

The Church In Laodicea

Rev. 3:14-22

City

1. This city was located in the confines of Phrygia and Lydia.
 - a. It was on the banks of the Lycus, and was about 90 miles East of Ephesus.
 - b. It was about 11 miles west of Colossae.
2. It was not far from Colossae, and is mentioned several times in the epistle to the Colossians. (Col. 2:1; 4:13, 15-16).
3. It was named Laodicea in honor of Laodice, the wife of Antiochus II, 261-246 B.C. who rebuilt the city. It is reported she later showed her gratitude and love by poisoning him.
4. It was later destroyed by an earthquake around A.D. 66, and was rebuilt by Marcus Aurelius.
5. It is now a heap of ruins, and is called by the Turks [Eski-hissar].

Church

1. This is the seventh church addressed by Jesus in this book. (Rev. 1:11).

REV 1:11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

- a. There is no indication that any importance is placed on the order of the churches addressed.
 - b. These were not the only churches in Asia Minor, but for some reason not disclosed Jesus addressed only these seven churches.
 - c. As one would read or have read to him the book of Revelation, he would benefit from what Jesus said to each church.
2. This church is mentioned several times in the epistle to the Colossians. (Col. 2:1; 4:13, 15, 16).

COL 2:1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face,

COL 4:13 For I bear him witness that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

COL 4:15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house.

COL 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.

- a. It appears that the church at Colossae and the church at Laodicea were not established by Paul. (Col. 2:1).

COL 2:1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are at Laodicea, and for

all those who have not personally seen my face,

- b. It seems that Epaphras was the one who established or had a big part in ministering to the congregation at Colossae. (Col. 1:7; 4:12).

COL 1:7 just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf,

COL 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

COL 4:13 For I bear him witness that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

- c. Paul revealed that Epaphras also had a “deep concern” for those at Laodicea. This implies prayer and labor on their behalf.
- d. Nothing negative hinted about this church in the letter to the Colossae written about A.D. 62.
- e. The church had deteriorated through the years, and now made Jesus sick to His stomach.

Description Of Jesus

REV 3:14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

1. "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write" - See notes Rev. 2:1.
2. “The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this”
 - a. “the Amen” is “ho amen” [hah ah **mayn**]. Isaiah 65:16 has in Hebrew “the God of Amen,” that is translated by the Septuagint as “the God of truth.” See KJV, ASV
 - 1) This word is often used to mean “so be it.”
 - 2) It is also used to mean “verily, truly.” (Jn. 3:3, 5).
 - 3) These words affirm and guarantee the truthfulness of what Jesus says.
 - b. “the faithful and true Witness” - See Rev. 1:5 “the witness the faithful.”
 - 1) His witness was always true, and never fail short of the truth.
 - 2) He always spoke the words of God His Father.
 - 3) Jesus described Himself as “the truth.” (Jn. 14:6).
 - c. “the Beginning of the creation of God”
 - 1) The Greek word “arche” [ahr **kay**] is used here in the sense of the “cause” of God’s creation.
 - 2) Jesus is not a created Being, but is Eternal. (Isa. 9:6,7; Mic. 5:2; Jn. 1:1-2; 1 Jn. 1:2).

ISA 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

ISA 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

MIC 5:2 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

JOH 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

JOH 1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

1JO 1:2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--

3) God created "all things" through Him. (Jn. 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2).

JOH 1:3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

1CO 8:6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

COL 1:15 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

COL 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.

COL 1:17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

HEB 1:2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Jesus' Knowledge Of Condition Of The Church

REV 3:15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot.'

1. "I know your deeds" - "Know" is used in a negative sense in this letter.

- a. Christ knows everything good and bad about us.
- b. It is sad that Jesus had nothing good to say about this church.

2. "that you are neither cold nor hot" - They were lukewarm.

- "Lukewarm" is from "chliaros" [klee ah **rahs**] meaning "barely warm, lukewarm." It does not mean the church was doing nothing. It means their "deeds" were not acceptable. Feeling satisfied about oneself and even keeping busy is not a guarantee one is pleasing to the Lord. Busy work is not the work of God.
- "Cold" is from 'psuchros" [psoo **krahs**] meaning "cold, chilly." It can even denote cold to the point of freezing. Jesus used this word in Matthew 24:12 to describe the faith of some.
- "Hot" is from "zestos" [zeh **stahs**] meaning "hot, boiling hot. It is used in Acts 18:25 and Romans 12:11.

ACT 18:25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being **fervent** [burning] **in spirit**, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;
ROM 12:11 not lagging behind in diligence, **fervent** [burning] **in spirit**, serving the Lord;

- a. There is no hint of this in the Colossian letter.
 - b. It had deteriorated to that over the years.
 - c. Active, zealous churches can become “lukewarm” or “cold.”
3. “I would that you were cold or hot” - Jesus wishes they were either “cold or hot.”

