

# Don't Get To Heaven Empty-Handed

2020Rev-06



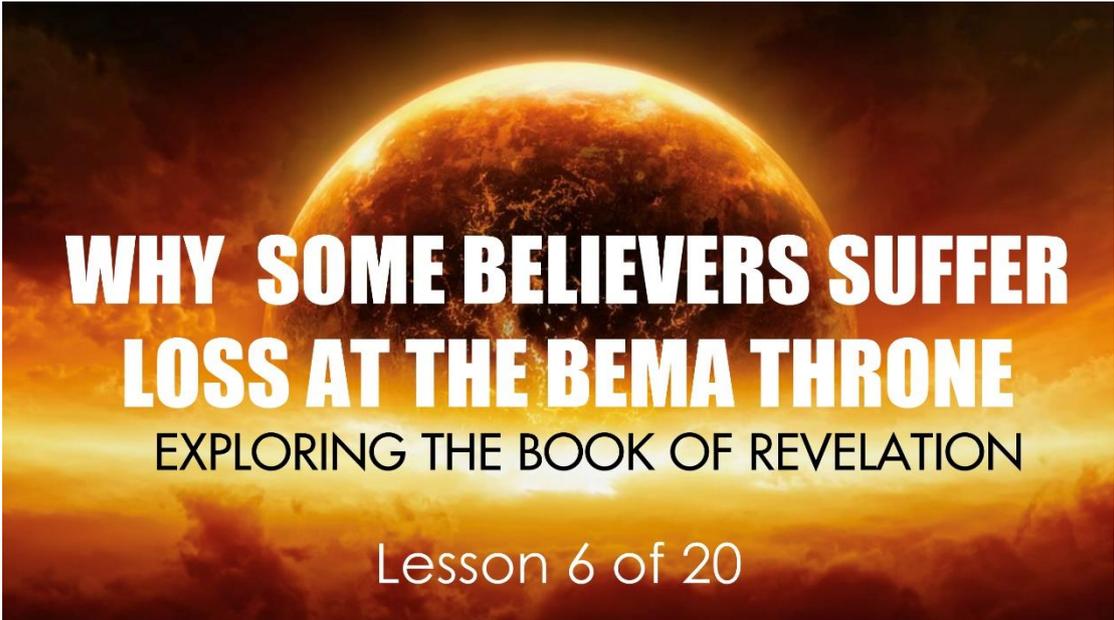
Welcome to the sixth class of our journey through the book of Revelation, we're studying all 404 verses over 20 class periods. We've gotten to the middle section of the churches, which is a strange title. You can see it there on the slide in front of you. Don't Get To Heaven, Empty Handed.

The picture, if you could make it out, is a picture of Samson. The Old Testament judge pushing down the pillars of the temple of the Philistines and going down into death with thousands of Philistines, with the enemies of God. The real message is not an Old Testament Bible story. It's the fact that today we're going to look at these three churches. We've lumped them together because all three of these churches have the same warning. It's the warning from 1 Corinthians 3:15. It said that some people there in that scripture will get to Heaven "*yet so, as by fire.*" They will suffer loss.

In fact, Job 19 in verse 20 says they get to Heaven by the skin of their teeth. Now my teeth don't have skin and that is an expression from old time, saying you just barely make it. Paul said you make it, so as by fire. It's like you made it through the fire, but that's all.

- You just made it. You are getting to Heaven empty handed to the greatest reception of all times.
- To the greatest time to give a gift to the One that did more for you than anyone else and more for me, Jesus Christ.
- We have been invited to a banquet where we present a gift to Him.
- There is going to actually be people who get there, to that banquet, empty handed.

That's a very sobering message.



# WHY SOME BELIEVERS SUFFER LOSS AT THE BEMA THRONE

## EXPLORING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Lesson 6 of 20

Another way to look at it, to give a book of Revelation framework to it, is Why Some Believers Suffer Loss At The Bema Throne. I'm going to read one verse and then pray. 1 Corinthians chapter 3, the one I already quoted to you and verse 15. I'm going to pray that the Lord will use His word to speak to our hearts in a way that for some of us, we've never heard this message in this way before.

This is what God say, Paul's epistle to the Corinthians chapter 3, I'll start actually in verse 13, *"each one's works will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work of what sort it is. If anyone's work, which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward."*

So, look up here. He won't be empty handed.

Now look at verse 15. *"If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."*

Suffer loss, still be saved. So as through fire. How to get to Heaven, empty handed. Let's bow for word of prayer.

Lord, I pray that this class will be a unique ministry in many lives, of getting some believers serious about why they're even here, what you left us to do, and how there is a reckoning for how we invest our 24 hours a day, 168 hours a week. That river of time flowing past us at 60 minutes an hour, you've asked us to redeem it. And Lord, I pray that many of your children, believers that are listening and watching this class will start thinking about what they're doing with their time. How they're actually wasting great amounts of their life from your perspective and your perspective is all that matters. I pray that would come through to our hearts in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.



What we're looking at on this slide, you can see is, living for God in a very dangerous world. Remember, these churches that this letter is written to we're living in the second generation of the first church that was born on the day of Pentecost. This second generation church had this book. They had the whole Bible, except for this last book. Revelation. That's, what's coming to them and God says you're living in a very dangerous world. I want you to survive that very dangerous world. I want you to know me.

