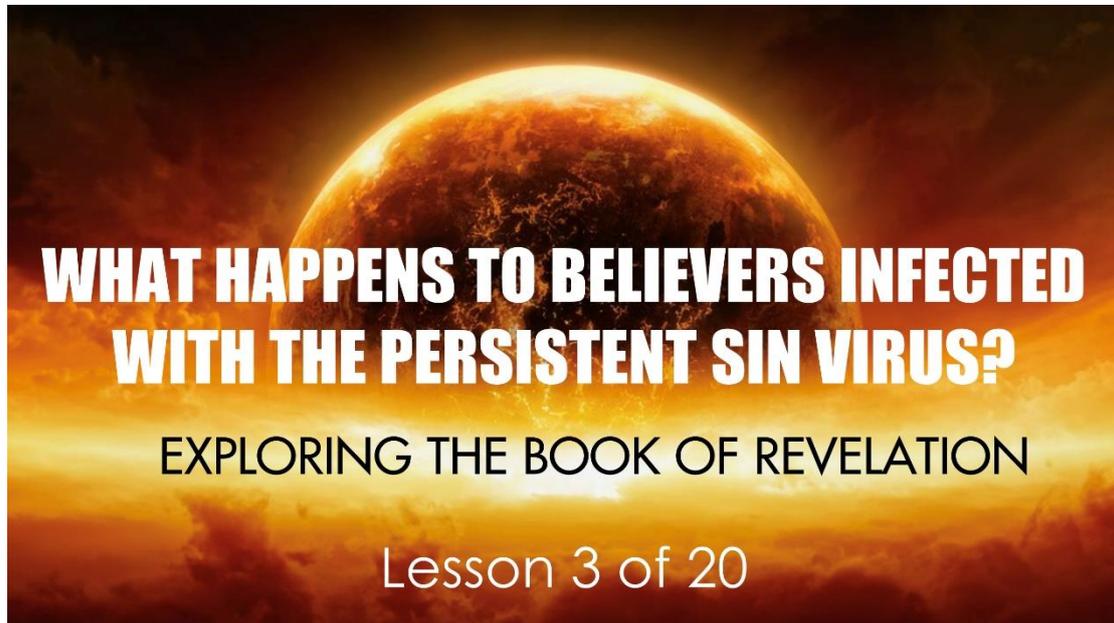


# What Happens to Believers Infected with The Persistent Sin Virus?

2020Rev-03



Welcome to the third lesson of the book of Revelation. There are 20 lessons in this course on Revelation. Revelation has:

- 404 verses,
- over 800 quotes, that cover all the other books of the Bible, the rest of the Bible.
- But there's only one message and that message is how the book opens.

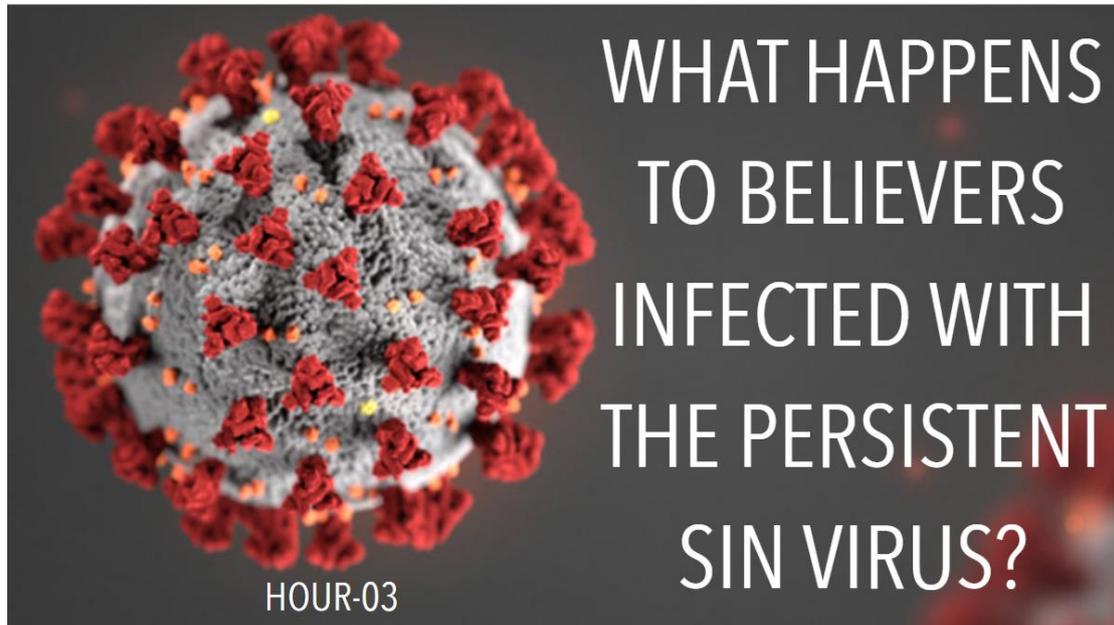
If you have a copy of the scriptures or your online version, look at verse 1. We're going to read that and then invite the Lord to do what it says.

*"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants, the things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant, John" ... and now verse three... "blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things written in them." The one message is:*

- God wants us to keep, treasure, respond to what His word says.

Let's pray and ask Him to do that.

