

June 2005 Broadcast Notes

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Title: Revelation Commentary - Conclusion on the Seven Churches
Verses 3:10 through 3:22

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Begin Text:

Last month, we ended our study at the church in Philadelphia. I have a few more things to say about the church at Philadelphia, so let's begin with verse 10:

Rev 3:10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also "keep" [tereo: preserve you] you from [during] the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

Rev 3:11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

Rev 3:12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

Rev 3:13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

The church at Philadelphia, like the church at Smyrna, was suffering persecution from the Romans. In addition to this grievous problem, the church was embroiled in a bitter conflict between Jewish converts and Gentile converts. This conflict is called "the synagogue of Satan" conflict and this controversy also affected the church at Smyrna.

In a nutshell, Jewish converts to Christianity insisted that Gentile converts must be circumcised, observe the feast days and other Levitical laws if they were going to be the children of Abraham and heirs of the promises given to Abraham. Remember, this is A.D. 95 and Christianity was struggling with its Jewish roots and baggage. One of the reasons that God scattered the Christians from Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was to prevent Christianity from becoming Jewish!

This is why Jesus said:

"I will make those who [boast about their Jewish heritage, but] are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars -- I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have

loved you [instead of them]."

Wow! As far as the King of the Jews is concerned, calling yourself a Jew does not make you a Jew! God hates self-righteousness and self-importance.

I need to be perfectly clear on this subject. Self-righteousness and self-importance is a common human characteristic. It is a powerful component in our selfish fallen nature. Some people have a capacity for more self-righteousness and self-importance than others. Some people are just full of it!

Self-righteousness and self-importance is that part of the curse of sin that God hates most -- because a self-righteous sinner magnifies his self-importance to the place that he takes the place of God.

A self-important and self-righteous person likes to give orders, He likes to be the boss, he likes to be up front and out front. He seeks and wants attention and adulation. As a matter of fact, a pompous self-righteous sinner is a perfect reflection of Lucifer. The devil became so pompous and "right" in his own thinking that God became inferior.

Bad news: Self-righteousness is an inseparable component of religion because self-centeredness **is the core** of our carnal hearts. **Every** person and every religion on Earth has a problem with self righteous.

Proof: No religion will admit that another religion knows more about God than itself. Self-righteousness is an **attitude** of superiority....

I know most
I know best
I am better off than...

And the clergy, those of us who preach or teach are cursed with a double portion of self-righteousness. Here's why: It is a contradiction in terms for a person be a **seeker** of truth and at the same time, a **defender** of the faith.

On the other hand, it is possible for a person to have the humility of a child. Jesus said:

Luke 18:17 "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

God doesn't ask us to convert other people to our way of thinking. God doesn't want us shoving our religious beliefs down the throats of other people. Rather, God only asks that we be able to share and explain to others the joy and the reasons for the hope that is within our hearts.

1 Pet 3:15 "... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

1 Pet 3:16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

When Jesus was on Earth, the leaders of Israel could not understand His teachings because of their arrogance and self-righteousness. They knew from the start they were right and Jesus was wrong. This is how self-righteousness works.

If Jesus were on Earth today, most religious leaders would not give Him five minutes of serious consideration because of self-righteousness. Here's a

little test:

What would be likelihood of a devout Jehovah's Witness reading a book produced by a Catholic priest? Zero, because Jehovah's Witnesses are not permitted to read religious materials produced by other religious bodies -- but they are more than eager to ask everyone else to read their materials! The Jehovah's Witnesses are so firmly convinced that they have and know God's truth, they are persuaded there is no point in reading other literature.

I would also like to use this behavior of the Jehovah's Witnesses to demonstrate a second point. Even if your own church does not prohibit you from reading doctrinal materials produced by other churches, you probably don't.

Why? Is it self-righteousness or laziness?

When a particular view on a doctrine [makes sense](#), most people stop their investigation and this is a problem because.... Truth never stops unfolding. So, what makes sense today may not make sense when more light on a particular subject is exposed. A self-righteous person thinks that he has surrounded the truth on a particular matter, and then he shuts his mind.

