



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



# The Holy Book of Revelation

## Chapter 3

His Grace Bishop Youssef



# Introduction

In this chapter God addresses His messages:

- To the Angel of the Church in Sardis, The Dead Church 1-6
- To the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia,  
The Faithful Church 7-13
- To the Angel of the Church of The Laodiceans,  
The Lukewarm Church 14-22



# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

## Sardis

- Sardis was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, one of the provinces of Asia Minor
- Sardis was a wealthy commercial city
- This Church is one of the two which receives one hundred per cent rebuke
- Smyrna and Philadelphia receive no blame; Sardis and Laodicea receive no praise

Who is the angel of this church ?

- It is said that he is St. Melito





# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

## Description of the Lord

- The titles by which our Lord speaks of Himself in the letters to the seven churches are chosen to correspond with the spiritual condition of the community addressed
- Number 7 is one of the "perfect" numbers and symbolizes spiritual perfection
- The *seven Spirits* refers to the prophetic mission of the Holy Spirit
- The seven stars, Christ tells us in Revelation 1:16,20, are the messengers of the seven churches to whom the letters will be sent



# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

## Description of the Lord, cont...

- They are held in Jesus Christ's right hand; under His power and authority they will speak to the churches on His behalf
- The messengers of the churches belong to Him and they are accountable to Him for their actions
- The elders of the church in Sardis desperately need to be reminded of this because they had allowed the church to fall into spiritual decay



# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

## The State of the Church

- After the vivid reminder of the dignity and authority of the risen Christ there is a severe condemnation of the community at Sardis
- The church at Sardis had a good reputation for being an active faith community "alive" for Christ
- How dangerous is it! When people witness to a certain church that she is alive, having a name and reputation, but in fact she is dead
- She is dead because she is occupied with many matters far away from her mission, which is the enjoyment of her children in the Lord Jesus





# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

- This church was not suffering under any external persecution like the churches at Ephesus, Smyran and Pergamum
- It is interesting that of these 4 churches the Christians at Smyrna were suffering the most on account of the faith yet they were yielding the "sweetest fruit" for Christ
- The ministry of this church had a name, that is, were reported as famous for their faith, diligence, and holiness; but their faith, without suitable works, was dead, and they were no better than hypocrites
- *"For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ."* (Galatians 1:10)



# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

- God, our merciful Father, still calls him angel in spite of him being dead, sinful, unrepentant, and hypocrite
- God is telling him that he is still under His authority
- Although he is under sin, God tells him that “*will not leave you nor forsake you*” (Deuteronomy 31:8)
- This angel is dead, but God has the authority of life, *He who has the seven Spirits of God*
- He is telling him that he is still in God’s hand, *He who has ... the seven stars*





# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

## The Remedy

- Bishop Victorianus says, “The fifth group represents careless people who do other works than what they have to do. They are Christians by name, therefore by all means, He urges them to turn back from their deeds in order to be saved.”
- Christ gives Sardis two warnings, He tells them to "wake up!" and He commands them to "remember.”
- Be watchful against sin, and unto your duty, to perform it in a better manner than formerly



# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

The Remedy cont...

- While waiting for the coming of the Lord, the believer should not pay attention to people's praise, but keep awake to meet Him
- Just like the wise virgins who “*took oil in their vessels with their lamps*” (Matthew 25:4)
- Do not be like the foolish virgins who looked good but were empty inside, “*Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them*” (Matthew 25:3)



# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

- Improve those gifts and good habits which are left you as yet, but are faint and ready to die, if you do not look after the improvement and strengthening of them
- It is interesting that if Sardis can wake up there is hope
- This implies that the church is not completely dead but even though the community is in the last stages of life Christ has not given up on this church yet
- The danger is real and the judgment is coming but there is time





# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

The Remedy cont...