## Revelation's Seven Clear Events

1. Christ's Church on Earth (Rev. 1-3)
2. Christ's Church in Heaven (Rev. 4-5 & 19:1-10)
3. Tribulation Events in Heaven & on Earth (Rev. 6-18)
4. Christ's Second Coming (Rev. 19:11-21)
5. Christ's Earthly Millennial Rule (Rev. 20:1-6)
6. Final Rebellion & Great White Throne (Rev. 20:7-15)
7. Dwelling with God in Eternity & Heaven (Rev. 21-22)

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That's basically the outline of the book of Revelation in this class. We're still here in the very first section.

- Chapters one, two, three are all directed toward and illustrating the church on Earth.
- Then we see in four and five, the church in Heaven,
- the great tribulation,

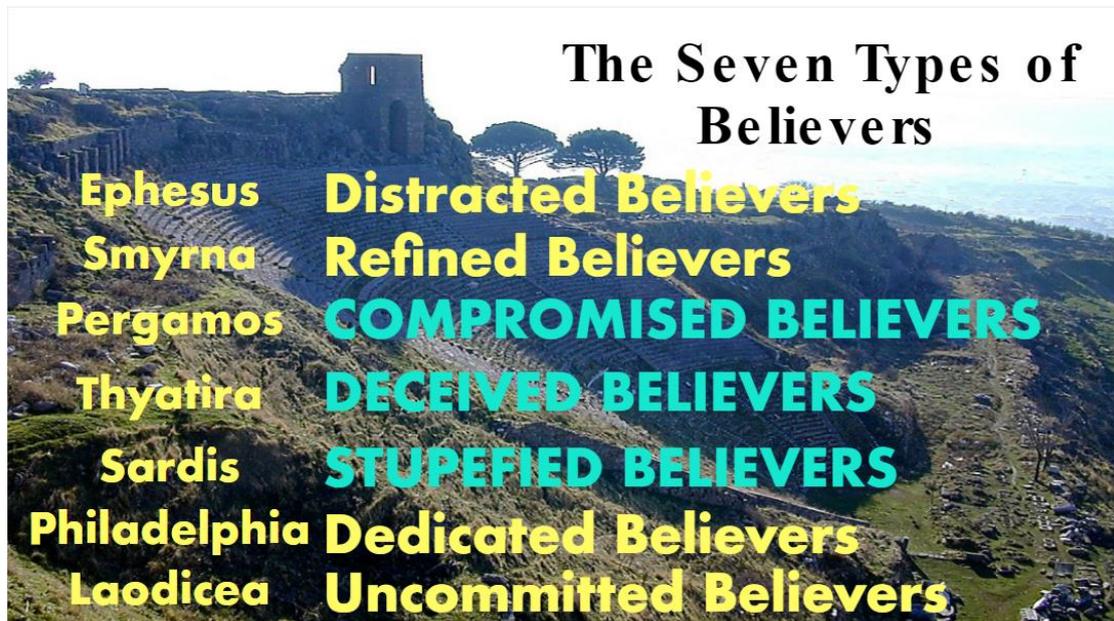
- the second coming of Christ is
- millennial rule.
- The ending of that with the great white throne.
- Then of course, dwelling in Heaven.



We've come on this map to these third, fourth, and fifth churches.

- You see Ephesus would be, if this was a clock on the wall with numbers on it, it would be at about nine o'clock and then
- Smyrna would be at about 10 o'clock and
- Pergamos would be at about noon and
- Thyatira would be at two and
- Sardis at three, if that was a clock face.

So, we've come on the geography of the book of Revelation, from the first, to the second, to this grouping. The over comfortable with sin, the infected with sin and the stupefied acting like they're not even alive, church.



Again, on this chart, this portrays what I've showed you over and over again. The seven types of believers.

- Distracted believers, Ephesus.
- Refined believers by suffering Smyrna.
- Pergamos has had the compromised believers, the ones that were comfortable around on sin.
- Thyatira had the deceived believers. They are deceived, they think that they can live their life any way they want. That they don't have to be aware of sin.
- Then the Sardis believers, they're stupefied. They act dead, like they're not even Christians.
- Then we have, and we'll come to the Philadelphians, the dedicated Christians.
- Then of course these uncommitted blinded ones.



Let's begin with Pergamos and that's in chapter 2, verse 12. We're actually going to walk through the text and I'm going to point out the structure I've already told you about. The lesson that we're going to see is this, the third church in Revelation, 2, starting in verse 12.

The church at Pergamos, remember that's a literal location that you could visit in Turkey today. In fact, many years ago, Bonnie and I led a tour. We took a bus from a cruise boat and went up to see this church at Pergamos. But **the lesson is beware of secret sins.**

# **PERGAMUM: When Believers Compromise Christ's Call to PERSONAL Holiness**

Revelation 2:12-17

Here on the slide in front of you, Pergamos is all about When Believers Compromise Christ's Call To Personal Holiness. That's what we're getting into here. The Lord, everyone that He saves, He sanctifies. The evidence of salvation is that all who God justifies, and that's the way God describes salvation. Justification is the doctrine where my sins go on Christ and his righteousness comes on me. All who are justified, Paul says in Romans chapter 8 are also sanctified.

If we took a coin out of our pocket and if you looked at one side and saw in the American quarter, George Washington, you'd have to flip it over. If it doesn't have the Eagle on the back, you know, that it's not a real quarter. That it's just a fake one. One that's used maybe for playing over and over a game that would slide through, but it's not two sided. It's a counterfeit.

The Lord says all who are justified are sanctified. The problem with Pergamos, they compromised that element. They were not living sanctified lives.

