

WHEN JESUS IS NO LONGER WELCOMED

The Laodicean Age - Revelation 3:14-22

Today we are going to talk about the Laodicean church. It is the last of the seven churches addressed by the Lord Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation. It was the only church with no commendation. Even the church of Sardis was commended for its past reputation of being a good church.

The Laodicean Church had departed so far from its biblical mandates that Jesus is described as having no part of the church. He is outside of the church looking in.

It should be kept in mind that the seven churches of Asia Minor were real churches operating around 90 AD. But more than that, they are in chronological order. They signify the kind of problems the church will experience in different periods of time until Christ raptures those who place their trust in Him.

First three churches differ from the last four in that they have no promise of remaining until the Lord comes. However, when we come to the church of Thyatira, we find the promise to “hold fast till I come” (Revelation 2:25). The same is true for the church of Sardis “Hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee” (Revelation 3:3). The same is true for the church of Philadelphia, “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” Revelation 3:10. Though there is no mention of the Lord coming upon the Laodicean church, the very next passage says, “After this I (John) looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither” (Revelation 4:1). Many believe this is a reference to the rapture of the church.

What age are we in? Most conservative scholars believe we are in the Laodicean Age.

THE CITY'S HISTORY:

Laodicea was a wealthy inland city about 40 miles from Ephesus. They were steeped in Greek culture and learning, and it was a thriving center of

commerce and industry. The local church must've been wealthy, as evidenced by the fact that among present day ruins there are three churches dating back to the early days of Christianity. In spite of her wealth, nothing is known of the ministry of this church. Their preaching and practice of the true gospel was apparently nonexistent.

THREE WAYS JESUS PRESENTS HIMSELF TO THIS CHURCH

As The "Amen" (Rev. 3:14a).

Amen is a Hebrew word that means "true" and carries with it the meaning of finality. In this sense, **Christ is the final truth.** That is, all of God's revelation to mankind are found in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As The faithful and True Witness (Rev. 3:14b).

The Lord Jesus is Truth, and He is the faithful witness of truth. He knows the end from the beginning. His word is absolute for He is God.

As The beginning (Ruler) of the Creation of God

The Greek word for "beginning" is ἀρχή arche, meaning ruler or first cause. Hence it points to Jesus as being the "**ruler**" of creation or the "**first cause**" of creation. The two passages below confirm this truth regarding our Lord.

Col. 1:16-17 – "For **by him (*Jesus*) were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: ¹⁷ And **he is before all things, and by him all things consist.**"

John 1:3 – "**All things were made by him (*Jesus*);** and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Therefore, Jesus is the first cause of creation, the faithful witness of everything that emanates from God, and the final authority.

THERE WAS NO COMMENDATION FOR THIS CHURCH:

The church of Laodicea had the distinction of being the only one of all the Churches **to forsake all God's truths.**

Their Condemnation:

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:15-16).

They were lukewarm. The Lord makes it clear that He was fully aware of their neutral condition. They were not hot meaning; they were not zealous in anything good. Not even in good works. Their works and faith were cold; meaning they were lifeless. Instead of being “refreshing” or “on fire” for the Lord, they were indifferent, having no spiritual power.

The Holy Spirit warned that in the last days many will be characterized as having a form of godliness but denying its power (2 Timothy 3:5).

They were deceived about themselves.

“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 (Revelation 3:17).

THE LAODICEAN DECEPTION

Material abundance is not conducive to spiritual vitality. The Laodicean church **in our day is rich**. Her churches are the finest. She has fabulous architecture, multi-million-dollar buildings, fundraising organizations, and a large (though unconsecrated) church membership.

They are wretched, miserable (Rev. 3:17c). The lukewarm church of our day often says, “I don’t want to condemn anyone by telling them Christ is the only way of salvation, that would judge them by saying their believe system is wrong.”

So, instead of grappling with the teachings of the truth of the Bible, they spend their time with social causes that have little bearing on truth and righteousness. I suspect the Laodicean church of our day would be at the forefront of all the “rights” movements and for the unity of all faith’s, i.e. (Gay rights, gay marriage, pro-choice, etc.). All of which the Bible speaks against.

They would be the ones imagining the feminization of God, culturalizing, perverting and/or censoring Scripture and the ones ordaining people that don’t belong in the ministry.

The message of our Lord is clear to such a Church: "I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16). "I will have nothing to do with you."

In reality they are poor (Rev. 3:17d) . . . spiritually poor. Even though they were rich in material things, the Laodicean church members were spiritually poor. They did not know Christ. This is in accord with our Lord's statement in Mark 8:36-38.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? ³⁷ Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸ Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

They were blind. Although the Laodicean membership thought they knew and understood God through their sophisticated education and wisdom, they did not understand the ways of God. They had abandoned the true teaching of God's word, for another gospel.

They were naked. They were clothed in expensive church robes, and enticed people with burning candles, symbols, offerings of chants, labyrinths, and the reading of creeds but they were without righteousness. They were without Christ. They were still in their sin.

CHRIST'S COUNSEL TO THEM

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried and fire" (Rev. 3:18a).

Eternal riches are not appropriated by material wealth or by works. They are only appropriated through the blood of Jesus Christ and are available by faith in Him.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye **were not redeemed with corruptible things**, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹ **But with the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: ²⁰ Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, ²¹ Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Peter 1:18-21).

“I counsel thee to buy of me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of that nakedness do not appear” (Revelation 3:18:b).

“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels” (Is. 61:10)

I counsel thee to . . . anoint thine eyes with salve, that thou mayest see” (Revelation 3:18c).

The Laodiceans were renowned for their eye ointment. What Jesus is telling them to do is to anoint their own eyes so that they may see the truth about themselves and their need for Christ.

WHAT MUST THEY DO?

Be zealous and Repent (Revelation 3:19). God loves them. He rebukes them. He chastens them (disciplines them). He calls on them to repent. That is, to have a change of mind. As the Word of God and the Spirit of God illuminates the truth about Jesus, they too must acknowledge that they are on the wrong path and in faith turn to Christ.

The Church Excluded Christ!

Jesus is outside the Church. **The church and her teachings were no longer representative of Christ.** The membership was lost. They were still in their sins. His appeal is one of the most beautiful of Scripture. It is the simplest of the plan of salvation.

“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. ²¹ 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” (Rev. 3:20-21).

The door refers to the door of our heart. That is, the center of our being. The Bible says, above all else guard your heart for this wellspring of life. IN THIS PASSAGE we find Christ knocking at the door of this emotional center asking entrance. He does not force his way in, but He is patiently knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in.

HOW DOES HE KNOCK?

Through the Word of God.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” – John 5:24

Through God’s people.

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher” (Romans 10:14)?

Through the Holy Spirit.

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me; ¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; ¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:8-11).

Through providence.

That is, God gently aligns the affairs of our life. In every circumstance He lovingly points us to our need. People may not recognize that this is Jesus gently knocking at the door of their heart, but it is true just the same.

TO HIM THAT OVERCOMES (Revelation 3:20b-22).

“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. ²² He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

AFTER THIS, THE TRUE CHURCH IS NO LONGER FOUND ON EARTH. ITS NEXT APPEARANCE IS WITH JESUS IN HEAVEN (REVELATION 19).

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.” – Rev. 4:1

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. ⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. . . ¹⁴ And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (Revelation 19:7-8, 14).