

The message to the church at Laodicea is to a church that prided themselves in their own perceived self-sufficiency. They were satisfied with their spiritual state as it was and saw no reason to draw closer to the Lord. However, Christ expresses His rejection of their halfhearted service by essentially declaring that it made Him want to vomit.

---

<sup>14</sup> And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

**“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write”** - Like Christ’s messages to the other churches, this one is directed to the pastor (angel = “messenger”) of the church at Laodicea. This city was an important commercial center in the region and so had become wealthy. Laodicea was known for three industries: banking, wool, and medicine (notably its eye salve). The city’s main water supply came through an underground aqueduct supplied by hot springs six miles away. As a result of the distance it had to travel their water arrived in the city at an unappetizing lukewarm temperature. Christ uses these facts in His message to Laodicea.

**“These things saith the Amen [true; certain; faithful]”** - Christ identifies Himself in a few specific ways. First of all, He identifies Himself as the personification of truth and certainty. Faith in Christ is not based on opinion but on the certainty of His power to save. **“the faithful and true witness”** - Christ is faithful in all things; He keeps all His promises and does exactly what He says He will do. He is the truthful witness of His Father for He is a reflection of His Father’s will. His testimony of salvation can be trusted.

**“the beginning of the creation of God”** - There was a heresy taking hold in the region that Christ was a created being and therefore not God. However, Christ declares Himself to be the “beginning of the creation of God.” The creation began (originated) in Him.

**John 1:3** “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

---

<sup>15</sup> I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. <sup>16</sup> So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

**“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot”** - Concerning their love and zeal for the Lord, they were neither on fire for God nor were they cold and unresponsive to the Spirit of God. Their halfhearted devotion to Christ was reflected in their works. They did enough to claim they worked for Christ but their heart wasn’t in it.

**“I would thou wert cold or hot”** - Lukewarm Christians are the hardest for the Lord to reach. Those that are “hot” respond immediately to the promptings of the Spirit, while those that are “cold” typically have a guilty conscience that can be touched by the Holy Spirit’s conviction. The lukewarm are neither close enough to the Lord to hear His voice nor far enough away for their conscience to bother them. They are just close enough to God that they think they don’t need to be any closer but no so far away for their guilty conscience to bother them. They are in that realm where they are comfortable and don’t see a need to change and so the Lord says He wishes that they were in any other state than being lukewarm.

**“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue [vomit] thee out of my mouth”** - Their water from the hot springs arrived lukewarm, making it undesirable to drink and Christ uses that fact to illustrate His disgust with their lukewarm service. Just as our mouths have a tendency to reject lukewarm water by spitting it out, Christ was rejecting their halfhearted works.

---

<sup>17</sup> Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

**“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing”** - Why were they lukewarm? Because they believed themselves to be self-sufficient. They had allowed the wealth of Laodicea to delude them into thinking that they were doing well and there was no need to depend on the Lord for their needs, physical or spiritual.

**“and knowest not that thou art wretched [enduring troubles and trials], and miserable [to be pitied], and poor, and blind, and naked”** - It’s possible that the Laodicean church believed some form of a prosperity gospel, thinking that their wealth meant that they were close to God. However, Christ informs them that they were ignorant of just how spiritually destitute they actually were, for the wealth of this world can be gone in an instant. Dependence on material wealth can be dangerous spiritually. Our material state has nothing to do our spiritual state, for the wealthiest person may be the most spiritually destitute while the poorest people may be the wealthiest spiritually. We need to realize that everything we need, whether physical or spiritual, comes from God through Christ.