This is what self-right-ness does. "I'm right, I know the truth, and I don't want to hear anything different." I must confess that if Jesus were on Earth today, masquerading as a carpenter -- I would probably ignore his teachings until I saw a miracle. Be honest, wouldn't you?

Jesus identified Himself to the church at Philadelphia with this description: "These are words of Him who is [holy and true](#)" because He is [the Word](#) ... He was speaking as God and He was speaking Truth. And his comments to the Jewish converts in Philadelphia and Smyrna were brutal.

Jewish converts in the church at Philadelphia claimed to be superior to their brothers because they were ancestors of Abraham.... but, Jesus condemned them twice by saying (a) that they were of the synagogue of Satan and (b) they were liars. Jesus used some very strong words...

What were the Jewish converts lying about? They said they were Jews and they were not. "I will make those who are of [the synagogue of Satan](#), who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are [liars](#)--I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have [loved you](#)."

This message should cause every Christian to examine his spiritual condition. Listen carefully: The word "Jew" means something different to God than it does to man. To God, the term refers to those who, like Abraham, choose to serve Him with a pure heart.

Jesus is [the king of the Jews](#) because He chose to do the will of the Father with a pure heart. For this reason, the Father has exalted His Son as the king of those having "servant hearts." To mankind, the term "Jew" often identifies a race of people. But, there is a world of difference between God's use of the word "Jew" and man's use of the word "Jew."

The descendants of Abraham are first called "Jews" in the book of Esther (5th century B.C.). For almost a thousand years before the Babylonian captivity, the descendants of Abraham were called "Hebrews" which means gypsies. (Genesis 14:13) During the Babylonian captivity, the Babylonians created a [denigrating word](#) for the self-righteous captives from Judea.

The Hebrews let the Babylonians know in no uncertain terms that THEY were God's chosen people, and this claim amused the Babylonians because these gypsies were nothing but exiles and slaves. So, instead of calling them

gypsies, the Babylonians used the slang "Ju" to represent the "self-asserting chosen race" from Judea.

History says this is how the term "Jew" came to be. You might be surprised to know that this derision and scorn comes as a fulfillment to prophecy:

Jeremiah 29:18 "I will pursue them [Israel] with the sword, famine and plague and will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth and an object of cursing and horror, of scorn and reproach, among all the nations where I drive them.

Jer 29:19 For they have not listened to my words," declares the Lord, "words that I sent to them again and again by my servants the prophets. And you exiles have not listened either," declares the Lord."

Ezek 36:20 "And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, 'These are the Lord's people, and yet they had to leave his land.'

God took a nation of slaves and He did everything possible to elevate them to the stature of a great nation... only to have His own people turn against Him. So, God made their name a matter of scorn and reproach among the nations.

Think about this: Jesus came to Earth as a Jew. He came at a time when the Jews were despised by the Romans. Jesus came to Earth to share the suffering which His people were experiencing. But, He was put to death by His own people and the Romans!

Pilate put the title of Jesus on the cross in three languages.

John 19:19 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

John 19:20 Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek.

John 19:21 The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews."

John 19:22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

I love this point: A pagan governor recognized who Jesus was and He declared His title in three languages so that everyone might know the true identity of Jesus. Jesus is still king of the Jews, but the term "Jew" is not a race.... It is a type of heart, an attitude.

Rom 2:28 A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical.

Rom 2:29 No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

This is why Jesus condemned the synagogue of Satan in Philadelphia. This is why Jesus declared those claiming to be Jews were liars. The point here is that God is not perplexed about the church we attend. God is not concerned about our biological heritage. God does not respect our ethnicity. God is not impressed with our education or possessions. To God, the human race is one race. When it comes to race, there is no distinction as far as He is concerned between Jew and Gentile. (There was a distinction at one time, when Israel was appointed as the trustee of His covenant, but He later abandoned

this distinction.)

However, there remains a sharp distinction between the children of Abraham and the children of the devil:

John 8:39 "Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did.

John 8:40 As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things.

John 8:41 You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children [like you are]," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

John 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.

John 8:43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because [of your self-righteousness] you are unable to hear what I say.

