**Eternal Issues, Lesson 12**

NT:1577

<START GREEK>e)kklhsi/a <END GREEK>

Ekklesia (ek-klay-see'-ah);

from a compound of NT:1537 and a derivative of NT:2564; **a calling out**

“called out ones”

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Matt 22:14

"For many are called, but few are chosen."

NASU

*chirche* and *cirice* meaning “circle”

Greek phrase *kuriake oikia*, meaning “lord’s house”

Origin of the word “church” comes from *chirche* and *cirice ….* Literally means a circle, originated from pagan worship where they came together in a circle to worship and offer incense, etc. to pagan gods.

Also from the Greek phrase *kuriake oikia*, meaning “lord’s house”. This literally links to the lord Mithras, the “sun-god”, worshipped by Constantine, and millions over the centuries. The Greek Christians of Constantinople adopted this word and it spread to the Goths, and onto the Anglo-Saxons.

“’We have no temples or altars.’ This statement, referring to Christians, comes from the pen of the apologist Minicus Felix, c200, and all evidence supports its accuracy. Throughout at least the first two centuries there were no church buildings as such.” -- The Early Christian Church, J.G. Davies

“When the church was very young, it had no buildings. Let us begin with that striking fact. That the church had no buildings is the most noticeable of the points of difference between the church of the early days and the church of today. In the minds of most people today, “church” means first a building, probably something else second; but seldom does “the church” stand for anything other than a building. Yet here is the fact that which we start: the early church possessed no buildings and carried on its work for a great many ears without erecting any.” -- When the Church was Very Young, Ernest Loosley

“Constantine (280-337), the Roman Emperor and his mother, Empress Helena, built many pagan temples. After his conversion in 313, he continued his custom of building, but this time it was “Christian” temples. They simply went from worshiping the pagan gods to the memorializing the dead saints. Many pagan buildings were later converted to churches. This was really the official beginning of recognizing buildings as churches.” -- The Origin of the Word “church”, Andy Zoppelt

While *kuriake oikia* can be traced back to the early 300s A.D. and used consistently since then, it’s important to note the Roman emperor Constantine never reneged his allegiance to Mithras the sun-god, and continued to force worship of Mithras, while cleverly mixing pagan worship with Christianity, making it seem he was promoting Christianity.

*Sol Mithras Deus Invictus* was quite literally the house of the lord Mithras, though Constantine caused people to serve in this under the pretense of it being Christianity.Mithras was a sun-god, with many other names such as Baal or Bel….

“…the use of the word “church instead of ‘assembly’ or ‘congregation’ came from those who had a bias towards a hierarchical and unscriptural form of church government.”

“…there is no biblical basis for a church hierarchy outside the local church or local assembly of believers. The only “ekklesia” the New Testament knows is a local assembly of believers.”

--The Translation of the Greek Word “Ekklesia” as “church” in the English Bible and its Ramifications, Cooper P. Abrams, III

Rev 1:11 KJV

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What you see, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches [ekklesia] which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Rev 2:1 KJV

Unto the angel of the church [called out ones] of Ephesus write;

The Seven Churches of Revelation 2-3 Picture Slide

Rev. 1:10-11 slide

Map slide here

The Post Road

Though there were three other cities nearby to whom Paul had written epistles (Thessalonica, Philippi and Colosse), they were not included because they were not on a Post Road beginning in Ephesus.

As a result, they could not give us a timed picture of conditions in the Church during the Christian era.

*The Post Road began in Ephesus and continued on to the various cities in the order given in Revelation 2-3.* From “Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.” *And that exactly matches the spiritual condition of Church during the Christian era.*

Map slide here

Each of the seven churches has….

* Name
* Description/character
* Commendation
* Reproof
* Counsel
* Promise

Each church existed in the time of John’s writing, and ALSO represents a future church application.

Only two of the actual cities represented by these churches still exist today: Smyrna and Philadelphia, ironically, the only two churches that were given no reproof.

* Located in most important area of Roman Empire 1-3 centuries
* Geography point of east/west meeting point
* Extremely rich land, beautiful scenery
* Made great during the time of Alexander the Great

*There were many outstanding churches in the Roman Empire, but these seven outstanding churches were chosen for several reasons, one of which was that they were located in probably the most important area of the Roman Empire during the first, second, and even third centuries. The area was important because it was where East and West met. By 2000 B.C. there was a civilization along the coast of Asia Minor (the modern west coast of Turkey). It is a very beautiful area… Not only is it beautiful, but some of the richest land is there. In ancient times the heart of the great Hittite nation was located there. Ephesus was founded about 2000 B. C. by the Hittites, as was Smyrna (modern Izmir). Pergamum obviously was founded later, and then Thyatira and Sardis even later, and they were made great during the time of Alexander the Great. The Anatolian civilization met the Greek civilization there. You can always tell the difference because the gods of the Anatolians (a more primitive people) were beasts, whereas the gods of the Greeks were projections and enlargements of human beings.*

Source: J. Vernon McGee <http://ldolphin.org/cleanpages/rev02.html>

Unto the angel of the church of **Ephesus** write; These things saith he that holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2 I know your works, and your labour, and your patience, and how you cannot bear them which are evil: and you have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars:

3 And have borne, and have patience, and for my name's sake have laboured, and have not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against you, because you have left you first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence you art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove you candlestick out of his place, except you repent.

