

## “How to Make Jesus Sick” (Revelation 3:14-22)

What is the greatest challenge facing the church today? Many suggest that it is Christian persecution. Yet persecution is not the greatest challenge. Quite the opposite, persecution is the fastest way to grow a healthy and vibrant church. The greatest challenge to any church is not persecution but prosperity.

Consider the situation in America. We are the wealthiest nation in the world. Our currency reads, “In God We Trust.” We have more churches, more Bibles, Christian literature, and Christian schools than any other nation in the world. Yet, in spite of all these blessings, we are not influencing our society.

Why is this? The answer is simple: American Christians can’t handle prosperity. With freedom and prosperity comes the temptation to trust in our blessings rather than in the Blessor. We become fat, comfortable, and self-sufficient. If we have plenty, we tend to think we have need of nothing. If we think that we don’t have enough looking at the wealth around us we tend to think that what we need is what others have. Both extremes lead us to seek happiness in things, and security in wealth.<sup>1</sup> The result is we fail to rely on the Lord and our ministry to the world is blunted.

In Revelation 3:14-22, Christ warns and instructs us against the lukewarm effects of trusting in material wealth rather than pursuing a vital faith relationship with Jesus Christ. The Laodicean<sup>2</sup> church was a church that had lost its impact on the world because it had become occupied with the world and had left Christ standing outside the church.<sup>3</sup> We must not make the same age-old mistake.

**1. The Character (3:14).** Christ identifies Himself here with three titles that cover His entire career from eternity past to eternity future.<sup>4</sup> First, concerning the future Jesus is “**the Amen.**” “Amen” means “so be it, it is true.” It also connotes the idea of finality or the last word. When applied to Christ, it is a testimony to His ability to produce what He predicts (cf. Isa 65:16). Thus, every promise He makes is true and every woe He pronounces shall come to pass.

Secondly, Jesus is “**the faithful and true witness.**”<sup>5</sup> This title epitomizes Jesus’ earthly life. He was “**faithful and true**” in everything that He thought, said, and did. In His teaching, in His miracles, in His life, and in His death, He was “**the faithful and true witness.**”

Thirdly, Jesus is the “**beginning of the creation of God.**” This title looks back to Jesus’ eternal past. This phrase does NOT teach that Jesus was the first being created by God, as the Jehovah Witnesses insist.<sup>6</sup> The word “**beginning**” (*arche*) can mean either “source/origin” (NRSV) or “ruler” (NIV and NLT). Here, Jesus is saying that He is the source or originator of all creation. He is the Creator of time and space (Col 1:15-18; Heb 1:2). This is borne out in John 1:2-4, where John says that the Word (i.e., Jesus) was “in the beginning (*arche*) with God.” John then states, “All things were made through Him.”<sup>7</sup> Jesus is the first cause, the Creator, and Sustainer of creation.

**2. The Condemnation (3:15-17).** What this letter lacks is the commendation. It is unique among the seven letters in that Christ has nothing good to say about this church.<sup>8</sup> Jesus begins His condemnation by saying, “**I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish<sup>9</sup> that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth**”<sup>10</sup> (3:15-16). The image of the Laodiceans being “**neither cold nor hot**” has traditionally been understood to be metaphorical of their lack of spiritual fervor and half-hearted commitment to Christ. One problem with this is that Christ’s desire that they be either “cold” or “hot” implies that both extremes are positive. This begs the question: why would Jesus prefer cold to lukewarmness? If we understand the term “cold” to mean hostility toward the Gospel, we must conclude that Jesus would rather see a person an antagonist than a halfhearted follower. But that explanation seems doubtful.

It is unlikely that Jesus preferred hostility to half-heartedness. A better way to understand these verses is to see both “cold” and “hot” as positive terms. Cold water refreshes, hot water heals,<sup>11</sup> but lukewarm water does neither.

