

1. **Introduction**: Continuing with the letters from Jesus to the seven churches.
2. **Laodicea**: The city was located about 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia and about 100 miles east of Ephesus. Hierapolis, with hot mineral springs and white limestone cliffs, was about 8 miles to the northeast of Laodicea. There were snowcapped mountains a few miles to the south. Unfortunately, Laodicea had no reliable water supply of its own.
 - Despite that, the city had become a leading banking center. It was also well known for manufacturing garments made of soft, black wool. It was also the home of a famous medical school for eye diseases.
 - Laodicea was virtually destroyed by a massive earthquake in 60 AD. They chose to rebuild on their own, paying for everything without Rome's help. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul mentions Laodicea and Hierapolis as well as a letter to Laodicea that has been lost.
3. **Colossians 4:16**: *And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.*
4. **Revelation 3:14**: *And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: "The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning (or originator) of God's creation."*
 - *"The words of the Amen."* In Hebrew, the word "amen" means "so be it," "that is truth," or "I affirm this." It is used as an expression of agreement, faith, and trust.
 - *"The words of the Amen"* refers to the truth that Jesus Himself is the validation, the ratification, the confirmation, the authentication of all that God has said and promised.
 - Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:20, *"For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory."*
 - Jesus speaks as the truthful, authoritative witness to God and His promises. In contrast to the truthful One, the church in Laodicea has failed to emulate Jesus' truthful witness.
 - Jesus, the One in whom all God's promises find their amen, is the origin or source of creation. It is possible (see Isaiah 65:17) that "God's creation" refers to God's new heaven and new earth.
5. **Revelation 3:15-16**: *"I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth."*
 - Jesus speaks about the church's spiritual problems by referencing the city's well-known lack of water suitable for drinking and other domestic uses.
 - That was a relatively common problem in that part of the province of Asia. Hierapolis to the north had hot springs useful for healing but not useable domestically due to heavy mineral content. Their domestic water was piped in from another area.
 - Nearby Colossae did have cold, refreshing drinking water. Laodicea's domestic water supply was from the water of a distant spring carried to them by a Roman Aqueduct.

When the mineral-rich water arrived in Laodicea, it was lukewarm, smelly, and disgusting to drink.

- Jesus uses the notion that both hot and cold water serve positive functions, but lukewarm mineral water to drink is merely nauseating.
- He views the work of the Laodicean church as apathetic and complacent to the extent it makes Him want to spit them out like lukewarm water.

6. Revelation 3:17-18: *For you say, “I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing,” not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.*

- The congregation thinks they have everything. They have prospered and need nothing.
- They have confused material prosperity with spiritual health and security. They need what only Jesus can supply - freedom from the guilt of sin and a mortal life that leads to eternal life with God. They need to lead an obedient life according to the principles taught by Jesus.
- Though the city is the home of an excellent medical school, the congregation seems to be spiritually blind, a blindness that the famous Phrygian powder from the medical school cannot heal. They need the healing power available only from Jesus.

7. Revelation 3:19: *Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.*

- Jesus reminds the congregation at Laodicea that He loves them and will not stand idly by while they drift away. Jesus loves them and will rebuke and discipline them to heal them.
- Their response should be to repent and to be zealous and prompt to follow His leading. His truth will guide them, and His power will protect them from eternal damnation.

8. Revelation 3:20: *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*

- This comment is directed to believers in the Laodicean congregation who have drifted away from their former fervent obedience to Christ but continue to follow Him in a half-hearted sort of way. Jesus is pictured waiting outside the door to their heart.
- Jesus offers them full restoration but waits for the believers to deny themselves and open their hearts in renewed fellowship with Him.
- The reference to eating together is important. The ancient world reserved table fellowship for intimate friends and family. For Jesus and them to eat together conveys Jesus' deep desire to forgive and reconcile. Fellowship signifies real forgiveness.

9. Revelation 3:21: *The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

- Victorious believers will participate with Jesus in governing, having a position with Him on His throne. Reigning with Christ in God's Kingdom is also a promised reward (Mt 19:28; Lk 22:28-30, 1 Tim 2:12, etc.)

