

Rev 3:14-22 The Church at Laodicea. Circa 96AD

(Holman Hunt's Painting - Christ at the door)

The last of the 7 churches that John was given a message from God to write to.

Over the last weeks we have looked at the previous 6 churches.

EPHESUS: were encouraged to repent and turn back to their first love & first works. To those who overcame, they will get to eat from the tree of life.

SMYRNA: a church going through tribulation and poverty and suffering, but to those who are overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.

PERGAMOS: hounded by false doctrines and sexual immorality, but to those who repent and overcome will be given the hidden manna and a white stone with a new name inscribed.

THYATIRA: tempted to give in to compromise including sexual immorality and eating food offered to idols, but to those who hold fast and keep God's works will be given power over nations and the morning star.

SARDIS: thought they were alive but actually spiritually dead, but to those hold fast and repent, will be clothed in white garments and their name stays in the Book of Life and that name will be acknowledged before Father God and His angels.

PHILADELPHIA: persevered when feeling weak and being continually tested in their love for God and one another, but to those who hold fast and overcomes, they will be made a pillar in God's temple and will have God's name, the name of the New Jerusalem and Jesus' new name written on them.

So we come to LAODICEA

A city well known for its ECONOMY and BANKING CENTRE, for its INDUSTRY in the manufacturing of fine white wool made into expensive garments, and MEDICINE, especially for eye clinics and the development of EYE SALVE.

The city was located near a river but relied on water via aqueducts coming from hot springs arriving into the homes LUKEWARM.

Interestingly, nearby Hierapolis had hot water spas used for healing the sick, while Colossae had cold refreshing

water to satisfy the thirsty and weary. Laodicea only had Lukewarm water - neither hot nor cold!

We will touch on this later as we look at the message to the church by using the outline used on the previous churches.

AUTHORITY: v14 "This is the message from the One who is the AMEN - the Faithful and True witness, the Beginning/ Source of God's new creation."

The AMEN - It is and shall be so. The final word of authority and total agreement.

THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS Heb 1:3a "The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and He sustains everything by the mighty power of His command." In John's Gospel it is mentioned 10 times in different ways that Jesus only said what He heard His Father saying, and only ever did what He saw His Father doing.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD ie Creation STARTED from Him (Let US make man in OUR own image) Colossians 1:15-17 "Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through Him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we see and the things we can't see such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through Him and for Him. He existed before anything else and He holds all creation together."

WHAT'S GOOD. - Nothing mentioned - silent - What an indictment on the church when God cannot find even one quality in the church to commend them!

WHAT'S NOT. - LUKEWARM Neither hot nor cold ie indifferent, unconcerned, half-hearted, 'sitting on the fence', or 'a foot in both camps' Result = I will spit/ spew/ vomit you out of My mouth!

RICH - Affluent economy - 'I don't need a thing' relates to when the city was mostly destroyed by

an earthquake in AD60. Rome offered aid and assistance, but the people rejected the help as they had all the means to restore everything themselves. A good thing for the city, but not for the church basically saying 'We don't need God, we have our own way of doing things now, we've grown up and moved on. We are living in a new world!' I did it my way!!!

Jesus says "You don't realise that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked"

It is the nature of lukewarmness to be unaware that it is lukewarm!

They might have had everything in the natural seemingly, but in actual fact were in desperate circumstances in God's eyes.

E.g. "Amazing Grace" sung by so many popular artists who have no understanding of the powerful message and life-changing hope offered.

**ACTION** - Buy/ Exchange from Me . . .

I.e. 'If you will just recognise your polity, I will enrich you with MY riches, i.e. a far better and different type of richness. The same for your Nakedness and Blindness'

**GOLD** purified by fire - speaks of Reflected Glory, Reflected Likeness. Gold, when treated correctly becomes transparent.

1 Peter 1:6-7 "So be truly glad (Luke 6:23 says Leap for joy). There is a wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold - though your faith is far more precious than mere gold"

**WHITE GARMENTS** speaks of Holiness and Righteousness. Isaiah 61:10 "My soul is overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God! For He has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom in his wedding suit or a bride with her jewels."

Clothed - No more shame - c.f. Adam and Eve

**EYE SALVE** speaks of the Anointing of the Holy Spirit enabling us to see with new spiritual eyes. Psalm 119:18 'Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your law/ instruction' 2 Kings 6:15-17 Elisha prays that his servants

eyes would be opened to see the heavenly army surrounding them and protecting them from the enemy. Stephen, when about to be stoned to death had his eyes opened to see Jesus standing ready to receive him into heaven.

V19 'So be diligent and turn from your indifference' ie allow correction and discipline to help.

V20 'Open the door . . . Let Me come in' have a change of heart and mind

Song of Solomon 5:2-6 'I slept, but my heart was awake, when I heard my lover knocking and calling. "Open to me, my treasure, my darling, my dove, my perfect one. My head is drenched with dew, my hair with the dampness of night." But I responded, "I have taken off my robe. Should I get dressed again? I have washed my feet. Should I get them soiled? My lover tried to unlatch the door and my heart was thrilled within me. I jumped up to open the door for my love, and my hands dripped with lovely myrrh as I pulled back the bolt. I opened for my lover, but he was gone! My heart sank. I searched for him but could not find him anywhere. I called to him but there was no reply.'

ENCOURAGEMENT - 'I WILL COME IN'- Access all areas!

Remember this is written to believers, the church.

I learnt a poem when in Sunday School many years ago which often challenges me. I only remember bits and pieces but enough to make me stop and think.

'If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two, If He came unexpected, I wonder what you would do?'

Jesus wants to come into your past, your present, your future, your dreams, your fears, your shame, your joys, in fact your whole world. And if you let Him in to these areas of your life, you can be sure He will do what He does best - bring healing, peace, joy, love, hope, acceptance and a sense of worth, belonging.

EAT TOGETHER - Intimate fellowship, sharing stories, laughing, crying, counselling, trust, feeling safe, etc.

N.B. YOU ARE NOT UNWORTHY! Remember Jesus ate and drank with ordinary (unloved?) people often - and got into trouble from the religious group for doing just that!!!

To those who are victorious/ overcomes from the status quo will sit with Me on My throne, just as I was victorious and sat with My Father on His throne.

I finish with this scripture from Ephesians 2:4-7

'But God is so rich in mercy, and He loved us so much that even though we were dead because of our sins, He gave us life when He raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realm because we are united with Christ Jesus. So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of His grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all He has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.'

So anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what He is saying to the churches.

AMEN.