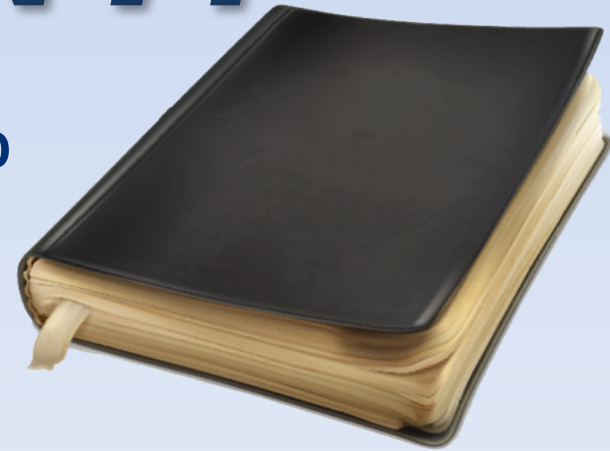


***REVELATION
MADE
RELEVANT!***

FRIDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY WITH FR. WARD



Introduction

BOOK OF REVELATION

- The book of Revelation contains seven “letters” or messages from Jesus.
- These letters are addressed to churches in seven important cities in the Roman province of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).

City	Revelation
Ephesus	2:1–7
Smyrna	2:8–11
Pergamum	2:12–17
Thyatira	2:18–29
Sardis	3:1–6
Philadelphia	3:7–13
Laodicea	3:14–22





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"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL" EXODUS 20:15

Sevenfold Outline

- The recipient church is first identified with the words, “*To the angel of the church in _____ write,*”
- The speaker (Jesus Christ) is mentioned with a reference to one of His identifying features revealed in chapter 1:12-16 in John vision.
- An assessment of the church’s current state is given by the One (Christ) who knows all.



Sevenfold Outline

- A verdict is pronounced on the church's condition.
- Jesus issues a command to correct and/or encourage the congregation.
- There is then the same general exhortation "*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches,*" which may be at the end or the second last from the end of the message.
- Finally, there is a victor's promise of reward to those who overcome.



Philadelphia

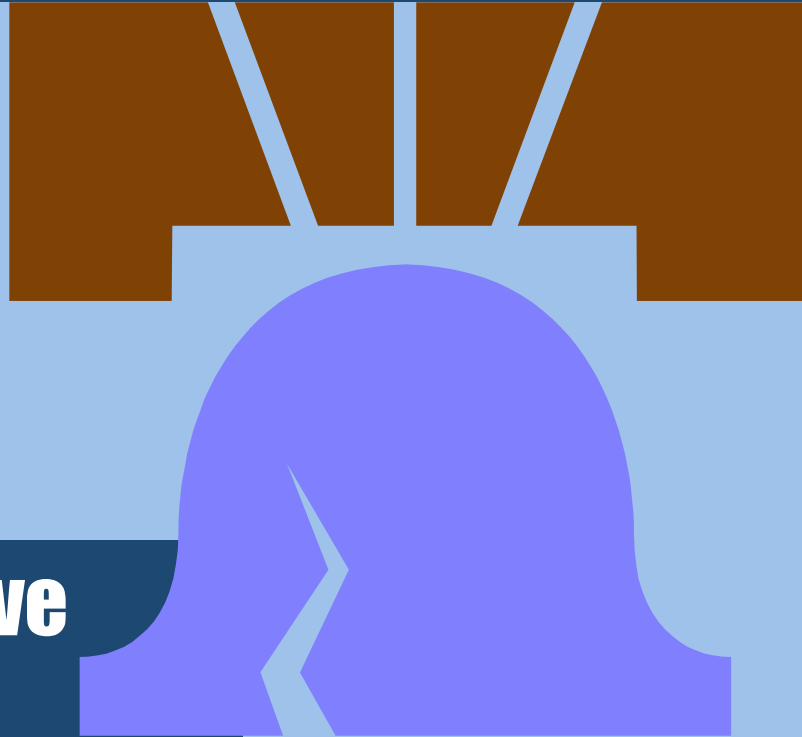
REVELATION 3:7-13



PHILADELPHIA!!! (3:7-13)

City of brotherly love

(Everyone says:
“yeah, right!?”)



Philadelphia

BACKGROUND

- Established by King Attalus II 200 years earlier.
- Because of Attalus' s loyalty to his brother, King Eumenes II he earned the nickname *Philadelphus*, which means the person who loves his brother.
- *Philadelphia*, then, is the city of brotherly love.



