

The Last Days Church

Revelation 3:7-22

What in the World is Going On? 2016

Tonight is week 4 of our Prophecy series – WITWIGO 2016!

A) I think some Christians today would question the validity of **doing a prophecy series** – or **studying Bible Prophecy in general**.

B) Can we really know for sure about those things?

C) Consider this: **The theme of the 2nd coming of Christ dominates the scriptures**

1) Next to faith it is the most talked about subject in all of the Bible.

- ❖ the 2nd coming is talked about or alluded to **1,845 times** in the Bible.
- ❖ **1 out of every 25 verses** speaks of the 2nd coming of Jesus.
- ❖ **1/5 of the entire Bible** deals with the end of days or the 2nd coming of Jesus

D) For every one verse that talks about His 1st coming there are eight that talk about His 2nd coming.

E) For every one verse that speaks of the atonement of Christ there are two that speak of His 2nd coming!

F) 21 times Jesus personally referred to it and 50 different times the Bible tells us to be ready for it!

It WAS an important theme of the early church!

A) At the ascension – Jesus will return the same way you saw Him leave.

B) The reality that Jesus would come again for His church was a **focal point and motivation** of the early Church

C) Example We are currently studying 1 Thessalonians here on Sunday mornings – 1) Paul's earliest writing

D) Paul was three weeks in the city – a Church was born – brand new believers – he writes to

encourage them -

1) **Every Chapter – mentions 2nd coming!**

Scoffers: You prophecy people have been talking about the coming of Jesus for years now and it hasn't happened yet! – 1972 –

A) **Bumper stickers - Like this one ...** In case of Rapture ...

(Did you ever instinctively move from following a car with a sticker like that?)

B) T-shirts – **get right or get left** - Don't get left behind - Everywhere back then.

C) Movies Thief in the night? - Scared the Hell out of a bunch of us – **THE POINT!!!**

1) Got saved again every time I saw it

D) Larry Norman – I wish we all been ready –DC talk **REDID** - – Jordan Sparks

'life was filled with guns and war and everyone got trampled on the floor..... READY

E) Sing tonight – lights out – Cell phones

MESSAGE: DON'T GET LEFT BEHIND!

A) Did any of you ever think – Missed the Rapture?

B) Middle school 1977 – Came home one day – doors open, lights on –

1) My parents were no where to be found- Missed it

C) Dad – Not graduate HS – 1982!

D) But the rapture didn't happen – people began to scoff and make fun of those who believed in the rapture.

Shouldn't surprise us – Peter predicted that would happen. 2 Peter 3:3-4 scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?"

A) Here is what I do when I meet someone like that – **I ask if I can take a picture – of them** – post it on Instagram – just met a fulfillment of bible prophecy

B) Peter also told us why the Lord delays His coming: 2 Peter 3:8

⁸ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. 2 Peter 3:8-10

C) Common problem with Christians Back in the 60's 70's 80's– Many were excited about the coming of the Lord

1) But not the Lord who was coming!

D) When Jesus didn't come – excitement went away 1) We need to not make that same mistake

Tonight I want us to consider two types of Church goes and Churches that will exist in the last days.

A) In the book of Revelation Jesus wrote letters in Chapters 2-3 to seven churches

B) Each one was a real historical church in the area of Asia minor

1) There is a Historical application – 7 real churches

C) Personal application: *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

1) See how the message to them applies to us personally

Prophetic application: These seven churches correspond with the various ages of church history.

- ❖ **Ephesus** – Early church to 100 AD
- ❖ **Smyrna** – Ten ways of persecution Roman emperors – Domitian to Diocletian 95AD to 313AD
- ❖ **Pergamos** – Period church became married to the state – Constantine
- ❖ **Thyatira** – Catholic church claimed authority over the Bible
- ❖ **Sardis** - Reformation – back to the Bible NAME ALIVE - DEAD

Final two Churches represent the Church that would be in existence in the last days. - Focus tonight – A) Philadelphia and Laodicea

B) The Church of Philadelphia – The Church of the open Door

⁷ “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

“These things says He who is holy, He who is true, *“He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”*: ⁸ “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. ⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. ¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him* My new name.

¹³ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

This church was in a city that had endured a lot of tragedy {series of earthquakes – shook their world .}

A) The Church was ALSO touched by the tragedy– **Rains on Just and unjust. – not IMMUNE**

B) JUST LIKE 2008 – Believers were not shielded when economy collapsed.

