

Laodicean Age

Revelation 3:14-22

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Church historians have often pointed out how the seven churches of Revelation reflect the characteristics of churches in general during the Church Age.

Hal Lindsey believes that the seven churches were literal assemblies that existed in Asia Minor at the time John wrote, and that they prophetically describe seven ages extending from the apostolic church to the church of the last days. He presented the following associations in “*There’s A New World Coming*,” his commentary on the book of Revelation:

1. The Church in Ephesus, The Loveless Church: Apostolic Church (A.D. 33–100)
2. The Church in Smyrna, The Persecuted Church: Era of Persecution Under the Ten Caesars (A.D. 100–312)
3. The Church in Pergamum, The Compromising Church: Era of Church-State Union (A.D. 312–590)
4. The Church in Thyatira, The Corrupt Church: Era Spanning the Middle Ages (A.D. 590–1517)
5. The Church in Sardis, The Dead Church: Protestant Reformation (A.D. 1517–1750)
6. The Church in Philadelphia, The Faithful Church: Era of Revival and Great Awakening (A.D. 1750–1925)
7. The Church in Laodicea, The Lukewarm Church: Era of “Higher Criticism” (A.D. 1900–Tribulation)

Good summary of church history:

<https://lineagejourney.com/read/season3/the-7-churches>

Why is it a good idea to look at what the Lord says about the Laodiceans?

Since the Laodicean error is the spirit of the Age, it would be to our advantage if we understand it so as not to contribute to it. We may be in the Laodicean church but we don't have to be Laodicean believers.

Revelation 3:14-22

¹⁴ “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that

you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

²² “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.””

What do we learn about our Lord from the names He uses for Himself (v. 14)?

- **Amen** - it is so, so be it... expresses solemn ratification or agreement with the Father
- **Faithful and True Witness** - He speaks the truth about all things
- **Beginning of the creation of God** - He is the Creator; this establishes His authority over us (so we had better listen to Him)

What is our Lord's complaint against the Laodiceans (v. 15-16)?

They are neither hot or cold, they are lukewarm toward Him.

- **hot:** on fire for the Lord
- **cold:** no love for the Lord
- **lukewarm:** saying you love the Lord but actions do not support this (hypocrites)

Why would Jesus rather people be cold than lukewarm?

- At least those who are cold are honest, and they can be warmed up
- Those who are lukewarm already think they have arrived in their religion and don't need to be on fire for Jesus
- Going from cold to hot is more obvious a change and God can use that to help others see their need for Him

What other complaint does the Lord have about the Laodiceans (v. 17)?

They are rich in worldly things but don't realize they are poor in spiritual things.

How does Jesus describe the spiritually poor?

- **wretched** - very unfortunate in condition or circumstances; pitiable
- **miserable** - someone who is unhappy and unpleasant
...We should be Joyful!
- **poor** - lacking what is needed, low quality
- **blind** - unable to see the truth or things of God
- **naked** - exposed and vulnerable to the hazards of the world

Why is it that the wealthy tend to be spiritually poor?

They have sufficient worldly resources that they don't believe they need to be dependent on God.

- They have bought into the Prosperity Gospel... they are OK with God because He is blessing them.

What does Jesus counsel the spiritually poor?

Purchase pure gold from God; this symbolizes true spiritual wealth:

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal (Matthew 6:19-20)

treasure in heaven - that which will last into eternity; relationships with the Lord and those who will also be spending eternity with the Lord

What is the significance of the gold (spiritual wealth) being refined by fire?

It is tested and purified... it will stand in the judgment of God:

each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is (1 Cor 3:13)

What is the spiritual wealth we get from Jesus a requirement for (v 18)?

We need the Lord's spiritual wealth in order to be rich (not wanting for anything). We will not miss out on any of the blessings of this world in heaven.

What else should we purchase from God?

- White garments which symbolizes the righteous acts of the saints per Revelation 19:8. This is important so that our shame of being a sinner may be covered.
- Eye salve so that we may see the things of God
the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:14)

How do we make these purchases from God?

This is not in any way salvation-by-works, we ask God for them:

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (Matt 7:7-8)

These gifts are free but we must know we need them in order to ask for them and that they can only come from God.

What is the prerequisite for God answering our prayers?

You must have a personal relationship with Him...

Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him (John 9:31)

Why does God rebuke and chasten us (v. 19)?

Because God loves us.

What should our response be to being rebuked and chastened by God?

- **be zealous** - be devoted to God; energetically support Him and His agenda
- **repent** - turn from our sin and resolve to make the changes we need to do in order to sin no more

What does it mean that Jesus is standing at the door and knocking (v. 20)?

Jesus has done everything necessary for us to have a relationship with Him, it is up to us to allow Him to enter into our lives

Why should we open the door of our hearts to Jesus?

He will dine with us... share fellowship so that we may grow in our relationship with Him.

1 John 1:7 – if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin

Why don't people open the door to Jesus?

