

"The Church in the Last Days"

Revelation 3:14-22

Introduction: In the book of Revelation there are 7 letters to 7 different churches. The 7 churches can be seen as the churches through out the church age and so when you come to the last letter which is the letter to the church at Laodicea, this letter can be examined to give us an idea as to what the church will be like at the end of the church age right before the rapture.

Revelation 4:1-2

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

² *And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.*

This is a picture of the rapture and the letter to the church at Laodicea is right before this therefore the church at Laodicea can be seen as the church that will occupy the earth when the rapture happens.

I want to consider a message from this text because of what I see happening in the lives of many believers today. I have heard from other Pastors about how they are frustrated and discouraged because their people have drifted away from the Lord. They have unquenchable desires for the things of the world but they have very little desire for the Lord if any at all. Church is not important to them. They attend if there is nothing else to do but if there is an opportunity to do something else then church is the very first thing to be scratched off the list. I sense it in people who attend here as well so it is something that is widespread and that is what the Bible tells us will happen as we get closer to the rapture.

1 Timothy 4:1-2

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

² *Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

Let us now get to our text.

The frightening part of verse 1 is that there are "seducing spirits" that are at work within the lives of believers today. Demonic influence that pulls believers away from the Lord and leads them into a life of self-pleasure as they indulge in the world.

I. Three points for the church to consider.

Notice Revelation 3:14

Jesus identifies Himself in three ways here:

1. The Amen.

This refers to our Lord as being "certain". The thought here is that His evaluation of the church is CERTAIN. It is not a guess and it is not inaccurate. His evaluation is exact and to the point.

2. The Faithful and True Witness.

This too is referring to His assessment of the church. What He speaks will be the Truth. He is able to see beyond the outward facade and He looks into the heart.

Jeremiah 17:10

¹⁰ *I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

Psalms 44:21

²¹ *Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*

Acts 15:8

⁸ *And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;*

Romans 2:16

¹⁶ *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*

All these verses show us that God knows the heart of man, so when He gives an assessment, it will be completely accurate.

3. The beginning of the creation of God.

This refers to Jesus as the Supreme Ruler over creation. In a way it is a reminder that He is the Judge.

John 5:22, 27

²² For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

²⁷ And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

II. The Assessment.

Notice Revelation 3:15-16

The believers at this church would have known exactly what Jesus was saying here. They had no water supply of their own so their water was brought in through an aqueduct system. They piped their water in from Hierapolis which was a few miles north of the city. The water that came through that system was lukewarm by the time it arrived and was therefore useless. It would not quench the thirst and it was no good for sanitary purposes.

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.

Jesus is stating that this church is the same as the water flowing through the aqueducts. They were worthless because they were lukewarm. What was happening? The water supply was a weakness.

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.*

Notice Revelation 3:17

The city was very wealthy.

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 church had become caught up in the wealth of the world. This became their focus and their goal was to gather as much as they possibly could. Because of their worldly wealth they had become completely ignorant of their own true spiritual condition. They did not believe that they were in need of anything but the Truth was they were spiritually bankrupt.

A. Wretched and miserable

This meant that they were AFFLICTED and did not even realize it and so they were pitiful.

B. Poor

They had much of the world's wealth but spiritually they were living in poverty.

C. Blind.

They were completely unaware of their true condition.

Application:

This is exactly what has happened to so many believers today. They are so caught up in the STUFF of this life that they think they are spiritually where they need to be but in reality, they are spiritually living in poverty. There is no devotion to God at all. They say

there is but their life tells a different story. The prosperity of this world has become a curse and many believers have become intoxicated with what they possess and the world. The church has fallen right into the trap of Satan.

Is that you? How dedicated are you to living for the Lord? What is the top priority in your life? How often do you read your Bible? How consistent is your prayer life? These are all barometers that help us to understand where we are in our spiritual walk.

Let me suggest that this church had stopped serving the Lord for the most part. They were living for what the world around them offered. Why do I say this? There were thousands of Jews that lived in Laodicea but there is no mention of persecution upon the church.

Revelation 2:8-10

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

⁹ *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.*

¹⁰ *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 3:7-10

⁷ *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;*

⁸ *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.*

⁹ *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.*

¹⁰ *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.*

Here were two churches that were being persecuted by the Jews. So, the silence in Jesus' Words to the church at Laodicea concerning persecution speaks loudly. Prosperity had silenced them.

III. The Remedy

Notice Revelation 3:18

To cure the sickness that had come in the Lord counseled them to BUY. This tells us that in order to turn this around there would be a cost. There were things that would have to be given up. They could not live for the world and for the Lord.

Matthew 6:24-25

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.*

²⁵ *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

They were counseled to buy:

1. Gold

This is a reference to exercising their faith.

1 Peter 1:7

⁷ *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

They were to forsake the world and trust the Lord to fulfill their desires.

2. White raiment

This is a call to get busy serving.

Revelation 19:8

⁸ *And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

3. Eye salve

If they would get back to serving the Lord their eyes would be opened and they would see how far they had drifted away. If they returned to the fundamentals the Holy Spirit would open their eyes.

IV. The Offer

Notice Revelation 3:19-20

If they would repent, they could enjoy fellowship with the Lord once again.

Conclusion:

This offer is for each of us. If you have drifted away from the Lord, He desires for you to come back and He will fellowship with you.

Job 22:21-26

²¹ *Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.*

²² *Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.*

²³ *If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.*

²⁴ *Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.*

²⁵ *Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.*

²⁶ *For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.*