rev. 2:2-3
4. Concerns → Rev. 2:4
5. Exhortation → Rev. 2:5-6
6. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”
→ Rev. 2:7
7. Promise to the Overcomer → Rev. 2:7



SMYRNA

¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

1. Name of the Church - Smyrna
2. Title of Christ Chosen – Rev. 2:8
3. Commendation - Rev. 2:9
4. Concerns – no concerns
5. Exhortation - Rev. 2:10
6. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.” - Rev. 2:11
7. Promise to the Overcomer - Rev. 2:11



PERGAMOS

But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. ¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

1. Name of the Church - Pergamos
2. Title of Christ Chosen – Rev. 2:12
3. Commendation - Rev. 2:13
4. Concerns – Rev. 2:14
5. Exhortation - Rev. 2:15
6. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.” - Rev. 2:17
7. Promise to the Overcomer - Rev. 2:17



THYATIRA

Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow^[c] that woman^[d] Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce^[e] My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. ²¹ And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.^[f] ²² Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their^[g] deeds.

1. Name of the Church – Thyatira
2. Title of Christ Chosen – Rev. 2:18
3. Commendation - Rev. 2:19
4. Concerns – Rev. 2:20-23
5. Exhortation - Rev. 2:24-25
6. Promise to the Overcomer - Rev. 2:26-28
7. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.” - Rev. 2:29



SARDIS

These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. ² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. ^[a] ³ Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

1. Name of the Church – Sardis
2. Title of Christ Chosen – Rev. 3:1
3. Commendation -
4. Concerns – Rev. 3:2-4
5. Exhortation - Rev. 3:4
6. Promise to the Overcomer - Rev. 2:5
7. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.” - Rev. 3:6



PHILADELPHIA

¹⁰ Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ Behold, ^[e] I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. ¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. 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 *I will write on him* My new name.

1. Name of the Church – **Philadelphia**
2. Title of Christ Chosen – Rev. 3:7
3. Commendation – 8-9
4. Concerns – NO
5. Exhortation - Rev. 3:10-11
6. Promise to the Overcomer - Rev. 2:12
7. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.” - Rev. 3:13



LAODICEA







HOT SPRINGS AT HIERAPOLIS





HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- ~2000 BC originally founded by the Ionians as a relatively small town of Diospolis
- ~19th century BC: the Hittites added it to their expanding empire
- ~900 BC: captured by the Phrygians and soon afterwards by the Lydians; renamed Rhoas
- 250 BC: it was taken by the Syrian Antiochus II rebuilt the town and renamed it after his wife, Laodice
- 190 BC it became part of the Kingdom of Pergamos and ultimately passed into the hands of the Roman Empire
- According to Josephus, there was a large Jewish colony there



ECONOMY

- It was a city of merchants, bankers, and gold refiners: At the junction of roads leading from Ephesus and Smyrna, much wealth flowed through Laodicea
 - Caravan trade as far east as the Yellow River in Punjab by the China Sea
 - Cicero held court there and did his banking there
- When earthquake destroyed in 62 AD, it was rebuilt by its wealthy citizens, without help from Rome (Tacitus, Annals 14:27)



PROSPEROUS NEUTRALITY

- Since it was never militarily defensible: its posture was one of compromise
- A highly successful commercial and financial center, remains of a theatre, aqueducts, baths, gymnasium and stadium still survive to testify of its former luxury



PRINCIPAL PRODUCTS

- **Textile manufacturing:** Laodicea was known for the quality of black wool produced from a particular strain of sheep bred in the Lycus valley and for the cloth and carpets manufactured from it
- **A famous school of medicine** was there, known especially for an ophthalmic ointement
 - **A mixture of oil and the collyrium powder**
 - **Described by Aristotle as “Phrygian powder”**



WATER SUPPLY

- Laodicea was near Hierapolis, a 6 miles away, renowned for its hot springs
- Laodicea stood midway between the hot springs of Hierapolis and the cold waters of Colossae
 - Its was fed by an aqueduct from Hierapolis, the water being lukewarm when it arrived



CHURCH HISTORY

- Possibly founded by Epaphras (Col. 4:12-14)
- Colossians 4:12-14
- ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. ¹³ I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.
- Paul addressed a letter to it which may have been circular letter which has been preserved as the Epistle to the Ephesians (Col. 4:16)
- Paul's first letter to Timothy was written by him from Laodicea (1 Tim. 6:21)
- There is a tradition that Archippus had become the bishop of Laodicea. Some 30 years earlier Paul had warned Archippus (thought by some to have been the son of Philemon) to be more diligent in fulfilling his ministry (Col. 2:1; 4:16-17)
 - It may have been his weakness which contributed to the spiritual condition of the church here



LETTER TO LAODICEA

- ¹⁴ “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans^[f] write,
- Lao = people
- Diceans = rulers

- “Rule by the people”
- Who is suppose to be ruling the church?



TITLE OF CHRIST

- ¹⁴ “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans^[f] write,
- ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:



FOUNDATIONAL CHARACTER

- Amen = true; verily (Rev. 1:6,7,18 | Isaiah 65:16 | John 14:6 | 1 Cor. 1:18-22)
- “Beginning of creation of God”
 - Beginning, first origin, first cause; ruling power, authority, ruler
 - Used of rank and honor
 - (Unique expression here and Col 1:15)
 - ¹⁵The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.
- Paul specifically instructed that Colossae and Laodicea exchange epistles. A rebuttal to the gnostic errors beginning to make their appearance in the Lycus valley



COMMENDATION

- No Commendation



CONCERNS:

- ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, ^[g] I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked



LORD, LORD

- Matthew 7
- ²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.
- ²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?
- ²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.



