

EVIDENCE AGAINST CHURCH ERAS

By Marie Casale
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INTRODUCTION

I am writing this article in response to a booklet located on this website called *Evidence for Eras*.
<http://www.eternalcog.org/ecgbooks/efe/directory.html>

Please read both this article expressing my opinion and also the booklet expressing the opposite view so you can be well informed to righteously judge this issue.

HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF ERAS

This doctrine was said to be invented by the Baptist preacher William Miller (1782-1849).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Miller_\(preacher\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Miller_(preacher))

The original “eras” doctrine that Miller spread had these timings:

Ephesus era - up to 100 AD

Smyrna era - 100 to 312 AD

Pergamos era - 312 to 538 AD

Thyatira era” - 538 to 901 AD (the 10th century)

Sardis era - 901 to 1517 AD (the Reformation)

Philadelphia era - 1517 to 1798 AD

Laodicea era - from 1798 to 1843 AD (According to Miller, Jesus was to return in 1843, so, that year was “the end”.)

Timings according to William Branham (1909-1965)

<http://www.williambranhamhomepage.org/lages.htm>

Ephesus era - 53-170 AD (Paul)

Smyrna era - 179-312 AD (Irenius)

Pergamos era - 312-606 AD (St. Martin)

Thyatira era - 606-1520 AD (Columba)

Sardis era - 1520-1750 AD (Luther)

Philadelphia era - 1750-1906 AD (Wesley)

Laodicea era - 1906-Present (Branham)

One present day Sabbath keeping church gives these timings:

Ephesus era - 31-35 AD (under name Christians)

Smyrna era - 135-450 (under name Nazarines)

Pergamos era - 450-1050 (under name Paulicians)

Thyatira era” - 1050-1600 (under names Vaudois, Insabbati, Albigenses, Waldenses)

Sardis era - 1600-Present (under name Seventh Day Church of God)

Philadelphia era - 1933-Present (under name Worldwide Church of God now among scattered churches of God)

Laodicea era - 1972-Present (scattered with various names)

In comparing the timings, you first notice quite a variation of dates. This shows how preachers have copied the original doctrine and adapted it according to their church's beliefs. Also notice another example that tells us how easy it is to find events in history that seem fit right in with the descriptions in the church letters. The 'open door' of the Philadelphia era is seen by Miller's group as the Reformation which provided an 'open door' leading out of the Catholic Church. The present day Sabbath keepers see the 'open door' as the beginning of the Worldwide Church of God and their being given the ability to preach around the world.

WHAT THE LETTERS DO NOT SAY

One of the fundamental rules of Bible study as I have always heard it is to ask, 'What does the Bible SAY and what does it NOT SAY?' So first, we must see the truth that there is no scripture anywhere saying that the churches in Revelation represent eras. These dates given above can only be speculated and assumed and not proved because there is no scripture that confirms church eras. The scriptures only confirm that these congregations all existed at the same time. Thus, like the other letters in the New Testament, they were addressed to congregations of Christians living at that time, but the lessons in them can apply to Christians in any age of history.

The only church that seems to have good evidence for being in the end-time era is the Philadelphia Church because it is spared from the 'Hour of Temptation' that shall come upon the whole world. We place this church in our era by assuming that this 'Hour of Temptation' is the same thing as the coming 'Great Tribulation' that shall come upon the whole world. But, when you look at these two phrases closely, it is evident that the words, 'Hour of Temptation' and 'Great Tribulation' are not the same words:

The word 'Temptation' is the Greek word 'Peirasmos' that is used in these scriptures as an enticement or a lure.

Mar 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. (Peirasmos) The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

Luk 4:13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, (Peirasmos) he departed from him for a season.

The Greek word for 'Tribulation' is 'Thlipsis' as used in these scriptures:

Mat 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, (thlipsis) such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Rev 7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation' (thlipsis), and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The words 'great tribulation' (Megas Thlipsis) are actually used in the letter to Thyatira referring to the Lord's judgment on the lovers of Jezebel. (Rev 2:22) So if he had intended to save the Philadelphian church from the 'great tribulation' (Megas Thlipsis) of the end time, he would have surely used those words instead of 'hour of temptation'.

Another point about the 'Hour of Temptation' is that a prophetic hour is not the same period of time as the Great Tribulation which continues from the time the Abomination of Desolation is placed until Christ returns, a period of three and a half years. An hour is only a small portion of a day. If a prophetic day represents a year, then an hour might represent a month.

In the context of the first century, the letter to Philadelphia tells us that the 'Hour of Temptation' would be a future event from when John wrote to them from the Island of Patmos - 95-96 AD. At this time under Domitian who reigned from 81-96 AD the worship of the emperor of Rome became compulsory for every Roman citizen on threat of death. The cities of Asia had competed for the privilege of erecting a temple in honor of the emperor. In 29 BC Pergamum was the first to erect a temple and Smyrna the second in 21 AD. Ephesus was the third. To show their allegiance, every citizen was required to burn incense once a year to the emperor and to declare that "Caesar is Lord". He was issued a certificate saying that he had met the imperial requirement and he could then go and worship any god he pleased.

Under Trajan who reigned a short time later from 98-117 AD, we find this documented evidence of Christian persecution. Pliny the Younger was sent by the emperor Trajan between 109 and 111 AD to the province of Bithynia in Anatolia as Governor. Pliny reported to him in a letter on people who had been denounced as Christians. Those who persisted in confessing that they were Christians he had executed or, if Roman citizens, sent to Rome. Those who denied that they were Christians he subjected to the test of invoking the gods, offering them incense and a libation in the presence of an image of the emperor, and cursing Christ. The letter can be found on this site: <http://www.bartleby.com/9/4/2097.html>

So this 'hour of temptation' that the Philadelphians were spared from could have taken place in this persecution sometime in the final year of Domitian or under Trajan in which Christians were brought before magistrates and tempted to deny the name of Jesus. Thus it was said to them that they had a little strength, but did not deny his name.

It is significant that in the letter to each of the churches, Jesus did NOT say, "He that hath wisdom, let him find and understand the era that this church belongs to." Rather, he wanted the individuals in each church to listen to the messages contained in the letters. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

I believe that it is Satan's doing to have us focus attention on what the letters are NOT - a study in historical eras - rather than on what they are - a call to repentance and steadfastness in the faith.

