

Christ & His Bride

Lesson #21

Laodicea: Jesus Is All You Need

Rev. 3:14-16

July 2, 2025

Christ's Proclamation to Laodicea

Rev. 3:14a And unto 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:

Laodicea . . . means "people ruling." Its name designates it as the Church of mob rule, *the democratic Church*, in which everything is swayed and decided by popular opinion, clamor and voting; and hence a Self-righteous and Self-sufficient Church.

➤ This is set in contrast to God's ruling in the church.

At the time of John's writing, the leadership of the church appears to have been inverted from Scriptural guidelines. Paul had previously warned Timothy concerning the consequences of the sheep ruling in place of Spirit-led Shepherds:

II Tim. 4:3-4 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.

I Cor. 2:4-5 And my [Paul] speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

⁵ That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Paul mentioned Laodicea 4 times in his letter to Colosse.

Col. 2:1-4 For I want you to know what a great conflict [struggle] I have for you and those in Laodicea, and *for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh*. My goal is that their hearts, having been knit together in love, may be encouraged, and that they may have [attain] ALL THE RICHES that assurance brings in their understanding of the knowledge of the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

[so no one will deceive you through arguments that sound reasonable.]

Col. 4:16 Paul requests that "after this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans."

The heretical teachings in Colossae contained and flaunted an exclusivity of mystery, secrecy, and superiority, the element of knowledge for a few elect through some form of initiation by religious experience or religious rites into the mysteries of the cult.

➤ This foreshadowed full-blown Gnosticism that would later develop.

Consider: If you take a Biblical worldview and begin to mix it with a pagan worldview, you have a worldview called syncretism. Heretical beliefs result!

The Heresy In The Church Of Colosse:

The heresy promised people a close union with God that would bring spiritual perfection.

But you must enter into the prescribed teachings and ceremonies. The wisdom gained would release you from earthly things and put you in touch with heavenly things.
 False teachers were promoting a heresy that stressed self-made rules.
 They also sought spiritual growth by discipline of the body (asceticism) and visions (mysticism).
 This search created pride in their self-centered efforts.

Heresy	Reference In Col.	Paul's Answer
Spirit is good. Matter is evil.	1:15-20	God created heaven & earth for His glory
One must follow ceremonies, rituals, & restrictions in order to be saved and/or perfected.	2:11, 16-23 3:11	These were only shadows that ended when Christ came. He is all you need to be saved and mature.
One must deny the body & live in strict asceticism	2:20-23	Asceticism is no help in conquering evil thoughts & desires; it leads to pride
Angels must be worshiped	2:18	NO! Christ alone is worthy of worship
Christ could not be both human & divine	1:15-20; 2:2-3	Christ is God in the flesh! He is the Eternal One, Head of the Body, 1 st in Everything; Supreme
One must obtain "secret knowledge"* in order to be saved or perfected. Not available to everyone.	2:2, 18	God's secret is CHRIST himself. He has been revealed to ALL.
One must adhere to human wisdom, tradition & philosophies	2:4, 8-10 3:15-17	By themselves, these can be misleading & shallow because they have human origin. Follow what Christ taught!
It is even better to combine aspects of several religions	2:10	You are complete through your union with Christ; All-sufficient
There is nothing wrong with immorality	3:1-11	Get rid of sin & evil because you have been chosen by God to live a new life as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus.

Secret Knowledge: The Gnostics were "in the know" when it came to the deeper things of God.

1. Since they believed matter was evil, they falsely concluded a holy God could not come in contact with evil matter.
2. They believed in a powerful spirit world that used material things to attack mankind.
3. They attacked the person and work of Jesus Christ and taught He was not the very Son of God come in the flesh. They claimed they were not denying the Christian faith; they were only taking it to a higher level.

Means & Methods: Combining ideas from other philosophies & religions > some elements of paganism & mysticism > some elements of Christian doctrine = Syncretism which endeavors

to harmonize and unite many avenues and come up with a superior religion.

