

Mount Up Wednesday
The Wednesday Night Bible Study Ministry of
East Mount Zion Baptist Church
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The Study of Revelation
The Rapture

In Rev. 3:20, the letter to the church in Laodicea, Jesus states “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me.” This letter is written to the last of the churches, the church which would be around when He returns. This letter was written to people who were deceived and inflated in their thinking, “For you say you are rich and have need of nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked!” Rev. 3:17 (emphasis added)

It could be said that this church is worse than all of the other churches, not because their individual actions were more grievous. Five of the seven churches received the rebuke of Jesus. However, Laodicea would be considered worse than the others for two reasons;

1. They would have been made aware of the sins of the other churches and how these churches did not prosper in their iniquity.
 - a. With modern day technology, it would have been very easy for them to find out how the others had fared.
 - b. They behaved as the Children of Israel had done by ignoring all that was given to them and missing their time of visitation with the Savior!
2. Therefore, the sins of all the other churches are wrapped up in Laodicea.

They too, have left their first love like Ephesus, they have caused weak believers to stumble like Pergamum, they have tolerated the sexual perversions of Jezebel like Thyatira, and allowed themselves to die like Sardis, without the One who is Life, Jesus and lastly they have become comfortable. They are comfortable in the midst of all of their sin; not on fire for Christ and not walking away, neither hot nor cold. In this behavior, they confuse others into thinking that they are “true worshippers” when really, they are “wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked!” Rev. 3:17 (emphasis added)

Laodicea can be considered the worst of all the churches because with everything that they have been given, they choose sin again and again. Jesus calls this the “shame of their nakedness (v. 18).” This church is us, the present-day church!

The church of today has embraced sin from the pulpit to the last pew. Refusing to honor as holy, what God says is holy. Debating the scriptures with human reasoning and weak logic. Some examples are “excusing sex before marriage (I Cor. 7:9), allowing women to display their bodies even in the church (I Tim. 2:9), embracing Homosexuality (Rom. 1:26,27), making some sins of a lesser penalty than others (I John 3:4), and acting as if there is no definition of a woman (Gen. 1:23)! This is the behavior found in the church, the Ecclesia, the Body of Christ!

God's response to this behavior: *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So, they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*

Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen (Rom. 1:18-25).

This is why we see Jesus in Rev. 3:20 "standing at the door and knocking." The fact that He is standing and knocking at the door, means that He has been shut out of His own Church; His Body! The Church has decided that they can do this without Him and He has been programmed out. Hence God has given them up to the "lusts of their hearts! How do we know this? Because Jesus is standing outside, knocking at the door!

Jesus makes it clear that He will not dwell in an "unclean temple (I Cor. 3:16-17; I Cor. 6:19-20; II Cor. 6:16-18)" In order to have Jesus join us, we must "turn from our wicked ways (II Chron. 7:14)." Jesus even explains to Laodicea that if they want to fellowship with Him, they must "open the door (v. 20)." Eating with another is fellowshiping. However, "what fellowship has darkness with light (II Cor. 6:14)."

It's amid this very behavior, just as in the days of Noah, that Jesus will call His church home! In I Thes. 5:2,3, we read that "the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying 'there is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape." This will be the fate of those who don't hear His voice at the end of time.

As we end chapter three of the Revelation, and shift into chapter four, something amazing happens. In the first three chapters, John is receiving this information from Jesus, while on the Isle of Patmos. However, Chapter four begins with a remarkable declaration; *"After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this (Rev. 4:1).'*"

Things are changing quickly for John. "After this" means that the past is over, time has shifted. John is at a different vantage point. His view is now in the Throne Room!

"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together

with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words (I Thes. 4:13-18)."