

The Letter to Laodicea and the Eschatology of Revelation

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The letters to the seven churches of Revelation 2–3, while clearly applicable to the local situations of each church, have traditionally been understood by Adventists as apocalyptic in nature and prophetic of seven periods of church history.¹ However, more recent Adventist commentators, while not totally excluding the possibility of a secondary prophetic application, have tended to interpret them like other NT letters, focusing on the local, first-century context of these seven cities as *primarily* in view.² This new approach has been critiqued in a previous article, in which I examined the genre, structure, and content of these letters in light of the

¹ See, e.g., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (ed. Francis D. Nichol; Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1957), 737 and *passim*; Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation: The Response of History to the Voice of Prophecy. A Verse by Verse Study of These Important Books of the Bible* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1904), 328-29; Roy Allan Anderson, *Unfolding the Revelation: Evangelistic Studies for Public Presentation* (rev. ed.; Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1974), 7-8.

² Jon Paulien, “The End of Historicism? Reflections on the Adventist Approach to Biblical Apocalyptic—Part One” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14/2 (2003): 15–43, esp. 39, n. 123; Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (2nd ed.; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 121, 142 generally uses noncommittal language in discussing the application of Rev 2–3 to church history (e.g., “One may observe ...” or “might also aptly apply ...”), a view he essentially argues against on exegetical grounds while allowing that the letters could be “read” that way (87–88). Taking an eclectic approach, interpreting the letters as prophetic, as well as historical and symbolic, is Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation: The Apocalypse through Hebrew Eyes* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 28–29 and *passim*.

overall structure of the book of Revelation, but only briefly discussed the prophetic application of these letters to church history.³ The present study is an attempt to provide further exegetical support for the approach there outlined by examining the letter to Laodicea as a test case. Following a brief summary of the most salient points from that article, it will be argued that literary, historical, and archaeological information combined contribute toward understanding the prophetic application of a given letter which in turn helps illuminate similar apocalyptic images that appear in later sections of the book.

Overview of the Seven Letters

The letters to the seven churches should be seen within the larger structure of the book and, more particularly, in connection with the specific time references in Rev 1:19 and 4:1 which indicate that these letters concern (from a first-century viewpoint) both present circumstances and the future, while what follows from 4:1 onward primarily concerns the future.⁴ Furthermore, the fact that these letters are from Jesus Himself, that they use apocalyptic imagery from the vision of 1:9–20 and exhibit a fixed structure, symmetry, and chiasmic arrangement, that they address universal concerns, not just matters of local interest, as well as that they represent the first of the four septets of the book, suggest that, like the rest of Revelation, they were meant to be understood prophetically.

Comparing the seven letters with Christian history, we find that they seem to fit well the condition of the church in successive periods, beginning as they do with a “first love” experience, reminiscent of the apostolic era but waning in John’s time, and concluding with a description of materialistic abundance fitting the modern-day church. The progressive depiction of church history in these letters from the second century onward was outlined previously as follows:

³ Clinton Wahlen, “Heaven’s View of the Church in Revelation 2 and 3,” *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 9/2 (2006): 145–56. On the broader question of using a historicist approach to the book as a whole, see now Richard A. Sabuin, “Historicism: The Adventist Approach? A Response to the Challenges to Historicism,” *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 11/2 (2008): 159–74.

⁴ So also *ibid.*, 170. Whether or not the first *καί* in 1:19 should be read epexegetically (*ibid.*, 170 n. 60) does not affect the larger conclusion that the letters also have a prophetic application.

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The persecution described in connection with Smyrna fits well Rome's persecution of Christians in the early centuries which was followed by the assimilation of the pagan Roman culture into Christianity evidently reflected in the syncretistic tendencies plaguing Pergamum and Thyatira The letter to Thyatira is notable for its length, which fits well the long period of church dominance during the Middle Ages. . . . [It is also where] we first hear of "faith" and "love" and that Thyatira's last works are said to exceed the first ones—a description that fits well the onset of the Reformation (2:19). . . . By the time of Sardis, reforms have stalled and appear near death. Finally, the appellations with which Jesus describes himself to the Philadelphian and Laodicean churches, rather than pointing backward to chapter one, point forward to judgment and the second advent.⁵

It is this last sentence, especially in reference to the letter to Laodicea, which will be elaborated upon in this study. As will become evident, it is not just the initial appellations of Jesus, but also a number of other indicators in the letter that suggest an application to the time of the judgment and the second advent.

