

***Prayer:***

The OT gives us God’s plan related to Israel and the fact that they are God’s special chosen people. When their Messiah came in the person of Jesus, they rejected Him. Consequently, God has temporarily set Israel aside and is building a whole NEW THING called the Church. We live in the Church Age. It is what God is doing right now. It is a forever family of whosoever will believe, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles.

When the Church is completed, God will remove it from the world and will then resume and complete His program with Israel, culminating in the Second Coming and Kingdom of our Lord.

The book of Revelation takes all the prophetic themes related to Israel, which began in the OT, adds to it what God is now doing in the present Church Age, and then, in chronological fashion, brings it all together to a grand consummation.

The book of Revelation is the ONE book in the NT that is essentially entirely prophetic. The basic contents of the book are outlined in Rev. 1:19.

**Slide # 1**

***Revelation 1:19 – Inspired Outline***

Revelation 1:19 (NKJV)

19 “Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

- “have seen” – Past (Vision of Christ) – **Ch. 1**
- “**which are**” – **Present (Church Age)** – Ch. 2-3
- “after this” – Future (Post-Church Age) – Ch. 4-22
- - Scene in heaven – Ch. 4-5
- - Tribulation – Ch. 6-18
- - Second Coming – Ch. 19
- - Kingdom – Ch. 20
- - Eternal State – Ch. 21-22

Some have taught that the seven local churches addressed in Rev. 2-3 are representative of 7 eras that make up the church age. But the text does not say this, and you end up with arbitrary and very subjective deductions.

It is far better to take what Christ is saying to each of the various churches and recognize that there is application to be made to all local churches throughout the church age. There have always been churches like the various churches referenced, and so it will continue to be the case until the end of the church age. That is why at the end of each address we have the consistent refrain: ***“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”***

The last four churches addressed all have language that relates ultimately to the coming of Christ, with the application to BE READY AND TO LIVE READY! Thus, the coming of Christ for the church is presented as ever imminent!

We have noted that in addressing these churches, in the mix are true believers and pretend believers. Most Churches have a mix as the wheat and the tares grow together (cf. Matt. 13). In addressing the various churches, Christ speaks to them in terms of the prevailing condition that characterizes them. For example, He calls the church at Sardis a DEAD church. Even so, He says there are few there who shall walk with Him in white (Rev. 3:4). There was a remnant of true believers.

The same is probably true of the church at Laodicea. It is commonly referred to as the APOSTATE CHURCH. It is true that, by and large, what defined the church was NOMINALISM. They were a church in name only. However, even so, there were probably a few in the mix who were truly saved. One evidence for this is that all seven churches are referenced as being “lampstands” indicating that there was some light represented there (cf. Rev. 1:20).

Still, it would seem that if true believers were represented at Laodicea that they were so few as to not even be acknowledged. Even in the dead church at Sardis, a remnant was acknowledged, but we have no such acknowledgement in the church at Laodicea.

There is a HUGE debate over whether the people being addressed here in the church at Laodicea were true believers or not. There are good scholars on both sides of the debate. Those who argue for them being “carnal” believers emphasize they are still addressed as a “church” and also in verse 19 Christ addresses them as those He loves and therefore rebukes and chastens them.

The other side (of which I am on) argues that the language of verses 16-18 and verse 20 shows that the church, for the most part, is simply a professing church – a nominal church, made up of mostly unsaved people.

Laodicea receives the sharpest rebuke of all the churches and no commendation at all. It is a church of compromise that is spiritually bankrupt, and they don't even know it. Laodicea is the last of the seven churches addressed, and in this case, Christ saved the worst for last.

The church may have been started in conjunction with Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey (cf. Acts 19:10). Paul, in Colossians 2:1, speaks of his great conflict for Christians in both Colossae and neighboring Laodicea. Although there is no record of Paul ever having been to Laodicea, he did send greetings to them in Colossians 4:15, and some think that the "epistle from Laodicea" mentioned in Colossians 4:16 is possibly the book of Ephesians, which was probably a circular letter.

The city is thought to have been founded by a Seleucid king (in the line of Alexander the Great) named Antiochus II (261-246 B.C.) who named the city after his wife Laodice. He later divorced her. In 129 BC the Romans took control of the city. There were several key factors that defined the city.