## Letter to Pergamos

*12-And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write;*

*These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;*

*13-I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even **where Satan's seat is**: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful **martyr**, who was slain among you, **where Satan dwelleth**.*

**Revelation 2:12-13**

Let's read starting in verse 12 "*and to the angel*". And I've said this to every class, the angel, angelos is messenger. A messenger from God was an angel as we think of it. But it doesn't mean that you have to have an angel every time we have a messenger. There were Earthly messengers and that's what the pastor of this church was. The pastor, the messenger, the one who spoke for God "*to the church of Pergamos write.*" Verse 12 continues. "*These things says He who has the sharp sword with two edges*". Now, again, back to chapter 1, that's a reference to Jesus Christ as He was portrayed in chapter 1, verse 13, "*I know your works and where you dwell, even where Satan seat is. And you hold fast to my name, and have not denied my faith, even in the days which Antipas who was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells.*"

I've already told you that in the city of Pergamos, Satan seems to have set up his headquarters. So, He says, I know that you're living near Satan's headquarters. Now Satan's headquarters are like living near a paper mill. Have you ever lived by a paper mill, down on I-40 and the South you can smell miles away. Have you ever lived near a sewer plant? Have you ever lived near anything that emits something that is nauseous or dangerous? Can you imagine what was coming out of Satan's headquarters?

The Lord's commanding them. He says you've been living where Satan seat is, and you've held fast.

*14-But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.*

*15-Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

*16-Repent; or else I will come to you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*

### Revelation 2:14-16

Now look at verse 14.

*"But I have a few things against you".* Yes, you survived living near Satan's headquarters, but what's happened is your compromised immunity system. You have been around that horrible, powerful, dark, radiation of Satan, and it's effected your personal sanctification. What was that? *"I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, to commit fornication."*

Now, this is going back to the Old Testament story of the children of Israel that were tempted by Balak, getting all of the worship of the Midianites into and destroying the people of Israel.

He doesn't stop there. So, they had that problem but look at verse 15, *"thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which things I hate."* Now, this is another, old struggle in the church. Nicolaitans is, Nike the Greek word, Laos. The victory of the people. Nike is a famous, a sports brand, a shoe brand, an athletic apparel maker. But Nike, the Greek word is victory and when it's connected with people's. Victories of the people. So there were, in this church, there were people that were dominating the church. Nicolaitans were a cult that had come into the church and was dominating the church. And the Lord says, see, in verse 15, *"I hate"* that. But look at verse 16, *"repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."* That's very interesting. *"Come to you". "Fight against them".*

What's going on here? The people that were receptive to the letter that was being written by Jesus to this church, were those who were receptive.

- They're actually listening.
- They have ears.
- They're sanctified.

Then there are those who have compromised.

- So within the church, the ones who weren't being sanctified,
- who were compromised,
- the Lord says I'm going to fight against them.

Those of you who are receptive, hear what I have to say.

See within every church, we have those:

- who love the Lord, but they're distracted.
- Those who love the Lord, but they're suffering persecution.
- Then we have those that are comfortable with sin, infected with sin, actually acting like they're lost people.
- Then we have those that are completely doing what the Lord says. Those are the ones who have ears to hear. Those are the ones who are justified and sanctified.
- Then we have these compromised believers. Who are going to get to Heaven and they're going to suffer loss.

To all Jesus said, repent or I'll come to you quickly and fight against you with the sword of my mouth.

*17-He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches;*

*To him that overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat, and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives it.*

**Revelation 2:17**

Now, look at verse 17, "*he who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*"

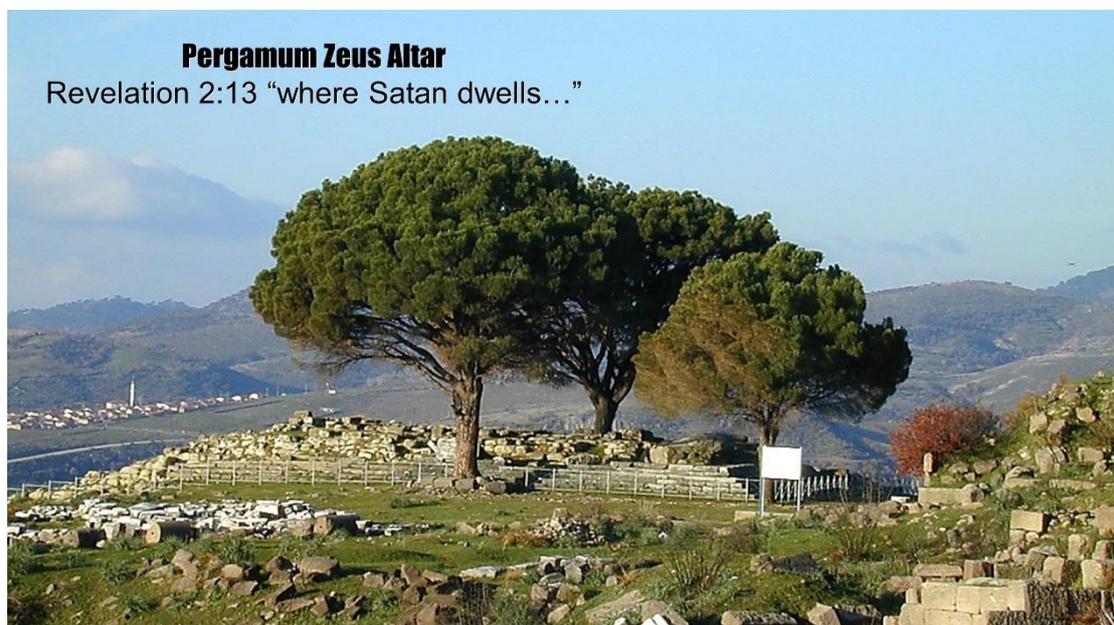
Remember the receptive have ears. And what He's doing is, He's talking to the whole church, but some won't listen and that's the danger. But to those who overcome. To those who are justified and sanctified. Those who have ears to hear and are receptive to the word of God. Those who repent, look what He offers.