Resulting Heresy: Finding other ways to God; Denying Jesus as God & Savior -

They do not just deny Jesus; They DETHRONE Him!

Truth: When we make Jesus Christ only part of a total religious system or philosophy, we cease to give Him the preeminence.

Col. 1:18 ...that in everything, He might be preeminent.

Challenge: Spiritual Transformation = Spiritual Maturity = Deeper Walk With God

Problem: Looking for ways to meet the challenge in all the wrong places!

When we strive for spiritual perfection or fullness by means of formulas, disciplines or rituals, we go backward instead of forward.

Kidnapped Convert→ Col. 2:8-10 BEWARE lest any man cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, after the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not after the teachings Christ.

Beware of a "deeper life" teacher who offers a way for a deeper walk that bypasses devotion to Jesus Christ. Many believe that some person, system or discipline can add something to their spiritual experience.

Warning: Do NOT let your hunger for a more fulfilling Christian experience cause you to trust in a teacher, a group or a system of thought more than in Jesus Christ.

Paul says you already have ALL you need in Jesus Christ. [Col. 2:1-4]

➤ In All things, He must have the preeminence!

True spiritual growth comes from within as we are transformed by the Holy Spirit and the living, active Word of God. Nothing else needs to be added for spiritual maturity.

Spiritual growth is NOT by addition; it is by NUTRITION. You grow from the inside out!

Problem: Not plugged in to the Source and Power who gives Life, Maturity & Transformation

Col. 2:10 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

You are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power.

Truth: Only by being connected with Christ through faith can anyone have eternal life.

Only through a CONTINUING connection with Him can anyone have power for living.

Andrew Murray: The believer can each day be pleasing to God only in that which he does through the power of Christ dwelling in Him.

Jesus Christ has absolute supremacy and sole sufficiency. He is the fullness of God.

Christ's Proclamation to Laodicea

Rev. 3:14a And unto 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:

A. Jesus is the Confirming One: The Amen: This is an OT title for God.

Isa. 65:16 So [it shall be] that he who invokes a blessing on himself in the land shall do so by saying, May the God of Truth and Fidelity [the Amen] bless me; and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of Truth and Faithfulness to His promises [the Amen], because the former troubles are forgotten and because they are hidden from My eyes.

- It points to Him as the end, the finality and certainty of all things.

Col. 2:3 With Jesus Christ there is no further search needed for truth
for in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The words to follow were truth the hearer would neglect at his or her own peril. At His imminent return, He will finally fulfill all God's promises which still remain unaccomplished.

II Cor. 1:20 For all the promises of God in [Jesus Christ] are Yes and in Him

Amen to the glory of God by us. [All God's promises and all God's covenants are guaranteed and affirmed by the person and work of Jesus Christ.]

B. Jesus is the Confronting One: "The Faithful and True Witness"

This church had a flawed vision of itself. Christ emphasizes His own faithful and true character because they lacked these two qualities. Jesus has come to reveal their true state as He sees them. He stripped them and us of all our false appearances and pretentiousness, rationalizations and excuses.

1. Their testimony lied about Him. False witness. He came to set the record straight.

- A true witness is a reflected example of the life of Jesus Christ in word and behavior.

2. This stresses our need for honest examination followed by an honest confession to God which demonstrates a genuine desire for a change.

3. Teaches us the need to be in His Word which reveals our true condition.

Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

John 17:17 The Lord said, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."

He uses this title referring to His glorious return, and His work of judgment of the nations.

Rev. 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He that sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war.

C. Jesus is the Controlling One: "The Beginning [source] Of The Creation Of God" Jesus Christ is the origin, the cause, the Creator of all things [John 1:3; Col. 1:16-17; Rev. 1:8; 21:6].

He is the Creator of this earth, now fallen under the curse of sin through rebellion to Him.