REV 3:16 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

- 1. “So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold”
 - a. The Lord would prefer them to be boiling hot in His service.
 - b. If not “hot” He preferred them to be cold. The reason for “cold” is not explained, but it may be one that is spiritually cold is more ready to recognize his condition before the Lord and ready to change.
 - c. The lukewarm person is self-satisfied with his spiritual condition and sees no need to change, but the cold person realizing his lack of spiritually may be more receptive to the gospel and change of life.
- 2. “I will spit you out of My mouth”
 - a. The word “spit” comes from the Greek word “emeo” [eh **meh** oh] that means “to vomit, to spew.”
 - b. It is a stronger word than the Greek “ptuo” [**ptoo** oh] meaning to “spit.”
 - c. This is a church that disgusted Jesus and made Him sick.

The Church False View Of Itself Contrasted With Jesus’s View Of It

REV 3:17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

- 1. “Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"
 - a. This was evidently a wealthy church that felt it was self-sufficient.
 - b. They were blind to their true condition in the sight of the Lord.
- 2. “and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked”
 - a. Jesus multiplies negative words to emphasize their pathetic condition.
 - b. His estimation of them was the very opposite of how they viewed themselves.
 - c. They viewed themselves as being spiritually lacking in nothing, but Jesus uses five negative words to describe their pathetic spiritual state - “wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”

Note:

- 1. There is no mention of immorality or idolatry in this congregation.

2. The problem with this church was satisfaction with their lukewarmness.

Warning From Jesus

REV 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

1. "I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire" - They needed to acquire from Jesus the true riches of God's kingdom. "True riches" would be such things as the Christian graces and "the fruit of the Spirit." (2 Pet. 1:5-11; Gal. 5:22-23).
2. "that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself" - They needed to "become rich" by clothing themselves in "white garments [true Christian faithfulness]."
3. "and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed" - Laodicea prided themselves in the fine clothing they made and wore, but they were "naked" spiritually. They would be ashamed to appear naked before others, and they should be ashamed of their nakedness before God.
4. "and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see" - "Eye salve" made by the Laodiceans might soothe the eyes, but it would not help their spiritual condition.
 - a. They needed spiritual salve [God's word] that they might see themselves as the Lord saw them.
 - b. God sees differently than men. (1 Sam. 16:9).

Call To Zeal And Repentance

REV 3:19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.

1. "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline"
 - a. This is a reminder that He loved them and was going to "reprove and discipline" them.
 - b. The Lord disciplines those He loves. (Heb. 12:5-11).

HEB 12:5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him;

HEB 12:6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives. "

HEB 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

HEB 12:8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

HEB 12:9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

HEB 12:10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.

HEB 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

2. "be zealous therefore, and repent"

a. Jesus called upon them to become “zealous.”

1) “Zealous” is from “zeloo” [zay lah oh].

2) Christians are to be “zealous.” (Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 3:13).

TIT 2:14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

1PE 3:13 And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?

3) “Lukewarm” Christians repel rather than attract unbelievers to Christ.

4) Even if some are led to Christ by the lukewarm Christian, they soon become barely warm.

b. He also called upon them to “repent.”

1) It was not enough just to change. Change can be for the wrong reasons and be the wrong kind of change.

2) Repentance is produced by godly sorrow. (2 Cor. 7:10).

2CO 7:10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Jesus Knocking At The Door

REV 3:20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

1. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock”

a. The “door” is the door to their hearts.

b. Jesus is knocking at each of their hearts and wants to enter each heart.

2. “if anyone hears My voice and opens the door” - One or all could admit Jesus into his/her heart.

a. One did not have to wait for the whole church to repent to invite Jesus into his heart.

b. Each member was individually accountable to God. (Matt. 16:27; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

3. “I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me”

a. This is a promise of fellowship with the one coming to repentance.

b. What a blessing to have Jesus having sweet fellowship with the one repenting and admitting Jesus into his/her heart.

c. Jesus dwells in the heart of the Christian. (Col. 1:27; Gal. 2:20; Jn. 14:23; 2 Cor. 13:5).

COL 1:27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

GAL 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

JOH 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.

2CO 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?

Promises To The One Overcoming

REV 3:21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

1. "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne"

a. This is figurative language.

b. The sense is that we shall share in the blessings of the heavenly reign once we have ascended to be with the Lord "forevermore." (1 Thess. 4:16-18).

2. "as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne"

a. Literally Jesus ascended on high to sit exalted at the right hand of God. (Mk. 12:36; Lk. 20:42; 22:69; Acts 2:33,34; 7:55, 56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3, 13; 1 Pet. 3:22).

MAR 12:36 "David himself said in the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord,' Sit at My right hand, Until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet.' "

LUK 20:42 "For David himself says in the book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to my Lord,' Sit at My right hand,

LUK 22:69 "But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God."

ACT 2:33 "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

ACT 2:34 "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord,' Sit at My right hand,

ACT 7:55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;

ACT 7:56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

ROM 8:34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

EPH 1:20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

HEB 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

HEB 1:13 But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies A footstool for Thy feet"?

1PE 3:22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

b. He is exalted there, and has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matt. 28:18).

REV 3:22 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' "

1. "He who has an ear" - Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13.

2. "let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches "

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