WHAT THE LETTERS DO SAY

Now that we see what the scriptures do NOT SAY about the eras doctrine, the following are things that we can and do know about the letters. We are to Prove (not assume) all things and then hold fast to that which is good. 1Th 5:21

1. We know the letters were meant for each specific church congregation existing at that time because John sent the letters to those churches and also because the letters mention specific events and people existing at that time. For example:

A. The saints in Smyrna were going to suffer ten days of imprisonment and tribulation. John wrote that the devil SHALL (future tense) cast some of you in prison for ten days. So we know this 10-day imprisonment was a future event from the time John wrote (95-96 AD).

* Some who believe in eras place the ten days as the Diocletianic Persecution http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocletianic_Persecution that came upon Christians for a ten-year period from 303 to 313 AD, and ended with the Edict of Milan.

* Some think that John meant persecution over the reign of ten Roman Emperors. The first under Nero, 54 AD; the second under Domitian, 81 AD; the third under Trajan, 98 AD; the fourth under Hadrian, 117AD; the fifth under Septimus Severus, 193 AD; the sixth under Maximin, 235 AD; the seventh under Decius, 249 AD; the eighth under Valerian, 254 AD; the ninth under Aurelian, 270AD; the tenth under Diocletian, 284AD.”

* Some think that in ten days are two hundred and forty hours, which make up the number of years from 85, when the second persecution began, (under which John at this time was) to 325, when all the persecutions ceased.

* Some say that ten days is simply an expression of speech, not to be taken literally, but it is the normal Greek expression for a short time.

* However, since Christ said that the seven golden candlesticks represent the seven churches which ARE (present tense) in Asia, there is no real proof compelling us to believe that ten days means anything other than ten literal days of imprisonment ending in death for some of the Smyrna Christians who at that time under Domitian and Trajan were facing the compulsory worship of the emperor under threat of death.

B. Antipas was a specific person in Pergamos who was martyred. Some who believe in eras identify him with Constantine of Mananah martyred in 681 AD and that the name Antipas is a symbolic name for his being anti-Pope. In the letter to Pergamos John said Antipas had already been martyred (past tense) at the time he sent the letters to the churches. (95-96 AD). So if Antipas was martyred before 95-96 AD, he could not be Constantine of Mananah who was martyred in 681 AD could he? The logical answer here is that Antipas was traditionally believed to be a man ordained by John as Bishop of Pergamos who was martyred during the reign of Domitian in 92 AD. This date fits the past martyrdom of Antipas according to the letter to Pergamos.

C. Jezebel was a specific person in Thyatira who was reprimanded for teaching and seducing Christians to commit fornication. (Rev 2:20) and specifically adultery (Rev 2:22) with her. Some who believe in eras suppose she is symbolic of the Catholic Church who spiritually corrupted members of God’s church during the Middle Ages. But notice in verses 22 and 23 that the Lord promised she would be cast into a (sick) bed, her lovers would be given great tribulation, and her children would be killed. This did not happen to the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages did it? If Thyatira was an era, these promises against the Catholic Church would have taken place in that era.

2. We know the letters were meant for all the churches as a whole because each message concludes with a promise. Each promise is addressed to only one church, but it applies to all of

the churches. For example, it is addressed to Smyrna that those who overcome will not be hurt of the second death. This promise obviously applies to all the churches, not just to Smyrna.

Also proof that the letters were meant for all the churches as a whole is that Jesus instructed the individuals in the churches to pay attention to the messages to all the churches: “Let him that hath an ear hear what the spirit saith unto the CHURCHES”.

3. We know the letters were meant for any Church or Christian in any historical age because they contain general admonitions that could apply to any church or Christian in any historical age. There are churches and Christians in all ages that have lost their first love. There are churches and Christians in all ages that are spiritually dead because they have faith without works. There are churches and Christians in all ages that have a lukewarm attitude. These are all ways that Satan can get his foot in the door of ANY church and into the heart of any Christian. This is why they are for all Christians of all historical ages and we need to pay attention to ALL of them.

This is the main reason it cannot be said that the letters were meant for specific eras. There is no proof that the admonitions to any one church only applied to a specific era or even mainly to a specific era. For example, can you say dogmatically that losing your first love can only apply to the Ephesian Church in the first century and not to other Christians and churches in other ages? No you cannot. Rather, it is evident that the admonitions in each letter, even those addressed to specific people, can serve as examples to Christians in every historical age.

For example, if we someday find ourselves in a situation of imprisonment or facing martyrdom like the Smyrnans or Antipas, we are not to fear what we shall suffer, but be faithful unto death.

Also, as we saw above, even though the words ‘temptation’ and ‘tribulation’ are not the same according to the message to the Philadelphia church, we can still apply the Philadelphia message to ourselves today. Not that we should call ourselves the Philadelphian era, but we can follow the example of the Philadelphians who faithfully kept God’s word and did not deny his name. Here are some scriptures showing how any Christian can deny the Lord:

Pro 30:8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

Pro 30:9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Note: We can deny the Lord by being so full that we do not perceive any need for him.

Mat 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Note: We can deny the Lord by not denying ourselves when called upon to bear crosses.

Mat 26:75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Note: We can deny the Lord by actual denying him or his words in order to save ourselves when put under pressure by society.

Tts 1:16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Note: We can deny the Lord by failing to maintain good works.

These scriptures show how God is judging us. He will reward Christians of any historical age who have a little strength and do not deny his name with an open door of some kind in their lives. Here are two examples of open doors in the scriptures:

Luk 13:25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

Note: This is the door of the Kingdom of God that God will open to us if he finds us worthy.

Col 4:3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

Note: This is the open door of preaching the gospel.

WHAT ARE THE FRUITS OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHURCH ERAS?

This doctrine has caused unfortunate and harmful attitudes in the churches of God.

1. To say each church's city name represents the spiritual condition of that church is self-deceptive. For example, the Church of God in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is not the church of brotherly love just because the members reside in a city called Philadelphia.

2. Churches have named themselves the Philadelphia era and pointed fingers at other church organizations looking down on them as the Laodiceans. Thus they have treated Christian brothers in a way Christ warned against.

Mat 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

3. What good does it do for a person's character to think he knows what era each of the letters belongs to? Will this knowledge get him into the Kingdom of God? In the literature about church eras, Christians are little taught to apply the letters to themselves, but to apply each letter to those people over there or back there in another era. For example, 'It is those people back there in the first century who lost their first love. That message does not apply to me! I am in the Philadelphia era.'

This most harmful attitude of being blind to all but what one thinks is his own era can be easily avoided if we HEAR what Jesus said to the individuals in each of those churches:

“HE (the individual) that hath an ear, let HIM hear what the Spirit saith unto the CHURCHES.

