

Teacher's Notes

"A Study of New Testament Churches"

12 Lessons

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Lesson One
"The Jerusalem Church"

SOME FACTS:

1. This city was prominent in O.T. & N.T.
 - a) It is believed to have been the city of Melchizedek.
 - Gen. 14:18—***"And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God."***
 - b) It was the capital of Israel and looked upon as the holy city because God's name was there.
 - c) The place where Solomon built the great temple to God.
 - d) But it was also the beginning place of the church.
 - Isa. 2:1-4
 - Luke 24:44-48
 - Acts 1:4-5, 8, 2:1-4
 - e) It is the symbol of the city of God in Rev. 21.

2. The church experience great growth in the early stages:
 - a) Acts 2:41—3,000
 - b) Acts 4:4—5,000 men
 - c) Acts 5:28—Filled Jerusalem with doctrine
 - d) Acts 5:42—Taught & preached daily in temple and from house to house
 - e) Acts 6:7—Number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly
---Great company of priests were obedient to the faith.

3. It was unified!
 - a) Acts 2:44-47
 - b) Acts 4:32, 34-37

SOME PROBLEMS:

1. Persecution
 - a) Acts 4:1-3, 17-21
 - b) Acts 7:54-60
 - c) Acts 8:1-4

2. Sin in their midst
 - a) Ananias & Sapphira. Acts 5:1-11
 - b) Grecian widows neglected in daily ministrations. Acts 6:1-7

3. Law vs. Grace. Acts 15:1-35

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Who prophesied that the church would have its beginning in Jerusalem?
2. Why was the response so great on Pentecost to the preaching?
3. Should we teach people to sell what they have and give to church, so it can be distributed among the needy? (Acts 2:44-47)
4. Why did the early church eat together? (Acts 2:46)
5. Why were the problems so easily solved in the Jerusalem church? (Respect, love, concern for others).
6. How did they fill Jerusalem with their doctrine? (Acts 5:28)
7. What part did prayer play in the success of the Jerusalem church? (Acts 2:42; 4:29-31; 6:4).
8. What was the underlying problem over Grecian widows? (Different cultures and backgrounds).
9. What kind of leadership did the Jerusalem church have? (Apostles—later elders).
10. What do we need to do to be like the Jerusalem church?
11. Can we expect to ever be like the Jerusalem church?
12. What lessons can we learn from the Jerusalem church?

Lesson Two
QUESTIONS ON
THE EPHESIAN CHURCH
(Rev. 2:1-7)

- 1. How long had it been since the church at Ephesus had been established?**
 - a) Established in AD 54.
 - b) Letter written in AD 96.
 - c) Church at Jerusalem established in AD 29-30.

- 2. Who had preached among the people and the church at Ephesus?**
 - a) Apollos—Acts 18:24-28; 19:1
 - b) Aquilla (?)—Acts 18:26
 - c) Paul—Acts 19:1-41
 - d) Timothy—1 Tim. 1:3
 - e) Apostle John—(AD 70 to AD 95)

- 3. For how long did Paul preach at Ephesus?**
 - a) 3 whole years.(Acts 20:31)

- 4. What was one of the 7 wonders of the Ancient World at Ephesus?**
 - a) Temple of Diana. (Acts 19:26-28)

- 5. How could the church have been so active and still have left their first love?**

- 6. What is involved in repentance?**
 - a) Change of mind.
 - b) Change of actions.
 - c) Do what you did before that was right.

- 7. Who were the Nicolaitanes?**
 - a) Practice immorality and felt they were still okay.
 - b) Grace covers all.
 - c) "Once save always saved."

- 8. What or who are we to hate?**
 - a) Hate evil deeds.

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9. Where is Paradise?

- a) Paradise of God (Where the tree of life is).
- b) Possibly used in two ways:
 - 1) Paradise in Hades where departed righteous go to await the resurrection.
 - 2) Paradise is where God is. (God's abode)

10. What does it mean that "all who dwelt in Asia heard the word?"

- a) Had exposure to gospel in all of the province of Asia.
- b) What Paul taught was repeated by the hearers to others all over the province of Asia.

SPECIAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Are we willing to give ourselves the examination the Lord gave Ephesus?**
- 2. How would we measure up:**
 - a) First love?**
 - b) Pure doctrine?**
 - c) Stern discipline?**
 - d) Patiently laboring?**
 - e) Endure fierce opposition?**
- 3. Is our enthusiasm, zeal, and efforts increasing or diminishing?**
- 7. Do we listen correctly to God's spirit?**

Lesson Three
Comments on
The Smyrna Church
Rev. 2:8-11

INTRODUCTION

1. Smyrna was a city in "little Asia." (Which was in the province of Asia in Asia Minor) (Now Turkey).
 - a) Called "The Beauty of Asia."
 - b) 2nd in importance to Ephesus.
 - c) 40 miles north on sea coast also.
 - d) A commercial city—rich.
 - e) Only one of the 7 cities that still remains a town of any importance.
 - f) Had a strong Jewish element—had a synagogue.
2. Background of the church:
 - a) Possibly established on Paul's 3rd missionary journey—during the 2-3 years stay at Ephesus. (All Asia heard the word).
 - b) Very little is given about the church.
 - c) Very unusual church—offered nothing for the pure eyes of Christ to rebuke.
 - d) Shortest letter sent.
 - e) Believed to have been a large church—very early.

INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT (Rev. 2:8-11)

Verse 8: (Identification of Christ)

- 1) "the first and the last"
- 2) "was dead, and is alive"

Verse 9: (What Jesus knew about the church)

- 1) "thy works"
- 2) "tribulation"
- 3) "poverty"
- 4) "rich"

Verses 9-10: (What Jesus knew about their persecutors)

- 1) "they are blasphemers"
- 2) "they are the synagogue of Satan"
- 3) "will cause suffering"

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Verses 10-11: (The Lord's encouragement to the church)

- 1) "do not fear things you will suffer"
 - a) Shall be cast into prison
 - b) Will be tried
 - c) Have tribulation 10 days
- 2) "be faithful unto death"
- 3) "Listen to what the Spirit says"
- 4) Reward promised:
 - a) A crown of life to the faith
 - b) Overcomers will not be hurt of 2nd death.

QUESTIONS
THE SYRNA CHURCH
Rev. 2:8-11

- 1. What is the significance of Jesus being "the first and the last?"**
 - a) Rev. 1:11—"Alpha and Omega"—1st & last letters of Gk. alphabet.
 - b) "I am"—Emphasis on his Divinity—eternal existence.
 - c)

- 2. What is the significance of Jesus being "dead, and is alive?"**
 - a) Rev. 1:18—"Alive for evermore—have keys of hades and death"
 - b) Emphasis upon his fleshly existence
 - c) Jesus' death did not end it all—he arose victoriously.
 - d) Gave assurance of a resurrection for all men.
 - e)

- 3. How was the church poor?**
 - a) It is possible that mostly the poor accepted the gospel.
 - b) Also, may have become poor in possessions because of persecutions.
 - c) Quote (Robert Ingersoll)—"*The church has always been willing to swap off treasures in Heaven for cash on earth.*"

- 4. How was the church rich?**
 - a) This church was a rich poor church.
 - b) Contrasted with the poor rich church at Laodicea.

