

Lesson

2

Video

35:40

The Day of The Lord Series

Verses 1 - 3

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. In 2, Ephesus is the only church He will speak about the apostles in. It shows that the verses addressed to Ephesus were addressed to first century Christians. That is the era in which the apostles lived. Ephesus refers to the time period from the organization of the church and continues until about 100 A.D. when John, who penned the Revelation, died. The word "fainted" in verse three refers to moral weariness. They hadn't become "...weary in there well doing" (Gal. 6.9).

Verse 4-5

Jesus said, Ephesus you are functioning very well mechanically. But you are leaving off your devotion to me. The Ephesus church began in purity, as can be observed from a study of the book of Acts. But we see that false prophets entered into the church at Ephesus which is exactly what Paul had warned about the last time he preached in Ephesus. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

The leaders of the church judged these false prophets in earlier days, but became lax as they lost their first love. Many claim that it is wrong to judge people who commit wickedness. But the same Christ who said "Judge not, that ye be not judged," in Matthew 7:1, also said, "Judge righteous judgment," in John 7:24. The church at Ephesus was on its way down. It had fallen from its original moorings that it had when Paul had preached there. Was it any wonder that Islam swept through the land and destroyed the compromising church that was once mighty under Paul?

After the conquest of Islam, the church at Ephesus became non-existent. They didn't repent. Therefore, Christ removed their lamp stand as He said He would do if they failed to repent.

Verse 6

He didn't say, I hate the Nicolaitanes. He said, I hate what they do. He hated their deeds. The first part *Nico*, comes from the Greek word, "Nicolaitanes" and means "to conquer or to have victory over". The last part of the word, *laitanes*, means "laity". The whole word means, "to conquer the laity," which is where the church leaders use a religious dictatorship over the church members.

Verse 7

The word "paradise" is a Persian word meaning "a park or enclosed garden". "He that hath an ear" means to have the fine ear of the Spirit or to hear the consummation of it. This runs all the way to Revelation chapter 22.

Verses 8-11

The Christians who lived during the Smyrna dispensation probably suffered the greatest persecution of all Christianity. Their works brought great tribulation and accompanying abject poverty. However, great riches were laid up for them in heaven. In addition, their relentless dedicated efforts brought the Word of God to the entire Roman empire. During the second and third centuries, the Smyrna church members were fed to the lions at Rome and throughout the empire while multitudes cheered. But miraculously the church grew tremendously during the Smyrna period. Believers during this era were encouraged to keep their eyes on eternal rewards rather than earthly.

Study Tip:

Ephesus means "To let go, to relax".

Verses 12-13

Silver and gold won't make you rich. It is the Holy Spirit of God and His grace that makes you rich. The world will never know that secret. The phrase, "*Ye shall have tribulation ten days,*" has to do with *purpose*, not days. Jesus was saying that for the Smyrna church there would not be ten actual days of persecution, but that there would be a cycle of persecution with ten distinct periods of persecution during the Smyrna dispensation of the Church Age.

The name *Smyrna* means "*Ointment of Death,*" indicating the persecution to be experienced during this dispensation.

The idolatrous Babylonian cult religion established its headquarters in Pergamos and infiltrated Christianity. Many church members in Pergamos called themselves Christians. But their hearts were far from Christ. At the council of Nicea in 325 A.D. the church became a part of, was joined to, the Roman government. Emperor Constantine did the very opposite of former emperors. He made Christianity the state religion. It is true that the nation that forgets God will soon find God dealing with it. God does not approve of the marriage of church and state either. This gives the state control of the church.

In 325 A.D. the church divorced God and married the Roman government. The church and the Roman government became one and the state began to financially support and control the church.

The word *Pergamos* means "*Marriage*". This marriage took place during the Pergamos church dispensation. The name Pergamos has in it the same root from which we get our English words *bigamy* and *polygamy*. Pergamos signifies a mixed marriage of the church and the world. After this marriage, the Roman government appointed the ministers and began controlling what they taught.

Verse 14

Everything that isn't explained in Revelation is explained somewhere else in the Bible. The Bible is its own interpreter. *Scripture interprets scripture*. In Numbers, Chapters 2-25, we find the doctrine of Balaam explained.

