

Subject: Matt 13:45-46
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THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

Matthew Chapter 13:45-46



MATTHEW 13:45-46

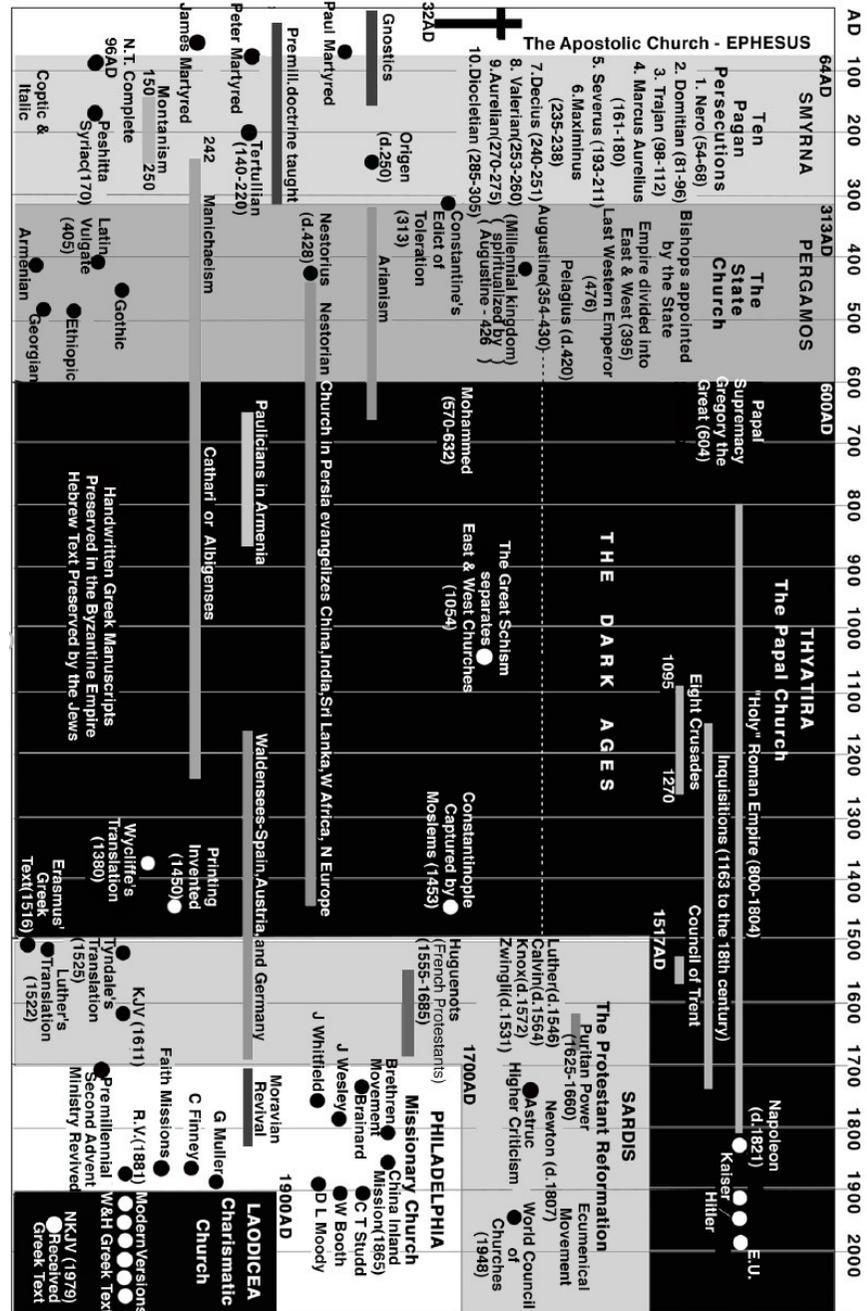
“V45). “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

V46). Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” KJV

THE MYSTERY of the KINGDOM of HEAVEN MATTHEW 13

1.	The Parable of the Sower	V's 3-8; 19-23
2.	The Parable of the Wheat & Tares	V's 24-30; 36-43
3.	The Parable of the Mustard seed	V's 31-32
4.	The Parable of Leaven	V33
5.	The Parable of the Hidden Treasure	V44
6.	The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price	V's 45-46
7.	The Parable of the Dragnet	V's 47-50