6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

EPHESUS “desirable”

* Represents the “apostolic church”
* Time period: first century A.D.
* Chief city of the province of Asia
* Population about 200,000
* Beautiful city, called “Vanity Fair of Asia” and the “Light of Asia”
* Religious and commercial center of entire area, influenced both East and West Europe and Asia
* Harbor Boulevard, all white marble
* 20,000 seat theater
* 100,000 seat amphitheater
* Up to two million gathered in Ephesus at given times
* Paul’s ministered here, considered the place of his greatest ministry by some
* John pastored here

***EPHESUS:*** *Ephesus was not only a beautiful city, it was the chief city of the province of Asia. It was called "the Vanity Fair of Asia." Pliny called it "the Light of Asia." It was both the religious and commercial center of that entire area which influenced both East and West Asia and Europe. When Paul landed at the harbor in Ephesus, he looked down Harbor Boulevard, all in white marble. As he moved toward the center of the city, he saw all sorts of lovely buildings, temples, and gift shops. There was a large market on his right as he went up the boulevard, and ahead of him on the side of a mountain was a theater that seated twenty thousand people. Off to his left was the great amphitheater that seated over one hundred thousand people. At times there were as many as one to two million people gathered in Ephesus. It was here that Paul had his greatest ministry, and it was here that John later became pastor.*

Source: J. Vernon McGee <http://ldolphin.org/cleanpages/rev02.html>

* City formed around temple of Diana
* Seat of Diana was in this city, (considered the “mother of gods”, goddess of fertility)
* Temple of Diana later known as one of the wonders of the ancient world
* Largest Greek temple ever constructed
* 100+ columns 56-feet high, 36 were hand-carved
* Doors: cypress wood, columns & walls: Parian marble, staircase: carved from one vine from Cyprus
* Wealthy, prosperous city
* Temple served as the bank of Asia, depository of vast sums of money
* Art gallery displayed masterpieces
* Diana’s temple was FOUR TIMES larger than the Parthenon at Athens
* Temple destroyed by Goths in A.D. 256

*This city was first formed around the temple of Diana by the Anatolians who worshiped Diana. The first temple was a wooden structure, built in a low place very near the ocean in fact, the waters lapped at the very base. In time, the Cayster and the little Maeander River brought down so much silt that, by the time of Alexander the Great, it had filled in around the temple. I have never seen any country that washes as much as that valley washes. The river itself is as thick as soup because it is carrying so much soil deposit. When Alexander took the city (by the way, the temple burned on the night Alexander was born), he turned it over to one of his generals, Lysimachus. Because the silt was coming and the harbor was filling up, Lysimachus moved the people to a higher location, and that is where the ruins of the city can be seen today. It is the city which was there when Paul came.*

*At the site of the old temple, a foundation of charcoal and skins was laid over this low, marshy place, and Alexander the Great led in the construction of a new temple of Diana which became one of the wonders of the ancient world. It was the largest Greek temple ever constructed. In it were over one hundred external columns about fifty-six feet in height, of which thirty-six were hand carved. The doors were of cypress wood; columns and walls were of Parian marble; the staircase was carved out of one vine from Cyprus.*

*The temple served as the bank of Asia and was the depository of vast sums of money. It was an art gallery displaying the masterpieces of Praxiteles, Phidias, Scopas, and Polycletus, Apelles' famous painting of Alexander was there. Behind a purple curtain was the lewd and crude image of Diana, the goddess of fertility. She was many-breasted, carried a club in one hand and a trident in the other. Horrible is Diana of the Ephesians could be accurately substituted for "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Diana was the most sacred idol of heathenism. Her temple was four times larger than the Parthenon at Athens, and it was finally destroyed by the Goths in A.D. 256. Of course, it was standing in Paul's day. If you want to see something of the magnificence of the place, go to Istanbul, to the Hagia Sophia. Those beautiful green columns that are there were taken out of the temple of Diana by Justinian when he built Hagia Sophia. Seeing only these columns gives us some conception of the beauty of the temple of Diana.*

*Around the temple of Diana were performed the grossest forms of immorality. She was worshiped by probably more people than was any other idol. The worshipers indulged in the basest religious rites of sensuality and the wildest bacchanalian orgies that were excessive and vicious. And farther inland, the worship of Diana became nothing more than sex orgies, and her name was changed from Diana to Cybele. Paul came to Ephesus on his third missionary journey to begin a ministry. For two years the Word of God went out from the school of Tyrannus. Of this experience Paul wrote, "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Cor. 16:9). Later John, the "apostle of love" and the "son of thunder," came to Ephesus as a pastor. He was exiled to Patmos, then after about ten years of being exiled and imprisoned, he returned to Ephesus. The Basilica of Saint John, which is located on the highest point there, is built over the traditional burial spot of the apostle John.*

Source: J. Vernon McGee <http://ldolphin.org/cleanpages/rev02.html>

In Paul’s day, Ephesus was a harbor city. By 800 A.D. the river had deposited so much silt, it was no longer on a harbor. Today, Ephesus lies in ruins.

