



The Book of Revelation: Week 9

Laodicea:

The Lukewarm Church

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Review

- We've come tonight to an important division in the Book of Revelation.
- The Lord had specific reasons for choosing these churches. In each of the seven letters, Jesus either praises the church He is writing to, or rebukes the church, or both. He makes promises to encourage people to become overcomers, and He gives strong warnings to people who were engaging in wrongdoing.
- These churches, and the problems they faced, are examples of conditions that we as believers would face down through history. Everything contained in Revelation 2 and 3, is meant to teach us how to live in the last days.
- We don't want to just be saved – we want to be overcomers, and receive the personal commendation of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Laodicea

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:

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.

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—

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.

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.

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.""

(Rev. 3:14-22 NKJV)

- Laodicea received no commendation!

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:

- Jesus always describes Himself in a way that is meaningful to that Church.
- Jesus is the Amen – the Guarantee that God will do all He has promised!
- Jesus is the True and Faithful Witness; if He endured, so can we.

- He is the beginning of the creation of God. Jesus is in fact the source of the creation of God. All things were created for his sake!
- Jesus reveals himself to the church at Laodicea in this way because He wants them to know they can still achieve the wonderful calling He gave them!
- These are three powerful truths about Him that a lukewarm and backsliding church needs to know if it is to have confidence and overcome.

15 “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

- Jesus declares to them that He knows their works: *For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.*
- But here He says a strange thing, that they are neither cold nor hot. In Laodicea there were hot springs for medicinal purposes.
- Jesus is saying to this Church – you’re good for nothing. We can’t use you to soothe people and we can’t use you to refresh people - you’re good for nothing!
- The Lord is saying: you’re not savory. You’re a flavorless dish that nobody wants... people don’t like food and drinks that are lukewarm.

16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

- Incredibly strong words from Jesus. This Church made Him sick to His stomach!

- In Laodicea, when the two waters were mixed, the result was something that made people nauseous. So, here Jesus is saying – your Christian life is something gross to me!
- Does this mean that Jesus doesn't love us or want us? No, but our life can become repugnant or even shocking to Him.
- In the Old Testament, God didn't want to expel His people from the land, but He said that when they sinned against Him enough, the land would vomit them out.
- *You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. (Lev. 20)*

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—

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.

- Laodicea was so wealthy that they literally needed no help. But what a trap! Jesus says they were completely unaware that their condition was critical.
- Wretched = in a terrible state like someone who had been condemned to slavery.
- Miserable = not that they feel miserable, because they're not aware of it – but it means that they are actually in a pitiable condition.
- Poor = they wasted their riches like the prodigal son, and are spiritual beggars.
- Blind = unable to even assess their condition any more.

- Naked = completely ashamed, when they should be covered in the beautiful garments of Christ’s righteousness which He wants to give them.
- The “deceptiveness of the gradual.” Archippus, the first bishop of Laodicea: "Say to Archippus, ‘See to it that that you fulfill the ministry which you have received in the Lord.’" (Colossians 4:17).

What is Jesus’ advice and counsel?

- First, buy some gold. This means get the true spiritual riches. Notice, He says we need to buy it from Him.
- Then, He says to get some white garments from Him. We talked about this and how it means purity and joy. Again, it can only come from Him.
- Then He says for them to anoint their eyes with eye-salve. Laodicea was also known for this eye-medicine. The Holy Spirit is that balm, that ointment.
- Be in the Word of God again. Take heed to His Word.
- Listen to wise counsel again. Start listening to the people who care about you. Look at the **Three P’s** God has put in your life... stop cursing them and start listening to them! Who are the three P’s? Your parents, your pastors and your pillars. The pillars are those mentoring, wise people that God brings to you.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

- Let’s not be discouraged when we feel He is rebuking and chastening us. It’s a sign of His love for us. “Love” here means Jesus likes you!

- He says, accept my rebuke, because I don't want anything to interfere with our companionship. The real definition of zeal is turning to Him, pursuing Christ!

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.

- He wants to dine with them. This was true fellowship.
- Church, let's open the door to Him!

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.

- The worst church has the greatest promise! How great is the love of Jesus for you and me. He is willing even now to rescue the blindest and most backsliding Christian and give him the very best of promises.
- If you overcome, you will enjoy His authority, just as Jesus overcame and enjoys His Father's authority.

22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.""

- Some concluding thoughts on the seven letters...