This statement shows that Jesus did not want the individuals in those original churches to just pay attention to the letter to their own church. Nor does he want individual Christians to just pay attention to their own supposed church era. He wants all Christian individuals of every historical age and in every church to hear what the spirit says to ALL the CHURCHES.

GOD'S MOTIVE FOR PLACING THE LETTERS IN REVELATION

One argument used as evidence for church eras is that the letters were placed in the book of Revelation, a purely prophetic book containing events in succession. Therefore God's motive for placing the letters there was that they must represent successive eras. So let's ask the question, "If the letters do not represent eras, then what was God's motive for placing them in the book of Revelation?" Here is a very good answer:

The book of Revelation is the vision of the events of the Day of the Lord.

Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, (Day of the Lord) and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

This book contains all the events of the Day of the Lord surrounding the return of Jesus Christ and the first resurrection at the seventh trumpet.

Jesus wrote these messages to the seven churches at the beginning of the book of Revelation to help his churches (who in every historical age read them) prepare for his coming by searching themselves for the iniquities he mentions in the letters, repenting of them, and by continuing steadfast in the faithful things that he praised them for.

The messages also show how he is watching and judging what his churches do in order to make a determination whether they are going to remain his churches or be removed from being his church (having their candlestick removed or being spit out of his mouth) because of ignoring his warning.

So the most important thing to see in the letters to the seven churches is not how to fit each of them into some era of history, but how to diligently take to heart all the admonitions and corrections in the letters.

God's purpose is to prepare all of his people for the return of Christ, and to help Christians of all historical ages depart from iniquity and attain to his kingdom. These letters to the seven churches can do that if we pay attention to all the messages, take them to heart and apply them to our lives.

LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES – A SELF EXAMINATION TABLE

	STATEMENT IN LETTER	GREEK WORDS & SELF EXAM QUESTION
	SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES	

EPHESUS

1.	Rev 2:2 I know thy works,	Works - Ergon - That which one undertakes to do or be occupied with, an act, deed - Am I careful to maintain good works?
	Mat 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, (ergon) and glorify your Father which is in heaven.	
2.	Rev 2:2 and thy labour,	Labor - Kopos - a toil that is exhausting united with grief and trouble - The word 'and' here is called an expegetic meaning that the words that come after works explain what the works are, ie. thy labor and patience. Am I energetically laboring in the work of the Lord?
	1Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour (kopos) is not in vain in the Lord. 1Th 2:9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour (kopos) and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.	
3.	Rev 2:2 and thy patience,	Patience - Hypomone - Steadfastness, the strength of mind that enables a person to endure pain or hardship - Am I patiently continuing in well doing?
	Rom 2:7 To them who by patient (hypomone) continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:	
4.	Rev 2:2 and how thou canst not bear them which are evil:	Bear - Bastazo - To bear or carry what is burdensome - Do I recognize evil that others do, see it as burdensome and seek to avoid cooperating with it in my own behavior, thoughts and actions?
	1Th 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.	
5.	Rev 2:2 and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:	Tried - Peirazo - To try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining quality The Ephesians could discern between true and false teachers. - Do I search the scriptures concerning things I am taught to see if they are true?
	2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Act 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.	
6.	Rev 2:3 And hast borne,	Borne - Bastazo - Same as #4 - To bear or carry what is burdensome - Am I bearing the burdens given me to bear?

	Gal 6:2 Bear (bastazo) ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Luk 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear (bastazo) his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.	
7.	Rev 2:3 and hast patience,	Patience - Hypomone - Same as #3 - Steadfastness, the strength of mind that enables a person to endure pain or hardship - Am I patiently continuing in well doing?
8.	Rev 2:3 and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.	Laboured - Kopus - Same as #2 - A toil that is exhausting united with grief and trouble - Have I energetically labored in the work of the Lord? Fainted - Kamno - To grow weary - Have I grown weary of Christian works and burdens?
	Hbr 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint (kamno) in your minds.	
9.	Rev 2:4 thou hast left thy first love.	Love - Agape - Affection, good will, love, benevolence and includes brotherly love - Am I as careful now as in the beginning of my calling to preserve the love of my espousal to God?
	Jer 2:2 Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Jhn 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; (agape) even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love (agape). Rom 13:10 Love (agape) worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love (agape) is the fulfilling of the law. 1Cor 13:4 Charity (agape) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 1Cor 13:5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 1Cor 13:6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 1Cor 13:7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 1Cor 13:8 Charity (agape) never faileth:	
10.	Rev 2:5 Remember from whence thou art fallen,	Remember - Mnemoneuo - Calling to mind - Do I take time to remember how I first responded to God's calling and judge if I have at all become lax in my first love of God and others?
11.	Rev 2:5 and repent, and do the first works;	Repent - Metanoeo - To change one's mind for better, and to heartily amend with abhorrence of one's past sins - Have I found in myself lacking in the first love and am truly repenting of it? Works - Ergon - Same as #1 - That which one undertakes to do or be occupied with, an act, deed DOING must accompany repentance. The first works are those good works I have fallen lax in since baptism - Am I careful to remember, repent and do again the first works that demonstrated to God how much I love him and appreciate his calling?

12.	Rev 2:6 thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.	Nikolaitans - Nikao - Since there is no record of the teachings of this group, we usually interpret it according to the meaning of the word. Nico means overcoming, dominating or conquering and laitans means the lay people - Do I hate the showing of oppressiveness to brethren?
	<p>Mat 20:25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.</p> <p>Mat 20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;</p> <p>Mat 20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:</p> <p>3Jo 1:9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.</p> <p>3Jo 1:10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.</p>	
13.	Rev 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;	Hear - Akouo - To listen with understanding - Am I diligent to listen to and meditate on what the holy spirit says to all the churches?
14.	To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life...	Overcometh - Nikao - Same word as Nikolaitanes #12, only used here in a positive sense to get the victory over sin - Am I overcoming the evils and challenges mentioned in this letter to Ephesus?

