

The message to the church of **Laodicea**, the last of the *Seven Churches* in the Revelation, reveals God's love and longsuffering towards humanity. The name Laodicea is comprised of the following two Greek terms:

Laos: meaning "people"

dike: meaning "principal decision"

Therefore, the Laodiceans are a people who make their views "principal" over all other thoughts or opinions. Secondly, they are a people upon whom decisions are being made, in other words, they are a judged people.

A remnant from this last church in Jesus' delineation of Christian Church history (~A.D.1862-End of Time) is to become Christ's triumphant church, "*fair as the moon, clear as the sun, [and] terrible as [an army] with banners*" Song of Solomon 6:10. Heralding Jesus' *Second Coming*, they are to be a spiritually enlightened people, benefiting from all the oracles of God through the ages, recorded in the Old and New Testaments and confirmed by world history. They are to be propelled by the successes of their predecessor church, **Philadelphia**, whose victorious love and works were above reproach by He who searches the hearts. They are to be a distinct people, "*who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus Christ*" Revelation 14:12. They have been entrusted with, and empowered by, the Holy Spirit's **Gift of Prophecy**, given to reveal past, present, and future events. This last church is to bear a particular and urgent message to a dying world, embodied in the *Three Angel's*

Messages of Revelation 14 and the Loud Cry of Revelation 18:1-8. As watchmen upon the city's walls, they are to sound the trumpet of man's sinful condition; the imminent conclusion of God's judgment in the heavenly court; and *Christ's Righteousness* that He freely offers to all as man's only hope for salvation (Jeremiah 23:5, 6). All of these glorious privileges granted to the earth's *Last Day* church movement should equip it in completing God's works in glorious honor, were it not for their "*Laodicean*" condition. By its name, one may reason that this church has forsaken its first love of abiding in Christ, for its works, its merits, and its own opinions. Jesus, Who comes to this church as "*the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God*", declares that He knows the works of Laodicea, that they are "*neither cold nor hot*". Jesus extends His rebuke in stating, "*I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth*" Revelation 3:15, 16.

Q: *What is meant that the church of Laodicea is neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm? Consider Jesus' desire for all people when reading the following:*

- 2 Peter 3:9
- Jeremiah 29:11-13
- John 6:39, 40
- Ezekiel 18:23, 32
- Matthew 18:10-14
- Isaiah 55:6, 7

A: *The verses describe God and His loving purpose to save all men. Therefore, Jesus' desire for Laodicea, to be either hot or cold, must be in direct contrast to the undesirable condition of being lukewarm. To be hot naturally implies one has spiritual fire, born of the Holy Spirit, which compels*

the one to good works for Christ's Kingdom. To be cold, however, implies one's lack of spiritual fire and inactivity in matters of Christ's work. The individual who is cold however, senses the absence of God's Spiritual Fire and with earnestness will seek it out (see Job 23:3). Thus, their condition is more favorable than that of the lukewarm.

That Laodicea has become a lukewarm church following the mighty works of its predecessor, *Philadelphia*, means that it has lost its focus and has itself become blind, and good for nothing. Jesus shows worldliness to be the source of Laodicea's condition as He sternly chastises their boast, "*I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.*" In response, Jesus reveals Laodicea's actual condition in stating "*and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*" Laodicea is privileged to exist in an era where technology and modern advances have largely simplified life tasks, while making accessible things in past eras either extremely laborious or altogether impossible to acquire. Social changes on a global scale have altered traditional roles, values, and priorities such that men are driven by their wants, rather than by their needs. These factors, coupled by increasing immorality and godlessness, as predicted by Jesus when He walked upon the earth, challenges the church of Laodicea to remain faithful to Christ. Though granted all spiritual blessings of God *in Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 1:3-14; 3:14-19), empowered by the Spirit of Prophecy and God's Two Witnesses, the Bible, this final church has adopted a false security in its works and in

its doctrine, rather than in the One Who has so richly blessed it (Jeremiah 9:23, 24; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Love for the world and its comforts have blinded this church to the eternal inheritance Christ has gone to prepare for it (1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; John 14:1-3). Equally frightening, this church has lost sight of the fact that it exists during the most solemn time of earth's history, the **Antitypical Day of Atonement**, the time of God's judgment. Finally, Jesus, Who was seen walking in the midst of the prior six churches in Christian church history, finds Himself outside the door of this last church, knocking to gain entrance.

With so great a task as spreading the final warnings of God's love and mercy to the world before the close of humanity's probation, this effort would be daunting to even the churches of Ephesus and Philadelphia that showed a near faultless commitment and zeal for Christ and His works. However, with Laodicea's lukewarm state and smug attitude, the work would appear near impossible. The prophet Ezekiel alluded to this last church, constituting **Spiritual Israel**, when he spoke of the valley of dry bones. Likening the church to a valley of corpses turned to bones, and its desperate, seemingly hopeless situation, Ezekiel saw that "*there were very many [bones] in the open valley; and lo, they were very dry*" Ezekiel 37:2. Jesus also, foreseeing the condition of the church before His return, likened it to *Ten Virgins* who as sentinels were to stand watch; however, their lamps had gone out while they slept (Matthew 25:1-5).

