

The Revelation 3

1] Unto 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 thy works, that thou hast a name that thou live, and art dead. Our Lord has the power to talk to any part of His creation. If He is using His power nothing and nobody can resist Him. In Matthew 8: 27 and on, our Lord is manifesting His might in a mighty, but limited way. Here our Lord appears as giving an opportunity of choice: our Lord is inviting these dead believers to hear and accept the Word of Life declared to them by the very Life Giver; the One Who gave His life to save the penitent. When we hear the Word and experience a strong, moving desire to obey it, we have heard the voice of the Son of God [John 5: 24-26]. If we resist the Truth, or, if we have such a feeble desire to obey that we disobey our God, we are dead. This is an active, awful deadness. Who gave the name 'alive' to the dead? Did they make a name for themselves and then told the other people that this is the name of theirs? We see that our Lord did not pay respect to the name based on nothing. He did pay attention to the reality, to the true state of the people He sent the message to. This deadness didn't justify or excuse the dead.

2] Be watchful, and strengthen them which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Since the first part of the remedy is the command: "Be watchful", negligence could have been the start of the downfall. If a guard on the wall is not watchful, what is expected of his nation? Part of the carelessness was in each looking for his or her private interests and not caring for our Father's business. If we are not eager to help our brothers in need, we are on the path of death. Selfishness and self-pity are characteristics of spiritually dead people. Am I ready to suffer death for Christ's testimony? Or, am I dead without the Savior? To be alive, I must be in Christ; there is no salvation and life without our Redeemer. Imperfect conversion is followed by shallow, negligent, stewardship. In the light of this message, are we busy doing His will, or barely alive, or, already dead – slaves of the evil master, Satan? The only perfect works before our God are the works done in the Spirit of our Lord Jesus to please the Heavenly Father. Only in striving to grow in faith and knowledge of the Son of God we are preserved.

3] Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, hold fast and repent; or, I'll come suddenly. I think spiritual memory did not vanish leaving vacuum; it was replaced with empty religion, pretence, hypocrisy, vanity, pride; forms of idolatry. The frightening fact is that we can hear and even receive God's Word with fervent repentance, then turn around and despise the Almighty in a needy person [Matthew 18: 23-35]. We are admonished to remember how we received and heard. This is not a reminder of my former goodness. I may not forget how great mercy and grace is given me in Christ. How awesome is the price He paid to bring me out of hell into everlasting life and glory. I heard much more than I can understand. I must watch my ways and prayerfully seek to follow

the great shepherd more closely, always confessing my shortcomings and trusting our Father's mercy and grace is covering my brother's imperfections. Our Master's presence is manifested to the joy of His watchful and to the fear of negligent and rebellious.

4] Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. In these 'few' God has preserved the light of Truth in this church. God's grace was revealed to Abraham in Genesis 18: for the sake of ten righteous, God would wait for sinners. Christ's Spirit keeps the light of the Truth shining in this church by the godly testimony of the faithful. The enemy is using the poor, lifeless example of the lukewarm nominal members to mar the testimony of these faithful. We must be watchful, prayerful, helping and encouraging one another in Christ's Spirit. These few names in Sardis were worthy to walk with Christ our Lord in white garments. They are still keeping the faith in the Son of God. He gave them of His purity and they cleaved fast to Him; they did not despise nor take lightly the grace of God in Christ. By God's grace we overcome self-will and live in Christ.

5] He that overcomes, the same shall be adorned in white garment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before His angels. First, by God's grace, we obtain victory over our own will, vanity and pride, ignorance and superstition, doubts and fear. Our Master removes our shackles of sin and idolatry. He spreads the skirt of His mercy and grace over us and makes us His Bride – members of His Body [Ezekiel 16: 8&9]. Our Lord never had been a covenant breaker; He never forsakes His people. The souls recorded in His book of life, He keeps safe and secured. This safe keeping cannot be miss-used or abused as liberty unto sin to offend the majesty and eternal honor of our Heavenly Father. Any man believing that it is safe to sin relying on our Savior's merit and redemption, has no understanding yet about the very nature of our security - which is only in Christ. The same foe, that is enticing and encouraging shallow believers to sin, is also accusing Christ's faithful disciples of selfishness, hypocrisy, and self-worship as he accused Job the righteous, but our blessed Redeemer is acknowledging His own souls before His entire heavenly Family as He does to the world.