Attalus

Philadelphia

BACKGROUND

- Philadelphia was a successful commercial center.
- Situated at the entrance of a particularly fertile valley.
- Known for its many temples and religious festivals.



Ruins in Philadelphia
(Alasehir, Turkey)

Philadelphia

BACKGROUND

- Located close to an active volcanic region.
- Completely destroyed by an earthquake in AD 17, but eventually rebuilt.



Ruins in Philadelphia
(Alasehir, Turkey)

Philadelphia

JESUS

- “Holy” refers to God or to something of God.
- Unlike the Roman emperors who were false gods, Jesus is the only one worthy of worship and to be judge of the whole world.

“These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David.”

—REVELATION 3:7

Philadelphia

JESUS

- “True” could also mean “faithful,” which is the name of the rider on the white horse (19:11).
- Jesus, who expects faithfulness from the seven churches, is the steadfast one who never changes.

“These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David.”

—REVELATION 3:7

Philadelphia

JESUS

- “The key of David” is an allusion to Isaiah 22:22.
- Jesus is from the line of David, and just as Jesus holds “the keys of death and Hades” (Rev. 1:18), he also holds the answer for eternal life.



“I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.” —ISAIAH 22:22

Philadelphia

PRAISE

- In spite of not having a loud voice in the community, the church remained faithful and true to Christ.
- God commends them for having obeyed his “command to endure patiently” (3:10).
- Like all the churches at the time, they also experienced persecution.

Philadelphia

CHALLENGE

- *None*
- The Lord will spare them from either suffering or being tested by what will come.

“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world.”

—REVELATION 3:10

Philadelphia

CHALLENGE

- He encourages them to “hold on to” the strength they have, so they will win the “crown” of eternal life.

“I am coming soon.
Hold on to what you
have, so that no one
will take your crown.”

—REVELATION 3:11

Philadelphia

CHALLENGE

- Becoming a pillar, a symbol of permanence and stability, is a particular encouragement for believers in Philadelphia because they suffered earthquakes.



“The one who is victorious
I will make a pillar in the
temple of my God.”

—REVELATION 3:12

Solomon's temple had pillars (Ex 27:10-17; 1 Kgs 7:2-6, 15-22)



**So will the end-time Temple,
according to Ezekiel (40:9-41:3)**



Philadelphia

Strength	Faithful to the word / True to Jesus' name
Fault	None: Despite their relative weakness, they are strong because they remain faithful to God.
Promise	Will become a pillar in God's temple, forever in his presence, and will have God's name written on them, showing ownership.

God commends endurance which
shows trust in him.

*What are you facing now that
requires from you patience and
endurance?*

Laodicea

REVELATION 3:14-22



† Cities of the seven churches
— Major travel route

Laodicea

BACKGROUND

- Laodicea was a strategic city located at the crossroads of two crucial trading routes.
- It was a prosperous commercial center.



Ruins in Laodicea (near Denizli, Turkey)

Laodicea the city

- 🌿 **In Phrygia' s Lycus Valley, 10 miles W. of Colosse**
- 🌿 **6 miles S. of Hierapolis (Col 4:13)**



Colossae

Laodicea

BACKGROUND

- Known for:
 - Banking
 - Textile industry
(especially black wool)
 - School of ophthalmology
(noted for an eye salve it developed)

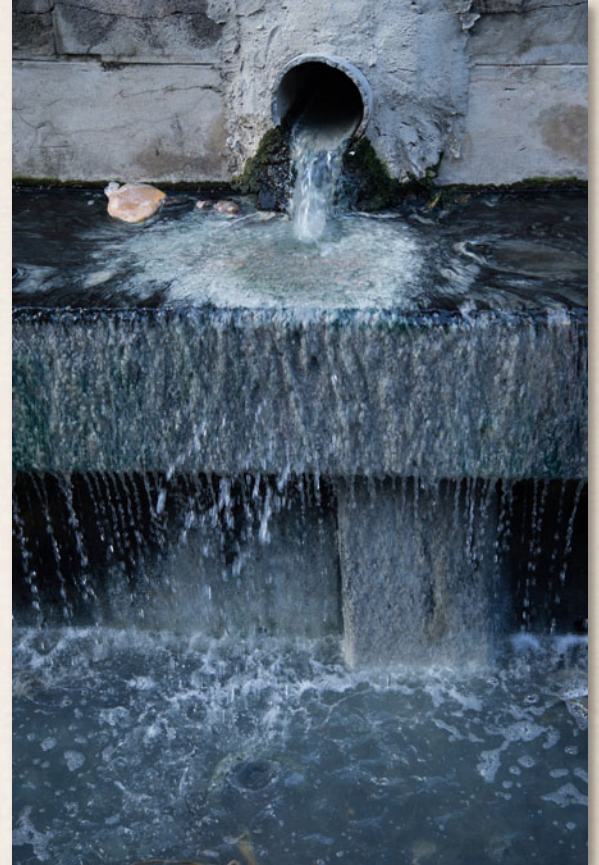


Ruins in Laodicea (near Denizli, Turkey)

