

# Key West Church of God

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Dear Friends,

If I ask what you thought the greatest sign of the coming Rapture of the church is, I am sure the answer would include things like Israel, Russia, Iran, peace treaty, wars and rumors of war. All are signs that get our attention. These are the signs of the Seven-Year Tribulation. The reason we tie them to the Rapture is because we understand that the Rapture of the church comes before the Tribulation.

**There is a more personal sign for the Christian.** It is the Church of Laodicea. The Book of Revelation is a prophetic book from front to back. It is given to the church for one reason, Rev 1:1 KJV “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, **to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass . . .**” God gave the Revelation to show His servants the events of the future in their order. Often overlooked and mostly ignored are the messages given to the seven churches.

Each message is a pointed prophecy revealing the history of a church age in advance. Seven actual local churches existing in John’s day were chosen as types of shadows of what was to come. The pastor (angel) of each church represents the ministry type of that age. Six church ages have come fulfilling their individual messages to the smallest detail. Laodicea is before us fulfilling to the last detail what was written concerning her.

**The church of Laodicea is the forgotten sign.** Observe just a few of the words (Rev. 3:14-22) used to reveal Laodicea’s condition and relationship with Jesus, “lukewarm,” “spue thee out,” “knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, shame of thy nakedness, rebuke and chasten,” “repent!” Nothing good is said about this church or pastor. The closing verse of Laodicea’s message shows the final relationship of that church and ministry with Jesus on the outside, knocking on the door. The final age of Christianity is rejected by Jesus Christ because he is simply not in it.

**Vital and important questions must be asked,** starting with where in the world is the “church of the Laodiceans?” How do we identify the Angel (pastor) of the church of Laodicea? He is the agent who has created this very dangerous environment. How did he create such deplorable conditions?

If you look around and just simply cannot identify Laodicea, perhaps the old idiom “he couldn’t see the forest for the trees,” would be useful. It seems that the Laodicean pastor was unaware he was in the forest of “Lukewarmness.” He had his eyes on the trees of prosperity, increases and attendance records. Rev 3:17 “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not . . .” He was totally unaware of his true condition. He could not see the Laodicean forest because he was one of the trees, which is rather frightening. Is it possible that you are having trouble seeing Laodicea because you are apart of it?

In the study of the Seven Churches it appears that the leading personalities that founded each age came

from the proceeding age. Example, The Church of Thyatira was and is the Roman Catholic church. Martin Luther was a Catholic minister. He is the leading personality of the Sardis church, the Reformation Movement. John Wesley, an Anglican Priest and a member of Sardis, was one of the leading personalities of the Philadelphian Church. It would stand to reason that the leading personalities of Laodicea will have come from men and women who began as Philadelphian.

Because of their past and heritage of coming from Philadelphian ancestors, they may have assumed that in itself was a guarantee that they would always be members of Philadelphia. They were unaware that they could not take liberties in removing necessary elements which define the Philadelphian experience with what they called “structural changes” to the worship and methods, without giving birth to the Laodicea experience.

To find Laodicea, it might be helpful to understand what it is not. It is not Philadelphian. Look at the words and phrases laced throughout the letter to Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7-13) to get the nature of this church, “holy,” “true,” “hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name,” “to know that I have loved thee,” “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation.” Not one negative word toward Philadelphia, not one positive word toward Laodicea. One is embraced and the other rejected!

With Philadelphia, their love for Jesus is the cause for everything they do, and their love for Jesus is the cause of everything Jesus does with and through them. For Laodicea, on the other hand, Jesus is the excuse and not the cause for all they do. He is not in or apart of their efforts. Their love is lukewarm. There is a fondness for Jesus. They have been able to use Him to increase their numbers, wealth and things wealth buys, “Rev 3:17 “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;”

**I feel that I must repeat our vital question - Where in the world is the “church of the Laodiceans?”**

Is it important to know the answer? If you want to be in God’s will, it is vital. If you are planning to go in the Rapture of the church, you will want to avoid the pitfalls of Laodicean Theology. It is important because the Spirit of God wants you to know it. Rev 3:22 KJV “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

When God’s Word deals with any subject, it does not just deal with it once. With something of this importance, you can be sure there is additional information. The message is repeated several times coming from different angles, each adding texture until the reader has a complete understanding. The subject is repeated again from a different angle. Does God want you to be able to identify Laodicea? The answer is found in the following passage.

