



*Reverend Dr. Nathaniel J. Wood, Pastor*

## **NOON DAY BIBLE STUDY**

# **MOVING TOWARD HOPE: REVELATION 1-3**

**The Seven Churches of Revelation: Why  
They Matter and What We Can Learn**



**JANUARY 12 – MARCH 2, 2022**

**LESSONS 1-8**

**Dial 848-220-3300. Access code 7266492#**

## *Note of Thanks ...*

To the Triune God for His continuous breathing upon me by His Holy Spirit, providential love, leadership and guidance, Who gave me the strength to fulfill this spiritual assignment.

- A very special thanks to our **Pastor, Reverend Dr. Nathaniel J. Wood and First Lady Ramona Wood**. Without your support and faithful prayers protecting and guarding this ministry through the pandemic and during spiritual warfare, we could not have gotten this done. Your wise counseling in leadership is appreciated.
- To **Sister Yvonne Highsmith and Sister Retha Bethea**, for supporting us through editing, copying, and printing our lesson plans and making them available to all our church family.
- To our Media Ministry, **Deacon Darryl and Deaconess Connie Mullins**, for “virtually” being the wind in my back and shield to my face during this pandemic.
- To **Deaconess Evelyn Booker**, for your assistance in praying, scriptural reading and serving as a backup has made this more than a road less traveled in this study of the Book of Hosea.
- To **Mr. & Mrs. Ted Tatum and Ms. Mary McGregor**, for putting the salve on our wounds through your ministry in praise and worship at 11:50A each Wednesday.
- To the **Christian Education Ministry**, for your dedication, commitment and guidance in our biblical sessions of educational learning.
- To our **Intercessory Prayer Ministry Team**, for the effectual, consistent and fervent prayers presented before God’s throne room on our behalf each week.
- To all our **colleagues, bible scholars, church family and friends**, the words “Thank you” are not enough – so I’ll just say, “May God forever bless you.”

- **Mary M. Heggie**

**New Providence Missionary Baptist Church, Fuquay Varina, North Carolina**

# THE STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION 1-3

## *Moving Toward Hope*

### GENERAL OUTLINE AND OVERVIEW

**January 12th – March 2, 2022 (8 Week Study of Revelation Chapters 1-3)**

1. Introduction (Revelation 1:1-20)
2. Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7)
3. Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11)
4. Pergamum (Revelation 2:12-17)
5. Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29)
6. Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6)
7. Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13)
8. Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22)

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#### **Resources/Used for Bible Study Only:**

Keener, Craig. @*Craig Keener, online course on the Book of Revelation*. Thru the Bible Commentary, Vol. 26: Daniel. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991.) New King James Version (NKJV)

(Cromwell, George, *The Exceptional Jesus*, Pendium Publishing House; 514-201 Daniels Street, Raleigh, NC 27605. The Holy Bible, New King James Version (NKJV) @ 1982

## **THE BOOK OF REVELATION CHAPTERS 1-3**

*“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”*

### **MOVING TOWARD HOPE**

#### **The Seven Churches of Revelation: Why They Matter and What We Can Learn**

The book of Revelation opens with seven letters to seven churches. Each of the seven letters is a prophetic word from Jesus, through the Spirit, who is inspiring John to write.

Who were the recipients of these letters? How were they read and understood in the first century? And what are we to make of them today?

#### **Where were the seven churches located?**

Before we look at these letters as a whole, let’s briefly look at the seven cities where the recipients lived.

#### **1. Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7)**

A messenger coming from Patmos—where John wrote—would reach Ephesus first, so Ephesus makes sense as the first letter. Ephesus was also a prominent city in the province: more powerful than Pergamum politically, and more favored than Smyrna for the imperial cult.

The letter to Ephesus warns against false teachers and evil in the world and admonishes for having forsaken their first love.

#### **2. Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11)**

For three centuries Smyrna had been one of the most important cities in Asia Minor. Jesus’ message to Smyrna highlights contrasts: the one “who is the First and the Last,” who was dead but came to life, speaks to those who are impoverished yet rich, persecuted by those who claim to be Jews but are not, and will, like Jesus, find life in death.

#### **3. Pergamum (Revelation 2:12-17)**

Pergamum was a famous city that had long prospered. It included between 120,000 and 200,000 inhabitants. The citizens of Pergamum had the foresight to take the lead in joining

Rome to defeat the other kings of the eastern Mediterranean, thereby securing for themselves special favor.

#### **4. Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29)**

If Ephesian Christians were tempted by rigidity and lovelessness, Smyrnaean Christians by persecution, and Pergamum's Christians by persecution and prophets of compromise, economic pressures were inviting compromise on the part of Thyatira's Christians.