**EPHESUS**: First or Desirable

**Character/Commendation**: labour, patience, intolerance of evil, tested and tried false apostles, calling them liars, labored with patience and endurance for Christ, did not faint or give up; hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans

**Reproof**: Left your first love

**Counsel**: REPENT, do again your first works

**Warning**: will remove your candlestick! [church]

**Reward for overcomers**: eat of the tree of Life

**Time period represented**: first century A.D. [32 A.D.-100 A.D.]

Nicolaitans were a group/sect of gnostics that taught that the law of God did not apply because man is flesh and spirit, so what we do in the flesh is irrelevant.

Gnostics were people who were heavily influenced by Greek philosophy, especially Plato, and taught that salvation can be obtained through individual illumination and not through the person of Christ. Gnostics “people who knew”… knowledge elevated them to a superior class of beings….

The first century church was largely apostolic, laying foundations and building up believers. Their original love and zeal for God had waned some, and God warned this generation of believers to remember from where they had fallen, REPENT and return to its first love.

8 And unto the angel of the church in **Smyrna** write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9 I know you works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but you are rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which you shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days: be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.

11 He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death.

**SMYRNA “myrrh”**

* Represents the martyred church
* Modern day city: Izmir, Turkey
* Continuously inhabited since its founding
* Commercial center, large population
* Beautiful harbor, lovely city, called a “flower, an ornament, the crown of Asia”
* Acropolis located on Mount Pagos
* Acropolis encircled with flowers, hedge, and myrtle trees
* Temples to: Zeus, Cybele (Diana), Aprhodite, Apollo, Aesculapius
* Shrine to goddess Nemesis
* Theater, Odeum (music center), considered home of music, Stadium where Polycarp was martyred

***SMYRNA:*** *Smyrna is the martyr church, the church that suffered martyrdom for Christ. The word Smyrna means "myrrh" and carries the meaning of suffering.*

*The city of Smyrna is still in existence in our day. It has a Turkish name, Izmir, which may lead you astray, but it is the some city. It has been continuously inhabited from the time it was founded. It is a commercial city. …There is a tremendous population there. The modern city covers so much of the ruins of ancient Smyrna that you are apt to miss the beauty which was there.*

*I have taken some pictures of it and use them as slides in an illustrated message. I try to point out the beauty of that harbor. It is very large and one of the most beautiful harbors that, I have seen. In fact, Smyrna was one of the loveliest cities of Asia. It was called a flower, an ornament, and it has been called the crown of all Asia. The acropolis is located on Mount Pagos. In fact, the early city that goes back to about 2000 B.C., a Hittite city at that time, was built around the slope of Mount Pagos. Later Alexander the Great had a great deal to do with building it into the beautiful city that it became. There were wide boulevards along the slopes of Mount Pagos. Smyrna was called the crown city because, the acropolis was encircled with flowers, a hedge, and myrtle trees. The city was adorned with noble buildings and beautiful temples--a temple of Zeus, a temple of Cybele (Diana), a temple of Aphrodite, a temple of Apollo, and a temple of Aesculapius. Smyrna had a theater and an odeum, that is, a music center--it was the home of music. Also it had a stadium, and it was at that stadium that Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna and student of the apostle John, was martyred, burned alive in A.D. 155.*

***There were ten intense periods of persecution by ten Roman emperors*** *(these dates are approximate):*

Source: J. Vernon McGee <http://ldolphin.org/cleanpages/rev02.html>

Nero: 64-68 (Paul was beheaded under his reign)

Domitian: 95-96 (John was exiled during that period)

Trajan: 104-117 (Ignatius was burned at the stake)

Marcus Aurelius: 161-180 (Polycarp was martyred)

Severus: 200-211 Maximinius: 235-237 Decius: 250-253

Valerian: 257 -260

Aurelian: 270-275

Diocletian: 303-313 (the worst emperor of all).

**SMYRNA**: Myrrh, “sweet-smelling” <an aroma of sacrifice>

**Character/Commendation**: works, tribulation, and poverty, (but you are rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

**Reproof**: NONE

**Counsel**: Be faithful unto death

**Warning**: will have tribulation ten days (years)

**Reward for overcomers**: crown of life

**Time period represented**: 100 A.D.-313 A.D.

\*\*\*\* No reproof for this church! Persecution and suffering had cleansed it and only the true believers with a pure faith endured.

12 And to the angel of the church in **Pergamos** write; These things saith he which has the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know your works, and where you dwell, even where Satan's seat is: and you hold fast my name, and have not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells.