CHURCH HISTORY FORETOLD IN THE SEVEN CHURCHES



INTRODUCTION

It's important to notice the phrase "goodly pearls", which is indicative of their value, because the very title of the seeker of these pearls suggests that he wasn't interested in keeping them for himself because pearls in so far as their value was known then, were specifically and particularly for the adornment of kings

The merchantman who was seeking them was seeking them in order to provide that embellishment, that symbol of glory, for such that could afford them.

In verse 46 the merchant man that the Lord likens to the kingdom of heaven is indeed the Lord himself, and the one pearl of great price is the Church, indeed just like the pearl, it is a product of suffering. Also just like the pearl which gradually grows, so as the Spirit of God convicts and sinners are gloriously converted the Church grows; notice the phrasing in verse 46 "one pearl", there is only one true church!

In Matthew 16:18 we have of course the Lord's discourse with Peter:

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The only one true church – the pearl of great price that one day will be revealed in all it's glory in that Christ will, ". . . present it to himself. . ." as we see in Ephesians 5:27, ". . . a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

The birth of the Church was only possible by the suffering of our Lord and Saviour on the cross of Calvary, and as it grows it also continues to suffer.

As we saw with the fifth parable concerning Israel, God the Father sold all that He had to purchase the field of the world in which the peculiar treasure of Israel was hid with His own blood shed in and through the person of His only begotten Son.

We see through this parable that God's supreme sacrifice was also made for the

Church, for we are indeed as we see in Ephesians 1:13-14 purchased possession's -V13). "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, V14). Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

The popular interpretation is that the pearl of great price is representative of Christ being found by the merchantman, where in fact the opposite is true because it is Christ that seeks and saves that which is lost.

The key word here in these two verses is "Pearl". (Matt 13:46; Rev 21:21) Its growth is the result of an injury done to a living organism, a diseased secretion caused by the introduction of foreign bodies, like sand etc; which gets into the shell of the oyster between the mantle and the shell.

The pearl is suggestive of purity, so in effect it is a symbol of purity resulting from wounding or suffering, which has been enclosed in that which has made it a thing of beauty. By geological standards the pearl is nothing. The lowly oyster can make one in three to five years. Crush a pearl and all you have is a little heap of lime dust made of calcium carbonate. Yet modern man as much as he might try, and is very successful in making fakes he cannot make a real pearl. The merchant in our parable is looking for real pearls, not fakes.

Remember it was Christ Himself that said in Matthew 16:18, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, (Petros meaning a little rock) and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

REVELATION CHAPTERS 2 & 3

The seven Churches of Asia are located on the western end of Turkey as we know it today. To each of these Churches Christ reveals Himself in a manner appropriate to the spiritual condition of that Church.

Just as Jesus predicted that tares would grow amongst the wheat, birds would lodge in the branches, and leaven would be mixed with meal in Matt.13:24-33, so the description of these seven Churches indicates that there are varying degrees of apostasy in local Churches. Each of the seven letters records:

I. The Revelation of Christ to that Church

II. The Commendation of Christ for that Church

III. Condemnation by Christ of that Church (except Smyrna and Philadelphia)

VI. The Exhortation of Christ to that Church

V. The Appreciation of Christ for the Overcomers (the saved remnant).

EACH CHURCH REPRESENTS A PERIOD OF CHURCH HISTORY

EPHESUS—Apostolic Church 1st Cen

SMYRNA—Suffering Church 2nd/3rd Cen

PERGAMOS—State Church 311-600A.D.

THYATIRA—Papal Church 600A.D. – Till Christ Returns

SARDIS—Reformation Church 1517A.D.—Till Christ Returns

PHILADELPHIA—Missionary Church 18th/19th Cen—Till Christ Returns

LAODICEA—Apostate Church 19th Cen – Till Christ Returns.

EACH NAME INDICATES THE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH

EPHESUS—The Ephesian Church is a picture of the early Apostolic Church which spread the Gospel throughout the world.