### **Slide # 2**

Laodicea Defined by...

- 1) Wealth
  - 2) Wool Industry
  - 3) Eye Salve
  - 4) Bad Water
1. It was a banking center and extremely **wealthy**. It had theaters, a huge stadium, lavish public baths, great markets. An example of their wealth was when the city was destroyed by an earthquake in 60 AD and the city refused aid from Rome to rebuild because it had enough funds of its own to do so.
  2. It was a manufacturing center for clothing, especially **glossy black wool**.
  3. It had a medical school that specialized in **eye salve**.
  4. It was known for its **poor water**. Neighboring Heirapolis had hot spring mineral waters, and neighboring Colosse had cold mountain water. However, Laodicea's water was channeled from Heirapolis 5-6 miles away and by the time it got there it was lukewarm and didn't taste well. Reportedly, visitors would begin to take a drink and then spit it out.

**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:**

The angel (messenger) of this church is singled out in a very definite way.

It is remarkable that the Greek adjectives [in verses 15-16] are in the masculine, agreeing with the angel, not feminine, agreeing with the Church. The Lord addresses the angel as the embodiment and representative of the Church. – ***Jamieson, Fausset & Brown***

This message to this messenger comes from the AMEN! This is a title for God in the OT (cf. Isa. 65:16) and for Christ here. There are at least 30 distinct and different names given to Christ in the book of Revelation.

As the AMEN Christ is the final authority on everything! Amen is a statement of resounding affirmation. It emphasizes CERTAINTY! It emphasizes what is fixed, true, and unchanging! Christ is the One Who establishes all of God’s promises. He is the last and final Word on what God says. It is totally affirmed in Jesus! (cf. 2 Cor. 1:19-20) Jesus is the AMEN to all that God says! What is true in Jesus cannot be changed! This is a very strong LORDSHIP affirmation!

And building on that is the emphasis that He is the “Faithful and True Witness” (cf. Rev. 1:5). This makes “the Amen” more specific! His character is that of being totally TRUSTWORTHY! Witness is the word (Gk. martus) from which we get our word “martyr”. Christ proved His faithfulness to the point of death (cf. Phil. 2:8-11).

To this nominal church, He is emphasizing that what He says is to be taken with absolute seriousness! The problem with nominal churches is that they have a low view of Christ and God’s Word! He is NOT Lord to them!

When it says Jesus is “***Beginning of the creation of God***” the cults have traditionally tried to use this to say Jesus is the first created being. But that is heresy. Christ’s eternality was already established in 1:8, and 18 (cf. Rev. 22:13). It was already established that He is the “***Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.***” John 1:2 says, “***He was in the beginning with God.***” He was already there at the very beginning.

“***Beginning***” means “***originator***” or “***initiator***”. It all started with Him! It was through Christ that the whole of Creation was brought into being (cf. Col. 1:15, 18). Therefore, the sense here is that Christ is the “***One Who begins the creation of God.***”

**Slide # 3****John 1:3 (NKJV)****3 All things** were made through Him, and **without Him nothing was made** that was made.**Colossians 1:16 (NKJV)****16** For **by Him all things were created** that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. **All things** were created through Him and for Him.

Evolutionists want to claim that “science” can explain all things. Turns out it is “science falsely so called” (cf. 1 Tim. 6:20). Really, there are but two explanations for the origin of the universe. You can either go with **speculation or revelation**. Nobody was there, so the only intelligent thing to do is to go with REVELATION. God was the only One there, so He is the only One Who can tell us, and He has done so in His Word. In the Word of God, we have the testimony of the One Who is “***the Originator of God’s creation***” (HCSB). You can have “speculation,” I am going with revelation!

Right out of the blocks, the emphasis to Laodicea is that Jesus is the DIVINE ABSOLUTE. There is a strong LORDSHIP emphasis here, presenting Him as faithful Lord-God. There is nothing relative – wishy-washy – superficial or lukewarm about Him. They so needed to hear this message because they had no spine – they took no stands – and nothing really seemed to matter to them. They could go this way or that way. They were LUKEWARM, but Jesus was the concrete absolute truth – the totally faithful and true witness – the Divine Source of all creation.

**15 “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.**

To each church Christ begins by saying He “***knows***”. He knows their works – what they are all about. Nothing is hidden from Jesus!