#### **5. Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6)**

This letter addresses Sardis, a "dead" church.

Jesus' oracle to Ephesus challenges a loveless church; his oracle to Smyrna encourages a persecuted church; his oracle to Pergamum addresses both persecution and compromise; his oracle to Thyatira challenges compromise. But Jesus' word to Sardis summons a sleeping church to wake up.

#### **6. Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13)**

The Philadelphian church had only a "little strength," but has proved successful in standing in that strength. Although closer in location to Sardis, the Philadelphian Christians' situation resembles that of their fellow believers in Smyrna, roughly sixty miles to the west.

#### **7. Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22)**

Perhaps the most well-known of the seven letters addresses the church in Laodicea.

Laodicea lay in Phrygia's Lycus Valley, ten miles west of Colosse and six miles south of Hierapolis. Pagan worship, especially of Zeus but also of numerous other deities flourished there.

We know from Acts 13:14–50 and 14:15 that a significant Jewish community lived in and around Laodicea. However, they seem to have blended into Greek culture in many respects. We know this because, by the third century, illustrations on some coins had mixed together Jewish and pagan versions of the Flood stories.

Laodicea boasted great resources but had a poor water supply. Ancient sources state that it was full of sediment, and excavation of the city's terra cotta pipes reveal thick lime deposits, which suggest heavy contamination. Because Laodicea had to pipe in its water, it grew lukewarm by the time of its arrival.

The point of lukewarm water is simply that it is disgusting, in contrast to the more directly useful "hot" and "cold" water.

Jesus thus finds the church in Laodicea to be other than what he desires (cf. Isa. 5:2–6). In today’s English, he is telling the self-satisfied church in Laodicea: “I want water that will refresh me, but you remind me instead of the water you always complain about.”

All the churches would plainly understand this warning.

### **Historical context of letters in the ancient world**

The book of Revelation would have been carried by travelers or (in this case) personal messengers. This is because no public postal service existed—apart from those tasked with carrying messages regarding the official business of the empire.

The letters to the seven churches are “prophetic letters.” We have numerous examples of this kind of writing:

1. We see it **elsewhere in the Bible**, such as 2 Chronicles 21:12–15 and Jeremiah 29.
2. We see it in **early Jewish literature**, including 2 Bar. 77:17–19, 78–87; Ep. Jer. 1.
3. We also see it in some **ancient Near Eastern sources**, such as the Mari letters.

These letters also bear some resemblance to “ancient royal and imperial edicts.” They resemble even more closely the biblical format of oracles concerning various peoples. We find instances of these in Isa. 13–23; Jer. 46–51; Ezek. 25–32; Amos 1–2.

### **How are each of the seven letters structured?**

Each letter follows a similar pattern:

- To the angel of the church in each city, write:
- Jesus (depicted in glory, often in terms from 1:13–18) says:
- I know (in most instances offers some praise)
- But I have this against you (offers some reproof, where applicable)
- The one who has ears must pay attention to what the Spirit says
- Eschatological promise<sup>6</sup>

That the message is from Jesus, following the same form as oracles in the Old Testament, plainly implies Jesus’ deity.

### **How were the letters received?**

Now that we know how the letters were written and structured, let’s look at how the churches would have read and received them.

Some commentators have noted that the churches are each invited to read the others' mail. This interpretive principle is implied clearly enough in the text: Each church is called to hear "what the Spirit says to the churches" (note the plural).

This would have been somewhat embarrassing to members of the churches addressed most harshly.

To what degree are the messages to the churches distinctive, and to what degree should they be read as samples of what is addressed to all the churches? There is surely a sense in which each church receives the letter appropriate to it. In the early twentieth century William Ramsay (and more recently Colin Hemer) emphasized how the message to each church resembles what we know of the cities in which the churches existed.

Yet each church also receives the *entire* book of Revelation.

- Like all John's audience (1:3; 13:9; 22:17), each church must "**hear**," common enough language in both Jewish and Greek ethical exhortations; the expression likely echoes Jesus' original teachings (Mark 4:9).
- Each church is also summoned to "**overcome**," which implies endurance in the coming trial depicted in much of the book (Rev. 21:7); the invitation probably also suggests the term's nuance of "conquer," especially if believers appear as God's end-time army.
- Each church shares the **hope** promised to the other churches; when the churches have heard this through to the end, they will recognize that the promises to all the churches are fulfilled in the book's closing vision of the coming world (see Revelation 21–22).

