The Seven Churches Of Asia
Revelation 2-3

Introductory Lesson - Chapter 1

1. Who Are These Churches?
These churches are congregations of Christians which existed in the latter half of the first century in a region known as Asia (show first two maps). They are not differing denominations (there was no such thing yet). They are not symbolic churches representing ages of church history to come (for example, Ephesus is mentioned in Acts 20:17 and Ephesians is a book of the Bible). They were real churches made up of real people with real names (see 2:13). None of them exist anymore on earth.

The entire book of Revelation is addressed to these seven congregations - 1:4...not just the first 3 chapters, or even just the part that is specifically addressed to each of them. Though each has its own individual letter from Jesus, the entire book is sent to all....all 22 chapters (though there were no chapter divisions originally). And the things said to one church, would be shared with all. One church could read what said to the other churches and profit. There may originally have been only one scroll circulated and each church could then see what was said to the others and Jesus even invites them all to hear what He said to the others (the closing words to each church are to heed what the Spirit is saying to the churches... plural). The order of the churches when seen on a map create a circuit.

In Colossians 4:16 we read that the congregation of Christ in Colosse is urged to read the epistle to Laodiceans and vice versa. By the way, as the Laodiceans are mentioned near Colosse, this is a good place to mention that there were more
than 7 churches in the region of Asia (show map). Other cities in Asia which had churches were Hieropolis (Colossians 4:13) and Troas (Acts 20) and possibly others not named in Scripture.

Three early lessons: The separate messages to the seven churches shows the autonomy of each group. Each is dealt with independently, though only short distances apart. Each are examined by Christ on their own merit, responsibility and accountability. Each had its own angel or messenger.

But, we also learn that even though congregations were autonomous, they were to cooperate with others churches of their brethren and respect the commonality they have with other bands of God’s saints elsewhere in the world.

God’s use of letters or epistles written to churches in the first century as the means by which His will would be revealed and preserved in Scriptures for all history is not solely in Revelation, but many of the other NT books. Application of the things said to these seven churches needs to be made to us today as much as do the letters to the Corinthians, Philippians, or others.

2. Geography - Asia in the first century was not the continent by the same name today. Asia was a small region in what is modern day Turkey (see map). Sometimes you may hear it referred to as Asia Minor.

John the apostle writes from the isle of Patmos (see map and photo). He is there “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (1:9) Was he banished for preaching? Likely. It is not a resort island for a vacation...or at least was not back then. And he receives the revelation in visions on the Lord’s Day (1:10). This may be saying it was on a 1st Day of the week...if there was ever a day that would be called the Lord’s, it would be the one. The day He was raised from the dead, the day the church began, the day saints gathered to commemorate His death
around His table, and contribute to the Lord’s work. — Or the Lord’s Day may be the day the Lord has made for the revealing of His wrath upon the earth about to take place. This is the way it is often used in the OT... and a day of wrath is soon to come upon the Jewish and Roman world.

3. The Symbolism - Why are only seven churches addressed, when we know there were more in the same area? Maybe there is symbolic significance - Seven speaks to completeness or perfection. Much of Revelation uses symbolism and figurative language. John sees Jesus Christ is a most startling way (see 1:12-20)... walking among candlesticks or lampstands, each representing a church. Jesus holds stars in His hand which are said to be the angels or messengers of the churches - signifying His control.

4. Additional Thoughts - Jesus sees both the collective and the individual in how he views the congregations. He broadly speaks to the entire church making statements that apply to them as a whole. But, also says the individual who has ears to hear, let him hear what Jesus is saying to the entire church. Also, he sometimes mentions there are some within a church that what He is saying generally, does not specifically apply to them. Similar to the earlier comment about autonomy, there is an individual accountability before Christ, but not to the exclusion of how they are viewed as part of a congregation of saints in some location.

Though the details are slightly different in each letter, there is a common pattern:

Jesus’ identity: “The One who...”

Commendation: “I know your...”

Condemnation: “This I have against you...”