Father, I pray that you would stir our hearts through this class to hear and to understand, and to keep, to treasure, to guard Your truth in our lives. And I pray that through this class, we might be transformed to be even more effective servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

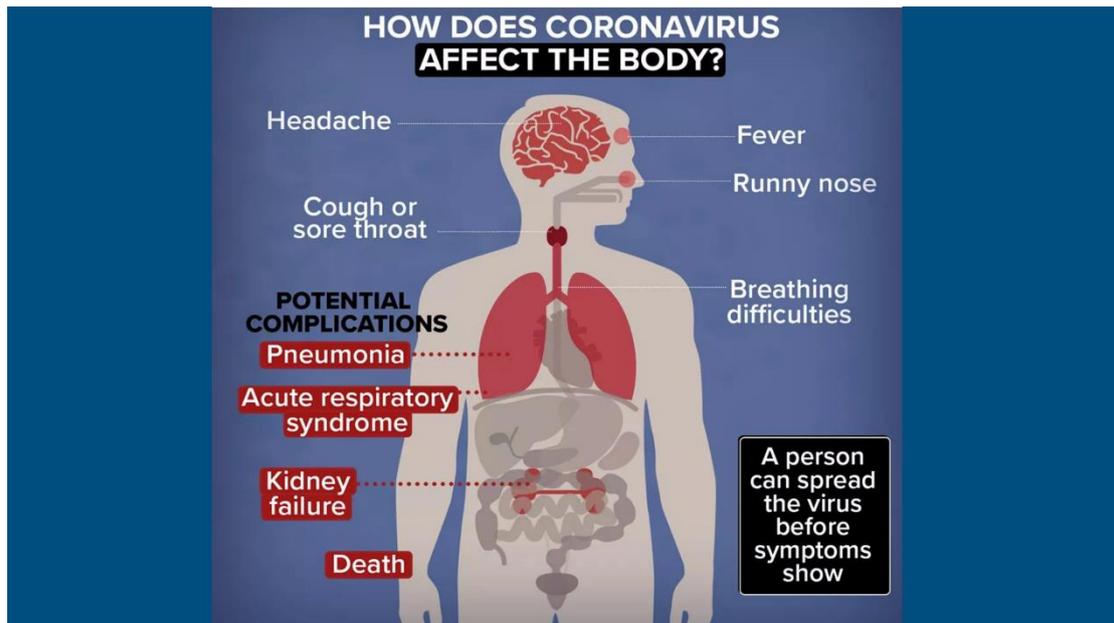


Well, the book of Revelation is so timely and the message for this third hour is about infected believers. Now, as you know, the COVID-19 virus is very small.

- COVID-19 is just 1,000,000th of an inch wide.
- Now, this isn't science class, but here's the virus. Here's a bacterium, which is between a hundred and a thousand times bigger. And here's a human cell.
- Now, remember we're made of billions of cells. Trillions, if you count everything in our neurons. Human cells are tiny.
- Bacteria are just a hundredth of the size.
- Viruses, a thousandth of that size.

Isn't it amazing how much something that small, has effected our whole world and the lesson is this, **that there's a virus worse than COVID?**

Do you know what that virus is? It's this, it's the S I N virus. The S I N virus is what the whole book of Revelation is about. **Sin keeps us from operating in a healthy way. It keeps us from being all that God designed us to be.**



Now, you can see here, this is just a typical clip out of all the newscasts you've been watching or reading online. It's how COVID affects our body.

- Notice that it affects our brain with a fever. We can't think.
- It affects our senses, you know, the eyes and the nose, and taste.
- They've found out early warning signs. Look what it does to the lungs. It affects our lungs, the connection of this little, tiny virus;
- which by the way, depending on what you read online, they can't even decide if a virus is alive or not alive.
- A virus affects the cell to which it attaches, but in itself it's not really alive. It's just an agent of infecting a cell.

Did you know that's so much like sin? Paul talked about sin as a force, as an influence, just like a virus as you see in that picture. Then it begins to affect all of the systems and at the bottom leads to death.