The basic principle for applying these letters to ourselves and others today thus seems to be: If the shoe fits, wear it.

**To whatever degree our lives or churches reflect symptoms similar to any of the churches the risen Lord addresses in these letters, we must take heed to "what the Spirit says to the churches."**

**What do the letters tell us about the seven churches in Revelation?**

That the letters to the seven churches often betray characteristics of the cities in which these churches flourished reminds us how easily churches can reflect the values of their culture if we do not remain vigilant against those values.

Such parallels are noted at relevant points in the commentary, but one of Ramsay's other observations should be summarized here:

- The two cities that are now completely uninhabited belong to two of the churches most severely rebuked (Sardis and Laodicea).
- The two cities that held out longest before the Turkish conquest are the only two churches fully praised (Smyrna and Philadelphia).
- The city of Ephesus was later literally moved to a site about three kilometers from where it was in John's day, just as the church was threatened with removal from its place (2:5).<sup>25</sup>

Such parallels may be coincidence, but they might also illustrate a pattern in history: The church, no matter how powerless in each society, is a guardian of its culture.

Given the high degree of assimilation of North American Christians to our culture's values—more time spent on entertainment than on witness, more money spent on our comfort than on human need—the prognosis for the society is not good.

When pagans charged that Rome fell because of its conversion to Christianity, Augustine responded that it fell rather because its sins were piled as high as heaven and because the commitment of most of its Christian population remained too shallow to restrain God's wrath. Naturally we recognize that not all suffering reflects judgment; but some does, especially on the societal level. Is Western Christianity genuinely different enough from our cultures to delay God's judgment on our societies?

*@Craig Keener, online course on the book of Revelation.*



# Revelation 1

## New King James Version

### Introduction and Benediction

**1** The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must <sup>[a]</sup>shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John, **2** who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. **3** Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.

### Greeting the Seven Churches

**4** John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, **5** and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who <sup>[b]</sup>loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, **6** and has made us <sup>[c]</sup>kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**7** Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

**8** “I am the Alpha and the Omega, <sup>[d]</sup>*the* Beginning and *the* End,” says the <sup>[e]</sup>Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

### Vision of the Son of Man

**9** I, John, <sup>[f]</sup>both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. **10** I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind

me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> saying, <sup>[g]</sup>“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches <sup>[h]</sup>which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. <sup>14</sup> His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; <sup>15</sup> His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; <sup>16</sup> He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength. <sup>17</sup> And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying <sup>[i]</sup>to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. <sup>18</sup> *I am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of <sup>[j]</sup>Hades and of Death. <sup>19</sup> <sup>[k]</sup>Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. <sup>20</sup> The <sup>[l]</sup>mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the <sup>[m]</sup>angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands <sup>[n]</sup>which you saw are the seven churches.

## Revelation 2

### New King James Version

#### Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7)

##### The Loveless Church

**2** “To the <sup>[a]</sup>angel of the church of Ephesus write,

‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: <sup>2</sup>“I know your works, your labor, your <sup>[b]</sup>patience, and that you cannot <sup>[c]</sup>bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they

are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; <sup>3</sup>and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. <sup>4</sup>Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. <sup>5</sup>Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. <sup>6</sup>But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

<sup>7</sup>“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’

## **Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11) –**

### **The Persecuted Church**

<sup>8</sup>“And to the <sup>[d]</sup>angel of the church in Smyrna write,

‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: <sup>9</sup>“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and *I know* the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a <sup>[e]</sup>synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup>Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

<sup>11</sup>“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’

## **Pergamum (Revelation 2:12-17)**

### **The Compromising Church**

<sup>12</sup>“And to the <sup>[f]</sup>angel of the church in Pergamos write,

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: <sup>13</sup>“I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne *is*. And you hold fast to My name, and did not

deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. <sup>14</sup> But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, <sup>[g]</sup> which thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

<sup>17</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*.” ’

## **Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29)**

### **The Corrupt Church**

<sup>18</sup> “And to the <sup>[h]</sup> angel of the church in Thyatira write,

‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: <sup>19</sup> “I know your works, love, <sup>[i]</sup> service, faith, and your <sup>[j]</sup> patience; and *as* for your works, the last *are* more than the first. <sup>20</sup> Nevertheless I have <sup>[k]</sup> a few things against you, because you allow <sup>[l]</sup> that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, <sup>[m]</sup> to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> And I gave her time to <sup>[n]</sup> repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. <sup>22</sup> Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of <sup>[o]</sup> their deeds. <sup>23</sup> I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches <sup>[p]</sup> the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

<sup>24</sup> “Now to you I say, <sup>[q]</sup> and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I <sup>[r]</sup> will put on you no other

burden. <sup>25</sup> But hold fast what you have till I come. <sup>26</sup> And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—

<sup>27</sup> ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron;  
They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—

as I also have received from My Father; <sup>28</sup> and I will give him the morning star.