SMYRNA

15.	Rev 2:9 I know thy works,	Works - Ergon - Same as #1 and # 11 - That which one undertakes to do or be occupied with, an act, deed - Am I careful to maintain good works?
16.	Rev 2:9 and tribulation,	Tribulation - Thlipsis - Oppression, affliction, distress, dire straits - Do I suffer tribulation in my life?
	Jhn 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: (thlipsis) but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.	
17.	Rev 2:9 and poverty, (but thou art rich)	Poverty - Ptocheia - The condition of being completely destitute of riches and abundance. Rich - Plousios - Wealthy and abounding in Christian virtues - Am I poor in physical goods, but rich in such things as faith and liberality?
	<p>Jam 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor (ptochos) of this world rich (plousios) in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?</p> <p>2Cor 8:2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty (ptocheia) abounded unto the riches (ploutos) of their liberality</p> <p>Note: Liberality is openness of heart manifesting itself in benefactions and generosity</p>	

18.	Rev 2:9 and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.	Blasphemy - Blasphemia - In context of this verse blasphemy is saying that you are something good, but in behavior doing the opposite or evil. In Smyrna resided many Jews who had influence with the Roman government and informed against the Christians. Thus they could be like the Pharisees who said they were Jews and Abraham's children, but were not. Jesus denounced them as being of their father the Devil. Or they could actually be false Christians who say they are Christians but are not since the word 'synagogue' was used to describe a Christian assembly in Jam 2:2 - Do I say I am a Christian, but actually serve Satan in thoughts or actions?
<p>Jam 2:2 For if there come unto your assembly (synagoge) a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;</p> <p>Rom 2:28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:</p> <p>Rom 2:29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.</p> <p>1Jo 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.</p> <p>1Jo 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.</p>		
19.	Rev 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer:	Fear - Phobeo - Afraid - When faced with suffering, especially from persecution, am I fearful?
<p>Mat 10:28 And fear (phobeo) not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.</p>		
20.	Rev 2:10 behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.	Faithful - Pistos - One who keeps his plighted faith and is worthy of trust - Am I determined to be faithful to the Lord unto death even if a terrible death should be pronounced against me?
<p>Mat 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful (pistos) servant: thou hast been faithful (pistos) over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.</p> <p>Rev 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. (pistos)</p>		
21.	Rev 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;	Hear - Akouo - Same as #13 - To listen with understanding - Am I diligent to listen to and meditate on what the holy spirit says to all the churches?
22.	Rev 2:11 He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.	Overcometh - Nikao - Same word as Nicolaitanes # 12, only used here in a positive sense to get the victory over sin Also same as #14 - Am I overcoming the evils and challenges mentioned in this letter to Smyrna?

PERGAMOS

23.	Rev 2:13 I know thy works,	Works - Ergon - Same as #1, #11 and #15 - That which one undertakes to do or be occupied with, an act, deed - Am I careful to maintain good works?
24.	Rev 2:13 and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name,	Holdest Fast - Krateo - To keep carefully and faithfully, not discard or let go - One evidence for Pergamos's claim to be Satan's seat was the temple of the god Asklepios, the god of healing whose symbol was the serpent and whose temple was crawling with snakes. - We could apply this to ourselves by asking, 'Do I live in an area where evils abound as if Satan himself lives there, and where even though the peer pressure of society is great to deny Jesus Christ, I hold fast his name?'
Hbr 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast (krateo) our profession.		
25.	Rev 2:13 and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.	Deny - Ameomai - To contradict, oppose, counter, disagree with, rebuff, negate, rebut, refute – My Faith - Mou Pistis - The true faith which is belief in God the Father, in Jesus Christ and in the body of beliefs called 'the faith' - Will I refuse to deny the faith even if I should see beloved brethren martyred?
Mat 26:34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny (ameomai) me thrice. Luk 12:9 But he that denieth (ameomai) me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.		
26.	Rev 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols,	Stumblingblock - Proskomma - An obstacle in the way which if one strikes his foot against, by which he is caused to sin and therefore he stumbles and falls. - One way to place stumblingblocks before brethren and thus to follow Balaam is to teach cooperatiom with the world's idolatry. Today, we do not see idol's temples on every street as Christians did back then. But idols are not just visible graven images, but also false concepts set up in our minds about God and his word. A stumblingblock can also be something a Christian feel free to do, but it offends a weaker brother. A stumblingblock can also be an urge to sin placed in front of those who are blind and don't know any better, for example, helping others to work on the Sabbath by paying them to serve my meals - Have I placed any stumblingblocks in the way of others that cause them to sin?

	<p>Lev 19:14 Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock (Hebrew - mikahowl) before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord.</p> <p>Eze 14:4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock (Hebrew - mikahowl) of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;</p> <p>Rom 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock (proskomma) or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.</p> <p>1Cor 8:9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock (proskomma) to them that are weak.</p> <p>1Cor 8:10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;</p> <p>1Cor 8:11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?</p> <p>1Cor 8:12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.</p> <p>1Cor 8:13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.</p>	
27.	<p>Rev 2:14 and to commit fornication.</p>	<p>Fornication - Porneuo - Used in scripture to include all types of sexual sins including adultery, sex with prostitutes, divorce and remarriage after conversion, homosexuality, incest, sex before marriage, lust of the mind etc. - Note: These two, cooperating with idolatry and fornication are said to be the doctrine of Balaam because our example in these can put a stumblingblock in our brother's way wounding their conscience and causing them to sin. - Do I approve of or show example of committing any kind of sexual sin?</p> <p>Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, (porneuo) causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.</p> <p>1Cor 6:18 Flee fornication. (porneuo) Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.</p>
28.	<p>Rev 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.</p>	<p>Nikolaitans - Nikao - Same as #12 - Nico means overcoming, dominating or conquering and laitans means the lay people - Do I hold doctrines of oppressiveness to others in my heart?</p>
29.	<p>Rev 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.</p>	<p>Repent - Metanoeo - Same as #11 - To change one's mind for better, and to heartily amend with abhorrence of one's past sins - In context of this letter, am I among people praised for good works and who are even persecuted and martyred, but yet are guilty of other sins that cause Christ to says he will fight against us unless we repent?</p>

	Hbr 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.	
30.	Rev 2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;	Hear - Akouo - Same as #13 and #21 - To listen with understanding - Am I diligent to listen to and meditate on what the holy spirit says to all the churches?
31.	Rev 2:17 To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.	Overcometh - Nikao - Same word as Nicolaitanes #12 and #28 only used here in a positive sense to get the victory over sin Also same as #14 and #22 - Am I overcoming the evils and challenges mentioned in this letter to Pergamos?

