REVELATION 3

Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea: I Stand at the Door

> *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”*
> REVELATION 3:20

A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · WITH TSARFATI · GUZIK

Where John has brought us

1. Revelation 3 finishes the seven letters of “the things which are” (1:19).

2. After this chapter the scene changes.

THE SEVEN LETTERS AT A GLANCE · REVELATION 2–3

CHURCH	CHRIST IS …	PRAISE	REBUKE	PROMISE
Ephesus	holds the seven stars	●	●	the tree of life
Smyrna	the first and the last	●	—	crown of life
Pergamum	the two-edged sword	●	●	manna, a white stone
Thyatira	Son of God, eyes of fire	●	●	authority, morning star
Sardis	the seven Spirits and stars	*a few*	●	white garments, named
Philadelphia	holy, true, key of David	●	—	pillar, three names
Laodicea	the Amen, true Witness	—	●	seat on His throne

Chapter 2 above the line, chapter 3 below.

● praise ● rebuke — none

Sardis: A Name That You Are Alive

A famous reputation, a dead heart — and a faithful few walking in white.

REVELATION 3:1

"To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

DAVID GUZIK

Sardis was a wealthy old capital on a high, steep hill its people thought could not be taken. Twice it fell because no one was watching.

WHAT IT MEANS

A reputation is not a pulse. People may think I'm doing well, and a church may look busy, while the life has gone out.

γρηγορέω
GRĒGOREŌ · "WAKE UP"

Jesus' first command to Sardis is grēgoreō: to keep awake, to be watchful — the very thing Sardis had failed to do on its cliff. The faithful few have not molynō (G3435), soiled — stained or defiled — their garments.

Philadelphia: Little Power, Open Door

No rebuke — a key, a door no one can shut, and a pillar that stays.

REVELATION 3:10

'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik reads "keep you from the hour of testing" as protection from the hour itself — the rapture of the church before the tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; 5:9).

AMIR TSARFATI

Amir Tsarfati, writing on Revelation 22, looks back to this letter and its promise of the pillar and the names: 'Philadelphia is the faithful church — one of only two Jesus had nothing against — and the…

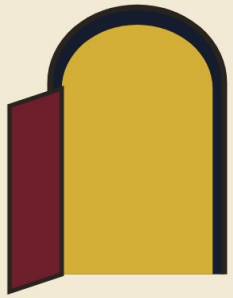
θύρα

THYRA · "DOOR"

"I have put before you an open door which no one can shut." Thyra is a door, an opening — and so an opportunity (1 Cor 16:9; Col 4:3).

Three Doors

THREE DOORS · 3:8, 3:20, 4:1



"an open door which no one can shut"

3:8 · PHILADELPHIA

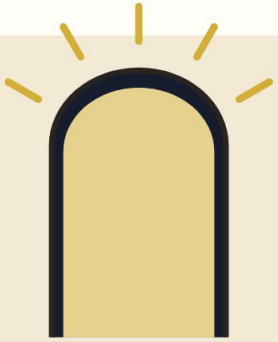
Jesus opens the way for a weak, faithful church



"I stand at the door and knock"

3:20 · LAODICEA

Jesus outside His own church, asking to come in



"a door standing open in heaven"

4:1 · WHAT COMES NEXT

John is called up: "Come up here"

A door Jesus opens for the weak, a door He knocks on in the comfortable church, and the door opened in heaven.

Laodicea: I Stand at the Door

Rich, lukewarm and blind — and Jesus knocking on His own church's door.

REVELATION 3:14

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik, through Barclay, cites Tacitus on Laodicea after the earthquake of AD 60: it 'arose from the ruins by the strength of her own resources.'

