

## Laodicea

### Int.

1. Aim: to give background information about the city, exegete the verses and make some applications to us today!
2. Seventh of the 7 churches of Asia - Rev. 2 & 3    Rev. 3:14-22
3. Establishment of the church
  - a. Probably between A.D. 52 and 63
  - b. Paul's second missionary journey probably began in 52 A.D. and he visited in this region though no mention is made of coming to Laodicea
  - c. A.D. 63 was the date of the letter to the Colossians and the church in Laodicea was mentioned - Col. 2:1    4:13-16 - it was in existence before this
  - d. The church was in a deplorable condition at the time of this writing
  - e. The church could have been started by Epaphras, Onesimus, Philemon, Archippus or Paul
4. The City of Laodicea [wool, medicine, gold]
  - a. Establishment - about 250 B.C. by Antiochus II in honor of his wife Laodike, by whom he was afterwards poisoned.
  - b. Under Roman rulership during time of writing
  - c. On great Eastern highway
  - d. Industries
    - i. Woolen - special breed of sheep raised in area that produced some of the best wool in the world! It was woven into cloth of all sorts.
    - ii. Medicine - they made a special kind of eye-salve that was exported to all parts of the world - it was called Phrygian powder.

- iii. Gold - Well established banking system - it was the "Wall Street" of Asia Minor
- e. Had many large and significant buildings
- f. So wealthy that when destroyed by an earthquake in 61 A.D. they refused Roman help and rebuilt the city by themselves

## 5. The LETTER

- a. Int. of speaker, condemnation, rebuke, counsel or advice, promises of Jesus, and conclusion
- b. Only one about which he had nothing good to say.
- c. Just the opposite of Philadelphia

## Discussion

### **I. INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER** - 3:14

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;"

- A. To the angel of Laodicea
- B. Three attributes of the speaker:
  - 1. **The Amen** -
    - a. So be it - verily, of a truth
    - b. Used often as a title of God - II Cor. 1:20
    - c. It would mean that what Jesus affirms is certain, true, and faithful
  - 2. **The Faithful and True Witness**
    - a. Faithful = one who can be trusted to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
    - b. True = he can discern the hearts
    - c. Witness = a testifier of a doctrine

### 3. The beginning of the creation of God

- a. This does not mean that Christ was the first thing created
- b. Jesus was in the beginning with God in creation
- c. He was the originating source of all that has been created
  - (1) Jn. 1:1
  - (2) Col. 1:15-16
  - (3) Gen. 1:26 "let us"

## II. **CONDEMNATION** v. 15-16

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

### A. I know thy works

1. Divine knowledge
2. Thy works- He knows what is happening in the church
3. There was nothing good to say - in the others he praised before condemning

### B. Thou art neither cold nor hot

1. Cold = sinner - to grow cold, Mt. 24:12
2. Hot = dedicated Christian - boiling hot, glowing with zeal, fervent
3. They had reached the middle point and had stalled there
  - a. They viewed attendance as paying up one's fire insurance policy for another week
  - b. They were a people of "compromise".
  - c. Religion was a side issue and it must not get in the way of business or pleasure

- d. They would probably say:
- (1) You worship your god and I'll worship mine. One is as good as another
  - (2) The Zeus worshipers might say "Yes I hate for another to say his god and his religion are the only right ones".
  - (3) This lukewarm brother would agree

**C. I would thou wert cold or hot**

1. Why would God prefer this?
  - a. Hot = zealous is what he wants all to be
  - b. Cold= would be the opposite
  - c. Would it not be better to be just a little warm or lukewarm than to be cold?
2. Christ says NO!! Why?
  - a. If a person was cold they could see their lost condition more easily
  - b. A sinner and a lukewarm Christian are both lost
  - c. But a lukewarm Christian is self-satisfied and thinks he is saved
  - d. The lukewarm Christian will do harm to the church.
    - (1) The Hypocritical church member influences more people against the truth than a cold sinner
    - (2) Some refuse to become Christians for as they say "we are better than some in the church", referring to these lukewarm Christians
3. Christ does not want any person to be lost. But it is easier to show an outright sinner that he is lost and needs to obey the truth than it is to show a lukewarm Christian!- I I Pet. 2:20-22