Jesus' Self-identification as the *Beginning of the Creation of*

Laodicea: A Judged People

Supplemental Study 12 [Based on Revelation 3:14-22]



Lesson 45

God is given to provide hope to this church that the One who spoke into existence all things in the beginning, can once again breathe life into their desperate condition. Surveying the valley of dry bones along with Ezekiel, God inquired of the prophet "Son of man, can these bones live?" to which Ezekiel responded, "O Lord God, though knowest." Indeed, God has the solution to bring revival to the *Laodicean* church, and to cure its worldliness and self-assurance. God presented a two-step process to the prophet Ezekiel, actuated by the power of God's Holy Spirit, to revive the valley of dry bones. God commanded Ezekiel to speak the *prophetic word* on two occasions (Ezekiel 37:3-10), that brought forth the following results:

1. **A Gathering:** Prophesying upon the bones, the bones were *gathered* and *aligned* in their proper position while flesh and sinews were placed upon the skeletons. Lifeless corpses, however, laid in the open valley
2. **A Revival:** Prophesying to the wind, a symbol of the Holy Spirit (John 3:7, 8), brought life to the corpses

The Bible illustrates the power the *gift of prophecy* has to gather and align God's people behind a common message, as watchmen sounding in unison along the *Old Paths*. Prophecy also brought life to the people's dead spiritual condition (Isaiah 52:7, 8; Jeremiah 6:16, 17). When spoken the prophetic word by the power of the Holy Spirit, the valley of dry bones became an "*exceeding great army*" for the Lord.

In addressing Laodicea's worldliness and self-assurance, Jesus, the *Faithful and True Witness*, speaks to the church's

consumerism by counseling it to *buy* of Him the following:

- "**Gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich**" - The Apostle Peter, desiring the love and faith of the saints be made perfect before the coming of the Lord, wrote: "*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*" 1 Peter 1:7; Jam 1:3; Job 23:10; Rom 5:3-5
- "**White raiment, that thou mayest be clothed**" - Jesus offers His righteousness to cover our spiritual nakedness, our unholy condition. Allowing God to remove our filthy rags of self-righteousness, we must accept Christ's righteousness by faith (Isa 64:6; Eze 36:25-27; Jere 23:5, 6; Rom 4:1-16; Zech 3:1-5; Rev 6:9-11, 16:15, 19:7, 8)
- "**Eye salve, that thou mayest see**" - Jesus, as a prophet applied salve to the eyes of the blind causing them to see; so too, we must receive eye salve from the *Seer* to cure our spiritual blindness (1 Sam 9:9, 14:29; Eze 3:1-3; John 9:1-7, 17; Jeremiah 5:21; Ezekiel 12:2; Zephaniah 1:17)

The words spoken to the Laodicean church parallels the message given by Elijah the prophet to backslidden Ancient Israel, "*How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD [be] God, follow him: but if Baal, [then] follow him*" 1 Kings 18:21. As Elijah was sent to bring reformation and revival, turning the hearts of the people back to God, so too, Jesus issues His final warning to this, His church. Entrusted with the greatest blessings and opportunities of all the churches, Laodicea, like the stewards entrusted with their Master's

talents in Jesus' parable, must give an account before the Lord of how it has used its privileges (Luke 12:42-48).

Those among Laodicea who fail to heed Jesus' warning will be "*spewed-out*" of Christ's mouth and trodden down by the **overflowing scourge** of the global Sunday Law and its enforcement (Isaiah 28:15-18). To those who hear Jesus' message of warning, zealously repent of their self-righteous, world-loving condition, and open the door of their hearts, He promises to come in and sup with them. The promise to abide in Jesus through the Holy Spirit was given at Christ's first advent, and will remain through all eternity for those who repent (John 14:16, 17, 21, 15:1-11). The **Spirit of Truth** and *Comforter* will impart the fullness of Christ through the **Latter Rain** to this *Last Day* body, fulfilling in them the **Mystery of Godliness**, Christ in you the hope of glory - complete victory over sin (Col 1:26-28). These final witnesses will be empowered to give the world its final warning of worshipping the *Beast*, its *Image*, and receiving its *Mark*. They will also endure a **Time of Trouble** as never seen before in earth's history, namely, a world devoid of God's sin restraining Holy Spirit. Jesus promises those who overcome by His faith, to sit on thrones with Him as He overcame and sat with His Father on His throne. Reigning as joint-heirs with Christ in heaven, the righteous will ultimately enjoy the fruit of the completed **Plan of Redemption** and **Everlasting Covenant** in the earth made new. Let us *zealously repent* to be found hid in Jesus Christ!