- Remember the goodness of God to you, thus, acknowledging what you owe Him, knowing that every righteousness you have is from Him not from you, repenting of your love of people's praise
- Remember the day of judgment: He who is not attracted by remembering the blessings of the Lord granted to him will be restrained by His threats, "*Therefore, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you*"



# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

- And what will happen if they fail to repent?
- The church will face the judgment of Christ
- This is the same threat as Revelation 1:7, 2:5,16
- The threat of His coming against a local church or even against a nation is not the same as the second Coming of Christ at the end of history
- The words used in this passage "*to you*" indicate a local coming not an end of the world coming



# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

- There was a remnant of the church who had remained faithful to what they had received and heard
- They had not *"soiled their garments"*; they had not become worldly and had not conformed to the dominant pagan culture
- These had not submitted to the oppressive moral atmosphere around them
- Those that have kept a pure conscience
- In the deathlike atmosphere, they had kept earnest in the pursuit of holiness, and had not forgotten Him who could cleanse and revive





# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

- The promise is repeated to all who overcome; all, not who have never fallen but who conquer
- Seven times in the Book of Revelation the saints are referred to as being "*clothed in white garments*" Revelation 3:4,18, 4:4, 6:11, 7:9,13, 19:14
- The white robes are a symbol in Scripture for righteousness and purity with origins in the sun-white brilliance of the Glory-cloud of God
- "*but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels*" Another echo of Christ's words on earth Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9



# The Church in Sardis 3:1-6

- He knows them by their names... He keeps them in the book of Life... The Lord acknowledges them before His angels... They wear white garments. Is not all this enough for us to reject every vain glory in this world?!
- “*Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches*” (v 6). As in the others of the last four letters, and unlike the first three, this exhortation follows the promise to the victor

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



### Philadelphia

- The town of Philadelphia derived its name from Attalus Philadelphus, the king of Pergamos, who died 138 B.C.
- Philadelphia was seventy-five miles southeast of Sardis and is the second city in Lydia
- It was situated on the slopes of Mount Tmolus, in the midst of a district the soil of which was favorable to the cultivation of the vine
- Of all the seven churches it had the longest duration of prosperity as a Christian city
- It still exists as a Turkish town under the name of Allah Shehr, City of God



# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



Who is the angel of this church?

- It is said that the angel of this church is the bishop Codranos; however St. Jerome says that this father was the bishop of Athens not of Philadelphia
- Jesus Christ is the holy and true
- Two great and glorious titles which will be repeated in Rev. 6:10
- The title "holy" is an established Biblical term for God, "*To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal?*" says the *Holy One.*" (Isaiah 40:25)

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- It is used repeatedly throughout the Old and New Testaments
- Holy is what the Angel called Him when he announced His birth to St. Mary, Luke 1:35
- The devil used this title in Mark 1:24
- And St. Peter used it in Acts 3:14
- David prophesized about it, Acts 13:35
- And St. Paul claimed it in Hebrews 7:21

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- True, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."* (John 14:6)
- His word is true, John 17:17
- His judgment is true, John 8:16
- His way is true, Revelation 15:3
- *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* (John 8:32)



# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- Saints Cyril the Great and Jerome think that the key, with which He opens, is the power of binding and loosening, which the Lord granted to His bride through His disciples (Matthew 16:19)
- St. John Chrysostom sees that it is the Cross with which the Lord opens for us the door of Paradise and gets us into the kingdom. Also with it, He shuts hell and Hades in our faces
- St. Gregory the Miracles-Worker thinks that this key is the understanding of the Holy Bible, especially the prophecies, for the Spirit of Jesus who wrote the prophecies is Himself alone who is able to clarify and reveal it

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- The kingdom of the Gospel, and the kingdom of heaven, are at the disposal of Christ
- He can shut against whom He will; He can open to whom He pleases
- If He shuts, no man can open; if He opens, no man can shut
- His determinations all stand fast, and none can reverse them
- This expression is an allusion to Isaiah 22:22, where the prophet promises to Eliakim, under the symbol of the key of the house of David, the government of the whole nation; i.e., all the power of the king, to be executed by him as his deputy; but the words, as here applied to Christ, show that He is absolute

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- The Lord knows her few works and does not forget them
- *have a little strength*, He assures her that He has compassion for her lack of strength
- Every prayer how weak it seems to be, every alms, every perseverance how negligible it may be, God does not ignore it, letting the door of salvation open in front of us
- For the little we do God offers much
- Perhaps the open door here is the door of the effective service (1 Corinthians 16:9)
- *an open door*, It might be the door to preach evangelize and serve



# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- As the angel of this church had little strength in preaching and pastoring, God grants him strength in serving and does not forget that he kept His word and did not deny His name
- Perhaps verse 8 is a reference to the passages (Acts 14:27; 1 Corinthians 16:8-9; 2 Corinthians 2:12-13; Colossians 4:3) in which a similar expression is used reminds us that the open door was not simply a way of escape from difficulties, but an opening for preaching the gospel, an opportunity of doing good, as well as an abundant entrance into the kingdom

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- He has opened to them a door to proclaim His word; and, although there are many adversaries to the spread of His Gospel, yet none of them shall be able to prevent it
- *For you have a little strength* – Perhaps very little political authority or influence; yet they have kept the true doctrine
- They have not denied His name, by taking shelter in heathenism when Christianity was persecuted
- The little strength may refer either to the smallness of the numbers, or to the weakness of their efforts
- In spite of the weakness of the struggle, God does not forget this toil

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- The church of Philadelphia is not a large or prosperous church, but they have remained faithful to what they have been given (Luke 19:26)
- Because of their faithfulness Christ the key holder, the Lord of the New Covenant Himself has admitted them to fellowship and has cast out the ones from whom the keys have been taken away, *“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”* (Matthew 23:13)



# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- In verse 8 our Lord presents to us the characteristics of the good successful service
- First the energy; the servant may *have a little strength*; however, it is enormous because of God's support
- Second the servant faithfulness; "*you have kept my word*", he became a good example to others
- Third the courage of the servant; "*have not denied My name*" "*perfect love casts out fear*" (1 John 4:18)

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- *I will make those* - Show them to be, of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, pretending thereby to be of the synagogue of God, and consequently His true and special children
- For that, God grants him grace as a tool in his hand to destroy the power of Satan
- Those Jews who rejected Christ will also be rejected by Him
- They are liars and *synagogue of Satan*, Matthew 3:7-12; John 5:39-47, 8:39-44; Romans 2:28-29, 9:6-8; Galatians 3:7-9, 26-29; Romans 9:6,8
- I know you are facing a great war, do not be afraid I'll *make them come and worship before your feet*

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- This is what the church asks for her bishops, *“all their enemies, visible and invisible, trample and humiliate under their feet speedily”* and as St. Paul says, *“And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.”* (Romans 16:20)
- *to know that I have loved you* , That the love which was formerly fixed on the Jews is now removed, and transferred to the Gentiles
- And to know that I have a greater kindness for you than for them



# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- He added the word persevere because true Christian faith requires patience, *“by your patience possess your souls”* (Luke 21:19)
- The doctrine which has exposed you to so much trouble and persecution, and required so much patience to bear up under its attendant trials
- The one who keeps God’s word is kept
- The promise does not mean the being kept away from, but the being kept out from the tribulation
- He is promising to preserve them in a time of sever hardship and to keep them from falling (Jude 1:24)

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- *To test them* - That is, such persecutions will be the means of trying and proving those who profess Christianity, and showing who were sound and true Christians and who were not
- *Behold, I am coming quickly!* By this hope, the Apostle calls on His children to be full of enthusiasm saying, Run in such a way that you may obtain it
- And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things
- “...Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown” (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- *I come quickly!* The great incentive to persevering faithfulness, and the consolation under present trials
- *what you have*, That is, whatever of truth and godliness you now possess
- He also warns us "*that no one may take your crown,*" as the human beings have taken the fallen angels' crown
- Jacob took Essau's blessing (Genesis 24), Judah took Reuben's blessing (Genesis 49); David took Saul's crown; Matthias took Judah's crown; and the Gentiles took blessings that the Jews had rejected



# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



What is our crown, or our hope?

- The winner becomes "*a pillar in the temple of My God*" It is amazing that He calls the Father "My God," repeating it four times, showing the relationship of Jesus and the victorious believer in its best image
- He brings to light the unity of the infinite love until He calls His Father with us saying, "My God"
- This would be enough for us as our crown, this unity that we do not deserve and that the mind can not imagine!