THYATIRA

32.	Rev 2:19 I know thy works,	Works - Ergon - Same as #1, #11, #15 and #23 - That which one undertakes to do or be occupied with, an act, deed - Am I careful to maintain good works?
33.	Rev 2:19 and charity,	Charity - Agape - Same as #9 translated love - Affection, good will, love, benevolence and includes brotherly love - Note: the 'and' here is another example of the epexegetic that explains what the works are. - Am I exercising works of charity in my Christian life?
	<p>Jhn 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love (agape) one to another.</p> <p>Note: The word used in this verse is agape which is said to be love of God, while phileo is brotherly love. But we see in this verse that agape is also used in context of love for one another. So this church can be said to be a church of brotherly love. And in fact, it is the only one of the seven churches that the Lord commended for their charity. The only other letter that mentions agape is to the first church in Ephesus that lost their first love (agape).</p> <p>1Cor 13:4 Charity (agape) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,</p>	
34.	Rev 2:19 and service,	Service - Diakonia - Various ministering offices serving the brethren in the church such as the office of deacon or that of helping meet needs of others by collecting and distributing charities - Am I ministering to the church according to the grace given to me?
	<p>Rom 12:6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;</p> <p>Rom 12:7 Or ministry, (diakonia) let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;</p> <p>Rom 12:8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.</p>	

35.	Rev 2:19 and faith,	Faith - Pistis - Same as #25 and similar to #20 Pistos (Faithful) - The conviction and belief in God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the doctrines of truth - How great is my faith?
<p>Mat 17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith (pistis) as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Hbr 11:6 But without faith (pistis) it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.</p>		
36.	Rev 2:19 and thy patience,	Patience - Hypomone - Same as #3 and #7 - Steadfastness, the strength of mind that enables a person to endure pain or hardship - Am I patiently continuing in well doing?
37.	Rev 2:19 and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.	Works - Ergon - Same as #1, #11, #15, #23 and #32 - That which one undertakes to do or be occupied with, an act, deed - Am I careful to maintain good works and increase in them from when I was first baptized?
38.	Rev 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach	Sufferest - Eao - To allow one to do as he wishes, permit, let alone - Am I allowing something evil in the church knowingly and afraid to make a fuss about it? Teach - Didasko - To hold the office of a teacher - Does my church allow women teachers contrary to the scriptures and am I approving of this?
<p>Mat 24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered (eao) his house to be broken up. 1Ti 2:12 But I suffer (eao) not a woman to teach, (didasko) nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.</p>		
39.	Rev 2:20 and to seduce my servants to commit fornication,	Seduce - Planoo - To lead others astray into error and sin Fornication - Porneuo - Same as #27 - Used in scripture to include all types of sexual sins including adultery, sex with prostitutes, divorce and remarriage after conversion, homosexuality, incest, sex before marriage, lust of the mind etc. - Am I being taught by word or example in the church to approve and/or commit any kind of sexual sin?
<p>Mat 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive (planao) many.</p>		
40.	Rev 2:20 and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.	Eat - Eathio - To consume food - Same as #26 having to do with the doctrine of Balaam - Cooperation with the world's idolatry knowing that idols are not just visible graven images, but also false concepts set up in our minds about God and his word - Am I being taught any cooperation with the idolatry of the world?

	<p>1Cor 10:18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat (eathio) of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?</p> <p>1Cor 10:19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?</p> <p>1Cor 10:20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.</p> <p>1Cor 10:21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.</p>	
41.	<p>Rev 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.</p> <p>Rev 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.</p>	<p>Repent - Metaneo - Same as #11 and #29 - To change one's mind for better, and to heartily amend with abhorrence of one's past sins</p> <p>Adultery - Moicheuo - To be an adulterer - Here the fornication of Jezebel is said to be that she is committing adultery with several men in the church. The Lord, after giving them time to repent says he will cast her into a bed (of sickness), cast her lovers into great tribulation and will kill her children. - Am I accepting of adultery/fornication in the church?</p>
	<p>Mat 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: (moicheuo) and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (moicheuo)</p> <p>Note: It seems that before John's letter was sent to Thyatira, the Lord was giving Jezebel and her lovers time to repent. Now, with this letter, the Apostle John was bringing this sin out into the open before the whole church and letting Jezebel and her lovers know openly that unless they repent, the Lord would soon bring this judgment upon them. This ought to serve as a warning to any who are committing adultery in the church in any age.</p>	
42.	<p>Rev 2:24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.</p> <p>Rev 2:25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.</p>	<p>Hold hast - Krateo - Same as #24 - To keep carefully and faithfully, not discard or let go - The Thyatirans did have much to be commended for and to hold fast to: good works that were increasing, charity, service, faith and patience - Am I holding fast to the good things my church is doing?</p>
	<p>Note: While verse 20 shows that there were brethren in Thyatira who knew of Jezebel's doctrine and that it was evil, but were suffering or permitting it, this verse shows that there were people who did not have or accept the doctrine of Jezebel. Also there were teachers or speakers who were not teaching this doctrine called 'the depths of Satan' and leading fellow Christians into sin</p>	
43.	<p>Rev 2:26 And he that overcometh,</p>	<p>Overcometh - Nikao - Same word as Nicolaitanes #12 and #28 only used here in a positive sense to get the victory over sin Also same as #14, #22 and #31 - Am I overcoming the evils and challenges mentioned in this letter to Thyatira?</p>

44.	Rev 2:26 and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:	Keepeth My Works - Tereo mou ergon - To attend to carefully, take care of, guard, observe - Ergon is same as #1, #11, #15, #23, #32 and #37 - The good works that I do are here called the Lord's works because we are following his example. - Am I practicing the good works of the Lord in my life?
	Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe (tereo) all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.	
45.	Rev 2:29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.	Hear - Akouo - Same as #13, #21 and #30 - To listen with understanding - Am I diligent to listen to and meditate on what the holy spirit says to all the churches?

SARDIS

46.	Rev 3:1 I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.	Works - Ergon - Same as #1, #11, #15, #23, #32, #37 and #44 - That which one undertakes to do or be occupied with, an act, deed - Am I careful to maintain good works? Dead - Nekros - Spiritually dead, destitute of a life devoted to God because of trespasses and sins - Am I spiritually dead?
	Mat 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead (nekros) men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Jam 2:15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, Jam 2:16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Jam 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead (nekros), being alone. Jam 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is (nekros), so faith without works is dead (nekros) also.	
47.	Rev 3:2 Be watchful,	Watchful - Gregorio - Give strict attention to, be cautious active - Am I watchful that my Christian works are abundant and pleasing to the Lord or are they dying out?
	1Pe 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; (gregorio) because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:	
48.	Rev 3:2 and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.	Strengthen - Sterizo - To make stable, place firmly, set fast, fix - Am I firmly establishing myself in habitual good Christian works? Perfect - Pleroo - To fill to the full - Am I filled to the full with good works or are they sporadic and insincere?