1,467,771

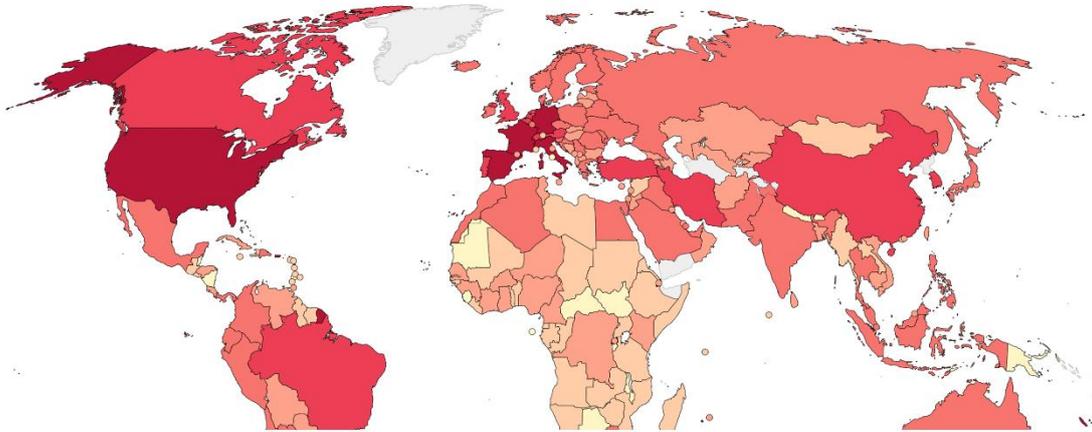
Confirmed cases worldwide

85,413

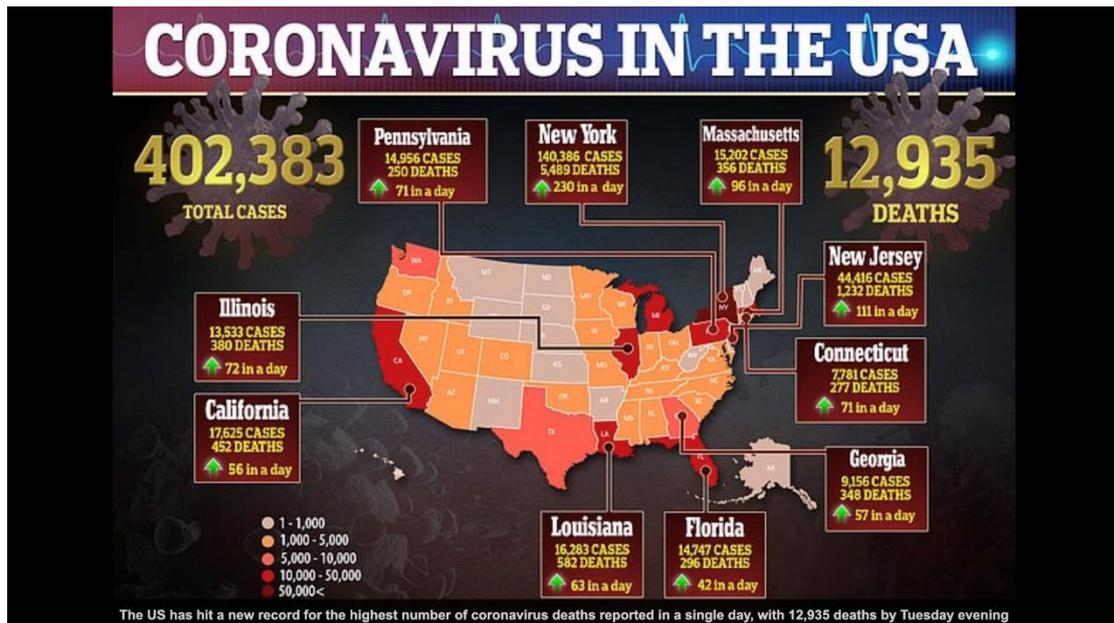
Deaths worldwide

Jurisdictions with cases confirmed as of April 8, 2020, 10:54 AM MDT

1-9 10-99 100-999 1,000-9,999 10,000-99,999 100,000 or more



Now this slide, I just clipped this off Bloomberg. This is what was going on. 1.467 million confirmed cases worldwide with 85,413 deaths. Notice there's hardly on that map, a country, the world, that's not effected by the virus.



Now, this is the normal screenshot of what we're seeing on the news all the time here, where we are in the United States.

- We have 402,000 cases.
- 12,935 Americans have died because of something that's one, 1,000,000th of an inch wide.
- That means it's almost invisible. In fact, it is invisible to, about 99.99% of the world, except those few attached to an electron microscope.
- It's an invisible influence that's changing the world.



Well, that's what's going on in the book of Revelation. Look at what we're seeing here. There's a repetition, follow along your Bible. Verse 1, "which God gave Him to show His servants." Then keep going to verse 4, "John to the seven churches", and then keep going to verse 11, "write what you see to the seven churches, which are in Asia" Revelation 1:11, and then they're listed.

Look at the map in front of you on that slide, starting on the left side.

- Right in the middle is Ephesus on that map of Asia minor, which is modern day Turkey.
- Above it is Smyrna.
- Then you go further up in a little to the right, Pergamum.
- Then you come down, starting to go a little bit to the east Thyatira.
- Down to the south Sardis
- and a little more to the south, Philadelphia
- and then southwest to Laodicea.

Those seven churches were the seven churches that verse 11 lists off. And they were a group of people, that were believers that had become infected with a nearly invisible virus God calls sin. Their lives had utterly become effected because of their infection with sin.



That's why the theme of this book is how to live for God in a dangerous world. We think... how to live for God in a dangerous world in modern times maybe, religious zealots, like Islamic zealots that would come and do terrorism. Or maybe someone that would terrorize us in the office and make fun of us as Christians. That's not the danger, really. This is the danger.

- We are more than conquerors.
- No one can take our life one moment before God has written it down in His book of all that we're going to live,
- but we can severely impede our health by wrong choices, by becoming infected believers.

So, how do you live for God in a dangerous world? That's what this book is all about and that's what we're going to examine. Especially as we look today at what Jesus says in the first three chapters, was going on in these seven local churches. We just looked at it, the map.

Now do you remember; this is the second generation. The first generation, the ones that were alive from the, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ through the apostolic journeys and the writing of the new Testament. They had passed off the scene and their children were now the ones that were populating the early church, right. The second generation was slowly getting infected by the Roman empire, where they lived. They were getting infected by something so tiny. No one could see it except God and slowly it began to permeate their lives.

# When Jesus Finds Sin in His Church

## Note

Revelation 2:4;  
2:14; 2:20;  
3:3 & 3:16



So, the lesson of Revelation 1,2, and 3 is when Jesus finds sin. In His church. Infected believers. Now let me show you what I mean. See, in your side there Revelation 2:4. If you take your Bible, mark this if you want to because, this is going to be the core that we're building around in this lesson today. Verse 4, Jesus said this to Ephesus. *"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have"...* and He lists off their problem... *"You have left your first love"* and verse 5 continues. What does it mean, I have this against you?

Well, most of us have been here. You sit in the waiting room and a friend, or a family member is in with the doctor and we're out there waiting:

- all of a sudden, as we wonder how our loved one, our mom or dad, our grandparents are husband, wife, our child is going to be, the doctor walks out.
- When the doctor finally finishes his exam and comes to deliver the news by looking at his face, we know that he's going to say something we aren't going to appreciate.
- He comes out and the doctor sits down, and he says, I have good news and bad news.
- The bad news is you're infected, or you have cancer, or you have heart disease or whatever the terrible diagnosis is.
- But then he says, the good news is you're going to live.

Now chapter 1 of Revelation, portrays Jesus like a doctor coming out. Do you remember what we read yesterday, when we were looking at *"one, like the Son of Man"* verse 13 of chapter 1.

- Clothed with a garment down to His feet,
- girded about the chest with a golden band,
- His head and hair were white, like wool and
- His eyes are piercingly like a flame of fire.

Do you remember what John said about his response when he saw Jesus? Look at verse 17. *"When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead."*

Now, wait a minute. Why did John respond that way? Wait, why did John who:

- loved Jesus Christ so much;
- who was the one that Jesus loved and
- the scriptures in the Gospel say that John would lay his head on Jesus' shoulder
- they were such close friends at meals, they would lean on each other. They were very close.

Why would John faint and fall down on the ground? Well, I believe John saw something he hadn't seen for 60 years.

Do you remember when Jesus started His ministry? John 2.

In John 2, Jesus cleansed the temple. If you remember,

- He got angry.
- He made a whip out of a bunch of chords.
- He began taking that whip and He goes through and He drives out of the temple the money changers, and those who were buying and selling all kinds of animals and birds inside the temple.
- Jesus, His eyes were just glowing with anger. It says that Jesus was angry at those money changers and those selling.