14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So you also have them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving he that receives it.

PERGAMOS “elevation”

* Turkey spells it “Pergamum”
* Great religious center (of paganism)
* Capital of the kingdom of Pergamum, Capital of the Roman province of Asia
* Built on a mountain
* Beautiful spot of Asia Minor, illustrious city
* Temple of Zeus and Ascelepius [serpent god], temple of Dionysius/Bacchus (goat god, god of wine)
* Acropolis
* Held the greatest library of the pagan world, later carted off to Alexandria by Cleopatra
* Great “healing center” of its day…

***PERGAMUM:*** *In our King James text this city is called Pergamos, but in Turkey it is called Pergamum...*

*The church in Pergamum is representative of church history during the period of approximately A.D. 314 to A.D. 590. I call it paganism unlimited because during this time the world entered into the church and it began to move away from the person of Christ.*

*[Location]: Izmir is the great city where tourists go because the airport and the hotels are there. You go about sixty-five miles south to reach Ephesus and about seventy miles north to reach Pergamum. These three were the royal cities, and they vied one with another. Smyrna (Izmir) was the great commercial center, Ephesus was the great political center, and Pergamum was the great religious center.*

*Pergamum was the capital of the kingdom of Pergamum. The acropolis still stands there, and the ruins of the great temples and the city are on top of it. It was a city in Mysia, labeled by Pliny "by far the most illustrious of Asia." It is one of the most beautiful spots in Asia Minor. Sir William Ramsey says that it was the one city that deserved to be called a royal city. In it was a temple built to Caesar Augustus, which made it a royal city. [making it the Capital of the Roman province of Asia]Augustus came to this beautiful area when the climate got cold in Rome. There was a healing spa there. It was not the commercial city that Smyrna was because it was not a seacoast town and it was off the great trade routes which came out of the Orient. But it was a fortified, stronghold city, built to withstand the enemy. It was built on a mountain, and the acropolis dominated the whole region of the broad plain of the Caicus. The original city was built between the two rivers which flowed into the Caicus and entirely surrounded this huge rocky hill, this promontory that stood out there alone. To visit it makes quite an impression. First you see that great mountain standing there, and you see the ruins on top.*

*Not only did Pergamum boast great temples, but it also had the greatest library of the pagan world. It was a library of over two hundred thousand volumes, In fact, the city got its name from the parchment (pergamena) which was used. This great library was the one which Mark Antony gave to his girl friend, Cleopatra, She lugged it off to Alexandria in Egypt, and that library was considered the, greatest library the world has ever seen--and it originally came from Pergamum.*

*If you are ever in Istanbul and go into Hagia Sophia, you will see there a great alabaster vase; taller than I am and a thing of beauty, which was brought there from Pergamum. Of course, the city of Pergamum was rifled and denuded by the enemy when they finally took the city and destroyed it.*

*… religion was big business in Pergamum... As you enter the gate of the city, you see that the first temple to your right is the imposing temple of Athena. Directly above it is the great library. You would see the great temple of Caesar Augustus and Hadrian's great temple, which covers quite a bit of territory. There are other things that are quite interesting. There is the great altar to Zeus with an idol on it near the palace of the king, …*

*There are two other areas which are especially outstanding. One of them is the temple of Dionysius, … which is beside the ruins of the theater there. … Dionysius is the same as Bacchus, the god of wine, the goat-god. He is depicted with horns, but with his upper part as a man and his lower part as a goat, with cloven feet and a tail.*

*… the other outstanding temple was of the god Asklepios. Down from that great promontory was the greatest hospital of the ancient world. It was the Mayo Clinic of that day. It was, first of all, a temple to Asklepios. If you are looking at the Greek god Asklepios, it is a man, but when you see the Anatolian or Oriental Asklepios, it is a serpent. [It is also known as a man instructing serpent, the symbol of a healing serpent wrapped around a pole.] …in Pergamum it was a serpent. …[at the] great marble pillar which stands like an obelisk now but apparently was a pillar in the temple of Asklepios. The construction of the temple was unusual in that it was round. There they used every means of healing imaginable, They used both medicine and psychology--and about everything else.*

*[It was built like this]: you go down long tunnels, and above are holes that look like air holes for ventilation but are not. As you walk along these tunnels, sexy voices come down through the holes, saying to you, "You are going to get well. You are going to feel better. You are going to be healed." … You go down to the hot baths where you are given a massage. There is a little theater there where they give plays of healing. If they haven't healed you by now, as a last resort they put you in that temple at night and turn loose the nonpoisonous snakes which crawl over you. … They have a back door where they take out the dead. … for seven hundred years it was a hospital that people came to from all over the world.*