Admonition: “Therefore...”

Warning: “Or else I will...”
Promise: “To Him who overcomes…”

Conclusion: “He who has an ear to hear let him hear…”

** Show pics of ruins of the seven cities.

** Ephesus - 2:1-7

**Background** - Ephesus was the chief city of Asia. It was a hotbed of occult activity and pagan worship (see Acts 19). “Ephesus also maintained its religious importance under Roman rule. It became a center of the emperor cult, and eventually possessed three official temples, thus qualifying thrice over for the proud title neokoros (‘temple-warden’) of the emperors, as well as being a neokoros of Artemis”

**Identity** - The One who holds the seven Stars in His hand and walks in the midst of lampstands. Jesus intimately is aware of all that is transpiring in His churches.

**Commendation** - I Know your works...the church did not tolerate false teachers. Apparently they heeded Paul’s warning in Acts 20:28-30. Further they had endured opposition. — I know your Works, Labor, Patience, Do Not Tolerate False Teachers, Test Teachers, Hate Evil

**Condemnation** - they left their first love. Since loving God is the first and greatest commandment (Matt. 22:37-38), this probably means they had let their love from God grow cold, serving Him out of grudging duty rather than love. Paul’s last word to the Ephesians was “grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus
Christ with incorruptible love” (Eph. 6:24). Left First Love - Possibilities: Object of early affection...Motive in service...Intensity of devotion

**Admonition** - Three commands: remember, repent, and return. The Gravity of leaving first love is emphasized. This problem is offsetting the good. The criticism is not for doing something wrong, but for doing something right with wrong motive, purpose, or affection. — Repentance is possible. Repent or ELSE. If not, Jesus judges quickly. The Need for regular stirring up of love is made clear - See Hebrews 10:23-25.

**Warning** - If they do not repent Jesus will come in judgment and remove their lampstand, which means He will no longer count them as His people. After this warning Jesus commends them for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans. No one is sure who these people were. One early tradition connects them with Nicolas, one of the servants in Acts 6:5. More is said about them in 2:14-15.

**Promise** - Anticipates the picture of heaven in 22:2,14.

**Conclusion** - The Lord pleads with them to heed the admonition. A promise of the tree of life to them who overcome. " He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”

**Questions To Stimulate Discussion:**

1. Each letter is addressed to “the angel”. Who is this? Why do you believe this to be true? Who is “the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand” and “walks among the seven golden lampstands?” What are the seven stars and seven golden lampstands (see 1:20)? What does this all mean?
2. What did the church in Ephesus have going for it? In your own words, what were they doing well?

3. Why does Jesus use three similar words (“deeds,” “toil,” and “perseverance”) to describe the Ephesian church? What else does He say about this church?

4. What did Jesus have against them (2:4)?

5. What does it mean to abandon your “first love” (2:4)?

6. Is it easy or hard to keep our first love for God? What causes an entire church to lose their first love? What is it like in the early days of your relationship with Christ and why does it sometimes change for the worse over time?

7. Is living a life on fire for Christ largely within our control? Is being on fire for Christ something that God or someone else does to us? How do we stay on fire for Christ? How can we help each other stay on fire for Christ, so that the whole church is not condemned?

8. What did Jesus ask the Ephesians to do about this first love problem? What would happen if the Ephesian church didn’t follow Jesus’ counsel? Is this verse a contradiction of the Calvinist doctrine of eternal security (“once saved, always saved”)? Does God punish Christians? Why or why not?
9. Who are the “Nicolaitians”? What deeds did they commit that were worthy of hatred? What group or teaching could serve as a contemporary parallel?

10. Each of the seven letters closes in the same way: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” What is being said here? Why is this so important as to bear repeating?