*"To him that overcomes, I will give some of the hidden mana to eat. I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."*

The closest thing in our current culture to this white stone with a new name written would be, when you get your ATM card, you get a pin. The ATM card doesn't work unless you have the pin, the secret code. What the Lord says is, I'm giving you a treasure that you have personal access to. Just like that ATM card works in any ATM machine as long as you have the pin.

Jesus said, what I give to you works anywhere as long as

- you follow my word,
- my commandment,
- as long as you live my way,
- as long as you are my children.



Pergamos had a problem. They dwelt as verse 13 says where Satan dwelt, they had this horrible problem of living in the presence of sin.

Now, let me show you what the Lord says that we're always to do. When we live in the presence of sin, all of us live in the presence of sin somewhere, the Lord's goal for us is He wants to sanctify us. Now this, there are two passages that deal with how the Lord wants to sanctify us. The first one we'll look at is in Ephesians 4. I alluded to it yesterday in one of our earlier classes, but look at the book of Ephesians 4, starting in verse 22. This is one of the more famous descriptors that Paul taught about how the early church was too live around sin.

It says in verse 22, and *"that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lust,"* verse 23, *"be renewed in the spirit of your*

*mind.*" Verse 24, "put on the new man which was created" in righteousness. Put off. Be renewed. Put on.

- So put off, there are things every day in our lives, we need to put off.
- Then we get into the word and get renewed. We ask God to renew our minds like Romans 12:1 & 2 "by the renewing of your mind, you may prove what is that good"?
- And then we put on.

So basically the Christian life is putting off something, being renewed on the operating system, and putting on something. So much like getting ready in the morning. You get up, you take off your dirty clothes, you jump in the shower, you put on your clean clothes. Now that's simple. What happens to someone that doesn't put off their dirty clothes and doesn't take a shower and doesn't put on their new clothes.

If you sit by them in class, you start noticing and you start going, something is wrong. What is that? You see, **when we don't follow the basic sanctification steps, the odor of our life begins to betray the fact that we're living, not like a new creation in Christ.** Sooner or later, our mind starts thinking that the Bible is too hard to read. I don't get anything out of it. Pretty soon we start feeling like an unsaved person.

I was a pastor for decades in America, started in Georgia, continued from there to South Carolina. Then I went to California, I went to Rhode Island, then I went to Oklahoma and ended up finishing my pastoral years in Michigan.

Do you know what the most common question that people have.

- They would make an appointment, come to my office, and they'd say; I have a Bible question. Finally, when the door shut, they look at me and they say; I don't feel like I'm saved.
- I go, Oh, okay, well... was there ever a time you were saved?
- Oh yes.
- I said, so if you're really saved, you can't lose your salvation. What you're telling me is you don't feel saved now and that's what it was.

Do you know what it was? There were always, a hundred percent of time, there were things that gradually came back from their old life. They wouldn't put off their mind, got confused. They weren't renewed, they weren't putting on the helmet of salvation. So they didn't even feel like good Christians.

That's what was going on in the church, in Pergamos. What did Paul say in Titus 2:11, 12, and 13, He said this. For the grace of God, that brings salvation. The justifying work of Christ opens for me, the sanctifying life of Christ,

- the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,
- we should live soberly,
- righteously,
- godly.

Soberly righteously, godly in this present world. Putting off, being renewed, putting on.

How? The grace of God. The same grace that brought us salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness. Justification is salvation brought to us. Sanctification is denying ungodliness. What happens to people who are saved that don't do that. They get to Heaven empty handed. Very sobering message.

# Thyatira: Jesus Searches Our Hearts & Minds

Revelation 2:18-29

Let's move on to the second church. Remember I told you all three churches have the same struggle and I would like to start in verse 18 of chapter two and look at how Jesus searches our hearts and minds.

He's looking at the churches one by one, and He's writing them a letter with His diagnosis after spending time looking at them.

## Letter to Thyatira

*And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write;*

*These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brass;*

*I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.*

Revelation 2:18, 19

Starting in verse 18 and *"to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, these things says the son of God,"* Now look at this, that *"has eyes like a flame of fire."*

Do you see He's searching? What Jesus is saying is, I have laser like eyes.

I was reading in New York times about a new acquisition that the U.S. Army, the Marines, our military is getting. Where the soldiers can actually wear a device, where through thermal imaging they can actually see the movement of people through walls. Wow. It sounds like superhero stuff. Scientifically there is some device you can wear that can read the signature of body heat. They can actually, through thermal imaging, see the occupants inside the room. Wow. That's really neat.

Jesus says, Hey, I've always had that. I can see not only through the walls. I can see what you're thinking. I can see what you're feeling. I have eyes liquid. It says in verse 18, like a *"flame of fire"* and my *"feet are like fine brass"*.

What is this brass? This is speaking of what I was talking to you about earlier in an earlier class, the chastening or the disciplining or the spanking of God. He does not allow us to continue in sin.

He said, my *"feet are like fine brass. I know your works"* verse 19, your *"love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than a first."*

So in Thyatira, He says those of you that are justified in sanctified, I'm watching you.

*20-Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21-And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.*

*22-Indeed **I will cast** her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 **I will kill** her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.*

**Revelation 2:20-23**

Now look at His condemnation, Verse 20. *"Nevertheless I have a few things against you[...] you allow that woman, Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols."*

They were not just comfortable around sin. They were engaging in sin.