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

We see that salvation boils down to an attitude. Those who love "truth" keep searching for more truth. God's children have an attitude of "tell me more!" I want to know everything about God that I can absorb!

John 3:19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

John 3:20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

John 3:21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

Don't be fooled. "The synagogue of Satan" controversy has not ended. The conflict with self-righteousness continues in most churches.

Jesus closed His remarks to Philadelphia saying, "Hold on to what you have...." These words are crucial when the fires of persecution are hot and you have been isolated from family and friends. Persecution can produce two outcomes.

First, if the carnal nature is being persecuted, the carnal nature will rebel and fight to the bitter end of life if the issue at hand is contrary to its will. Lucifer would rather die than give in to God's authority. Good news: His wish will eventually be granted....

On the other hand, if the spiritual nature is being persecuted, enduring persecution and suffering because of principle can be very difficult. It is so easy to "just say uncle" and stop the pain. But, those who overcome the adversary by choosing to stand for the right will be rewarded beyond their wildest imagination!

You should know that every person who suffers because of principle will be highly elevated in God's kingdom because this is a pure reflection of His

character.

When human beings stand firm for their faith in God, our sacrifice brings glory to God because this is how He lives and loves! He did the same for us! This is why Jesus said:

v12 "...Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it."

The temple of God in the Earth made new will not be a building.

Rev 21:22 "I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple."

The point here is that in the Earth made new, whenever a temple service convenes, overcomers will form a quorum. We all know that when Congress convenes, a quorum is required.... a specific number of members must be present for business to be conducted. This is the parallel.

A number of overcomers will be present at every meeting at the temple. They will make up a quorum and the business of the universe will not be conducted without them because overcomers will be the pillars of God's government! "God's business will be conducted in His presence!"

All overcomers will be given a special name tag when they get to Heaven. Jesus said, "I will write on him:

1. the name of my God...
2. the name of the city of my God, and I will also write on him
3. my new name"

This name tag will permit its owner to travel anywhere in God's universe in a stretch-limo with a thousand angels attending. OK, I may be understating the point a little bit, but you get the idea.

Once you receive this name tag, you will be recognized throughout God's universe as a V.I.P. because YOU were trained to be an overcomer through suffering and temptation on Earth for the exalted role that God has given you throughout eternity and remember, the saints will reign with Jesus on His throne!

Your victory in overcoming the world makes you very special and unique to God and Jesus wants everyone to know it, thus, the glorious name tag. Can you say,

"Hallelujah! Discipleship hurts? Discipleship is killing me?"

Laodicea: The last message to the seven churches:

Rev 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

Rev 3:15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!

Rev 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

Rev 3:17 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, blind and naked.

Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Rev 3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.

Rev 3:20 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 him, and he with me.

Rev 3:21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Rev 3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Jesus is described:

The Amen = True / So be it

The Faithful Witness = Who has fully revealed the Father

The Ruler of God's Creation = Everything concerning the church has been put under His authority:

Mat 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority* in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Mat 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Mat 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

***Note:** We know from Eph 1:22 "And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church." The authority to control the church is not to be confused with universal authority that is given to Jesus in 1798. "And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ." (Eph 1:10) This topic will be closely examined when we study Revelation 5.

The Problem in Laodicea: Laodicea was a city of affluence and luxury. The church was not suffering persecution. The church was on "easy street" and the absence of threat or danger induced security and lethargy. Christians in Laodicea were physically comfortable. Their zeal for winning souls was nominal - throw a little money at the preacher, and just be happy!

The Laodiceans were so busy taking care of personal business and recreation that they had no time for God's work. The thing that bothered Jesus most about Laodicea was its indifference to the mission and objectives of His church. The church of Jesus only has two objectives:

1. Soul winning
2. Soul building

Any church committed to these two objectives will grow and prosper because Jesus will ensure its success! The church at Laodicea meet together, they socialized together, they did things together, but they did nothing to reach out for lost souls. They had little interest in evangelism and even less interest in sanctification.

Rev 3:17 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, blind and naked.

Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me [gold](#) refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Rev 3:19 Those whom I love I [rebuke and discipline](#). So be earnest, and repent.