A Closer Look at Laodicea

The letter to Laodicea as the seventh of the sequence mentioned in Rev 2–3 suggests completeness.⁶ Being the *last* church of the seven, like the seventh item of the other septets, it also suggests finality. This thought is further underscored by the appellation of Jesus as "the Amen" (3:14), a word used in four of the remaining seven times in Revelation, as in the NT

⁵ Wahlen, "Heaven's View of the Church in Revelation 2 and 3," 155; similarly Edwin Reynolds, "Now is the Time! The Eschatology of the New Testament," *Asia Adventist Seminary Studies* 2 (1999): 85–93, esp. 91.

⁶ Use of the number "seven" to signify completeness, found also in Babylonian, Assyrian, and Ugaritic traditions, conforms to the number's significance in the OT (E. Otto, "שבע *šeba*"; "שבועות *šābū'ōt*," *TDOT* 14: 336–67 here 351). The use of seven not only in connection with divinity (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6), but also in connection with anti-God imagery (12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 9, 11) seems to suggest the completeness of divine perfection on the one hand and of evil and imitation of the divine on the other (Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, "ἐπτά κτλ" *TDNT* 2:627–35 here 632).

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more generally,⁷ to conclude a statement as its last word.⁸ In the three remaining instances it affirms the truthfulness of what has just been said.⁹ This is also the way Jesus uses the word in the Gospels, except that there it is in reference to what He is *about to say*.¹⁰ The word is also associated with oaths in legal contexts¹¹ and probably alludes to the “God of truth [אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֶת]” who creates new heavens and a new earth in Isa 65:16–17,¹² a passage which connects the appellation with the eschaton as it is presented in Rev 21–22.

The reference to Jesus as “the faithful and true witness,” appears in an almost identical form as a title of Jesus in Rev 19:11, where it depicts His second advent and His coming to execute judgment.¹³ By contrast, the last appellation in Rev 3:14, “the *beginning* [or origin, ἀρχή] of God’s creation,” seems to have no connection whatsoever with the end. One might see this appellation in light of similar divine titles in Revelation (“the Alpha and the Omega,” “the First and the Last,” “the Beginning [ἀρχή] and the End”),¹⁴ except that then we might expect this title to be listed first and “the Amen” last. As it is, the opposite order is striking: the title that refers to the beginning is at the end and the title that refers to the end is at the beginning. Another possibility is that this third title, despite the explicit reference to

⁷ Rom 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 16:27; Gal 1:5; 6:18; Eph 3:21; Phil 4:20; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim 4:18; Heb 13:21; 1 Pet 4:11; 5:11; Jude 25.

⁸ These include a doxology (1:6), a solemn affirmation (1:7), and a prayer (7:12); also 5:14, concluding the doxology in the preceding verse. Cf. R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John with Introduction, Notes, and Indices also the Greek Text and English Translation*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, [1920]), 1:19.

⁹ Rev 7:12; 19:4; 22:20 (also perhaps 5:14); cf. use of אֱמֶת in Jer 11:5; 28:6; Ps 106:48; Neh 8:6.

¹⁰ It occurs a total of twenty-five times in John, where it is always doubled: “Amen, Amen” (e.g., John 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24, 25, etc.); a single “Amen” is used by Jesus similarly in Matthew (31 times), Mark (13 times), and Luke (6 times).

¹¹ Num 5:22; Deut 27:15–26; 1 Kgs 1:36; Neh 5:13; Jer 11:5; cf. 1QS I:20; 2:10, 18, etc.

¹² E.g., G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 298–300; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 203.