Now for me, I get notifications and notes from people who are watching these classes on YouTube. I told my wonderful wife, Bonnie, who distracts me all the time in this class. She's actually sitting out there and she's the one person in the whole world I'd like to spend all my time with. I have to not look at her too much, or I get off target. I got a note this morning from a fellow and said, I've come to know the Lord. I fell away. I got involved in drinking and got involved in drugs and the Lord has taken those out of my life. But, I'm still struggling for the past year and a half with the same thing as verse 20. I'm committing sexual immorality and I'm compromised. This fellow that wrote to me said; I am struggling with putting off, with being renewed, with putting on. He said, I know I'm justified but my problem is the sanctifying work.

I said, what you're experiencing, he'd told me about all these struggles he's having his life is, as I said the Lord is chastening you, disciplining you, He's spanking you. So that you will take His grace and deny ungodliness. Put off and say, no. See the grace of God opens the prison door. We're not locked into our temptations and sins anymore. We can forcibly say no and depart. As the Lord says *"let everyone that names, the name of Christ depart from iniquity."*

Look at verse 22. What happens if we don't repent as verse 21 talks about? The chastening, the discipline that God has is severe. Verse 22. *"Indeed I will cast her"*, that's this false teacher, *"into a sick bed and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent"*. Verse 23, *"I will kill her children with death"*.

Oh, do you know what 1 Corinthians 11 says from verse 23, all the way down to verse 27, it says those who partake of the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner, if they do not repent of sin, will become weak from their disobedience. If they still do not repent, they will become sick. If they still do not repent the same thing as in verse 23, they will die.

*"I will kill "*, verse 23, *"her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and the hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works."*

*"24-Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. 25 But hold fast what you have till I come. 26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'—as I also have received from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star.*

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

Revelation 2:24-29

Now continue to verse 24 *"Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan."*

Now remember, each of these letters are saying that within the church, there seem to have been those who were actually living out the sanctified life. Then there are those that are compromised and you see Him speaking to both halves of the church.

*"As many as do not have not this doctrine"*, they're the ones who are not being involved with Jezebel in her fornication and immorality. To this group, those that are, He says I want you to repent. Then He continues in verse 24.

*"As they say, I will put on you no other burden, but"* look verse 25, *"but hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power of the nations."*

This is a future promise of serving the Lord. *"He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potters vessels'. As also I received from My Father, and I will give him the morning star."*

So Jesus is saying, as He said to His disciples (remember, I've told you often there's nothing new in the book of Revelation), Jesus told the disciples that they would sit on 12 Thrones. Jesus is saying we also will help Him in the Millennial Kingdom. After we're in Heaven, we will come back and be His servants. Much as we have seen others that come, like Moses and Elijah during the ministry of Christ.

Then look at how verse 29 ends. *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."* The Lord is saying true believers, those who have been justified and sanctified. They will hear and they will respond.

# **God Sent More New Testament Letters Here than Anywhere Else**

Now look at the next slide because God sent more New Testament letters here, to Thyatira, than anywhere else. Let me explain what I mean. This is the Roman province of Asia minor.

Here is Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea; that are part of modern day Turkey.

How many letters were written especially to that area?

- Peter wrote his epistles. Two of them. You know how the book of 1 Peter starts to the elect scattered throughout Pontus, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. So Peter wrote two letters here.
- Now of course, Revelation was written to here. So Revelation, 1 Peter, 2 Peter. So we have three letters coming there.
- Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to the Colossians. The Galatians lived here, the Ephesians lived here, the Colossians lived there. So Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians,
- Then Timothy. 1 and 2 Timothy. Timothy was the pastor right there at Ephesus.

So we've got eight letters written to this little area.

- John, the apostle pastored in Ephesus right here and wrote back to that church. 1 John, 2 John, 3 John.
- Then finally. The first New Testament book. Remember what the first new Testament book is? "James, a bondservant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to the 12 tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings." The 12 tribes were scattered throughout this area. So the book of James actually was written from Jerusalem to here.

Which makes the 12th.

More books of the Bible were written to that little part, modern day Turkey, than any other place in the world. The books, all of these books, Revelation and Paul's epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, all of these. 1 & 2 Timothy. All of those books have the same message, daily choice that we each have, **serve Christ or not.**

Thyatira was being seduced by the false teacher, Jezebel, as true believers in that church were called on Christ to resist evil speaking and evil lifestyles. What I'm saying is, what they were facing in Turkey is the same challenge you and I face every day, serve Christ or not. **Let the justifying death of Christ open for us, the sanctifying life of Christ. That's a choice every day that we make.** They were living in hard times.

This is the longest of the seven letters, starting in verse 18.

- Thyatira was the least known of all the churches, that got the longest letter.
- Now what we do know, there's only one thing we really know about this church. In acts 16, when Paul's first European convert was saved. If you remember Lydia, she was a merchant from where? Thyatira.
- That's the only thing we know about this church. That Paul's first convert in that meeting in Philippi, was a woman from Thyatira.

# **Daily Choices: Serve Christ or Not**

Probably she went back to this city and shared the gospel. What she brought with her is what the scripture said, that it's a daily choice to serve Christ or not.

- Lydia, the Lord opened her heart and she went back there,
- took the gospel most likely to Thyatira,
- a church was born,
- she was wealthy, probably she funded it.