11. How will you ensure that you will be one who “overcomes”?

12. If Jesus was writing to our church, would He find things to commend? Would He find things to condemn?

13. Where is the tree of life said to be?

**Smyrna - 2:8-11**

**Background** - Smyrna claimed to be the “first city” of Asia, in beauty, literature and loyalty to Rome. It was chosen as the site for a temple in honor of Caesar Tiberius. Jews at Smyrna were reported to be numerous and hostile to Christianity. — Smyrna was a very old city, beautiful and very prosperous. It aligned itself early with Rome. The church is one of only two churches among the seven that receives commendations only. By human standards, Smyrna was an unlikely candidate for such.
Identity - Dead but Alive...First and Last

Commendation - I know Your works, your tribulation, your poverty (perhaps due to confiscation of property, see Heb. 10:34), your persecution by blasphemy (slander). The source of these trials were Jews, who because of their rejection of the Messiah had become a synagogue of Satan. The Bible consistently teaches that only those Jews who accepted Christ can be truly counted as Abraham’s heirs (see Luke 3:7-9; John 8:39-44; Acts 24:14; Rom. 2:29; Gal. 3:28-29).

Condemnation - One of only two churches which receive none.

Admonition - Do not fear. They will face tribulation for ten days, which means it will be only temporary and over shortly. Christ knows the future. Do not fear suffering. It will test you. Remember: The Devil is to blame.

Warning - None.

Promise - The crown of life, and exemption from the second death, which is defined in 20:14 as hell. There are conditions: Remain faithful, even to the point of dying and overcome all obstacles.

Conclusion - "He who has an ear to hear, let him hear..." Christians must be careful, lest they no longer hear what God is telling them. It is to be taken to heart individually and applied.

Questions To Stimulate Discussion:

1. How is the title, “the first and the last” so appropriate for Jesus?
2. Why does John use a death and life description?

3. What kind of tribulation and poverty did the church at Smyrna face? Why does Jesus say they are rich if they are poor?

4. What is so blasphemous about saying you are a Jew when you are not? Why the reference to “a synagogue of Satan?”

5. What did the future hold for the church of Smyrna? What were they admonished to do? What is the stated purpose in their persecution?

6. Is the reference to “ten days” probably literal or figurative?

7. In the context, what does being faithful unto death mean?

8. What is the meaning of receiving a “crown of life”?

9. What does the following phrase mean: “he who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death”? 
Pergamum or Pergamos - 2:12-17

**Background** - Pergamum was the political capital of Asia, and hosted several pagan shrines. The first temple of the imperial cult was built in Pergamum (c. 29 BC) in honor of Rome and Augustus. The city thus boasted a religious primacy in the province, though Ephesus became its main commercial center. Pergamos was a very cultured city, possessed a great library, was the center of state religion and paganism.

**Identity** - "He who has the two-edged sword"

**Commendation** - Dwell where Satan’s throne is. Since John later shows that the power behind the Roman Empire was Satan (13:4), this phrase probably refers to the strong presence of emperor worship there. They held fast, following the example of a martyr named Antipas. Holding fast to Christ's Name, rather than denying the faith is praised of God. And this is especially commendable when they did so in the center of paganism and it resulted in one of them being killed.

**Condemnation** - They tolerated two false teachings, that of Balaam and that of the Nicolaitans. Balaam was a false prophet who tried to lead Israel into idolatry and fornication (see Numbers 22; 25:1-9; 31:16). These sins were commonplace in the pagan worship of the first century. Interesting, the names Nicolaitan (in Greek) and Balaam (in Hebrew) mean the same thing: “conqueror of the people.” — Compromising members, at least some of them was angering the Lord. Maybe it was so as to soften persecution that some were eating meat sacrificed to idols, or committing fornication, etc. Christians must dare to be different. Note that the Nicolaitan false doctrine was hated by the church in Ephesus - Rev. 2:6. Though no Scripture description is given of this false teaching, other writings say it likewise compromised with paganism, similar to v.14. Regardless, holding to false doctrine is condemned!