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- c) Early church known for its "poverty and power."
- d) They were only poor in possessions—rich towards God.
- e) Man is rich indeed who sees the difference between:
 - 1) Riches of this world
 - 2) Riches in Christ.
- c) Saul had to make this decision:
 - 1) Between prestige, national leadership, wealth, security
 - 2) Or...being in Christ.
 - 3) Phil. 3:7-9
 - 4) Jas. 2:5
- d) They were truly rich:
 - 1) Rich—because they knew Christ knew their condition.
 - 2) Rich—because they were assured of being the true child of God.
 - 3) Rich—because they could share in the sufferings of Christ.
 - 4) Rich—because they had power of God working to bring a victory over Satan.
 - 5) Rich—because they possessed the greatest of all treasures—salvation in Christ.

5. What was the blasphemy of these persecutors?

- a) Blasphemy—slander of the unbelieving Jews.
- b) They were Jews—physically—but not Jews—Spiritually!
- c) Christ said they were a Synagogue of Satan—doing the work of Satan.
 - 1) Strong indictment.
 - 2) Indicates the bitter opposition by Jews.
 - 3) Rom. 9:6
 - 4) Rom. 2:28-29
 - 5) They were invited to become a church of God, but chose to become a synagogue of Satan.
 - 6) Jews often joined in with idolaters to persecute Christians.

6. Why would the church suffer?

- a) Jesus encouraged them not to be terrified of what their persecutors will do.
- b) It would be a testing time for them to prove their faithfulness to Christ.
 - 1) Heb. 11:17
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:20
 - 3) 1 Pet. 1:7

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c) Example:

- 1) Polycarp—disciple of John—died 155 AD.
- 2) Tried before Roman governor, given chance to repent.
- 3) Conversation recorded:
 - **Governor:** *"Swear, and I will set thee at liberty, reproach Christ."*
 - **Polycarp:** *"Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior.?"*
 - **Governor:** *(Pressed him to repent strongly)*
 - **Polycarp:** *"Since thou art vainly urgent that...I should swear by the fortune of Caesar, and pretendest not to know who and what I am, hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian."*
 - **Governor:** *"I have wild beasts at hand; to these will I cast thee, except thou repent."*
(Later)
 - **Governor:** *"I will case thee to be consumed by fire seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, if thou wilt not repent."*
 - **Polycarp:** *"Thou threatenest me with fire which burneth for an hour, and after a little is extinguished, but art ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt."*
- 4) Quotation: *"And the fire of their inhuman tormentors felt cold to them, for they kept their eyes on escaping the eternal, unquenchable fire, and with the eyes of their minds they looked at the blessings reserved for those who are stedfast, 'which no ear ever heard and no eye ever saw, and never occurred to the human mind.'"*

7. How long would they suffer?

- a) 10 days in prison.
- b) To take this literal would not seem logical.
- c) 10 days to represent 10 years???
- d) 10 great persecutions to come upon church???
- e) Could be:
 - 1) Complete testing—trial to the limit—to death itself.
 - 2) Even if death came, Christ overcame death and is alive.
 - 3) And so we too shall be raised up.
- f) Be faithful to martyrdom.

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8. What is held out as reward to the faithful & overcomer?

- a) To faithful—a crown of life.
 - 1) A crown signifying that they were righteous before God.
 - 2) A crown of life—incorruptible—fades not away. (1 Pet. 1:4)
 - 3) These Christians were to show a quality of life which neither persecution, poverty, nor death could destroy.
 - 4) ***"I have set the Lord always before me, and because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."***
 - 5) Jesus wanted them liberated from fear.
 - 6) And also from the fact of death itself.
- b) To the overcomer—not hurt of 2nd death.
 - 1) Delivered from it.
 - 2) Rev. 20:14
 - 3) 2nd death—the one to fear. (eternal punishment).

CONCLUSION

- 1. The Spirit has spoken—let man take heed.
- 2. Could we pass the test of persecution—trials—imprisonment—martyrdom?
- 3. Reward goes to the faithful overcomers.

Lesson Four
Comments on
THE PERGAMUM CHURCH
Rev. 2:12-17

INTRODUCTION

1. City of Pergamos:
 - a) First rose to prominence in 241-197 BC.
 - b) They won recognition from Rome early for their allegiance to the Emperors.
 - 1) In 29 BC, they erected a temple and dedicated it to the worship of Caesar Augustus.
 - 2) They also had an acropolis filled with pagan temples: ZEUS, APOLLO, DIONYSIUS, APHRODITE, AESCULAPIUS.
 - 3) Had a great altar to Jupiter (Zeus)—40 ft. high—
 - 4) Famous temple of Aesculapius—a healing god—worshipped in the form of a serpent (School of medicine).
 - c) They were given authority over the cities of Asia.
 - d) They were famous for their great library of 200,000 volumes—2nd only to Alexandria.
 - e) It was a stronghold of Balaamite & Nicolaitian teachers.
2. Church at Pergamos:
 - a) Possibly started like others—*"All Asia heard the word."*
 - b) Had both good and bad said about it.

DISCUSSION

I. INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT: (Rev. 2:12-17)

Verse 12 (Identification of Christ):

- 1) "He has the sharp sword with two edges."

Verse 13 (What the Lord knew about the church):

- 1) "I know your works"
- 2) "I know you live where Satan's seat is"
- 3) "I know you have held fast my name"
- 4) "I know you have not denied my faith—even like Antipas who was a faithful martyr—slain among you.

Verse 14-15 (What the rebuked them for):

- 1) "I have a few things against you"

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- 2) "You have in your midst those that hold the doctrine of Balaam"
- 3) "You also have those that hold to the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes"

Verse 16 (The Lord's admonition to them):

- 1) "Repent"
- 2) "Or I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth"

Verse 17 (The Lord's Exhortation to them):

- 1) "Hear what the Spirit says to you"
- 2) "To him that overcomes:
 - a) I will give to eat of the hidden manna
 - b) I will give him a white stone
 - c) I will give him a new name—that no one will know.

**QUESTIONS
PERGAMUM CHURCH
Rev. 2:12-17**

1. What is to be understood about Jesus having a two-edged sword? (12)

- a) Capable of more effective battle—cuts both ways.
- b) The significance—The Lord will make war with these false teachers.
- c) How?
 - Eph. 6:17
 - Heb. 4:12

2. Why is Pergamos said to be "Satan's seat?"(13)

- a) It was a strong-hold of Satan.
- b) It was a place of idolatry of all kinds plus emperor worship.
- c) They worshipped the god of healing—a serpent!
- d) All forms of sensuality was practiced in the name of religion.
- e) You could see the reigning power of Satan in men's lives.

3. What did Jesus praise them for? (13)

- a) You have held fast my name.
 - It wasn't easy being a Christian in Pergamos.
 - The forces of evil were active against God & His people.

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- When put to the test—they held fast to the name of Christ.
- They respected & revered the Lord, His Authority, His Name.
- b) You did not deny my faith.
 - They were tried, but held fast to the doctrine of Christ.
 - 2 John 9
 - Antipas gave open testimony before his persecutors of his faith.
 - It cost him his life.