6] Let our hearing be ever inclined to hear every message of our Lord's Spirit. What He says to His churches is important to all of us in His Church throughout centuries. We are waiting for our Master's return [Luke 12: 36] and our goal is to be ready for a joyful meeting with our glorious King of kings. To think: "I'll get ready for the King when I see Him appearing or some time later – after I have exhausted my share of sinful pleasures", is foolish; a devil's snare. Living and laboring in faithfulness to the Lord is peace, comfort and safety. Running after vanity, pride and disobedience to the Lord is rushing to hell.

7] To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He that is holy, true, having the key of David, He opens and no man shuts, He that shuts and no man opens. I see a close link between this introduction and the message addressed to the church in Philadelphia: recognition, promise and

encouragement. In this whole message I find no rebuke; but there is so much loving, kind admonishment. Whenever any Christian individual or fellowship serves the Lord in meekness, purity, modesty, and genuine godliness, our adversary will hoard all of his dark resources to heap up as many false accusations as they can scoop. Satan can harness godless rulers and societies, false religions and ignorant nominal Christians - to attack. In the depth of the Lord's introduction I sense assurance to His faithful laborers and witnesses. What you hear from your accusers is not relevant to the Holy, True and Mighty to save, the Lord Whom you serve. "I am your reliance and shield. I gave you the grace to save you and make you faithful. Ignore their lies". "Be not persuaded by their misunderstandings of the true Gospel even if they are sincerely wrong". Our Lord keeps the key of David and gives it to His faithful believers. Only a true disciple and follower of Christ's Gospel can be a godly shepherd of Christ's Flock. His true authority He bestows upon His faithful. A shepherd, serving the Great Shepherd of the Flock, must be a godly example in righteousness, but also ready to face and confess his personal wrong and repent sincerely. The Lord Jesus has the key of success and progress. He opens the doors of opportunities. He opens the hearts to believe and obey the Gospel. He shuts the possibility of enemy's attacks in spite of Satan's craftiness. All is under His power. He exalts the humble and overthrows the proud. His faithful suffer here for a time. His enemies suffer forever. This church has limited strength but keeps God's Word and honors Christ the Son of God. This church is alive!

8] I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and has kept my Word, and hast not denied My Name. When we use all of our little strength in His service, the mighty power of the Lamb of God, our King of kings reveals to us His might. He manifests the grandeur of His marvelous power in saving sinners and defeating the darkness. If we keep God's Word in spite of discouraging examples of nominal believers we adore Christ our Redeemer. When we confess our Master against the persecution in the world, we experience His power in our life.

9] Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but lie; I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Witnessing bravely in words and deeds, we look forward to the glory and joy of worshiping Him endlessly. In Christ is victory. The Jews opposing the Gospel, like Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9, professed to be the true orthodox defenders of their ancestors' faith. Some of them might have really believed that they were serving the God of Israel. By ignorance or in full awareness of their wickedness they were kept in Satan's enslavement. A miracle of Christ's Spirit - grace and power - converted Saul of Tarsus. I am confident that Saul was not the only one. Every conversion is a miracle only God can accomplish. I would think that every organized religious group actively opposing and persecuting Christians, battling against our Lord, is in Satan's camp. Only our Lord has the grace and power to turn their minds and hearts to Light. Only He is able to make them realize their folly and sit down to humbly learn the Truth, trust and obey the Lord Jesus and in Christ's Spirit worship the Father. Such a change must be a great joy for both sides

– now united in Jesus. Once having experienced mercy and grace of our Blessed Redeemer, these former enemies of the Gospel can now know that only by the love of the Savior in their hearts the Christians patiently endured the evil manners and deeds in former ignorance of these new brothers and sisters now covered by Christ's grace. What mutual joy they must have had together celebrating victory of eternal Love over Satan's hatred.

10] Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the entire world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Philadelphian Christians have kept the Word of our Lord's patience. We learned about the manners of the Hebrews in Jerusalem. We remember the wickedness of some Jews against Paul in many places within the pagan regions. This city is just one of many idolatrous cities with a significant Jewish community. There probably was much pressure against Christians in the society, in businesses, and among relatives to deny Christ; to be silent. It might be easier to close up the Gospel by cutting off any contacts with the opposition and become one sect. But these believers were commanded for their openness to share the Word again and again praying and hoping for a positive change in the hearts that for a long time refused Gospel of salvation in Christ. Having been ridiculed many times, treated as enemies, suffering unfair deals in business, and patiently reaching out to the sinners, praying and hoping for yet another soul to be snatched from Satan's chains and brought into the arms of our blessed Redeemer, is rewarded by our Lord's support and His blessing. Long enduring patience, suffering, and zeal in sharing the grace of our Lord are virtues of God's children; His Family in Christ. The entire Church history was marked with diverse temptations. Every day is a test and trials are following frequently. Suffering with Christ is also ruling with Him & reward is measureless. Sinful humanity is suffering also; at times more. For sinners the earthly calamities are followed by God's judgment and everlasting consequences of their foolish sinful choices. Every day the entire humanity is tested. Patiently suffering, Christians are growing in holiness; but sinners are multiplying transgressions.

The end is coming. God's judgment will reveal every man's work as it really is. That final trial will confirm every man as sinner deserving eternity in hell, but the redeemed souls will be separated and recognized as the blessed of the Heavenly Father, because Christ righteousness has been bestowed upon them. That righteousness of the Master, that grace of the blessed Savior preserved them through every testing; that redeeming grace will take them through to the end. Every one trusting and obeying the Lord will face the Day of Judgment as the final deliverance from all suffering [Matthew 25: 31-46 and John 5: 24].

11] Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. In the days of severe suffering it is encouraging to know that the Lord is always present; He never leaves His own. In some cases He did act so unexpectedly and surprisingly, that we have realized: this was the Lord's work. In my limited experience five years of imprisonment past like a few weeks. Many believers and ordinary sinners seemed to have thought it was a testimony of remarkable faith and endurance. My observation was that our Lord knew my small strength

and great weakness and carried me in His arms through it all. It is very meaningful for us to consider and to be certain what we have in our Lord Jesus Christ. When we trust and obey our Savior, we recognize the Eternal King of kings as our King also. He has taken us into His Kingdom; He is our Crown. We may not allow any wickedness to destroy our loyalty to our Lord, and deprive us of subjection to, and of delight in, His loving Lordship. We grow in faith & knowledge of Him. When we are aware of the preciousness in His talents, it is miserable for us to live in idleness and aimlessness. Wasting our Master's value is spiritual fraud bordering idolatry. It is only natural for us to apply our all: His gifts, opportunities, and ability to this one main purpose – to glorify our Savior and King.

12] Him that overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him My God's Name, the name of My God's city, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of Heaven from My God, and My new Name. What man can calculate how much blessedness is in victory? These words come from the Lord Jesus Christ to us – an encouragement and a promise. He is the One victorious over all power of Satan and of the sinful world. The early record of His power over darkness is recorded for us in the Gospel books: the testing in the wilderness. His example is teaching us victory. Inward victory precedes victory over every enemy. There is no powerful temptation for a person not lusting after sin. Before we can overcome, we must acknowledge that we are helpless and we must seek the power from Him, the Source of all power. We continue in prayer to the Lord for our faithfulness. Enduring faithfulness and continuous resistance to Satan and sin indicate that we are stable parts of our Lord's Church, His building and members of His body. The Name of our God is written all over our being. The purpose of our life is to please our Heavenly Father. Our goal is to remain citizens of His Kingdom. We are waiting for our King's ultimate triumph and full manifestation of His glory and majesty. The New Jerusalem is in Heaven and on earth. All true Christians are citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem. All the faithful that ended their earthly journey in Christ are in the Heavenly Jerusalem in eternal glory and bliss. This New Jerusalem comes from Heaven with Christ: first, when the Savior was born as a babe, then when He was baptized and confirmed by the Father, when He was tested in the wilderness and was victorious. He triumphed over Satan, sin, and death on Golgotha, in death, resurrection and ascension. He is majestic in outpouring the power of the Holy Spirit. He is triumphant in the death of James and Stephen. He is victorious in all His faithful, because His new Name is written upon them; they live in Him as His kings and priests. He is our King of kings, our great high Priest; the only Redeemer, God's only Son.

