

## REVELATION PART 8

### (Ch. 3. 14-22)

- **“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. <sup>15</sup> I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. <sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes so you can see.<sup>19</sup> Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. <sup>20</sup> Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.<sup>21</sup> to the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches?”**

We don’t know how the church began but evidently there was a link between this church and the church at Colossae. There are three references to the Laodicea church in Paul’s letter to the Colossians. They are:

1. Ch. 2:1-3 **“For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, <sup>2</sup> that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**
  
2. Ch. 4:12 **“Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that you may**

stand perfect and <sup>[c]</sup>complete in all the will of God. <sup>13</sup> For I bear him witness that he has a great <sup>[d]</sup>zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

3. Ch. 4:15-16 “Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his house.<sup>16</sup> Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

See how Jesus introduces Himself to the church “**These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation**”

Jesus is “the Amen” the last word, the end, to which nothing can be added.

He is certain, faithful and unchangeable. Paul says “**For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us** (2 Cor1:20). Everything God has ever planned, purposed or promised for man, finds its certainty in Christ. Christ is Gods Amen. Listen you lukewarm church I am certain and final, the ultimate authority the Amen and there is no appeal from Me

Jesus is “**the ruler of God’s creation**” Writing to the church in Colossae Paul 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist** (Colossians 1:14-17). John says in his Gospel “**All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made**”

Jesus is God Himself, and He comes to this church with an authority beyond any other. He is the very essence of cause and creation. Wherever you look,

there is the work of Christ. His footprints are everywhere. The flowers, mountains, rivers, majestic landscapes declare the beauty of Christ. The rising and the setting of the sun, the seasons, the glories of autumn, the snow etc. In it all, is the glory and majestic Christ. To this church, conceited because of its wealth and independence, Jesus announces his wealth and independence. To this lifeless, indifferent lukewarm church, He announces Himself as the one who is the source of all life, **“the ruler of God’s creation”**

I love that old hymn “loved with everlasting love”

Heaven above is softer blue  
Earth beneath is sweeter Green  
Something lives in every hue  
Christless eyes have never seen  
Birds with gladder songs o’erflow  
Flowers with deeper beauties shine  
Since I know as now I know  
I am His and He is mine

The city of Laodicea was important because it was on a trade route. People crossed north and south and east and west and came through the city. Crucial to the city was its water supply. As the population grew and water became scarce water had to be brought in via an underground aqueduct brought from hot springs six miles away, so by time it reached city it was tepid.

### Money (Gold)

It was a banking centre because it was a business hub, so when in AD 60 the city was flattened by an earthquake the city refused financial help from Rome to rebuild because it had enough money of its own, indeed it was one of the wealthiest cities in the world.

### Clothing

There was a flourishing wool industry and its major product was a soft wool that was glossy black in colour used for clothing and for carpet weaving.

Medicine (eye ointment)

It also had a medical school which had developed an ointment for the eye. People with eye problems would come from that part of the world to get the ointment

There was no commendation for this church. Jesus simply says **“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other”**

In Hierapolis, a town six miles north, were famous hot springs you could bathe in. They had a therapeutic value. In Colossae ten miles south there was a cold stream coming from the mountains. It was famous because it was cold and thirst quenching. The water coming into the city in Laodicea through the underground aqueduct had flowed for miles and it was tepid, neither cold nor hot. Any visitors to Laodicea not used to the water would put it in their mouths and immediately spit it out

The people in the church were not cold, not frozen, not completely indifferent, neither were they hot and zealous and fervent. They were lukewarm-tepid something which evidently God detests in a church and in an individual. Tepid is utterly repugnant to him. No emotion, no enthusiasm, no urgency, no passion, no compassion.

Do you know what first stirred William Booth the founder of the Salvation Army? He said “I was made a red hot Salvationist by an infidel lecturer” He was in a class listening to a lecturer who said “If I believed what some of you Christians believed I would never rest night or day telling men about it” Williams Booth acted on that and it drove him from tepid to red hot.

Jesus would rather have had them cold than in this tepid condition. There is a greater chance for someone who is cold than someone who is lukewarm. There is more hope for the man outside the church in all his coldness and lack of life and love of the world, than for a man in the church near enough the warmth to appreciate it but far enough away from its burning heat to be

any use to God or man. The heathen who have not heard the gospel have a greater chance than the man who has become an evangelised heathen. There is a lesson here, I think, the gospel message does not have to be repeated endlessly to people who know it but have not been saved. There is a danger that they become hardened to the message. Each time it is preached another layer goes on the heart making him or her more difficult to win.