They don't hear Him...

- they're so focused on themselves that they're not open to an outside voice.
- they don't recognize who it is that is calling to us; they don't know Jesus as Savior personally... *the sheep follow him, for they know his voice* (John 10:4)

Why should we want to grow in our relationship with Jesus?

- Out of gratitude for what He did for us; it pleases Him.
- It fulfills our purpose for which we were created, to have a relationship with Him... *for in Him we live and move and have our being* (Acts 17:28)
- It is part of having a personal relationship with Him; if we're not growing, we have to wonder if we really have a relationship with Him
- There will be rewards for growing in our relationship with Him. The more we can grow in our relationship with Him in this mortal life, the greater capacity we'll have to participate in what He is doing in eternity (see Parable of Talents, Matt 25:14-30)

What does a personal relationship with Jesus look like?

Those who have a personal relationship with God include God in their daily lives. They pray to Him, read His word, and meditate on verses in an effort to get to know Him even better.

- They recognize His speaking to us in many ways especially in circumstances and His Word.
- They associate with fellow believers because they naturally will want to be with the ones they love...
John 13:35 – By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.
- They pray for wisdom (James 1:5).
- They take their requests to Him, asking in Jesus' name... *whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you* (John 15:16)

They experience the 12 characteristics of those who have eternal life...

1 John 5:13 – These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

How do we know that God desires a personal relationship with us?

First things: Before Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), both he and Eve knew God on an intimate, personal level. They walked with Him in the garden and talked directly to Him.

- Due to the sin of man, we became separated and disconnected from God.

What role does the Holy Spirit have in our personal relationship with Jesus?

The Holy Spirit has been given to us as our Counselor:

"If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:15-17).

The Holy Spirit is the one who lives in the hearts of believers and never leaves.

- He counsels us, teaches us truths, and changes our hearts.
- Without this divine Holy Spirit, we would not have the ability to fight against evil and temptations.
- He enables us to produce the fruit that comes from allowing the Spirit to control us: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control* (Galatians 5:22-23).

What must we overcome (v. 21)?

We must overcome the temptations of the world that draws into the Laodicean spirit of the Age.

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world (1 John 2:16)

How can we overcome the worldly temptations of the Age?

By purchasing the spiritual wealth that Jesus wants to give us.

What is the reward for overcoming the tempting spirit of the Age?

To sit with Christ on His throne which means that we will rule with Him as promised...

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years (Revelation 20:6)

Does this mean we will all have people to lord over during the Millennial Kingdom & Eternal State?

No, during the Millennial Kingdom it will be more like we have people to minister to as the angels minister to us (salvation hangs in the balance). Also, "first things" helps here... we will have responsibilities as stewards just as Adam and Eve were called to "have dominion" over God's creation (Genesis 1:28)

Why does the Church become lukewarm to Christ in the time prior to His return?

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money... having a form of godliness but denying its power (1 Tim 3:1-5)

There will be the practice of religion but being on fire in a relationship with the Creator will be lacking.

What power is being denied?

- That God cares about us and intervenes in the affairs of men
- Paul goes on to remind Timothy of the need to follow true doctrine which we know because:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (1 Tim 3:16-17)

God is Almighty enough to have accurately provided us His Word and preserved it through time even using His flawed subjects.

Why does Paul remind us about the authority of Scripture in the context of telling us about conditions of the last days?

- Not correctly recognizing the authority of Scripture will be a problem in the last days.
- Indeed, it contributes to people being lukewarm toward Jesus.

What happens if you forget the Scriptures are not inspired by God?

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (1 Timothy 4:3-4)

They will embrace bad doctrine and replace truth with fables...

- beginning things: Theistic evolution
- ending things: amillennialism; Jesus is not returning until the Eternal State and that will not happen any time soon (millions of years)

Why is it important to have a right view of both beginning and ending things?

Beginning things: This gives people cause to doubt the authority of God's Word

Psalm 11:3 – If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?

Another passage which addresses the consequences of not believing God from the beginning is:

Luke 16:31 – If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead

Ending things: there is no sense of urgency to grow in our relationship with Him and get on with what God is calling us to do (lukewarm-ness)...

1 John 3:2-3 – Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Why is it important to see Scripture as being inspired by God?

- this is necessary to be compelled to study it... if not inspired by God, why bother?
- It is necessary to grow in your relationship with God... if it is not inspired, how will you get to know Him?

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- Just because we are in the Laodicean Church Age it doesn't mean we have to be Laodicean believers.
- A personal relationship with Christ is critical for all who have eternal life.
- Overcoming worldly temptations is a lifelong journey that lays up treasure in heaven.
- The lukewarm Laodicean church is a sign of the times... it should give us a sense of urgency to get on with what God is calling us to do.
- Not having a right view of the inerrancy of God's Word is the same as not having a right view of God and contributes to the lukewarm Laodicean spirit of the Age.
- Be Joyful! God is in control and we get to spend eternity with Him!