Balaam tried to put a curse on Israel but couldn't do anything. So he figured out a plan of destruction for Israel. He told king Balac that *God has blessed Israel and I can't curse them. But I'll tell you what you can do and their God will get them. Have a celebration to your god and invite the Israeli men over and present your most beautiful women to them and when they get involved with your women their God will get them*. Many Israeli men fell for the trap and right away twenty-four thousand died. The Jewish men were enamored with the beauty of the daughters of Balac's kingdom, committed abomination with them and were drawn into idolatry. "*Ye cannot drink the cup of the...Lord's table, and of the table of devils*" (I Cor. 10:21). Pergamos was a stronghold of idolatry.

It was famous for the great altar of Zeus which had a frieze around the base of the altar depicting the gods of Greece in victorious combat against the giants of the earth (symbolizing the triumph of civilization over barbarianism). The shrine of Asklepios, the god of healing, attracted people from all over the world.

Pergamos was the official center in Asia for the imperial cult that had originated in Babylon and infected the entire world. Jesus says, "I know where Satan's seat is". Balaam taught Balac how to cause Israel to stumble and bring the judgment of God upon them. The same thing was going on at Pergamos in regard to this imperial cult which involved teaching people that it was acceptable to engage in promiscuous sexual activities.

Satan's seat, Pergamos, was a hotbed of idolatry and promiscuity. Thus the parallel is drawn between Pergamos and the doctrine of Balaam..

Study Tip:

Smyrna means
"Ointment of death".

Lesson

2

Continued

The Day of The Lord Series

Verse 15

In Revelation 2:6, Jesus said of the Ephesus dispensation, *"thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes"*. Notice the progression. They had gone from deeds during the Ephesus dispensation to teaching in the Pergamos dispensation. Jesus said, *"... you've even allowed the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate,"* to be taught as church doctrine.

Verses 16-17

Why does He say that the manna would be hidden? In about 400 A.D., Jerome translated the Bible into the Latin language. That Bible is called the Vulgate translation. Latin became the official language of the church. The government controlled the leadership of the church and ordered services to be held in Latin, which many people throughout the Roman empire did not speak. So the truths of the Bible were locked up from the church laity for a long time. Jesus said they would be able to eat of the hidden manna, meaning He would cause those who loved Him to know Him personally, even though the Bible was taught in a language many didn't understand.

In the proper context, the hidden manna alludes to heavenly food which is a contrast to the unclean food supplied by the Balaamites. When Rome ruled the world they had a system of signifying whether a person was guilty or innocent when the verdict was rendered at the end of a trial. If the defendant was found guilty, the jurors laid out a dark stone depicting a guilty verdict. If a defendant was found innocent, the jurors laid out a white stone depicting acquittal. He said to the Pergamos dispensation, *"...if you have repented and allowed the blood of Jesus to wash and cleanse you..."* and you are walking in His high order, then you are acquitted and will receive a white stone, even though the manna has been hidden in a Bible translated in a language that much of the church laity are not able to speak or to read.

Verses 18-19

The name *Thyatira* means: *"Continual Sacrifice"*

When He says *His eyes are like a flame of fire and His feet are like fine brass*, that is judgment.

Verses 20-23

In the Old Testament, Jezebel, was the very wicked (Lebanese, Canaanite, Phoenician) wife of king Ahab of Israel. She claimed to be a prophetess. She led in pagan worship and pagan feasts which often led to sexual promiscuity. She brought Baalism into Israel as a new religion, seduced God's servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

God gave Thyatira approximately 1,000 years to repent, but she refused. Verse twenty-two is the result. The Lord promises to cast this church and her bed partners, those who have partaken of her abominable iniquities, into the Great Tribulation. At that time, the Catholic church, which sits upon the seven hills of Rome, and her bed partners, all other churches who *have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof* (2 Tim. 3:5), will be judged and destroyed as we see in Revelation 17:9.

Elements of heresy that were introduced in earlier time periods grew tremendously during the Thyatira era and kept growing. Jesus told them to correct this or their descendants would be cast into the Great Tribulation. We are looking at an element that was introduced in the Pergamos era but greatly enlarged with time and is still thriving today.