SMYRNA—Smyrna represents the second stage of Church history, which saw what Church historians have called the "Ten Pagan Persecutions" by Rome

PERGAMOS—Describes the period of Church history from AD 313 to 600 when the Church was "married" to the State under Constantine.

THYATIRA—Aptly describes the fourth stage of Church history when the papacy began about AD600 with Gregory the Great (AD590-604). The continu-

al sacrifice of the Mass became the central feature of the idolatrous Roman Catholic worship.

SARDIS—Represents the Reformation Church which began in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Church at Wittenberg.

PHILADELPHIA—The Church at Philadelphia wonderfully depicts the great evangelical awakening which occurred during the 18th and 19th centuries.

LAODICEA—As the meaning of the name suggests, the Laodicean Church period of history has experienced a take-over by human intellect, and no longer does it bow to the Word of God as the final and only authority on all matters of faith and conduct.

AN OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY

One of the distinctive features of the dispensation of the Church Age in contrast to prior periods is the fact that the Holy Spirit indwells everyone who is regenerated.

II Thessalonians 2:6-7

V6). "And now ye know what withholdeth that he (ANTICHRIST) might be revealed in his time.

V7). For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he (HOLY SPIRIT) who now letteth will let, until he (HOLY SPIRIT) be taken out of the way."

EPHESUS REV 2:1-7

V1). "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

V2). I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

V3). And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

V4). Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

V5). Remember therefore from whence

thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

V6). But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

V7). He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

The Ephesian Church is a picture of the early Apostolic Church which was short, yet it touched the entire world. It is believed that the gospel reached the British Isles as early as AD62

In each of the 7 letters to the churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 we are given an insight in the in the letters as to the spiritual temperature within the church

Also if we were to examine each letter we would see that with the exception of the letters to Smyrna & Philadelphia each church receives from the Lord a condemnation.

SMYRNA REV 2:8-11

V8). "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

V9). I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

V10) Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

V11). He that hath an ear, let him hear

what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

Smyrna was one of the two churches that did not receive condemnation from the Lord; it was as its name indicates a suffering church.

Where as the Apostolic Church experienced persecution from the Jewish authorities; the Smyrna church experienced two centuries of Roman Aggression. Smyrna represents the second stage of Church history, which saw what Church historians have called the "Ten Pagan Persecutions" by Rome .

- # NERO AD54-68
- # DOMITIAN AD81- 96
- # TRAJAN AD98 -112
- # MARCUS AURELIUS AD161-180
- # SEVERUS AD193 -211
- # MAXIMINUS AD235 -238
- # DECIUS AD240 -251
- # VALERIAN AD253 -260
- # AURELIAN AD270 -275
- # DIOCLETIAN AD285 -305

PERGAMOS REV 2:12-17

V12). "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

V13). I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

V14). But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Ephesians 1:13, 14

V13). "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, V14). Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

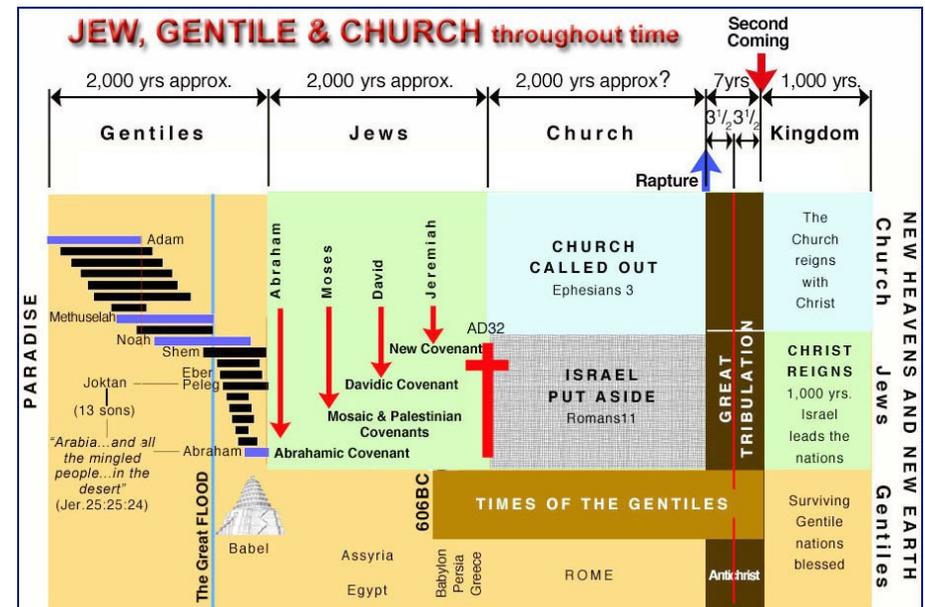
Ephesians 4:30 "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