Like many of you, I like coffee. I like it hot but I also like it cold. In fact, one of our staff members, Tom Jennings, regularly brings me ice-cold coffee from Starbucks. It’s delicious! To tell the truth, I like my coffee cold more than I like it hot. But the one way I don’t like coffee is lukewarm. Similarly, Jesus would rather that His people be cold or hot in their deeds, not apathetic. From the standpoint of their ministry the church at Laodicea provided neither refreshment nor healing, they could only cause nausea. They were useless to the Lord and His purposes for the church in the world. Jesus is saying, “If you were hot or cold I could do something with you.<sup>12</sup> But because you are neither, I will do nothing.”

This church nauseates Jesus. They make Him sick! So He “spits” them out of His mouth. This does not mean they would lose their salvation. This is impossible! This is a figure of speech (anthropomorphism) that simply indicates His intense disgust. However, the translation “**spit**” is not really strong enough. The Greek word here is *emeo*, which means “to vomit.”<sup>13</sup> There is another word, *ptuo* that means “to spit” that John could have used if that is what he meant.<sup>14</sup> Our English word “emetic” comes from this word. An emetic is a mixture that doctors give a person when they swallow poison; it makes them vomit. A lukewarm church makes Jesus vomit. Jesus rejects this kind of Christianity. There is nothing mediocre about Jesus. C. S. Lewis said, “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and, if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important.”<sup>15</sup>

The particular “deed” that is lacking is their effort to witness. The unbelievers in Laodicea were receiving neither spiritual healing nor life because the church was not actively fulfilling its role of witnessing to the Gospel of Christ. Two reasons can be given to support this view. First, this theme is rampant throughout the seven letters. The church is either applauded or condemned for its impact upon its culture. Second, Christ introduces Himself as “**the faithful and true witness**,” which denotes His exemplary life as a witness.<sup>16</sup>

You and I must ask ourselves these questions: Do I provide spiritual refreshment to believers and unbelievers? Am I known for bringing others encouragement, joy, and hope? Do I bring healing by challenging the careless, correcting the erring, and rousing the indifferent? Remember, we can’t help anybody if we are lukewarm. The Lord wants us either hot or cold—whatever the need may require.

What brought about this lukewarm living? What is the problem with these Christians? They had the audacity to say, “**I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing**” (3:17). The case against Laodicea revolves around the idea of self-deception. They were self-deluded. They were like the young woman who went to her pastor and said, “Pastor, I have a besetting sin, and I want your help. I come to church every Sunday and just can’t help thinking I’m the prettiest girl in the congregation. I know I ought not to think that, but I can’t help it. I want you to help me conquer this sin.” The pastor replied, “Child, don’t worry about it. In your case it’s not a sin. It’s just a horrible mistake.”<sup>17</sup>

The church at Laodicea was made up of Christians who were trusting in themselves and their wealth or what they thought their wealth could buy them. Note their threefold claim: (1) “**I am rich**.” These believers had an over abundance of material blessings, but by this statement, it shows they were proud and trusting in that richness as though wealth had the power to give them security and happiness. (2) I “**have become wealthy**.” These believers continued to add to their wealth. Not only was wealth a sign of security, happiness, and success, but the truth is, it never really satisfies and people want more. Billy Sunday once said, “The fellow that has no money is poor. The fellow that has nothing but money is poorer still.”<sup>18</sup>

(3) I have **“need of nothing”** (lit. “no one”). These believers were so well off they thought they needed help from neither man nor God. The people there say that their wealth and prosperity eliminates their need for the Lord. They had bought into the satanic delusion that money can buy anything. They didn’t need to trust God. They could simply go out and buy whatever they needed or desired. There was no need to wait on the Lord, no need to put Him first. They sought their security in their talents, abilities, human resources, and financial wealth. They thought they were protected from all dangers, were insulated from all problems, and immune to every kind of tragedy.

