



Revelation - Chapter Three

II. Revelation 1:9-3:22 - Things that are: Christ's presence with and knowledge of his churches (continues/concludes)

II.b Revelation 2:1-3:22 - Christ's edict-letters to his seven churches (continues/concludes)

Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter concludes the writings to the seven churches. In it the church in Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea are addressed. The fifth edict is to the church in Sardis who is condemned by Christ for acting alive but being dead.

The sixth edict is to the church in Philadelphia who is commended and promised great victory. Last, is the message to the church in Laodicea who is condemned for their spiritual blindness and warned to repent or face judgment.

II.b.v Revelation 3:1-6 - The message to Sardis

Sardis was captured twice in its history while watchmen neglected their duty and this became a cautionary tale of misguided complacency and lack of vigilance. Although Jesus' rebuke identifies no specific source of attack, this congregation was similarly asleep, at death's door. Jesus finds nothing to commend in this church except for a few individual believers within it.

Most of the impressive Roman-era remains now visible at Sardis were constructed after the tragic earthquake of AD17. The emperor Tiberius helped sponsor reconstruction efforts, earning greater local renown for himself. In John's day the civic structures included a theatre, a stadium, a central marble road, and multiple temples, especially the monumental temple of Artemis.

Many Jewish inscriptions also exist in Sardis, confirming the multiple references in Josephus to Sardis' large Jewish population (Jewish Antiquities 14.235, 14.259-261 and 16.171).



The Temple of Artemis in Sardis

This message to Sardis lists no specific enemies, internal or external. There is no Balaam or Jezebel, no deep secrets, synagogue or throne of Satan. Consequently, of all the congregations in Asia, little is revealed about Sardis and its problems. Yet no other message is more damaging or more urgent than this one.

¹ ‘And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars:

‘I know your works; you have a name for being alive, but you are dead.

Revelation 3:1

The seven spirits of God draws together ‘the seven spirits’ of 1:4 and ‘the seven stars’ of 1:16 and 1:20, and is a figurative description of the one Holy Spirit, who issues an edict to each of the seven churches. He will also appear as the Lamb’s seven eyes, sent throughout the earth (5:6). Jesus knows this church’s reality: you are dead, that is, spiritually unresponsive and unaware, or perhaps intended in the way Paul contrasts dutiful widows from others: <<*The real widow, left alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day; but the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives*>> (1 Timothy 5:5-6). This reality is also seen in the contrast to the reputation of this church: you have a name for being alive, but you are dead.

That Jesus holds the seven stars signifies the churches’ true identities.

I know your works again reveals the omniscience of the Lord and that he remains present with his churches through the Holy Spirit.

² Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is at the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God.

³ Remember then what you received and heard; obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

Revelation 3:2-3

The church in Sardis is in a deep spiritual coma, approaching death but not beyond Christ’s summons to wake up, to strengthen what is at the point of death, to remember and obey the message of grace that the church had received and heard, and to pursue the holiness that flows from grace.

I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God. Again, this should not be read literally to indicate that salvation is by works or that believers are to be perfect in this life. The call is for the church, and the individuals who make up the church, to live out the faith they have received in accepting Jesus as Lord.

Like a thief you will not know at what hour I will come to you is a frequent NT simile: <<*But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour*>> (Luke 12:39-40), and: <<*See, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and is clothed, not going about naked and exposed to shame*>> (Revelation 16:15), as well as the passages quoted in the comments on 1:3; it indicates that humans cannot predict the timing of Christ’s return.

The command to wake up is a reminder that twice in its history Sardis had been sacked, in 547/546BC by Cyrus II, and in 214BC by Antiochus III, when the watchmen on the walls failed to detect an enemy army sneaking up its supposedly impregnable cliffs and walls.

⁴ Yet you have still a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.

⁵ If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes, and I will not blot your name out of the book of life; I will confess your name before my Father and before his angels.