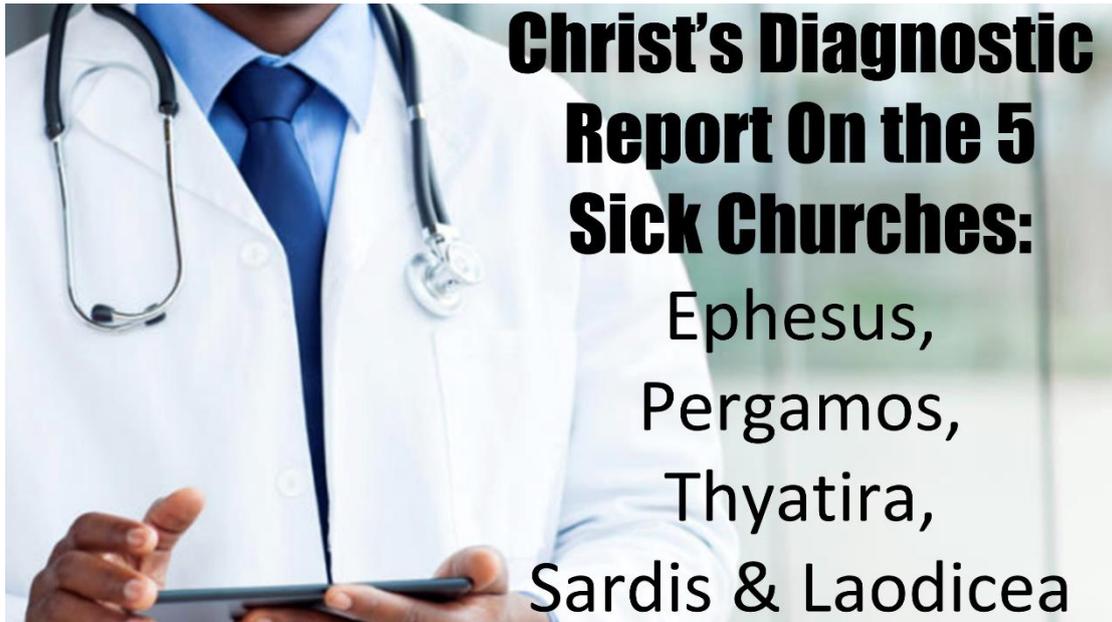
Do you remember at the end of Jesus' ministry? And again, when we get to Matthew 21, He does it again.

- Jesus comes and He drives them out of the temple a second time,
- overturns their tables, driving out the animals.
- The anger of Jesus, when the temple, the earthly representative of God's presence was defiled.

Now, Jesus comes and inspects the church and the earthly temples. The representatives of God were defiled and that same anger John saw. That's why he fell down as if he was dead. It paralyzed him thinking of Jesus being so angry.

Look at verse 14. Revelation chapter 2, verse 14: to the next church, to Pergamos actually the third church Jesus says, *"but I have a few things against you."* Now you notice I skipped over verses 8, down through verse 11. That's the church in Smyrna. Jesus doesn't say He has anything against them. There are only five. If you notice Jesus has five churches that He says that He has something against them, that they're infected with sin in their lives.

Continuing down to verse 20, notice what Jesus said. *"Nevertheless I have a few things against you"*. Continuing to chapter 3, verse 3. *"Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent."* Jesus said. I want you to repent of what I found in your life. Finally look at verse 16. *"So then, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of my mouth."*



# **Christ's Diagnostic Report On the 5 Sick Churches:** Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis & Laodicea

When Jesus finds sin in His church, He doesn't overlook it. He goes right to remediation, getting to something wrong. What's that the diagnostic report on the five churches? What does Jesus say to Ephesus, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea? The physician comes in and says, this is what you need to do.

- Now, if something happens to us and it's detected that we either have the newest, horrible flu, or we have heart disease, or we have a tumor, or we have something wrong with us.
- Does the doctor just say, I hope you get better, or does he say...
- to treat this, you're going to need a ventilator, like in the current flu crisis, or you're going to need surgery, or you're going to need to take this medicine.

You see, that's what Jesus does. Our new hearts sometimes start behaving like the old heart.

Salvation. What does salvation do to us? It says in Ezekiel 36 in verse 26 ... a new heart I will give you. A new spirit I will put within you. And I will put a soft heart within you. God says that what He wants to do with us in salvation, is give us a new heart. That's what salvation is. That's Ezekiel 36:26-27. If that's a verse you don't have marked in your Bible, you ought to mark it. The essence of salvation is new hearts. So, He takes out the old stony heart. He takes it out and transplants a new heart, but what was happening in these believers? Their new heart was starting to look like the old heart that He had removed in the surgery of regeneration.

When a new heart gets infected with sin. When our life becomes infected with sin, we begin to act like unsaved people, like unbelievers. Jesus said, I will not tolerate that. Jesus prescribes treatment in Revelation 2 and 3 and that's why this letter. Remember I told you last session and the session before, this was the most widely taught and most popular and most desired book of the Bible for the early church. Why?

- Because they didn't want to be infected with sin.

- They didn't want to displease the Lord.
- They want to live out this new heart.
- They didn't want to act like the old.

I always tell people when they say they lost their temper. Have you ever heard that expression? Oh, I lost my temper. I said, no, you didn't. You found it. You see whom we act like our pagan, old hearted person. We're showing that we become infected with sin.



Well, what was the diagnosis? What did Jesus say? Basically, the medical report is this:

- Ephesus had heart problems. What was their problem? Their heart was crowded. I illustrate it this way. It's kind of like the top shelf of our life. The Lord says I want to be on the top shelf. I want to be up here, most important in your life. Then we say, okay, that's what we want but then we start adding other things that are just as important. Our heart gets crowded. Jesus no longer has first place. That was the medical report for Ephesus.
- Smyrna. The only thing we could possibly have heard Jesus say to the second church is fear not. What is that? He said don't even slip into fear with what's happening to you.
- The third church Pergamos, they were overexposed to sin.
- The fourth church, they weren't exposed, they were infected. The virus had taken root in their bodies, Sardis. They appeared to act unsaved. If you would have been walking around the city of Sardis in the first century and looked at the church, you could not have told the difference between the way the people in the church were living and the way the people in the Roman pagan temples were living. They both had the same struggles in life. They both had the same living under the power of sin

going on in their lives. The Lord says you're like you're dead, you're acting unsaved by the way.