Jesus goes immediately to the heart of the problem. He knows their works which reveal them to be “neither cold nor hot.”

“[Works] are evidence of the inward spiritual condition the Lord alone sees and knows directly. It is by means of these that men prove what they actually are.” – ***Robert Thomas***

They would have understood the concept of “neither cold nor hot” very clearly because they lived in Laodicea, the city known for lukewarm water. Cold and Hot are used here as **contrasting spiritual temperatures**. Cold is on one end of the spectrum, which would emphasize hostility and opposition, while on the other hand, HOT emphasizes healthy spiritual fervor.

The word “hot” is the Greek word “**zestos**” from which we get the word “zeal”. It means “boiling hot” (cf. Acts 18:25; Rom. 12:11).

Understood this way, this message is JARRING! The most offensive thing to Christ is not one who is completely COLD to Christ, but rather the PRETENDER – the HYPOCRITE who, in name, is a Christian but stands for nothing in reality. Taken at face value, LUKEWARM CHRISTIANITY is the MOST OFFENSIVE thing to Christ. He could even wish them cold versus lukewarm. Better to honestly reject than to be a NOMINAL fake Christian.

There is no one further from the truth than the one who makes an idle profession but never experiences genuine saving faith. No one is harder to reach for Christ than a false Christian. **John MacArthur–**

**The worst thing is a LUKEWARM Christian** because, in fact, they aren’t Christian at all. They are simply pretenders. Nothing is more disgusting to Christ than those who claim His name but in fact are phony! Jesus said on judgment day, there will be “many” in this camp (cf. Mt. 7:21-23). These are those who habitually, as a way of life, use the Lord’s name in VAIN! This is repulsive to Christ! In the words of Paul, they have a form of godliness but at the same time they deny its life-changing power (cf. 2 Tim. 3:5).

Those who received the **strongest words of condemnation** while Christ was here on this earth were not the tax collectors, harlots, and other worldlings. Rather, His most **severe words** of rebuke were for the **most RELIGIOUS people in the land – the Pharisees**. They were pretenders that Christ called “hypocrites”. In Matthew 23, Jesus pronounces 7 woes upon the Pharisees - “***Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!***”

I submit to you that nothing is more offensive to God than HYPOCRITICAL commitment to Him. It is absolutely repulsive. John, the apostle, in both 1<sup>st</sup> John and Revelation, called such people **liars** and says they will have their part in the lake of fire (cf. 1 Jn. 2:3-4; Rev. 21:8).

Christ had nothing good to say to this professing Church – nothing! They were totally lukewarm, mellow yellow phonies! They had Churchianity, but not Christianity; they had religion, but not relationship. They were totally indifferent to the things Christ! They wouldn't take a stand on anything!

#### **Slide # 4**

This spirit of indifference is the most tragic thing that can happen to a church. – ***Wycliffe Bible Commentary***

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

Lukewarm essentially defined this church, and it made Christ nauseous. “***I will vomit you out of My mouth***” is an extremely strong statement of rejection that is unparalleled in the NT.

Lukewarm signifies being indifferent, passive, apathetic, complacent, self-satisfied, compromising, tolerant, and conforming to this world in a “Christian” sort of way.

These are “room temperature” Christians! They just assume the cultural temperature around them – and yet they claim to be Christian. They would never claim to be in opposition to Christ, and yet they don't stand for Him either. They are just middle of the road – anything goes. TOLERANCE is their motto.

#### **Slide # 5**

“Lukewarmness, then, does not refer to the laxity of Christians but the condition of not really knowing Christ as Savior and Lord....”

– ***Expositors***

“Christ's forceful expression is one of disgust. He will utterly repudiate those whose attachment to Him is purely nominal and superficial.”

– ***John Stott***

“**Vomit you out**” is very strong! They make Christ want to puke. It is nauseating to Him. The vomiting out is actually THEM! He is actually speaking of vomiting them out. He is going to repudiate and forcefully reject any attachment to them. In truth, they never really belonged to Him but merely claimed an attachment.

The language is so strong here that I take it they must indeed be unbelievers. To His own Christ has promised He will never leave nor forsake them. (Heb. 13:5-6)

### **Slide # 6**

#### **John 6:37 (NKJV)**

37 “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

But that is not what He says to these people – indeed, He is about to vomit them out!