	<p>2Th 2:16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 2Th 2:17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish (sterizo) you in every good word and work. Act 9:36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full (pleroo) of good works and almsdeeds which she did. Phl 1:11 Being filled (pleroo) with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.</p>	
49.	<p>Rev 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard,</p>	<p>Remember - Mnemoneuo - Same as #10 - Calling to mind - Do I take time to remember how I first heard and received God's calling and if I have at all allowed many of the first works to die?</p>
	<p>Mar 4:18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, Mar 4:19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. Mar 4:20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.</p>	
50.	<p>Rev 3:3 and hold fast,</p>	<p>Hold Fast - Tereo - Same as #44 translated keepeth - To attend to carefully, take care of, guard, observe - Am I finding in myself any good works that are dying and striving to attend to them more carefully?</p>
	<p>Jhn 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep (tereo) my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.</p>	
51.	<p>Rev 3:3 and repent.</p>	<p>Repent - Metanoeo - Same as #11, #29 and #41 - To change one's mind for better, and to heartily amend with abhorrence of one's past sins - Am I repentant if I have allowed good works to die out in my life?</p>
52.	<p>Rev 3:3 If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.</p>	<p>Watch - Gregorio - Same as # 47 - Give strict attention to, be cautious active - Am I watchful over the good works I do have that they are not dying out? Come Upon - Heko Epi - To have come, have arrived, be present unexpectedly - Am I attending to my Christian duties as if the Lord will come at any time, or am I getting distracted and find my mind wandering from him?</p>
	<p>Mat 24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; Mat 24:49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; Mat 24:50 The lord of that servant shall come (heko) in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, Mat 24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.</p>	

53.	Rev 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.	Defiled their garments - Molyno Autos Himation - To pollute, stain, contaminate, defile - Am I keeping myself from the stains of sin? Worthy - Axios - of one who has merited anything worthy - Am I keeping myself from sins so that I may be found worthy to walk with the Lord in white?
<p>Rev 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, (himation) lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.</p> <p>Rev 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.</p> <p>Note: to defile the garments is symbolic for staining oneself with unrighteous deeds.</p> <p>Mat 22:8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.(axios)</p>		
54.	Rev 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.	Overcometh - Nikao - Same word as Nicolaitanes #12 and #28 only used here in a positive sense to get the victory over sin Also same as #14, #22, #31 and #43 - Am I overcoming the evils and challenges mentioned in this letter to Sardis?
55.	Rev 3:6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.	Hear - Akouo - Same as #13, #21, #30 and #45 - To listen with understanding - Am I diligent to listen to and meditate on what the holy spirit says to all the churches?

PHILADELPHIA

56.	Rev 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:	Works - Ergon - Same as #1, #11, #15, #23, #32, #37, #44 and #46 -That which one undertakes to do or be occupied with, an act, deed - Am I careful to maintain good works?
57.	Rev 3:8 for thou hast a little strength,	<p>Little - Mikros - Small of size, space, age, time, quantity, rank or influence</p> <p>Strength - Dynamis - Power, ability - Can I say that my strength is small and yet I have kept God's word and have not denied his name?</p> <p>Luk 9:1 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power (dynamis) and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.</p> <p>Luk 9:48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least (micros) among you all, the same shall be great.</p>
58.	Rev 3:8 and hast kept my word,	Kept my word - Tereo mou Logos - Same as # 44 (keep my works) and # 50 translated 'hold fast' - To attend to carefully, take care of, guard, observe - Am I attending to carefully and observing the words of the Lord?

	<p>Jhn 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep (tereo) my words: (logos) and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.</p> <p>Jhn 14:24 He that loveth me not keepeth (tereo) not my sayings: (logos) and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.</p>	
59.	<p>Rev 3:8 and hast not denied my name.</p>	<p>Denied my Name - Ameomai Mou Onoma - Same as #25 translated deny my faith - To contradict, oppose, counter, disagree with, rebuff, negate, rebut, refute – William Barclay expressed it this way: “These two - obedience to God’s word (our example) and fearlessness in witnessing for him (our words) will bring about a door of opportunity to influence others to become Christians.” Will I promote the name of Jesus and all he stands for even if great temptation or persecution is presented to do otherwise?</p>
	<p>Act 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name (onoma) under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.</p> <p>1Pe 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name (onoma) of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.</p>	
60.	<p>Rev 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.</p>	<p>Synagogue of Satan - Synagoge Satanas - In #18 those in the Synagogue of Satan are said to be blasphemers because they say they are Jews and are not. - A good example of these were the unbelieving and hypocritical Pharisees whom Jesus denounced as being of their father the Devil. Read Jhn 8:28-47. In contrast Jesus told the believing Jews to continue in his word and they would be his disciples indeed - Am I the faithful disciple of the Lord, keeping his word and not denying his name so that he will make unbelievers come and worship before my feet?</p>
	<p>Note: The words synagogue and ekklesia mean an assembly of people. We normally use the word synagogue to refer only to Jews and the word ekklesia translated church to refer only to Christians. However, the word ekklesia was sometimes used to refer to an assembly of people apart from the church. A man named Demetrius called an ekklesia for purposes of inciting people into persecuting Paul in Acts 19:29,32. Also, ekklesia was used to refer to an assembly for a legal proceeding in Acts 19:38-39.</p> <p>Likewise, the word synagogue was used to refer to a Christian assembly in Jam 2:2 And in the context of the end time Christians will be beaten in synagogues. (Mar 13:9) Christians today do not attend Jewish synagogues; therefore the word must be used here to denote an assembly, probably of Christians, whose love has deteriorated to the point of beating and disfellowshipping one another unjustly. (See Luk 12:45)</p> <p>The point here is that the Synagogue of Satan could be composed either of false Jews or false Christians. And we need to examine ourselves to make sure that we are not false Christians, serving Satan rather than God.</p>	