13] He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. When He delivered us from the darkness into the light of His Truth, He gave us the new and everlasting life. In this new life He gave us hearing to hear the guidance of His Holy Spirit. Now we can hear the Spirit's messages - our King's voice. The Spirit speaks loud and clear teaching of Christ as He receives from our Heavenly Father. The Spirit speaks to the churches, but only the Church of Christ will hear and obey the Word. The Word is declared to the world, but only the children of the

Heavenly Father, the newborn and faithful serve and hear Him. To us His Word is a fragrance of life unto life. We owe to our blessed Savior our full confidence. To Him belong our soul and body; time and all efforts; power and government; adoration and praise continually. He knows all our needs and He feeds us with the living bread of Heaven. He knows our weaknesses and shortcomings, yet He loves us and in His faithfulness and righteousness, when we confess, He forgives.

14&15] To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. In the chapter 2, verse 8 our Lord appears to Smyrna as the First & the Last. In this message – to Laodicea – we see our Lord as Amen and the Beginning of God’s works recorded for us in the Book. In the opening verse of this book we read that this Revelation is God-given to Christ. This is what our Heavenly Father tells us about His Son: He is my faithful witness, through Him I created all. He is the living faithfulness, an everlasting testimony of perfect harmony with all that is His Father’s will. He is named ‘Amen’, a strong confirmation of the foregoing, which is His Father’s desire and work. This knowledge is to our benefit: our perfect example, the Lord Jesus, has only confirmation for God’s will. To follow our Master, to please our Father, all we need is full submission to our Father’s Word. Our prayerful endeavors must be for God’s grace unto faithfulness; that is the purpose, the essence and goal of every godly life. Believers in Laodicea lacked that godly life. They valued the Word as it pleased them. Lukewarm professing believers are indifferent to righteousness and to godlessness; thus regarding both – equally. That attitude is ugly in God’s sight and is used by Satan to offer opportunity of blaming all true and faithful for the rebellion of the lukewarm just because both groups claim the same name ‘Christians’. Satan is using this lack of decision and commitment to keep professing disciples in Laodicea from turning to the Lord whole-heartedly. They probably believed that they are not sinful enough to be rejected as some ‘bad sinners’; after all, they are not in an open rebellion against the true and faithful disciples. Imagine what was their action in decision-making among the believers; they are not ‘against’ anything and they are not ‘for’ anything. Their presence is an obstacle to any progress and an open door for much evil influence. Their whole life is based on nothingness and lifelessness. Can Satan have greater helpers?

16&17] So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou say: I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Our Lord’s description is awful & true. Indifference is a point between life and death; it is wasting time and opportunities given to us to serve our Lord. This condition is offending our Lord and He will not wait too long a time for the impenitent. As the angels urged and eventually dragged Lot out of Sodom, this message is urging all of us to consider. If I am rich, and not poor in spirit, depending on, trusting and obeying the Lord rich in mercy and grace, I am surely wretched. If our Lord blessed me with wealth but I use it in selfish vanity and pride despising the Giver, my

soul is as miserable as the soul of the “rich” man begging for a drop of water [Luke 16: 19].

If I see no deficiency and shortage in my walk with the Lord or, worse yet: apart from Him, my poverty is evident by helpless blindness and the shame of my nakedness. If I cover my carnality to hide my soul’s nakedness in the sight of men, all my hypocrisy turns into self-condemnation I cannot hide from God. Yet the Creator and Savior speaks to the wretched, blind and naked: Come unto me to receive you healing.

18] I advise thee to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that thou may be rich; and white raiment, that thou may have clothing on thyself, that the shame of thy nakedness be not exposed and anoint thine eyes with ointment that thou may see. One advice offers many cures to these souls with many ailments. It is clear that no gift of God can be purchased with money [Acts 8: 18-22], but in Matthew 13: 45&46 that pearl had a great price. To receive salvation and the everlasting life in Christ we must give up all that seemed the most precious to us – all our idols from the greatest to the least, or, we choose death in sin. When we give up all we had sinfully treasured and find our refuge and safety in Christ, the Gold from the heavenly treasure, that Gold tested in fire - He makes us rich by giving us life everlasting and power to follow Him in suffering to the end of our earthly journey [Luke 14: 26&27 and Philippians 3: 7-11]. We must trust and obey God’s Son, cast away sin and self and humbly seek His mercy and grace. Then He gives us garments of His righteousness and eyes of faith and obedience to know the difference between right and wrong, truth and deception, our God’s good will and Satan’s wickedness; we are His; He is ours.