<sup>29</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

## Revelation 3 New King James Version

### Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6)

#### The Dead Church

**3** “And to the <sup>[a]</sup>angel of the church in Sardis write,

‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. <sup>2</sup> Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before <sup>[b]</sup>God. <sup>3</sup> Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. <sup>4</sup> <sup>[c]</sup>You have a few names <sup>[d]</sup>even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. <sup>5</sup> He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

<sup>6</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

### Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13)

## The Faithful Church

<sup>7</sup>“And to the <sup>[e]</sup>angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”’: <sup>8</sup>“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, <sup>[f]</sup>and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. <sup>9</sup>Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. <sup>10</sup>Because you have kept <sup>[g]</sup>My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. <sup>11</sup><sup>[h]</sup>Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. <sup>12</sup>He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him My new name.*

<sup>13</sup>“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

## Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22)

### The Lukewarm Church

<sup>14</sup>“And to the <sup>[i]</sup>angel of the church <sup>[j]</sup>of the Laodiceans write,

‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: <sup>15</sup>“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. <sup>16</sup>So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither <sup>[k]</sup>cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. <sup>17</sup>Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— <sup>18</sup>I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. <sup>19</sup>As many

as I love, I rebuke and chasten.<sup>[1]</sup> Therefore be <sup>[m]</sup>zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. <sup>21</sup> To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

<sup>22</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’

## **QUIZZES FOR STUDY**

### **Quiz for Introduction and Ephesus**

1. To whom did Christ give the Revelation?
  2. Where was John when he was given the Revelation? Why was he there?
  3. What is the name of the connecting route between the churches?
  4. What do the seven stars that Christ holds in his right hand represent?
- What does the name, Ephesus, mean?
6. Which one of the Seven Wonders of the World was at Ephesus?
  7. What other name was Ephesus known by and why?
  8. Why was this period of the church history that Ephesus represented desirable?
  9. For what did Christ commend the church at Ephesus?
  10. Who were the Nicolaitans?
  11. What was the complaint Christ had against the church at Ephesus?
  12. What church period does Ephesus represent?

### **Quiz for Smyrna**

1. For what was the city of Smyrna famous?
2. With what term was Smyrna synonymous?
3. What was Christ's message to the church?
4. Smyrna would usher in what "Age"?
5. Approximately how many Christians were martyred in Smyrna during its time of persecution?
6. According to some Bible scholars, a day in prophetic time equals what?
7. Under whose rule did the worst persecution take place?
8. What church period does Smyrna cover?



**Quiz for Pergamum**

1. What does the name, Pergamum (Pergamos KJV) mean?
2. What was invented at Pergamum and why?
3. Who fled to the city and set up a pagan religion?
4. What union took place during this church period?
5. Who was martyred?
6. What was Christ's complaint against this church?
7. What did the black and white stones signify?
8. What time period did the Pergamum Church cover?
9. What did Christ call for the church at Pergamum to do?

**Quiz for Thyatira**

1. What were the leading industries in Thyatira?
2. Why was the city captured, destroyed, and rebuilt many times?
3. What does the name, Thyatira, mean?
4. What did the church of Thyatira become known as?
5. For what did Christ commend the church?
6. What was Christ's complaint against the church?
7. To whom is the "morning star" a reference?
8. This church age was also known as what "Age"?
9. Who were two early Reformers?
10. What did each of the Reformers do?
11. What church period did Thyatira cover?

**Quiz for Sardis**

1. For what was Sardis famous?
2. Why was Sardis captured?
3. What is the meaning of Sardis?

4. Sardis was also known as the city of \_\_\_\_\_. Why?
5. What time period does Sardis represent?
6. Who were some of the famous Reformers of this period?
7. What was Christ's complaint against this church?
8. What happened to the Reformation?
9. Who were the leaders that began the revivals to carry the Reformation forward?
10. What promise was made to the faithful remnant in Sardis?