Revelation 3:4-5

Hope for revival is in the fact that a few people in Sardis, alert and unstained disciples, can still be found in this church. The church as it stands may die but some of its members will hold true to the call of the Gospel on their lives and they will be rewarded for their faithfulness. In Sardis, this group of people are the conquerors that Jesus calls for. The call upon their lives might be similar to that of the Lord's brother: *<<And have mercy on some who are wavering; save others by snatching them out of the fire; and have mercy on still others with fear, hating even the tunic defiled by their bodies>>* (Jude 22-23).

Who have not soiled their clothes. Their unsoiled clothes symbolise consistent obedience and courageous faith. Christ promises them the conqueror's reward: communion with himself, i.e. they will walk with me, dressed in the white robes of victory, for they are worthy to receive them imputed from their faith in Jesus who is worthy (5:2); refer also to the comments made on 2:17 and 7:14. Their name is secure in Christ's book of life (20:15), and he will confess their name before his Father and his angels, since they have confessed Jesus in hostile circumstances: *<<Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven>>* (Matthew 10:32).

Clean, white clothing in the book of Revelation is consistently a symbol of religious and moral purity, especially in the face of persecution; while soiled or dishevelled clothing, or no clothing at all, is a symbol of religious and moral impurity and shame. It is likely that the problem at Sardis was a strong tendency to compromise Christian faith for the sake of conformity to social and cultural standards set by Asian society and the Roman Empire. This spirit of compromise was linked not to one particular faction in the Christian community, as at Pergamum and Thyatira, but to the majority. The ones who had not soiled their clothing had become marginalised. They were the small faction. This explains the severe tone of the message, but it is impossible to be more specific as to the exact nature of the compromises made at Sardis.

⁶ Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Revelation 3:6

As before, Jesus is calling those at Sardis to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. As noted in comments on 2:26-28, this command forms the conclusion of the last four edicts.

II.b.vi Revelation 3:7-13 - The message to Philadelphia

Those who regard the seven churches in Revelation as a kind of chronological portrait of the Christian church through the centuries seize upon the church at Philadelphia as a model for the true church, usually their own small but faithful congregation, in contrast to the mainstream but apostate church at Laodicea! The message to Philadelphia has captured the imagination of Christians throughout the centuries because no other message, not even the one to Smyrna, is so rich in its promises.

In appreciation for imperial reconstruction aid after an earthquake in AD17, Philadelphia was briefly renamed Neocæsarea, or 'Caesar's New City', but Jesus promises his suffering church an infinitely greater name: <<***the city of my God, the new Jerusalem***>> (v.12).

Philadelphia was established in 189BC by King Eumenes II of Pergamum (197-160BC). Eumenes II named the city for the love of his brother, who would be his successor, Attalus II (159-138BC), whose loyalty earned him the nickname, Philadelphos, literally meaning 'one who loves his brother'. It lies near a fertile valley, especially suited for growing wine grapes. Inscriptions from Philadelphia mention worship of Zeus and Hestia, and the Roman imperial cult was already present by the 1st Century AD. An inscription from a nearby town mentions a synagogue in that Philadelphia. Christians in Philadelphia later received a letter from the early church father Ignatius, circa AD110, and they suffered during the martyrdom of Polycarp, circa AD155.

⁷ 'And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of the holy one, the true one,
who has the key of David,
who opens and no one will shut,
who shuts and no one opens:

Revelation 3:7

These are the words of the holy one, the true one, is unparalleled in John's introductory vision, although it was noted of Jesus during his earthly ministry: <<***Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God'***>> (Mark 1:23-24); while the key of David is vaguely reminiscent of <<***the keys of Death and of Hades***>> mentioned in 1:18.

Jesus holds the key of David, meaning that his authority to admit to or exclude from God's Kingdom cannot be reversed: <<***I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and no one shall shut; he shall shut, and no one shall open***>> (Isaiah 22:22), which is the origin of this verse; and: <<***I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven***>> (Matthew 16:19).

