

Bible Background

This is in the last book of the Bible. It was written at the end of the 1st century A.D. It described a vision that John, the disciple (called apostle at this time), saw when he was an older man. At this time, there were many churches throughout the Roman Empire. These churches were groups of people who trusted in Jesus, but not church buildings. In the beginning of this book, Jesus is speaking to churches in seven specific cities. For each one, Jesus encouraged them in things they were doing well but also criticized them for things they were not doing well. This was written to the Christians in Laodicea. This was a wealthy city. Jesus said that this church was "not hot or cold". They said they were Christian but other things in life were more important to them than Jesus was.

Revelation 3

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.

²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

²¹ To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²² Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

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THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD circa 1854

Artist: William Holman Hunt

Location: Original at Keble College, Oxford Life-size version in St. Paul's Cathedral, London



William Holman Hunt was a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (the beginning of avant-garde artists. His style is known for attention to detail and public appeal. In explaining this painting, Hunt said, "The door in the painting has no handle, and can therefore be opened only from the inside, representing 'the obstinately shut mind'."

1. What are some of the details that you see in the painting?
 - How does Jesus look?
 - What is he wearing?
 - What are the surroundings like?
2. Both this passage in the Bible and the painting has a lot of symbolism. What is some of the symbolism that you see or understand?
 - What does "**rich**" mean?
 - What does "**poor**" mean?
 - What does "**wretched**" or "**pitiful**" mean?
 - What does "**blind**" mean?
 - What does "**naked**" mean?
 - What does "**gold refined by fire**" mean?
3. What does Jesus say about those whom he loves? What will he do to and for them?
4. How would you feel if Jesus came to your house and ate with you?
5. What would that mean about your relationship with Jesus?
6. Who do you think has "ears" according to the description that Jesus gives?
7. How could you have "ears to hear"?
8. What is the result of having "ears to hear"?