¹³ The word “witness,” which appears in Revelation in connection with the testimony of Jesus (1:5; cf. 1:2, 9), is absent but unnecessary here as the additional title “The Word of God” appears at the end of the description (19:13).

¹⁴ Rev 1:8; 21:6; 22:13.

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Jesus as the Origin¹⁵ of God's creation (κτίσις, used only here in Revelation), may in fact also be connected with the eschaton. Apart from the song of the elders in Rev 4:11, the only other use of κτίζω is in 10:6, which emphasizes the nearness of the end.¹⁶ The creation is also referred to in the final proclamation before the coming of Jesus (Rev 14:7; cf. vv. 14–16). Seemingly, creation becomes an issue at the end, an idea suggested also in 2 Pet 3:5. In Rev 13–14, the final test connected with the mark of the beast hinges on true versus false worship. There even seems to be an attempt by the second beast to imitate creative power by giving “breath” (πνεῦμα) to the image of the beast so that it appears to be alive (13:15; cf. Gen 2:7). It is this issue surrounding true worship of the Creator with which the messages of all three angels in Rev 14:6–12 is ultimately concerned and which is already hinted at as an issue at the end by referring to Jesus as the ἀρχή of creation.

This latter passage, with its mention of the commandments and the Sabbath commandment of Exod 20:11 in particular,¹⁷ suggests that connected with this call to worship the Creator is a renewed emphasis on the Sabbath as the outward sign of loyalty to Him. The importance of obedience is especially stressed in this section of the book (Rev 12:17; 14:12). Therefore, it is probably no accident that the *seventh* church is called by the Creator to enjoy a closer relationship with Him,¹⁸ symbolized with eschatological overtones¹⁹ by eating together (3:20),²⁰ at the time when a general call to worship on the *seventh* day is to be given to the world. The

¹⁵ So the NRSV translates it; cf. Charles, 94 (“origin” or “primary source”); similarly, Osborne, 205. Intertextual connections with ἀρχή include John 1:1–3; Col 1:15–18; Heb 1:10.

¹⁶ The eschaton is in view regardless of whether the pronouncement is translated “There should be time no longer” (KJV and KJ21) or “There will be no more delay” (NRSV).

¹⁷ See Jon Paulien “Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 9/1-2, 1998): 179–86.

¹⁸ See Wahlen, 151.

¹⁹ Frequently observed include allusions to the “door” in connection with judgment (Matt 24:42; James 5:9) and the messianic banquet (e.g., Matt 8:11; Luke 12:35–38; Rev 19:9).

²⁰ Shared meals feature prominently in Jesus’ ministry (Mark 2:15–17; 6:41–42; 14:22–25; Acts 1:4) and worship in the early Christian church (Acts 2:42, 46; Jude 12). See James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, Vol. 1 of Christianity in the Making (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 600–601; Tim Wiarda, “Revelation 3:20: Imagery and Literary Context,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 38 (1995): 203–12.

timing of this call, which began in the mid-1800s, is remarkable in light of modern challenges, beginning at about the same time, to the Genesis creation account.

Another important emphasis of both the letter to Laodicea and Rev 14 is the gospel message (3:17–19; 14:6–7). While the call to repentance is present in many of the letters to the churches (but not all),²¹ references to works whether explicitly or implicitly are in all of them.²² However, the need of forgiveness or cleansing is rarely even implied, though the introduction to the book and scattered references elsewhere clearly refer to the sacrifice of Christ (1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 14:3–4; 19:8; 22:14). The only explicit reference to the gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) or the preaching of it (εὐαγγελίζω), other than Rev 14:6 (in which both the noun and the verb occur), is in Rev 10:7, which, as we have seen, is also an end-time context.