19] As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. We can recognize the same Spirit speaking that was teaching the first disciples: never flattering, always wise; when proper, encouraging; teaching essentials in His loving way, even when we harbor resistance to humbling truth. He says to us: be zealous and repent; not because He rebukes and chastens, but because He is doing all in love for the souls He redeemed. We need to pray for grace to understand His loving correction toward more abundant life in His Spirit and Word. Blessed are the humble: He draws them closer to His Father. Our Lord makes us aware of our negligence and He calls us to repent; to turn to the opposite direction – to become fervent. He is not just commanding impossible to us, but urging us to receive the abundant grace our Heavenly Father offers to us in His Son. Christ, our Lord, is the Blessed Son of the Blessed One. When we know His love in His correction of us, we have Him in our hearts and the measureless wealth of His Kingdom is ours. When He is teaching us to be humble, He is moving us to greater blessedness.

20] Behold, I knock at the door: if any man hear and open the door I will sup with him and he with Me. By the Spirit and the Word, our Blessed Redeemer is knocking and waiting at the door of every church and every heart. It is important for us to turn our hearing away from the tumult of sinful world and incline our hearing to our Savior’s voice. We must respond in fervent obedience to His loving bidding. Offering Bread and Cup to His disciples our Redeemer told us to

repeat that in remembrance of Him. Each time we trust and obey Him anew, we hear His voice again. He purifies us again by His Word. He is washing our feet again. If we are distracted by carnality, if we neglect and ignore His loving care, we sin. When we sin by negligence, we are tempted to feel that He does not care for us. Then our adversary is strong and we are weak. In submission we are at His feet and the living Water flows from Him to make the ground of our heart a fruitful field. We must keep our mind and heart from satanic deception. No word of our Lord is too great that it should be refused, nor too insignificant that we should neglect it.

21] To him that overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. In Christ we have victory over self-will, sin, Satan and death – when we are in Christ. Living in Christ’s Spirit, with His Lordship in our heart and daily walk, we are victorious. Of course He has prepared splendid rewards for all the faithful – in His everlasting glory and joy; but also from the moment He delivered us from darkness and sin-slavery, He is defeating our enemies and giving us victory. Since He blessed our soul with His new life, He made us His fellow heirs, kings and priests. We may never doubt His grace and power. We may never believe deceit of our adversary. We must keep our soul and body in His grace and service. He will never leave us nor neglect us for a single moment. Our Lord and Savior is the eternal Son of the Heavenly Father. Perfect unity with the Father is Christ’s victory. Christ has never reduced His love and faithfulness to the Father. When He appeared in this world – as a man – He was still just as much King of kings and Lord of lords. In all conflicts and clashes with darkness and sin He always ruled with a rod of iron, a scepter of might and majesty – He did His Father’s good will. He has been on His throne always; He never left His proper place; never had any pleasure but to please and glorify His Father. That is His nature, personality, power, majesty; He is God – the Son. He is in His Father’s throne. He declares in His royal authority to His redeemed ones: abide in Me; I am your throne. We suffer for Christ’s sake; He suffered for us. We rejoice in His salvation; He rejoiced in His Father’s grace upon us. He overcame the world and defeated the devil; He is giving us power to be victorious. This royal message, life giving edict, He addressed to the wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. This call is directed to these fools that of their own will replaced the everlasting treasures with rubbish of vanity and pride. Christ is our only bridge from wretchedness to splendor, from misery to glory, from poverty to the heavenly treasures, from darkness to bliss, from nakedness into Christ’s righteousness.

22] He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches. O Lord, give us an ear to hear. This call is to the churches: the naked to seek His garment, and the faithful to keep their garment unspotted by the pollution of the world; the blind to look up to Jesus and seek healing, and all with clear sight not to shift their focus away from Him, our mountain of salvation and our fountain of living water. Since our Lord is revealing His grace in patience, admonishment, encouragement, correction, and giving assurance to all churches as each needed, we must receive this abundance of His grace unto obedience and zeal for our Father’s will. Daily we pray for grace and power to live His Gospel; to be His witnesses. It is not our

Father's will that we proclaim the final judgment upon any person as long as our God has left him another moment to repent. He has commended us to proclaim the day of grace and to herald His, God's, last and final judgment. The time is short, the amount of work is huge, but our power is in Christ. Our Father's will is not that we comfort sinners in sin. We may not tell the world that our God is merciful to sin or indifferent to any unrighteousness. God is judging every sin, all unrighteousness. In Christ is true salvation for all penitent sinners. Our Savior saves us from sin and death; not in sin, but unto holiness.