The Lord’s evaluation is that because they are so proud and self-sufficient they cannot see their spiritual condition, which is **“wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”** The article “the” draws the five characteristics into a single whole, with each one building on the other.<sup>19</sup> **“Wretched”** means “distressed.” **“Miserable”** means “pitiful.” It describes one in such a state that he becomes the object of extreme pity, like a beggar. The real pity is that they were like a drunk in the cold; they could not feel their condition. **“Poor”** is “beggarly.” This word referred to one who begs for crumbs trying to fill his hunger or craving. Those who try to find happiness and security in the details of life are like beggars trying to exist on crumbs. Mother Theresa once said, “The spiritual poverty of the Western world is much greater than the physical poverty of our people. You in the West have millions of people who suffer such terrible loneliness and emptiness.”<sup>20</sup> **“Blind”** means “without spiritual insight or discernment.” Their eyes were bad and so their whole body was full of darkness (Matt 6:23).<sup>21</sup> Jesus concludes His list of five adjectives with the term **“naked.”** The idea of spiritual nakedness refers to humiliation and embarrassment. The Laodiceans were like the foolish emperor in Hans Christian Andersen’s story, *“The Emperor’s Clothes.”* They thought they were clothed in splendor when they were really naked. In the same way, all too often, we strut in front of others thinking we are clothed with commitment to Christ, when in reality we too are as naked as the emperor in his invisible clothes.

If there is a glaring truth that stands out from this section, it is this: God’s estimation of us is often very different from our estimation of ourselves. In what or who is your confidence?

**3. The Correction (3:18-19).** Of course Christ has a solution to their spiritual condition. He “advises” them to **“buy”** (cf. Isa 55:1) three entities. The Laodiceans don’t have to run to the malls of wealth in Laodicea to obtain satisfaction. There is only one market from which they can buy the goods Jesus offers—**“from Me.”** First, He counsels them to buy **“gold refined by fire.”**<sup>22</sup> Refined gold is a biblical idiom for purifying one’s life by removing sin (cf. Job 23:10; Prov 27:21; Mal 3:2-3). The metaphor is also used for the purifying effect of tribulation on God’s people (Zech 13:9; 1 Pet 1:6-9).

Secondly, they are told to buy **“white garments”** (outer garments worn only by Christ and the church) so that they may clothe themselves and so that their shame and dishonor, consisting of their nakedness, will not be made manifest at the judgment seat of Christ.

The third solution is to buy **“eye salve”** from Him that they will smear on their eyes so that they will be able to see divine realities. Since this obviously has to do with spiritual sight, this most likely refers to the person and work of the Holy Spirit as God’s anointing, who anoints our eyes to discern His Word (John 14:26; 1 Cor 2:14-16).

In 3:19, Jesus states, **“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous<sup>23</sup> and repent.”** The Lord reminded His readers that He said what He did because He loved them (Prov 3:11-12; cf. Prov 13:24; Heb 12:5-6). The Greek word for **“love”** (*phileo*) is never used of God/Jesus loving unbelievers in the New Testament. (Indeed, it would be impossible for God to have this kind of love for an unbeliever, for it routinely speaks of enjoyment and fellowship).<sup>24</sup> This *phileo* must be applied to the Laodiceans here, for the verse concludes, **“Be zealous, therefore, and repent.”**

The word “**reprove**” speaks of correction or verbal rebuke. The word “**discipline**” means primarily to train children (Eph 6:4). This is their first and basic form of education. God trains His children as well (Heb 12:6-8, 10). A basic idea behind “discipline” is correction or guidance. This instruction has to do with the purpose of forming proper habits of behavior (Acts 7:22).

Like the corrective commands given to the other four churches in this section (Rev 2:5, 16, 22, 3:3), the believers of the church at Laodicea are to “**be zealous**” and “**repent.**” This would involve them choosing to have a decisive change of mind regarding their spiritual condition. This results in genuine confession of sin to God (1 John 1:9; 1 Cor 11:31-32; Prov 28:13) and a change in spiritual direction. Again, the motivation for this is Jesus’ love for His church.<sup>25</sup>

Why isn’t the church more effective in the world today? Is the problem simply with the world? Is it too stubborn and too blind to listen? Or could part of the problem be with us? Have we, because of our materialism and in spite of our religiosity, excluded the Savior? Have we literally shut Him out of our lives so He can no longer flesh out His life in ours to impart His vision, His character, and values into ours?

