

Chapter 3

John continues his letters to the (7) churches. He writes to the churches in Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Verses 1-6: The Lord tells John to write the church in Sardis a personal letter from Him. He relates to them the fact that He knows their works. He states that they should strengthen and perfect themselves as their works are far from perfect. He reminds them that they know the difference between right and wrong. He calls them unto repentance, because when He comes again, "Judgment" shall be at hand. He acknowledges that he knows that there are but a few that are righteous in Sardis. He says that he that overcomes the world will be clothed in white and his name written in the book of life. In other words those that overcome the world will be made clean from the sins of the world and allowed to enter in the Lord's rest. Then the Lord says that they that hear the words spoken to Sardis can also benefit from them.

Verses 7-13: The Lord tells John to write the church in Philadelphia a personal letter from Him. He introduces Himself as the one that holds the Keys of David. The Keys of David are symbolic of absolute power (*see Isaiah 22:22 & Mormon Doctrine page 409*). He relates to them the fact that he knows their works. He promises that with His power He will protect the few remaining that hold fast to His words. He promises to make the wicked fall at the righteous' feet. Their righteousness can cause the hour of temptation to pass over them. He exhorts them to be strong so that their exaltation is not lost. He promises that those that overcome will dwell with God, and receive a new name. This references the blessings received in the Temple. Then the Lord says that they that hear the words spoken to Philadelphia can also benefit from them.

Verses 14-22: The Lord tells John to write the church in Laodicea a personal letter from Him. He relates to them the fact that he knows their works, and that they are neither good or bad. He exclaims that their works are dead. They are living life being satisfied with things the way they are. The Lord states that the path to exaltation is through our trials. He calls them to repentance, and requires them to strive after God who gives to all who ask. He promises that those that overcome will sit down at the throne of the Father. Then the Lord says that they that hear the words spoken to Laodicea can also benefit from them.

In both Chapters 2 and 3, we learn that the Lord is very aware of our works. We can probably find ourselves in at least one of the letters sent to the churches. We too can find reassurance in the letters, in that as we commit ourselves to overcoming the world, we will be strengthened and in the end blessed with all that our Father has. It is interesting as one reads these chapters that the Lord, though speaking to the church as a whole, repeatedly asks John to write to the angel or leader of the church in each city. The priesthood line of authority is used. As we read in the Old Testament, God will reveal nothing except through his servants (*Amos 3:7*).

The warnings and counsel given to the seven churches can be summarized as follows;

<i>Letter to:</i>	<i>Main Counsel</i>
Ephesus-	Repent or lose the Gospel
Smyrne-	Withstand your trial and be crowned with Glory
Pergamos-	Watch for False Doctrine
Thyatira-	Watch for False Prophets
Sardis-	You are held accountable for what you know is right
Philadelphia-	Overcome Temptation through our Heavenly Father
Laodicea-	You can't be neither righteous nor wicked

It is interesting that the warnings given to the ancient church are just as applicable and needed today as they were back then.