

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

Last week, we noticed two congregations of the Lord's church, located in Asia, that were not pleasing to Jesus. These congregations were Ephesus and Pergamos. Was the Lord displeased with each of them for the same reason? No. One congregation had left their first love, the works that the children of God in a faithful congregation do (Revelation 2:5). Pergamos was allowing some persons who followed things contrary to the doctrine of Christ to remain in the congregation. If faithful brethren put out of the congregation those believing and practicing the things displeasing to the Lord, and the ones removed start their own "church" - would that make them right and acceptable to the Lord? No, they continued to be wrong, didn't they?

The third congregation we want to look at is Sardis. Notice the last half of verse 2 of Revelation 3: "for I have not found thy works perfect before God." In Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29), the congregation was at fault for permitting evil to abide in it. The fifth congregation condemned is Laodicea, and they harbored the fifth type of sin. They were lukewarm. They were not "on fire" for the Cause, nor were they ice cold. Lukewarm - we don't like a "hot" drink, or one that should be "cold," to be lukewarm, do we? Have you noticed the one thing each of these five congregations had in common? About each, Jesus says, "I know thy works." The KJV uses this phrase in all seven instances.

Let us consider a simple question here. The Revelation came from God (the Father - John 10:30) through Jesus (His beloved Son - Matthew 3:17) through John (the disciple whom Jesus loved - John 13:23). Were God and Jesus pleased with the congregations at Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea? "Repent" does not mean "continue as you are." Read what is said about one of the two congregations which was pleasing to God: "I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (Revelation 3:8; emphases mine - HL). All seven congregations had the "word," and have either obeyed (kept) it or disobeyed (not kept) it.

Some might say only the words in "red" in our Bibles are the words of Jesus we must keep. How did the church at Ephesus know God's Word? We know Paul, along with other inspired men through whom the Holy Spirit worked, taught them, both by letter and in person. Today, we have in written form what Paul and the 7 other writers of the New Testament were given by the Holy Spirit.