The church today needs to repent of the mentality of tolerance and compromise. Churches today are neither cold nor hot. We like moderation and comfort. “Don’t disturb me. Don’t ask me to move out of my comfort zone.” We love moderate temperatures. We want to be as comfortable as possible. Comfort drives our values. This is very much like the value “peace at all costs.” It is possible to attend churches like this for years and never seriously confront sin. Compromise lies at the core of these churches. Jesus vomits when He thinks of churches like this. They are repulsive to Him. Though people may love these churches, Jesus rejects them. They are religious country clubs that exist only for the benefit of their members. Smug complacency does more damage than these churches imagine. These churches may please their community, but do they please their Lord? Public approval dictates the values of many churches today. They use public approval as a standard of how well they are doing as a church.

**4. The Call (3:20-22).** Jesus begins this section with the familiar verse, “**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<sup>26</sup> with him, and he with Me**” (3:20). This verse pictures the Lord Jesus seeking entrance into His own church for the purpose of renewed fellowship. This is not a gospel appeal.<sup>27</sup> It is addressed to Christians and is inviting them to have fellowship with Christ. The figure of opening the door<sup>28</sup> is an illustration of what it means to “be zealous and repent” (cf. 3:19).

Let’s break down this verse. “**Behold** (pay attention, listen), **I stand at the door.**” Jesus Christ has been and continues to stand (perfect, active, indicative) at the door. The question is “what door?” Now to assume this is the door of your “heart” is totally foreign to the passage. It would seem more appropriate to understand this as the door of the Laodicean church. While this church was saying, “I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing,” they actually had Jesus Christ on the outside of the church. No wonder He is then described as repeatedly “knocking” (present tense).

The picture Jesus is using here of eating an evening meal together speaks of intimate fellowship between the closest of friends. The arms outstretched, inviting restoration, are firstly toward a whole Christian community. However, a church is made up of individual people. So this invitation is a call to every member to respond, that the promise of renewal might come to the whole company.

Now Christ will come “in to” (two different words), not come “into” (one word).<sup>29</sup> The verse is saying that Christ will come in the church to the person, not that Christ will come into the person. When He gets *in* the church *with* the person He will eat dinner with him. That is, He will have fellowship with him.

Moving from the Laodicean church generally, Jesus Christ then appeals to the individual believers on the inside of this church. “If (*ean*)<sup>30</sup> anyone (singular) hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him.” Notice the two conditions that Christ requires to be fulfilled by those on the inside: (1) **“if anyone hears My voice.”** This refers to what Jesus Christ has been saying in 3:14-19. (2) **“If anyone opens the door.”** This again refers to the door where the church is gathered and involves the genuine repentance He required.

Connected with these two conditions are three wonderful promises by Jesus Christ Himself. (1) **“I will come in to him.”** This is a promise of Christ’s personal entrance into the church to meet the believer face to face. (2) **“I will dine with him.”** This is a promise of Christ’s personal fellowship with this repentant believer. (3) **“He will dine with Me.”** This is a promise of reciprocal fellowship with Jesus Christ. Again, this is not an offer of salvation. Rather, it is a promise of Christ’s fellowship for any lukewarm believer who repents.<sup>31</sup>

Jesus closes this passage with these words: **“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (3:21).**<sup>32</sup> The overcomer is the one who opens the door. Jesus says, I will give to the overcomer what My Father gave to Me. What was Jesus given? Philippians 2:6-11 tells us that Jesus was given authority and recognition.