Laodicea

BACKGROUND

- The city lacked water, so it had an aqueduct built to bring in water.
- Financially strong, even able to rebuild without imperial aid when destroyed by an earthquake in AD 60.



Laodicea' s water supply (3:15-16)

- Had a bad reputation
- Strabo says it was full of sediment
- his only *nice* comment is that it wasn' t as bad as the water in Hierapolis



Herod' s aqueduct at Caesarea

Despite their claims to self-sufficiency, they had to pipe in water

- ☞ **Aqueduct from S. *mainly* underground**
- ☞ **but nearer the city, via stone barrel pipes**
- ☞ **vulnerable to any besieger**
- ☞ **A city with no internal water supply was
absolutely defenseless in siege**

Hot water was considered useful for bathing

- 👉 **Hot springs were thought therapeutic**
- 👉 **Public baths were artificially heated**
- 👉 **Hot water was also drunk (like tea) at banquets**
- 👉 **Cold water was normally preferred for drinking**
- 👉 **But lukewarm water was considered disgusting**



There was a large Jewish community in Phrygia

- ☞ **So Acts 13-14**
- ☞ **But evidence may suggest that it was very hellenized**
- ☞ **I.e., very assimilated to the larger culture**
- ☞ **The messianic community proved to be no less capable of such assimilation!**



Synagogue zodiac
with Helios in middle

Laodicea prided itself on its self-sufficiency

- ☞ **It was a wealthy banking center**
- ☞ **It had grown especially prosperous under the Flavians (Domitian's family)**
- ☞ **Capital of the Cibyatic convention, which included at least 25 towns**



First Merchants of
Laodicea, Inc.

There was a large Jewish community in Phrygia

- 👉 **So Acts 13-14**
- 👉 **But evidence may suggest that it was very hellenized**
- 👉 **I.e., very assimilated to the larger culture**
- 👉 **The messianic community proved to be no less capable of such assimilation!**



Synagogue zodiac
with Helios in middle

They were arrogant about their wealth

- ☞ After the earthquake in A.D. 60, refused the emperor's federal disaster relief funds
- ☞ “We can rebuild our city ourselves, thank you!”
- ☞ How's *that* for an attitude?



8th-century earthquake remains
from Bethshean

They even had their own games

- 👉 **Gladiatorial games as early as 50 BC**
- 👉 **their own theater**
- 👉 **civic rivalry, vying with Phrygian Antioch**



Colosseum, built A.D. 80, now looking slightly used

Laodicea

JESUS

- “Amen” likely means “faithfulness, trustworthiness.”
- The blessings upon the earth and the swearing of an oath have validity only because they are made effective by God’s trustworthiness.

Revelation 3:14

“These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.”

Isaiah 65:16

“Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the one true God; whoever takes an oath in the land will swear by the one true God.”

Laodicea

JESUS

- The description in Revelation 3:14 might refer to Isaiah 65:16 where God's name is mentioned as being used with blessings and oaths.

Revelation 3:14

“These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.”

Isaiah 65:16

“Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the one true God; whoever takes an oath in the land will swear by the one true God.”

Laodicea

JESUS

- The expression “the faithful and true witness” is similar to the “holy and true” used for Philadelphia (3:7).
- Jesus Christ is “the faithful witness” because he never changes (1:5).

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday
and today and forever.”

—HEBREWS 13:8

Laodicea

PRAISE

- This is the only church that does not receive a positive message.