- There's one church, the sixth church, that got Jesus absolute approval, Philadelphia. Jesus said, just keep up what you're doing. So, see, it is possible to live on earth absolutely pleasing to the Lord. It's by avoiding infection.

Now, I don't know where you are at, at the current time but where we live, our country, everyone is encouraged to wear masks. We have a student here with a mask. Look at this, this is a real one. It's got the filter on it and people are going around with these masks on and they're talking through them and they're steaming up their glasses. Why? Because they know that there's an infection. There's a virus. It's only 1,000,000th of an inch wide, but they want that filter to stop it because they don't want to get infected. Did you know that the believers of the first century church were not wearing their masks? They weren't socially isolating. They weren't washing their hands all the time. In fact, they were touching their face and getting the virus all into their system.

- So, the last church Laodicea, the one that made Jesus sick, was spiritually blind and distracted.



[pastorjohnbarnett@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjohnbarnett@gmail.com)

Well, let me tell a quick illustration from this slide. Bonnie and I've had the privilege of ministering in the last 12 months to several hundred missionaries that work on the front lines of Central Asia, the Middle East, Equatorial Sub-Sahara Africa... all over the world. As we taught them, we met one doctor and I'd like to tell you the story of this doctor, because sin has consequences.

# Sin Has Consequences:

## The Jungle Doctor Who Got Infected with Bitterness

This doctor was an American, amazing doctor, that was trained as a surgeon who had a heart for missions. Like many of you that are taking this course, he wanted to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. So, he finished med school, did his practice, learned, and excelled as a doctor. In his late thirties, he moved to one of the most desolate, needy, gospel absent countries of the world. One of those hard to enter countries and he could only enter as a doctor. So, you went there to be a medical missionary in a closed country, a limited access country.

He worked very hard and got a team around him and they built a hospital. Americans contributed and they started this hospital. They started reaching out in the community and they started translating the Bible. As the ministry grew and as people were getting saved, teams started coming into their hospital to help them from America.

One team came and they decided they'd paint the hospital and they'd also do daycare so that all the doctors and all the nurses and families could spend extra time as couples. So that team came and while that team was there, his little daughter said to him; Daddy, why did that man touch me? And the father said, what are you talking about? To make a horrible story short. One member from the church missions' team that was on childcare duty, molested his little, tiny daughter.

That doctor, as you see on that slide, got infected with bitterness. The first thing he did, is he looked up and he said, God, how could you let my little, helpless, innocent, precious daughter, get defiled by that wicked man. Then he said to his wife, how come you weren't watching our daughter. Then he started getting irritated at all the other doctors and nurses. And before long, when we met him, he had decided to resign, close the hospital and the work in that desolate part of the world with no gospel witness.

Now the way I met him is, I'd been invited every morning to do a Bible lesson and for 45 minutes challenge a room filled with doctors. That group was about 750 doctors from 64 different countries, and I was preaching along, and I was telling them, about the Lord's

prayer. At that conference I was doing the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6. I began showing on the screen, when it says, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. I said, did you know what, if you're not a forgiving person you'll get infected with, and on the screen, I put up a chart about the symptoms of bitterness. I just started going through the signs. Actually, it was called The Signs, Bitterness. I was going through, and I was on about the third one, and this doctor told me that he'd been sitting there.

He wouldn't listen. He didn't open this Bible. No one noticed because there were several, you know, 750 of them out there. He was looking at the floor, but he couldn't help but listen. By about the third sign of bitterness, he looked up and he started looking at that screen and he started thinking and he said to me; he turned to his wife and he said, is that me?

His wife told me that she froze. Because for the last year he had been so bitter that he was violently angry. He just would explode for anything. He'd get so upset and impatient and troubled and irritated with everybody in the hospital. With his children. His marriage was struggling. So, she thought if I say yes, he'll explode and get angry at me. She thought, but if I don't say anything, this might be my only chance. So that faithful wife, breathed a quick prayer and looked at her husband and said, that is you on the screen.

I went through the rest of the signs of bitterness, but he told me he didn't even listen to the rest of the sermon. He said he bowed his head and right there sitting in that service said, "God, I confess, I got angry at you and blamed you for not protecting my daughter. Then I got angry at my wife and blamed her. Then I got angry at the whole ministry and then I quit." And he said, "I was bitter, bitterness is sin and sin infected my life."

That doctor said he had taken so many steps away from God months had gone by, but it was just one step back, right there sitting in that service. He bowed his head. He said "I was wrong. I confess, I ask you to cleanse me." And he said, when he lifted his head, he was a different person. The infection was gone. His wife realized it. His coworkers. And by the way, he went to the mission and said, I'm not closing the hospital. Satan allowed me to get infected with bitterness, trying to stop the ministry.

# No Matter How Many Steps we Take Away from God:

It Is ALWAYS Only  
One Step Back  
(Repentance)



Here's the lesson, no matter how many steps we take away from God, it's only one... it's always an only one step back. That one step is called repentance.



## **Ephesus' Spiritual Heart Condition** Revelation 2:1-7

Well, let's look at what the early churches needed to repent of. Number one, Revelation in your Bibles verses 1-7. We see that Ephesus had a spiritual heart condition and the first stop on Jesus' medical inspection tours, Ephesus, and it didn't take long for Him to find a serious heart condition there. But you wouldn't have known it to look at them.

- You see Ephesus was the largest church of the ancient world.
- Ephesus, according to the church's historian Eusebius, had upwards of 50,000 people that had come to know Christ in the ancient world.
- That huge church was humming.
- It had a galaxy of great pastors. Apollos had been there.
- Paul had helped found the church. He had left behind Timothy.