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- He raises us up as living pillars in heaven, and the pillars point to the victory
- Bishop Victorianus sees that the pillars are the ornament of the building. Therefore, on the great day of the Lord, the victorious pastors are the ornament of the believers in heaven. Paul the Apostle called Jacob, John and Peter the pillars of the church (Galatians 2:9). And called "*the church of the living God, the pillars and ground of the truth*" (1 Timothy 3:15)

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- There shall be "no temple" in the heavenly city because there shall be no distinction of things into sacred and secular, for all things and persons shall be holy to the Lord
- The city shall be all one great temple, in which the saints shall be not merely stones, as the spiritual temple now on earth, but all eminent as pillars: immovably firm
- There is probably all allusion here to the two pillars in the temple of Jerusalem, called Jachin and Boaz, stability and strength



# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- *he shall go out no more*, As St. Augustine says, “Who does not long for the city from which no friend departs and no enemy enters?!”
- He shall have an eternal inheritance, of which he shall not be dispossessed
- As men use, upon pillars and monuments erected for their own use and honor, to write their names; so I will peculiarly own, and challenge such a one for Myself
- The church at Philadelphia is three times sealed: belonging to God, belonging to God's city, and belonging to God's Son

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- The name of the Lord will be registered upon every believer not in a human language, but through the hidden unity and the eternal tie between us and Him, as members in His Body
- The name of the Lord will remain new in our taste of Him in eternity
- The believer will not age or get tired of enjoying utterance of His name, and delight at its sweetness
- *My new name* - The Savior of All; the light that lightens the Gentiles; the Christ; the Anointed One; the only Governor of his Church; and the Redeemer of All mankind

# The Church in Philadelphia

## 3:7-13



- Through the sin of Adam we became "dis-graced" and lost our divine sonship (in the image of God)
- When we were reborn into the family of God through our baptism we experienced the forgiveness of original sin and through our death to this world and our resurrection in Jesus Christ we became God's image bearers restored to divine sonship (Exodus 34:29-35; Numbers 12:6-8; Psalm 80:3,7,19; 2 Corinthians 3:7, 4:6; 1 John 3:2)
- And not just sonship but citizenship in the New Jerusalem which is coming down from heaven



# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



The angel:

- The Angel of this church is Eurelius or Sepharios the martyr who was praised by Eusebius

Laodicea

- Laodicea is situated half way between Philadelphia and Colossae, and not far from Hierapolis
- It received its name from Laodice, wife of Antiochus the second king of Syria, by whom it was rebuilt and beautified

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- Laodicea's strategic position helped to make it one of the richest commercial and financial centers in the Roman Empire
- The city was famous for its local black wool, which helped to make the city a textile-manufacturing center
- The church of Laodicea was a church in the midst of an extremely affluent, sophisticated society
- At the time St. John wrote his message, the spiritual condition of this church had sadly deteriorated

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- Laodicea receives the most severe condemnation of all the 7 churches
- It is interesting that this church is in sharp contrast spiritually to this city materially
- The city is rich, produces a world famous eye medicine to improve eyesight, and luxurious wool clothing, but this church is spiritually poor, blind, and naked
- The Lord presents Himself to the church who was marked by the "spiritual lukewarmth," by these qualities, *Amen, Faithful, and True*, to support her



# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- *The Amen*: It means the "Truth." God was thus described as in Isaiah 65:16
- *"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us."* (2 Corinthians 1:20)
- It seems that the angel of this church had some doubts in Jesus' promises and therefore, he became lukewarm
- That is why our Lord described Himself here to him *the Faithful and True Witness* as a reminder that the Lord Jesus Christ is the *the Truth, the Faithful and True Witness*

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- He is a faithful witness because He is an infallible, authoritative witness and we can eternally depend completely upon His word!
- It is an invitation to believe His promises and obey His commandments
- *The Beginning of God's creation*: The translation of the Greek word is "Head," or He has the right to administer, manage and work, hence He does not cease caring for His creation
- Arius used this verse to prove that Jesus Christ was created

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- It is a headship of love in action as is said about Him, "*And gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*" (Ephesians 1:22-23)
- The One who bears testimony against the church at Laodicea is the Trustworthy king, the guarantor of the covenant, the infallible, true witness who comes with all the authority promised by the Creator and King of the Universe



# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- Christ is both the Origin and the Ruler of all creation as St. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:15-18, *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”*

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



### The State of the Church

What does He mean by cold, hot and lukewarm?