4. What was the Lord's rebuke to the church? (14-15)

- a) I have a few things against you.
 - From without—the church had stood the test!
 - But Satan turned his efforts within the church itself.
 - Within had arisen grave dangers to threaten the church's effectiveness.
- b) You allow to be in your midst those who hold the doctrine of Balaam.
 - Teachers were advocating what Balaam had told King Balac to do.
 - Entice God's people into participating in idol worship & immorality and God will destroy them.
 - They were advocating compromise with the enemy.
 - By doing such—will take the stigma off of Christianity.
 - Offer sacrifice to the emperor, but still be a Christian.
 - Go to idolatrous feasts & worship, but still be a Christian.
 - We know that the Emperor and idols are not gods.
 - It sounded good—but it would have negated Christianity in Pergamos.
- c) Observation:
 - England & France used to be a very sexually oriented society.
 - Now America has become such.
 - "No sin to be unfaithful to wife or husband"
 - "No sin to divorce & remarry"
 - "No sin to have affairs"
 - "No sin for teens to have sexual experiences before marriage."
 - All are swallowing the lies of Satan!
- d) You also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.
 - Doctrine:
 - 1) Not under Law—Can do as we please.
 - 2) Led to all kinds of immoralities.
 - Pseudo-arguments are offered to get us to indulge in sin.

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- 1) It won't do any harm.
 - 2) No real problems.
 - 3) Don't let others tell you what to do.
 - Young people fall victim to much of this comprising life-style.
 - 1) Smoking, drinking, drugs, dancing, etc.—"no real harm."
 - 2) But adults often fall victim to same pitfalls.
 - It is the little compromises that destroys Christianity's effectiveness.
 - 1) Christianity is that which is Godly.
 - 2) That which stands for right and good at all cost.
 - 3) The highest calling a man can follow.
 - 4) And when Christianity appears no different—no better—no greater than the world around it—LOSES IT'S APPEAL.
- e. Which thing the Lord hates.
- He hated it in the wilderness wanderings—slew 23,000 people.
 - He still hates it today!

5. What exhortation does the Lord give? (16)

- a) To the church—Repent!
 - Change your mind & heart about these things.
 - Conform to my Word—not error.
 - But also—repent about allowing such to remain in your midst undisciplined.
 - 1) The church at Ephesus had taken strong & fast action.
 - 2) Pergamos needed to do the same.
 - 3) This was no time to compromise with Satan's forces.
 - 4) This was the time to fight, even harder, longer, valiantly.
 - 5) Tolerating this condition was dangerous.
- b) To the false teachers—Repent!
 - Change your mind to conform to my Word.
 - If will not repent—The Lord will fight with them with the sword of His mouth.
- c) Take heed to what the Spirit is saying!

6. What reward was promised to the church? (17)

- a) To the overcomer:
 - Hidden manna—The true bread that gives life—not condemnation.
----He will sustained them as He did Israel.

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- White stone—Given to people who are victorious.
----Significance of acceptance.

- New name—When the Lord changes names—it is prophetic.
----It will be a great blessing & honor in itself.

7. What are some spiritual lessons to be learned?

- a) It is possible to live a Christian life even in midst of wickedness.
- b) There are dangers outside the church, as well as inside.
- c) It is right to love sinners or false teachers—but not to condone their sin or error.
- d) God's promises are to those who overcome sin—to the faithful.

Lesson Five
Comments on
THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA
Rev. 2:18-29

INTRODUCTION

1. City of Thyatira:
 - a) Located more inland—on road between Pergamus and Sardis.
 - b) But it had commercial and industrial enterprises.
 - c) They had organized trade guilds or societies: Bakers, Potters, Wool Workers, Robe Makers, Leather Workers, Metal Craftsmen, Weavers, Dyers.
 - d) Each guild had its guardian god.
 - e) To get ahead, you needed to belong to a guild.
 - f) But you were obligated to engage in ceremonial homage to the gods.
 - 1) Eat meats offered to idols.
 - 2) Indulge in immoralities.
 - g) The Christian would be faced with quite a decision.
 - h) Lydia (seller of purple in Philippi) was connected with this city.
2. The church:
 - a) No direct knowledge of beginning.
 - b) Church, for the most part, seems to have been faithful.
 - c) Some were not.
 - d) Christianity is a battle:
 - 1) A continual war against all evil.
 - 2) Within and without—until death!

DISCUSSION

I. INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT: (Rev. 2:18-29)

Verse 18 (Identification of Christ)

- 1) Called the Son of God
- 2) His eyes like a flame of fire
- 3) His feet like fine brass

Verse 19 (What the Lord knew about the church)

- 1) I know your works
- 2) Your love, service, faith, your patience.
- 3) Your last works are more than your first.

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Verses 20-21 (What He rebuked them for)

- 1) A few things against you
- 2) You allowed that woman Jezebel to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.
- 3) Lack of repentance

Verses 22-23 (The Lord's Threat of punishment)

- 1) I will cast her into a sick bed
- 2) I will cast into great tribulation those who commit adultery with her
- 3) I will kill her children with death
- 4) I will give to each one according to your works.

Verses 24-25 (The Lord's admonition)

- 1) To the rest, I will put no other burden on you.
- 2) Hold fast what you have till I come.

Verses 26-28 (The Lord's Promised rewards)

- 1) To the overcomer and the one who keeps my works until the end—give him power over the nations.
- 2) I will give him the morning star.

Verse 29 (Admonition to all)

- 1) Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches!

**QUESTIONS
THYATIRA CHURCH
Rev. 2:18-29**

1. What is the significance of Jesus being identified as:

a) The Son of God:

- 1) Only place in Revelation He is called this.
- 2) Great prominence!
- 3) Deity being called into question by false teachers

b) Eyes like unto a flame of fire:

- 1) Penetrating, Omniscient, infinite wisdom.
- 2) Discerner of hearts—can't deceive God.

c) Feet are like fine brass:

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- 1) Stance of royalty, dignity, firmness, Majesty—strong.
- 2) Strong inducement to be strong & obedient to the weak!

2. What does all the good things said about the church indicate?

- 1) Their love was being shown by their works.
- 2) They were growing, maturing, steadfast (last more than first).
- 3) They had not lost their first love.
- 4) Not growing weary in well-doing.
- 5) Ephesus was strong on orthodoxy—little on love!
- 6) Thyatira was strong on love—weak on orthodoxy!

3. Was "Jezebel" really a prophetess of God?

- 1) "which calls herself"
- 2) OT. Jezebel was a personification of wickedness.
 - a) She brought Israel low with her idolatry.
 - b) She had a brilliant mind—but an evil heart.
 - c) She was unscrupulous and unrestrained in her sin.
- 3) This "Jezebel" had justified having part with idolatry and its evils.
- 4) She succeeded in persuading others that the circumstances justified their actions.
- 5) But an all-seeing, penetrating eye knew the real reason for their actions:
 - a) They took the easy way out—compromise.
 - b) They did not want to suffer persecution.
- 6) How often do we keep quiet or give-in:
 - a) Rather than suffer persecution;
 - b) Rather than be marked as narrow, peculiar or different!