- Before long, the apostle John moved there, and he brought Mary.
- How would you like to go to church with Paul and Mary and John and Apollos? It was, it was an unbelievable place. The largest, the most vibrant church. Ephesus appeared to be thriving. Easily the largest church.
- Paul had been there three years explaining the scriptures daily, answering their questions, teaching them sanctified lives. That's the content of the book of Ephesians, is what was taught there.
- When Paul moved from Ephesus he left, Timothy. You can read 1 & 2 Timothy. You can see the caliber of that serving the Lord.
- Just before being exiled to Patmos, John lived there and ministered there.
- More scripture books were written directly to Ephesus than any other city.
- But they had slowly developed hardening of the arteries, the heart disease that came from Jesus no longer being most important. He was just important.

This, letter Jesus dictates to John is Epistle number four written specifically to this church. When Jesus examines Ephesus, He finds they had a major health problem. At first glance, they appeared healthy but if you read the diagnostic report in verses 1-7, Jesus' initial observation appears to be a glowing report of His largest, the most influential church. He says,

- I know your works,
- your labor,
- your patience,
- you can't bear those who are evil.
- You've tested those who say they're apostles and are not,

It sounds like health was there, but look, Jesus wasn't first. He was no longer first in their schedule.

- They planned everything. And when they got done with their plan, they found there was no time for the Lord.
- Jesus wasn't first in their concentration and that signaled that He was no longer the Supreme ruler of their hearts and their lives.
- What's the bottom line. Jesus didn't take first place in their lives.
- Their heart didn't belong solely to Him. Their spiritual arteries were clogged with so many other things that they were in danger of a spiritual heart attack.

While the Ephesians may have felt fine on the outside aside, Jesus said there's something wrong on the inside.

# The bottom line:

Jesus didn't take first place in their lives. Their heart didn't belong solely to Him.

The prognosis was simple:  
**REPENT.**

Now I want to give you a little test and I'll use an object lesson. I was a youth pastor for so long that, it's hard for me not to walk around. In fact, in my teaching as a youth pastor, I used to walk around the students. It really made everybody just sit up and be careful because they knew as I walked up and down the rows where they were sitting, that I could see everything they're doing. What I would tell them is, I'm just doing what Jesus does. You remember in chapter 1 of Revelation we looked at yesterday. Jesus was walking in the midst of those seven lampstands. And as he walked around the seven lampstands, what He was saying is:

- I'm looking. I'm looking at what you're doing.
- I'm watching to see whether or not you're doing what I left you to do.

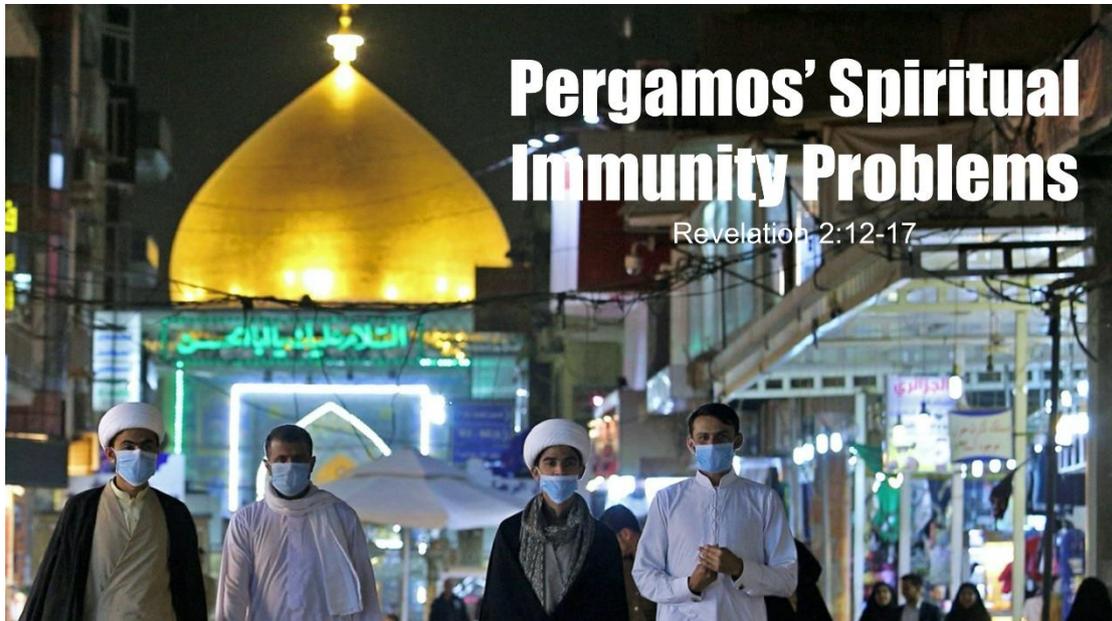
Just as a youth pastor walking around, I would look to see whether or not the children, (well, they weren't children) the teenagers in my youth group we're:

- following along in their Bibles,
- whether they were listening,
- whether they were paying attention or if they were kind of more in touch with someone next to them and distracted.

Now Jesus walked around the church. If He walked around today, here's an illustration, what He could do. He would say, which is more important in your life:

- to catch up with every friend you have
- to post,
- to send pictures,
- to Instagram them,
- to snap them,
- playing games,
- is listening to music...

More important than my voice. You see it isn't that Jesus was unimportant. He just was no longer supremely important. The people did not, in the church in Ephesus, they did not build their lives around seeking first Jesus Christ. That's what heart problems are like. And that's the first church.



The second church Jesus addresses is Pergamos. That's in Revelation, chapter 2. Look at verse 12 because in Revelation 2 and verse 12, Jesus says this. *"And to angel of the church of Pergamos write, these things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword."* Now remember every letter Jesus refers back to something from chapter 1. What are you saying is 1:16. I'm the one with the sword coming out of my mouth. He's reminding them that He is the living and abiding word of God.

Look at verse 13. *"I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days when Antipas",* verse 13, *"was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells."* He said that two times.

Now look at that slide. What was Pergamos' problem? They had spiritual immunity problems. Basically, when Jesus travels to Pergamos, He says the church at Pergamos was sitting right on top of a nuclear sin reactor. Did you notice what twice I read to you in verse 13, it says you live *"where Satan dwells"*. Now there's something really, really interesting that we learned here.

Pergamum is where Satan, at that moment in history, dwells you. What that tells us? Reminds us actually.