The church at Laodicea had a lot of money. But Jesus warned them to buy gold from Him. What does this mean? It means that Jesus wants His followers to constantly set up faith objectives, and through prayer and endeavor, do our best to reach that objective. This is how a church "buys pure gold" from Jesus. This is how we "purchase" faith tried in the fire as we set out to accomplish things for God that are bigger than we thought possible.

For example, suppose the church at Laodicea had set a faith objective to win ten people to Jesus through three different endeavors in one year. That would have been a "soul winning" endeavor. Soul winning is the [first](#) work of the Christian church. Show me a church that puts forth little or no effort to win souls, and I will show you a stagnant church -- a church in decline -- a church full of dead wood.

Soul winning is the first work of the church of Christ for three reasons:

1. When basic doctrines are presented for the benefit of new people, members benefit as they are led to reexamine their core beliefs. What is new and exciting for those hearing the gospel for the first time is new and refreshing for those hearing the gospel for the tenth time! The gospel story never grows old to those that love Jesus!
2. Soul winning is the first work of the church because new people joining the church bring talent, energy and vitality to the church. More people, more joy, more talents, more love, more of everything!
3. Soul winning is the first work of the church because members need to adopt and love those who are struggling with problems created by sin. When members confess their trials and failures with new converts, everyone is encouraged and blessed. Members learn to love and help new converts in their struggle to apply the teachings of Jesus. This sharing between experienced members and babes in Christ is endearing and it is called fellowship: two or more people in the same boat.

Three reasons for soul winning:

1. Basic doctrines refreshed
2. New people = new dynamics
3. Fellowship

Laodicea was not focused on soul winning. It was content with being lukewarm, and Jesus was disgusted with His church. He knew this church would eventually wither for lack of spiritual commitment and direction.

This is why He said, "I'm telling you ...buy from me gold refined in the fire [[a faith experience](#)], so you can become rich [[through loving people giving to them](#)]; and white clothes to wear [[wedding garment](#)], so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see [[what is important](#)]."

Rev 3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent [[of your indifference](#)]. [[Get with a soul winning outreach and soul building](#)]

experience and you will be blessed!]

Rev 3:20 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 him, and he with me.
[Fellowship with me!]

Rev 3:21 To him who overcomes, I will give **the right to sit with me on my throne**, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Rev 3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

The authority and glory given to overcomers will be awesome! Words cannot begin to describe the glories which Jesus has prepared for overcomers.

This completes our study on the seven churches.

Summary statements:

Jesus described seven times:

1. Ephesus: Jesus described as holding the seven stars in his right hand and walking among the seven golden lampstands
2. Smyrna: Jesus described as the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.
3. Pergamum: Jesus described as the One who has the sharp, double-edged sword.
4. Thyatira: Jesus described as having eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.
5. Sardis: Jesus described as holding the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.
6. Philadelphia: These are the words of Jesus: who is holy and true, who holds the key of David - what He opens no one can shut....
7. Laodicea: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

Seven problems identified:

1. Ephesus: Endured many hardships... Lost their first love / (but hated the teachings of Nicholas)
2. Smyrna: Persecuted and poor -- but rich! Be faithful to death / Ignore the slander of the synagogue of Satan
3. Pergamum: Throne of Satan / Holding to teachings of Balaam... / Accepted the teachings of Nicholas
4. Thyatira: Perseverance.... but Jezebel was tolerated / Religious bamboozle
5. Sardis: Reputation for being alive, but dead inside...
6. Philadelphia: Dealing with the synagogue of Satan
7. Laodicea: Rich but lukewarm

Seven promises to overcomers:

1. Ephesus: Eat from the tree of life
2. Smyrna: Not hurt by second death
3. Pergamum: Hidden manna / white rock
4. Thyatira: Authority over the nations
5. Sardis: Name never blotted out
6. Philadelphia: Pillar in the temple
7. Laodicea: Sit on the throne with Jesus

Remember, the seven churches do not represent seven time periods since the ascension of Jesus. They are not prophetic, they are didactic. The seven churches represent the experiences and conditions of the whole of Christianity. Your current spiritual condition or experience determines which church you are in. The messages and promises given to the seven churches are timeless and universal.

End text: