

SESSION 13 – REVELATION CHAPTER 3 – PART III

¹“And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write... (Revelation 3:14-22 ESV)

I. TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA

- A. Jesus introduces Himself to the Assembly in Laodicea as *the Amen*, the *Faithful and True Witness*, the *Beginning of God’s Creation*. He opens this revelation of Himself to the last Assembly in a way that will promote a blessed experience with Him should they repent. They are the third Church Jesus opens the Lord’s Table to as a means of His grace and sanctification/transformation/theosis.¹ Recall, the Church in Ephesus would be granted to eat from the Tree of Life, the life-giving participation with the Incarnate Life of God Himself. The Church in Pergamum would be given some of the *hidden manna* to participate in the Body of Messiah; that is, the Person Yeshua, the Bread from Heaven.
- B. Laodicea was located north of Colossae and was the recipient of one of Paul’s letters, or a letter known by Paul to exist. Laodicea is mentioned five times in Colossians (Col 2:1, 4:13, 15, 16 [2x]). The Apostle Paul indicates that he had not personally visited Laodicea (Col 2:1). He also mentions a “letter from Laodicea”—that is, a letter that will be forwarded to the church at Colossae by the Laodicean believers, not a letter written by them (Col 4:16; Heil, Colossians, 198). This letter is unknown, but it has been suggested (on little evidence) that it is the letter to the Ephesians (Aune, Revelation 1–5, 250). Paul also refers to Nympha, a woman whose home served as the meeting place for the Laodicean church (Col 4:15).²
- C. It was a city of great wealth, with extensive banking operations (c.f. Rev 3:18). Little is known of the early history of Christianity there; Timothy, Mark and Epaphras (Col 1:7) seem to have been the first to introduce it. However, Laodicea was early the chief bishopric of Phrygia, and about 166 AD Sagaris, its bishop, was martyred³. In 1071 the city was taken by the Seljuks; in 1119 it was recovered to the Christians by John Comnenus, and in the 13th cent. it fell finally into the hands of the Turks.⁴
- D. Jesus begins by declaring Himself to be *the Amen*. The Greek *amen* means, “truly, indeed, it is true;” it is usually used at the *end of a sentence of statement*. Thus, it is clear Jesus is saying here to the *last Assembly* He is addressing, He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last (the *protos and the echatos*). Amen is given upon hearing a blessing, meaning “so be it;” also interpreted as an abbreviation of El

¹ 2 Peter 1:4 where it is *through* Messiah’s precious and great promises we become *participants of the divine nature*. (Gr. *theios physis*)

² David Seal, “Laodicea,” in The Lexham Bible Dictionary, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

³ Stevenson, J.. A New Eusebius Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337 (J. Stevenson, W. H. C. Frend) (Z-Library) (Kindle Location 3474). Kindle Edition.

⁴ E. J. Banks, “Laodicea,” in The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, ed. James Orr et al. (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 1836.

Melech Ne'eman, "The Mighty and Faithful King."⁵ This blessing is recited prior to reading the Shema in a public setting. EL MELEKH NE'EMAN (Heb. אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ נֶאֱמָן; "God, faithful King"), an affirmation of faith pronounced before the recital of the *Shema. The rabbis interpreted the word *Amen as being composed of the initial letters of El Melekh Ne'eman (Shab. 119b).⁶ This Mishna, the written Jewish oral tradition, was written anywhere from 30 BCE – 200BCE, which means it appears to have been captured by Jesus to declare Himself to the Laodicean Assembly in context to the Faithful King with the Shema⁷ in mind. There is also a connection to Isaiah 65:16:

¹⁶so that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes. (Isa. 65:16 ESV)

Here *the God of truth* is literally *the God amen* or *the God of amen*. (אֱמֵן) aleph-mem-nun; when you take the consonant sounds of the three letters *ah-mm-nn* you end up with Amen. He is *the Amen*. Hopefully, when one says *amen*, you will think of the God, the Faithful King, Himself being the Amen.

- E. Jesus the AMN, El Melech Ne'eman, is the Beginning of God's Creation. There is no indication from the translation *beginning* that He was or is a *created Being*, like the angels. Rather, the Greek here is *arche* which means, "beginning; power; office"; it carries the idea of being the starting point, such as the *head* of a river (Gen. 2:10), the first month or beginning month of the year (Ex. 12:2), at the end of the age, Jesus speaks of the *beginning of birth pangs*. In other words, this is the same as saying He is the First, the Beginning. That He is the Amen and the Beginning is the same as saying, "I am the Last and the First; the End and the Beginning." He will bring this Age to an End and Begin the Age to Come.
- F. John had previously peered into this mystery when he wrote the following,

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. (John 1:1-5 NRSVue)

John clearly acknowledges it was the Living Word, the Word with God, the Word who Is God, was the beginning point, the head of the river of God's creation, for it was His creation.

⁵ https://hebrew4christians.com/Glossary/Hebrew_Glossary_-_A/hebrew_glossary_-_a.html#loaded; Alef-Mem-Nun (a-m-n); El – God, Melech – King, Ne'eman – the root of a-m-n which reflects firmness, support, trust, and truth; something reliable, dependable, and steadfast.

⁶ <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/el-melekh-neeman>

⁷ A transliterated rendering of the Shema: shmah yee-s'rah-ayl ah-doh-noi eh-loh-hay-noo ah-doh-noi eh-kahd.

²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. (Heb. 1:2-3 NRSVue)

Amen.

- G. Jesus identifies the works of the Laodiceans, and as such says to them, “you are neither cold nor hot...because you are lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth.” Mounce introduces a very solid case for not looking at the *cold nor hot* statement as *not* referring directly to their spiritual fervor, rather to the impact of their works (which obviously is a product or outflow of their spiritual state):

In an important article, Rudwick and Green argue that the adjectives “hot,” “cold,” and “lukewarm” are not to be taken as describing the spiritual fervor (or lack of it) of people. The contrast is between the hot medicinal waters of Hierapolis and the cold, pure waters of Colossae. Thus the church in Laodicea “was providing neither refreshment for the spiritually weary, nor healing for the spiritually sick. It was totally ineffective, and thus distasteful to its Lord.” On this interpretation the church is not being called to task for its spiritual temperature but for the barrenness of its works.²⁴ Among the several advantages of this interpretation is the fact that it is no longer necessary to wonder why Christ would prefer the church to be “cold” rather than “lukewarm.” It should be noted that although the Lord was about to spit²⁶ them out of his mouth, there was yet opportunity to repent (vv. 18–20).⁸

⁴²And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is My disciple, truly I tell you, he will never lose his reward.” (Matt. 10:42 BSB)

- H. Beale also points to the waters of Hierapolis and Colossae as bearing in on the rebuke Jesus gives this Assembly,

Laodicea had two neighbors, Hierapolis and Colossae. Hierapolis had hot waters which possessed medicinal effects, while Colossae had cold water, which was also thought to be healthy. Laodicea had no good water source, however, and had to pipe it in. By the time it arrived, it was lukewarm and dirty—fit only for spitting out. In fact, it was generally held to be true in the ancient world that cold and hot water or wine were beneficial for one’s health, but not water which was lukewarm. Likewise, the Laodiceans’ faith and witness did not have a healthy effect on the people who lived around them. We shall see that one of the main reasons for their ineffective faith was their compromise with idolatry. Christ now exposes the spiritual condition of the church to be no better than the city’s water by asserting that I will spit you out of my mouth. If the Laodiceans will not identify faithfully with Christ in their culture, then neither will Christ identify them as faithful witnesses together with Him.⁹

⁸ Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 109–110.

⁹ G. K. Beale and David H. Campbell, *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 91.

- I. Jesus addresses their *confession of faith*: You say, “I am rich.” “I have prospered.” “I need nothing.” This should be a point of addressing the good confession versus the one that is devoid of spiritual awareness of the soul.

²*Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. (3 John 2)*

Prosperity is contingent on the prospering of the soul; which is a product of sanctification, transformation, and theosis. This is not to say only the sanctified person (whoever that may be) or the transformed person (again, whoever that may be) will only prosper. No. John is saying there is a direct relationship to the prospering soul (the one engaged in the sanctifying power and the participation with the divine nature of Holy Spirit and His transforming reality) to prospering materially. What is materially? The external world in which we live. Jesus said it this way, “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness and all of these *things* will be added to you.” The *adding* is related to the *seeking*. And the thing sought for is the Rule and Reign of God, His King, and His righteousness.

- J. The Laodiceans were absent this “*seek first*” truth. They bypassed prospering in their souls and moved straight to confessing wealth, prosperity, and having no needs, or said another way, “all of my needs are met.” Yet inwardly, their condition was revealed by their lukewarm ineffectiveness to impact the city and world around them with the Gospel of the Kingdom. Their confession had nothing to back their claim. This is not to say we are not to and should not confess a good confession, because she should and are commanded to (Heb. 10:23). But clearly there is here a relation to understanding its effectiveness as it relates the spiritual condition. And it is that condition Jesus reveals to them.
- K. He says they do not realize (lacking spiritual insight but rather attributing their external state as equal their inner lives) they were: wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. This is more than simply saying they were *lukewarm*. Here that is defined:

1) they are *wretched*; the Gr. *talaiporos* corresponds directly to the Heb. *shadad* (*sdd*) meaning: to be robbed; to devastate, ravage; overpower; to drive out, chase away; 1) to tighten, tie up, 2) to cause distress, oppress, take by storm;¹⁰ Their spiritual condition was a result of not knowing they had been overtaken by the opposing spiritual forces in their city. They were robbed, overpowered, driven away, tied up, and oppressed by the spiritual storm. The end result was they were destitute and wretched.

2) they are pitiable; the Gr. *eleeinos* corresponds to the Heb. *chamudot* meaning: best thing *n.*, *the best or most valuable things available, whether food or artifacts, such as clothing*.¹¹ They were unaware of their position and value (Eph. 1:18) due to their wretched state, and as such, the unknowing of their state provokes pity from Jesus. They are *a kingdom of priests* but they don’t even know it. They are His *segullah*, yet they live like they are in slavery, overpowered by their enemies.

¹⁰ Ludwig Koehler et al., [The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 1419.

¹¹ [The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017).

3) they are poor; here the Gr. *ptochos* is related to the Heb. *ani* meaning: poor, not independent: —1. in a sociological sense: without (sufficient) property and therefore dependent on others; in a needy condition.¹² The reference to *without property* can point to spiritual exile and thus the dependency on others, whether believers or unbelievers which forms their dependency. *[A] person who has been the victim of some pain, injury, or harm, either physically or mentally; often associated with recurring treatment or events*¹³

4) they are blind: the Gr. *typhlos*, meaning: unable to understand, incapable of comprehending, pairs with the Heb. *iwwer* which is defined in terms of understanding (for they were not physically blind), unable or unwilling to perceive or understand.¹⁴ The interesting part of this definition of being blind from understanding is it isn't only being *unable* to understand, it also captures the *unwillingness* to understand. Both Paul and James give means by way of prayer to ask and receive wisdom and understanding from the generous and giving God:

¹⁷ *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him,* ¹⁸ *so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may perceive what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints,* ¹⁹ *and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. (Eph. 1:17-19 NRSVue)*

⁵ *If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.* ⁶ *But ask in faith, never doubting (James 1:5-6a NRSVue)*

Had the Laodiceans prayed only these two prayers in faith, they would have received God's wisdom, and revelation, and understanding, their eyes would have received light and they would not have been blind. They would have received by faith the value of themselves as Jesus' inheritance. And they would have received resurrection power by which they would have seen and conquered their enemies, the spiritual forces of darkness.

5) they are naked: the Gr. *gymnos* (naked; poorly clothed; unclad) is rendered in Heb. *arom* as the same meaning, *naked; lightly dressed*. in a state of complete or partial nakedness.¹⁵ The Greek is found in Genesis 3:10 LXX where Adam hid himself out of fear of his nakedness (*gymnos*). This was the state of the Laodiceans in the sight of Jesus.

In sum, their spiritual condition was not such they could confess or say they were rich. The reality was, they were the opposite. They could not say they had no needs. They were blind of their condition. As such, confessing the good confession in such a state of blind understanding and deception will not produce Godly prosperity. Their soul had withered.

¹² Ludwig Koehler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 856.

¹³ *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017).

¹⁴ *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017).

¹⁵ Ludwig Koehler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 882.

- L. The Amen, the Faithful and True King gives them counsel to *buy from Him gold refined by fire* that they might be rich and to *buy white garments* to cover their nakedness, and to *buy salve* to anoint their eyes so they may see. These advisements were obviously addressing their spiritual state. How can the *poor buy gold, white garments, and salve*? In the same way the Five Wise Virgins told the Five Foolish to *go to the oil dealers and buy some for yourselves*. In this case, the *gold (kingdom riches/rewards), garments (righteous deeds), and salve (revelation, wisdom, understanding)* are being sold by One Person, Jesus Himself. They must come to *Him* in order to rectify the problem. Purchasing these from Him is an exchange of something they did have for something they didn't have: time, prayer, fellowship, and good works for gold for riches, white garments which is the righteous deed of the saints (Rev. 19:8), and salve for sight; understanding and enlightenment.
- M. Paul gives insight into the purchase of gold, silver, and precious stones in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 where he compares building on the foundation, that is Jesus, with *gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw* – which he defines as, *the work of each builder*. The *fire of testing* (see 1 Peter 4:12-19) will reveal the *work of each builder*. This again calls back to the Sermon on the Mount and building the house on the rock or the sand, by *hearing and doing the words of Jesus*, or not. Paul says, *if the work survives, the builder will receive a wage*, if it is *burned up*, they will suffer loss.
- N. Jesus gives the third invitation to His Table, to eat the bread and drink the wine of His Body and Blood. Recall, the Fruit from the Tree of Life and the Hidden Manna from the exhortations to Ephesus and Pergamum.

*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 **eat with him**, and **he with me**.* (Rev. 3:20 ESV)

Mounce writes of the eschatological importance of this invitation to *the church*,

Jesus tells his disciples that they are to eat and drink at his table in the kingdom (cf. Matt 26:29; Rev 19:9). Whether eucharistic associations are intended or not, it is hard not to see in the picture at least an anticipation of the future messianic kingdom. All present fellowship with God is a foretaste of eternal felicity.¹⁶

- O. Beale references a beautiful verse from the Song of Solomon, *“I was sleeping, but my heart was awake. **The sound of my beloved knocking! “Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one,** for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.”*” (Song 5:2 NRSVue)

‘Open to me ...’ ” This is an invitation, not for the readers to be converted, but to renew themselves in a relationship with Christ which has already begun, as is apparent from v. 19 (those whom I love, I reprove ... be zealous ... and repent). The allusion to the Song of Solomon points to a focus on renewal of a relationship, since there the husband knocks on the door of the bedchamber to encourage his wife to continue to express her love to him and let him enter, but she at first hesitates to do so. Christ, the

¹⁶ Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation, The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 114.

husband, is doing the same thing with His bride, the church. This is the cry of God's heart toward those whom He loves. He calls them to dine with Him, to return to the fellowship they knew in days gone by.¹⁷

- P. Fanning writes concerning the eschatological importance of this visual, "The picture of Christ standing outside and knocking on the door has important connections to Jesus's parable of the servants who are alert to their master's knock when he comes from the wedding feast, to whom the master himself then serves a banquet (Luke 12: 35– 38). 38 This parable has an eschatological reference, anticipating the coming messianic banquet or marriage supper of the Lamb (Isa 25: 6– 8; Matt 8: 11; 26: 29; Luke 14: 15; 22: 30; Rev 19: 9) that the redeemed will enjoy when Christ returns. 39 The warmth of relationship spoken of here ("I will come in to him⁴⁰ and share a meal⁴¹ with him and he with me") likewise pictures the deep communion they will experience with their God in the new age (7: 15– 17; 21: 3, 7)."¹⁸
- Q. The theme then is there is going to be a Wedding Feast and participation in that feast. Notice the language of the garment, the need to see, and the gold of both investment and righteous deeds. These are present in Matthew 8:5-13; 22:1-14; 25:14-30; 25:1-13. Each of these has to do with eating and drinking at the *table* with the Patriarchs in the *age to come*, the *Wedding Feast*, the *Giving of Rewards*, and the *Ten Virgins*. The points should be clear. The *already-but-not-yet* bring us into participation *now* with that Feast that is to come; and this happens at the Lord's Table. That is to say, in the participation of the body and blood of Messiah. The means of this grace to partake *now* in the blessings of the eternal age come to us through His Body and His Blood. Jesus stands at the *door* of this assembly as the Faithful and True King; they simply have to open it from the inside and He will enter; both to the corporate assembly, and individually.
- R. To the overcomer He grants the overcomer/conqueror to sit with Him on His throne *even as He conquered and sat down with his Father on His throne*. We see here both Psalm 2, 110, Daniel 7, and Ephesians 1-2 as these truths span time, space, and eternity. The Amen completes the destiny of believers and the church as His Body. In every way He overcame in His incarnation, temptation in the wilderness, the religious leadership in Jerusalem, the wicked spirits He cast out, the betrayal by Judas/Judah, the Roman death sentence, scourging, and crucifixion, burial, and descent into hell, and in His glorious victory in Resurrection and Ascension and Seating as the Eternal King of Glory in His Father's Kingdom, so we too follow Him. Not just in taking up our cross daily. But also in the resurrection and ascension.

⁶ *and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus* (Eph. 2:6 NRSVue)

This seating is *above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named in this age and the one to come*. This is the *already* of Psalm 110:

¹⁷ G. K. Beale and David H. Campbell, *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 93.

¹⁸ Buist M. Fanning, *Revelation: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary On the New Testament* (Kindle Locations 7550-7560). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

¹Yahweh says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I put Your enemies as a footstool for Your feet." ²Yahweh will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Have dominion in the midst of Your enemies." (Ps. 110:1-2 LSB)

The overcomer is promised to be seating with Yeshua, our Lord/Adon, at the Right Hand of our Father with His and our enemies under our feed, ruling with the strong scepter from Mount Zion, exercising dominion in the midst of our enemies.

Excursus: The Error of the "Seven Church Ages"

- A. 20th Century Dispensational author Clarence Larkin wrote the following in his commentary on Revelation when discussing the *seven churches*:

This interpretation of the "Messages to the Seven Churches" was hidden to the early Church, because time was required for Church History to develop and be written, so a comparison could be made to reveal the correspondence, if it had been clearly revealed that the Seven Churches stood for "Seven Church Periods" that would have to elapse before Christ could come back, the incentive to watch would have been absent.

While the character of these Seven Churches is descriptive of the Church during seven periods of her history, we must not forget that the condition of those churches, as described, were their exact condition in John's day. So we see that at the close of the First Century the leaven of "False Doctrine" was at work in the Churches. The churches are given in the order named, because the peculiar characteristic of that Church applied to the period of Church History to which it is assigned. It also must not be forgotten, that, that which is a distinctive characteristic of each Church Period, does not disappear with that Period, but continues on down through the next Period, and so on until the end, thus increasing the imperfections of the visible Church, until it ends in an open Apostasy.¹⁹

- B. Larkin was heavily influenced by two individuals: John Nelson Darby and C.I. Scofield.²⁰ We will return to the systematic theology of Dispensationalism later. Here the focus is on the current *Church Age* which Larkin divided into *Seven Ages* based on the seven churches of Revelation. The absolute tragedy of Larkin's view is the *Church ends in Apostasy*. This is completely counter to the Church our Bridegroom returns for:

²⁷ so as to **present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind, so that she may be holy and without blemish.** (Eph. 5:27 NRSVue)

¹⁹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/larkin/dt/22.cfm>

²⁰ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383232483_The_Rapture_Reconsidered_A_Critical_Examination_of_Darby_and_Scofield's_Influence_on_Christian_Eschatology

On the day of the Wedding, the Bride is not apostate. Darby, Scofield, and Larkin are simply mistaken. The so-called *Church Age* does not end in failure. It is completed when the Bridegroom Himself arrays His Bride in splendor with no blemish. That is not a picture of Apostasy. Rather, it is the Bride coming up out of the wilderness leaning on her Beloved (SoS 8:5).