1) People in our church lost Jobs – homes – many faith was strengthened – came out stronger!

C) So in this city that had gone through so much – stood this vibrant group of believers in Jesus.

1) Jesus has nothing bad to say about this church – only good.

They were the Church w/ a Divine Opportunity –

v.8 *See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it;*

What does an OPEN DOOR – refer to?

A) In Col.4:3 Apostle Paul asked that the People in Colossae would pray, *that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ,*

B) Sharing the gospel – the good news – Hope – forgiveness and salvation found in Jesus Christ

C) In 1 Cor. 16:9 *“For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”*

1) **Open doors come with opposition!** – Enemy doesn’t like to see people getting saved / set free

Part of our Blessing from the Lord is that He desires to use our lives in his on going plan of redemption.

A) LAST GENERATION – WHAT A PRIVILEGE!

B) Not that God needs us – Needs us like you need your **5 year old son to help you mow the lawn or wash the car – get in the way.**

B) But you let your son **“help” to bless him** – the same thing is true of us

1) Blessing to impact lives for eternity.

C) Always been God’s heart – God made man – Adam and Eve placed them in the garden -

Genesis 1:28 *“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

A) Note: **God blessed them** – This was their Blessing: **“Be Fruitful and multiply and take care of what I have put into your hands.”**

B) Man lost that – **at the fall** – had to leave the garden

C) Reclaimed through Christ – Blessing to us – Be Fruitful and multiply spiritually –

D) Take care of what I have put into your hand
RESOURCES – SPHERE – OPEN DOORS

The blessing of God for every believer is that He allows us to partner with Him in reaching a lost world – Part of why we are here.

A) NOT EVERYONE EXPERIENCES THAT

B) To this church – He opened up a door of opportunity that no one could shut.

B) Consider the reasons they were “Blessed” with this open door – HOW We can have it as well.

#1 V.8 They had little strength:

A) Idea is this – their little strength caused them to be dependent upon Him.

B) Jesus opens doors to those who realize they need His Strength!

C) Many believers today – fail miserably in their walks – try to live the Christian life in their own strength

1) Formulas and programs are so popular -

We hate to admit we are weak: Weakness is a position of Strength in Jesus!

A) He resists the proud – gives grace to the Humble

B) Matthew 5:3 Poor in spirit..... Kingdom

C) Jesus told his disciples – Abide in Me – My words abide in you without Me NOTHING

D) Jesus gets excited about those who realize – Can’t do this without you Jesus –

1) Cling to You – Cling to Your word

#2 V.8 They kept the word!

A) Believed the word and they obeyed the word!

B) God opens doors to those who are following His word

1) Person – I am living with my boyfriend – praying for God to show me what He wants to do with my life.

C) First – stop living with Boyfriend – Sin – Once you take care of step one – **He will fill you in on step two**

I talk to Christians all the time – I don’t feel like the Lord talks to me

- A) What is the last thing you remember Him speaking to your heart about ?
B) Let go of my bitterness – have you done that? – No!
1) He is waiting

- C) Doers of the word not just hearers only!
1) This Church – Followed the Word

#3 V.8 They did not deny His name:

- A) **Story of Danny** – Teacher and the Egg!

- B) TEACHER – Looked at Danny ... EGG ... AGAIN / Class dismissed

- C) He opens doors and is ready to provide resources to those who are willing to stand. – His strength –

- D) Philadelphia was a dark place V.9 – The Church of Satan was alive and well there –
1) They stood strong

#4 They were patiently waiting for His return:

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Crowns = Rewards in the Bible – 2 Tim 4:8 – Crown of Righteousness – those who love His appearing.

- A) Three comings of Christ in the Bible – 1st coming – Lamb

- B) 2nd Coming in the clouds – Lion – set up His kingdom

- B) In between those two – Rapture comes NOT TO the earth – but **in the clouds**

- C) Believers are caught up – **Wedding celebration**
Escape the hour of trial – 7 year Tribulation - WRATH OF GOD

- D) 1 THESSALONIANS 5:19 Not appointed unto wrath - Jesus paid price -

- 1) **Comfort one another with these words – Comfort**

E) One week from this Sunday – May 1st – 3 weeks on the rapture – Ch.4-5 – RAPTURE READY

- F) Crown for those who love His appearing – Waiting and watching

That was the church of Philadelphia – and that is how the Lord wants us to be living today

- A) Jesus is our source of strength

Abiding in His Word – Keep it – do it – not Deny

- B) **Watching and waiting for His Return!**

C) **Those who do – open doors – THE Blessing of being used by Him!**

- 1) Eternal Impact in lives

Quickly Contrast Philadelphia with the other Church of the last days

- A) Laodicea

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: ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 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—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. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 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. 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.