⁸ 'I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Revelation 3:8

For Paul, an open door was an opportunity for ministry: <<When they arrived, they called the church together and related all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles>> (Acts 14:27), <<But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries>> (1 Corinthians 16:8-9), <<When I came to Troas to proclaim the good news of Christ, a door was opened for me in the Lord>> (2 Corinthians 2:12), and: <<At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison>> (Colossians 4:3). That sense is possible here; but since these Christians, excluded by the synagogue, would become pillars in God's temple (v.12), probably Jesus sets before them the 'door standing open' into God's heavenly sanctuary: <<After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this'>> (Revelation 4:1). Unlike opportunities for ministry, this is a door which no one is able to shut.

I know that you have but little power. As Christians in Smyrna were physically poor yet spiritually rich, so those in Philadelphia were weak yet not without influence for they were holding fast to Jesus' word (vv.10-11), and have not denied his name.

⁹ I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying – I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

Revelation 3:9

Members of the synagogue of Satan (2:9) say that they are Jews but instead they are serving God's enemy as they persecute Christians. Christ will compel these persecutors to bow down at the feet of his followers and acknowledge that he has loved them: <<Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life>> (Isaiah 43:4), and: <<No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us>> (Romans 8:37), just as Isaiah foresaw Gentiles bowing before Israelites and their God: <<Thus says the Lord: The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Ethiopia, and the Sabeans, tall of stature, shall come over to you and be yours, they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will make supplication to you, saying, 'God is with you alone, and there is no other; there is no god besides him'>> (Isaiah 45:14), and: <<Kings shall be your foster-fathers, and their queens your nursing-mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame>> (Isaiah 49:23).

¹⁰ Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

Revelation 3:10

To those who have kept his word, Christ promises, I will keep you from the coming hour of trial: <<then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of

judgement>> (2 Peter 2:9), which will put the inhabitants of the earth to the test. Because this trial is coming on the whole world, it seems that before the final consummation, Revelation envisions a brief future period of intensified persecution for the church, i.e. 19:19 and 20:7-9, and of escalating manifestations of God's wrath against the inhabitants of the earth, a phrase used on several occasions to denote rebellious humanity. Jesus does not promise to spare believers from suffering or martyrdom but to shield them from his wrath and to transform martyrdom into triumph, e.g. <<*When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given; they cried out with a loud voice, 'Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?' They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow-servants and of their brothers and sisters, who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed*>> (Revelation 6:9-11).

Many who believe in a pretribulation rapture position believe that this verse means Christ will take them out of the world before a literal great tribulation period begins. Other interpreters, however, see this as God's promise to safeguard and remain faithful to believers who endure patiently in the midst of the hour of trial that is coming, although it does not imply that he will take believers out of the world at that time. The scripture: <<*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world*>> (James 1:27), contains a similar but not identical Greek expression, where it does not imply removal from the world.

¹¹ I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

Revelation 3:11

I am coming soon. Once more Jesus promises that he will return: <<*For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done*>> (Matthew 16:27). The early church always took these statements to mean that Jesus would return within a short period of time in the way humans measure it. However, God is outside of time and it cannot be viewed in this way. For God, even eternity is not a period of time!

Hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. The crown is the reward given to believers who persevere in their faith. Those who fail to remain in their faith are in danger of losing their reward but not their salvation.

¹² If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. ¹³ Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Revelation 3:12-13

As a pillar in the temple of my God, inscribed with the name of God, the one who conquers can never be excluded from God's presence, you will never go out of it, for he will dwell in God's New Jerusalem (21:2) as David's royal heir (v.7). As with much of Revelation, this is highly symbolic rather than literal for there will be no actual temple building in the new city: <<*I saw no temple in the city, for its*

temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb>> (Revelation 21:22). Paul had described Peter, James and John as acknowledged pillars in Galatians 2:9.

