

**"The Church of the Last Days"**

**Part 1**

**Revelation 3:14-22**

**Introduction:** Last week the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to where we are in the prophetic timeline of God's plan. Several of us men visited two churches this past week to look at what was available in sound and video equipment. The one church we visited made me ashamed to even look at what they had. The lighting and the sound were nothing short of spectacular. The speakers were cranked up to the point it was difficult to talk to the person standing next to you. At that church they have the capability of doing theater productions. I mean this is Hollywood stuff. As I look around in the church, I started to think of how that was just the tip of the iceberg. What they had in that church is becoming the norm. Then I began to wonder about the sermons. There was no pulpit in the front of the church. So, I went home, and I pulled up their website to listen to a message and it broke my heart.

What I listened to sounded like a modern day, popular TV preacher that always talks about things that make you feel good. He has thousands of people that attend his church and if I said the name, you would know who I am talking about. This man sounded just like him. There was no teaching at all. It broke my heart!

That little journey however opened my eyes to where we are at today. This morning we are going to look at the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3 which I referenced not too long ago. This church is a picture of what the church will look like when Jesus returns in the Rapture. As we look closely at this church, we shall see many warnings for our lives.

I just want to say that the days we are living in are not the same as they were ten years ago. There is an increase in spiritual darkness and the influence has touched all of us. It has now made its way into the church and in many churches, it is accepted as the new normal. There are so many things that we must be on guard against. This is why I wanted to look closely at the church of Laodicea.

➤ **The Condemnation**

I want to first of all point out that there is no Commendation given to this church. Jesus has nothing good to say concerning this church which is a frightful thought. This church existed and was even having service but everything they were doing was in the power of the flesh and not the Spirit. Here is a local body of believers who are just going through the motions. Something has happened that has taken away all their spiritual power and effectiveness.

**Judges 16:18-21**

*18 And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand.*

*19 And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.*

*20 And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. **And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.***

*21 But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.*

Samson had no idea that the Lord was departed from him. The church at Laodicea had no idea that God's power was removed and many today have no idea that God is not in in their church services. **They look like they are powerful, but it is all of the flesh or of Satan, who counterfeits God's power to deceive the church.**

**Notice Revelation 3:14**

Jesus identifies Himself to this church in 3 ways:

1. **The Amen.** - It means "a reliable support".

*The basic root idea is firmness or certainty. It expresses the basic concept of support and is used in the sense of the strong arms of the parent supporting the helpless infant.*

Jesus is our Reliable Support in any situation that we are going through. It is of special meaning in that He used this title when speaking to this lukewarm church.

2. **The Faithful and True Witness.**

This would let them know that the evaluation they were about to receive would be accurate and true. It may not be what they wanted to hear but it would be what the NEEDED to hear.

3. **The Beginning of the Creation of God.**

This has the idea that Jesus is the Supreme Authority over the creation of God.

**Notice Revelation 3:15-16**

Jesus speaks in such a way that this church would know exactly what He was talking about. They understood that when something was lukewarm it was not good.

**History.**

The city of Laodicea did not have their own water supply, so they built aqueducts and they piped the water in from about 5 miles away. The water supply however came from the hot mineral springs near Denizli. In the 5-mile journey the water would only cool down slightly and so it would arrive lukewarm. The remains of the aqueduct system are still there today, and it is full of mineral deposits from the hot water. When the water arrived as lukewarm it useless until it was heated or cooled. So, when Jesus referred to the church as lukewarm, they knew exactly what He was stating. **THEY WERE USELESS IN THE CURRENT STATE.**

What does Jesus mean when He says they were lukewarm?

Spiritually speaking they were living with one foot in the world and one foot in the church. He states that it would be better for them to be cold or hot but not lukewarm. They were divided in their allegiance and it had made them ineffective. If they were "hot" they would be in fellowship and if they were cold, He could work with them and bring them to their knees. But they were lukewarm, and they did not even realize their true spiritual condition. In order for a man or a woman to get back in fellowship with God they must understand where they are spiritually. It starts with a spiritual recognition.

This church was no longer a light in the darkness.