1Ti 4:1-2 KJV “Now **the Spirit speaketh expressly**, that in the latter times some shall **depart from the faith**, giving heed to **seducing spirits**, and **doctrines of devils**; **(2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;**” Sometimes in prophecy God will speak in such a way that things are hidden, but this God wanted in the open. He wants it understood. When will Laodicea come into being, “In the latter times,” which is the same as saying the “end times,” that is the time just before the Rapture of the Church. If this is Laodicea’s time, we should be able to spot her and not be swept by her net.

We see the steps taken. Step one, **departing from the faith**. How is that done? You could replace the faith with a different faith that does not seem to be what is happening here. It is more like though still considering themselves Christians, but their time was no longer spent studying and preaching the

doctrines of the Christian faith, as Philadelphia had done. They have found something else to give their time too. This sounds like the “Seeker Friendly” or “Church Growth Movement.” Their time is used up in studying culture, methods and means for entrapping the catch. The Bible conference has been replaced with church growth conferences. Recently, I received an invitation to a church growth conference. I was to be taught how to become a “Cultural Master.” That sounds an awful lot like what Satan tried to do to Jesus when he took Him to the top of the mountain and offered Him the kingdoms of this world. All He had to do was fall down and worship the spirit of the World (Satan), the creator of the culture.

The second element I saw was the “**seducing spirits.**” This is a teacher whom Satan uses to offer guaranteed success if you will follow his method of taking advantage of the culture. Whatever you use will end up controlling you, until you are the one being used. Be very careful who you make your friend. Jam 4:4 KJV “. . . know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a **friend of the world is the enemy of God.**” It is the same kind of spirit that tempted Eve in the garden. In a short simple conversation, Satan gave Eve a paradigm shift. He rewired her. She turned from the old truth of loving and trusting God, to pride and using God for her own kingdom.

This is the experience of the young struggling Philadelphian pastor who has been drawn into “Seduction Cathedral.” He is having trouble competing with the entertainment program of his neighbour Laodicea. So he is open to a better way. The Reverend Seduction begins to sell the program, stating, “I was just like you, struggling hard. I could only get ten people to come, but that’s when I found the ‘Increased Church Growth Program,’ my church grew to 25,000!” The young pastor becomes hypnotized as he swallows “doctrines of demons.” They are subtle, well-crafted lies, pulling him away from the direction of the Holy Ghost. He is now giving his time to cultural studies and surveys. He restructures the church worship to make friends with the world. Over organized he has been separated from the spontaneity of the Holy Spirit. Life has left his church and ministry.

This is the most disastrous change of all. He is now being encouraged to move his preaching to the next level. Just so happened that for a small fee he can download and print culturally tested messages, guaranteed to get results. They come with preprinted bulletin inserts and PowerPoints. Save money, buy the series! Next level! They didn’t tell him which level. How about the lower level, so low that they descend into hell along with anyone feeding on them!

**“Speaking lies in hypocrisy;” what exactly does that mean?** Vine’s New Testament Dictionary tells us what hypocrisy is - “playacting,” as the actors spoke in dialogue; hence, “pretense.” They are just acting like they are preaching. They have now become counterfeit preachers preaching a counterfeit Gospel. This requires that they override the conviction of the Holy Ghost and reject the warnings of the Word of God, “having their conscience seared with a hot iron.” That is what happened to Pastor Laodicean, “not knowing, blind and naked.” It seems that his hearing was not very good. He seems to have had trouble hearing Jesus knocking on his door.

**Jesus has left us another passage full of clues** concerning Laodicea. It is found in Matthew chapter seven. Our warning starts here, Mat 7:13-14 KJV “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” What we have here is the beginning of a study and comparison of the last two of our seven churches, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Philadelphia is the straight and narrow way. That is what truth is. It is straight and narrow. How did Philadelphia get that way? Jesus who is holy and the embodiment of truth tells us how Philadelphia got that way, “Rev 3:8 . . . hast kept my word.” The church growth specialists would declare Philadelphia an unhealthy church. Only a few enter and attend. Never mind that those who enter

in find eternal life.

When you try to move the truth around in any direction, you create the broad-road. Truth by nature is narrow. Here we see Laodicea, the mega-church, “for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.” Not every church that has a large attendance is Laodicea. Some got their crowd the old fashion way, preaching the Gospel. Who caused the Broadway church? The answer is in the warnings Jesus will give to both churches, Mat 7:15 KJV “**Beware of false prophets**, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” They come appearing as one of the flock, cloaked in innocence garb, assuming the appearance of sanctity and innocence, while their hearts are evil. They want to devour the sheep, rustle them from any other pastor’s herd. A common tactic is what is called “rebranding.” Out west a “rebrander” was a cattle rustler. It is a little difficult to build up your herd if you have a few rebranders around!

