

Revelation 3:14-22—Letter to Laodicea

I. Getting the Right Focus on Our Faith (Describes Jesus Christ)

- a. The 'Amen' and the faithful and true witness: one who stays true to the word
- b. The beginning of God's creation (echoes *Col. 1:15-20*); speaks both to his divine nature and his greatness; do we tend to take Jesus too lightly?
- c. Before critiquing them, Jesus reorients their understanding to who He is

II. Context

- a. Final letter: Laodicea; making a circuit, would then return to Ephesus
- b. Laodicea at junction of key trade routes north/south & east/west; they profited regular traffic and became wealthy; banking center; elite medical school
- c. One thing city lacked was good water; north was Hierapolis known for hot springs; southeast was Colosse, with cold, mountain streams for water source

III. Lukewarm

- a. Jesus' tone is one of sorrow and disgust; vomit is not too strong a word
- b. Most common interpretation:
 - i. Hot= on fire for faith and living actively for Jesus
 - ii. Cold= outright denial of faith
 - iii. Assumption: as lukewarm they are professing Christians but not actively living out their faith (on the fence); they've grown apathetic; Jesus is in essence saying 'pick a side, are you for me or not?'
- c. Also possible interpretation: both cold mountain water and hot springs water in neighboring towns were useful; Laodicean church not living out any useful God-ordained purposes; living out their own agenda, not God's
- d. We can lose sight that we are God's church, and use worship as a way to keep God at a distance, to feel like we are doing a nice act, but just going through the motions or 'playing it safe' with God
- e. Their material possessions put them into a spiritual slumber; they didn't feel they need God

IV. The Invitation

- a. I counsel you (v.18); not forced but an invitation to 'purchase'...
- b. Gold refined in the fire: real wealth that will last into eternity
- c. White garments: dressed in righteousness of Christ (not our own)
- d. Salve for eyes: able to see and discern spiritual truths: a hunger to learn each day new insights: to walk with Jesus daily
- e. V. 19—Jesus is speaking out of love
- f. V.20—an invitation to church people who have grown cold; dine with him: a sense of intimacy; do you need to renew your intimacy with Christ?
- g. Do we recognize our utter need for God? Or are we going through the motions of faith (playing church) while living self-sufficiently?