

# Laodicea, The Foolish Church.

## Let's Stop The Foolishness!

Rev. 3:14–22

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 579.



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of FAITH  
Hebrews 11:1



## Revelation 3:14–22 (NKJV)

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.” ’ ”



- Laodicea was known for its wealth and its manufacture of a special eye salve, as well as of a glossy black wool cloth.
- It also was located near Hieropolis, where there were famous hot springs, and Colossae, known for its pure, cold water.
- The Lord presented Himself as “the Amen,”:

## 2 Corinthians 1:20 (NKJV)

For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

## Isaiah 65:16 (NKJV)

So that he who blesses himself in the earth Shall bless himself in the God of truth; And he who swears in the earth Shall swear by the God of truth; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My eyes.



- He is the truth and speaks the truth, because He is “the faithful and true Witness” *(Rev. 3:14)*.
- The Lord was about to tell this church the truth about its spiritual condition; unfortunately, they would not believe His diagnosis.

- The Laodicean church was blind to its own needs and unwilling to face the truth.
- Yet honesty is the beginning of true blessing, as we admit what we are, confess our sins, and receive from God all that we need.
- If we want God's best for our lives and churches, we must be honest with God and let God be honest with us.

# The Lord Demonstrated Four Areas Of Need In The Church At Laodicea.



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# 1. They Had Lost Their Vigor

## Revelation 3:16–17 (NKJV)

**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—



# In The Christian Life, There Are Three “Spiritual Temperatures”:

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A burning heart, on fire for God:

**Luke 24:32** (NKJV)

And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”

# In The Christian Life, There Are Three “Spiritual Temperatures”:

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## A cold heart

### **Matthew 24:12** (NKJV)

And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

# In The Christian Life, There Are Three “Spiritual Temperatures”:

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## A lukewarm heart

### **Revelation 3:16** (NKJV)

16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

- The lukewarm Christian is comfortable, complacent, and does not realize his need.
- If he were cold, at least he would feel it!
- Both the cold water from Colossae and the hot water from Hieropolis would be lukewarm by the time it was piped to Laodicea.

- As believers in Jesus Christ, we have every reason to be “fervent in spirit”.

## Romans 12:10–11 (NKJV)

**10** Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

**11** not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

- The church cannot be a “closed system.”
- Jesus said, **John 15:5** (NKJV)
- “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”
- The Laodicean church was independent, self-satisfied, and secure.

- **“We have need of nothing!”** But all the while, their spiritual power had been decaying; their material wealth and glowing statistics were but shrouds hiding a rotting corpse.
- Their Lord was *outside the church, trying to get in (Rev. 3:20)*.

# 2. They Had Lost Their Values.

vv. 17–18a

## Revelation 3:17–18 (NKJV)

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.





- The church at Smyrna thought itself poor, when it was really rich (*Rev. 2:9*); the Laodiceans boasted that they were rich, when in fact they were poor.
- Perhaps we have here a hint of why this church declined spiritually: they had become proud of their ministry and had begun to measure things by human standards instead of by spiritual values.
- They were, in the eyes of the Lord, “wretched, and miserable, and poor.”

- The solution? Pay the price to get true “gold tried in the fire.”
- This suggests that the church needed some persecution; they were too comfortable.

## 1 Peter 1:6–7 (NKJV)

**6** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

**7** that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,



# Nothing Makes God's People Examine Their Priorities Faster Than Suffering!



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# 3. They Had Lost Their Vision.

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v. 18b

- The Laodiceans were “blind.”
- They could not see reality. They were living in a fool’s paradise, proud of a church that was about to be rejected.
- The Apostle Peter teaches that when a believer is not growing in the Lord, his spiritual vision is affected.

# 3. They Had Lost Their Vision.

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v. 18b

## 2 Peter 1:5–9 (NKJV)

**5** But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,

**6** to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,

**7** to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

# 3. They Had Lost Their Vision.

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v. 18b

8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

- These people could not see themselves as they really were. Nor could they see their Lord as He stood outside the door of the church.
- Nor could they see the open doors of opportunity.
- They were so wrapped up in building their own kingdom that they had become lukewarm in their concern for a lost world.

# Revelations 3:18 (NKJV)

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.

- The solution? Apply the heavenly eye salve!
- The city of Laodicea was noted for its eye salve, but the kind of medication the saints needed was not available in the apothecary shop.



- The eye is one of the body's most sensitive areas, and only the Great Physician can “operate” on it and make it what it ought to be.
- As He did with the man whose account is told in John 9, He might even irritate before He illuminates! But we must submit to His treatment, and then maintain good spiritual “health habits” so that our vision grows keener.

# 4. They Had Lost Their Vesture

vv. 17–22

## Revelation 3:17–22 (NKJV)

**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.



# 4. They Had Lost Their Vesture

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vv. 17–22

**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.” ’ ”



- These Christians thought they were clothed in splendor when they were really naked!
- To be naked meant to be defeated and humiliated.

## 2 Samuel 10:4 (NKJV)

Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away.

## Isaiah 20:1–4 (NKJV)

**1** In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it,

**2** at the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet.” And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

**3** Then the LORD said, “Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia,

**4** so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

- The Laodiceans could go to the market and purchase fine woolen garments, but that would not meet their real need.
- There is no divine commendation given to this church.
- The Laodiceans were busy commending themselves!
- They thought they were glorifying God, when in reality they were disgracing His name just as though they had been walking around naked.

# The Lord Closed This Letter With Three Special Statements:

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- First, an explanation: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” (Rev. 3:19a).
- He still loved these lukewarm saints, even though their love for Him had grown cold. He planned to chasten them as proof of His love:



# The Lord Closed This Letter With Three Special Statements:

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## Proverbs 3:11–12 (NKJV)

**11** My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction;

**12** For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

# Hebrews 12:5–6 (NKJV)

**5** And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

**6** For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.”

- God permits churches to go through times of trial so that they might become what He wants them to become.

# Second, An Exhortation: “*Be Zealous Therefore, And Repent*”

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- Rev. 3:19b
- The church at Laodicea had to repent of their pride and humble themselves before the Lord.
- They had to “stir up that inner fire” (2 Tim. 1:6, °F) and cultivate a burning heart.

# Finally, an invitation.

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- We often use these verses to lead lost people to Christ, but the basic application is to the believer.
- The Lord was outside the Laodicean church! He spoke to the individual—“if any man”—and not to the whole congregation.
- He appeals to the individual. God can do great things in a church, even through one dedicated individual.



- Christ was not impatient. “I have taken My stand” is the sense of the verb. He “knocks” through circumstances and He calls through His Word.
- For what is He appealing? Fellowship and communion, the people’s desire to abide in Him.
- The Laodiceans were an independent church that had need of nothing, but they were not abiding in Christ and drawing their power from Him. They had a “successful program” but it was not fruit that comes from abiding in Christ  
*(John 15:1–8).*

- Note that when we invite Him in, the supper room becomes a throne room!
- It is through communion with Christ that we find victory and become overcomers indeed.
- The letters to the seven churches are God's X rays, given to us so that we might examine our own lives and ministries.
- Judgment is going to come to this world, but it first begins at God's house (*1 Peter 4:17*). In these letters we find encouragement as well as rebuke.

**May The Lord Help Us To Hear  
What The Spirit Is Saying Today  
To The Church, And To The  
Individuals In The Churches!**



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