4. Why did the Lord rebuke the church about this woman Jezebel?

- 1) They suffered her in their midst to teach her doctrine.
- 2) She was successful in gaining converts.

5. What did the Lord expect of the woman "Jezebel?"

- 1) To repent.
- 2) The Lord gave her time to repent—The Lord is patient!
- 3) But it is rare that repentance will come to such people who take such steps.
- 4) If she will repent—forgive her evil.
- 5) But He will punish if repentance is not forthcoming.

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6. What will the Lord do to her?

- 1) Cast her into a bed (KJV) "sickbed" (NKJV)
- 2) Her pleasurable bed of sexual immorality will be turned into a sickbed.
 - a) Stubbornness in sin will bring its punishments.
 - b) A life of sin will bring its suffering and misery.

7. What punishment will come to her followers.

- 1) If they will not repent!
- 2) Cast into great tribulation.
- 3) That which they had hoped to escape, will come in another way.
- 4) "kill her children"—followers with death?
 - a) In what sense?
 - c) Immediate physical death?
 - d) Or spiritual & eternal death?
 - e) Tribulation—plus death!
- 5) Reason for this punishment:
 - a) So all will know that he searches the minds & hearts of men.
 - b) Even the inmost depths (Heb. 4:12).
 - c) Christ knows us through and through—inside & out!
- 6) Punishment will be just—according to our deeds.
 - a) We are under a Grace system.
 - b) But our works will determine whether we receive Grace of punishment.

8. What is it to know the "depths of Satan?"

- 1) They did not have to experience the depths of sin to know it was wrong.
- 2) Need to experience sin—to understand.

9. How will the faithful Christian be given power over the nations?

- 1) Our godly lives condemn the ungodly.
- 2) We sit in judgment upon the disobedient.

10. What is the significance of being given "the morning star?"

- 1) Concept of brilliance in midst of others.
- 2) Christian will shine above all men.
- 3) Godly men and women are powerful—kingly.
- 4) Their wholesome influence is a mighty weapon.
- 5) It will be their brilliant attire at the day of judgment.

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CONCLUSION

1. An ungodly person can play havoc in the midst of God's people.
2. But a righteous, godly person can have a great influence for good too.
3. It is not enough to refrain from immorality—must oppose it too!
4. If we sin with our leaders—we will be punished with them.
5. The Lord gives the sinful time to repent.

Lesson Six
Comments on
THE CHURCH AT SARDIS
Rev. 3:1-6

INTRODUCTION

1. City of Sardis:
 - a) An ancient city—antedates known history.
 - b) Had been an important and magnificent city in times past.
 - c) Had been fabulously rich with gold & silver in hills & streams.
 - d) City—known for sin.
 - e) However—at this time, city thought to have been declining.
2. Church at Sardis:
 - a) Do not know for sure about its beginning.
 - b) Had no Balaam nor Jezebel.
 - c) Had a worse evil—the numbness of spiritual death coming on.
 - d) Complete rebuke—nothing good said except for a few.

DISCUSSION

I. INFORMATION FROM TEXT (Rev. 3:1-6)

A. Verse 1 (The Lord's Identification)

- 1) Has seven Spirits of God
- 2) Has seven stars

B. Verse 1 (His rebuke of them)

- 1) you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

C. Verse 2-3 (His exhortation)

- 1) Be watchful
- 2) Strengthen the things which remain—that are ready to die.
- 3) I have not found your works perfect before God.
- 4) Remember what you have received and heard
- 5) Hold them fast
- 6) Repent

D. Verse 3 (His threat)

- 1) If you will not watch....
- 2) I will come upon you as a thief
- 3) You will not know what hour I will come

E. Verse 4 (His limited praise)

- 1) You have a few names who have not defiled their garments

F. Verse 4-5 (His promise)

- 1) Few shall walk with me in white—they are worthy.

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- 2) Overcomers shall be clothed in white garments
 - 3) I will not blot out his name from the book of life
 - 4) I will confess his name before my Father and before His angels.
- G. Verse 6 (Admonition to hear Spirit)**

QUESTIONS
THE CHURCH AT SARDIS
Rev. 3:1-6

- 1. What is the significance of 7 Spirits and 7 stars?**
 - a) God wants to guide, sustain, and direct his people.
 - b) He has the power to infuse life again into a dead church.
 - c) Reputation vs. Character:
 - 1) Reputation—What people think of us.
 - 2) Character—What we actually are.
 - 3) Can be a wide gap between with some people.
 - d) They were somewhat like the city—dying!

- 2. What are some things that can give a name to a church—but no guaranteed of spiritual life?**
 - a) Financial power & wealth.
 - b) Large membership in church.
 - c) Prominent people in community.
 - d) An elaborate place of worship.
 - e) Absence of immoral conduct of the flesh.
 - f) Soundness of doctrine.
 - g) An attractive ritual in worship services.

- 3. What does it mean to be watchful?**
 - a) Eternal vigilance is price of eternal salvation.
 - b) Admonished continual to be watchful.

- 4. What does it take to put new life back into a dead church?**
 - a) Strengthen what remains that is right.
 - b) Remember how you have been blessed and what you have heard.
 - 1) Don't ignore it, reject it, table it.
 - 2) Don't receive it with joy and do nothing about it.
 - c) Hold fast to these. (Don't let it slip)

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- d) Repent! (Do something about your condition.)
- e) Be more watchful.

5. What are some areas in which the church could be dead?

- a) Sing, but not from the heart.
- b) Pray, but no real trust in God's answers.
- c) Give, but not unselfishly.
- d) Commune, but only an outward formality to be done each week.
- e) Study, but with no intentions of putting into practice.
- f) Pretend to be servants of God:
 - a) But fail to serve fully or faithfully.
 - b) Let too many things interfere.
- g) *"have a form of godliness, but deny power thereof."***
- h) Become too complacent, self-satisfied.
- i) No real zeal and dead-earnestness on their part.

6. How can you have a few righteous in midst of a dead church?

- a) It is possible to live right even when others do not around you.
- b) They still served God faithfully.
- c) Their garments were not defiled—did not go with the rest.
- d) But—not enough righteous to save the church—needed God's help.

6. What is the significance of the three promises:

- a) Cloth you in white raiment—Righteousness, purity, cleanliness.
- b) Name not blotted out—can be if don't do right.
- c) Confess his name—He is mine—He is faithful.

Lesson Seven
Comments
THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH
(Rev. 3:7-13)

INTRODUCTION

1. City of Philadelphia:
 - a) A commercial city.
 - b) Well-fortified—a commanding position.
 - c) Destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 17.
 - d) Richness of land caused people to continue to live there.
 - e) Had numerous temples and festivals.
 - f) Had a colony of Jews who lived there.
 - g) Name means—"Brotherly love"
2. Church at Philadelphia:
 - a) Only one with no condemnation or rebuke of any kind.
 - b) Most unusual.