II Corinthians 1:22 "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

EPHESIANS 5:25b-27

V25b). ". . .even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; V26). That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, V27). That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. "

The Church exists for nothing else . . . but to draw men to Jesus Christ!



-duct. Verse 32 of Matthew 13 tells us that the mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds, it's an herb and sometimes growing in the right conditions it can become a medium size bush, but certainly not a tree with many branch's big enough for many birds to make their home in. And this grain of mustard has been sown in the field of the world and what we see happening to the least of all seeds is unnatural or of perverted growth.

What we see here is a picture of what is known as Christendom, its outward appearance is perverted, and yes the perversion is man made, yet as we see in verse 31 of Matthew 13 the mustard seed was sown in the field by the Lord, ". . .The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:" The seed represents the smallest of beginnings, but such is the size of this mystery tree that it attracts, ". . .the birds of the air. . . ." to make their home in it's branches. In the first foundational parable, who was it that devoured the seeds that fell by the way side? Yes it was, ". . .the fowls. . ." or the birds of the air; may I suggest that all types of birds have made their home in Christendom's mystery tree proclaiming to be Christian yet according to the Word of God and the words of the Apostle Paul in II Timothy 3:5

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Remember Matthew 13 is about mystery parables, and The "Fellowship of the Mystery" is that of the church representing both believing Jews and believing Gentiles, and God's program for this Mystery Church is that:

It commenced at Pentecost:

Galatians 3:28

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

It was commenced to re-produce:

Acts 1:8

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

It will be consummated before the Tribulation:

II Thessalonians 2:3 "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (the tribulation) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;"

Romans 11:25 "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." (Fullness of the church)

The phrase "*falling away*" in verse 3 of II Thessalonians 2 simply means in the Gk "to depart".

It can be a departure from the faith which is apostasy or a falling away, but it can also be translated in this passage as a "physical departure".

How the word or phrase is translated depends upon the context. The context here in II Thessalonians 2:3 is of a physical departure notice verse 1 of II Thess 2:1 "*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him."*

Remember the Church belongs to God

I Timothy 3:15

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

It was purchased by the Blood of Christ

Acts 20:28

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

The Church is sealed by the Holy Spirit

V15).So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

V16).Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

V17).He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Pergamos describes the period of Church history from AD 313 to 600 when the Church was "married" to the State under Constantine. Part of that remnant was a man named Nestorius who was appointed Bishop of Constantinople in AD428.

He apposed the worship of Mary and rejected the title that was given to her that of the "Mother of God"

After he was excommunicated in AD431 he spent the rest of his life in the Egyptian desert where he wrote an excellent defence of the two natures of Christ. Other Bishops who were of the same mind as Nestorius were also expelled and fled to Persia; eventually the Nestorian Church was established and for centuries became a strong missionary Church with works in Central Asia, China, India, and Sri Lanka.

THYATIRA REV 2:18-29

V18). "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

V19).I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

V20).Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

V21).And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

V22).Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

V23).And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

V24).But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

V25).But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

V26).And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

V27).And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

V28).And I will give him the morning star.

V29).He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Thyatira aptly describes the fourth stage of Church history when the papacy began about AD600 with Gregory the Great (AD590-604). The continual sacrifice of the Mass became the central feature of idolatrous Roman Catholic worship. But this period also produced men like John Wycliffe an early advocate for translation of the Bible in the common tongue. He completed his translation directly from the Vulgate into vernacular English in the year 1382, now known as the Wycliffe Bible.