Source: J. Vernon McGee <http://ldolphin.org/cleanpages/rev02.html>

* Proconsul of Pergamos held a double-edged sword
  + [proconsul is the appointed governor of a province appointed by the Roman Senate for year terms]
* Babylonian priesthood took the Dagon [fish god] Palladium Stone, vestments, title (*pontifex maximus*= bridge between heaven and earth), keys and mitre with them to Pergamum. This title is represented with the initials PM. You’ll find them behind Roman emperors names and Pope names.
* Antipas means “anti-pontiff”
* The last pontiff king of Pergamum was Attalus III. He bequeathed his title to Rome in 133 B.C.
* Christian emperor Gratian refused the title and robes of Pontifex Maximus, and it then went to the bishop of Rome in Damascus. [he was the first emperor to do this]

**PERGAMOS**: “elevation, power, elevation by marriage”

**Character/Commendation**: Dwell where satan’s seat is, hold fast to Christ’s name, and have not denied faith, … Antipas faithful martyr

**Reproof**: tolerance for doctrine of Balaam, idolatry, fornication, doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Compromise.

**Counsel**: Repent; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

**Warning**: none

**Reward for overcomers**: hidden manna, white stone, new name

**Time period represented**: 313 A.D.- 500ish A.D.

Negatives of Pergamos period of the Church:

* Compromise
* Religion

Positives of Pergamos period of Church:

* Faith

The negatives of this time period of the church can be summarized in many respects in a couple words: COMPROMISE and RELIGION

This is the period state religion really got its foothold.

The doctrine of Balaam is one of compromise. Constantine who headed this time period by professing to be a Christian but actually being a polytheist, married other religions and mixed Christianity in it. He commissioned his priest, Eusebius, to write/rewrite the word of God more to his liking (of compromise), in which Jesus was lessened. 50 copies were made of this.

The Nicolaitans are still here in all of their gnostic glory, and the tolerance of believers in this age brought confusion and compromise into the church.

However, the positives of this time period of the believers of God can be summarized in one word: FAITH.

Arian heresy (denies the deity of Christ) was birthed in this season, and Athanasius (from North Africa) arose a great defender of the faith and outspoken critic of Arianism. The Council of Nicea condemned Arianism because of Athanasisus’ work.

Another giant of faith was Augustine. He came against the Pelagian heresy which denies the corruption of human nature, original sin, and irresistible grace.

18 And to the angel of the church in **Thyatira** write; These things saith the Son of God, who has his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19 I know your works, and charity, and service, and faith, and your patience, and your works; and the last to be more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against you, because you suffer that woman Jezebel, which calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and they that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searches the reins and hearts: and I will give to every one of you according to your works.

24 But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

25 But that which you have already hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Thyatira “sweet savor of labor; sacrifice or contrition; satan’s teaching”

* Inland city built by Lysimachus and again by Seleucus I
* Chief route of Asia Minor travel and communication
* City of defense with an elite Roman guard
* Known city of textile industries
* Famous for its dyes, especially its purple and crimson dyes made from madder roots
* Lydia, Paul’s first European convert from Thyatira
* Temple of Apollo [sun-god] (aka: Tyrimnos) and another altar to a female goddess

*When you leave Pergamum, you begin to move inland. Thyatira and the remaining three churches are inland. Thyatira was situated in a very beautiful location. Sir William Ramsoy has written this about it: Thyatira was situated in the mouth of a long vale which extends north and south connecting the Hermus and Caicos Valleys. Down the vale a stream flows south to join the Lycus (near whose left bank Thyatira was situated), one of the chief tributaries of the Hermus, while its northern end is divided by only a ridge of small elevation from the Caicos Valley. The valleys of the two rivers, Hermus and Caicos, stretch east and west, opening down from the edge of the great central plateau of Anatolia towards the Aegean Sea. Nature has marked out this road, a very easy path, for the tide of communication which in all civilized times must have been large between the one valley and the other. The railway traverses its whole length now: in ancient times one of the chief routes of Asia Minor traversed it.*

*Thyatira was located in this long vale or pass. Thyatira was a city built for defense. However, most cities built for defense were situated upon an acropolis or a promontory and walls were put around them. But Thyatira was different. It stood in the middle of that vale on a very slight rising ground; its strength lay in the fact that Rome stationed the elite guard there.*

*Thyatira was built by Lysimachus and again by Seleucus I, the founder of the Seleucid dynasty, whose vast realm extended from the Hermus Valley to the Himalayas. It finally fell to the enemy. No city in that area was so completely destroyed and rebuilt as was this city. For this reason, it is very disappointing to visit the ruins of Thyatira in our day. They cover only one very small block.*

*This city became prosperous under the sponsorship of Vespasian, the Roman emperor. It was the headquarters for many ancient guilds:' the potters', tanners', weavers', robe makers', and dyers' guilds. It was the center of the dyeing industry. … Lydia, the seller of purple, who in Philippi became Paul's first convert in Europe, came from here (see Acts 16:14). That purple color spoken of is what we know today as "Turkey red"... The dye was taken from a plant that grows in that area.*

*Apollo, the sun god, was worshiped here as Tyrimnos.*

Source: J. Vernon McGee <http://ldolphin.org/cleanpages/rev02.html>

**THYATIRA**: “sweet savor of labor, sacrifice of contrition, satan’s teaching”

**Character/Commendation**: charity, and service, faith, patience, and your works; and the latest deeds more than the first

**Reproof**: tolerantes Jezebel, idolatry, immorality.

**Counsel**: Hold fast what you already have

**Warning**: those caught up in Jezebel doctrine will face great tribulation and children (offspring of those in this system) will be killed

**Reward for overcomers**: authority/power over the nations, morning star

**Time period represented**: 500ish A.D.-1000s (possibly 1500s)

This is considered the Middle Ages/Dark Ages, and also that for the church. Mary worship, idols in the church and bishops rise in power.