**Admonition** - Repent. Stop practicing such and tolerating it.
Warning - Or the Lord will make war on them.

Promise - Three blessings: hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name. Manna calls to mind God’s miraculous provision for the Israelites in the wilderness. It was hidden in the ark of the covenant (Heb. 9:4). Jesus is the true manna from heaven, our ultimate source of spiritual sustenance (John 6:33-35, 50-59). No need to fret being cut off from the world. Christ will sustain us. — The meaning of the white stone is unclear, but is suggests purity, favor, approval and emancipation. The new name is a reference to the promise in Isaiah 62:2, and means God will have a special and exclusive relationship with those who overcome. Set free, with a new name, a new person & character. Security, individuality, not understood until received.

Conclusion - “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says..."

Questions To Stimulate Discussion:

1. Why does Jesus refer to Himself as “the One who has the sharp two-edged sword”? What does this “sword” represent (cf. Heb 4:12)?

2. Pergamum is referred to as “where Satan’s throne is”. What does this mean?

3. What is the church commended for?
4. What does Jesus “have against” the church in Pergamum? Who are “Balaam” and “Balak” (see Numbers 22-25, 31)? What sins did they tempt Israel to commit?

5. How might this apply to our own day? How can temptations to sin come from within the church?

6. Are the “Nicolaitans” related to Balaam and Balak (2:15)? If so, how?

7. What course of action does Jesus command the church in Pergamum to take?

8. Is this quick “coming” referring to Christ’s second coming at the end of time or a coming in judgment?

9. How might Christ “make war” against these believers?

10. What is the “hidden manna,” “white stone,” and “new name” that the overcomer receives?
Thyatira - 2:18-29

**Background** - Thyatira was an important center of manufacturing; dyeing, garment-making, pottery and brass-working are among the trades known to have existed there. Thyatira was a small city, not as devoted to the Romans, filled with Greek idolatry, had many craftsman guilds, and was known for its purple dye (see Lydia - Acts 16).

**Identity** - Christ’s Qualifications: Son Of God - infallible...Eyes of flame - omniscient...Feet of fine brass - refined in service, strong, able to crush.

**Commendation** - Many virtues, they were more faithful now than before. They were workers - activities. They Lovers - motives, devotion, and objectives were good. They were servers - love in action, rendered to God and man. They were faithful - in God and to His religion. They were patient - "peace under pressure"...And their works are growing, improving, and progressing.

**Condemnation** - Tolerated a false prophetess named Jezebel. In all likelihood this is a symbolic name. Jezebel was a Phoenician princess who introduced Baal worship into Israel (1 Kings 16:31; 2 Kings 9:22). There seems to be a connection between her teaching and that of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. — Once again, Christ disdains not only false teaching, but the toleration of it by others. It leads to compromise, fornication and idolatry.

**Admonition** - The Lord gave her time to repent, but she refused.

**Warning** - Jezebel and her children (followers) will be cast into great tribulation. They made their bed of adultery with her, now they will share the deathbed of punishment. The deep things of Satan may refer to the boastful pride of false teachers who claimed to have superior knowledge, but whose teachings were from the devil.
Promise - Some are still faithful. No greater burden than what is necessary will be coming. Just hold fast what they are doing right. If they hold fast they will rule over the nations with the Lord. We reign now as those who have been raised from spiritual death and seated with Christ (Eph. 2:4-6; Rev. 5:9-10), and we will reign with Him forever in the eternal kingdom (2 Tim. 4:8; 18). The morning star is Christ Himself (Rev. 22:16; II Pet. 1:19) and when we overcome we will bask in the eternal day of His light (21:23).

Conclusion - Beware of indifference to what the Spirit says.

Questions To Stimulate Discussion:

1. How does this picture of Jesus alter your perspective of who He is?

2. Is “love” something you feel or do? Can you feel without doing and still call it love? Can you do without feeling and still call it love?

3. What is “faith?” An attitude? A belief? A feeling? Is our “service” to each other, or service to the world? Where is the priority?