**“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked”** If you had visited the church they may have shown you, with pride, their lovely buildings and facilities etc. Apparently they did not need a thing. The word **“wretched”** means oppressed with a burden. Their wealth was their burden. What they thought carried them was a burden to them. Here was not a church burdened with debt but with wealth. Jesus said they were **“pitiable”** The Lord was moved in pity for them. **“Poor”** means poor as a pauper a beggar on the street. From Jesus point of view they were cringing beggars having nothing worth having. **“Blind”** seeing nothing lacking vision. **“Naked”** stripped of beauty and glory which should adorn the church.

These are not words of anger but of pity and Jesus is able to remedy their situation, if they will let Him. His anger is that they are satisfied with such rubbish. He wanted to give them real riches, open their eyes and give them some clothes

**“I am about to spit you out of my mouth”** In Laodicea they had everything except Christ. They had thrown Him out and He knocked at the door to get back in **“here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me”** (incidentally this is not addressed to the unsaved though it is often used in gospel preaching). The bride had thrown the bridegroom out. The bride lived quite satisfied and smug in the delusion that the bridegroom still lived with her. Oh the infinite love of God who knocked on the door for

admission, how He suffered and still does. He excluded Himself from His own heaven and glory to come to earth to die. He was excluded from His nation by their blindness. Men and women don't want Him in their lives and exclude Him. But here it's the church by tepid indifference locking Him out and excluding Him.

Jesus is about to reject their work and spit them out of His mouth but here is the remedy. **"I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes so you can see"**

It's as if Jesus is saying, you rich city and church of Laodicea with your money, your black wool, and your eye ointment, I have a solution for you. It's similar to the words of Isaiah 55:1 **"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost"** How can we buy if we have no money no currency. The answer is simple, the one thing we have in this condition is our own wretchedness that is our currency, the recognition of that is the key to the purchase. Back to those words of Paul to Colossae Col 2:2 **"For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, <sup>2</sup> that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"** Jesus opens the storehouse of Himself to this pitiful deluded self- satisfied failed church.

If you will admit to your condition I have riches for you GOLD CLOTHES AND OINTMENT the most important commodities in the city. What they needed however were the spiritual equivalents.

Gold

1 Peter 1:6-9 “in this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> whom having not <sup>[d]</sup>seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls” Faith, says Peter, is of greater worth than Gold, and only Jesus can give this. Faith in His word, faith in Him, faithfulness to Him

### Clothes

Isaiah 61:10 “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks *himself* with ornaments, And as a bride adorns *herself* with her jewels” Jesus offers to them the clothes of His own righteousness.

### Salve or eye ointment

I could not resist including the brief account in John 9 of the man born blind a wonderful story “Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup> I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. <sup>7</sup> And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing. Therefore the neighbours and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?” The church was blind to its own condition and needed its eyes opening to see its state and condition and to see Jesus

What then was Jesus waiting for, let me repeat His invitation **“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me”** He waits for one man, one woman to respond and invite Him as a guest for dinner. Jesus says if you just hear the knocking and open not only will I be your guest but you will be Mine

A glorious promise follows **“To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne”** It seems The Lord recognises the difficulty of life in the laodecian church and He makes them the most gracious and wonderful promise Jesus said **“as I also overcame or as I was victorious”** Now remember he is talking to people who were taking it easy, had no compassion, no enthusiasm and he says to them “overcome” as I also overcame. In the wilderness Satan came to him and said **“all these kingdoms will I give you”** by an easy way without the cross, the passion the crucifixion. His own disciples brought the same suggestion that He should spare Himself. But The Lord overcame and sat with His Father in His throne. Now he says to Laodicea self-satisfied Luke warm complacent be zealous and repent and sit with me in mine.

Brothers and sisters “how are you”, a familiar English greeting, normally followed by “I’m fine thanks “The more important question is “how is Christ feeling” Is He feeling sick about your life and mine? Is He feeling sick about the life of the church? Am I lukewarm, have I excluded Christ and locked Him out? Do I think I am healthy when I am not? Am I deluded? Do I have a heart for seeking God? Do I have a heart for communion with God in private and corporate prayer? Do I have a heart for the lost? Can Christ be seen in me? Who among us wants a lukewarm relationship with someone? No life, no passion no laughing or crying together.

We are the church there is no one else out there to carry out the work of Jesus. It belongs to Jesus and he has entrusted it to us