

Revelation 3:14-22

Sunday, August 22, 2020

(Pray for the family of Lydia's niece; CC Downey)

14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

I. The Christians

A. Leadership – "...and to the angel of the church..."

The Angel of the church is in reference to that pastor who's purpose was to relay the message; to the teachers whose task was to teach these words of Jesus to the church at Laodicea.

B. Fellowship – "the church of the Laodiceans..."

The church of Laodicea, was next on the postal route, 40 miles south east of Philadelphia and just 10 miles from the church in Colossae, as a matter of fact, the church of Laodicea is mentioned 4 times in Paul's letter to the Colossians.

Paul had a burden for them, even writing a letter to them (Colossians 4:16).

The city itself was known for its financial prosperity. It was situated in a fertile valley at the juncture of several important trade routes – so it amassed a considerable amount of wealth. It was so wealthy, that in the year A.D. 60, after being devastated by an earthquake, the

Laodiceans promptly rebuilt the city without making a single appeal to Rome for the customary financial aid – they had the money and they were proud of it.

We'll see later that this was the case for the **church** as well – they had big bucks, a big bank account.

Laodicea was also known for its medical school commended even by the famous philosopher, Aristotle, a school known especially for its salve used to treat those with eye conditions.

And then there was their manufacturing of cloth, garments, and carpets from the valuable wool of the local sheep, which was soft in texture, and glossy in color.

And the last noteworthy item significant to our study today is the fact that the water at Laodicea was not drinkable, so the city had its water pumped in – hot water from Hierapolis and cold water from Colossae.

By the time it reached Laodicea, it was lukewarm...we'll see the significance of this in our study today.

If you were to travel to this region today, you would find that the site where Laodicea once stood includes an elaborate fountain and a water tower supplied by an aqueduct from hot springs at the site of modern Denizli, a city 4 miles south. So even today, it's easy to calculate the lukewarm water of the aqueduct at Laodicea, the fresher, colder water at Colossae and the very hot water of the cascades at Hierapolis.

The Christians

II. The Christ

14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

A. Amen

The word "Amen" is Hebrew in origin and it simple means, "indeed," true, it's a way of confirming, and affirming something that was said. Amen?

In Jesus' case we have not only an amen in saying, but an amen in being. He's the fitting and final Word of God.

Paul the Apostle wrote this about Jesus in **2 Corinthians 1:20 (NKJV)** "For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us."

It's interesting - in Isaiah 65:16 the Bible refers to God as the God of Truth - and there the Hebrew word translated "truth" is Amen. He is the Amen. And He is about to tell the truth about the church...notice:

B. The Faithful and True Witness

We saw a little bit of this back in 1:5 - Jesus Christ the Faithful witness.

We'll see it again in 19:11, "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True..."

There's so much we could say at this point, but one of the reasons for this revelation, is if we see Jesus for who He is, we can trust His diagnosis, His verbal and circumstantial discipline, His re-direction.

As a faithful and true witness He not only tells the truth, He tells the hard truth, for faithful are the wounds of a friend.

The next characteristic of Christ reveals that He doesn't just point out our struggles, He has the power to help us through and even **out** of our struggles.

C. The Beginning/Ruler of the Creation of God

The NKJV uses the word beginning, but the Greek word, "arche" carries the idea here of originator, the one that commences or causes creation.

Our English word architect comes from this Greek word "arche" so in one sense Jesus is both Architect and Builder of all creation.

He is the 'source,' of creation (John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2).

John 1:3, "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

We see the same thing in Hebrews 1:2

Colossians 1:15 (NKJV) "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."

In one sense God is invisible; and in another sense He's not; He's seen in the incarnation and manifestation of Jesus Christ. The fact that He is the image of the invisible God (speaks of His deity) and the fact that He is the firstborn over the creation of God (speaks of His authority). Which means He bears the rights of the Firstborn.

Another English word we get from this Greek word is "Archbishop." An Archbishop is one who is in authority over

other bishops. Jesus as the arche of creation has all authority over creation.

This word is from the One who made everything, maintains everything, and holds everything together. (Colossians 1:16-17)

Colossians 1:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Would the Laodiceans therefore listen? He's not just a man, He's the Amen. He is the epitome of faithful and true, the king of all creation.

There's a big difference between a man and the Master; between the captain and Creator. These aren't just the words of some mighty guide, this is Almighty God! Over ALL creation.

They first needed to listen to the state of the church; the conviction from their judge.

III. Conviction

¹⁵ "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

Laodicea, what's true or your water is true of you.

How many times on a hot day have you longed for the cold waters of Colossae?