Mat 7:21 KJV “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” **There are times when the debate is not right or wrong, but is it God’s will or not?** Philadelphia is God’s way. It is the way of the Spirit; it is the way of the Word of God. Laodicea is not God’s way. It is the way of the flesh; it is the way of death and destruction. Only those who do the will of God will enter into Heaven. Being in the will of God is the only way to be ready for the Rapture!

Jesus bears down on the last point, Mat 7:22-23 KJV “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied **in thy name?** and **in thy name** have cast out devils? and **in thy name** done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

What day is he talking about? It is the Rapture, and we are looking at the Laodicean ministry. They did not go! It was a shock to them. Jesus has been the excuse for all they have done. They repeat “in thy name” three times. He was the excuse, he was not the cause of what they had done. Don’t get caught in their web. If you do, you are going to hear these words, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” The plain English is called for here, “I was not a part of what you did. I did not sire it. I did not spawn this. You did this on your own. You used my name, my church, and you conned my people to build your kingdom. All that you accomplished became a pile of trespass and iniquity! What a sharp rebuke and warning! Did not Jesus tell Laodicea, Rev 3:19 KJV “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

**There is an addendum to this parallel that should be heeded.** Mat 7:24 KJV “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:” The wise man builds his house on the Word of God. While the entirety of God’s Word is a rock we must build on, it is this message He has just given them that He is emphasizing. He warns of a coming storm, only the man who builds on the rock will have his house stand. The man who has built on the rock is the Pastor of Philadelphia. The other man, the pastor of Laodicea, builds upon sands of surveys, programs and entertainment. The storm will totally destroy his house. That storm is the Seven-Year Tribulation. That is the destruction the broad road leads to. If you let the numbers lead you, destruction will await you.

There is one more place we must look to understand who Laodicea is and what she is. Perhaps we will

find more of the answers we are looking for in Matthew chapter 13. In this chapter Jesus will give us seven parables. Each parable will correspond with one of the seven churches. It is the last one that deserves our attention, for it is the parallel to Laodicea. It is the parable of the Net.



Mat 13:47-50 KJV “Again, the kingdom of heaven **is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:** Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

It is amazing that Jesus with his foreknowledge will choose an ancient fishing net to illustrate the **InterNET Church of Laodicea**. Look at the ancient fishing net. It has a cell structure. Everything is woven into cells connected to each other to make the net escape proof. In ancient times it required teams of men to be organized to pull the net. The net required a captain if pulled from the boat. If it was being pulled from the land, someone was in charge. To have a good catch, someone would survey the culture of the water and fish. This knowledge would be used against the fish. The waters would often be chummed with the favorite food of the fish. While they are caught up in a feeding frenzy, the team would sneak upon the fish entrapping the unfortunate victims, dragging them in the net to certain death. The net would be dragged upon the shore. The fish are removed from the life-giving waters. Now they lay on the sand entangle in the cell structure of the net, gasping for air, flopping in a death struggle.

There the team members sort the catch, some are considered good and put in baskets, while others are considered bad and are thrown away to rot. Several questions come to my mind. 1. Whom does the net benefit? It is certain that nothing caught in the net will get anything more than death. 2. What makes one fish good and another bad? They were all good when created by God and a part of the balance of nature. Now that they have been forced into the kingdom of men built upon the sand, their value is rated by what they have brought to the net. If they bring money to the men of the net, they are good. If not, they are trash to be cast aside. 3. Is there a single creature in that net who came of their own free will? Notice that this net does nothing to change the nature of the fish. This net does not even change the nature of the captain of Laodicea, Rev 3:17 “. . . thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:”

It all looks familiar. Laodicea’s character and nature are taking shape right before our eyes. **The InterNET church** world is being woven into cells, cells that are knitted into an escape-proof net. Teams are structured to pull that net. The culture of the location is surveyed and analyzed until it is known what kind of chum the people of the world cannot resist. Resisting the **InterNET church** is a difficult struggle. With the internet and cell phone technology in hand, the **NET church** builds by flooding the environment with endless emails, robo texts and calls urging the believer into to the net culture, so much so, it becomes an oppressive atmosphere. It is no wonder that Jesus gave this warning to the Philadelphia pastor. Rev 3:11 KJV “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

The fishing experience of the Philadelphian pastor is quite different from his Big Net Laodicean

neighbor. He is a single hook, catch and release guy. He is not in it to make money off of the fish. He is working for the salvation of the fish. He uses just one kind of bait. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was the same bait that rescued him from the polluted waters of the sinful sea. Mar 16:15-16 KJV “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and **preach the gospel to every creature**. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” The fish of this sea were created with freewill. It is one fish at a time, each must decide to take the gospel bait of their own freewill. Philadelphian depends on a partnership with God to catch his fish. Joh 6:44 KJV “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me **draw him**: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