4. How are we doing when it comes to “perseverance?”

5. Who was “Jezebel” in the Old Testament (see 1 Kgs 16:31-33; 2 Kgs 9:22)? What do you remember about her?
6. What was this so-called Jezebel in Thyatira doing wrong? What specific sins did Jezebel’s false teaching lead people into?

7. How important is pure teaching to Christ? Does God care what we believe, just so as long as we behave right?

8. Why does God blame the church for this woman’s false teaching? What should they have done?

9. What did God threaten to do about Jezebel? What did He do first? What does this teach us about how we should treat each other?

10. Was God merciful forever? Should we?

11. Did all those at Thyatira hold to the teachings of Jezebel?

12. What does it mean to “hold fast”? What are we doing to ensure that each member perseveres until Jesus comes?

13. What does 2:26-27 teach we will be doing in heaven?
14. What does “I will give him the morning star” mean? How is the phrase “morning star” used in 2 Pet 1:19?

**Sardis - 3:1-6**

**Background** - Though Sardis was situated among dangerous cliffs, the city fell twice to conquerors who scaled the cliffs and marched straight into the weakly defended city. The letter in Rev. 3 suggests that the early Christian community there was imbued with the same spirit as the city, resting on its past reputation and...failing, as the city had twice failed, to learn from its past.

**Identity** - Jesus has the Seven Spirits - fullness of divinity (1:4 also) and the Seven stars - angels of churches (see 1:20). Jesus controls the destiny of His churches! He KNOWS their TRUE condition.

* This church has a complaint first - then commendation

**Condemnation** - They only had a reputation of being ALIVE - Really they are DEAD. The church was living on its past reputation. In actuality, it was dead, and had left some work unfinished. Warning: our analysis of church is very limited and fallible. People praised this church - Christ condemned it!

**Commendation** - The light commendation of the church is that a few people had not soiled their garments. Judgment is individual not congregational. A few there are faithful (minority of church) and they are worthy to walk with Christ because they are pure.

**Admonition** - Three words: remember, keep, and repent. They need to live up to what they had once been, and finish what they had started. Awaken to your true
condition...Strengthen the remaining good - start there...for your works are incomplete. Were they great starters but bad finishers? Remember "How" you first received? Hold fast and REPENT! If not watching - Christ will come in punishment...Unexpected, unannounced, while they are asleep.

**Warning** - Several times in Scripture Christ’s coming in judgment is compared to that of a thief, meaning it will be unexpected (see Matt. 24:42-44; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). Remember, a coming in judgment may not refer to the end of time, but to a temporal judgment, such as the fall of Jerusalem.

**Promise** - Whoever overcomes shall wear new clean garments, not have their name blotted out of Book of Life, but will be confessed before Father and angels.

**Conclusion** - Everyone give heed.

### Questions To Stimulate Discussion:

1. Comment on the significance of Jesus possessing the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.

2. What do “the seven spirits of God” refer to (see Isaiah 11:2-5; Zech 4:2, 10)?

3. Why is there no initial commendation for the church at Sardis?

4. Why is the church accused of being “dead?” What did Jesus see that caused Him to say they were dead? What does it mean to be dead?
5. What does it mean to “wake up” or “watch”? How is that possible?

6. What are “the things” that remain which Jesus calls the church to strengthen? Why must they strengthen these things? How important are “completed” works to Jesus?

7. What are they to remember?

8. What are the consequences if the church fails to repent?

9. What does Jesus say commendably of this dead church? What does it mean to have unsoiled or undefiled garments?

10. Were these members in the minority? What does this tell you?

11. Does walking with Christ in white mean?

12. What is the “Book of Life”? How do you know that your name is in the Book of Life and can it ever be erased? Will God erase the names of believers who don’t overcome? Why or why not?
13. What does it mean to have Jesus confess us before His Father and the angels?