## **Sin was Everywhere Present & Powerfully Alluring. It was like Living in a Cesspool of Sin**

Let's just talk about what Thyatira looked like. Now, the one thing we do know is archeologists have spent their time finding all seven of these churches. This church in Thyatira an extensive excavation was done by a British archeologist named Sir William Ramsey. I'll read to you what was going on.

The saints in Thyatira he wrote, needed to stop their friendship with the world because it was displeasing to God. Most workers in Thyatira were members of guilds. Now we would call that a union. Kind of like a teacher's union or an auto workers union, or the Teamsters or something like that.

Most people who lived in Thyatira lived in this Roman area that had trade guilds. The guilds encouraged their members by setting prices for their labor and the prices on the goods they sold. That meant that all the various trades, the powders, the dyers, the tanners, the bakers, the metal workers, the textile makers, the bronze smiths, the slave dealers, the leather workers, and all the rest had guilds in this town.

But Ramsey wrote this after actually digging that town up. He said this, sin was everywhere. Present and powerfully alluring. "Revelry, licensed intoxication mark the pagan religious trade guilds. Lounging on dining couches, surrounded by troops of unclothed dancing and singing slaves, was fatal to all self-restraining spirits."

- In other words, the guilds held weekly meetings where they fed and gave alcohol to all the employees.
- The alcohol was served by, basically unclothed female slaves who would give you
- as much as you wanted to drink, as much as you wanted to eat, and as much as you wanted of anything else.

Therefore, these justified & sanctified people were getting comfortable and gradually involved in sin. What happened is Jezebel, this woman prophetess says; Hey, it's okay, it's part of work. Telling the Christians and excusing it.

Well, what we could say is they were living in a cesspool of sin. Now that's an old-fashioned word. Cesspool is septic tank. We don't even have those anymore because we have public sewers. It's where everything flushed in the toilet goes into. This pond is called a cesspool, sewer. Do you know what living in Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis was like?

It was much like a surgeon friend of mine, that talked about doing colon surgery. He said imagine cutting your finger open, having it bleeding, and sticking it into a dirty diaper and using that as the bandage. He says, how much do you think that'll heal?

How much do you think a justified & sanctified person living in that Thyatiran cesspool could live? Wives knew that every month their husbands were going off to a guild meeting. Knowing he was served all the alcohol he could ever drink, followed by a pornographic strip show.

# Christ's Call to Holiness Has Never Changed: We Live in the Present **BASED on the Past**

The next slide, Christ's Call To Holiness Has Never Changed. Christ called them to do, what all these 12 letters said they were supposed to do.

- They were supposed to put off Ephesians 4:22. Be renewed, Ephesians 4:23. Put on, Ephesians 4:24.
- They were supposed to deny ungodliness Titus 2:11.
- They were supposed to know that, if they come to the Lord's table unrepentant of sin the Lord would chasten them. Make them weak and sick. They were under God's chastening.

Christ's call to holiness is to live in the present. The present time **based on the past**.

Everything in Christianity is a present action, based on a past event. What's the past event? The cross of Jesus Christ. The past event is that on the cross Jesus conquered sin. He defeated. You know what it says in Hebrews 2:14, He destroyed him that "had the power of death, that is the devil." Jesus conquered sin. Living in the present based on the past, how did I get saved? By trusting, believing, and clinging to the truth that Jesus died on the cross.

- So in the past, Jesus died on the cross.
- In the present, I believe that, that faith instantly communicates the power of the cross to my life.

That's what it means to live in the present based on the past.

You know what Paul said, as you received the Lord, Jesus Christ; the way that you got salvation is the same way that you live out the sanctified life. It isn't like, I got saved totally by faith, by trusting the cross of Christ but I've got to deal with sin all on my own. I've got to work it out myself. No, the justifying death of Jesus opens for me, the sanctified life of Jesus. That's what it means to live in the present based on the past. When Jesus stood in my place and bore the punishment of God's wrath, I deserved the guilt. This one took my guilt. The sinless one took my sin.

- The same way I was saved, believing all that took place 2000 years ago, is exactly the same way I say no to sin.
- Exactly the same way that all those who trusted Christ were able to resist the allurements of Thyatira.

# **The Impact of Chastening Upon a Compromised, Worldly (Thyatiran) Believer's Life**

Rev. 2:18-29/ Heb. 12:1-11/ Judges 13-16

By the way, what are the impact of chastening on a compromised worldly, Thyatiran's life? It says in 1 Corinthians 11 and also in Hebrews chapter 12, that God will chasten those who are not obedient to Him; and those who don't repent and live lives of sanctification. The Lord will deal with them.

## **Samson Shows Us How He Got to Heaven EMPTY Handed & Suffering Loss**

1 Corinthians 3:15

The next slide is back to where we started in 1 Corinthians 3:15. Samson shows us how he got to Heaven empty handed and suffering loss. Samson was one of the most amazing Old Testament personages. So many details God captures from his life to show us again.



Don't get to Heaven like Samson empty handed. How would that happen?

## Steps on the Pathway to Spiritual Loss

- 1: Samson Wandered from His Godly Heritage  
(Judges 13:1-25)
- 2: Samson Disobeyed His Parents  
(Judges 14:1-4)

Number one, and this is what I call: The Steps On The Pathway To Spiritual Loss. What happens when someone gets off the track of living the sanctified life? What happens when they don't live in the present, based on the past work of Christ? What is chronicled, happened in these three churches?

**Number one, like Samson we wander away from our godly heritage.** If you look in the book of Judges chapter 13, the first 25 verses. I'll give you a biography of Samson.