²² “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

- B) Problem with this Church – **Lukewarm** – Not hot or cold –

- 1) Who likes Coffee – tea – Chocolate Milk

Hot tea morning – Cold Tea – afternoon

C) Jesus said- make me want to Vomit

1) KJV Spew – English – Don't say Barf – I think I am about to spew -Means Vomit upchuck – barf –

D) This is the metaphor that described their condition.

How did this once vibrant Church get to this place? 3 Reasons

A.) #1 **Compromise**: How do you get lukewarm out of the tap?

B) You turn cold water a little and warm water a little

C) Or if you have one of the single handle kitchen sinks just keep it right in the middle

1.) **Result is a Lukewarm compromise**

Lukewarmness occurs when we seek to live in the middle –

A) You have a little bit of the world and a little bit of Jesus

B) Horrible way to live – Too much of JESUS to really ENJOY THE WORLD

1) Too much of the World to really enjoy JESUS always

C) HORRIBLE - INBETWEEN CONDITION not hot or cold – lukewarm

#1 **Compromise**

#2 **Self sufficiency – the opposite of Philadelphia – little strength – Laodicea had a lot of Strength**

A) Earthquake – Romans offered Govt aid to rebuild the city – **they declined it – We have got this. {today?}**

B) Wealthy Place – and resulted in a wealthy Church – V. 16 *you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; -*

C) So self-sufficient Jesus has been pushed out
1) V.22 He is outside the church knocking on the door trying to get in

C) Nothing wrong with Wealth – accept when our Wealth causes us to grow dependent on our resources and not the Lord

D) Quick to plan – but not pray -

1) Why pray – write a check

#1 **Compromise**

#2 **Self-Sufficiency**

#3 **Self-Deception**

*you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, & have need of nothing' But you **YOU DO NOT KNOW** that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, & naked;*

A) How could Jesus have such a different view of them / than what they had of themselves ?

B) **Laodicea was using the standards of the world.**

C) This is what can happen when we start to think that blessings – means – More stuff

1) Possessions and wealth become the measuring stick of Spirituality! – **Not God's measuring stick**

D) OFTEN times it is simply the result of being in an affluent area.

Self Deception:

They said, we are **Wonderful**, He said you're **Wretched!** They said We're **Marvelous!** He said you're **Miserable!**

They said We're **Prospering!** /.... you're **Poor!** / We're **Beholding!** / He ... you're **Blind!** / We're **clothed** from Nordstroms/ you're **Naked!**

So here is this Church – that apparently doesn't need Jesus – Jesus has been pushed out - but I want you to note – Jesus doesn't abandon them.

A) Those I love I CHASTEN - tonight spanked He loves you.

B) Jesus wanted to take all that they had – were – and use it for His glory

1) Jesus saw their potential for greatness –

C) He comes knocking on the door of their hearts

D) You tonight: **Lukewarm – He loves you**

1) But Not the condition of your heart! – V.20

Behold: Wake up – Call to attention! Shake it up

A) Standing at the door – desiring fellowship – get back with me.

B) Heart on Fire again!

C) V.18 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.

I counsel you to buy from me- the idea here is to EXCHANGE

A) Their Self-sufficiency replaced by Christ sufficiency

B) Exchange wretched poverty for pure gold

1) True faith is tested faith – Trials bring test – Faith is refined –

C) Professed faith replaced by Active faith – Get back to taking steps of faith

D) When is the last time you took a step of faith? Been playing it safe

Exchange their nakedness for His white garments

A) White - Righteousness of Christ – replaced by self-righteousness

B) My works – my performance!

C) Closer you get to Jesus – how unrighteous you are

Paul the Chief of sinners

D) Nothing good in me – Filthy rags – need Jesus

Eyes anointed – Anointing of the Holy Spirit

- ❖ Self-dependency replaced by Holy Spirit dependency

Calling them to:

- ❖ Self-sufficiency replaced by Christ sufficiency
- ❖ Professed faith replaced by Active faith
- ❖ Self-righteousness replaced by Christ Righteousness
- ❖ Self-dependency replaced by Holy Spirit dependency

Maybe Walked away – **LUKEWARM** – approaching being cold

1) Religious / No Relationship

John promises in his Gospel, *12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name*