Although the Savior’s sternest rebukes and condemnation are directed toward Laodicea, so also does He reserve for her the most glorious and precious promises given to any of the seven churches. Just as Christ was declared the victor over death by His resurrection and ascension to sit at the right hand of the Father, so believers follow Christ in victory to join Him on His throne and reign with Him (2 Tim 2:12). There is no greater reward or higher dignity than to reign with Christ.<sup>33</sup>

Jesus concludes this letter as He does His other six letters with the words: **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (3:22).** How easy it would be to allow these words of rebuke and instruction to pass one by. How easy it would be to fall into the same complacency and self-reliance that plagued the Laodicean church. If we have learned anything from this letter, it is that we must not be smug and complacent, but rather be zealous, evidencing fruit worthy of repentance. Our own assets are worthless before Christ. We must obtain all our spiritual assets from Him.

Henry Morrison was a missionary to Africa. One day he was coming home from Africa on a ship, which was also carrying President Theodore Roosevelt. When the ship docked in New York, thousands of people were there to greet Roosevelt. But no one cheered for Morrison.

Henry Morrison had served the Lord for forty years in Africa. As he watched the crowds greet Theodore Roosevelt, he became dejected to think he had served the Lord all those years and yet no one was there to greet him.

Morrison said that as he walked down the gangplank in a depressed mood, a voice whispered to him, “Henry, don’t worry. You’re not home yet.” Then he said he saw a vision of multiplied thousands of Africans standing at the gates of heaven, those who he had reached for Christ, applauding him as he entered heaven.

If people are not recognizing you down here, if you are not getting applause right now, don’t worry. You are not home yet. Remember what Christ has waiting for you.<sup>34</sup>

## THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION 2-3

Church	Commendation	Condemnation	Challenge/Correction	Call/Promise
Ephesus (2:1-7)	Rejected evil and patiently persevered	Lost first love	Remember, repent, and redo the initial works	The Tree of Life
Smyrna (2:8-11)	Gracefully bore suffering	None	Be faithful until death	The crown of life
Pergamos (2:12-17)	Kept the faith of Christ	Tolerated immorality, idolatry, and heresies	Repent	Hidden manna and a white stone with a new name
Thyatira (2:18-29)	Love, service, faith, patience were greater than at first	Tolerated immorality and idolatry	Hold fast	Rule over nations and receive morning star
Sardis (3:1-6)	A remnant has kept the faith	Spiritually dead	Repent and strengthen what remains	Clothed in white, name confessed before God
Philadelphia (3:7-13)	Persevered in the faith, kept Christ's Word, and honored His name	None	Hold fast	An eternal pillar in the temple with new names
Laodicea (3:14-22)	None	Spiritually indifferent	Be zealous and repent	Rule with Christ

## THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST IN REVELATION 2-3

1. "The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand" is a reference to the sovereign authority and control of Jesus Christ over the angelic realm (2:1).
2. "The One who walks among the seven golden lampstands" is a reference to the intimate presence of Christ among His church (2:1).
3. "The first and the last" is a reference to Jesus' eternal existence (2:8).
4. "The One who was dead, and has come to life" indicates Christ passed into death, through death, and out of death (2:8).
5. "The One who has the sharp two-edged sword" reveals that Christ's acts of judgment will be carried out on the basis of His Word (2:12).
6. The title "Son of God" declares Christ's absolute deity (2:18).
7. The description "eyes like a flame of fire" indicates that Jesus is able to see into the secret places of our hearts (2:18).
8. The description "feet like burnished bronze" means that Jesus will pursue evil and stamp it out (2:18).
9. The One who "has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars" conveys ownership and control over the Holy Spirit and the angelic realm (3:1).
10. The One who is "holy" means that Jesus is set apart and a cut above all so called "gods" (3:7).
11. The One who is "true" means that Jesus is genuine, authentic, and unique (3:7).
12. The One with "the key of David" means that Jesus is the heir of David's covenant who has been given all authority to grant entrance into heaven and the New Jerusalem (3:7).
13. "The Amen" is a testimony to Christ's ability to produce what He predicts (3:14).
14. "The faithful and true witness" epitomizes Jesus' earthly life as the model witness before the world (3:14).
15. The "Beginning of the creation of God" means that Jesus is the origin or source of all history (3:14).

