

# Chapter 18

## Conclusion

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

**Do what it says.  
(James 1:22)**

**J**esus 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.

<b>Revelation</b>	<b>The plea to listen!</b>
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.

Most prophecy scholars agree with this timeline interpretation of these letters, yet consistently ignore one clearly stated fact: the church that represents the largest number of believers as we approach the final seven years—God will reprimand and discipline!

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) A more literal translation is “I am about to “vomit” you out of my mouth.” Jesus gave additional warning to Laodicea: *Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.* (Revelation 3:19) These are incredibly strong statements for God to make about the future of his own people.

Despite what world-renowned prophecy interpreters have stated, 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 during the early rapture, and 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) To replace that message with “relax, because you will all be raptured early” is dangerously irresponsible. (2 Timothy 4:3)

This widely accepted dispensational interpretation of the end-time rapture is central to complacency in today’s church. Teaching that every believer will be raptured at the very start of the end-times means that God created a low-incentive system for his people on earth, which is to subtly imply that God wrote a flaw into his plan. Such a flaw would be sin! Why work in harvest fields when scripture has already guaranteed each believer an early rapture?

Countless missionaries working in harvest fields where millions have never even heard the name of “Jesus” are requesting your support. Let us open our eyes to children believers who live in poverty,(1) and act now concerning a worldwide Bible shortage.(2) Jesus addressed our need to turn away from complacency.

*I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*

(Revelation 3:18)

**Tiananmen Square Massacre  
Beijing – June 5, 1989  
People's Republic of China**



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)

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**References:**

1. World Vision, P.O. Box 9716, Federal Way WA 98063. <http://www.worldvision.org>
2. Bible League, PO Box 28000, Chicago IL 60628. <http://www.bibleleague.org>