**D. Because thou art LUKEWARM**

1. Lukewarm - only used here in Bible
  - a. Means tepid, warm, - afforded no refreshment as is ministered by either cold or hot water
  - b. Springs near Laodicea - some hot others cold and some lukewarm
2. They were indifferent - half hearted Christians
  - a. We don't want to get involved - want to be in the middle
  - b. III. - Man in Civil war couldn't make up his mind about which side to join. So he put on Gray trousers and a Blue coat. The Confederates shot him in the back, and the Federals shot him in the Pants
  - c. I Kings 18 - Elijah
  - d. Mt. 6:24
3. They were a little too cold to be hot and a little too hot to be cold
4. They were a little too bad to be good and a little too good to be bad.
5. Being lukewarm was revolting and nauseating

**E. I will spue thee out of my mouth**

1. I am about to - I am at the point of
2. Spue - vomit - reject with extreme disgust
3. Their lukewarmness had made Christ sick. He could not stomach their indifferent attitude
4. These Christians at Laodicea had fallen
  - a. Proving a Christian can fall from grace
  - b. This church did nothing and was lost

- c. The members were dead, indifferent and that was their sin
- d. They were lost spiritually
- e. They were not infidels - but they were not earnest believers
- f. They did not oppose the gospel - but neither would they defend it.
- g. They were not really immoral but they were not distinguished for holiness
- h. They were middle of the roaders.

### **III. REBUKE** v. 17

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:"

A. They said:

#### 1. **We are rich**

- a. Materially they were - which was just the opposite of the church at Smyrna
- b. They said they had need of nothing
- c. This does not sound like people who are spiritually rich, for this would be self righteousness and would not be pleasing to God

#### 2. **And increased with Goods**

- a. Lk. 12:20-21
- b. These people were putting their trust in riches

#### 3. **Have Need of nothing**

- a. They thought they had attained perfection spiritually
- b. They had everything they wanted - and were therefore independent!

4. Riches - may refer to material and spiritual
  - a. Those who are rich materially are sometimes too self confident
  - b. I Tim. 6:10
  - c. The riches of these Laodiceans had blinded them of their actual condition

## B. They were DECEIVED

1. Knowest Not:
  - a. They were the opposite of what they thought they were
  - b. Do not realize their real condition and the results
  - c. Ill. preacher with no education prayed "Lord I thank thee that I am ignorant, make me ignoranter still." One man said that the Lord had a hard job on his hands!
2. Wretched:
  - a. Miserable
  - b. Oppressed with a burden
  - c. The burden they carried was the wealth that they thought carried them
  - d. Today we talk about churches burdened with debts, here was one burdened with wealth
3. Miserable
  - a. To be pitied
  - b. Even though Christ was condemning them he still had love for them
4. Poor -beggar
  - a. Poverty - destitute in need and want
  - b. Spiritually poor - though boasting of no needs

- c. Smyrna was a rich “poor” church in contrast to Laodicea that was a POOR “rich” church
5. Blind
- a. Spiritual blindness
  - b. Because they could not see their own condition
  - c. Near sighted = could see nothing afar off
6. And Naked
- a. Without spiritual clothing
  - b. Their souls were not clothed with salvation, holiness and purity
- C. This was the real picture
- 1. They said we are rich, Jesus said you are poor
  - 2. They said we have gotten riches and have need of nothing, Jesus said you are blind and naked.
- D. Laodicea had not, but knew not that it had not.
- E. Laodicea knew not, but knew not that she knew not.
- F. Laodicea saw not, but saw not that she saw not.
- G. Laodicea was ignorant, but was ignorant of her ignorance
- H. Laodicea was blind, but was blind to her own blindness.