DISCUSSION

I. INFORMATION FROM TEXT (Rev. 3:7-13)

A. Verse 7 (The Lord's identification)

- 1) Holy-- (pure, exalted one, showing Divinity)
- 2) True -- (True God as opposed to false—True Messiah in contrast to many false Messiahs)
- 3) Has the key of David – (Government, power, sits on throne, who rules)
- 4) Opens and shuts – (Great power—none can resist it)
(Complete control)
(He can invite or exclude whom He wills)
(He can open and shut doors (of opportunity))

B. Verses 8, 10 (His praise of them)

- 1) You have a little strength
- 2) You have kept my word
- 3) You have not denied my name
- 4) You have kept my command to persevere.

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C. Verses 8, 9, 10, 12 (His promise to them)

- 1) Set before you an open door that no one can shut.
- 2) Cause the Synagogue of Satan to come and worship before your feet and to know that I have loved you.
- 3) I will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.
- 4) To him who overcomes—I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God—and he shall go out no more.
- 5) Will write on him the name of my God & name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God.
- 6) I will write on him my new name.

D. Verse 11, 13 (His exhortation to them)

- 1) I come quickly—Hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown.
- 2) Listen to what the Spirit is saying.

QUESTIONS
THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA
(Rev. 3:7-13)

1. Why was it important for the church at Philadelphia to know that Jesus had the Key of David?

- a) Struggle between unbelieving Jews & Jewish Christians.
- b) They claimed to be the true children of God—not the Christians.
- c) Jesus made it very clear that He is the one that determines who the true children of God are!
- d) Unbelieving Jews are no longer acceptable to God.
- e) He opens & shuts—excludes or includes—no one else!

2. For what was the church praised by Jesus?

- a) You have little strength—possibly small in numbers, but can still serve God acceptably. Small by human standards—strong by God's standard.
- b) Kept my word—Faithful under great persecution (possibly by Jews).
- c) Not denied my name—Held fast to convictions about Christ being the Messiah—the Son of God!

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3. What is the significance of an "open door" and what responsibility does it require?

- a) Can be an entrance to something or an escape.
- b) Here—possibly an opportunity to proclaim Christ—to witness of Him.
- c) No one can close that door, but Christ.
- d) What responsibility:
 - 1) That we look for them.
 - 2) That we take advantage of the opportunity while it is open.

4. Who is called a synagogue of Satan and why?

- a) Those who claim to be Jews, but are not.
- b) Jews by generation, but not Jews by Regeneration.
- c) Unbelieving Jews were doing Satan's Will—not God's Will.
- d) True Jew—one who has accepted Christ.

5. In what sense will such be made to come and worship before the church's feet?

- a) Possibly brought to point of conversion.
- b) Or, something will happen soon to make it obvious who the true Child of God is.
- c) Moral strength in persecution affects others.
- d) Upon the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem—many became Christians.
- e) God's favor has passed to Christians, not Jews.

6. Is God promising the church that He will cause them to miss being tempted when the world will be tested?

- a) No—all will be tested.
- b) But he would help them and deliver them during the trial.

7. Is Jesus saying that men can take our Crown that God gives us?

- a) Yes—in a sense.
- b) No one can take it against our will.
- c) But we can allow someone to turn us from Christ and faithfulness to Him.
- d) In this sense—a man can take away our crown.

8. What is the significance of the promises to the church in verse 12?

- a) Pillar in the temple of my God
 - 1) Pillars often still stand where rest of temple in ruins.

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- 2) Emphasis upon the everlasting nature of God's temple in heaven.
- 3) Steadfast, unmovable.
- 4) Temple—church.
- b) Go no more out:
 - 1) Earthquakes—had to flee city.
 - 2) But no earthquakes in heaven.
 - 3) Keeps safe.
- c) Write upon him the name of my God:
 - 1) Identification to whom one belongs. (a child of God).
 - 2) God not ashamed for His name to be attached to them.
- d) Write the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem.
 - 1) Because he belongs in the city.
 - 2) New Jerusalem—in contrast to old Jerusalem that was destroyed.
 - 3) Heavenly Jerusalem—the church (Eventually, heaven).
- e) New name:
 - 1) Name of Christ—recognition by Him.
 - 2) Belong to Christ
- f) Comment:
 - 1) No question as to whom is a true Christian—true Jew.
 - 2) It may be debated & argued by men who is a true child of God.
 - 3) But the Lord ends that argument!

CONCLUSION

1. Are we a Philadelphia church?
 - a) Small—little strength—but not weak for the Lord.
 - b) Watching for doors of opportunity and taking advantage of such.
 - c) One that keeps faithfully the word of God.

Lesson Eight
Comments
THE LAODICEAN CHURCH
(Rev. 3:14-22)

INTRODUCTION

1. City of Laodicea:
 - a) Wealthy, Proud, Well-known city.
 - b) Center of banking empire.
 - c) Medical school close by.
 - d) Known for its special black wool and seamless garment.
 - e) Destroyed by earthquake in 62-63 AD, but rebuilt by its wealthy people.
2. The church at Laodicea:
 - a) One of 3-cities close together: Colosse and Hierapolis.
 - b) Paul evidently had a letter passing around that was known of by the Laodiceans.
 - c) Col. 4:16—*"And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."*
 - d) Church was not disturbed by: Heresies or persecutions.
 - e) But received severe condemnation from the Lord for its condition.

DISCUSSION

INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT:

Verse 14—Attributes of Christ:

- a) The Amen (Verily, Truly, True One, God, Deity)
- b) The faithful and true witness
 - 1) His word is truth, reliable, dependable.
 - 2) His promises are sure.
- c) The beginning of the creation of God.
 - 1) Its source, it's beginning—without Him nothing was made.
 - 2) Through Him all things consists.
 - 3) He owns it all—is rich, truly!

Verse 15-17—Condemnation:

- a) *You are neither cold or hot.*
 - 1) Cold:
 - Lifeless, dead, inactive—no spiritual life with God.
 - An unbeliever or one who has completely turned back into the world & overcome.

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2) Hot:

- Zealous, active, alive, working, producing fruit.
- Dedicated, Loyal, Faithful Christian.
- Busy working in God's vineyard.

3) The Lord said, "***I wish you were one or the other.***"

4) In other words—"Get in or get out—don't be in between."

b) You are lukewarm

- 1) Listless spiritual indifference.
- 2) Only outdone by their sense of respectability.
- 3) They were neither earnestly for God, nor totally against Him.
- 4) Lukewarm is sickening—spew it out.
- 5) Lord's disgust at them is being shown.

c) You say you are rich and have need of nothing.

- 1) Showed a spirit of blind self-confidence.
- 2) Self-satisfaction in riches and possessions.
- 3) Become infected with love of material things.
- 4) Spent their energies accumulating riches, rather than being zealous for Lord.
- 5) Felt divine approval because of prosperity.

d) And knowest not:

- 1) Did not realize their wretched, miserable, poverty-stricken condition.
- 2) They were blinded to their true condition.
- 3) Special comments:
 - No condition so dangerous.
 - Self-satisfaction had eaten the heart of love and zeal for Christ.
 - Were not concerned about lives or sins.
 - No wonder the Lord preferred them Cold to this.
 - Such does more harm inside church as well as outside.
 - Harder to be reached than though he had not heard.
- 4) The spiritually lukewarm go thru their ceremonies on Sunday:
 - Convincing themselves of their righteousness.
 - He may want the lost to be condemned publicly.
 - But he is not interested in saving the lost.
 - And all the time not realizing that he is lost.