Assuming these seven churches have symbolic significance,²³ a comparison of this letter with the ancient city of Laodicea presents some striking contrasts. While the city was famous for its *black* woolen garments,²⁴ the church needs *white* raiment, which, based on usage of the word ἱμάτιον earlier in this chapter, refers to the development of Christian character (3:4–5; cf. 19:8).²⁵ At the same time, those who are ultimately victorious have made their garments white by washing them in the blood of the Lamb (7:14; cf. 22:14), suggesting the necessity of both justification and sanctification. Without these white garments, Laodicea's current condition of nakedness will leave her unready for the return of Christ, who

²¹ The letters to Smyrna and Philadelphia are glowingly positive with apparently no need to repent.

²² Most occurrences of ἔργον in Revelation (12 of 20) are found in these letters. Even “love, faith, service, and patient endurance” are classed as “works” (2:19).

²³ See Wahlen, “Heaven’s View of the Church in Revelation 2 and 3,” 154 and n. 34; idem, “Letters to the Seven Churches,” 13.

²⁴ W. M. Ramsey, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and Their Place in the Plan of the Apocalypse* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1906), 429. See Strabo, 12.8.16; Vitruvius, 8.3.14.

²⁵ Various words are used for clothing in Revelation. In John’s initial vision, Jesus is clothed in the priestly ποδήρης (1:13). Those who are vindicated in the judgment and victorious are clothed in long white robes (στολαί, 6:11; 7:9, 13–14; 22:14). Fine linen clothing (βύσσινος) is associated with both Babylon (18:12, 16) and the New Jerusalem (19:8), as well as the heavenly armies (19:14), but only in the latter two instances is this clothing called “pure” (καθαρός). Similarly, the angels who pour out the seven last plagues are clothed in pure linen (λίνον καθαρόν, 15:6).

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will come like a thief (16:15).

The other two needs of Laodicea likewise stress the nearness of the end. Although the ancient city was so prosperous that it needed no assistance from Rome to rebuild following a devastating earthquake in AD 60²⁶ and the church itself boasts of its wealth, Jesus says it is poor²⁷ and in need of “gold tried by fire,” which represents a faith proven through trial (1 Pet 1:7; cf. Luke 18:8)²⁸ and purified (πεπυρωμένον).²⁹ This alludes to the testing that will occur in connection with the mark of the beast (Rev 13:10; cf. Dan 3:17–18, 25), resulting in a people who have “the faith of Jesus” (Rev 14:12). The anointing (ἐνχρίω) with eyesalve symbolizes the gift of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20, 27; cf. Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38),³⁰ which “destroys self-deception and restores spiritual vision.”³¹ In an end-time context, it may refer to a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:17). With this in mind, the fact that the word used for the eyesalve (κολλ[ο]ύριον) also refers to that which could be “stamped with the physician’s seal” as well as to the “fine clay on which a seal can be impressed”³² may be significant. The seal of God, given to God’s faithful, end-time remnant of “Israel” (Rev 7:2–8) stands as the positive counterpart to the mark of the beast given to those who participate in false worship. The faithful ones are later shown singing the Song of Moses and the Lamb, a

²⁶ See Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.27; Craig S. Keener, *Revelation* (The NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 160.

²⁷ For David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5* (WBC 52A; Dallas: Word, 1997), 1:259, this tension suggests the need for a figurative interpretation.

²⁸ So also Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St John: The Greek Text with Introduction Notes and Indices* (2d ed.; London: Macmillan, 1907), 74; Wilfred J. Harrington, *Revelation* (SP 16; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 75.

²⁹ Its OT use is frequent in this sense (Ps 26:2; 66:10; Isa 1:25; Zech 13:9; cf. Mal 3:2–3).

³⁰ So Ekkehardt Müller, *Der Erste und der Letzte: Studien zum Buch der Offenbarung* (Adventistica 11; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2011), 136; Oral Edmond Collins, *The Final Prophecy of Jesus: An Introduction, Analysis, and Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (rev. and corr. ed.; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 97 (pointing to 2 Cor 2:6–16; 2 Cor 4:4).

³¹ Swete, 63, referring to the ἐλεγχμός of the Holy Spirit in John 16:8–11.

³² LSJ 972.

