

Teacher Class Plan

Revelation: Lesson #98 – Letters to the Seven Churches - 3 For Sunday, May 17th

Read Revelation 3:7-22 (a simplified explanation of the text will be supplied at the end of these notes.)

Memory Verse: Rev. 3:11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."

Today we are looking at the last two letters to the seven churches of Asia that Jesus gave to John – Philadelphia and Laodicea.

Jesus' Letter to the Church at Philadelphia

- Jesus introduces Himself as "He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens." The Key of David means that Jesus has the authority to rule. In the Old Testament God appointed David to be the King over God's people. Later in the Old Testament Isaiah talked about a ruler having the Key of David (Isa. 22:22). Jesus can us His "key", His authority as King to open or to shut.
- Good Things About This Church: Jesus knew that even though this church had only a little strength, it had kept His Word and not denied His name. The Lord said He would give them an open door. An open door is often a symbol of an opportunity to do something good. This church which had only a little strength would now be given an opportunity to do more.
- Bad Things About This Church: The Lord does not tell anything bad about the Philadelphia church.
- The Christians at Philadelphia were having even more problems because of the "synagogue of Satan". A synagogue was a place where Jews worshipped, but these Jews were doing evil things and were of Satan. It is possible that they were persecuting Christians. Jesus said that He would cause these to come bow down at the feet of the Christians. Because the Philadelphia church had already proven that they would stay faithful to Christ, He said He would keep them from being tested. But these Christians needed to make sure that they held on and not let anyone take away their crown. This is where our **memory verse** in Rev. 3:11 comes from: "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."
Hold up the large memory verse cards and work on this verse with the class.
- **The Lord's Reward:** Jesus said that those who win the victory would be made a column in the Temple of His God and that they would never again go out of that Temple. In Revelation 21 there is a description of our reward in heaven. John says there was no temple there because God and Jesus will be our temple. We will always be with them in their glory. Sometimes when something is important and we don't want to lose it, we put our names on certain things. Jesus said He would write God's name, His name, and the name of our new home in heaven on all who serve Him faithfully.

Jesus' Letter to the Church at Laodicea

- Jesus introduces Himself as “The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the source of God’s creation.” The word “amen” is not just the ending to a prayer. It really means “this is true”. Jesus is what is really true. We can always believe Him. He is a faithful and true witness to what God says. He is also the beginning, the source, of all that has been created.
- Good Things About This Church: Unfortunately, the Lord found nothing good to say about the Laodicean church.
- Bad Things About This Church: Jesus said they were not hot or cold, just lukewarm. Some people like to drink coffee hot, but it doesn’t taste good once it cools off. Some people like to drink soft drinks cold, but they don’t like them once they warm up. In between cold and hot is lukewarm. Jesus said He wished Laodicea would be one way or the other but not in between. Being “lukewarm” means that we still go to church, but we aren’t ever happy to go. One of the worst things that can happen to a Christian is to start thinking they don’t need to do much any more. They don’t need to grow any more. They don’t need to study any more.
- It sounds like these Christians thought they didn’t need anything. They thought they were rich. But Jesus said they were really miserable, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.
- The Lord said they needed to...
 - Buy gold from Him (gold tried in the fire) so that would truly be rich,
 - Buy white garments so that you can be properly clothed and not be ashamed of your nakedness,
 - And buy ointment to rub on their eyes so that they could see.
 - It was time for the Christians at Laodicea to change their ways and be more zealous. Zealous means to be excited and interested. It means to serve the Lord better and more.
- Jesus would like to have greater fellowship with the church. He said He was standing at their door knocking. All they had to do was open up and let Him come in. It is sad to think that we could be so uninterested in church that Jesus would feel like He was on the outside of the church.
- **The Lord’s Reward:** If the Laodicean church would change their ways, they, too, could win the victory. Jesus promises them, “I will give them right to sit with me in my throne, just as I won my victory and sat down with My Father in His throne.” We can join in Christ’s reign and enjoy His rule.

Bible Quiz: Please review the quiz questions with your students. Make sure they are able to answer the questions individually.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

Letter to the Church at Philadelphia

3:7 Write this to the angel of the Philadelphia church: He who is holy and true, who has the Key of David, who can open and no man can shut, and shut and no man can open, has this to say:

8 I know your works. Look, for I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I have done this for you because even though your strength is small, you have still kept My Word and have not denied My name.

9 So watch, for these of the synagogue of Satan (those who say they are Jews, but are not and are really liars), I will make them come bow down at your feet and know that I have loved you.

10 Because you have kept My Word when I asked you to endure, I will keep you from the hour of trial that will come on all the world when I put all who dwell on the earth to the test.

11 Watch, for I will come quickly. Hold on to what you have so that no one will take your crown.

12 Those who win the victory I will make them a column in the Temple of My God. They will never again go out of that Temple. I will write on them the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on them My new name.

13 If you have an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Letter to the Church at Laodicea

3:14 Write this to the angel of the Laodicea church: The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the source of God's creation, has this to say:

15 I know your works. I know that you are not cold or hot. I wish that you be either cold or hot.

16 So since you are lukewarm, and not cold or hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

17 You say, "I am wealthy and have become rich and I don't need anything" and yet you don't know that you are really miserable, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

18 Because of this I advise you to buy gold from Me (gold tried in the fire) so that you can truly be rich, buy white garments so that you can be properly clothed and not be ashamed of your nakedness, and buy ointment to rub your eyes so that you can see.

19 Whoever I tenderly love, I tell them when they are wrong and teach them to do better. So become filled with zeal and change the way you've been acting.

20 Now you need to see this: I am standing at the door and knocking. If any of you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to them and take supper with them.

21 Those who win the victory I will give them right to sit with me in my throne, just as I won my victory and sat down with My Father in His throne.

22 If you have an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the churches.