**Philadelphia - 3:7-13**

**Background** - Philadelphia lay at the threshold of a very fertile tract of plateau country, from which much of its commercial prosperity derived. The city was remarkable for the number of its temples and religious festivals. Its name means "Brother Loving" - Built by King Attalus II of Pergamum out of love for his brother. It was on a major trade route, was steeped in Greek idolatry ("Little Athens"). The Jews had a beautiful synagogue there. The city was destroyed by an earthquake in 17 A.D. - Rebuilt twice; new names not fully accepted - Many lived outside the city in huts for fear of earthquake and constant tremors. Much of this shows in the terms used by Jesus.

**Identity** - In a break with the general pattern of the letters to the seven churches, none of these titles are found in Rev. 1. Holy and true is used again in 6:10. Since this book is a prophecy of the future, there is great emphasis placed on the truthfulness of Jesus’ message (see also 19:11). He is the One who has the key of David. Jesus is the ultimate Davidic king (2 Sam. 7:12-17; Ps. 110:1-4). As such He has the power to grant or exclude entry into that kingdom (Matt. 8:11-12), symbolized by the key. This imagery is borrowed from Isaiah 22:15-25.

**Commendation** - I know your works...so Christ opens door (privileges of service) they had kept His word - true to the doctrine of Christ; Not denied His name - confessed Him openly; Though little strength (weak in number, ability, etc.). Observe: Little strength can easily be an excuse, but ought not. They were capable though weak or small. Restraints sometimes, not necessarily all the time. The church has persevered in the face of testing, possibly from the Jewish community.
Condemnation - As with Smyrna, there is no criticism made of this church.

Admonition - They are told to hold fast in view of a coming hour of testing.

Warning - There is no warning, in keeping with the lack of condemnation.

Promise - There are several promises in this letter: Christ will cause the synagogue of Satan to bow before them (3:9)...to recognize that Christians are loved of God. They will be kept from the hour of testing (3:10). A turn of events is possible, sometimes after a period of great distress.

Conclusion - John anticipates the vision of the glorified church in Rev. 21-22 as one gigantic temple-city. In that vision “the tabernacle of God is among men” (21:3), and the Lord is the temple (21:22). In that city His name will be on our forehead (22:4), indicating an intimate relationship. They must overcome to receive promises...to become a pillar in temple - permanent fixture in God's house, where there will be no going out anymore - assurance and security. They will be with God - owner, have a New Jerusalem citizenship, wear Christ’s new name - as a glorious victor. Be sure to Listen and apply.

Questions To Stimulate Discussion:

1. Comment on each of the characteristics of Jesus’ descriptions in verse 7.

2. What did God promise the church of Philadelphia (3:8)? What does it mean, specifically and practically that they had an open door? Can God give us an open door as well?

3. When God provides an open door, can the doings of man frustrate Him?
4. What does it mean that the church in Philadelphia has “little power”? How impressive is it that even with little power the church kept Jesus’ word, and did not deny His name?

5. Does a congregation need to be big and powerful to have value to God’s purposes?

6. Who or what is the “synagogue of Satan”? What is the purpose in making these people “bow down” before the church? How might this be seen?

7. What was the “hour of trial” to the church in Philadelphia?

8. Could God’s Providence spare them adversity that was going to be worldwide? What does that tell you?

9. Can God duplicate this today?

10. What does the phrase “I am coming quickly” mean? If this is a reference to Jesus’ coming in the final judgment...coming in the judgment on the hour of trial He mentions...or some other?

11. Is there a sense in which we all can see Jesus as coming quickly?
12. What does it mean to “hold fast”? Why does Jesus warn them not to let anyone take your crown?

13. What does Rev 21:22 tell us about a future temple? What is the significance of a being a pillar (see Isaiah 22:23)?

14. Explain the beauty of the three promises of verse 12.

Laodicea - 3:14-22

Background - Laodicea was located at a major crossroads in the Lycus Valley. This strategic position made Laodicea an exceptionally prosperous commercial center, especially under Roman rule...It was an important center of banking and exchange...Its distinctive products included garments of glossy black wool, and it was a medical center noted for eye salve and ophthalmology. Built in 250 B.C.