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song of their exodus-like experience of deliverance.³³

There appears to be an intensification of the warnings of Christ's soon coming in the letters to the seven churches.³⁴ The same warning of Jesus coming like a thief is given to Sardis (3:3) but in the larger context of the letter His coming is still clearly future. Sardis is also admonished to wake up, because although there are "a few" whose garments are pure,³⁵ the church as a whole is dying. To the church at Philadelphia, Jesus promises that His coming is "soon" (ταχύ, 3:11).³⁶ And to the Laodiceans, Jesus is already standing at the door (3:20), emphasizing that His return is now very close indeed (cf. James 5:9) and that the heavenly banquet is just about ready to begin (3:20).³⁷ The present perfect form of the verb (*hestēka*) suggests that Jesus has been standing at the door for some time, waiting for the door to be opened (cf. Luke 12:35-38).

This invitation to sup (δειπνέω) with Christ in 3:20 points "to eschatological union with the Friend who is welcomed in, the Lord of the *parousia*."³⁸ It also makes clear who is waiting for whom—that Jesus is waiting for each individual (shown by use of the singular) to open the "door" to more intimate fellowship with Him.³⁹ The cognate noun δειπνον

³³ The 144,000 are the only ones who receive this end-time seal (7:4; 14:1, 3). Those Laodiceans who "buy" these *gifts*, that is, they accept Jesus' counsel, are "bought" or redeemed from the earth at last (14:3-4).

³⁴ Apart from the book's introductory reference to the second coming (1:7), two early references to Jesus' "coming" are figurative references to Christ's judgment of His people (2:5, 16). Like the promises to the overcomers, it is assumed that the outcomes of the judgment will be dispensed at the Parousia (22:12).

³⁵ The term "few" (ὀλίγος) is sometimes used in the Gospels in the sense of a remnant (Clinton Wahlen, "Remnant in the Gospels," in *Toward A Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective* [ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez; Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009]) which, together with the use of οἰκός in 2:24; 3:2, may suggest that a remnant is beginning to form, becoming more fully manifest in the churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea (cf. 12:17).

³⁶ At the same time, the letters give no more specific time indication as to how soon that "soon" might be (2:5, 16, 22-23; 3:3, 11).

³⁷ So also Ekkehardt Mueller, "Jesus and His Second Coming in the Apocalypse," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 11/1-2 (2000), 210; Swete, 63-64, referring to Luke 12:36 and (by way of contrast) 13:25.

³⁸ Johannes Behm, "δειπνον, δειπνέω," *TDNT*; 2:34.

³⁹ That the timing of the second advent is to some extent contingent on the activity and/or readiness of the church is also suggested elsewhere in the NT (Matt 24:14; 2 Pet 3:9, 12).

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appears only twice, and both these occurrences are in Rev 19 which describes the second advent. One refers to the judgment of the wicked where the birds feed on their corpses at “the supper of the great God” (19:17). The other instance describes “the marriage supper of the Lamb” (19:7–9). Here, as in Jesus’ parable of the marriage supper (Matt 22:11–12), the requirement of wearing the wedding garment is emphasized, pointing to an end-time judgment which assesses the readiness God’s people who have been invited to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb.⁴⁰

Another image connected with eating that links holiness and judgment is Jesus’ threat to vomit out Laodicea because of its lukewarm, non-committal attitude (3:16). A significant intertext for this passage is found in the so-called “holiness code” of Leviticus (chaps. 17–26). Israel is called to holiness so that the land to which they are journeying will not vomit them out as it did the Canaanites who were before them (18:28; 20:22). Obviously, in the case of Laodicea, any such negative judgment must occur before entering the heavenly Canaan since Revelation pictures paradise as being free not only from sin and sinners (21:8, 27) but from sorrow, pain, and death (21:4). The pre-advent timing of this judgment is confirmed in the book’s final chapter when, following the ominous pronouncement that those who are evil and those who are righteous should remain thus, Jesus promises to recompense all for what they have done at His coming (22:11–12).