### **Quiz for Philadelphia**

1. What kind of city was Philadelphia known as?
2. What other name was Philadelphia known as?
3. Why was Philadelphia the keeper of the key to the gateway to the eastern highlands?
4. How did Christ introduce himself to the Philadelphians?
5. What did the message to Philadelphia reveal about its spiritual condition?
6. What happened to many of the churches founded by early Reformers?
7. Who were some of the missionaries during this period?
8. What became an essential part of the program for World Evangelism?
9. What movement was organized about this time?
10. The great revival in Christian love and study of the prophecies in the Bible by all religious circles was known as the \_\_\_\_\_ Movement.
11. What church period did Philadelphia cover?

### **Quiz for Laodicea**

1. The city of Laodicea was a leading banking center and a trade center for what kind of wool?
2. What else was Laodicea famous for and why?
3. What kind of springs was Laodicea noted for? Would you want to drink water from these springs?
4. What does "Laodicea" mean?

5. What happened there in 364 C. E.?
6. This is the only place in the Bible that this name “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” is used as a name for the deity.
7. How does Christ introduce himself to the Laodiceans?

## **CONTRIBUTORS:**

**Dr. Craig S. Keener**, Professor of Biblical Studies, Ethnic/racial Reconciliation

Education: B.A., Central Bible College (now part of Evangel University), 1982, M.A., M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (now of Evangel University), 1985, 1987, Ph.D., Duke University, 1991

Before coming to Asbury in July 2011, Dr. Keener was professor of New Testament at Palmer Theological Seminary of Eastern University, where he taught for 15 years; before that time, he was professor at Hood Theological Seminary.

Craig has authored 34 books, six of which have won book awards in Christianity Today, of which altogether more than one million copies are in circulation. His *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (1993), now in its 2nd revised edition (2014), has sold more than half a million copies (including editions in several languages, including more than fifty thousand copies in Korean). The *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*, for which Craig authored most of the New Testament notes (and which John Walton and Craig edited), won Bible of the Year in the 2017 Christian Book Awards, and also won Book of the Year in the Religion: Christianity category of the International Book Awards.

Craig is married to Médine Moussounga Keener, who holds a Ph.D. from University of Paris 7. She was a refugee for 18 months in her nation of Congo (their story together appears in the book *Impossible Love*, Chosen Books, 2016), and together Craig and Médine work for ethnic reconciliation in the U.S. and Africa. Craig was ordained in an African-American denomination in 1991 and for roughly a decade before moving to Wilmore was one of the associate ministers in an African-American megachurch in Philadelphia. In recent years he has taught in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and in connection with various denominations. Craig and **Médine Keener**, Asbury Seminary faculty and staff, write and speak on the issues of racism, ethnicity and reconciliation in Africa and the U.S.

**Rev. George T. Cromwell Sr.**  
**Noted Christian Author, Speaker, Prolific Pastor**

Pastor George Taylor Cromwell is an experienced pastor and author who has forged his place in the Body of Christ with his unique pastoral leadership and literary scholarship. He possesses a wealth of knowledge that he has gained from his study of God's Word. "He is a Student of God's Word." Cromwell has authored numerous books including: *The Exceptional Jesus*; *Flames of Fire*, which are both in circulation and high demand.

*The Exceptional Jesus* demonstrates God calling His church to return to Him, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Over the years the body of believers, the church, has in many ways lost itself and forgotten its purposes for which God designed it. Some of the ways are obvious to us how the church has strayed from God. Some of the ways we have lost our direction are not obvious and known to us. From the known and unknown ways, we are where we are, God our Father is drawing us back to Himself. The Holy Spirit of God is inspiring us to return to His Word, to the basic principles upon which the Christian Church was established in preaching and teaching the sure gospel of the Cross, the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus Christ.

*The Exceptional Jesus* focuses on the loving and gracious power of God in His work in the lives of the laity and the church in reconciling us and loving us. Using biblical characters and his experiences, George T. Cromwell discusses the merciful, gracious and loving strategies and methods of The Holy Spirit to give us victory in spiritual warfare and in our lives.

Reverend George T. Cromwell began his ministry at the age of nineteen at the Eastern Star Baptist Church in Tarboro, North Carolina. He attended Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina and holds a Master of Divinity Degree from Shaw University School of Divinity in Raleigh, North Carolina.

A pastor for over Twenty-four years, Reverend Cromwell recently retired as pastor of Barnes Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina. He expresses his love for God, the Christian church, and the children of God in effective teaching and preaching of God's word.

Reverend Cromwell has served as an Adjunct Professor at Shaw School of Divinity and taught in North Carolina public schools for twenty-eight years. As a Special Educator, teaching school was a ministry for him from which he retired.

The proud father of one son and two daughters, Reverend Cromwell has six grandchildren. He lives with his wife, Gail in Garner, North Carolina where he enjoys reading and playing Scrabble.