

name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Initial Questions 3:7-13

1. What is the relationship between God's purpose and will and human efforts - vs. 7?
2. What is the "synagogue of Satan" - vs. 9?
3. What is the relationship between our loyalty to God and the availability of His power in times of trial - vs. 10?
4. What are the spiritual results for those that overcome - vs. 12?

The Church in Philadelphia Chp. 3:7-13

The congregation of the Lord in the city of brotherly love was the only one of the seven churches which was not condemned by Christ. Philadelphia was the second most important city in Lydia. It was situated southeast of Sardis. Under heavy persecution this congregation had remained loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence the Lord had "caused a door to be opened." This Church kept the Faith!

Verse 7

Christ is "the holy one," "the true one," the one having the key of David." Christ is the separated one. He is separated from sin, but not the repentant sinner. He is set apart to do the will of His father. The term *hagios* means holy in the sense of separation. In Isaiah, chp. 6:1ff we read of the thrice holy God of Israel.

The Greek language has two words which can be translated true (first one is *alēthes*, second is *alēthinos*). The first word is applied to propositions or assertions which are either true or false, depending on the actual state of affairs. The second term means true in the sense of genuine. The word is formed with an *a privative* which makes the word mean to uncover or to reveal to the observer whether or not something is real or spurious - i.e., claiming to be true when it is not. The term true is one of the central words in all of John's works.

The third title comes from a quotation from Isaiah 22:22. This messianic use of this O.T. background enables Christians to be in the presence of the living God.

The next title is "the one opening (*anoigōn* - pres. parti., the one who keeps opening) and no one shall shut (*kleisēi* - fut. to be hard-hearted or to lack compassion) and shutting and no one opens (*anoigei* pres. ind. no one keeps opening).

Verse 8

Christ has placed a "door having been opened" (*ēneōgmenē* - perf. pass. participle) which no one is able (lacks the power because God has opened it) to shut it." This door was opened for them by God Himself, because "they kept on keeping" the Word of God ("my Word") and did not deny my name." Here the name stands for the person of God in Christ. The great door of opportunity has been opened by God and no man or congregation can ultimately shut.

Verse 9

Christ promises two things here, first that their persecutors will be humbled; second that in the general persecution that is coming upon the entire populated earth they will be spared. These two promises coupled with Christ's promise in vs. 7 concerning the door "having been opened (or which He caused to be open) constitute three hope creating words from the living Christ. The former two promises will be fulfilled - Christ "will make them to come and worship before thy feet" and the second promise is found in verse 10.

Verse 10

"Because you did keep on keeping the Word of my patience (endurance) I will keep you out of (*ek*) the hour of trial shortly to come upon the inhibited earth (*eikoumenēs* - the word Ecumenical means - dwellers in the household then figuratively - the populated earth.)

Verse 11

Christ announces "I am coming quickly; hold on to what you have and do not let go; in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) no one takes your crown." Hold so that no one takes your crown.

Verse 12

The imagery of this next promise was certainly available around Philadelphia. The ruins of some Temples left only the

supporting columns remaining upright. Christ has promised a vital place in the temple of God for every faithful Christian. The faithful will have the name of God and New Jerusalem inscribed on the faithful one. (See *Special Study* on Jerusalem: in *History and Symbolism*, also compare with Rev. 21:1ff.)

Review Questions
Chp. 3:7-13

1. What do the titles for Christ given in vs. 7 tell us about His person and work?
2. In what way, if at all, is it possible for sinners to refuse to go through God's door of opportunity - vs. 8?
3. Christ made three promises to the faithful - one in vs. 7 and two in vs. 9. Discuss them and their relevance for the 20th century Church!
4. Does Christ's promise to come again give you courage for daily Christian living? If so, in what ways - vs. 11?

SECTION 10

Text 3:14-22

14 And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne. 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Initial Questions 3:14-22

1. With respect to the Christian life is neutrality possible - vs. 15?
2. Is a *lukewarm* Christian life satisfactory to Christ - vs. 16?
3. Is there ever a stage of Christian maturation where the Christian need not or cannot develop beyond - vs. 17?
4. Is there any sarcasm apparent in vs. 18?
5. Does God really chasten or test those whom He loves? How?
6. Is every individual responsible before God's Word - vs. 20?
7. Does vs. 20 relate to us how vital, wonderful, and close our relationship with Christ will be?

The Church in Laodicea
Chp. 3:14-22

The name of this city means "justice of the people." The congregation in this city attempted the impossible - they tried to be neutral with respect to their Christian commitment. Laodicea was generally condemned, but it was not a hopeless situation. They were helpless but not hopeless!

Much of the imagery in this section of scriptures comes from the surrounding country-side, i.e., hot springs, the "salve to anoint your eyes," etc. There was a great medical school there. They indeed "hath need of a Divine Physician."

Laodicea was situated about 40 miles S.E. of Philadelphia. (See Sir William Ramsey, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, Nothing better available!) The only new title for Christ found in this verse is "the origin or source of the creation of God." See appendix immediately after chp. 3 - for a brief discussion of the crass distortion this title receives at the hands of The Jehovah's Witnesses Cult.

Verse 15

Christ again asserts first hand knowledge of the spiritual condition of the Church in Laodicea. He charges that they are neither (*oute*) cold (*psuchros*) nor hot (*zestos* - boiling). They were attempting the deadly compromise! There can be no real commitment to Jesus Christ and be liturgically cold at the same time. A. T. Robertson says that "there is no real Christianity without enthusiasm." Christ must mean more to us than the valid conclusion of polemical arguments. There must be the