Even the final promise, that those who are victorious in Laodicea will sit with Jesus on His throne, points unequivocally to the end times. The only other place in Revelation where redeemed individuals are described as sitting on thrones with Christ is in the millennial judgment scene of Revelation 20.⁴¹ This special privilege is theirs apparently because, in the

⁴⁰ While the New Jerusalem is called the “bride” (21:2, 9–10), it is only thus when populated with the redeemed. City and People are an inseparable image in the OT antecedent prophecies alluded to here (Isa 54; 62:1–4). This observation helps to explain why God’s people are only “guests” to the wedding in Matt 22:10–11.

⁴¹ Those “beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God” (20:4, ESV) may allude specifically to those slain by Babylon in the end time (17:6; cf. 13:15). In a broader sense, those who are raised in the first resurrection are also said to reign with Christ in the sense that, like Him, they have been victorious over the grave and the second death has no power over them (20:6).

final test, they refused the mark of the beast and thus received the seal of God (20:4).⁴²

Conclusion

The letters to the seven churches prepare readers for understanding the later chapters of the book of Revelation so that when read together they are mutually interpretative. The present study has identified numerous terminological and literary connections in the letter to Laodicea to the eschatological portions of the book.

The appellations of Christ in v. 14 point to issues connected with the reception of the seal of God for worshiping God as the Creator in contrast to those who receive the mark of the beast. In this end-time context, the references to those who keep God's commandments are especially pertinent. The prerequisite for this obedience is the proclamation of the gospel, which is implicit in the symbols employed in the counsel to Laodicea but explicitly announced by the angels in Rev 10 and 14. While some of the other letters contain references to the second advent, the letter to Laodicea has the most urgent reference, with Jesus Himself standing at the door, knocking and waiting. In a single brilliant stroke, the invitation to sup anticipates the two alternative destinies, represented by the two suppers of Rev 19, based on each individual's response to Jesus. The threatened judgment recalls the warning given to Israel as they prepared to enter Canaan, while the promised reward refers directly to the unique privilege of sharing in Christ's work of judgment granted only to those who are victorious in the last great contest over the beast and his image.

While occasional glimpses of the end-time can be seen in some of the other letters, the message to Laodicea is unique in terms of its sustained and consistent clustering of eschatological images. In particular, no other letter is so closely tied to the crucial central chapters of Rev 12–14 and the climactic suppers of Rev 19. These are also the primary contexts of the book that describe the second advent in detail. Judging from this test case at least, it would appear that the prior study, which suggested a prophetic interpretation for these seven letters (applying to successive periods in the history of the Christian church), appears to be confirmed.

⁴² Cf. Wahlen, "Heaven's View of the Church in Revelation 2 and 3," 153.

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Judging from this test case at least, it would appear that the letters' applicability to the seven churches to which they are addressed, far from undermining the prophetic interpretation suggested here actually supports it. The prior study upon which this investigation builds suggested that these seven letters are to be understood principally as prophetic oracles applying to successive periods in the history of the Christian church.⁴³ Our close examination of the letter to Laodicea confirms that proposal, showing that the imagery by which Jesus is described in the seventh letter, as well as that which is used of the seventh church, has its correlates in the portions of the book that deal with events surrounding the second advent and the final rewards given at that time. In short, these letters seem to employ physical and spiritual characteristics of the seven cities/churches themselves parabolically of the future experience of the church, the recognition of which can assist the interpretation of apocalyptic symbolism in later chapters.⁴⁴

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⁴³ Wahlen, "Heaven's View of the Church in Revelation 2 and 3," 154-55; cf. Stefanovic, 155.

⁴⁴ This is not unlike Jesus' use in Matthew 24:4-31 of the destruction of Jerusalem "as a type of the end of the age," which assists the interpretation of the parable and warnings which follow (vv. 32-51). See Richard M. Davidson, "'This Generation Shall Not Pass' (Matt 24:34): Failed or Fulfilled Prophecy?" in *The Cosmic Battle for Planet Earth: Essays in Honor of Norman R. Gulley*, ed. Ronald A. G. du Preez and Jifi Moskala (Berrien Springs, MI: Old Testament Department, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2003), 307-28.