61.	<p>Rev 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.</p>	<p>Kept - Tereo - Same as #44 (keep my works), #50 translated hold fast, and #58 (keep my words) To attend to carefully, take care of, guard, observe - Word of my Patience - Logos Mou Hypomone - Same as #3, #7 and #36 - Steadfastness, the strength of mind that enables a person to endure pain or hardship - Am I keeping the word of the Lord's patience? Do I see the Lord's example of patient endurance in his word and seek to emulate this in the trials of my life?</p>
<p>We usually think of this verse as saying, 'patiently keep God's word' instead of the correct translation, which is 'keep the word of his patience'. What is the 'word of his patience'? This is the only other scripture containing the word 'hypomone' or patience that shows the patience as belonging to God.</p> <p>Rom 15:5 Now the God of patience (hypomone) and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:</p> <p>This is the context of Rom 15:5</p> <p>Rom 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.</p> <p>Rom 15:2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.</p> <p>Rom 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.</p> <p>Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience (hypomone) and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.</p> <p>The Matthew Henry Commentary has this to say about the 'word of my patience'. "The gospel of Christ is the word of his patience. It is the fruit of the patience of God to a sinful world; it sets before men the exemplary patience of Christ in all his sufferings for men; it calls those that receive it to the exercise of patience in conformity to Christ."</p>		
62.	<p>Rev 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.</p>	<p>Hold Fast - Krateo - Same as #24 and #42 - To keep carefully and faithfully, not discard or let go of. The good things the Philadelphians do have are keeping God's word, not denying his name and keeping the word of his patience. It seems that the Philadelphians are uniquely vulnerable to lose the crown (stephanos) that God is preparing for them. They could lose it to false teachers, by those tempting them to conform to society around them etc. A man can take our crown away from us only if we carelessly let go of it instead of keeping it faithfully and carefully - Am I keeping my crown by faithfully persevering in the things I do have that God approves and am I watching for men by whom I might lose my crown?</p>

	<p>1Cor 9:25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate (exercising self government) in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; (stephanos) but we an incorruptible.</p> <p>Jam 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: (Satanic lures or fiery trials) for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown (stephanos) of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.</p> <p>2Ti 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:</p> <p>2Ti 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown (stephanos) of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.</p>	
63.	<p>Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out:...</p>	<p>Overcometh - Nikao - Same word as Nicolaitanes #12 and #28 only used here in a positive sense to get the victory over sin Also same as #14, #22, #31, #43 and #54 - Am I overcoming the evils and challenges mentioned in this letter to Philadelphia?</p>
64.	<p>Rev 3:13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.</p>	<p>Hear - Akouo - Same as #13, #21, #30, #45 and #55 - To listen with understanding - Am I diligent to listen to and meditate on what the holy spirit says to all the churches?</p>

LAODICEA

65.	<p>Rev 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.</p>	<p>Works - Ergon - Same as #1, #11, #15, #23, #32, #37, #46 and #56 - That which one undertakes to do or be occupied with, an act, deed - Here are some of the good works the other churches were commended for: Not bearing evildoers (#4), Laboring for the Lord's name (#8), Charity (#33), Service (#34). Good works such as these must be either absent from Laodicea or the character of them is neither refreshing as cold nor zealous as hot. - Am I zealous in my pursuit of good works and being about my father's business, or is my religion ho hum and lukewarm?</p>
	<p>Pro 25:13 As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.</p> <p>Note: The Greek word for hot is zestos meaning boiling hot; fervor of mind or zeal.</p>	
66.	<p>Rev 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.</p>	<p>Lukewarm - Chliaros - There is such a thing as a non-demanding neutral show of religion that makes us look respectable to others. But God calls us to a passionate all-consuming love for him that is willing to give up everything in this life for him. He calls us to do such things as love our enemies, give our goods to the poor, deny ourselves, bear crosses and even give up our life for him.</p>

	<p>Mar 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.</p> <p>Luk 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.</p> <p>Luk 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.</p> <p>Luk 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.</p>	
67.	<p>Rev 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;</p>	<p>Rich and Need Nothing - Plousios - Same as #17 It is not a sin to be rich in material possessions as long as we see the danger of wrong attitudes that can accompany riches. I may think that my riches prove that God favors me rather than a poor person. I may be unwilling to give up my riches in order to follow the Lord if he asks me to (Luk 18:18-25) I may trust in riches instead of God. I may be unwilling to share with the poor as in the example of the rich man and Lazarus. (Luk 16) My physical needs may be so fulfilled that I do not recognize my need for God - Do I have any of these wrong attitudes that can accompany riches?</p>
	<p>Pro 30:8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:</p> <p>Pro 30:9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.</p> <p>Mat 19:24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich (plousios) man to enter into the kingdom of God.</p> <p>1Ti 6:17 Charge them that are rich (plousios) in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;</p> <p>1Ti 6:9 But they that will be rich (plousios) fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.</p>	
68.	<p>Rev 3:17 and knowest not that thou art wretched,</p>	<p>Wretched - Talaiporos - The only other place this word is used is in Rom 7:24 concerning the wretchedness of every man who finds when he becomes a Christian that a war is taking place between the law of God that he serves in his mind and the law of sin that he serves in his flesh. Perhaps because the Laodiceans were so full of riches and focusing on satisfying every need and desire, they lost the awareness of this conflict and so were letting the lusts of the flesh win the conflict. They perhaps forgot their need of Christ to deliver them from the body of death - Do I see the wretchedness of my body of death and the need for Christ to deliver me from it?</p>

	<p>Rom 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.</p> <p>Rom 7:24 O wretched (talaiporos) man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?</p> <p>Rom 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.</p> <p>Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.</p>	
69.	<p>Rev 3:17 and miserable,</p>	<p>Miserable - Eleeinios - To be pitied - The only other place this word is used is in 1Cor 15:19 telling us that if the resurrection is a false belief, then those who so passionately spend their lives hoping and believing in the risen Christ are miserable above all men and to be pitied because this belief is vain. The Laodiceans were miserable and to be pitied without realizing it because they placed their trust and belief in riches, a truly vain belief. - Do I trust in the false belief of riches that cannot save me?</p>
	<p>1Cor 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.</p> <p>1Cor 15:18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.</p> <p>1Cor 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable (eleeinos).</p>	
70.	<p>Rev 3:17 and poor,</p>	<p>Poor - Ptochos - Similar to #17 (poverty - ptocheia) Not lacking in material wealth, but without realizing it, destitute of the true riches of Christian virtues and heavenly treasure - Do I spend more time laying up earthly treasures or heavenly, and can I say that I strive to be rich in Christian virtues and fruits?</p>
	<p>Mat 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:</p> <p>Mat 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:</p> <p>Mat 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.</p> <p>Mar 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.</p> <p>Jam 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor (ptochos) of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?</p>	
71.	<p>Rev 3:17 and blind,</p>	<p>Blind - Typhlos - Physically, spiritually or mentally blind. - Do I have any of these characteristics of being spiritually blind?</p>

Mat 13:13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

Mat 13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

Mat 13:15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Note: Spiritual sight requires a sensitive heart that is really interested, listening attentively to and perceiving what the scriptures say, not a heart waxed gross and dull of hearing and seeing.