I want to explain something that will help us to see what had happened in this church. **History tells us that 100 years earlier there was believed to be 7500 Jews in Laodicea. John wrote this letter 100 years later and with the prosperity of the city there would have been thousands more by this time. Now listen to what I am about to say! In the early church the greatest persecution that came upon the church came from the Jews. With thousands and thousands of Jews living in the city it is alarming that there is no mention of persecution.**

**Revelation 2:8-10**

*<sup>8</sup> And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;*

*<sup>9</sup> I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*

<sup>10</sup> Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

**Revelation 2:12-13**

<sup>12</sup> And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

<sup>13</sup> I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

**Revelation 3:7-10**

<sup>7</sup> And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

<sup>8</sup> I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

<sup>9</sup> Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

<sup>10</sup> Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Listen to the words of Mills on this:

"The significance of this probability is that, while Christians elsewhere in Asia were persecuted by the Jews, there is no mention of persecution in this city with so large a Jewish population. This silence speaks volumes, for the Christian church in Laodicea was so complacent and self-sufficient in its wealth that it had ceased to be effective for Christ; so much so that its traditional persecutor, the Jews, considered it benign."

This church has made peace with the enemy. There was little Truth preached and so nobody was offended. Let me show you a few verses.

**2 Timothy 3:11-13**

<sup>11</sup> *Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.*

<sup>12</sup> **Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**

<sup>13</sup> *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*

### **Luke 6:26**

<sup>26</sup> **Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!** *for so did their fathers to the false prophets.*

When a church is just coasting along with no opposition or problems we should step back and look at where we are. When the church does what God has called us to do there will be opposition. If we find ourselves in a position where the world speaks well of us, we are in the wrong place.

**Notice Revelation 3:16 again.**

Jesus told them, **"I will spue thee out of my mouth"**. This was probably equivalent to what He told the church at Ephesus.

### **Revelation 2:5**

<sup>5</sup> *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:**

Let us be very careful concerning our service for the Lord. It is possible to get so involved in the world that God will place you on the sidelines and there you will sit until the Rapture or death. We get one life to serve the Lord with and we must make it count. We cannot be light if we are part of the darkness.

### **Ephesians 5:5-8**

<sup>5</sup> *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

<sup>6</sup> *Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

<sup>7</sup> *Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*

<sup>8</sup> For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

➤ **The Deception**  
**Part 1**

**Notice Revelation 3:17**

Before we look at the church let me give you some information on the city of Laodicea. This city was extremely wealthy for two major reasons.

1. The black glossy wool which they made.
2. The eye salve which they made.

Both of these products were shipped out over the world. The city was famous for their medical school as well. Listen to the words of Barclay;

*"After an earthquake devastated the region in a.d. 60 Laodicea refused Imperial help to rebuild the city, successfully relying on their own resources. They didn't need outside help, they didn't ask for it, and they didn't want it. "Laodicea was too rich to accept help from anyone. Tacitus, the Roman historian, tells us: 'Laodicea arose from the ruins by the strength of her own resources, and with no help from us."*

**I point all of this out so you can understand that the philosophy of the city had become the philosophy of the church.**

**The world had made its way into the church with no resistance.**

**Application:**

This is what is happening today, and it is what we must guard against.

**2 Timothy 3:1-5**

*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*

<sup>2</sup> *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*

<sup>3</sup> *Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,*

<sup>4</sup> *Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;*

<sup>5</sup> *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

This is a description of what the church will be like in the last days.

➤ **The Temptation**

Listen to what had happened at Laodicea;

Listen to the words of Seiss;

*"One of their problems was a poor water supply that made Laodicea vulnerable to attack through siege. If an enemy army surrounded the city, they had insufficient water supplies in the city, and the supplies coming into the city could be easily cut off. Therefore, the leaders of Laodicea were always accommodating to any potential enemy, and always wanted to negotiate and compromise instead of fight."*

*The name Laodicea means "rule of the people." This church well represents a church run by majority rule instead of God. "Its name designates it as the Church of mob rule, the democratic Church, in which everything is swayed and decided by popular opinion, clamour and voting."*

Now let us see what Paul warned about in the last days:

**2 Timothy 4:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.*

<sup>3</sup> *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

<sup>4</sup> *And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

**Conclusion:**

The temptation will be compromise and conforming to the rule of the people instead of following the Word of God.