



REVELATION

Jesus Loves His Church (Part 4) | February 4, 2024

Read Revelation Chapter 3:14-22

THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA

- **Jesus has nothing good to say about the church at Laodicea**
- **The background of Laodicea:**
 1. A strong banking community and very wealthy
 2. They dyed white wool to become black and sold it all over the world
 3. Eye salves were made there to help heal hurting eyes
 4. They had an aqueduct system from Colossae (cold water) & Hierapolis (hot springs): the result was **lukewarm water**
 5. The aqueduct system made them vulnerable to enemies: compromise

Verse 14 - Who Jesus is:

1. The Amen
2. The faithful and true witness
3. The beginning/source of all creation

Colossians 1:15-20-15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

The Good about the Church at Laodicea: Nothing

The Bad about the Church at Laodicea:

- **Verses 15-16:** Jesus saw their works but was unimpressed. They were lukewarm, like the water the city was known for. And because of this, Jesus would spit them out of his mouth. They made Jesus sick.
- **Verse 17:** Their problem was spiritual pride. They depended on their wealth, prosperity, and need for nothing. Jesus called them: wretched, pitiable, poor (in spirit), blind and naked (note here the comparison with what Laodicea depended on)
- Note the connection here to the first verse to Amazing Grace!

At this point, Jesus gives us a counseling session:

Buy **HIS GOLD** (which is free, by grace)

1. Gold refined by fire
2. Receive his white garments, his righteousness, no more SHAME
3. Salve your eyes with grace so you can see Jesus's love for you
4. Accept his reproof and discipline, which shows:
 - God is near
 - You're his child
 - He cares. (Dean Smith quote: "Start worrying when I no longer discipline you. It means I've lost faith in you.")
5. Know his desire for intimacy (Verse 20) - Jesus knocking on the door:
 - Of our hearts: "anyone"
 - HIS church (the church is made up of a lot of "anyone's")

The Benefit to Overcoming/Conquering:

- Sitting on Jesus's throne WITH him (verse 21)

Verse 22: Listen up! All this is true! This is important!

Finally, some believe that each of these churches also represent an era of church history:

The 7 churches representing the “church age”

1. Ephesus: 33-100 AD

- The apostolic era
- Motion without emotion
- First love of evangelism (Romans 16:26 - whole world reached for Jesus)

2. Smyrna: 54-305 AD

- The persecuted church under 10 Roman emperors (“10 days”)
- To Gallienus: The Edict of Toleration

3. Pergamum: 312-600 AD

- Constantine: “in this thou shalt conquer..”
- A Christianized Roman Empire (accepted to be a Christian, bishops were paid, Christmas and Easter became holidays in the calendar)

4. Thyatira: 607-1520 AD

- The Dark Ages
- Idolatry, iconography, sexual license (often by popes)

5. Sardis: 1520-1750 AD

- The Protestant Reformation: sola: faith, grace, Scripture, Jesus
- Among many who didn’t really believe

6. Philadelphia: 1750 AD -today

- The advent of evangelicalism
- The worldwide missionary movement (William Carey, Hudson Taylor, C.T. Studd, etc.)

7. Laodicea: 1850 AD -today

- The advent of liberalism/progressivism in theology
- Compromise with culture, denying major tenets of the faith (the Virgin Birth, the deity of Jesus, miracles, etc)
- Lukewarm

Up to the Rapture of the church (Next week’s message): Revelation 4:1 — ”After this...”