

The Revelation Chronologically Arranged

The Seven Churches — Chapters 2–3

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The Seven Churches

In chapters two and three He appraises, warns and counsels these seven churches, which are also typical of the succeeding seven stages of the professing church in its entire course throughout this church age. "Judgment must begin at the house of God." He tells them at Ephesus how He misses their former love and zeal such as was seen in Acts 4:32, 33. The church had fallen. Next, to the Smyrnans, Christ gives strong encouragement in view of the terrible persecutions and death many would soon have to endure. He then stoutly rebukes Pergamos for being seduced into alliance with the world where Satan reigns. Like Balaam's snare of old, Constantine lured the church into settling down in ease with the pagan world! This is followed by Thyatira suffering that lewd woman Jezebel to teach and corrupt by idolatry and illicit intercourse with the world! Here it is not difficult to recognize this monstrous religious system which has grown out of "the depths of Satan."

Next, Protestant Sardis appears with its vast but dead profession and receives His solemn warning that He will come upon it as a thief, the same as He will come in judgment upon the world! Unpretentious Philadelphia receives only the Lord's commendation because He was their sole delight and blessed hope. His name, His Word and His love were precious, filling them with brotherly love. All they possessed was devoted to Him and making Him known. Nevertheless they were warned to "hold fast" to all this their precious portion. Have the most highly privileged with Philadelphian truth done so?

At the last Christ is outside the door of heartless Laodicea. They had become full of themselves, yet blind to their poverty and end. This is the last state of the professing church on earth after the Philadelphian grace and truth had been so richly enjoyed.

Laodicea is Christendom become wholly leavened and about to be rejected. At this point it is important to see what Laodicea becomes! Papal Rome's domineering overtures to gullible lifeless Protestantism are already finding increasing response to join the great ecumenical union which will become "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots" (17:5). "Come out of her, My people" (18:4). Self-pleasing, worldliness, prosperity and ecumenical appeals are the great snares of our day.