The first reference of Christ’s coming is in this letter to this church. “hold fast until I come”

Jezebel is the Phoenician princess who married the Israeli King Ahab. She led Israel into sun worship and brought in Baal priests and Ashtoreth. In this time period, the believers are confronted with a similar if not same blatant system of idolatry. Christ says plainly she did not repent of her idolatries, and He will cause His people who participate and tolerate such to face great tribulation unless they repent. Christ also indicates this Jezebel system will NOT repent, that it will bear children which God will kill. He indicates that within this system the “depths of satan” are known by some. “But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.”

588 A.D. the Bishop of Rome was appointed by Justinian decree as “the corrector of heretics”

3 And unto the angel of the church in **Sardis** write; These things saith he that has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know your works, that you have a name that you live, and 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.

3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore you shall not watch, I will come on you as a thief, and you shall not know what hour I will come upon you.

4 You have a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5 He that overcomes, 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.

6 He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

**SARDIS** “renewal”… “that which remains” …. “reformation”

* Capital of Lydia, very wealthy city
* Old part of the city was on a plateau, new city below it, making almost a double city
* Old part used as acropolis
* Center of the carpet industry
* Coins first minted here
* Temple of Diana/Cybele (moon goddess) and Apollo (sun god)
* Some say like the modern city of Prague
* City was impregnable but was taken twice without resistance by Cyrus and Antiochus

*Sardis was the capital of the great kingdom of Lydia and one of the oldest and most important cities of Asia Minor. It was located inland and built on a small, elevated plateau which rises sharply above the Hermus Valley. On all sides but one the rock walls are smooth, nearly perpendicular, and absolutely unscalable. The only access is on the southern side by a very steep and difficult path.*

*As the civilization and the commerce grew more complex, the high plateau became too small and a lower city was built chiefly on the west side of the original city. The old city was used as an acropolis. Actually this made it a double city, and it was caned by the plural noun Sardeis or Sardis. The plain was well watered by the Pactolus River. It became the center of the carpet industry and was noted for its wealth. Coins were first minted there. Its last prince was the wealthy Croesus who was captured by Cyrus. He was considered the wealthiest man in the world, and everything he touched seemed to turn to gold. Sardis was ruled by the Persians, by Alexander, by Antiochus the Great, and finally by the Romans. It was destroyed by an earthquake during the reign of Tiberius.*

*In our day the ruins of the temple of Cybele and also of the temple of Apollo can still be seen. It is one of the few double temples that you will find in the world. Cybele was known as Diana in Ephesus, but when you get inland, she becomes a nature goddess. She was the goddess of the moon, and Apollo was the god of the sun--they were brother and sister. This was a very corrupt worship, much like the worship of Diana at Ephesus.*

*Extensive excavations have taken place, at Sardis. They are rebuilding the gymnasium and also the synagogue. And they have dug up the Roman road that is there. [that the apostle Paul walked]*

Source: J. Vernon McGee <http://ldolphin.org/cleanpages/rev02.html>

Strangely, the city was impregnable, but taken twice without resistance by Cyrus and Antiochus

**SARDIS**: “renewal…that which remains…reformation”

**Character/Commendation**: a few names with undefiled garments, reputation of being alive

**Reproof**: you are dead, incomplete works

**Counsel**: be watchful, strengthen that which remains and is about to die, hold fast and remember that which heard and received, repent

**Warning**: if will not watch, will come as a thief

**Reward for overcomers**: white garments for dress, name kept in Book of Life

**Time period represented**: 1000/1500s-1800

This period of church history marks the protestant movement, when man stood up against the beast of religion and began to take a hammer to its lofty walls. The personification was in Martin Luther in 1517 A.D. when he nailed his 95 Theses on the chapel door at the church in Wittenberg, Germany. It began what is known as the Reformation.

While the Reformation brought desperate light to a darkened world, and freedom to those in religious bondage, it didn’t complete its work. At the Council of Trent the Reformation lost. The Reformation said the Bible and the Bible alone was the authority for the believer, while the Roman Catholic Church said NO, the Bible AND tradition was authority, and they upheld tradition over the Word of God. The split occurred.

7 And to the angel of the church in **Philadelphia** write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens;

8 I know your works: behold, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

10 Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown.