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Christ told us in no uncertain terms to do the opposite, to lay up treasures in heaven (Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:17-19). Cf. God warned Israel in Deuteronomy 6:10f against forgetting the Lord as the source of their freedom and salvation. Nine times in Deuteronomy He tells them not to forget what the Lord had done for them and 15 times He tells them to remember the Lord and His deliverance.

<sup>2</sup> The Gospel came to Laodicea probably while Paul was in Ephesus (Acts 19:10). Although Paul mentions the church (Col 4:12-16), he may have never visited the city personally.

<sup>3</sup> Hampton Keathley III, *Revelation* (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 1997), 96.

<sup>4</sup> This is the one list of characteristics with no allusion back to the inaugural vision of Rev 1:12-20. The titles seem to have been chosen entirely to challenge the Laodiceans. See Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation: ECNT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 203.

<sup>5</sup> This description is especially designed to contrast Christ's statement of 3:15-16 with the statement of the Laodiceans about themselves in 3:17.

<sup>6</sup> This view is aptly refuted in Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 81.

<sup>7</sup> This is in harmony with Colossians 1:15, 18 where Christ is said to be "the beginning," and "the firstborn of all creation."

<sup>8</sup> The church in Sardis (Rev 3:1-6) received no corporate commendation but they at least had a remnant of "a few people" that remained faithful (3:4).

<sup>9</sup> The word translated "wish" (*ophelon*) is a fixed form used to express an unattainable wish. It assumes the nature of an interjection where one wishes that a thing had happened, but has not and probably will not. They had become thoroughly hardened and indifferent to Christ through the deceitful riches of the world and their sin (cf. Heb 3:7f).

<sup>10</sup> The only similar image in the Bible is found in the curse sections of Leviticus where God says that the land of Israel will "spew out the inhabitants" for disobedience to the covenant (Lev 18:25, 28; 20:22).

<sup>11</sup> Some scholars suggest that Jesus may have been thinking about two springs near Laodicea—the hot mineral springs at Hierapolis and the pure cold water springs in Colossae. The hot springs were seen as possessing healing powers. The cold, invigorating springs provided refreshment. The Christians in the church at Laodicea brought neither healing to the spiritually ill nor refreshment to the weary. They were lukewarm, and therefore of no help to anyone.

<sup>12</sup> The church at Laodicea was useless. They couldn't even give out a cup of cold water in the name of Christ (Matt 10:42).

<sup>13</sup> The NKJV translates this word literally as "vomit."

<sup>14</sup> BDAG, Electronic Ed.

<sup>15</sup> Preaching Today Citation: "C. S. Lewis," *Christian History* (65.19.1), 27.

<sup>16</sup> G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: NIGTC* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 303-04.

<sup>17</sup> Preaching Today Citation: Haddon Robinson, "Good Guys, Bad Guys, and Us Guys," *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 80.

<sup>18</sup> Preaching Today Citation: Billy Sunday (1862-1935), American revivalist. "Money II," *Christian History*, Issue 19.

<sup>19</sup> Osborne, *Revelation: ECNT*, 207.

<sup>20</sup> Preaching Today Citation: Mother Teresa, *Leadership*, Vol. 8, no. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Cp Ps 119:11-14, 99-105; 19:10; Prov 16:16 and note there the results of good eyesight or spiritual illumination.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Ps 66:10; Prov 17:3; Zech 13:9; Luke 12:21; 1 Tim 6:18; Jas 1:3; 2:5; 1 Pet 1:7; 4:12.

<sup>23</sup> The expression "I am rich, and have become wealthy" is a literary device that inverts the natural sequence for emphasis (cf. 3:19; 5:2, 5; 10:4, 9; 12:10; 19:13). Here it stresses that the wealth attained came through self-exertion.

<sup>24</sup> *Agapao*, rather, is the verb used of God's love for unbelievers (cf. John 3:16).

<sup>25</sup> The inferential *oun* ("therefore") connects the two parts of the verse, indicating that the Laodiceans are to repent because Christ loves (*phileos*) them!