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- 5) If religion is worth anything—it is worth everything.
- 6) Indifference is inexcusable.

Verses 18-19—The Lord's Admonitions:

a) *Buy of me gold tried in the fire.*

- 1) Doctor prescribing for the patient who is sick.
- 2) Only God has the true riches—rich in faith, hope, and love.

b) *Buy white raiment.*

- 1) Purity, holiness, zealousness—only God can furnish.
- 2) Clothed in the proper attire.

c) *Eyes to be anointed.*

- 1) So they can see their true selves.
- 2) Be enlightened by God.
- 3) Truly have our eyes opened to truth.

d) *Be zealous and Repent.*

- 1) The Lord loves all men.
- 2) But in particular those who are His children.
- 3) He rebuked this church out of His love for them.
- 4) They needed to realize that what He had spoken was for their good.
- 5) They needed to repent!

Verses 20-22—The Lord promises:

a) *If open the door, I will come in and sup with you.*

- 1) Jesus was standing outside—not His choice, but their's.
- 2) He knocked to be allowed back in.
- 3) No greater sight of humility presented than this.
- 4) Put out—but still knocking.
- 5) I will be a source of help and strength.

b) *To the overcomer—Let sit with me in my throne (even as I overcame).*

- 1) Concept of living & reigning with Christ. (Rev. 20:4)
- 2) Christ as set the example and paved the way.
- 3) He overcame and was allowed to sit down with His Father.
- 4) So can we—if we overcome.

C. *Admonition to hear the Spirit.*

- 1) Of the 7 churches—this one needed to hear most of all.

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CONCLUSION

1. Never become self-satisfied with your life.
2. Always look to ways of improving yourself before God.
3. As a congregation, never be content to remain as we are.
4. No preacher, worth his salt, desires to preach to and work with a self-satisfied smug, indifferent church—much less the Lord.

QUESTIONS
THE LAODICEAN CHURCH
(Rev. 3:14-22)

1. **Why would the Lord want them hot or cold, not lukewarm?**
2. **Why is it so hard to reach the indifferent?**
3. **Why does the Lord have to keep knocking on the door of men's hearts?**
4. **How do people get to the condition of a false sense of security?**
5. **How does ease and prosperity affect Christians?**
 - a) Can lead to blind pride & lukewarmness.
6. **How does one so delude himself about his true condition?**
7. **In what sense were they "naked?"**
 - a) Did not have the proper spiritual clothing—Faith, Hope, Love, Righteousness, Good works, etc.
 - b) Lives filled with fruit of the Spirit that clothes them.
 - c) 1 Pet. 3:3-4—Inner beauty!
8. **Who truly loves his children?**
 - a) Those who chasten.
 - b) If not chasten—not son.---Prov.—hate child.
9. **How does God knock on the door of our hearts?**
 - a) His Word.
 - b) Others about us living right.

**Lesson Nine
Comments**

THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

**(Acts 6:5; 11:19-30; 12:25-13:3; 14:25-28; 15:1-3 (Gal. 2:1-16); 15:22-39;
18:22-23)**

I. THE CITY OF ANTIOCH.

- 1) Founded by Seleucus Nicator (BC 300)
- 2) Named after his father, Antiochus.
- 3) Capital of Seleucian Kingdom until city was conquered by Pompey and made a Roman Province (BC 64).
- 4) Located about 300 miles north of Jerusalem.
- 5) Estimated population of 500,000.
- 6) Referred to as "Antioch the Beautiful," or "The Queen of the East."
- 7) City was large, rich, cosmopolitan, with large commerce.

II. THE CHURCH IS STARTED. (Acts 6:5; 11:19-26)

1) Where was Nicolas from? (Acts 6:5)

- a) A proselyte from Antioch.
- b) Converted while in Jerusalem.

2) Who first preached the gospel at Antioch? (11:19-20)

- a) Those scattered after the persecution of Stephen preached to Jews only.
- b) Men who were from Cyprus & Cyrene preached to the Hellenists.

3) How large was the church? (11:21, 24, 26)

- a) Great number believed and turned to the Lord.
- b) And a great many people were added to the Lord.
- c) Taught a great many people.
- d) The Lord blessed their combined efforts.
- e) After the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70):
 - 1) Church at Antioch became a haven for fleeing Christians.
 - 2) It became the center of Eastern Christianity.

III. THE CHURCH STRENGTHENED. (Acts 11:22-26)

1) Who was sent to help strengthen the new church at Antioch? (11:22)

- a) Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to help stabilize the church.
- b) Barnabas was an exhorter, an encourager. (Acts 4:36)

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c) He was a good man, full of the H.S., and Faith.

2) Who else was secured to help with the new church? (11:25)

- a) Saul of Tarsus had been converted on the way to Damascus to persecute Christians.
- b) After 3 years, he had gone up to Jerusalem—but didn't get to stay long.
- c) The church had to send him away for his safety—to his home in Tarsus.
- d) He evidently did some preaching and teaching in his home town & that area.
- e) Barnabas went over to Tarsus to seek for Saul to come and help.

3) For how long did they work together with others at Antioch? (11:26)

- a) For a whole year.
- b) Strengthening the church & teaching the lost.
- c) Antioch church had to be a strong congregation with such teachers.

4) What term was used for the first time to identify the followers of Jesus at Antioch? (11:26)

- a) Disciples were called Christians.
- b) Isa. 62:2
- c) They identified with Christ as his followers.

IV. THE CHURCH WITH A BENEVOLENT SPIRIT. (Acts 11:27-30)

1) Who foretold of a great famine to come? (11:27-28)

- a) Prophets from Jerusalem.
- b) One of them was named Agabus.
- c) Great famine throughout all the world.
- d) Happens in days of Claudius Caesar.

2) What did the disciples at Antioch do? (11:29-30)

- a) Determined to send relief (help).
- b) Each gave according to his ability.
- c) They sent the money to the elders by the hands of Barnabas & Saul.

V. THE CHURCH WITH A MISSIONARY ZEAL. (Acts 12:25-13:3; 14:25-28)

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1) Who did Paul & Barnabas bring back to Antioch with them that went on their first missionary journey? (12:25)

a) John Mark—nephew or cousin to Barnabas (Col. 4:10).

2) Who were named as Prophets and Teachers at Antioch? (13:1)

a) Barnabas

b) Simeon who was called Niger

c) Lucius of Cyrene

d) Manaen (brought up with Herod the tetrarch)

e) Saul

f) Quiet an array of teachers of God's Word.

3) Who determined that Paul & Barnabas would do mission work elsewhere? (13:2)

a) The Holy Spirit had them separated out to go.

b) But the indication was that the church was fasting & praying over something.

c) How was this message communicated to the church? (By prophet)

d) The church's willingness to lose them great men to preach elsewhere.

4) What did Paul & Barnabas do upon their return to Antioch from their first missionary trip? (14:27)

a) Called the church together.

b) Reported on what the Lord had done through their efforts.

