

I. THE CHURCH OF LAODICEA

- A. Laodicea was a wealthy city being the banking center of Asia Minor. It was also known for manufacturing (soft black wool) and medicine. A famous school of medicine developed a treatment to cure eye diseases.
- B. A greater problem was the lack of a water supply. An aqueduct brought them water from neighboring Hierapolis (known for its hot springs) and Colossae (known for its cold springs). There is nothing left of the town today except a few scattered ruins.
- C. It is likely that the three sister churches (Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse) were established by Epaphras during Paul's 3 year ministry in Ephesus (Col. 1:7; 4:13; Acts 19).

II. JESUS' REVELATION OF HIMSELF

- A. ***The Amen*** – In the Hebrew, it means to “confirm” or “verify” and was often used in the OT to affirm a prayer (1 Chron. 16:36) or a hymn (Ps. 41:13). Jesus is the Amen because His promises are certain and sure. Twenty five times John used the Greek form of the word, “amen.” It is translated as, “truly, truly, I say to you”.
- B. ***The Faithful and True Witness*** – what He speaks is reliable and truthful (Rev. 3:7). He was about to tell them the truth in both positive and negative ways. He revealed such great promises in Rev. 3:18-21 along with negative truths about their spiritual problems in Rev. 3:17-18. He does not ever exaggerate or flatter.
- C. ***The beginning of the creation of God*** – He is the beginning or “first” in cause (source) and authority (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17; Rev. 1:8; 21:6). He is the uncreated God like the Father and the Spirit.

III. AFFIRMATION FOR FAITHFULNESS – NONE

IV. CORRECTION FOR COMPROMISE

- A. They were not passionate in their pursuit of God nor were they spiritually cold, which would allow them to know their spiritual position. They were lukewarm, so Jesus says that he will vomit them out of his mouth. They were deceived and thought that they had something.
- B. ***You say, 'I am rich and have become wealthy'*** – they claimed God's financial blessing but it turned out to injure their heart. Instead of being desperate for more. I have need of nothing expresses their spiritual complacency. They were intoxicated with their financial blessing. Because they were materially “rich,” they assumed that they were also spiritually “rich.”

- C. ***You do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked*** – They were calloused and hardened, spiritually sick, and had nothing to show in the age to come of their love for the Lord, and yet they were not aware of their dire situation.

V. **EXHORTATION TO RESPOND: BUY GOLD AND GARMENTS AND USE EYE SALVE**

- A. ***Buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich*** – this builds on the banking and commerce of the city. The gold of godly character makes us rich in this age by tenderizing our heart to feel more of God’s love and enlarging our desire for Him and for righteousness.

That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold...though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus... (1 Pet. 1:7)

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you... (1 Pet. 4:12)

- B. ***I counsel you to buy white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed*** – righteous living results in the reward of eternal garments. Our garments begin with the gift of righteousness that is imputed to us by faith (2 Cor. 5:21). However, here Jesus is speaking of experiential righteousness or acts of righteousness.

To her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Rev. 19:8)

- C. To be naked or shamed in eternity is to be devoid of the reward of heavenly garments. All believers have the robe of righteousness, yet Jesus warns us of the shame of nakedness or “lacking the reward of added clothing” that reveals one’s commitment to Jesus in this age.

Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. (Rev. 16:15)

You have a few...who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments... (Rev. 3:4-5)

Abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. (1 Jn. 2:28)

- D. ***Anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see*** –Laodicea’s famous “Phrygian powder” was applied to the eyes as doughy paste to cure eye disease (c.f. John 9:39).

- E. ***I counsel you to buy from Me*** – Jesus exhorts us to “buy gold” or to engage in the God ordained process of acquiring a deep relationship with God. In buying gold or garments, we do not earn them but we “invest ourselves in a costly way” to position ourselves to receive them. “Buy” is from Isa. 55:1-3. No one can literally buy anything from God.

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price (Isa. 55:1)

- F. ***As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*** – Jesus promises to discipline all of us so that we may have gold and garments that we may be rich. Jesus promises to discipline us to bring us out of passivity and self sufficiency (Prov. 13:24; Heb. 12:7). God disciplines *because* He loves us. Some people think bad things are happening because God doesn't care about them.
- G. ***Therefore be zealous and repent*** – be radical in our resolve to make changes.

VI. PROMISE FOR OVERCOMERS: TWO PROMISES

- A. Jesus invites all individuals who hear. Jesus has such great authority yet He waits for us to open our heart. This is the one door Jesus will not open unless we open it with Him (Rev. 3:20).
- B. To feast speaks of intimacy or deep fellowship as the Spirit tenderizes our heart to feel more of His love by increasing our revelation of Jesus and zeal for righteousness. The eternal application of this refers to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9; Lk 22:16, 29, 30; Mt. 26:29; Mk 14:25). Eating with the Messiah and ruling with Him is regularly brought together thus, we rule with affection.
- C. The promise to sit with Jesus on His throne is offered to all Christians in the Millennium (Rev. 5:10; 11:15; 20:4). Jesus promised the apostles that they would eat and drink with Him and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:29-30).
I bestow upon you a kingdom...³⁰ that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. (Lk. 22:29-30)

VII. CONCLUSION

- A. Jesus promises the prestigious wealthy church of the Laodiceans deep fellowship and a position in His eternal Kingdom along with gold, garments and revelation. However, to receive this He required that they zealously repent of their lukewarmness in their relationship with Him. Their problem was spiritual blindness and pride that led to lukewarmness in their love for the Lord.
- B. One root problem they had came from misinterpreting why God gave them financial blessing. The Lord releases financial blessing as part of the covenant that He has made with His people. There is much emphasis on the biblical promise of receiving financial blessing from God (Deut. 28:1-14). When our finances grow faster than our heart then negative dynamics occur.
You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers... (Deut. 8:18)
- C. We must not allow financial prosperity to hinder our heart prosperity nor our heavenly treasure. The church of Smyrna was financially poor because of persecution, but were spiritually rich. The Laodiceans had the opposite condition.
I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. (3 Jn. 2)