Identity - More descriptions not found in Rev. 1. The Amen. This word means “so let it be, truly.” Here it refers to the truthfulness of Jesus’ message...steadfast, certain and sure. - The faithful and true Witness, used slightly differently in 1:5 and 19:11. Jesus knows everything perfectly. - The Beginning of the creation of God, not meaning that Christ was created but that He is the creator, the one who began the creation (see John 1:1-3; Col. 1:18).

Commendation - There is none.
**Condemnation** - Lukewarm and proud. Interestingly, because of where Laodicea was situated, the city did not have access to warm or cold water, but merely lukewarm water...The church was charged with similar uselessness. Neither COLD - dead, do nothing, indifferent...Nor HOT - zealous, fervent. Very distasteful to Christ!

**Admonition** - The church in this wealthy city needed to know that true riches come only from Christ, who alone could give them the gold, white garments, and eye salve they needed. Simply put, be zealous and repent. The congregation’s supposed self-sufficiency is rebuked. They feel they have succeeded, accomplished a lot...Reached the pinnacle of church work in their own estimate...Relying on the congregation more than Christ. Is being unaware of true condition possible today?

**Warning** - The Lord warned that he would spit them from His mouth (3:16). This echoes the warning God gave to Israel that the land would vomit them out if they committed the same atrocities as the Canaanites (Lev. 18:24-30). They have to buy true riches from Christ...Gold tried in fire - faith? (I Pet.1:5-7)...White garments - righteousness? (19:8)...Eye salve - honest and good heart? — Repent! Motive: love (not "agape", but "phileo" brotherly love). Chastening is evidence of concern and care.

**Promise** - In spite of the harsh condemnation of this church, there are several hopeful statements as well. Those whom I love I reprove and discipline. This is what all fathers do, and our heavenly Father is no different (Heb. 12:5-7). Despite their flaws, the Lord still loved the Laodiceans. — I stand at the door and knock. In this case the invitation is not to non-Christians, but to half-hearted Christians. Those who respond will dine with Christ. Later the glorification of the church is described as the marriage supper of the bride and Lamb (Rev. 19:9). Christ is seeking the lost within the church.
Conclusion - Jesus pictured on outside of His church - SAD! Though the only church of the seven with no commendations, they are still recognized as His church though..at least for now. This church probably has a heart problem, not doctrine or practice. — Overcome and sit with Christ...Exaltation is given AFTER overcome, not before. Heed what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Questions To Stimulate Discussion:

1. How do Christ’s three titles span His entire career? What is significant about these titles? How do you interpret the phrase, “the beginning of the creation of God”?  

2. Is there any commendation in this letter? Why or why not? Is there any mention of persecution or trial? What does this suggest?  

3. Why does God prefer that they are either “cold or hot”? Why would God want them to be “cold”?  

4. How distasteful is lukewarmness to God? Why is lukewarmness so distasteful to God? What is the appeal of being lukewarm? Why do people sometimes live lukewarm lives? How can we avoid lukewarmness?  

5. The Laodiceans think they are rich when they are, in fact, poor. What dangerous mindset develops as a result of wealth? What does this have to do with being lukewarm?
6. Why does Jesus advise them to “buy from Me gold refined by fire”? How is refined gold used in the Bible (cf. Job 23:10; Prov 27:21; Mal 3:2-3; see also Zech 13:9; 1 Pet 1:6-9)?

7. What might be the purpose of the “eye salve”?

8. How does God treat those He loves? Is God all cookies and smiles?

9. What does zeal have to do with repenting?

10. How does Jesus depict His relationship with the church in verse 20? Comment.

11. What do we learn when we hear Him say that though He is knocking, we still must open the door?

12. Although Jesus has nothing commendable to say to this congregation, He still holds out hopes and promises. What does this tell you? How should this affect our treatment of one another?

13. What is held out as worthy of our overcoming in verse 21?

14. Over and over the appeal is that whoever has the ear of hearing what God is saying, to give heed what He is saying to the churches.