- Samson was born, verse 1, into a godly family from Zorah, he was there in the family of Manoah and his wife was barren, had no children.
- The Lord appeared in verse 3 and told them they'd have a child and conceive. So, from birth, Samson was promised by God.

- Look what it says in verse 5. They raised him to be a Nazirite. You know what that mean? He had strict rules about his life. He never cut his hair. He never was around anybody touching anything dead and he never drank any alcohol. He was raised that way as a Nazirite. It was promised he'd have ministry.
- Look at verse 8 of chapter 13. His dad prayed to the Lord and said, how do I teach, this boy? What kind of training? And he actually asked the Lord to guide. What a dad he was. He sought the Lord and prayed and then followed what the Lord says.
- And then verse 18, the angel of the Lord said, "*why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful.*" That's a Christophany, chapter 13, verse 18 of Judges.
- **Samson was unique. He was promised by God before his birth. Christ himself came and met with his parents, telling them how to raise him. Wow.**
- Verse 22, they were very reverent. They said we will die because we saw God.
- Verse 24, Samson "grew, and the Lord blessed him."
- So basically, the first 25 verses of this chapter say that Samson had a godly heritage, but he wandered away from it.

## **Steps on the Pathway to Spiritual Loss:**

3: Samson Compromised His Life  
(Judges 14:5–20)

4: Samson Ignored God's Warnings  
(Judges 15:1-20)

It starts in chapter 14, the first four verses of Judges 14. He disobeyed his parents.

- Remember they said, don't go down to the Philistines.
- Don't look for a wife down there.
- He says, bug off, I'm going to, and he did.
- Samson compromised his life.
- He begins living with these different Philistine women. That's in chapter 14, verses 5-20.
- He ignores God's warning in chapter 15. Samson basically has; if you remember, he would be with all these harlots and the harlots would set him up. The Philistines

would crash in and he would still have his strength. He'd beat up the Philistines or kill them and escape.

- Those were warnings from God that he neglected until finally, Delilah. She seduced him and got him to tell his secret. He said, it's my hair. While he was asleep, she cut his hair, called the Philistines, and the Philistines captured him.

## Steps on the Pathway to Spiritual Loss:

5: Samson PLAYED With Sin  
(Judges 16:1-20)

6: Samson's Compromises LED to Disaster  
(Judges 16:21-31)

Samson we can say, as you see on your slide, played with sin. Chapter 16, the first 20 verses and starting in verse 21 of chapter 16. Let me read to you these very sad words, judges 16 in verse 21, it says *"then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison."*

Wow. How did all that happen? Look at the last line of verse 20, *"but he did not know the LORD had departed from him."*

There's a dreadful condition that the Bible talks about. For us as believers, the power source in our lives is the Holy Spirit. I tell young people when I teach that's His first name, Holy. The Holy Spirit is a person. He's God, the Son.

- There's God, the father.
- God, the son.
- God, the spirit.

He's the third person of the Trinity.

Now the scripture say He can be grieved. How was He grieved? When we disobeyed the Lord. When He has to chasten us. If we continue grieving Him Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5, He can be quenched.

Quenched is what I just read in verse 20. *" He did not know that the Lord had departed"*.

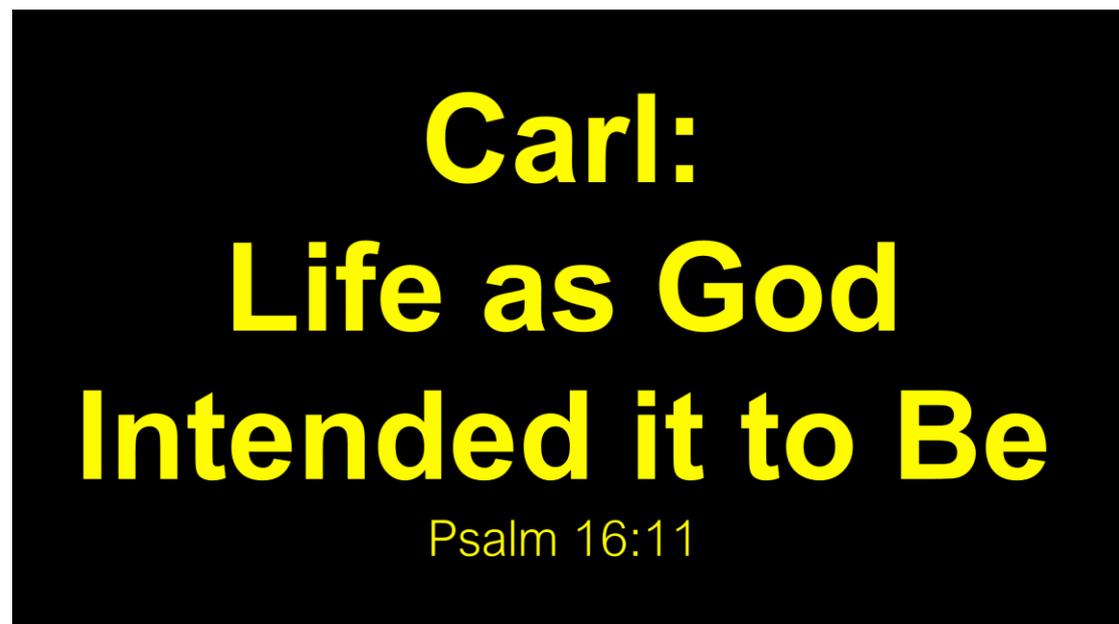
The power that Samson had known. That he could pick up 5,000 pound city gates, that had brass on them and carry them 20 miles to top of a mountain. That he could defeat with just a little stick in his hand, an entire army. It wasn't Samson.

