

"The Letters to the 7 Churches"

Part 9

Revelation 2:1-3:22

Introduction: Today in our study of the book of Revelation we have come to the last of the letters to the 7 churches. This letter is addressed to the church of the Laodiceans. In this letter we will find absolutely no commendation. Jesus has nothing but words of CONDEMNATION for this church.

History- This city was a very wealthy city and there were several reasons for the wealth.

1. The city was located on a major trade route running from Ephesus to Syria and the route brought many travelers.
2. The city was well-known for banking and it was a money changing center that even minted its own coins.
3. It was a city which manufactured expensive goods. They manufactured glossy black wool that was very expensive and they had a medical school which was known for the development of eye salve that was used worldwide for treating diseases.

This city was so wealthy that in AD 60 there was a massive earthquake and much of the city was destroyed. Rome offered money to help rebuild the city but the city refused the money from Rome and they rebuilt at their own expense.

Now there was a weakness within the city and the weakness was their water supply. The city lacked an adequate water supply and for that reason they had to set up aqueducts. Some of their water came from the cool springs of Colosse and some came from the hot springs of Hierapolis. The aqueducts were some 6 miles long and by the time the water arrived at Laodicea it was lukewarm. The water was too warm to drink and not warm enough to cleanse.

Now because of the water problems the city made many compromises. When an enemy would approach the city fear of losing their water supply would set in and they would compromise with the enemy.

Application:

This is what happens to many believers today. Someone rises up against them with a sinful practice and they know they need to take a stand but FEAR fills their hearts. If they take a stand there will be consequences and they are fearful of the cost of standing for Jesus Christ. So the end result is they compromise and they drift further away in their walk.

I need to remind you that there will be consequences when we take a stand. There will be a cost for the stand we take. It cost Jesus His life when He stood for the Truth so it should come as no surprise to us when it is costly for us to stand for the Truth.

1 Peter 4:12-14

¹² Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

¹³ But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

¹⁴ If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

Now let us get back to Revelation.

The Church- We do not know how this church was started but we do know that Paul had connections within this church.

Colossians 4:16

¹⁶ And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

I. The Greeting

Notice Revelation 3:14a

There is something in this greeting at the beginning which we need to see. Let me show you how the other letters begin.

Notice Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18, 3:1, 7

Each one is addressed as the church in the city which they existed, but the letter to the Laodiceans is addressed to the CHURCH OF THE LAODICEANS not the church in Laodicea. So what is the significance of this? This is letting them know that Jesus was not in their midst in the sense that they were completely out of fellowship.

Notice Revelation 3:20

This is NOT an offer of salvation as many teach. This is Jesus Christ's desire to get in and have fellowship. He had been pushed aside in their lives. So it was the church of the Laodiceans and them only because Jesus was on the outside.

Notice Revelation 3:14 again.

Jesus identifies Himself in 3 ways:

1. **The Amen.** - This speaks of certainty.
2. **The Faithful and True Witness.** - He is about to evaluate this church and what He says will be the Truth.
3. **The beginning of the Creation of God.** - He is the Creator of all things.

These 3 titles are very important. The first 2 speak of the certainty and the Truthfulness of His Word. Let us remember that He is standing and He is looking into the heart of this church so He is about to give a Truthful evaluation about what He sees. The 3rd title is a reminder to all who are in the church that He is the Creator of all things and therefore what they possess is not something they have gained on their own.

James 1:17

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Notice Revelation 3:15-16a

This church was neither cold nor hot and Jesus stated that He desired that they were cold or hot.

This church was LUKEWARM. They were saved but they had one foot in the world and one foot in the church. These people knew how repulsive LUKEWARM water was for they had experienced it from their aqueducts.

Let me tell you what had happened to this church. The wealth and the prosperity of the world had stolen away their hearts. They were completely caught up in materialism.

Let me show you the Words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 6:19-24

¹⁹ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

²² The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

²³ But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

When Jesus spoke of an EVIL EYE He was referring to GREEDINESS.

Proverbs 28:22

²² He that hasteth to be rich hath an **evil eye**, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

Deuteronomy 15:9

⁹ Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine **eye be evil** against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.

Now let us get back to Revelation.

This church was controlled by greed and wealth but at the same time they believed they were walking with the Lord. They were LUKEWARM.

Notice Revelation 3:16b

This would be the same as removing their lampstand.

Remember Jesus' Words to the church at Ephesus?

Revelation 2:5

⁵ Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Application:

We need to be reminded the dangers of getting caught up in materialism and the world especially if we attempt to live with one foot in the church.

To be LUKEWARM means we have no ministry in our lives. Let me explain. Cold water is refreshing to a parched soul. Hot water is healing to a sick soul. LUKEWARM does nothing. If we get caught up in the world and materialism then our allegiance becomes divided and we are of no spiritual use to others.

Let me show you what James said about the world.

James 4:4

⁴ Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Let me show you what God said through the Prophet Haggai to Israel:

Haggai 1:2-5

² Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.

³ Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

⁴ Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?

⁵ Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

It is IMPOSSIBLE to live for God and the wealth of this world.

Matthew 6:24

²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

If you are caught up in the world and its wealth you need to know that if you do not repent God may just set you on the shelf and you will live the rest of your life with no impact upon others.

Let me show you something.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

²⁴ Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

²⁵ *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

²⁶ *I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:*

²⁷ *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

Paul made it clear that if he did not RUN by the rules he would be disqualified. Now I have had people tell me that God would not disqualify any of His children. Let me show you an example.

Numbers 20:7-11

⁷ *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*

⁸ *Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.*

⁹ *And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.*

¹⁰ *And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?*

¹¹ *And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.*

¹² *And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.*

Moses was disqualified from bring Israel into the land of Canaan. Moses later pleaded with God to be permitted to enter.

Deuteronomy 3:23-26

²³ *And I besought the LORD at that time, saying,*

²⁴ *O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?*

²⁵ *I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.*

²⁶ *But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.*

Conclusion:

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AM Service

If you are out of fellowship and living for the world then you had better repent before you are disqualified.