---

<sup>18</sup> I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

**“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich”** - They thought they were rich but Christ advises them to look to Him for “gold tried in the fire.” The refining process removes the impurities from the gold and Christ is offering true spirituality that has been refined in the fires of trials rather than the false spirituality based on the self-sufficiency of material wealth. People who have been through trials have learned that they need God and have discovered that He is faithful. Such people have more riches than the wealthiest people in the world. The church at Smyrna had learned this through the persecutions they endured (Rev. 2:9). **“and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed”** - The merchants of Laodicea were famous for a glossy black wool that was used to make beautiful garments, so those in the church believed they had no need of clothes. White raiment speaks of the righteousness of Christ that has been given to us by faith (Rev. 19:8) and Christ says they are naked without it.

**“and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear”** - The Laodiceans had become satisfied with their own righteousness and did not understand their spiritual nakedness before God (v. 17). Some suggest this is evidence that these people had not yet been redeemed.

**“and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see”** - Laodicea was known for a salve that was used to treat various eye problems. The Laodicean church felt that nothing was wrong with their eyesight but Christ points out that they were spiritually blind and needed His “eyesalve” to restore their sight.

---

<sup>19</sup> As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

**“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten”** - Christ has had some strong words to say to this church but He assures them that the rebukes and chastening come from love and not hatred. Parents correct their children because they love them and Christ loves us and therefore rebukes and chastens us to correct us so that our fellowship with Him can be restored.

**“be zealous therefore, and repent”** - Seeing the love Christ has for us ought to motivate us to repent that we may enjoy fellowship with Him. His rebukes and chastening are for our good and we should respond with repentance.

---

<sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: 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.

**“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock”** - When Christ should have been inside the church enjoying fellowship with His redeemed, He pictures Himself as standing outside with a desire to enter. What a sad commentary on a church! The church has shut Christ out and He is standing outside knocking, awaiting an invitation to come in. Christ should be the center of all activity within the church but instead they are doing their own thing, leaving Christ out of everything they do.

**“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”** - The church as a whole was rejecting the presence of Christ but the Lord’s invitation here is to individuals (“if any man”). His invitation is to anyone who will hear His voice and willingly open the door to Him. “Hearing” carries the idea of listening and acceptance, rather than merely the idea of sound waves hitting the ear. If they do hear and respond, the result will be sweet fellowship with Christ. The Greek word for “sup” indicates the last meal of the day and is a meal where the participants take their time and fellowship with one another as they eat. Sharing such a meal in that culture was a symbol of intimate friendship.

---

<sup>21</sup> To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

**“To him that overcometh [to conquer; to gain the victory]”** - The definition of an “overcomer” bears repeating, because it does not depend on our performance but on faith in Christ. John defines the one who overcomes in **1 John 5:4-5** *“<sup>4</sup> For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

**“will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne”** - A throne represents authority and Christ uses the fact that He has been rewarded by His Father for overcoming by sharing the throne with His Father as an example of how we will be allowed to share in the authority of Christ’s throne. The throne that Christ shares with His Father is in heaven, while the throne we will share with Christ will be on earth during His Millennial reign in Jerusalem over the whole earth.

**Rev. 1:6** *“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”*

**Matt. 19:28** *“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”*

**2 Tim. 2:11-12** *“<sup>11</sup> It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: <sup>12</sup> If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:”*

---

<sup>22</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

As with the other churches, Christ includes this statement in His message to the church at Laodicea because He’s stressing the importance that we pay attention to what is being said to each of these churches. The messages contain commendations for what the churches are doing that pleases Him as well as rebukes for that which displeases Him in the churches. There are also glorious promises to His people from which we can draw encouragement while facing the temptations and persecutions of the world.

The statement is addressed to “he that hath an ear.” In a natural sense, anyone with the ability to hear (“that hath an ear”) is commanded to listen. However, they are to hear “what the Spirit saith.” Unsaved people are unable to hear the Holy Spirit unless He is dealing with them for salvation. Thus, the “he that hath an ear” is apparently limited to those who have been born-again and therefore can “hear what the Spirit saith.” All born-again believers are to “hear” (listen, understand and heed) what the Spirit is saying to each of these churches because it is important that we listen and learn from what Christ is saying.