Peter Waldo—The Waldensian movement was characterised from the beginning by lay preaching, voluntary poverty and sticking to the "Word of God".

Johannes Gutenberg who developed the Gutenberg press on which was printed the Bible in Gemany in 1456. In 1455 Gutenberg published his 42-line Bible, commonly known as the Gutenberg Bible. About 180 were printed, most on paper and some on vellum.

SARDIS REV 3:1-6

V1). *“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*

V2). *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.*

V3). *Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

V4). *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.*

V5). *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; 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.*

V6). *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”*

Sardis represents the Reformation Church which began in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Church at Wittenberg. This period produced men like William Tyndale (considered to be the father of the English language)- He was the first to translate and print what was considered the “Forbidden Book” The English Bible. After being imprisoned for 500 days he was burned at the stake. Tyndale's was the first English translation to draw directly from Hebrew and Greek texts, and the first to take advantage of the new medium of print, which allowed for its wide distribution.

Martin Luther - His reformation began by the publication of his 95 Theses in 1517 against the claims of indulgence preachers that God's punishment for sins could be avoided by buying them. Luther's refusal to retract his writings at the demand of the pope in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the

Diet of Worms meeting in 1521 resulted in his excommunication by Pope Leo X (10th) and condemnation as an outlaw by the emperor.

John Knox - A Scottish clergyman and leader of the Protestant Reformation who is considered the founder of the Presbyterian denomination. Knox was notable not so much for the overthrow of Catholicism in Scotland, but for assuring the replacement of the old religion with Presbyterianism rather than Anglicanism.

Ulrich Zwingli - Was a leader of the Reformation in Switzerland. In his publications, he noted corruption in the Ecclesiastical hierarchy, promoted clerical marriage, and attacked the use of images in places of worship. In 1525, Zwingli introduced a new communion liturgy to replace the mass.

PHILADELPHIA REV 3:7-13

V7). *“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;*

V8). *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 hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*

V9). *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*

V10). *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

V11). *Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

V12). *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is*

new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

V13). *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”* The Church at Philadelphia wonderfully depicts the great evangelical awakening which occurred during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Only glory can tell of those who stepped thru the Philadelphian Open Door hindering the mystery of iniquity. Those like: George Muller; Charles Finney; D.L.Moody; R.A.Torrey; C.T. Studd; the list is endless George Whitfield - He was famous for his preaching in America which was a significant part of an 18th century movement of Christian revivals, sometimes called "The Great Awakening."

John Wesley - In contrast to George Whitefield's Calvinistic Methodism, which preached a doctrine of predestination, Wesley believed that each person could be saved by faith in God. Methodism in both forms was a highly successful evangelical movement in the United Kingdom, which encouraged congregants to experience Christ personally.

J. Hudson Taylor - A British Protestant Christian missionary to China, and founder of the China Inland Mission (CIM) (now OMF International). Taylor spent 51 years in China. The society that he began was responsible for bringing over 800 missionaries to the country who began 125 schools and directly resulted in 18,000 Christian conversions, as well as the establishment of more than 300 stations of work with more than 500 local helpers in all eighteen provinces.

Robert Moffat - A Scottish Congregationalist missionary to Africa whose daughter married David Livingstone. Moffat also translated the whole of the Bible and The Pilgrim's Progress into Setswana.

William Carey an English Protestant missionary and Baptist minister, known as the "father of modern missions." Car-

ey was one of the founders of the Baptist Missionary Society. Carey later preached a pro-missionary sermon (the so-called Deathless Sermon), using Isaiah 54:2-3 as his text, in which he repeatedly used the phrase which has become his most famous quotation:

“Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”

LAODICEA REV 3:14-22

V14). *“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;*

V15). *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

V16). *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

V17). *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

V18). *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

V19). *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

V20). *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

V21). *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

V22). *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”*

As the meaning of the name suggests, the Laodicean Church period of history has experienced a takeover by human intellect, and no longer does it bow to the Word of God as the final and only authority on matters of faith and con-