

## **The Lord's Word to His Church: Laodicea**

### **Revelation 3:14–22**

**Laodicea is a completely unsaved church. This is a church of nonbelievers. Laodicea has the grim distinction of being the only church to which Christ says nothing good about anybody – unsparing condemnation; no redeeming feature.**

**Chapter 3 and verse 14-22 “To the angel of the church, or the messenger of the church, in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore, be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will dine with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down 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.’”**

verse 14: “To the messenger who will take this letter back to Laodicea write the words of the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God. It is He who says this.”

**The Amen,”** what does that mean? This is a unique title, and actually may reflect a Hebrew thought, because back in **Isaiah 65:16**, we read this phrase: “**The God of Amen, the God of Amen.**”

The word amen is often used in Scripture to affirm the truthfulness of a statement. It is an affirmation. It is a kind of verbal guarantee that what has been said is true.

Christ, in fact, is the Amen to God’s promises. He is the Amen to God’s covenants.

**Second Corinthians 1:20** says, “**For all the promises of God in Him, in Christ, are yes; and in Him, Amen unto the glory of God.**”

Secondly, **He is the faithful and true Witness**. This further elucidates the Amen. Not only does he validate what God has said and what God has promised, but whatever He says is true, whatever He affirms is true.

**John, Chapter 3 and verse 31:** “**He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has set His seal to this, that God is true.**”

Then, thirdly, He identifies Himself in verse 14 as the **Beginning of the creation of God**. The English there is frankly ambiguous. That ambiguity disappears when we read the words of the apostle Paul in **Colossians 1 and verse 15-** concerning Christ. **“He is the image of the invisible God.”**

He is the *protokos* of all creation. That means not necessarily the first who was ever created, but the premier one of all creation.

Christ is the everything of God. All that God is, He is. He is the Creator. He is the Author of life, both spiritual life and physical life.

So, when it says, “He is the Beginning of the creation of God,” we can interpret as the primary One. He is the Source of all creation.

Now, why is this important to establish in a letter to Laodicea? Christological heresy had infiltrated Colossae and then Laodicea.

They didn’t believe that He was the Alpha and the Omega as Revelation introduces Him. To be the Alpha, He had to be the Creator. To be the Omega, He had to be the Consummator.

So, there was the essence of commercial Laodicea: finance, black wool, and eye salve. All three industries play a part in this letter, and so does the water supply.

**I know your deeds, and all your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.”**

**Verse 17 “Not only are you sickening hypocrites, but you are deceived, . You say one thing and you don’t know your true condition. You say, ‘I am rich and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”**

**One thing about nonbelievers who have come together in a “church” is they’re in no position to assess their spiritual condition. They cannot know reality.**

**Maybe they met together in spiritual pride thinking they were the elevated people.**

**That was what Gnosticism and pre-Gnosticism was – comes from the Greek word “to know,” the people who had the secret elevated knowledge.**

**This is the ultimate apostate hypocrisy: you know about Christ and you’ve created a false Christ, you know about God and you’ve created a false god, and you’re smugly self-confident in that.**

**Once they deny Scripture and deny Christ, it’s Laodicea. “You don’t know – ”that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”**

**Look, there's nothing you can do with those words to make them Christians. Christians are not wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. So, when you're asking, "Who are these people?" these are non-Christians in a church, a church of non-Christians.**

**verses 18 to 20. "I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see."**

**Isaiah 55:1 "Come, without money and without price, and buy.**

**1 Peter 1:7 " – "True faith is more precious than gold which is perishable, even though it's tested by fire, it's found ultimately to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."**

**"Come to Me and buy the true and tested gold so you will not be poor anymore. And then come to Me to receive a white garment that you may clothe yourself, and the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed.**

**"And then since you're blind, come and take the eye salve that I have, and I'll anoint your eyes so that you can see**

**"Come to Me, I'll make you see. Come to Me, I'll cover you in a white garment. Come to Me, I'll make you rich."**

Salvation is that gold which makes us spiritually rich in faith. It is that white robe that covers our sinful nakedness with the righteousness of God through Christ. It is that eye salve which gives us the knowledge of God, illuminating grace and an understanding of God's truth. This is a call to salvation in a three-fold description, and it is a magnificent picture.

**Verse 19** He says something interesting: **“Those whom I love I reprove and discipline; therefore, be zealous and repent.”**

This is just an axiomatic statement about God and about Christ. **“Those whom I love I reprove and discipline,”** which is no different than to say this: “God so loved the – ” what? “ – world, that He gave His only begotten Son.”

God does reprove and rebuke unbelievers. You're going to see that in **John, chapter 16**: **“He convicts the world, through the Holy Spirit, of sin and righteousness and judgment.”** And by the way, The word “reprove” there is to treat with contempt, to convict, Matthew 18:15, “to expose.”

“He loves the world, and He exposes the sin of the world, and He reproves it, and He even punishes it.” The word “discipline” here is used in Luke 23 twice at it referred to punishment.

**Therefore, be zealous and repent.”**

**“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.”** Who is He talking about? Himself. The door of what? Not the door of your heart, the door of the church, right? **“I stand at the door of your church and I knock.**

**Is there anyone who will hear My voice and open the door? I will come in to him and will dine with him and he with Me.”** This is a church that Christ is not in.

A shared meal was a symbol of union. A shared meal was a symbol of fellowship.

And then a final promise, **verse 21: “He who overcomes.”** What is it that overcomes? First John 5:5, our faith:

**“He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”** Are you listening?