- Satan is not omnipresent.
- Satan is only at one place at a time.
- You ever heard someone say, Oh, the devil made me do it. Most likely he didn't because he can't influence every person on the planet.
- His demons with him can be pervading the atmosphere all around everybody.

- But for Satan to be in one place at one time is what we have to remember. That's what God says.
- Satan at this time in the first century, his seat, his throne, his command center, it says twice in verse 13 was right there.

A few years back, a nuclear reactor melted down in Japan. Fukushima is the name of the location. To this day, 10 years...12. I don't remember how many years ago it was. To this day it's still too deadly for people to walk around not in protective suits in that whole city. People that go there unprotected that go and loot homes, get leukemia. It just shrinks and withers the marrow of their minds because they're around the terrible radio activity of that reactor. You know what the Lord said? The people in Pergamos were around the radioactivity of sin and they weren't protected.

You see the slide there, notice all those people in that picture have masks on. Can you see a COVID-19 virus? It's 1,000,000th of an inch wide. No, but they know it's out there and they protect themselves. The people of Pergamos were living within the radius zone of the marrow shriveling radiation of the soul that Satan pumped out and they weren't putting up any immunity protection. They'd been doing really well for a while. It says in verse 12, they held fast to Jesus' name, verse 13, even one of their great leaders were martyred, but by the time of Jesus examines the church, they who had started out strong were now susceptible to sin and we're starting to get unhealthy. Immunity problems at Pergamum.

Our Spiritual immunity is  
compromised when we as  
believers, as God's own people,  
**are comfortable around  
what God hates.**

Revelation 2:12-17

Here's a kind of a summary of what the Lord is saying. Our spiritual immunity is compromised when we, as believers, as God's own people are comfortable around what God hates. Do you see we're supposed to, more and more, be embracing as our conduct and our operating system, Gods? God says, avoid what is evil. Let those that named the name of Christ depart from iniquity. We are supposed to not love the world or the things in the world because whatever is of the world is not of the father and it's passing away. Well, yours and my spiritual immunity is compromised when we, as believers are comfortable around what God hates.



There's almost like a downward spiral here because by the time we get to the next church, which is Thyatira, we find out that they've gone through what the Ephesians went through in Ephesus, the Lord was no longer first and then Pergamos as they got comfortable around sin. But by the time we get to, Thyatira, you know what the Lord says, look at verse 18.

Chapter 2, verse 18. *"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'these things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire,'* remember every church, He refers back to chapter 1, this is verse 14; those flaming eyes, continuing *"feet like fine brass"*, that's verse 15 also, is how Jesus self-described himself. *"I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience [...] your works are more than at the first. Nevertheless"*, verse 20. *"I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants"*, not to be tempted; you see Thyatira wasn't just come around sin and the Lord was no longer first. Thyatira, it says in the 20th verse it says, *"my servants to commit [sexual] immorality"*. They were infected.

They weren't just comfortable around sin; they were doing it. They were starting to live like unbelievers. They were committing the same sins that the Greek and Roman pagans in their city we're committing. In fact, what's worse is, they went back to what they used to be like before they were saved. The Lord says, I'm not going to allow that to go on in your life. That's the whole lesson that Jesus gives to these five churches that are infected believers.

# When Believers Persist in Unrepentant Sin

1 John 5:16 & 1 Cor. 11:27-31

What happens when a believer persists in unrepentant sin? There are two verses on your screen in front of you. The first one is in 1 John 5. I'll read it to you. 1 John chapter 5 and verse 16. It says this. *"If anyone sees his brother sinning as sin, which does not lead to death, he will ask, and he will give life for those who commit sin, not leading to death"; "for", 16 continues, "there is sin leading to death."* 1 John 5:16. What is that? On your screen look at 1 Corinthians 11:27. What happens when a believer persists in unrepentant sin?

I'll read you the answer. It's right here in 1 Corinthians 11, starting in verse 27. *"Therefore whoever eats this bread and drink this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of Christ."* Verse 28, *"let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread"...* What is this about? This is communion. Verse 26 talks about; eat this bread, drink this cup till I return. So Paul says for those of you that are attending church, that are a part of the celebration, the Lord's table; if you go to church and partake of the Lord's table and don't examine yourself, verse 29, *"he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body"*. And here's what he says., Verse 30 *"for this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep"*. Whoa.

1 Corinthians 11:30 says that there are three levels of God's ways that He deals with sin, medically in our bodies. When we get infected with sin,

- He says, many of you are weak and
- He says many of you are sick and
- many of you sleep.

Whoa.

- Now I've been a teacher long enough. When I started out teaching in seminary, I used to have men that would work all night and they would fall asleep in class. I'm not talking about that. This is dead.
- This isn't a runny nose. This is persistent sickness.

- Persistent physical problems. This is an unexplained weakness.

What 1 Corinthians 11 says is that when believers get infected with sin, God, chastens them. Like a father should chasten his children when they're disobedient. That chastening has three levels.

- It starts out with the Lord just making their lives have no joy, no peace. It's just like a flat tire.
- If that doesn't work, then there starts being engine problems. I
- f that doesn't work, He takes them home.

You say what? It says in 1 John 5, it says right here ,that any believer .And it says right here in Revelation, chapter 2, that any believer that persist in sin, unrepentant persisting in sin, the Lord will chasten to the point of weakness, sickness, and untimely death. That's called chastening.

That's why John, in chapter 1 falls on his face, like a dead man. He hadn't seen that anger that Jesus had, when we as believers get infected with sin. Now that doesn't mean we were supposed to be sinless, but it means we're supposed to be washing our hands like we are right now in this time of being careful. Wearing our mask, avoiding coughing people, avoiding anywhere where we would get exposed, we don't want to get to get infected. That's the attitude of health as a believer. They've lost that desire.



Well, that takes us to the next church. It says in chapter 3 and look at Revelation 3, this is the church in Sardis and the first 6 verses, *"to the angel of the church in Sardis write, these things says He who has the seven spirits of God"*. There we go, chapter 1:4, remember every letter has a reference back to chapter 1; *"and the seven stars"*. That's verse 20 of chapter 1. *"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive"*, but look at verse 1, *"but you are dead"*.