He is also the Creator of the coming kingdom and the eternal state of a new heavens and earth in which perfect righteousness dwells [Isa. 65:17]. He declares that by His resurrection, He allows the beginning of a creation which, this time, will be eternal.

Rev. 3:15-16 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot.

¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, & neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

History & Background: Laodicea was part of a tri-city area,
closely associated with the cities of Colosse and Hierapolis.

1. The founders built Laodicea in the Lycus valley where two major trade routes crossed. Located on a high plateau and very secure from enemy attack.
2. It remained neutral and its posture was of compromise. Why compromise?

Crucial to this city was its water supply. There were some local streams in the area but as the population grew and developed, they were inadequate.

In fact, some of them dried up in the winter. Result> water must be brought in.

Since there was no ready source of water in the city it had to be piped in through aqueducts.

- Water from the hot springs in Hierapolis 6 miles to the north and from
 - Colosse located 10 miles to the east was brought into the city.
3. The water was collected in a central water tower and distributed through the streets by pipes radiating from it. The water carried by those pipes was so charged with impurities it dropped much of its load in flow. The calcium carbonate gradually clogged the pipes. The water tower and sections of the terra cotta pipes are still visible even today. Thick deposits of calcified impurities can still be seen almost choking the surviving section of the pipes.

Note: This had an impact on their military strength. Even though they were fortified architecturally, an enemy could conquer them by sealing off the aqueduct and hold the city under siege until the water ran out. So it never became much of a military power.

4. Water arrived foul, dirty, and tepid - lukewarm, like the people in the church.

Key: What is the result of relying on outside sources for the water [LIFE] ?

Our focus IS NOT on Jesus who is the SOURCE of our LIFE. Rob His Preeminence!

Consider: What is "clogging up" my vessel? Is the "river of living water" flowing through me contaminated with impurities, unconfessed sin, misplaced priorities?

- Am I compromising with the world and the enemy? = Defeated Christian
- Am I counting on the wrong practices and disciplines to enrich my experience?
- Am I not experiencing victory through Jesus Christ?

Rev. 3:15-16 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot.

¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,
I will vomit thee out of my mouth.

Lukewarm #5513 > chliaros from chlio = to become warm; of temperature between cold and hot; lukewarm, tepid; metaphorically, of a half-hearted condition of love and loyalty.

Literally moderately warm, figuratively showing little enthusiasm. The only use in the Bible.

Chliaros: used only 1x in God's Word - Rev 3:16. Not used in the Septuagint.

SPIRITUAL INDIFFERENCE = Spiritually apathetic

You are completely useless to Me because of your spiritual indifference. You have no purpose.

Question: Can cold and hot both be a positive thing? Yes! Cold water refreshes.

Hot water can be very therapeutic and healing. Lukewarm water does neither!
From a standpoint of ministry, the church provided neither refreshment nor healing;
they could only cause nausea! Don't be apathetic!

Question: Do I provide spiritual refreshment to others? Do I bring others encouragement,
joy and hope? Do I bring healing by challenging the careless, rousing the indifferent?

Truth: I cannot help anyone if I am lukewarm!

Crazy Love - Traits of Lukewarm Christians

1. Attend church fairly regularly. "Good Christians" do, so they go.
2. Give money to charity and to the church as long as it doesn't impinge on
their standard of living; giving out of our leftovers.

I Chron. 21:24 But King David said to Ornan: No, but I will buy them for the full price.

I will not take for the LORD what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing.

3. Gauge their morality or goodness by comparing themselves to the secular world.
4. Tend to choose what is popular over what is right when they are in conflict. They desire to
fit in both at church and outside the church. They care more about what people think of their
actions than what God thinks of their hearts and lives. Craving people's approval!

Luke 6:26: Woe to you when ALL men speak well of you,
for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

5. Moved by stories about people who do radical things for Jesus, yet they do not act.
6. Say they love Jesus, and He is indeed a part of their lives but only a part.

