

I. Church of Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22)

A. Historical Context - The city of Laodicea was a wealthy city being a center of banking, manufacturing (soft wool), and medicine. The city was the judicial seat of the district. This city enjoyed immense material prosperity and the majority of Christians there lived lives of ease and plenty. A famous school of medicine had developed a treatment to cure eye diseases using a locally produced eye salve. Its great weakness was the lack of a water supply. An aqueduct brought them water from a neighboring city 6 miles north called Hierapolis. Hierapolis was known for its hot springs, but the water arrived at Laodicea lukewarm and caused sickness unless boiled first. The city of Colossae was situated 5 miles to the west and was known for its refreshing pure springs of ice-cold water.

1. Revelation of Jesus – The Amen, The Faithful Witness, and the Beginning of Creation.

a) The Amen - His promises are certain and sure. Nine times John used the word amen (amhn) in the book of Revelation. It is translated as, “truly, truly, I say to you.” Amen was pronounced when one agreed with the promises and consequences of an oath. As “The Amen,” Jesus lived in perfect agreement with His Father. We in turn must relate to Jesus on His terms of perfect agreement. Jesus is the One who always agrees with God unconditionally, and He requires that we agree with Him to release His promises and purposes.

- All of the promises of God are yes and amen. All the promises of God are yes because they are true. They are amen and we are exhorted to believe in them and agree with them. Most of God’s promises and purposes for increased blessing are invitations to partnering agreement, not necessarily unconditional guarantees. (Num. 23:19-20; 2 Cor. 1:17-22; Heb. 6:13-20)

b) The Faithful and True Witness – Jesus needs this church to see him as the one who always tells the truth. He is about to tell them of their negative spiritual condition and they need to place what He tells them above their own perceptions. Jesus does not flatter or exaggerate, He has no fear of man but only speaks the truth. His actions and words are perfect and the expressed image of God. (Jhn 1:14-18, 18:37)

- c) The Beginning of the Creation of God - He is the beginning or “first” in cause and authority. In other words, power and authority over creation “begin” with Him. He is the uncreated God, like the Father and the Spirit. There was never a time He did not exist. This truth was meant to provoke the Laodiceans to humility and repentance, instead of being so impressed with their accomplishments. (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17; Rev. 1:8)
2. Affirmation for Faithfulness -This church received no commendation, a fact that makes this letter unique compared to the other six. The church of Sardis was similar however Jesus did say He had a few in that city that were wholehearted. The travesty of the believers in Laodicea is that there were seemingly none.
 3. Correction for Compromise – Luke-warmness and Spiritual Pride.
 - a) Lukewarm - Jesus desired for the believers of Laodicea to be either hot (medicinal, healing, rejuvenating like water from Hierapolis) or cold (refreshing, pure, life giving like the water from Colossae). However, they were lukewarm. The lukewarm are not wholehearted but rather halfhearted. They are generally double minded and have half their heart in this world and half their heart in God. In my own life I have become lukewarm during seasons when I insisted upon comforts, isolated myself from community, discipleship and ministry, was compromised by unchecked sin, and controlled by busyness. (Is. 29:13)
 - I will vomit you out of My mouth: This is a statement about Jesus’ emotional pain about their loss. It speaks of Jesus’ “stomach feeling sick” as in being heartsick with concern over them. Jesus is not repulsed by the people who are lukewarm, but He feels anguish in His love for them. He is heartsick (or His stomach hurt) with concern over them and what they were losing in their relationship with Him. (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19)
 - b) Spiritual Pride – They were unaware of their need for God being blinded by comforts and financial blessing. They made the common mistake of interpreting their spiritual condition through the grid of positive or negative circumstances. Assessment of our spiritual condition must primarily come from Spirit led introspection guided by the scriptures not by our current circumstances. (Ps. 139:23-24)

- We must be intentional to not allow financial prosperity to hinder our heart growth or eternal treasure. The church of Smyrna was in poverty because of persecution. Jesus however described this church as “rich” spiritually. The Laodicean church was in the exact opposite category. Jesus describes them as “wretched and poor” even though they had excess monetary resources. (Deut. 8:18; Mat. 19:21-23; 3 Jhn. 2)
4. Exhortation to Respond – Jesus brings correction and council to them because of the love (“phileo” enjoyment) He has for them. This word he uses for love is never used to speak of unbelievers but rather (“agape” unconditional goodwill) is used. Understanding that He feels this way about us, it should stir up zeal in us to repent. Zeal is needed in our resolve to make changes. Many wish they were more on fire for Jesus, but they decide to wait until later to make zealous changes because it interferes so much with their current lifestyle. (Rom. 12:11; 2 Cor. 7:10-11; Heb. 12:7; Titus 2:14)
- Buy gold refined in fire - To buy gold is to acquire costly and rare godly character and spiritual riches. These riches are eternal and holy and tenderize our heart to feel more of God’s presence. This spiritual gold is refined by the fires of testing. (Ps. 66:10-12, Song 4:16; Is. 55:1-3; Mal. 3:2-3; 1 Cor. 3:12; 1 Pet. 1:3-7; 4:12-13)
 - Buy white garments – Living lifestyles of love based obedience results in the reward of eternal garments. We all are clothed with the gift of righteousness that is imputed to us by grace through faith. However, here Jesus is speaking of voluntary acts of righteousness overflowing out of a heart of love. All believers have the robe of righteousness, yet Jesus warns us of the shame of nakedness or “lacking the reward of clothing” that reveals one’s commitment to Jesus in this age. (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Jhn. 2:28; Rev. 3:4-5, 16:15, 19:8)
 - Anoint our eyes with salve that we may see - Jesus was saying that we must take action to cure our spiritually sick eyes. Only the Holy Spirit can give us transformational revelation of Jesus and His Word. Our part is to position ourselves to see with our spiritual eyes through intentional spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, study, giving, serving, etc.. We must engage in these disciplines in a posture of humility and intimacy. (Ps. 27:8, 119:18; Jer. 29:12-13; Eph. 1:15-21)

5. Promise for Overcomers – *Dinning with Jesus and sitting with Him on His throne*. Jesus longs to give us vast comforts and royal clothing that openly express how dear and near His people are to Him. He wants to eat meals with us and desires a partner in His governmental position. Eating together and ruling together are presented together many times in scripture speaking of reigning with Him through intimacy and affection. He is desirous of giving this to those who were breaking His heart at that time. (Lk. 22:16-18, 29-30)

- I will come and dine with Him – Dining together speaks of covenant intimacy and the deep fellowship of family. This is the place where the Spirit tenderizes our heart to feel more of His love by increasing our revelation of Jesus. The eternal application of this refers to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb which is the initial experience of an eternal reality. (Ps. 23:5; Song 2:4-5; Jer. 31:12-13; Is. 25:6; Mt. 26:29; Mk 14:25; Jhn. 14:21-23; Rev. 19:9)
- Sit on His throne with Him - This promise of authoritative privilege in His kingdom is offered to all Christians. Scriptures make it clear that the level of that authority will in major part be determined by our love-based responses to His leadership in this age. These are known as our “works” of righteousness. (Dan. 7:13-14; Mt 25:31; Heb. 2:5-8)