10. **Revelation 3:22**: *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

- Again, we are reminded that God gave us ears to hear, and we should listen carefully and strive to understand what the Spirit says to all the churches.

11. **Review of First 3 Chapters**: On earth, there is an ongoing spiritual war. God sovereignly rules His creation. He will win! History's consummation will be as He chooses. In this war, people are either for God and living life consistent with His character, or against Him and living life in ways that displease Him.

- Anyone who fails to serve God will eventually fall into direct or indirect worship of Satan and his deceptive agents.
- History's consummation will be consistent with God's plan to have for Himself a holy people who can (are able to) live in eternity with Him (Heb 12:14, ***"without holiness no one will see the Lord"***). Christ is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end.
- The message of Revelation presents a challenge like that of Joshua: ***"Choose this day whom you will serve"*** (Josh 24:15). Revelation's vivid symbolic depictions convey consequences of making right or wrong choices. Next a short review of chapter 1-3.

12. **Revelation 1:1-3**: *The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who testifies to everything he saw - that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.*

- The document we are studying is from Jesus Christ, approved by the Father, and delivered to John on Patmos through visions by an angel sent by Jesus.
- John's first vision is of the risen Jesus Christ. In Jesus' human nature, John is His cousin. John was especially close to Jesus during His incarnation. Seeing Jesus in His divine nature is so shocking to John that he falls at Jesus' feet as though dead.
- Jesus walks among golden lampstands that represent His churches showing that Jesus is actively involved in the life of each church. Additional visions will reveal what soon must take place. John is commanded to write what he experiences.
- A special blessing is promised to those who read aloud what John writes and to those who hear (or read) the document and take it to heart.
- The ***"time is near"*** signifies the elements in God's purposeful plan necessary to make possible a holy people who can live with Him in eternity (they must be holy as God is holy, Heb 12:14), were completed by Jesus' propitiatory death and resurrection.
- The elements necessary for final victory over sin are complete. Salvation for human sinners is being applied to individuals step-by-step, person-by-person.
- At the right time, the salvation process will be complete, and all the appointed people will be ready to live with God in the new Jerusalem.

13. **Revelation 2:1-3:22**: This section records the letters revealed to John to be sent to the 7 churches in Asia Minor. Each letter is specific to the church it is sent to, but all the letters are intended to be useful for all churches then existent and future.
- Each letter contains Christ's comments about the congregation of that church.
 - Comments about the church's spiritual condition both good and bad. There are instructions about what to continue doing and what they must stop doing.
14. **Ephesus, A Church That Lost It's First Love**: "First love" refers to the initial, passionate devotion, zeal, and ardor the Ephesian church had for Christ.
- The beginning was a time of fervent dedication, intimate connection, and selfless service, and thankfulness for God's grace. They lost that initial fervor, becoming more dutiful than passionate, prioritizing religious works over genuine love for God.
15. **Smyrna, A Faithful Church**: Received no rebuke from Jesus. Though under constant physical hardship, they had persevered and were encouraged to be faithful even to death.
16. **Pergamum, A Worldly Church**: The congregation refused to deny Christ but tolerated to some extent idols, immorality, cults, and heresies.
17. **Thyatira, A Church with Wrong Doctrine**: This was a church who had love, faith, and good works. They were patient and eager to grow, but they fell short in doctrine which had been infiltrated by idolatry, sexual sin, and pagan traditions.
18. **Sardis, A Spiritually Dead Church**: Except for a small remnant, the congregation had fallen spiritually asleep. Jesus encouraged this spiritually dead congregation to kindle and revive every bit of faith they had left.
19. **Philadelphia, A Spiritually Alive Church**: Jesus had no rebuke for this church. They lived by faith in Him. They keep the name of Jesus alive with patient endurance, never denying Him. Jesus' promises protection. He tells them to hold fast to what they have.
20. **Laodicea, A Lukewarm Church**: This church received only rebuke. They were neither enthusiastic nor the opposite. They relied on the riches around them being fond of the things of this world. The result was a lukewarm, halfway committed type of faith.
21. **Next Lesson**: Chapter 4 deals with God on His Throne as the Sovereign Creator, creator of the universe and all that is in it. His authority is supreme.