

10. The Message to the Church at Laodicea

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why true believers in Christ do not need to fear the tribulation because Christ promised that believers would be kept from that hour which will test the whole earth. In our topic today, we will see the church in Laodicea had pushed Christ out of the church.

Revelation 3:14-17 says, “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: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 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.” The church at Laodicea apparently had some who were teaching the same false teaching that had been taught in Colosse, since both the letter to the Colossians, and this letter, show that Christ is the Creator.

This letter shows this fact by the names given for Christ. First, Christ is the Amen. When men say “amen”, it means, *let it be so*. When God says “Amen”, it means, *it is and it shall be so*. Colossians 1:14-16 says, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” Christ is the Amen because He is the Creator of all things. Second, Christ is the Faithful and True Witness. Revelation 1:5 says, “And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” John 14:6 says, “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” These verses tell us He is the Faithful and True Witness.

Third, we see that Christ is the Beginning or Originator of the creation of God. John 1:1-3 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” Christ said that He knew the works of the church at Laodicea. He also said that they were neither hot nor cold. There were hot springs a few miles from Laodicea. The Laodiceans had made a waterway to bring that water to the city. By the time it reached the city the water had cooled and was only lukewarm. As a result, the people did not want to drink this lukewarm water. Christ said that water described the church at Laodicea. Like lukewarm water, Christ said He would vomit them out of His mouth. Christ made it clear He would reject them.

Christ went on to tell them why they would be rejected. The church in Laodicea thought that they could depend on their riches. The city had experienced an earthquake and they did not even accept help from other parts of the Roman Empire because the city felt that they were rich enough to rebuild the city without help. Here, we see that the church in that city had the same attitude. They were depending on worldly riches instead of heavenly riches. Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay

up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” The hearts of most of the people in the church at Laodicea were in this world.

As Christ examined the church at Laodicea, He had a very different view. He saw them as wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. The only other place, where the word “wretched” is used, is in Romans 7:24, where we read: “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” The only other place where the word “miserable” is used is in 1 Corinthians 15:19, where we read: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.” (most miserable). Galatians 4:9 says, “But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?” In this verse, the word is translated “beggarly”. These verses show some were Christians who were very weak.

However, much of the church was described by the last two words. Matthew 15:13-14 says, “But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.” In this verse, Christ was talking about the Pharisees who were spiritually blind. Matthew 22:11-13 says, “But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” Here, we see that those who are spiritually blind and naked are facing eternal judgment.

That is why Revelation 3:18-19 says, “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. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.” The city of Laodicea had gained much of their wealth by three major businesses: gold, wool and eye salve. As a result, Christ used these three major businesses to show the church what it should really seek. First, Christ said they should buy from Him gold refined in the fire. 1 Corinthians 3:12-16 says, “Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” When our works are tested by fire, anything that has eternal value will endure like gold, silver and precious stones. This is true riches.

Second, instead of clothes made of wool which only have worldly value, we are to seek the robe of righteousness. Revelation 3:5 says, “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” We saw that all true believers are overcomers and here we see that we will receive white garments. This way the shame of our sin has been replaced by the

righteousness of Christ. Third, instead of the physical eye salve that only relates to physical eyesight, we are to anoint our eyes with the spiritual eye salve that gives us spiritual sight. Christ told the Pharisees, in John 9:41, “‘If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say,’ ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.” In contrast, the man formerly blind had said, in John 9:38, “‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him.” That day he received both physical and spiritual eyesight. Christ encouraged the people of Laodicea to make that same choice when He said, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.” Christ loves even those who continue to reject Him.

Most of the people in the church at Laodicea had never come to Christ and were still facing eternal judgment. As a result, Christ gave an invitation to each individual. Revelation 3:20-21 says, “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. 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. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Here, we see that Christ was outside the door of the church at Laodicea. The church as a whole was so busy enjoying the things of this world that most of the people did not even think of Christ. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 says, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”

This description describes many churches today. We see that they love three things instead of loving God. These verses say that they love self, love money and love pleasure. The entire description fits 1 John 2:15-16 which says, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” We see that this church has pushed Christ out of the church because of their love for the world. Christ will continue to knock until He comes to take the church so that those individuals who want to have fellowship with Him have the opportunity to come to Him in repentance and faith and enjoy fellowship with Him. Christ has a promise for even one who comes to Him and becomes an overcomer. Here, we see that each one who comes will have the privilege of ruling with Christ when He returns to the earth to set up His kingdom.

Christ concludes His message to the churches with the same word that He has spoken to each of the other churches, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand, explain and apply the messages that are given to each of the churches. In this way, they can serve the Lord by helping individuals come to Christ for that fellowship. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.