

# The End Time Church

Many world disasters are occurring, and we know much worse is coming. We know all will be done exactly according to God's will. He will make or allow things to happen, fulfilling every prophecy. Those of God's people, living in the end times, as these times certainly appear to be, have certain admonitions.

Revelation 2:25-26 "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 over the nations--

Four of these Revelation 2-3 churches are specifically stated to exist at the return of Christ. Thus it follows that they are HERE today!

Revelation 3:1-3 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

Verse 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

Certainly Sardis will have it happen to them. There is an overlapping of the ages. There is always a *remnant*. Philadelphia will be there at the end, also as a remnant, just a relative *few*. Where are they now? What are they told to do? Are they *doing* it? *Really?*

Revelation 3:8-11 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Everyone *says* that's who they are, but do they have the characteristics of Philadelphia? What specific "action items" have they been given? They are commanded to "*hold fast*" to what has been given, and persevere. He wouldn't tell them that unless it was going to be a problem, a *challenge*! Something to *think* about.

### **When will that be?**

*No one* knows! But it will happen quickly. And for some, such as those in Sardis, they will be *completely* unaware.

Matthew 24:40-46 "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. "Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

The last era, show the main attitudes *at the time of the end*. Remember that there will only be a remnant of Philadelphia, Sardis, and the others at the return of Christ. The main church will be Laodicea, which makes it most likely *you* are in it! In fact, one of the *principal characteristics* of that group is that they *don't* think they are in it! That will be their way, attitude, and

approach. This aspect was always present among *some* in the church through all the ages, but at the end it will be *predominant*. The great tribulation is not here yet. Even at it's greatest numbers the church is said to be a small flock. So, where is that small church - the majority at the end? Does thinking about this make us uncomfortable? If so, that's *good!*

### **Characteristics of the end time church**

We are affected by the society around us. This was true in ancient times too. Many of the problems dealt with in the Bible are there because of the society in which those people lived. This is true in New Testament times, and the *end* times. With that in mind, what are the characteristics of the city and people of Laodicea? Some background: It was famous for it's soft black wool, eye salve, and school of medicine. It was wealthy, and a hub of banking.

Revelation 3:13 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

ALL are to listen! There is a different angel (messenger) for each church, a different spirit.

Verse 14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

Notice it says "of" Laodicea. Not "in" Laodicea. It's the people "of" this mind-set, without regard to *when* or *where* they might live. Laodicea means 'Judgment of/by the people.' They appraise themselves! What *they* think of themselves. Just as Adam and Eve decided for themselves. This way, man's way, is still present in the church! They disregard the example of Jesus Christ, our "true and faithful witness."

Isaiah 43:10-12 "You are My witnesses," says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, And besides Me

there is no savior. I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed, And there was no foreign god among you; Therefore you are My witnesses," Says the LORD, "that I am God.

He is the perfect evaluator, and so He does! Jesus Christ *is* that witness. He has *all* knowledge and wisdom to impart to us, *if* we will listen. Let's *listen* to what He says.

Revelation 3:15-16 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

The end time church is *not* being a true example of the way of Jesus Christ. They were being *bad* representatives actually. The city, in order to be in optimal location for trade and wealth (i.e. *money*), had to be located at some distance from sources of water. It had to be run in via long aqueducts, and by the time it reached them was warm, made one nauseous, and could cause vomiting! If someone cares enough to tell you that you are doing something wrong, you should *LISTEN!* *All* the churches should listen.

### **My church is doing the work, so it can't be us!**

The end time church's works, which they *did have*, were not very good. They were not terrible, but they were not good either. Lukewarm. Lukewarm is a state of neither hot or cold. Cold can be good, cool and refreshing. Hot can be good, passionate and on fire to do right. They had *neither*. Works they *had*, but were not up to standard.

They would be vomited out! Because of their halfhearted compromises, and their works. Not "bad" not "good." What they do is unenthusiastic, indifferent, and apathetic. Doing what they are *supposed* to do because they *have* to. Not because they *want* to or have the heart for it.

### **What kind of a "work" is being done?**

Look across the church of God landscape today. What is the hallmark of the efforts of these churches? How many are "doing the work" by rote. Plodding along the same tired old track, because that is what they have

always done, what they *have* to do. To them that's doing "the work." Frozen in time in a previous century. Railing against issues no one cares about in the least. No fire. No zeal. No connection with today's world. Continually cranking out dreary outdated literature devoid of enthusiasm, despite many exclamation marks and being decorated with medieval religious art. Producing nothing but sleep inducing "programs," and media. Often little more than perfunctory attempts to copy the mainstream Sunday morning TV religion peddlers. Even then they only succeed in producing a poor imitation.

They all take judgment to themselves, most thinking *they* are the only ones doing the *real* "work." Deceiving themselves (and their followers) into thinking *they* are "powerfully reaching the world!" Quite proud of themselves in what they are doing! Their only "power" is convincing their people of the "power" they say they have. This is almost universal across today's churches of God. Most of these groups differ from others in some way and doctrine, so at best they *all* can't be right! They can't have all "held fast" to what they had been given because people are clinging to *different things*. This happens on a personal level too. How are we doing?