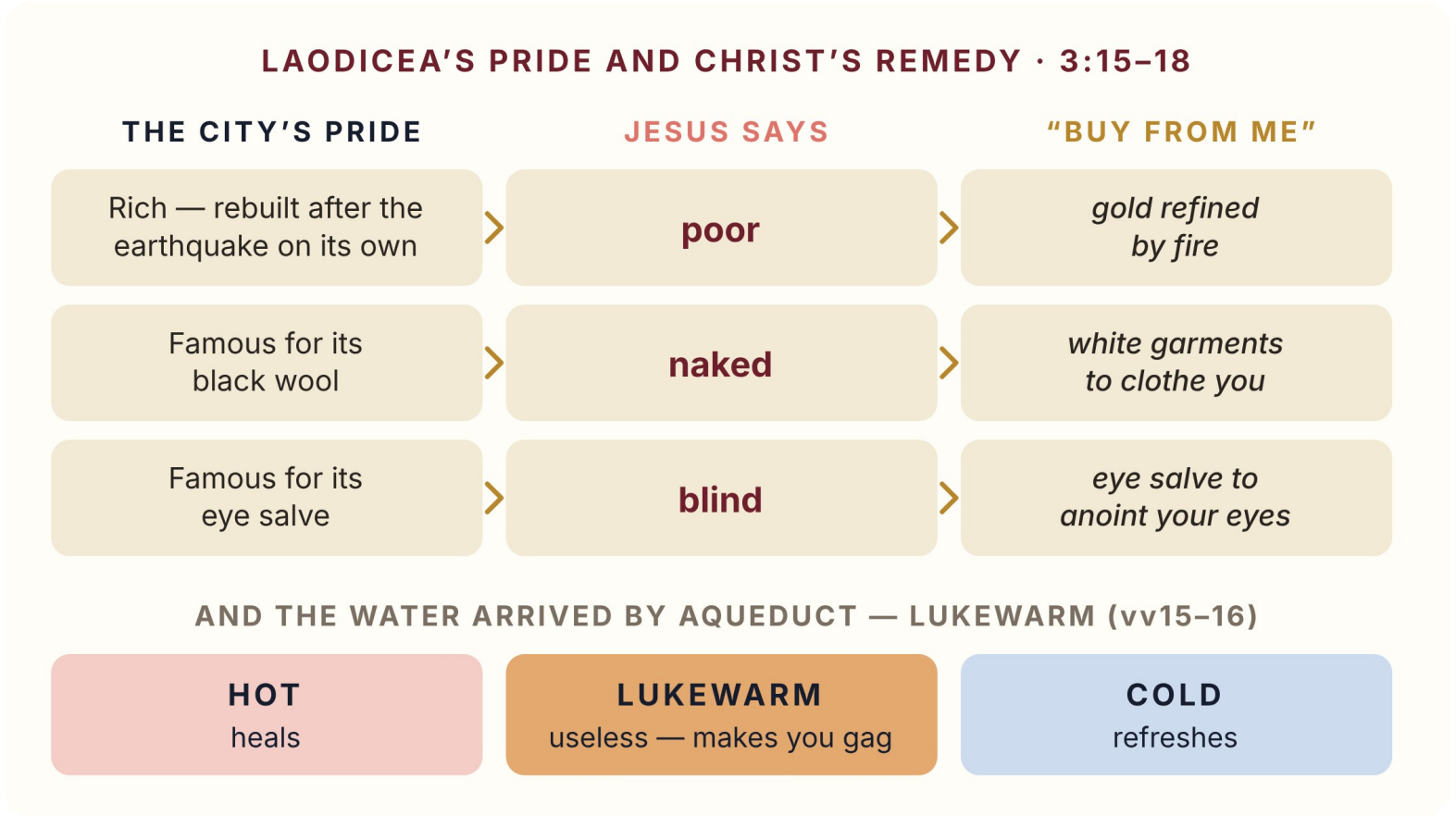
WHAT IT MEANS

Laodicea's sin was self-sufficiency, and it was blind to it: "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing." Jesus says they are poor, blind and naked.

χλιαρός
CHLIAROS · "LUKEWARM"

Chliaros means tepid — neither hot nor cold. Jesus' response is emeō (G1692), to vomit: lukewarm water makes you gag.

Laodicea's Pride and Christ's Remedy



Jesus answers the city's three boasts with three things only He can sell — and its tepid water with a call to zeal.

What to carry from this chapter

1

A reputation is not a pulse.

Sardis had “a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”

2

Dead churches draw no fire.

Guzik observes that Sardis faced no real struggle and drew no attack.

3

The few still count.

Even in Sardis Jesus counts “a few people” who will walk with Him in white.

4

Little power is enough.

Philadelphia was weak but kept His word — and got a door no one can shut.

More to carry

5

Promised in 3, delivered in 22.

The pillar and the names promised to Philadelphia are what every overcomer finally receives.

6

The crown thief.

Havner, in Guzik: the man most likely to steal your crown is yourself.

7

Lukewarm makes you gag.

Chliaros is tepid and emeō is to vomit — hot heals, cold refreshes, lukewarm is useless.

8

The church of the excluded Jesus.

Guzik's name for Laodicea, where Christ stands outside His own congregation and knocks.

Talk it through

1. Sardis had a reputation for being alive. What in your walk with Jesus is “about to die” and needs strengthening now?

2. Philadelphia had only “a little power.” Where do you feel weak, and what door might Jesus be holding open anyway?

3. How do you understand the promise to be kept “from the hour of testing,” and how can you hold your view with both conviction and charity?

4. Laodicea said they “have need of nothing.” Where have you quietly stopped needing Jesus?

5. Jesus stands at the door of His own church and knocks. What would it look like for you to open the door this week?

CLOSING

Seven letters, one Lord. He wakes the sleeping, opens doors for the weak, and knocks on the door of the comfortable — and to anyone who overcomes He promises a seat with Him on His throne. Next, John sees another door, standing open in heaven.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides, reflection journal and film: see the Revelation study page.