Misguided sentimentalists think that God will not condemn anyone to hell. True or false? Remember Christ himself is speaking in verse twenty-three, where he said, *"I will kill her children (descendants) with death...and I will give unto every one of you according to your works"*.

Study Tip:

Pergamos means "Marriage".

Verses 24-29

Jesus promises to those who do not succumb to the false Babylonian religion propagated by Jezebel, that they would not have any other burden. They had experienced enough heartache. And He promises them Himself, the Morning Star.

The name *Sardis* means: *"Escaping ones"*

Chapter 3 begins with *"and"* which connects it to chapter two. Bible chapters and verses came into existence about five hundred years ago. These divisions are not divinely inspired, but greatly assist in finding texts. Sometimes, however, they break the continuity of a study. Such is the case here. There should not have been a break between chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 3 begins with *"and"* which connects it to Chapter 2.

Verse 1

Sardis had been destroyed and was rebuilt in the time of Alexander the Great. The city was dedicated to a local Asiatic goddess usually referred to as Cybele, who was identified with the Greek god Artemis. It was believed that this patron deity possessed the special power of restoring the dead to life. The Sardis church also had a name that it was alive, but it, like the idol, was dead. Christ said, *"Sardis, you're dead. I am the Spirit baptizer. So why are you dead when I have the life giving flow? I know you Sardis. You have a name that you're alive, you say you've reformed, you have a program you're carrying on, but you are dead."*

Verse 2

Although the city of Sardis was considered to be a natural citadel and difficult to capture, there were several times in the city's history that the city fell because of over self-confidence and failure to watch. Perhaps the most famous incident was when Cyrus, king of Persia, captured the city when Croesus was king of Sardis. So the church in Sardis was encouraged to watch and not fall to their enemy Satan, as the city of Sardis had fallen to her enemies by not watching.

The Sardis dispensation covers the Reformation Period. Many churches during the Sardis dispensation of the church age were dead. The reason for the deadness is that during the Reformation, entire countries became Protestant without anyone being born again. Protestantism was made the state religion, and was freely embraced by millions who did not know what it meant to become new creations in Christ Jesus.

Jesus was saying you have reformed a little. But you're still trying to hold on to many of the practices of the church you broke away from. Your reforms were not enough. You didn't completely forsake the heresies of the past. *"I have not found your works perfect."* In other words, I've found no work of yours fulfilled before God. Christ was calling them to retain the simple truth of the gospel and discard the excess baggage of ecclesiastical pomp and ceremony that they had drifted back into. Christ's call was for the entire movement to change. They were to turn back to Christ and follow the Spirit instead of clinging to Catholic or other forms of religion and traditions.

Verse 3

God called for a five-fold revival package. Sardis was admonished to: (1) Be watchful, (2) strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, (3) remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, (4) hold fast, (5) repent. Referring to the rapture, Christ warns them to, *"Remember therefore...(or) I will come on thee as a thief..."*

Verses 4-6

There was an inscription found in Asia Minor which announced that soiled garments disqualified the worshipper and dishonored the god. It is also often noted that since the manufacture and dying of woolen goods was a principle trade in Sardis, an allusion to defiled garments would be immediately recognized.

Thyatira means
"Continual Sacrifice".

Verse 7

Greek and Roman cities of New Testament times kept a list of citizens according to their class or tribe. New citizens were entered into the register and degraded citizens were expunged. The promise in the fifth verse is that these will not in any way have their names blotted out.

Verse 8

Instead of gleaning a picture of Christ from chapter one, as we have in the past, we are now given a new and beautiful four-fold description of the Lord. (1) He that is holy (2) He that is true. (3) He that hath the key of David (4) He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth. *“And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.”* This is a reference to Isaiah 22:22, where God told the high priest, Eliakim, that He would give him the key to all the treasure of the king. When Eliakim opened the door, it was opened and when he closed it, it was closed. This indicates that Jesus has complete control over the royal household. If He closes the door, no man will get in. But if He opens it, no man, or devil, can close it.