Mat 23:16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

Mat 23:17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

Mat 23:18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

Mat 23:19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

Mat 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Mat 23:24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Note: Here, Jesus shows how teachers can be spiritually blind if they are teaching as doctrine wrong principles. You can be careful that you do not fall under the influence of blind leaders by zealously checking what you are taught. If the blind lead the blind, they both will fall into the ditch. (Mat 15:14)

Mat 23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

Mat 23:26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Note: Spiritual blindness pays attention to the outward appearance so that we can look good to others, but not paying attention to (seeing) the condition of the person within.

2Pe 1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

2Pe 1:6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

2Pe 1:7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

2Pe 1:8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2Pe 1:9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Note: The spiritually blind are not perceiving that they must put priority on busily building the fruitful character that they are called to produce.using these building blocks.

72.	Rev 3:17 and naked:	Naked - Gymnos - Lack of clothing - Spiritual nakedness is the condition of living in unrighteousness - Is my nakedness coming into appearance because I am not clothed with these garments?
<p>Note: There are two types of clothing: White wool is symbolic of the righteousness that we ourselves perform: It requires washing, putting away evil, doing well, learning, seeking, judging etc. Isa 1:16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Isa 1:17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.</p> <p>Note: The other type of clothing is fine white linen. It is symbolic of the righteousness that we are granted to wear. It is the Lord's doing to clothe us in these garments. Isa 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. Rev 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.</p>		
73.	Rev 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich;	Buy - Agorazo - To buy or sell in the marketplace - Many who believe in eras see this verse as God making the Laodiceans go through the fiery trial of the Great Tribulation while he spares the Philadelphians from it. But the sense here is that of voluntarily buying a trial from God because we see the need for the spiritual benefit of it, just as we voluntarily go to the marketplace to buy food because we see the need for that food. Similarly, we sometimes voluntarily afflict our soul with fasting because even though it is a difficult thing to do, we see the spiritual benefit of it. To buy a trial is something God here counsels us to do rather than something he forces us to do - Do I see the spiritual benefits that come from trials and tribulations and ask God to give me whatever trials I need so that I may be spiritually rich?

	<p>Rom 5:3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;</p> <p>Rom 5:4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:</p> <p>Rom 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.</p> <p>Jam 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;</p> <p>Jam 1:3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.</p> <p>Jam 1:4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.</p> <p>1Pe 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:</p> <p>1Pe 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:</p>	
74.	<p>Rev 3:18 and (buy) white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear;</p>	<p>Buy - Agorazo - Same as #73 - To buy or sell in the marketplace - As in #72, here we are voluntarily buying from God the white garments of righteousness to cover our nakedness.</p>
	<p>Note: Notice God says in Rev 3:18, I counsel thee to buy of me... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed. He does not specify here which type of raiment we are to buy, white wool or white linen. Lack of woolen garments means that we are not practicing righteousness as we should. Lack of linen garments means that we think that our own righteousness is sufficient. We don't need God to grant us any. The virtuous woman in Pro 31:13 is busy producing both kinds of white garments. She seeketh wool, and flax (linen), and worketh willingly with her hands. Pro 23:21 also tells us that drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. So if we do not want the shame of our nakedness (unrighteousness) to appear, we need to be busily and zealously producing/buying the white garments of righteousness for a covering.</p>	
75.	<p>Rev 3:18 and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.</p>	<p>Anoint - Egchrio - To rub in, anoint oneself - Eyesalve - Kollourion - A preparation composed of various materials and used as a remedy for tender eyelids - This is the only verse in the NT where these two word are used - Am I examining myself for any of these symptoms of spiritual blindness and applying the appropriate treatment?</p>
	<p>Note: According to the scriptures in #71 above, the eyesalve would have the ingredients of: 1. A sensitive heart paying attention to what the scriptures really say, 2. Paying attention to teaching and following true doctrines, not blindly teaching and following false doctrines, 3. Paying attention to the condition of the person within, not just outward appearance, and 4. Paying attention to building godly attributes, not neglecting them.</p>	
76.	<p>Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore,</p>	<p>Zealous - Zeloo - To be zealous in the pursuit of good - Am I listening to the rebukes of God in the letters as applying them to myself, or do I think that they apply to others? Am I zealous in chastening myself as Daniel did or am I waiting for God to chasten me?</p>

	<p>Dan 10:12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.</p> <p>Gal 4:18 But it is good to be zealously affected (zeloo) always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.</p>	
77.	<p>Rev 3:19 and repent.</p>	<p>Repent - Metanoeo - Same as #11, #29, #41 and # 51 - To change one's mind for better, and to heartily amend with abhorrence of one's past sins - The faults mentioned above are things that the sinner is not aware of and doesn't realize about himself. Am I zealous to search myself for errors and seek repentance?</p>
	<p>Psa 19:12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.</p>	
78.	<p>Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.</p>	<p>Hear - Akouo - Same as #13, #21, #30, #45, #55 and #64 - To listen with understanding. Two other scriptures shown below, use the phrase "Hear my voice". Notice these both have to do with the Lord's true sheep who hear his voice. Those who are not truly his sheep do not hear what he says. And if they do not hear him, they will not answer his knocking at the door. Therefore we must be diligent to hear what the Lord is saying in these letters to the churches, open the door of our heart, let his words take root and bear good fruit in our lives.</p>
	<p>Jhn 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.</p> <p>Jhn 10:24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.</p> <p>Jhn 10:25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.</p> <p>Jhn 10:26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.</p> <p>Jhn 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:</p>	
79.	<p>Rev 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne,</p>	<p>Overcometh - Nikao - Same word as Nicolaitanes #12 and #28 only used here in a positive sense to get the victory over sin Also same as #14, #22, #31, #43, #54 and #63 - Am I overcoming the evils and challenges mentioned in this letter to Laodicea?</p>
80.	<p>Rev 3:22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.</p>	<p>Hear - Akouo - Same as #13, #21, #30, #45, #55, #64 and #78 - To listen with understanding - Am I diligent to listen to and meditate on what the holy spirit says to all the churches?</p>

<p>Note: Finally, notice that these last three verses, #78, #79, and #80 are all addressed, not to the church as a whole, but to the individuals in the church. And actually, if you count them, there are 29 scriptures in Rev 2. Of these 10 are addressed to the individual (including those to Jezebel) This is about one third of the scriptures in Rev 2. Then there are 22 scriptures in Rev 3. Of these seven are addressed to the individual - again about one third. This is not only a discouragement to the belief in eras, but it tells us that each of us is responsible to listen to these words of Jesus and so to make our calling and election sure.</p>
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