12 Him that overcomes will I make 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 comes down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

13 He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

PHILADELPHIA “brotherly love”

* City was named for Attalus II’ s love for his brother Eumenes
* City formed a gateway through the mountains (an open door)
* Culture was Greek
* Fortress to impede attacks on the 3 great cities of Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamum
* Fertile land, wine country
* Bacchus (wine god) on coins
* Destroyed by an earthquake A.D. 17 and rebuilt
* Byzantine church there
* Christian church in Philadelphia through 13th century

*Philadelphia… is today a rather prosperous little Turkish town. It is located in a very beautiful valley that is inland a great distance, about 125-150 miles from the coast. The valley is a very wide one which runs north and south, and the Cogamis River of that valley is a tributary of the Hermus River. The city was built on four or five hills in a picturesque setting. Today it is spread out a great deal, and it is a typical Turkish town.*

*Philadelphia is in an area that is subject to earthquakes. The great population that was in that area left primarily because of earthquakes and, of course, because of warfare. When Tamerlane and the other great pagan leaders came out of the East, it was a time when all those who were left were slaughtered. Therefore, today no descendants of the original population are there. However, this city has had continuous habitation from its very beginning.*

*This city was like a Greek island out in Lydia, out in the Anatolian country, an area which the Greeks considered to be heathen and pagan--the Greek ward far it was barbarian. In fact, anyone who was not a Greek was considered a barbarian in those days. The Lydian language was spoken there at first, but by the time of the apostles, the Greek language had taken over, and it was a typical Greek colony. This was the outpost of Greek culture in a truly Asiatic and Anatolian atmosphere. It was called a "little Athens" because of the fact that it was in this area and yet was truly Greek.*

*It was a fortress city used to waylay the enemy who would came in to destroy the greater cities like Ephesus and Smyrna and Pergamum--these were the three great cities. These other cities were largely fortress cities where garrisons were stationed either to stop the enemy or delay him as he marched toward the western coast.*

*Philadelphia is in a country where erosion is at work; the soil is quite alluvial, but it is very fertile soil. Beautiful laurel trees, many flowers--. It was particularly celebrated for its excellent wine. Great vineyards cover the surrounding hills, and the head of Bacchus was imprinted on their coins.*

*The city did not get its name, as so many seem to think, from the Bible. Actually, the city got its name because of the love that Attalus II had far his brother Eumenes who was king of Pergamum. Attalus had a great love and loyalty for his brother, and because of that it is called "the city of brotherly love,"*

*In A.D. 17 a great earthquake struck this city and totally destroyed it. The same earthquake totally destroyed Sardis and many other Lydian cities throughout that area. Tiberius, the emperor at that time, allocated a vast sum of money for the rebuilding of these cities, and they were then restored.*

*[In Philadelphia] there are the remains of a Byzantine church, which reveals that Christianity was active there up until the twelfth or thirteenth century. The remains of that Byzantine church are still there… [On another hill] there had been an amphitheater but it was totally destroyed except for one pillar… hidden away under the trees. The Seljuk Turks brutally killed the Christians in Philadelphia... Philadelphia is the place where Christian and Saracen fought during the Crusades, and in 1922 Turkey and Greece fought in Philadelphia. The church of Philadelphia continued into the thirteenth century. This church was in a very strategic area to be a missionary church, and that is actually what it was.*

Source: J. Vernon McGee <http://ldolphin.org/cleanpages/rev02.html>

**PHILADELPHIA**: “brotherly love”

**Character/Commendation**: works, have a little strength, kept my word, not denied my name, kept the word of my patience

**Reproof**: NONE

**Counsel**: hold fast to what you have

**Warning**: will make false believers (liars) know God has loved them/true believers

**Reward for overcomers**: keep you from the hour of temptation that will try those on earth, pillar in God’s temple, God’s new name written on

**Time period represented**: 1790s-1948 [some say 1840s/1900ish]

This was a small group of believers who held steadfast to the Word of God. There are ruins of Byzantine churches around Europe and Asia that remind us of the fruits of this early church’s labors that were mirrored again in another era considered the World Missions movement.

World Missions is what marked this generation of believers, from which you get the greats like:

Cary: India 1793

Morrison: China 1807

Moffet: Africa 1817

British Bible Society 1804

American Bible Society 1816

14 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;

15 I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would you were cold or hot.

16 So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.

17 Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear; and anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you may see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 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.

