

Chapter 17

Conclusion

**Do not merely listen to the word,
and so deceive yourselves.**

Do what it says.

(James 1:22)

Jesus wrote letters to seven first-century churches, as recorded in the second and third chapters of Revelation. He intended for believers throughout the centuries to understand these letters. Jesus emphatically urged us seven times—to **hear** the message to these churches.

Revelation	The plea to listen!
2:7	<i>He who has an <u>ear</u>, let him <u>hear</u> what the Spirit says to the churches.</i>
2:11	<i>He who has an <u>ear</u>, let him <u>hear</u> what the Spirit says to the churches.</i>
2:17	<i>He who has an ear, let him <u>hear</u> what the Spirit says to the churches.</i>
2:29	<i>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.</i>
3:6	<i>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.</i>
3:13	<i>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.</i>
3:22	<i>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.</i>

Jesus is saying something like, “if you have an **ear**, then my expectation is that you will listen.” These letters are important—because they have tremendous depth of meaning. When placed end to end they describe the primary characteristics of the worldwide church, starting with the first century and ending with the church that prevails just before the end-times, named Laodicea.

Prophecy scholars agree with the timeline interpretation of these letters, which has the last church being the predominate end-time church. Yet they largely ignore that this church will be disciplined. Jesus said to this Laodicea Church, *“So because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. (Revelation 3:16) Jesus gave additional warning to Laodicea. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. (Revelation 3:19) These are strong statements for God to make about the future of his own people.*

God will not rapture all believers into heaven at the start of the end-times. Instead, discipline will occur as Laodicea believers are left-behind as world events spin out of control. The question that strikes the heart of the early rapture issue is, *“How can Laodicea be disciplined and raptured into heaven simultaneously?”*

This is what prophecy interpreters should be saying to the modern church, it is what Jesus said to Laodicea believers: *You say, I am rich: I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. (Revelation 3:17)*

Tiananmen Square Massacre Beijing China – June 5, 1989



Photographer: Jeff Widener

***All men will hate you because of me,
but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.***

(Matthew 10:22)