When the fish drawn by his creator willingly takes the bait, he is drawn out of the pollution of the waters of death and gently released into the water of life. That water of life flows through him and around him, he is a transformed fish. He remains a free moral agent serving God out of choice. Joh 4:14 KJV “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

The catch is getting smaller for the Philadelphian. It is understandable when someone brings a giant net and sweeps most of the fish right out of your fishing spot, the attendance to your hook is bound to drop. If you identify with Philadelphia and are tempted to drop your pole and run off to a “How to weave a net class,” hang onto that pole. God is in that pole and not to be found in the net.

**A final note**, the parable of the net tells us that when the net has come, society as we know it will end and the Tribulation will be upon the world. The Rapture will happen as angels sever the wicked from the good. Laodicea is separated from the Raptured Bride of Christ and left for the Tribulation, Mat 13:49-50 “So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” The church of the InterNET built upon the sand, had a great fall. The tribulation with its nuclear war will be a place of wailing!

**Not long ago I experienced two dreams.** They were very disturbing to me. I wanted to cast them off as indigestion from a late night pizza. The first came, it woke me out of a dead sleep, I was troubled by it. It was too early in the morning to get up. So I fell back asleep and a second dream came. It was different but had the same message, it also troubled me. I tried to cast them both off but they would not go. I felt that I should share them with you.

**Dream one** - My dream opens with me dressed in a business suit like I wear to my pulpit. I am with my African minister friends. We are walking through an airport. Everybody was happy and laughing. Somehow I got ahead of my friends. In my journey through the concourse there is a table with a meal set and friendly people waving for me to come over. They had prepared something special for me. Though I was in a hurry I did not want to seem rude so I set down at the table.

My next conscious thought finds me stumbling back to the concourse. It felt like I was coming to from being drugged. I look down and discover I am no longer dressed in my business suit complete with a necktie. In its place is some kind of leisure suit with a large collar shirt opened to the third button. I am very shocked and scared. In real life I would never wear such a thing. My memories are gone from the event. I wondered had they drugged me and removed my clothes, putting this monkey suit on me? I check for my wallet, I pulled it open, my drivers licence, credit cards and money are all gone. I have lost my identity, now what am I going to do? About that time my African friends caught up with me. Where

were you? How did you get separated from us? They could tell something was very wrong with me.

The dream woke me. I was troubled. Before I rehearse the second dream, I will tell you what I feel the interpretation is. The airport concourse is the journey of life and ministry. The plane I am trying to catch is the Rapture Express. My African friends represent my radio ministry and mission endeavor. They have been my daily companions in this journey. The table and the people inviting me to the meal belong to Laodicea. Under their influence I lost my consciousness, they took control of me. I was powerless to resist them. They changed me. My identity was changed. The reward for fifty years of ministry was gone, my crown had been taken from me. Now I stood a very good chance of missing my flight.

**The Second Dream** - My dream starts with me driving a truck pulling a 40<sup>th</sup> fifth wheel up a narrow mountain road. There were bumps in the road but I was heading for the top of the mountain. It was the same rig that I had driven in my evangelistic days. There is someone standing at the roadside waving me down. He was standing at the mouth of a freshly made tunnel. It was broad. It looks to be at least four lanes wide. My new friend said come this way. We have made it easier for you. I left my evangelistic rig behind and began traveling by foot. I remember thinking this is nice. As I journeyed, it got smaller, then corkscrewed downward. I began to feel claustrophobic. Its smoothness was gone, and it came to a sudden dead end. My last thoughts in the dream were, what a waste of time. I have got to get back to my rig.

Again I was troubled. I had just had a double witness from God warning me about the broad road that leads to destruction. I was shown how even I, yes me, an ordained minister, could lose my grip on God's fishing pole and slip into the net of death. It made me want to grip my crown in such a fashion that no man would ever get me out of Philadelphia.

If you have been seduced out of Philadelphia, return as quickly as possible. Jesus is coming quickly! Rev 3:13 KJV He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

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Your Friend in Christ,

Raymond L. Shockley

**The message of the Month - "The Thought That Made a Good Servant Evil"** - Mat 24:40-44. This message is an audio of the written message of the newsletter. Another layer of Laodicea's onion is peeled off. This is a very vital message that most have completely missed. It is yours for an offering of any size to help our ministry.