C. Larkin gives specific dates for each of these periods or ages of the church²¹:

- 1) The character of the Church at Ephesus is a fair outline of the Church Period from A.D. 70 to A.D. 170
- 2) [The Church at Smyrna] extended from A.D. 170 to Constantine A.D. 312.
- 3) [The Church at Pergamos] This "Period" extends from the accession of Constantine, A.D. 312 to A.D. 606, when Boniface III was crowned "Universal Bishop."
- 4) [The Church at Thyatira] Period extended from A.D. 606 to the Reformation A.D. 1520.
- 5) The "Sardis Period" extended from A.D. 1520 to about A.D. 1750.
- 6) The "Philadelphia Period" covers the time between A.D. 1750 and A.D. 1900.
- 7) The character of the Church today is Laodicean, and as the Laodicean Period is to continue until the Church of the "New Born" is taken out, we cannot hope for any great change until the Lord comes back.

The dates are entirely contrived by Larkin. They have no basis in Scripture, nor does Revelation say anything about each of the Church Assemblies representing anything other than themselves and their mission.

D. Another influential figure took Larkin's work and brought it into the Charismatic Movement thought beginning in December 1960. That unfortunate influence was none other than William Branham. In a sermon delivered that year, Branham, for all intents and purposes, repeated Larkin's prior work, and took credit for it, saying the Holy Spirit revealed this to him.²² He then restates Larkin's dates in a very close or exact manner. Since the Bible says nothing about *seven church ages* much less the dates of those ages, it is clear Branham used Larkin's material. The end result, unfortunately, was the information entered the consciousness of the Charismatic Movement and was and has been perpetuated as *truth* ever since.

E. ¹⁰ *That very night the brothers and sisters sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea, and when they arrived they went to the Jewish synagogue.* ¹¹ **These Jews were more receptive than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message very eagerly and examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so.** (Acts 17:10-11 NRSVue)

²¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/larkin/dt/22.cfm>

²² https://en.believetheesign.com/index.php?title=The_Seven_Churches_Ages&mobileaction=toggle_view_desktop ;
https://william-branham.org/site/blog/20120403_divine_revelation_or_clarence_larkin

The reception of Branham by the so-called Charismatic leaders (and by extension Darby, Scofield, and Larkin) and his *seven church ages* was without the same rigor used by the Berean Jews concerning what they heard and whether the Scriptures corroborated the claims. Had Branham arrived in Berea and declared that message they would not have received it any quicker than they did the Apostle Paul and Silas. Yet today, we tend to take in the latest Charismatic *revelation welcoming the message* without as much of a turn of the page.

- F. As we have looked at the text of Revelation 2 and 3, we saw no mention of the word *aion* (age). The summary of those two chapters shows nothing about each of the assemblies as distinct periods of time representing the condition of the whole church through history. The reality is *all of the churches in Revelation 2 and 3 are present at the same time the book is written*. To claim they represent seven ages negates the historical fact they all existed at the same time in Asia Minor. They were all present as Jesus walked in the midst of all of the Lampstands. He did not exhort one church, wait 100 years and speak to another, then wait 300 years and speak to another. There is nothing in the text that would point to that conclusion.
- G. Considering one of the truths we do see, and have mentioned, given they were all present on earth at the same time, they show us the different spiritual states of different assemblies during any given time period in church history. By this I mean, one can find *all of the spiritual conditions in all of the churches* during Larkin's and Branham's first *Ephesian Church Age: 70-170 AD*. How do we know? John's letter written in the 90's AD is proof. Jesus didn't just speak to the church in Ephesus. He spoke to all of them in the so-called Ephesian Church Age. The truth is throughout Church History we see all of these spiritual conditions in the Church, with the admonitions and exhortations applying to them all. There are no Seven Church Ages. There is "*this age*" referred to by Jesus and Paul as, "*this present evil age*" and there is "*the age to come*." (see Matt. 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Luke 20:34; Eph. 1:21; Gal. 1:3-4; Heb. 6:5-6 et.al.) Two ages. Not seven. We can see then the condition of the whole church at any given time as having these rebukes and commendations in distribution of the believers worldwide.