In fact, you want to know what I think Samson looked like. He looked very much like a little skinny, nothing kid because it wasn't his brawn. It was the Spirit of God that made him great.

He compromised and it led to disaster. The sin that he wanted,

- Blinded him.
- Bound him.
- He started grinding.
- He became like an ox pulling a sledge, around, inside this place where they had bound him.

That became a picture of what God does with His servants who are dominated by lust. Who are driven by pride and revenge. **Samson defeated himself**. What's amazing is Samson could defeat everyone, but his own desires. Is that what God wants from us?



Real quickly, Psalm 16:11 tells us what God wants. Psalm 16:11. As you see on the slide is: Life Has God Intended It To Be.

God wants to show us the path of life and wants us to follow His presence. That's the choice we have to make.

**Church # 5**  
**Sardis**  
Revelation 3:1-7

Acropolis from below Rev. 3:3  
“I will come as a thief”



One last church before we go, the church in Sardis. Sardis is, you can see it in that slide, it's the tall mountain. That's where their Acropolis was, and the city spread out below it.

# **Sardis: Where the Great Physician Felt their Pulse & Declared Them Dead**

Revelation 3:1-6

Sardis is all about the church where the Great Physician came and felt the pulse of the church.

Look at Revelation chapter 3 and the first 6 verses. He declared them to be dead.

**The Pathway that Leads to DEATH:  
Only Professing Jesus, Not Possessing Him (Mt. 7:23)**



Here's a view of the central forum area of Sardis.

I'd like to go through just the first few verses of Revelation chapter 3. Before I apply it to you, it's very hard to get three churches in one class, but I'll try.

**“This people draw near Me  
with their mouth, and with  
their lips do honor Me, but  
have removed their heart far  
from Me” Isaiah 29:13**

It says, *"to the angel of the church in Sardis write, these things says He who has the seven Spirits of God"*.

Chapter 1, verse 4. The seven stars. Chapter 1, verse 20. Remember, all these are repeats of what Jesus said in chapter 1.

*"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."*

Now, look at the slide on the screen in front of you. This is Jesus quoting what He said in Isaiah. Listen to Isaiah 29:13. *"This people draws near to me with their mouth and with their lips, do they honor me, but they have removed their heart far from me,"* Isaiah 29:13.

The people of Sardis sang the same hymns, came to church, and listened to the same messages, but their hearts were far from the Lord.

# Why Call Me Lord & Obey Me Not? Luke 6:46

This reminds us of what Jesus said in Luke 6:46. He said, why call me, Lord, Lord and do not what I say.

## Sardis & Christ's **CALL** to Every Believer: Stay Awake

Revelation 3:1-6

Sardis is all about Christ's call to every believer. Look what it says in the next verse. Verse 2, "*be watchful*", Revelation 3:2, "*and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.*"

# **Beware of Spiritual Overconfidence: Christ's Lesson**

**Mt. 24:36-44**

What had happened to the people of Sardis? They had slowly fallen asleep. I don't mean sleeping through the church services. They had breathed so much of the toxic air of sin, that they were in a stupor. Jesus warns in Matthew 24 of spiritual overconfidence.

- Of thinking that won't happen to me.
- Those are famous last words. Oh, I would never do that.
- Do you know what the Bible says? Beware of dangerous overconfidence.

That's Christ's lessons. He says, watch and pray lest you enter into what? Temptation. Less you stop putting off. Stop being renewed. Stop putting on. Less you stop taking the grace of God because what happens when we do?

The Holy Spirit gets grieved, we lose the joy of our salvation. The Holy Spirit gets quenched. We lose the power of God, to say no to sin. That's where they were.

# **The Necessity of Spiritual Watchfulness**

**Rom. 13:11-14**

Paul had written an entire section on this, on spiritual watchfulness in Romans 13.

# Watch Out For The Prowling Lion Satan

1 Pet. 5:8

Peter had said in 1 Peter 5:8, watch out *"because your adversary the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking those he can devour."*

Do you know what happened to these three churches when they didn't have the Holy Spirit's power in them? When they aggrieved and quenched the spirit, Satan devoured them.

What does that mean? They began living like they were lost, like they were pagans.



What was the result? 1 Corinthians 3:15.

If anyone's work is burned, and Paul said, he will suffer loss but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Jesus Christ wrote a letter to the church on Earth. After two generations, this set of churches had more letters written to them than any other church. More truth

trained to them. Yet these churches allowed the Holy Spirit to be grieved and quenched. They suffered loss and they got to Heaven empty handed.

I wonder, do you think every day about the greatest day of your life. It's the day that you stand in front of Jesus Christ and you get to say, this is my life, this is what I did for you on Earth. Everything else was just, food and raiment and I was content, but this is my service, my offering to you.

- When you get invited to the reception of the greatest person in your life what present are you going to give Him?
- Are you going to get there empty handed?

That's a choice you make today.

- It starts with putting off,
- being renewed, letting the word of God restart your mind, thinking God's way, and
- then choosing to put on God's way.

Let's bow for word of prayer.

Father in Heaven, I thank you for these three churches. What a sobering lesson. Thank you for illustrating the empty entrance into Heaven that Samson had, but he was saved like Lot, like many New Testament believers, but so as by fire.

Lord, speak to our hearts, convict us, and draw us to take your grace. And began putting off the old ways and being renewed every day, by getting into your word and then putting on the new creation.

We are in Christ, as the justifying death of you Lord Jesus opens for us your sanctifying life. That's what we want. In the precious name of Jesus, we asked for it and all God's people said.

Amen.