- The first opinion: The cold is the unbeliever who is immersed in evil, and the hot is the believer who is inflamed with the fires of God's love, but as Bishop Victorianus says, "The lukewarm is neither an unbeliever nor a believer, he is all things to everyone. He lives without principle, cold with the cold and hot with the hot."
- The second opinion: The cold is the one who refrains from sin for fear of punishment. The hot is he who refrains from sin for his love to the Lord. As for the lukewarm, he is empty of both, fear and love

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- The third opinion: Cassian believes that the lukewarm is the hesitant between virtue and vice. He wants virtue but is coward to struggle, and he hates to strive for it
- The forth opinion: The cold is he who deep down perceives his weakness and his fallings as the adulterous woman, the tax collector, the thief, St. Moses the Black, and St. Mary the Egyptian. This kind gets inflamed quickly by God "the consuming fire" and becomes warm in spirit. As for the lukewarm, he is in deep sleep. He thinks in himself that he is virtuous, a disciple of the Lord and faithful. That he himself is in need of nothing but to preach others without humbling to listen, to accept advice and to accept blame. How poor is this man because he is deceived!



# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- St. John Cassian says, “We saw many of the cold people, monks and laymen, turn to be spiritually warm but we have not seen lukewarm persons becoming warm.”
- St. Augustine says, “I dare to say that it is good for the proud to fall into clear disobedience that they may mourn in themselves, for their fall is because of their delight in themselves. Peter was in a better state when he wept unsatisfied with himself than when he was daring and self-conceited. This is what the Psalmist assured by saying: *‘Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name, O Lord’* (Psalm 83:16).”

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- The fifth opinion: is attributed to Father Daniel. St. John Cassian has written his conference with him, and handled the subject of "the lukewarmness of the spirit" from all aspects. He explained how the lukewarmness could be allowed by God for our good, or could be because of a satanic war, or because of our gradual carelessness. He, as well treated each kind separately
- As for the danger of the lukewarmness, it appears from the Lord's saying, "*I will vomit you out of My mouth.*"
- St. Jerome says that the Savior does not like the half and half things. He also says, "While God does not want the death of the sinner, but to repent and live, He hates the lukewarm who makes Him vomit."

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



Why does God spit the lukewarm?

- Feeling rich leads to doing without God
- As the lukewarm does not realize his weakness, therefore, he does not feel his need for righteousness and grace of God
- He becomes like the proud Pharisee who does not know what he needs from God!
- He thinks that he is happy although he is empty of the secret fellowship with God
- He is miserable because one day his apparent worshipping will vanish and his nakedness, blindness, poverty and misery will be revealed



# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



What contrast does Jesus make between what these people believe they have and what they really are?

- Riches and every material necessity vs. their true state of spiritual poverty, blindness and nakedness
- The city is a banking and financial center of immense wealth vs. this community spiritually is *“wretchedly and pitifully poor”*
- The city produces a world famous healing eye ointment and this church is spiritually *“blind”*
- The city is a clothing manufacturing center and yet this church is spiritually *“naked too.”* Without the image of God, not clothed with holiness and purity

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- *I counsel you* - O fallen and deceived soul, hear Jesus! Your case is not hopeless. *Buy from Me*
- There is no remedy for the lukewarmness unless one comes back to the Lord to buy from Him
- The difficulty of this remedy is to empty oneself, to come as a needy to the Lord
- The other difficulty is buying "without silver and without price" (Isaiah 55:1-2), "*being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*" (Romans 3:24)
- Come and receive from Me, without money and without price, Isaiah 55:1

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- True faith and genuine works of obedience are symbolized in Scripture in terms of jewelry and especially gold
- He buys the gold tried in fire, that is to possess the Incarnate Word of God, *"though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich"* (2 Corinthians 8:9). He who bore the fire of suffering on the Cross to enrich us with all the hidden virtues
- *Gold* may also mean faith that shall stand in every trial
- It may mean pure and undefiled religion, or that grace or Divine influence which produces it, which is more valuable to the soul than the purest gold to the body



# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- Ibn-el-Assal sees that the gold is the patience acquired through sufferings. It is also the true and self-giving love that we obtain through the Lord Jesus
- White is a symbol of righteousness and purity
- Biblically white, the color of light, is the divine color because it symbolizes the holiness and perfection of God, Psalm 104:2; Daniel 7:9
- What could be this eye salve that opens the eye to see the depth of the word of God and His wisdom other than the Holy Spirit who opened the disciples' mind that they may understand the scriptures?!