What was Sardis? The walking dead. Jesus originally found Sardis and Ephesus and Paramus and Thyatira and Laodicea dead in the ditch. They all were dead in their trespasses and sin. As Ephesians 2 says, all of us were.

- I was born spiritually unresponsive to God
- When I was born again, I got a new heart. I came to life.
- I was able to respond to God.
- I can understand His word.

Acts 26 and verse 18 tells us that when we get saved, we come alive. The church in Sardis was dead. Acts 26 says this is what salvation is in verse 18;

- When we get saved, we go from death to life, our eyes open.
- We're turned from darkness to light. We no longer love the darkness. We want the light.
- From the power of Satan unto God.
- We receive forgiveness of sins and we get an inheritance.

But the people in Sardis went back after they became infected as believers, they began to act like they were unsaved. That's what dead means. They were not responsive. They didn't have the vital signs. You know when the paramedics come, they check the vitals. They check to see if your hearts beating, they check your respiration, they check your blood pressure. When Jesus came, they looked alive. Jesus, even comments that they had a reputation in Sardis for being alive, but when He examined them, He found there was no pulse. The church of Sardis was full of the walking dead. They walked like, talked like, connected like the dead unbelievers around them. Jesus said, that's because of an infection of sin and I'm not going to tolerate that.



Now we come to the final church. Laodicea had a materialism induced blindness. Look at chapter 3, verse 14. Notice I skipped right over verses 7 to 13. That's the church member

that has no area of their life where Jesus finds that he says, *"I have this against you"*. But this is what it says about Laodicea verse 14, chapter 3, *"to the angel of the church in Laodicea write, these things says the Amen, the Faithful, the True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God. "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth" "*.

Perhaps the most frustrating condition of all is what Jesus found in Laodicea.

- They weren't living near Satan's throne like the Pergamos saints were.
- They weren't struggling with martyrdom.
- They weren't being led by false teachers, like the other churches.

The Laodiceans were rich, well fed, well-dressed and had every advantage. And they knew it.

- They boasted, they had need of nothing.
- God's word was first taken for granted, then it was forgotten, then it was swallowed up with all the information and gadgets and material possessions, and
- Laodiceans were distracted.

I watch people as I'm preaching in church or teaching a class. At the beginning you've got their attention, they're looking at you. All of a sudden there's a little buzz in their pocket and out comes the phone and then they go like this, and then they start going like this. And you know that they've gotten distracted.

- The church in Laodicea had gotten distracted. Yes, they had the word, but they had everything else and there was so much to capture their attention that God's word just got lost in the traffic.
- The Laodiceans had every advantage, but they were so focused on everything that didn't matter. They no longer saw the one thing that did matter. And that's what was going on. They had become bland and useless to God.

By the way, what does it mean when it says that the Laodiceans were neither cold nor hot? Well, it's curious and when we get to that church, you'll see the geography.

- The Laodiceans had water coming in from Colossi to their town, which had no water source. Cold water came in.
- from Hierapolis another city nearby, they had hot water coming.
- They both came on aqueducts for miles.
- By the time the cold water got there from Colossi, it wasn't cold anymore and
- by the time the hot water got there from Hierapolis, it wasn't hot anymore.
- All the water in town was kind of lukewarm

What Jesus is saying is, I don't want you to be cold and sin, and hot serving me. No, he says, I want you to either be cold, that's refreshing and renewing; or hot that's like therapeutic and helpful and cleansing. I want you to be useful for me. Not just neutral, lukewarm, not hot,

not cold. Just lukewarm. What does that mean? They were going along avoiding the really big sins, but kind of living the dream, kind of having it all.

Jesus doesn't differentiate between those who are meant to be on fire for him and those who are simply expected to live a life of mediocrity, hot or cold. Not hot, not cold, just lukewarm is going along avoiding the really big sins. We're called to something higher. We're called to be set apart. To be on fire for God.

# Okay.

# Let's talk about

# the Grace of God

Titus 2:11-13

Now what about the grace of God? I'm glad you asked that. You see the slide Titus 2:11. Do you know what it says? The grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness. You see, grace is not a pass for me to live like I used to live, like these churches were living, like I'm infected. No, it's the power to deny sin.

When the great physician examines my life, what does He find? Well, think about what He found here. Jesus found five potentially fatal conditions. His bought and paid for church had gotten infected by His believers and His radical treatment plan was the same for all of them. You know, when He said absolute no-holds-barred repentance, no matter how many steps you've taken away from me, turn back. That one step back to me.

- What Jesus was saying is beware of coasting, going through the motions, no longer being passionate,
- getting comfortable around sin,
- entertaining yourself with sin,
- not fleeing sin.

In other words, not wearing your mask. Not washing your hands. What happens if we don't do that and get infected? Chastening Hebrews 12. See, on the slide verses 5-6. Do you know what it says? Every child that's in God's family He chastens.

What is chastening by the way?

- It's when you feel emotional anxiety and distress, when nothing really satisfies anymore,
- when you don't have peace,
- when you don't have joy,
- when you don't have purpose.

You see, the righteous are as bold as a lion. We have the Holy Spirit; we have a new personality. That's what the fruit of the spirit is. God doesn't see two classes of Christians, the hot and the cold, no He sees one class of Christians. What'd He says is you can't get to heaven unless you've been sanctified.

- Jesus said, I'm in charge of your sanctification and I have a 100% patient survival rate.
- Jesus doesn't lose any of us.
- He says, I'm going to come to you. I'm going to confront the sin and the one response I want is repent.

# Jesus has a 100% patient survival rate

What's repentance? A change of mind that leads to a change of behavior. So, what happens when believers are infected with the persistent SIN virus? Jesus comes and like a good doctor, He prescribes a radical treatment plan and says, repent.

I hope today that this won't just be a lesson of facts about some obscure 2000 year churches, 2000 year ago churches. But they you'll say Lord, the grace of God that brought me salvation, teach me to deny ungodliness. I don't want to be infected. I want to wear my mask. I want to wash my hands. I want to eat healthy.

God bless you. Thank you for joining the third class.

Let's close in a word of prayer. Father teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lust. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.