#### **IV. COUNSEL OR ADVICE** v. 18-19

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

##### **A. I Counsel thee to buy of me:**

1. Counsel - advise, exhort - he was not forcing them, but advising - they were free to make their choice
2. Buy of me
  - a. Jesus invites them to come and buy the true riches
  - b. What's the price? It will cost them their self righteousness plus the proper use of their time, money and talents!
  - c. Phil. 3:7-8
  - d. Buy = does not mean they would earn

##### **B. Three things they need to buy**

##### **1. GOLD tried in fire**

- a. Gold represents true Christianity
- b. The kind that can be laid up in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal - Mt.6:20
- c. Seek the true riches -- we today think that sometimes we are rich, but our wealth is like "play" money children buy at the store

## 2. **White Raiment - to be clothed**

- a. Though dressed physically with the finest garments - they were naked spiritually
- b. White = righteousness, salvation, pureness
- c. Shame of thy nakedness do not appear
  - (1) Physically
  - (2) Spiritually - righteousness prevents the shameful life of hypocrisy
- d. Laodicea made black garments which covered the body. God's white garments covered the soul.

## 3. **Eyesalve**

- a. They made a product there to cure physical eyes.
- b. But they needed some eyesalve from Christ to cure their spiritual blindness
- c. The Great Physician could open their eyes!

C. Christ was telling the Laodiceans what they really needed!!

D. Love = Rebuke & chasten v. 19

- 1. Term used to express God's love
- 2. Heb.12:6 "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."
- 3. If he didn't love them, he would let them alone
- 4. Reprove - discipline is natural
- 5. Chasten - educate or instruct by use of correction

### E. Be zealous and repent

1. They were lacking zeal - get hot boil
2. Repentance leads to a change of life - change from lukewarmness to being zealous
3. Repent or else I'll spue thee out of my mouth

### V. PROMISES OF JESUS V. 20-21

"Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

#### A. Jesus standing at door

1. Behold -he is getting their attention
2. The people have cast him out - He is now at the door seeking entrance
3. He is knocking on the heart of each individual and will take them back as they open their heart to Jesus

#### B. If any man hear and open - I will come

1. Voice - Jesus speaks to us through the scriptures - Rom. 10:17
2. We must let him in - he will not break down the door
3. Mutual fellowship

#### C. Overcometh = overcome lukewarmness

1. Sometimes it would mean laying down their life just as Christ did!
2. He admonishes them to overcome even if it meant death

D. Throne = Christ overcame temptation and death

1. Symbolizes victory - highest state of glory
2. If they overcame they would be allowed to sit with God on his throne

## **CONCLUSION**

1. V. 22 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
2. Lessons we can learn from the letter to the church at Laodicea:
  - a. Contrast of spiritual conditions and material conditions
    - (1) Clothing & Nakedness
      - (a) Laodicea was famous for its black woolen industry
      - (b) Only Jesus had the true Robes of Righteousness
    - (2) Eyesalve & Blindness
      - (a) They could cure physical blindness
      - (b) They needed medicine from the Great Physician to cure spiritual blindness
    - (3) Gold & Poverty
      - (a) They had plenty of Gold and riches
      - (b) But they were in spiritual poverty - Lukewarm=indifferent
    - (4) Lukewarmness despised by God
      - (a) They had hot thermal springs were all around
      - (b) Jesus wanted them to get hot or be spued out!

b. Lukewarmness is a deadly sin

(1) Many consider it as a small matter but Jesus said it made him sick!

(2) Ill. - Hypothermia is the most common cause of death in mountain climbers.

Hypothermia is death by freezing! The symptoms are mild depression, fatigue, shivering, inability to perform simple tasks, staggering and falling. If you do not recognize the symptoms you may just lie down and go to sleep and die!

(3) The most common cause of spiritual death is not a sudden rebellion to God and the Christian life. Usually, an individual allows Satan to slowly enter his life until eventually, the person is lulled into a spiritual sleep. Some of the symptoms are: a dwindling prayer life, a lack of Bible study, frequent absence from Bible school and/or worship, insensitivity to personal sin, and a dependence on self rather than God.

(4) Lukewarmness will kill you!! Wake up before it is forever too late!!!!

3. 7 Churches of Asia - Summary

a. Ephesus - The distracted Church - Rev. 2:1-7

b. Smyrna - The faithful Church - Rev. 2:8-11

c. Pergamos - The persecuted Church - Rev. 2:12-17

d. Thyatira - The compromised Church - Rev. 2:18-29

e. Sardis - The shadowy Church - Rev. 3:1-6

f. Philadelphia - The Loving Church - Rev. 3:7-13

g. Laodicea - The lukewarm Church - Rev. 3:14-22

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