<sup>26</sup> "Dine" (*deipneo*) is a Greek word, which referred to the main meal of the day—a real feast. This word was used not only of the chief meal of the day—a full course dinner—but of the meal, which was the occasion for hospitality and fellowship. At this meal, however, Jesus is the host. It is He who sets the table and we are His guests dining on that which He has provided.

<sup>27</sup> See the article by Pastor Dennis Rokser, *Revelation 3:20*: [http://www.duluthbible.org/g\\_f\\_j/Rev3\\_20.html](http://www.duluthbible.org/g_f_j/Rev3_20.html)

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<sup>28</sup> The metaphor of Christ standing at the door is a familiar eschatological concept (Mark 13:29; Matt 24:33; Luke 12:36; Jas 5:9). It is also true that the idea of a messianic banquet is often used as a symbol of fellowship in the kingdom of God (Matt 8:11; 22:1-4; 26:29; Luke 14:15; 22:29-30; Rev 19:9).

<sup>29</sup> This is not a hair-splitting of the English text, but an accurate reflection of the Greek. In phrase “come in” (*eiserchomai*) is one word. It is followed by the preposition “to” (*pros*). The idea of “come into” would be expressed with the Greek independent preposition *eis* and would suggest a penetration into the person (thus, spawning the idea of entering into one’s heart). However, spatially the Greek preposition *pros* means, “toward,” not into. In all eight instances of *eiserchomai pros* in the New Testament, the meaning is “come in toward/before a person (i.e., enter a building, house, etc., so as to be in the presence of someone), never penetration into the person himself/herself. In some instances, such a view would not only be absurd, but inappropriate (cf. Mark 6:25; 15:43; Luke 1:28; Acts 10:3; 11:3; 16:40; 17:2; 28:8). See Michael Cocoris, *Evangelism: A Biblical Approach* (Chicago: Moody, 1984), 82-83. See also Daniel B. Wallace, *Scripture Twisting*, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org).

<sup>30</sup> This is what Greek grammarians call a 3<sup>rd</sup> class condition: one might or might not open the door.

<sup>31</sup> Wallace humorously adds, “If it causes us some measure of panic to have to use other than Revelation 3:20 when we share the gospel, keep in mind that the earliest Christians did not have this verse. Revelation is the last book of the Bible to be written. How was it possible for Peter and Paul and James to ever see anyone get saved without this verse? They never had it! But if I read the book of Acts correctly, they had a measure of success in sharing the gospel even in spite of this handicap.” See Wallace, *Scripture Twisting*: [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)

<sup>32</sup> “There is an interesting, often overlooked parallel between the five warnings in the Book of Hebrews and the seven overcomers’ promises in the Book of Revelation. The warnings and the overcomers’ promises both have the same end in view. The last warning has to do with the birthright (Heb 12:14-17), and the last overcomers’ promise has to do with the throne (Rev 3:21). The successive thought in the warnings in the Book of Hebrews is that of Christians ultimately realizing their birthright—sons exercising the rights of primogeniture. The great burden of Hebrews is ‘bringing many sons into glory’ (Heb 2:10). And the successive thought in the overcomers’ promises in the Book of Revelation is that of Christians ultimately ascending the throne—co-heirs, companions, exercising power with Christ. The great burden of Revelation, chapters two and three is that of placing equipped Christians upon the throne with Christ.” See Arlen L. Chitwood, *The Judgment Seat of Christ*, (Norman, OK: The Lamp Broadcast, 1986), 138-139.

<sup>33</sup> There are two thrones in this verse: “My throne” and “His throne.” There is the throne of Jesus and then there is the throne of the Father. The throne of the Father is His sovereign rule over the universe. There is nothing that is not under His control in the universe. Jesus sat down at the “right hand of the Majesty on high” with His Father, at His Father’s right hand (Heb 1:3).

<sup>34</sup> Tony Evans, *Returning to Your First Love* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 218.