

THE CHURCH OF THE LAODICEANS, THE BLOATED CHURCH

Revelation 3:14-22

Introduction:

- A. As we begin the study of the seventh and last church, it is wise to review a little. These seven churches were true churches existing at the time of the writing of The Revelation of Jesus Christ. They were chosen because of their individual characteristics which symbolized the growth, development and final corruption of Christianity through the 2,000 years of the Church Age.
- B. Christianity began with the church Jesus Christ planted and pastored during His earthly ministry. He commissioned His church and left her to accomplish His purpose. Christianity has grown into a huge, monstrosity of religion that shelters thousands of organizations calling themselves churches and claiming to speak for God. Within this huge spiritual monster there are true churches that continue to hold to the faith once delivered to the saints and to preach the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.
- C. Jesus spoke The Parable of the Mustard Seed to illustrate the growth of Christianity. The least of all seeds was sown; but it grew into a tree that became the roosting place for all kinds of birds. Jesus sowed the mustard seed (church) and it (Christianity) has grown into a tree that has become a roosting place for all kinds of birds (speckled bird churches).
- D. First, the church of *Ephesus* symbolized the cooling of the first love, the love for Christ; 2nd, the church in *Smyrna* symbolized true churches steadfast in the face of persecution by the government; 3rd, the church in *Pergamos* symbolized the intrusion of the state into the Christian religion, the birth of the universal church doctrine and the Roman Catholic Church; 4th, the church in *Thyatira* symbolized the Roman Catholic Church seizing control over Christianity and working to eliminate all of Christianity that opposed her; 5th, the church in *Sardis* symbolizes the true churches being driven into hiding by the persecution of the Roman Catholic Church; 6th, the church in *Philadelphia* symbolizes the resurrection of true preaching and teaching in opposition to and the spreading of the truth into the Americas and on into China and India and around the globe. The church OF the *Laodiceans* symbolizes Christianity as seen in this present time *rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*
 1. This is a time of lukewarm comprise, material riches and poor spiritual qualities.
 2. Christ has been pushed out through activities, comprise and downright denial in the name of Christianity.
 3. The spirit of ecumenism and unionism – go along to get along – lay down all matters of differences has left churches without strength and awaiting the hand of chastisement to fall from the Lord.
- E. We must remember these seven churches symbolize the whole of Christianity and that there have been true churches existing and serving and holding to the faith once delivered to the saints in every generation since Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father to await the time for His return to this earth.
- F. Let us take note of the characteristics of the church OF the Laodiceans and how they characterize the whole of Christianity and how they can characterize the condition of any true church.

I. LEARN THAT THE LUKEWARM SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE IN A CHURCH IS REPULSIVE TO THE LORD. Vs. 15, 16

A. The Lord wants His churches to be hot for Him and His work.

1. If a church will not be hot – zealously standing for the faith, It would be better to be cold.
2. A cold, inactive church does little to hurt the Lord’s work – and little to help the work.
3. A true church alive in leadership activities and lukewarm in her doctrinal stand for truth does great hurt to the cause of Christ.

B. The Lord is ready to spue a compromising church out of His mouth.

II. LEARN THAT BUILDINGS AND GOODS DO NOT MAKE A CHURCH RICH BEFORE GOD. V. 17

A. The church of the Laodiceans spoke of being rich and increased in goods and in need of nothing.

B. The Lord saw her as poor and wretched and miserable and blind and naked.

C. A look at the whole of Christianity now reveals great riches in property, in buildings, in services of all kinds; yet the faith once delivered to the saints is ignored and cast aside in the interest of acceptance in the eyes of man.

D. This attitude can also be the hurt of any true church.

III. LEARN THAT THE ONLY HOPE FOR SUCH A CHURCH IS TO SEE HERSELF AS SHE IS IN GOD’S SIGHT AND REPENT. VS.18, 19

A. V. 18 “anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.” Take a God’s eye view of your spiritual condition – poor, wretched, miserable, blind and naked.

B. V. 19 then be zealous and repent of her failure to do the works of God – teaching them to observe all things that the Lord has commanded.

C. V.18 Look to the Lord for true riches and the clothing of true righteousness – a life lived in full obedience to His will in our lives.

IV. LEARN THAT THE REBUKE AND CHASTISEMENT OF THE LORD IS BORN OF HIS LOVE. V. 19

A. V. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.”

B. Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

C. True churches are loved by the Lord. When a true church falls into such condition as the church of the Laodiceans, the Lord will in some way rebuke her and chastise her because of His love.

V. LEARN THAT A CHURCH CAN GET SO BUSY THAT SHE FORGETS THE LORD AND FORCES HIM TO THE OUTSIDE.

A. V. 20 reveals the Lord on the outside of the church. “I stand at the door and knock.”

B. It is easy for a church to get so busy with all kinds of activities that the Lord and His will is left out.

C. A true church can fall into such a trap trying to keep every member entertained and happy.

**VI. LEARN THAT THE LORD DEALS WITH INDIVIDUALS IN
REVIVAL. Vs. 19-22**

- A. V. 19 “As many as I love, I rebuke...” each one.**
- B. V. 20 “if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me.”**
- C. V. 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.**
- D. V. 22 “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”**

**VII. LEARN THAT THE LORD WILL NOT OVER RULE A
PERSON’S WILL.**

- A. If any man hear – and openeth the door.**
- B. The Lord will not open your door of salvation neither will He open your door of service.**
- C. The Lord sets before every person and open door. Each person must open the door of his heart and life.**