In Christianity there is no room for lukewarm neutrality. The individual who has not declared
FOR Christ is AGAINST Him. Weak commitment is NO commitment.

Jesus will not tolerate their indifference and apathy! They were useless to the Lord due to
loss of passion for the things of the Lord [just going through the motions.]

Isaiah 29:13 These people come near Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from Me. Their worship of Me is made up only of rules taught by men.

Trey Morgan: Symptoms Of A Lukewarm Christian

1. Thinking more about life on this earth than their eternal life

Col. 3:1-4 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above,
where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above,
not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

2. Seeking God when I have a problem.
3. Saying we believe God but living like He doesn't exist.
4. Rarely or never share the Gospel.
5. Critical or Complaining Attitude

Quote: If you find yourself a bit irritated and overwhelmed, it's a sign that
you're spending less time with God and more time with this world.

6. Blend in with the world instead of making a difference.

Matt. 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

7. Justified [ticket to heaven] but not submitted to sanctification.

Quote: Lukewarm people don't really want to be saved from their sin;
they want only to be saved from the penalty of their sin.

Spurgeon: It is a sad thing, that after of Christ's love to us,
We should repay it with lukewarm love to Him.

Dr. Adrian Rogers - 2004 Lukewarmness is not weakness; it is wickedness. It is not a small sin; it is a great sin. If the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, then the greatest sin is not to do so.

In the last days, our Lord says that lukewarmness will be the condition of the average church.

Quote: "There was a time when people went to church, heard the TRUTH and wept over their sins. Today, people go to church, hear a motivational speech, and ignore their sins."

8. Say we believe in God, but we do not take the time [STRIVE] to get to KNOW Him. The Greek word for "strive" is *agonizomai*, implying an agonizing, intense, purposeful struggle.

It is the same word in I Corinthians 9:26-27 of an athlete battling to win a victory.

Therefore, I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.

²⁷ But I DISCIPLINE my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. [*castaway; from the prize*]

Straining Every Nerve -Pressing Toward The Goal

Phil. 3:12-15 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Therefore let us, as many as are mature,

HAVE THIS MIND; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

The Message: So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet! Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it.

Francis Chan: God is calling you to a passionate love relationship with Himself.

The answer to religious complacency isn't working harder at a list of do's and don'ts.

➤ It's falling in love with Jesus Christ.

He's All I Need, He's All I Need; Jesus is All I Need.

He Satisfies, My Need Supplies; Jesus is All I Need.

Col. 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a Bondservant of Christ, greets you, always LABORING FERVENTLY for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Rev. 22:3-4 fast forward to the new heaven and the new earth

There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and
His Bond-Servants Will Serve Him;

Bond-servant = #1401 *doulos* > is used with the *highest dignity* in the NT -

namely, of believers who *willingly* live under Christ's authority as His devoted followers

Rev. 22:4 They Will See His Face, and His Name *Will Be* On Their Foreheads.

[His Bond-Servants will see His Face and His Name will be on their foreheads.]

1 When this passing world is done, when has sunk yon glaring sun,
when we stand with Christ on high looking o'er life's history,
then, Lord, shall I fully know, not till then, how much I owe.

2 When I hear the wicked call on the rocks and hills to fall,
when I see them start and shrink on the fiery deluge brink,
then, Lord, shall I fully know, not till then, how much I owe.

3 When I stand before the throne, dressed in beauty not my own,
when I see thee as thou art, love thee with unsinching heart,
then, Lord, shall I fully know, not till then, how much I owe.

4 When the praise of heav'n I hear, loud as thunders to the ear,
loud as many waters' noise, sweet as harp's melodious voice,
then, Lord, shall I fully know, not till then, how much I owe.

5 Chosen not for good in me, wakened up from wrath to flee,
hidden in the Savior's side, by the Spirit sanctified,
teach me, Lord, on earth to show, by my love, how much I owe.