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- Fr. Gregory the Great observes that it is the contemplation on the Divine Commandments which enlightens the eyes
- Blindness is a symbol for man's powerlessness
- With God's restoration of man to true sight results in the Spirit filled ability to judge between righteous and ungodly behavior, Deuteronomy 29:4; Matthew 13:13-15, 16:3; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Luke 4:18; Acts 26:18; 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 and 1 John 2:11  
*"But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."*

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- When the lukewarm accepts God's chastening and rebukes, his heart is humbled by repentance, and is opened before God who desires to enter into it
- Repent immediately!
- His continuing love for this fallen Bride is the source of His genuine, righteous anger
- Because I LOVE YOU, He says, I discipline you!
- Remember: God is NOT a permissive father
- He is a perfect Father!



# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- God is treating you as sons; *"If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons."* (Hebrews 12:7-8)
- The Church, indeed, needed some of that chastening, that persecution, and hardship, which should arouse her from the dangerous slumber of ease into which she had fallen, and call forth some zeal and self-sacrifice, the frequent and natural result of opposition

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- Christ stands - waits long, at the door of the sinner's heart; He knocks - uses judgments, mercies, reproofs, exhortations, etc., to induce sinners to repent and turn to Him; He lifts up His voice - calls loudly by His word, ministers, and Spirit
- He approaches the heart as He had approached the two disciples of Emmaus
- As He was talking to them, they urged Him to stay with them for it was getting towards evening
- He reclined with them, their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him (Luke 24)

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- How great is God's love! God hides behind the door of His commandments so that anyone who opens his heart to the commandments, God is revealed to him
- He is asking the church to willingly receive Him, or welcome Him with the affection due to such a Savior
- *opens the door*; This must be one's own act
- God will not break open the door; He will make no forcible entry
- And I will have a communion with him in this life, he shall eat My flesh, and drink My blood



# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- St. Ambrose says, "The Lord Jesus is standing at the door of yourself; hear Him talking to the Church... He says, *"Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfection, for my head is drenched with dew, my locks with the damp of the night"* (Song of Solomon 5:2). He does not stand alone. He is preceded by the angels who say, *"Open the doors O Kings."* What doors? In another place He says: *"Open to me the gates of righteousness"* (Psalm 118:19). Let us open to Him the gates of righteousness, the gates of purity, the gates of courage and wisdom."
- St. Mark the Hermit says, "God hides in His commandments therefore he who asks for Him, will find Him in them."

# The Church in Laodicea

## 3:14-22



- For the Son, sitting on the divine throne is a natural matter, but for us, sitting on the Lord's throne is because of our unity with, and our attachment to, Him
- Through Him we obtained all that the Father desires to offer us
- I overcame the world, sin, death, the devil, and then ascended, and sat down with my Father in his throne: so they that will sit down with Me in My throne of glory, must fight the same fight, and overcome, and then be crowned, sitting with Me in my throne
- This is the worst of the seven Churches, and yet the most eminent of all the promises are made to it, showing that the worst may repent, finally conquer, and attain even to the highest state of glory



# Discussion

- What name did those of the church in Sardis have? Was it true?
- Why is there no commendation for the church at Sardis?
- What is the Book of Life?
- How do you know that your name is in the book of Life? Will God erase the names of believers who don't overcome? Why or why not?





# Discussion

- What does the Lord describe Himself to the church in Philadelphia?
- What does it mean that the church in Philadelphia has “*little power*”(3:8)? How impressive is it that even with little power the church kept Jesus’ word, and did not deny His name?
- Why does God prefer that we are either “*cold or hot*”(3:15)? Why would God want us “*cold?*” How can this term be understood?



# Discussion

- In what sense is Jesus the beginning of creation? Was He the first thing created or the source of creation?
- What should we learn about rebuke and chastening? Do we ever need it? Should we ever practice it?
- In what ways is modern America like Laodicea?
- Explain the illustration of Jesus at the door.