

# THE REVELATION

MARCH 24, 2024

## Chapter 3:14-22

### G. Laodicea – The Pathetic Church (3:14a)

*Rev 3:14a "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:*

Laodicea was originally called Diospolis, the "City of Zeus", and afterwards Rhoas. It was changed to Laodicea by Antiochus II Theos, in 261-253 BC, in honor of his wife Laodice. Laodicea suffered regularly from earthquakes. During the days of Nero, in 60 AD, the city was completely destroyed. But the inhabitants declined imperial assistance to rebuild the city and restored it with their own money. Its wealthy citizens embellished Laodicea with beautiful monuments. Antiochus the Great transported 2000 Jewish families to Phrygia from Babylonia and thus many of Laodicea's inhabitants were Jews. The Laodicean Church had been founded by Epaphras of Colossi. The Church met in the beginning in the home of Nymphas for worship. Paul asked the Laodicean and Colossian Churches to trade the letters he sent to each of them and read them publically in their worship assemblies. We do not have Paul's letter to Laodicea.

During the life of Paul, Archippus (Colossians 4:17) and Nymphas (Colossians 4:15) were two of the pastors in Laodicea. But by 95 AD, we do not know the pastor's name for sure. However, the Church was like the city – wealthy.

The Church *Counsel of Laodicea* was held there from 363 – 364 AD. The city was desolate by 1450 AD, when the Church essentially ceased to physically exist even though the Roman Catholic Church kept the potential for a pastor on the books until 1968 AD. A pastor was never assigned to Laodicea after 1450 AD.

### 1. The LORD's Identification (3:14b)

*Rev 3:14b The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:*

For this seventh Church, the LORD identified Himself with four facts. First, He is the "Amen" which mean *True or Truly*. Second, He is the "faithful," meaning *Trustworthy*. Third, He is the "Witness" meaning the *martyr or one who suffers death in cause of the truth*. Fourth and finally, He is "the Beginning of the creation of God." Do not make the mistake of thinking this means that the LORD was the first creation of God, He was not. This phrase means that the LORD was *the origin or source of the creation of God*. When Wycliffe (1380 AD) and Tyndale (1525 AD) used the word "beginning" it meant *the start of something*. In other words, the LORD *started creation*. He created everything and nothing has been created by anyone but Him (John 1:3). This phrase, "the Beginning of the creation of God" was not included in the original description of the LORD found in chapter 1. There, in place of this phrase we see the words, "the first born of the dead." The LORD was both, the source and creator of creation and the first to carry on eternal life after physical death here on earth.

## 2. The LORD's Oracle to Laodicea

### a) The LORD's Acknowledgment (3:15)

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

What are you when you are not? You are nothing. The deeds of the Church of Laodicea were neither good nor bad, right nor wrong, moral nor immoral, respectable nor disrespectful. Thus, the Church was totally ineffective in the city for the cause of the LORD.

A classic example of the Laodicean Church is found in the Genesis story of Lot. When the angels arrived in Sodom, they had a difficult time even speaking with Lot. He knew they were there for Him and he tried to protect them from the debauchery he knew from his knowledge of the evil sin of the men and boys in the town. After much pleading, the angels agreed to stay in Lot's home instead of the city square. That night, the men and boys of Sodom showed their sin and the angels became impatient with them. Lot should never have been in the city. Wealthy when he arrived there, that night he became poor, lost his fortune and half of his family. He wanted the world and God too and that did not suit God at all. Lot could not decide what he wanted. It would have been better for him if he had chosen a side, but he was lukewarm about the sin of the men of Sodom. Lot was not wicked, nor was he righteous, he was nothing. So, too, were the members of the Laodicean Church. They, too, wanted the world and God at the same time, and that did not suit God at all. They were neither wicked nor righteous, they were nothing. "I wish that you were cold or hot," He said about the Church.

### b) The LORD's Complaint – Lukewarm (3:16-17)

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

The Church in Laodicea may have been nothing, but they had a major problem, they had "need of nothing," and that, in reality, meant they had no need for the LORD. They may have been wealthy in earthly terms but they were "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked," in heavenly terms. This whole pitiful world in which we live is filled with people just like those of the Laodicean Church. They just do not know how sinfully sick they are as they act like they have enough of God but do not really have any part of Him.

### c) The LORD's Advise (3:18)

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

The LORD had a bit of advice for this pathetic Church. He did not just make a suggestion to this Church. He said, "I advise you." Those, my friends were a last warning for the Church to make an immediate change. Parents use those words when their children need redirection. Employers use those words when employees need a "last ditch" turn around in their work and attitude. The LORD used those words when one of His Churches needed Salvation. Every member of this Church was in need of redemption, none were saved, no not one. In the Bible, refined gold always refers to

salvation, garments of white always mean imperishable purification and anointing of the eyes always means clarity of direction.

The Laodicean town folk were renowned for their production of an eye powder that was supposed to heal the eyes when infected. It was not a salve, but the Church would have understood that the LORD's eye salve would provide perfect and holy sight.

**d) The LORD's Promise (3:19-20)**

*Rev 3:19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; 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 will dine with him, and he with Me.*

Even though every member of this Church was lost, without a relationship with the LORD, He still loved each one. Because He loved them, He reproved (which means *to expose*) and disciplined (which means *to train*) them. Their sins needed to be exposed and they needed training, but that required a “zealous” (which means *to have a warmth or feeling for or against something*) change. They also needed to “repent” (which means *to change one's mind and heart*). To this Church the LORD made this incredible offer! “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.” The refined gold, the white garment and the eye salve could be purchased by simply opening the door. The LORD is knocking, the LORD is calling, the LORD will enter and fellowship with each person if he will just open the door. This promise was not just for the Laodicean Church members. The LORD's offer is for “anyone” who hears the LORD calling. Evidently, this letter must have shaken this Church to its foundation because it remained in the city until 1450 AD.

**e) The LORD's Gift – To Sit on the LORD's Throne (3:21)**

*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.*

The LORD's gift to this Church, as well as to everyone in the world, was the promise of a place to sit on the LORD's throne with Him and the Father. Any heart that refuses this offer must be cold and dead.

**f) The LORD's Charge (3:22)**

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

As with all the other Churches, the LORD's charge was the same. If anyone opens an ear to hear “what the Spirit” is saying to all the churches, eternal heavenly rewards await.