5) For how long did they stay at Antioch? (14:28)

a) Long time with the disciples.

b) How long is long? Several months?

c) Who wouldn't want to stay with a church like Antioch!

v. A CHURCH IN THE MIDST OF CONTROVERSY. (Acts 15:1-3, 22-39; Gal. 2:1-16)

1) What was the problem that arose in the church and who caused it? (15:1)

a) Certain men from Judea.

1) At Jerusalem—sect of Pharisees that believed (15:5)

2) Certain men that came from James (Gal. 2:12)

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b) Must be circumcised to be saved.

1) At Jerusalem—To circumcise them and keep the Law of Moses.

2) How was Peter and Barnabas affected by these men from Judea (from James)? (Gal. 2:11-13)

a) Peter previously ate with Gentiles who believed before they came.

b) Afterwards, He no longer would eat with them.

c) He feared those of the circumcision.

d) The rest of the Jews in the congregation also did like Peter.

e) Even Barnabas was carried away by their actions.

f) Paul called it hypocrisy.

3) What did Paul do before the whole church? (Gal. 2:11, 14-16)

a) He saw they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel.

b) He withstood him to the face because he was at fault.

c) He stated before whole church that Peter was wrong in his actions.

4) How did the church deal with this problem? (Acts 15:2; Gal. 2:1-10)

a) After Paul & Barnabas had had no small dissension and dispute with them....

b) The church decided to send them and certain other ones to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question.

c) Titus was one that went up with Paul.

d) Paul said he went up by revelation.

e) He communicated what he preached to those of reputation (apostles, elders, others) privately first.

f) Then, the whole church at Jerusalem was involved in the final decision.

5) What did the Jerusalem church do to help settle the question? (15:22-23)

a) Once they had concluded the matter as a group.....

b) Sent a letter stated their conclusions.

c) Sent it by the hands of Paul & Barnabas, Silas, and Judas (Barsabas).

6) What effect did the letter and the exhortations have on the church at Antioch? (15:30-32)

a) The church rejoiced over its encouragement.

b) Judas & Silas were prophets who exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words.

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7) What did Paul & Barnabas do at Antioch? (15:35)

- a) Continued to teach and preach the word of the Lord with many others.

CONCLUSION

1. Acts 18:22-23—last mention of Antioch in Scriptures.
2. Antioch became a great center of Christianity for many years.

**Lesson Ten
Comments**

**THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA
(Acts 17:1-10; 1 Thess. & 2 Thess.)**

I. THE CITY OF THESSALONICA:

1. It has a long history.
2. Present name is Salonica.
3. Cassander named the city after his wife—Philip's daughter.
4. The city was taken by the Romans in 168 BC.
5. It became the capital of one of the 4 divisions of Macedonia under the Romans.
6. In 42 BC, it was made a free city.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH: (Acts 17:1-10)

1) Who first preached the gospel to the Thessalonians? (Acts 17:1-3)

- a) Paul, with Timothy & Silas.
- b) Traveled from Philippi.
- c) During Paul's 2nd missionary journey (AD 50-53)
- d) He reasoned with the Jews & devout Greeks about Jesus:
 1. That the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead.
 2. That this Jesus whom I preached in the Christ.
- e) The Philippian church helped Paul financially to preach at Thessalonica. (Phil. 4:16)

2) What kind of response was given to the preaching of the gospel? (Acts 17:4)

- a) "some of them (Jews)."
- b) "great multitude of the devout Greeks....not a few of the leading women"
- c) Joined Paul and Silas—In what sense?

3) What caused some Jews to take action against Paul? (Acts 17:5-9)

- a) They became envious—they lost a lot of people to this new teaching.
- b) They got a mob of evil men and set the city in an uproar.
- c) They attacked the house of Jason—but didn't find Paul, Timothy, & Silas.
- d) They dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city.
- e) Accused them: *"These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. And Jason has harbored them. They are acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar—saying there is another king, Jesus."*

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- f) These things troubled the rulers of the city.
- g) They took security from Jason and the rest and let them go.

4) What did Paul and Silas do? (Acts 17:10)

- a) The brethren sent them away immediately by night to Berea.
- b) Timothy may have stayed on for a period of time.
- c) But Timothy was with Paul at Berea when Paul had to leave from there due to some from Thess. coming down and stirring up the crowd again. (Acts 17:13-14)

5) From where did Paul write the two letters to the Thessalonian church?

- a) Paul wanted to go back up to Thessalonica, but was hindered. (1 Thess. 2:17-18)
- b) Paul sent Timothy back up to Thessalonica from Athens. (1 Thess. 3:1-5)
- c) Timothy (and Silas) rejoin Paul in the city of Corinth. (1 Thess. 3:6; Acts 17:14-16; 18:1, 5)
- d) Paul stayed 18 months in Corinth. (Acts 18:11)
- e) Letters believed to have been written with 6 months of each other.

6) What names are mentioned as being from Thessalonica?

- a) Acts 20:4; 27:2—Aristarchus & Secundus
- b) 2 Tim. 4:10—Demas

II. WHAT WERE SOME PROBLEMS THAT THE CHURCH HAD TO DEAL WITH?

1) Who had suffered as the Thessalonians had? (1 Thess. 2:14-16)

- a) Like the Jews of their own countrymen.
- b) They killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets.
- c) They persecuted us....trying to keep us from preaching to the Gentiles.

2) How had they dealt with their persecution? (1 Thess. 3:2-3, 5-7)

- a) They were not shaken by their afflictions.
- b) They had expected persecution.
- c) Timothy brought good news of their faith and love.

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3) What were some of their misunderstandings about the 2nd coming of Christ?

- a) That the dead in Christ would not get to go to be with the Lord as the living would. (1 Thess. 4:13-18)
- b) That the Lord would be coming in their lifetime. (2 Thess. 2:1-3)

4) What was their problem about not working? (1 Thess. 4:11-12; 5:14; 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:6-8, 10-12)

- a) Paul recognized a condition among them when he was there that some were lazy.
- b) He warned them to work and earn their own living.
- c) He gave the principle—"If will not work, neither shall he eat."
- d) To withdraw from such who will not take heed to God's Will.

5) What were some good things stated about the church at Thessalonica?

- a) 1 Thess. 1:3—Work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope.
- b) 1 Thess. 1:6—Became followers of us and the Lord
---Received word in much affliction—with joy of Holy Spirit.
- c) 1 Thess. 1:7—Became examples to all in Macedonia & Achaia.
- d) 1 Thess. 1:8—Word of Lord sounded forth from them.
- e) 1 Thess. 1:9—Turned from idols to serve the living God
- f) 1 Thess. 2:13—Received the preaching as Word of God, not men.
- g) 2 Thess. 1:3—Your faith grows exceedingly & love abounds.

CONCLUSION

- 1. There were quite a few exhortations to the church.
- 2. Especially in view of the problem areas.
- 3. He praised them highly as a group.

Lesson Eleven
Comments
THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE

I. THE CITY OF COLOSSAE:

- 1) In a tri-city area.
- 2) Laodicea was 10 miles away.
- 3) Hierapolis was 13 miles away.