### **But people in my group are OK**

This *is* the state of the *majority* in the church today. That, or you don't believe the scriptures! When Christ encounters this, it makes Him SICK. People manipulate the scriptures to "prove" whatever they like, usually in *reducing* some understanding so they can do what they want to. Things that never would be tolerated before. Leaders come up with "new truth," usually aggrandizing themselves. "Old truth" is relegated to the trash. (Truth is always additive. Real truth can never be subtracted from or changed!)

James 2:14-18 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

And what people want is usually a *departure* from the "faith once delivered." Just because someone has works, doesn't mean they are right with God. Many people do good things without even knowing the true God. Church leaders can go about trumpeting what they are doing, bragging about the big numbers at the feast, family weekends, etc. But if they don't have faith what is it? That's where the end time church fails. "Good" people, good "works," but the truth of God is going by the boards. Look at ourselves, how are *we* doing? Are we "doing good" but compromising? Laodicea chose NOT to live near the water source, for money and wealth. Good water is symbolic of the Spirit, living water. Nobody wants to believe they fall into the Revelation 3:17 category!

Revelation 3:17 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--

We can think *we* are good, but don't see ourselves correctly. Naked is symbolically lacking acts of righteousness (Revelation 19:8). They were similar to the people of the city in which they lived. They THINK they are fine! They are *glad* they are fine! They are in the group that is *right*. They did what they had to in 1995, so they *have it made*. We must ask ourselves if *we* are that way? Do we think we are good, our group? We need to ask God to show us!

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

### **If we have let things slip, what should we do?**

We need to stay close to God, and his word. God looks for our fruit, the results of what we do. What is it? Self-deception? It's quite common. We are warned not to be that way, right in our own eyes. We must always watch out for the end time attitude in *ourselves*! If our thinking is out of line with God's, what should we do? Christ tells us.

Revelation 3:18 "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be

clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

Christ has the "right stuff" for us. It's going to be tough to get out of that mind-set, but you can. You may find yourself in a time and place you never expected to be. Use it. God made sure you were there for a purpose, His purpose.

1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

We don't have what it takes within us. We need to continually be checking ourselves against the perfect word of God! God gives us trials so we can learn and come to genuine faith. Choosing right over wrong. What God *says* is right, not what *we think* is.

Revelation 7:14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

White garments are washed in the blood of the Lamb. Not blind to the filth or dirt on our garment. We should have physical works, but spiritual works too. The blind Pharisee thought it was all about doing the right things, not *being* right. They did good works for the wrong reasons. (Matthew 7:22-23) They didn't have the eye-salve of Christ. We have to begin to think like God, our sight illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

The people in the end time church are told to repent and change. That is no different than what we *all* should be doing, *all* the time! If you are not, and God is working with you, you will be taken to that point one way or another.

Matthew 23:23-26 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected

the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. "Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Particularly applicable to the church in the end time!

Revelation 3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

### **Get back to the word of God**

Judging ourselves by the word of God. It's for our *good*, so we are *not condemned*. Do we realize this, and act accordingly? Are motivated inwardly to keep God's law, and actually LOVE it? Not doing what we do just to be seen. God's way works. It's the only way that works. Do you believe it?

James 1:22-27 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Do we search the whole word of God? Not looking for just what we think is right? Or seeking "loopholes" to enable us to slack off somewhere.



Consider, what will you say when you stand before God Almighty? "I knew the law." --So what! So do Satan and the demons! They just won't DO it. We can't be that way. Look to God's word, and align OUR thinking and doing with His.

Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Notice, Jesus Christ is on the *outside*! How did he get *there*? He won't be "in" them enough to even be recognized when the day comes! (Matthew 25:12)

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Christ must be *in* us, living in us. Motivating us. Many (half?) in the end time church apparently will not, and are expelled (vomited) from the body, rejected. Why? There is a great reward for just *doing what He says*!

Revelation 3:21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

There is still time to change! There is still a chance. *If* there needs to be change, wake up and *see* what needs changing! It's not a bad thing to go through the great tribulation, *if* it effects essential change. If that is the only way God can get through to some, it's what He will do.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Some are left behind. Those who don't or won't repent, overcome, and change their ways and their thinking *now* will have to go through the great tribulation! And it's beyond just keeping the commandments and knowing God's word. These people do that. It's not enough. We need to make sure

*we* don't have the prevalent attitude of the end time church. Self-satisfied contentment with where *we* are, in *our* own little group that's "right," convinced *we* are spiritually OK. In the end time most will think everyone *else* is Laodicean! Don't YOU be that way!

Everybody that *thinks* they are Philadelphian, are in effect indicating they probably are *not*! *We*, the churches of God in the end time, *are LAODICEA*! We need to heed Christ's words, and not continue that way! Nobody as an individual has to be part of that group.

Hebrews 2:1-3 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; "that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

We must make a choice. God wants us to choose rightly, to choose life. Don't fail to *hold fast* to what we had been given. Don't let down, compromise, drift away, even a little bit! Don't be self satisfied with your situation, your group. Don't be weak-willed, going along with everyone just to be going along. You won't escape if you don't heed these warnings. ---- It's not too late, ...yet.