EXHORTATION

- ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 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 dine with him, and he with Me.



THE REMEDIES PROPOSED

- Their blindness and nakedness are not incurable:
- The ultimate Refiner offers His “Gold”: (Ps. 19:7-11; 12:16; cf. 1 Cor. 3:12)
- The Bridegroom offers His covering: White raiment, vs. glossy (raven colored) black wool
- The Great Physician offers His remedy to really open their eyes – the Holy Spirit



EXHORTATION

- 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 dine with him, and he with Me.
- To the Laodicea – Jesus is outside (not to the church by to the individual)



PROMISE TO THE OVERCOMER:

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



CLOSING

- ⁶ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
- 7 times in Revelation + 7 times in the Gospels
 - Matt. 11:15, 13:9, 43, Mark 4:23, 7:16, Luke 8:8, 14:35
- To the church of Philadelphia
- To the Your church
- To you individual as a body of the church



DESIGN TALLY

Name	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamos	Thyarira	Sardis	Philadelph ia	Laodicea
Title	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comendati on	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Concern	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Exhortation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Promise to the overcomer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Closing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

PROPHETIC PROFILE

- Group A (promises are Post-Scripted)
 - Ephesus → Devotion, not just doctrine
 - Smyrna → Endure Persecution
 - Pergamos → Stand fast against world (Purify Ambassadorship)
- Group B (Promises are in the body of the letter) – Explicit References To His Second Coming
 - Thyatra → Pagan Practice (Sunday, Easter, ...)
 - Sardis → Watchfulness, Diligence
 - Philadelphia → Missionary outreach
 - Laodicea → Apostate Church
- Thyatira – Repent or - you will be in The Great Tribulation
- Sardis – Repent - I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life
- Philadelphia – Kept My command - keep you from the hour of trial
- Laodicea – Repent - sit with Me on My throne



AN INSCRIPTION ON A CATHEDRAL IN LUBECK, GERMANY

- Thus speaketh Christ our Lord to us:
- Ye call Me Master and obey Me not. | Ye call Me Light and see Me not.
- Ye call Me Way and walk Me not. | Ye call Me Life and choose Me not.
- Ye call Me Wise and follow Me not. | Ye call Me Fair and love Me not.
- Ye call Me Rich and ask Me not. | Ye call Me Eternal and seek Me not.
- Ye call Me Noble and serve Me not. | Ye call Me Gracious and trust Me not.
- Ye call Me Might and honor Me not. | Ye call Me just and fear Me not.
- If I condemn you, blame Me not.



ADMONITORY (TO ALL CHURCHES)

- Application to All Churches
 - Ephesus → Devotion, not just doctrine
 - Smyrna → Endure Persecution
 - Pergamos → Stand fast against world (Purify Ambassadorship)
 - Thyatra → Abandon Pagan Practice (Sunday, Easter, ...)
 - Sardis → Watchfulness, Diligence
 - Philadelphia → Missionary outreach
 - Laodicea → Prosperous compromise



PERSONAL (HOMILETICS)

- Personal Application
 - Ephesus → Neglected Priorities
 - Smyrna → Satanic Opposition
 - Pergamos → Spiritual Compromise
 - Thyatra → Flee Pagan Practice (Sunday, Easter, ...)
 - Sardis → Watchfulness, Diligence
 - Philadelphia → Loyal Ambassadorship
 - Laodicea → Repent & be committed



PROMISES TO THE OVERCOMER

- Application to All Churches/Person
 - Ephesus → Eat of Tree of Life
 - Smyrna → Not hurt of 2nd death
 - Pergamos → Manna, Stone, Name
 - Thyatra → Power over nations
 - Sardis → Walk with Him in white, Name not blotted out
 - Philadelphia → Pillar in temple, name of God, name of His city, new name
 - Laodicea → sit with Me on My throne



WHO IS THE “OVERCOMER”

- ⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our^[a] faith. ⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4-5)
- Overcomer promises are to the people of faith



PROPHETIC PROFILE?

- Ephesus - Apostolic Church? (**The Loveless Church**)
 - Knew the word, and on a mission but left their first love
 - Being too busy on the business of the King rather than for the King Himself
- Smyrna - Persecuted Church? (**The Persecuted Church**)
 - that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation
 - They ambassadorship was tested

Pergamos – The Marriage Church (**The Compromising Church**)
you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith
Compromising with the world

Thyatira – The Medieval Church? (**The Corrupt Church**)

- I know your works, love, service, faith, ^[b] and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first
- Allowing what is evil (immorality) in the church



PROPHETIC PROFILE?

- Sardis – Has a name but of no significance (**The Dead Church**)
 - “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
 - Be Watchful, Strengthen
- Philadelphia – Missionary Church (**The Faithful Church**)
 - I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; ^[a] for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.
 - Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.
- Laodicea – Prosperous Compromise (**The Lukewarm Church**)
 - that you are neither cold nor hot
 - As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten
 - Behold, I stand at the door and knock
 - sit with Me on My throne



NEXT READ CHAPTER 2 & 3

- Outline the Letter

1. Name of the Church
2. Title of Christ Chosen
3. Commendation
4. Concerns
5. Exhortation
6. Promise to the Overcomer
7. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”

