

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2016**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE FAILURES IN THE CHURCHES,
THE DEGRADATION OF THE CHURCH, THE OVERCOMERS IN THE CHURCH,
THE RECOVERY OF THE CHURCH, AND THE STAGES OF THE CHURCH**

Message Fifteen

The Stages of the Church

(4)

The Church in Philadelphia and the Church in Laodicea

Scripture Reading: Rev. 3:7-22

- I. As a sign, the church in Philadelphia prefigures the proper church life recovered by the brothers raised up by the Lord in England in the early nineteenth century—Rev. 3:7-13:**
- A. In Greek *Philadelphia* means “brotherly love”—v. 7:
 - 1. The church in Philadelphia prophetically depicts the church of brotherly love, that is, the proper church life—v. 7.
 - 2. “We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death”—1 John 3:14:
 - a. To pass out of death into life is to pass out of the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of death into the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of life; this took place in us at our regeneration—John 3:3, 5-6; 5:24.
 - b. Love (the love of God) toward the brothers is strong evidence that we have passed out of death into life—1 John 3:14.
 - 3. “In this we know love, that He laid down His life on our behalf, and we ought to lay down our lives on behalf of the brothers”—v. 16:
 - a. A love for the brothers is a willingness to lay ourselves aside to serve them—Gal. 5:13.
 - b. To love the brothers is to be willing to deny oneself for the perfection of others and to have a heart that is willing to lay down one’s own life for his brothers.
 - B. To the church of brotherly love, the Lord is the Holy One, the true One, by whom and with whom the recovered church can be holy, separated from the world, and true, faithful, to God—Rev. 3:7.
 - C. To the church of brotherly love, the Lord is also the One who has the key of David, the key of the kingdom, with authority to open and shut—v. 7; Isa. 22:22.
 - D. Two outstanding features of the church in Philadelphia are that she keeps the Lord’s word and does not deny His name—Rev. 3:8.
 - E. We should not regard the church in Philadelphia as being strong and powerful; the Lord said that she had “a little power”; what pleases the

Lord is not our doing much for Him but our doing our best for Him with what we have—v. 8.

- F. The return to the pure word from all heresies and traditions and the exaltation of the Lord's name by abandoning every other name are the most inspiring testimony in the recovered church.

II. As a sign, the church in Laodicea prefigures the degraded recovered church—vv. 14-22:

- A. In Greek *Laodicea* means “opinion, judgment, of the people”—v. 14.
- B. In the eyes of the Lord, the characteristics of Laodicea are lukewarmness and spiritual pride—vv. 16-17.
- C. “I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see”—v. 18:
 - 1. In the Bible our operating, working faith (Gal. 5:6) is likened to gold (1 Pet. 1:7), and the divine nature of God, which is the divinity of Christ, is typified by gold (Exo. 25:11); by faith we partake of the divine nature of God (2 Pet. 1:1, 4-5).
 - 2. White garments signify conduct that can be approved by the Lord; such conduct is Christ lived out of the church, and it is required by the degraded recovered church for the covering of her nakedness.
 - 3. The eyesalve needed to anoint their eyes must be the anointing Spirit (1 John 2:27), who is the Lord Himself as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b); the degraded recovered church needs this kind of eyesalve for the healing of her blindness (cf. Job 42:5-6).
- D. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me”—Rev. 3:20:
 - 1. The door is not the door of the hearts of individuals but the door of the church.
 - 2. The door is the door of the church, but the door is opened by individual believers; the Lord is dealing with the whole church, but the acceptance of the Lord's dealing in order to feast on Him must be a personal and subjective matter.
- E. “He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”—vv. 21-22:
 - 1. Here to overcome is to overcome the lukewarmness and pride of the degraded recovered church, to pay the price to buy the needed items, and to open the door so that the Lord can come in; Christ as the unique Overcomer includes all the overcomers.
 - 2. To sit with the Lord on His throne will be a prize to the overcomer so that he may participate in the Lord's authority and be a co-king with Him in ruling over the whole earth in the coming millennial kingdom.