Of on a cold day, how a **hot** cup of tea would have done you well?

But you're neither, I love with a love you can't even begin to imagine, but as far as a church goes you're useless at your current temperature, therefore (and you probably know the feeling well) if things don't change in a hurry, Jesus said, I will vomit you out of my mouth.

It's not just irritating, it's nauseating; unacceptable.

"Spitting out is apparently a graphic metaphor representing Divine discipline." - Ron Rhodes

They chose to have one foot in the world, and another in the church, they chose to be nominal in their commitment to Christ, half-hearted, complacent Christians who had put it on cruise control.

We in America know firsthand the simplest way to get lukewarm water, just mix together a little hot, and a little cold.

We think we can have the best of both worlds.

John Stott, "Perhaps none of the 7 letters is more appropriate to the 20th century church than this. It describes vividly the respectable, sentimental, nominal, skin-deep religiosity which is so widespread among us today. Our Christianity is flabby and anemic. We appear to have taken a lukewarm bath of religion."

And it's such a battle (the movies, the music, the social media mandates and mantras of this world) and one of the biggest warning of all is the lukewarming of the church.

Sandy Adams, "Sadly, the church of Laodicea looks a lot like the church today. Neither spiritually frozen or on fire, this is

room temperature. She takes her cues from the world. But like a warm drink on a hot day God spews her out of His mouth."

I remember many years ago, that song by Steve Camp, "O Lord, take Your plow to my fallow ground, let Your blade dig down to the soil of my soul, for I become dry and dusty and Lord there must be richer earth, lying below. For I've been living in Laodicea, and the fire that once burned bright, I've let it grow dim, and the very one I said that I would die for, has been forgotten, as the world's become my friend."

(Vomit from His mouth – Jesus mouth speaks thing, makes things happen, not good)

There was an infinite difference between what they were saying and what God was saying; between what they thought about themselves and what God knew about them.

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

Complacent and Ignorant

They were kicking back, casual, carnal and without a clue.

They had a massive misconception of themselves.

What a difference between the words **"you say"** and **"you are"**

How important it is to get Jesus' perception of who and how we are!

This is why it's hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven and why it can be hard for a rich church to represent the Kingdom of Heaven.

Money can buy a lot of nice things; it can even buy people who like nice things; when scrutinized through human lenses money and things money can buy can make a church look very successful – that was the church in Laodicea.

When in all reality they spiritually wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

(wretched man that I am – Romans 7:24 = misery)

(poor what a contrast to Smyrna - Revelation 2:9) (Ephesians 1)

(blind – cannot see the Kingdom of God; spiritual things; themselves, their own nakedness; unrighteousness) (clothed Genesis 3:21; Revelation 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:3)

IV. Counsel

¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

“Buy from Me...”

It's time to get real, a new deal; it's time to do some serious business with Jesus

This gold refined in the fire is good gold – leading to true spiritual riches.

The white garments are in reference to being clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

The eye salve (have you ever had an eye infection?) (ointment) healing for our eyes to realize what's really going on. (John 9)

Wiersbe, *"As He did with the man whose account is told in John 9, Christ might even irritate before He illuminates! But*

we must submit to His treatment, and then maintain good spiritual health habits so that our vision grows keener."

(free – but does require a response)

Isaiah 55:1–3, ¹ "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ² Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread, And your wages for *what* does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is* good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. ³ Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David.

¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 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 dine with him, and he with Me.

Hopefully many of us are convicted today. May we know, it's a message motivated by love - even though these people were half-hearted, they were wholly loved, it's the relentless love of Jesus that rebukes and chastens us.

(verbal and circumstantial chastening)

Therefore be zealous (present tense imperative) and repent (flog yourself? Climb those stone stairs on your knees?)

No...just open the door – to meet and eat with Jesus.

(Imagine that – Jesus outside His church - they were excluding Him)

Song of Solomon 5:2a (NKJV) "I sleep, but my heart is awake; *It is* the voice of my beloved! He knocks, *saying,* "Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove..."

The invitation to “anyone” means He’s speaking to each and every individual.

Ron Rhodes, “If more individuals develop a close relationship with Christ, the entire church will benefit.”

21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.””

Overcomers – will rule and reign with Jesus Christ.

We must endure and overcome:

2 Timothy 2:12a (NKJV) “If we endure, we shall also reign with *Him*.”

We are called to be kings:

Revelation 5:10 (NKJV) “And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”

During the Millennial Kingdom:

Revelation 20:6 (NKJV) Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

And then we reign with Him somehow in heaven, forever and ever:

Revelation 22:5 (NKJV) There shall be no night there: they need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.