21 To him that overcomes 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.

22 He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

LAODICEA “nation of judgment” … “judging the people” … “justice of the people”

* Called the “city of compromise” by Sir William Ramsey
* Founded by Anitochus II [261-246 B.C.], named after his wife
* Destroyed in 60 A.D. by earthquake but rebuilt with its own funds
* Gate city in a great valley
* City of great wealth and commerce, Greek culture
* Place of science and literature, medical school
* Renown for its eye and ear salve, Phrygian
* Center of industry and banking operations
* Place of great clothing commerce
* Cicero held court here
* had a health resort, sold “collyrium”, an eye salve
* city supported a health industry

*Sir William Ramsey calls Laodicea "the city of compromise." This city was founded by Antiochus II (261-246 B.C.). It had a Seleucid foundation. Seleucus was one of the generals of Alexander who took Syria. Lysimachus took Asia Minor, but apparently Seleucus moved aver into his territory and took some of his ground, including this city.*

*Laodicea was about forty miles east and inland from Ephesus and the Lycus River, which flaws into the Maeander River. It is located at what is known as the "Gate of Phrygia." Out of the Oriental East, the great camel caravans came dawn through the Gate of Phrygia and through Laodicea. This road came out of the East and went to Ephesus, to Miletus, and also up to what is called Izmir today but was Smyrna in that day. Laodicea was in a spectacular place, a great valley. Today its ruins are largely covered up with the growth of what looks like wild oats. Its name means "justice of the people." It was named far Laodice, the wife of Antiochus. Although there were several cities which bare this name, this was the mast' famous one of all.*

*Between Laodicea and going on up to the Phrygian mountains; there was in this valley a great Anatolian temple of the Phrygian gad, Men Karou. This was the primitive god of that area. The temple was the very center of all society, administration; trade, and religion. There was a great market there, and strangers came from everywhere to trade. I suppose that the large market in Istanbul today is very similar to it.*

*Laodicea was a place of great wealth, of commerce, and of Greek culture. It was a place of science and of literature. It boasted an excellent medical school which, again, was very primitive and actually very heathen. Here is where they developed what was known in the Roman world as Phrygian powder, a salve far the ears and the eyes. Laodicea was also a center of industry with extensive banking operations. Cicero held court here. It is said that he brought notes here to be cashed in this city. Jupiter, or Zeus, was the object of worship in Laodicea.*

*The city was finally abandoned because of earthquakes. The very impressive ruins of two Roman theaters, a large stadium, and three early Christian churches are still there. The city itself has not been excavated. In other words, these ruins which I have mentioned protrude through all the debris and wild growth that is there. … there is [allegedly] an American foundation which has set aside two to three million dollars to excavate Laodicea.*

*Laodicea was a place of great commerce where they made clothing, As you stand on the ruins of Laodicea, you can look around at the nearby hills and see where Colossae is located and also Hieropolis, where there are springs. The greatest ruins are not in Colossae or Laodicea but in Hieropolis. The hills have a very funny color. The people took the clay from those hills, put it with a spikenard, and made it into a salve for the eyes and ears. This salve was shipped all over the Roman Empire. Today the chemical analysis reveals that there is nothing healing in that clay at all, but somebody made good money at it in that day.*

Source: J. Vernon McGee <http://ldolphin.org/cleanpages/rev02.html>

Another source: Laodicea had a health resort, sold “collyrium”, an eye salve… City seemed riveted around health and a health industry.

**LAODICEA**: ““nation of judgment” … “judging the people” … “justice of the people”

**Character/Commendation**: NONE

**Reproof**: lukewarm, spiritually: wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked

but physically: rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing

**Counsel**: **BUY OF ME (CHRIST):** gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear; and anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you may see. Be zealous and REPENT.

**Warning**: God will spew out of His mouth

**Reward for overcomers**: sit with Christ in His Throne

**Time period represented**: [1840/1900ish] 1948-Christ’s return

This generation of believers has no commendation, no character to speak of, only reproof. Selah.

It is a body of believers who are rich in biblical knowledge, inherited knowledge from the Philadelphia believers and DO NOTHING with it but are adept at PLAYING CHURCH, completely unaware we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.

Ah, but we are **rich** and **increased with goods**….!!!!!

32-95AD **Ephesus..........*“Lost your first love...”***

Rev 2:4, Heresy enters church: Marcionites, Gnostics, Nicolaitans, Balaamites, etc.

95-321AD **Smyrna...........*“Persecuted 10 days...”*** Rev 2:10

Ten major persecutions under ten Roman Emperors:

(1) Domitian (2) Trajan (3) Hadrian (4) Antonius Pius (5) Marcus Arelius (6) Septimus Severus (7)

Maximin (8) Decius (9) Valerian (10)Diocletian

321-450AD **Pergamum......*“Where Satan's throne is...”*** Rev 2:13

Constantine makes Christianity state religion. Church hierarchy begins.

450-950AD **Thyatira.........*“That Woman Jezebel...”*** Rev 2:20

Beginning of Mary worship. Idols brought into the churches. Bishops rise to power.

950-1450AD **Sardis............*“But you are dead...”*** Rev 3:1

Dead Catholic formalism. Bible taken from the people. Persecution of the brethren intensifies.

1450-1948AD **Philadelphia...*“You have kept My Word...”*** Rev 3:8

The Reformation, Protestant churches rise, the Puritan movement, foreign missions founded.

1948AD-???? **Laodicea........ *“You are neither hot nor cold...”*** Rev 3:15

Lukewarm church of today. Great “so-called works,” but spiritually cool.