My own new name. Later it is revealed that Christ's name can be one <<*that no one knows but himself*>> (19:12b); or it can be <<*the Word of God*>> (19:13b); or <<*King of kings and Lord of lords*>> (19:16b). The redeemed bear his name on their foreheads (22:4) or, alternatively, <<*his name and his Father's name*>> (14:1b). The effect is the same even if the city of God has a special name other than the new Jerusalem, such as that revealed to the prophet: <<*And the name of the city from that time on shall be, The Lord is There*>> (Ezekiel 48:35b).

In his allegory of Hagar and Sarah, Paul described the woman who bore the seed of promise as being like the new heavenly city: <<*Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother*>> (Galatians 4:25-26).

II.b.vii Revelation 3:14-22 - The message to Laodicea

Damaged by an earthquake in AD60, self-sufficient Laodicea, a commercial centre and site of thriving medical and textile industries, declined imperial disaster relief. The city did not see itself as <<*poor, blind, and naked*>> (v.17), nor did the complacent church within it. In this last church alone Jesus finds nothing to commend.

Laodicea was famous for its worship of Zeus, who appears on some of the city's coinage. Today one can still view unexcavated remnants of the city wall, two theatres, a stadium from the time of Vespasian, circa AD79, and a 2nd Century bath and/or gymnasium with adjacent water tower. An aqueduct came from the south toward Laodicea, bringing water rich in minerals. There is evidence of a Jewish presence in Laodicea. Twenty pounds of gold were confiscated in the 1st Century BC from Jews who intended to send it as a temple tax to Jerusalem (Cicero, For Flaccus 28). Paul was in contact with the church there as recorded in Colossians 2:1 and 4:13-16.



Laodicean Coin Depicting the god Zeus

¹⁴ 'And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin of God's creation:

Revelation 3:14

This introduction enlarges <<*the faithful witness*>> of 1:5 into the faithful and true witness, but combines it with two other terms: the Amen and the origin of God's creation, which were not found in Chapter One. Note that some translations record origin as ruler.

As the faithful and true witness, Jesus brings accusing testimony that contradicts the church's boast: <<*I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing*>> (v.17). Jesus revealed himself in this role when he was brought before Pilate: <<*Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice'*>> (John 18:37).

Jesus' self-designation as the origin of God's creation does not mean that he is God's first creation, refer to the comments made on Colossians 1:15-17, but that he is the one who began God's creation, as commented on in John 1:3-5. In Revelation, 'the beginning' or origin with its complement 'the end' is an expression for God's eternity, see 21:6 and 22:13; and here it signifies Christ's sovereign rule over the created order.

¹⁵ 'I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

Revelation 3:15-16

The waters of the nearby Lycus River were muddy and undrinkable, and the waters flowing by aqueduct from hot springs 5 miles or 8km away were lukewarm when they reached Laodicea. Likewise, Jesus found his church's tepid indifference repugnant. Cold and hot water represent something positive, for cold water, like that found in nearby Colossæ, refreshes in the heat, and hot water, like that in the cascades of Hierapolis, is a tonic when one is chilly.

Jesus would naturally prefer his church to be spiritually hot for that would mean they were having the greatest possible impact on the world around them. A cold or dead church on the other hand has not impact on anyone, either good or bad. However, a lukewarm church, one that lacks zeal and enthusiasm, does impact on its local community but in a way that is only ever negative for it does not reflect Christ or his Gospel message.

I am about to spit you out of my mouth. Some translations use the term vomit to show just how Jesus feels about their current status. Unless they change their ways they will find themselves totally separated from God for their reconciliation comes only through their acceptance of and adherence to the Gospel message.

¹⁷ For you say, "I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing." You do not realise that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸ Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

Revelation 3:17-18

I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing. The prophet accused the Northern Kingdom of Israel of making similar false boasts: <<*Ephraim has said, 'Ah, I am rich, I have gained wealth for myself; in all of my gain no offence has been found in me that would be sin'*>> (Hosea 12:8). Like the church in Laodicea, the Israelites had not been prepared to focus on God but on their perceived self-sufficiency. History shows what happened to the northern tribes and the same can happen to the church if they do not learn from history.