He opened the door for Philadelphia for three reasons. (1) They had a little strength, (2) They kept His Word, and (3) They had not denied His Name. The phrase *“they had a little strength”* means they are still a minority. The word for *“strength”* is the same word that the Holy Spirit is derived from, *“dunimas”*. The baptism in the Spirit is baptism into great power.

Verses 9-10

The Greek terminology used here indicates *“a door standing open”*. The metaphor of the *“open door”* indicates a door standing open to the throne room of God and a door standing open to preach the gospel. The phrase *“hour of temptation”* refers to the Tribulation Period. He said I will keep you from it. This comes from the Greek word, *“Ekay”*, and means *up, out, and over*. It does not mean *through*. The era of Philadelphia believers are promised exemption from the day of the Lord’s wrath, the Tribulation Period. God promises to keep the Philadelphia believers *“out of”* which means by way of evacuation in the rapture. It means preservation. Christ also promises that the members of the synagogue of Satan, as described in Rev. 2:9, will bow and worship the Lord God in the presence of these saints at a future time. This does not mean to bow to the saints, but just to bow in their presence.

Verses 11-13

The metaphor of being a pillar in the temple of God conveys the idea of stability and permanence which had a special meaning to Philadelphia. This is a city which had experienced devastating earthquakes that had caused it’s citizens to flee into the countryside and establish temporary dwellings there. (1) They become pillars in the temple of God; and wait on God continually (Hos.12:6b). (2) They have the name of God written upon them; allowing them access into the city of God. This is the New Jerusalem, as described in Rev. 21-22. (3) They have the new name of God written upon them.

The name of God allows them to enter the Holy City and be called *“the children of the living God”* (Ro. 9:26). The new name of Christ entitles them to be His servants, where they shall see His face. (Rev. 22:3-4)

Study Tip:

Sardis means
“Escaping Ones”.

Verse 14

Laodicean Dispensation: The fruition of the apostasy of the early church until it's judgment in Revelation, Chapter 17.

"Laodicea" means, "My wealth is due to my own strength or exertion."

The *"Amen"* means *"truth in its finality"*. *"The faithful and true witness,"* links Christ to Rev. 1:5. The phrase *"the beginning of the creation of God,"* refers to Jesus (see Colossian 1:15).

Verses 15-16

The spiritual condition of the Laodicean church makes God so ill that He wants to spit it out of His mouth. The Greek word is Emeo, from which we get the word *"emetic"*.

An *emetic* is given to one who swallows poison in order to make him regurgitate. Think of that! A lukewarm church is an emetic to Christ. The contrast revealed here is between the hot medicinal waters of Hierapolis, which was located on one side of Laodicea, and the cold, pure waters of Colossae, which is on the other side of Laodicea. Thus, the church in Laodicea was providing neither refreshment for it's spiritually weary nor healing for the spiritually sick. It was totally ineffective and therefore distasteful to the Lord.

Verses 17-18

The city of Laodicea was known for its wealth. To Smyrna, He said, "I know your poverty", but in parenthesis He said, (*Thou art rich*). But to Laodicea He said, "I know you have everything of this world's wealth. But you are really wretched and poor".

Laodicea was known for its medical school and was particularly famous for an eye salve made from *"Phrygian powder"* which was mined near Laodicea, and then mixed with oil. The Phrygian powder was apparently applied to the eyes in the form of a doughy paste. This is the only time the word eye salve is used in the Bible. It means *to glue, to stick, to keep company with*. We must therefore keep His commandments close or glued to our eyes.

Laodicea was famous for its garments of glossy black wool, an appropriate material for someone who is cold and dead in their heart.

Laodicea is not the finale of the true church. Laodicea is the fruition of the descendents of the early church that God will judge during the Tribulation period.

Gold is a *symbol of the glory of God*. The phrase *"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire,"* is not talking about earthly gold. He's talking specifically about the glory of God.

Verse 19

Christ reveals His heart once again by speaking of His love, which is coupled with discipline. The challenge given is to repent with earnestness. (See more about love and discipline in Hebrews 12:5-11).

Study Tip:

"Church of Brotherly Love" defines the Philadelphia era, leading to the rapture.

Study Tip:

Laodicea means "My wealth is due to my own strength".