Laodicea

CHALLENGE

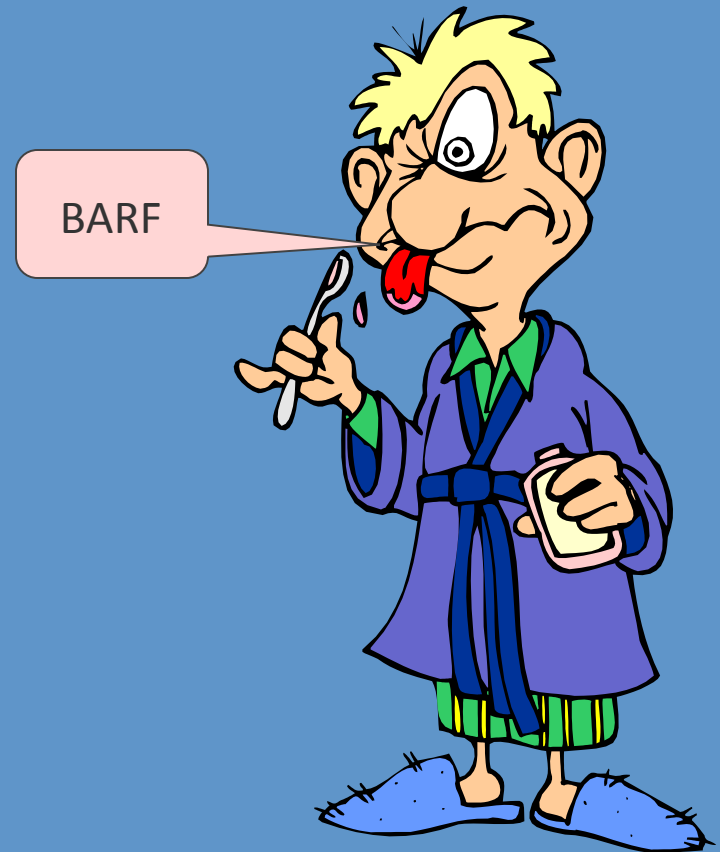
- *Losing Identity in Christ*
- In previous messages Jesus' presence brings comfort, but here it is bad news because the church is lukewarm.



“So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” —REVELATION 3:16

Jesus is saying to the Laodicean believers:

- ☹️ You make me sick.
- ☹️ You make me want to **PUKE**
- ☹️ God doesn't like our arrogant self-sufficiency
- ☹️ He is near the weak, the broken, the humble



Laodicea

CHALLENGE

- The church has little, if anything, to offer for spiritual encouragement, refreshment, or growth because it has lost its focus on Jesus.



“So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” —REVELATION 3:16

Laodicea

CHALLENGE

- The city was located close to a volcanic region.
- Hierapolis in the north had hot water from its many hot springs, which were considered medicinal.
- Colossae in the east had cool, refreshing waters that made the entire valley fertile.



Mineral hot springs in
Turkey

Laodicea

CHALLENGE

- Their waters were part of their identity as cities.
- Laodicea, on the contrary, was neither hot nor cold.
- The church in Laodicea, like the city's waters, lacked an identity.
- Its zeal and love for God had become lukewarm.



Mineral hot springs in
Turkey

Laodicea

CHALLENGE

- They're preoccupied with acquiring wealth and prestige.
- The church shows no dependence on God.
- True riches come only from God, who can clothe them in white and soothe and open their eyes so that they see what is truly important (3:18).



God chooses the poor and broken

3:17-18: 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, ... I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich

🐦 Compare Babylon's gold decorations with New Jerusalem's gold substance

I'm WAY cool



We don't need eyesalve! or do we?

- 👉 But you do not realize that you are ... blind ... I counsel you to buy from me ... salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.
- 👉 **Laodicea had its own medical school**
- 👉 **eye salve was made from Phrygian powder**
- 👉 **Laodicea honored Apollo and Asclepius**



Ha, I can see fine without these glasses, Elouise. Oh, Craig, sorry, I thought you were Elouise

Laodicea

JESUS

- The church must recognize that it is spiritually bankrupt and has pushed Jesus out the door!

“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.”



Laodicea

JESUS

- Jesus is there, however, knocking on the door, making his presence available to the church.

“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.”

—REVELATION 3:20



Laodicea

Strength	None
Fault	Has lost its identity: Its self-sufficiency and search for wealth has made it lose its love, faithfulness, and direct relationship with Jesus, which are central in the identity of a Christian church.
Promise	Will sit next to Jesus on his throne.

*What helps you keep your focus
on Christ during the good and the
bad times in your life?*

Jesus said to his disciples: “Apart from me you can do nothing.” —JOHN 15:5

Our lives, individual and in our churches, must reflect our connection to the risen Christ. His example of love, service, humility, sacrifice, and obedience must shape our lives.

What do you need to reevaluate in your life in light of Jesus' example?