There is a clear contrast between Smyrna and Laodicea, for Jesus had said of the former: <<*I know your affliction and your poverty, even though you are rich*>> (Revelation 2:9a). Thus the words of Solomon come to the fore: <<*Some pretend to be rich, yet have nothing; others pretend to be poor, yet have great wealth*>> (Proverbs 13:7). Jesus shows that it is not pretence but a spiritual reality that all churches must discern and act upon.

The spiritually blind, poor, naked Laodiceans obviously had no resources to buy from Jesus gold refined by fire, contrasting their poverty with the riches of believers who have persevered in their trials: <<*In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith – being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed*>> (1 Peter 1:6-7); or white robes to clothe themselves, covering their nakedness; or salve to anoint their eyes, reversing their blindness. They could purchase these necessities only by his grace, as the Lord had once invited thirsty spiritual paupers: <<*Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples*>> (Isaiah 55:1-4).

Some have claimed the reference to salve for the eyes to have a local link because Strabo (Geography 12.20) mentions a school of medicine near Laodicea in the 1st Century. Such people have tried to link the production of a famous eye medicine known as ‘Phrygian powder’ to Laodicea in particular, but there is no conclusive evidence of this. It is doubtful that the reference is more meaningful here than it would have been in any of the seven messages.

¹⁹ I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. ²⁰ Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.

Revelation 3:19-20

Like a loving father, Christ will reprove and discipline those whom he loves: <<*Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so the Lord your God disciplines you*>> (Deuteronomy 8:5), and: <<*My child, do not despise the Lord’s discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves the one he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights*>> (Proverbs 3:11-12), calling them to repent before he intervenes in judgment. The message to Laodicea is that the congregation needs, for its own sake, to face persecution so as to shatter its complacency and test and shape its faith. Behind this need is the principle, rooted in the experience of Jew and Christian alike: <<*for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts*>> (Hebrews 12:6).

Jesus says I am standing at the door, knocking, not as a homeless transient seeking shelter but as the master of the house, expecting alert servants to respond immediately to his signal and welcome his entrance: <<*Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks*>> (Luke 12:35-36), and: <<*Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!*>> (James 5:9). The church is called to listen for, to the one who opens the door, Christ will come in and will eat with him, a picture of close personal fellowship.

Unlike Philadelphia, where the door stands open (v.8), the door for the Laodiceans remains firmly closed unless they hear and answer the call of Christ on their lives. Jesus does not impose his will on anyone but offers an open hand to all who choose to accept his grace: *<<I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live>>* (Deuteronomy 30:19).

The angel at Laodicea, like those at Ephesus, Pergamum and Sardis, must be earnest, and repent. To do this, he must change his perception of what is real, and above all his perception of himself, hence the salve for the eyes in order to see (v.18). If he sees himself as rich and in need of nothing, when in fact he is desperately poor and miserable, there is indeed something terribly wrong with his eyes!

²¹ To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

²² Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.'

Revelation 3:21-22

To the one who conquers. All those who overcome, conquer or triumph in every congregation will do so in the same way Jesus did. Thus the conclusion to the seven messages sets the stage for John's subsequent visions of the triumph of Jesus and his people over the powers of evil (5:5-6).

I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne implies that Christ will delegate some of his ruling authority to his people: *<<Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel>>* (Matthew 19:28), *<<He said to him, "Well done, good slave! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities">>* (Luke 19:17), *<<Do you not know that we are to judge angels – to say nothing of ordinary matters?>>* (1 Corinthians 6:3), *<<if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us>>* (2 Timothy 2:12), *<<Then I saw thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years>>* (Revelation 20:4). Premillennialists also see this as a promise of reigning with Christ in the millennium; refer to the comments on Revelation 2:26-28 and 20:1-6.