II. THE CHURCH STARTED.

- 1) Probably started while Paul was at Ephesus on 3rd journey. (All Asia heard the word).
- 2) Epaphras was working with all three churches as a minister of the gospel. (4:12-13)
- 3) He may have been the one who first took the gospel to the three churches. (1:7)
- 4) They were not personally acquainted with Paul. (2:1)
- 5) Church made up of both Jew & Gentile (larger number of Gentiles—1:27; 2:13)
- 6) Epaphras may have brought news of the problems in the church to Paul at Rome. (4:12)

II. HE COMMENDS THE CHURCH.

- 1) He calls them saints & faithful brethren. (1:2)
- 2) Their faith & love was a source of thanksgiving to Paul. (1:3-5)
- 3) He rejoiced over their good order and steadfastness of faith in Christ. (2:5)

III. HIS ADMONITION AND WARNING TO THEM.

- 1) Be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom & spiritual understanding. (1:9)
- 2) Walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him—Be fruitful in every good work—increasing in knowledge of God. (1:10)
- 3) Be strengthened with all might. (1:11)
- 4) Watch out for danger of being deceived with persuasive words. (2:4)
- 5) Don't let anyone cheat you through:
 - a) Philosophy & empty deceit;
 - b) Traditions of men;
 - c) basic principles of the world (2:8)

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- 6) Don't allow someone to condemn you over:
 - a) food & drink
 - b) Festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths. (2:16)
- 7) Let no one cheat you of your reward by:
 - a) Taking delight in false humility;
 - b) Worshipping of angels;
 - c) Being vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. (2:18)
 - d) By letting yourselves be subjected to regulations. (2:20-23)
- 8) The need to set our affections on things above. (3:1-2)
- 9) To avoid the dangers of sinful indulgences. (3:5-6)
- 10) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. (3:16)
- 11) Walk in wisdom towards them that are without. (4:5-6)

IV. GREAT EMPHASIS UPON CHRIST.

A. His Nature:

- 1) He is the image of the invisible God. (1:15)
- 2) He is the first born of all creation. (1:15)
- 3) He is the creator of all things in heaven & earth. (1:16)
- 4) He is before all things. (1:17)
- 5) In Him all things consist. (1:17)
- 6) He is the head of the body, the church. (1:18)
- 7) He is the beginning, the first born from the dead. (1:18)
- 8) He is to have the pre-eminence in all things. (1:18)
- 9) In Him all fullness dwells. (1:19)
- 10) He makes reconciliation with God possible. (1:20)
- 11) In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge. (2:3)
- 12) In Him dwells all fullness of Godhead bodily. (2:9)
- 13) He is head of all principalities and powers. (2:10)
- 14) He has disarmed principalities & powers. (2:15)
- 15) He has made a public spectacle of them. (2:15)
- 16) He has triumphed over them. (2:15)
- 17) He is all in all. (3:11)

B. His Blessings:

- 1) Redemption. (1:14)
- 2) Forgiveness of sins. (1:14; 2:13)
- 3) Reconciliation. (1:21)

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- 4) Make us holy & blameless & above reproach. (1:22)
- 5) He is our Hope of glory. (1:27)
- 6) We are complete in Christ. (1:28; 2:10)
- 7) He has made us alive. (2:13)

CONCLUSION

1. Christ is our hope—not the wisdom of men, nor the commandments & regulations of men.
2. Put our trust in Christ, not something else.
3. We are complete in Him.

Lesson Twelve

Comments

THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI

I. THE CITY OF PHILIPPI

A. Considered European continent.

- 1) An elite Roman colony.
- 2) Lot of retired military people.
- 3) Famous as a military & communications center.
- 4) No Jewish synagogue—not too many Jews.
- 5) People with money—Lydia, a seller of purple.
- 6) People born there had Roman citizenship, freedom, special privileges.

B. First place Paul preached in Macedonia.

II. THE CHURCH STARTED (On Paul's 2nd missionary tour.)

- 1) Paul & Barnabas separated and went different directions.
- 2) Silas went with Paul (Acts 15:40)
- 3) They strengthened the churches in Syria, Cilicia, & Galatian province.
(Acts 15:41; 16:1, 5)
- 4) Timothy asked to join them. (16:2-3)
- 5) Came to Troas where Paul saw a vision of a man asking him to come and preach to them in Macedonia (16:8-9).
- 6) First recorded converts at Philippi:
 - a) Lydia & her household (Acts 16:13-15)
 - b) Jailer & His household (Acts 16:16-34)
- 7) About AD 51-52.
- 8) Paul came through again on his 3rd journey (AD 55-56)
- 9) Letter written to them from Roman prison (AD 62-63).

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHURCH:

A. From Acts:

- 1) Church made up of Jew & Gentile.

B. From Philippian letter:

- 1) They had Bishops & Deacons (1:1)
- 2) They were holding up under suffering (1:29-30)
- 3) They were mission-minded (1:5)
- 4) They had a benevolent spirit (2 Cor. 8:1-5)

C. People connected with church:

- 1) Lydia & her household (Acts 16:13-15)
- 2) Jailer & His household (Acts 16:16-34)

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- 3) Luke evidently stayed with the church when Paul, Silas, & Timothy left. (Acts 16:11, 17:1)
- 4) Epaphroditus was sent by church to Rome to help Paul. (Phil. 2:25; 4:10, 14, 18)
- 5) Euodia & Syntyche (4:2-3)

IV. PAUL'S EXHORTATIONS TO THEM:

A. In General:

- 1) Your love to abound still more & more in knowledge & all discernment (1:9)
- 2) Approve things that are excellent (1:10)
- 3) Be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ (1:10)
- 4) Be filled with fruits of righteousness (1:11)
- 5) That your faith & Joy will progress (1:25)
- 6) That your conduct will be worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27)
- 7) Don't be terrified by your adversaries (1:28)
- 8) Be blameless & harmless children of God (2:15)
- 9) Shine as lights in the world of darkness (2:15)
- 10) Hold fast to the word of life (2:16)
- 11) Help women who laborer with Paul in the gospel (4:3)
- 12) Rejoice in the Lord always (4:4)
- 13) Let your gentleness be known to all men (4:5)
- 14) Be anxious over nothing (4:6)
- 15) Think on good things (4:8)

B. Exhortations to unity, oneness, harmony.

- 1) Stand fast in one spirit (1:27)
- 2) Stand fast in one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (1:27)
- 3) Be likeminded (2:2)
- 4) Have same love (2:2)
- 5) Be of one accord (2:2)
- 6) Be of one mind (2:2)
- 7) Walk by same rule, same mind (3:16)
- 8) Two women to be of same mind (4:2)

C. Exhorted to avoid things that disturb or destroy this unity.

- 1) Don't do anything through selfish ambition or conceit (2:3)
- 2) Don't complain and be disputing with one another (2:14)
- 3) Beware of dogs, evil workers, mutilation (3:2)

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D. Exhorted to do things that help to strengthen this unity.

- 1) In lowliness of mind esteem others better than self. (2:3)
- 2) Look out for others' interest as well as your own. (3:4)
- 3) Follow my example (3:17)
- 4) Take notice of those also who do this (3:18)
- 5) What you have learned, received, heard, saw in me, do! (4:9)

CONCLUSION

1. These concepts are hitting at the idea that a person can have a vital connection with Christ, but isolated from fellowship with God's people.
2. Rom. 14:7, 19