Many commentators think there may be an eschatological emphasis here. Laodicea represents the APOSTATE church of the last days that ends up being the bride of the antichrist. Thus, it portrays the great whore of Revelation 17. Ultimately, Christ will gather the true Church to Himself in the rapture, but the false Church will be spewed out into the Tribulation Period.

“I will vomit you out of my mouth.” Does that sound to you like the church which He’s going to rapture, to whom He says, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3)? I don’t think so. That is the church He draws to Himself, but here is a church He just vomits out because it is lukewarm. – **J. Vernon McGee**

And yet, note there is still a measure of grace. “***I will vomit you out***” is the sense “I am about to” or “I am ready to” but it has not happened yet. There is still a final warning and invitation as the text goes on to show.

“His dealings towards them will depend on theirs towards Him.”

– **Jamieson, Fausset & Brown**

Now in verse 17, Christ goes on to elaborate on exactly what He means by saying the church is “lukewarm”.

The five adjectives that describe this church in verse 17 make it quite evident that, corporately speaking, they did not have a relationship with Christ as Savior. This probably cannot be pressed to mean that there were no genuine Christians there. It simply means they were so few in number and insignificant in influence that the Lord did not find it necessary to acknowledge their presence. – **Robert Thomas**



**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—**

The Lord points His finger forcefully toward the messenger representing this church through His use of [the] emphatic “you”.

– **Robert Thomas**

Earlier in the life of the church, it would seem that, as seen in Colossians, there was some life there. But it is now perhaps about 40 years later, and the church has largely died - it is essentially just a nominal church now, as here described by Christ.

The church boasted about how it had become financially wealthy and was self-sufficient, independent, and complacent. They were so well off that they no longer recognized their need for God. But in their affluence, they did not recognize their true spiritual condition (cf. the contrast of 2:9). As such, they had invested in “fool's gold”.

It would seem that this church was an early proponent of the “**prosperity gospel**,” interpreting their material wealth as a blessing from God, and so they boasted in it. But wealth can be numbing and deceiving. Paul in 1 Timothy 6 speaks of those who wrongly believe that “godliness is a means of gain” – that is, worldly gain. In verse 10, he speaks of those who, through love of money, pierce themselves through with many sorrows. And then he commands the believers not “to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.” (1 Tim. 6:17)

The church of Laodicea presents a vivid picture of the age in which we live. Luxury-living abounds on every hand while souls are dying for want of the gospel. Christians are wearing crowns instead of bearing a cross. We become more emotionally stirred over sports, politics, or television than we do over Christ. There is little sense of spiritual need, little longing for true revival. We give the best of our lives to the business world, then turn over the remnants of a wasted career to the Savior. We cater to our bodies which in a few short years will return to dust. We accumulate instead of forsake, lay up treasures on earth instead of in heaven. The general attitude is, “Nothing too good for the people of God. If I don't pamper myself, who will? Let's get ahead in the world and give our spare evenings to the Lord.” This is our condition on the eve of Christ's return.

– **William MacDonald**

That is pretty sobering! Looks to me like the message to Laodicea is right up to date and perhaps closer to home than we would like to admit!

It is pointed out that an even deeper problem than that of their spiritual indifference was their spiritual ignorance. They did not even KNOW they had a spiritual problem. They thought everything was fine! Nominal churches are FULL of people who think they are okay, completely oblivious to their real spiritual condition.

### **Slide # 7**

The spirit of the surrounding culture had crept into the congregation and [over time] had paralyzed their spiritual life. - **Expositors**

Christ describes them as spiritually wretched and miserable. These two descriptions are linked together, while the latter three (poor, blind, and naked) further explain this twofold condition.

Wretched refers to a condition of being destitute (Rom. 7:24). Miserable means “pitiful” (1 Cor. 15:19). They were spiritually destitute and in a pitiful state.

Poor is a strong word that means desperately poor, beggarly poor, completely destitute. They were totally spiritually bankrupt in a city known for its wealth through banking.

They were spiritually blind in a city famous for its eye salve. They couldn’t see spiritual truth – starting with their true spiritual condition. They thought they were okay, in “need of nothing,” not realizing how spiritually destitute they really were (cf. 2 Pet. 1:5-10).

And they were spiritually naked in a city famous for its woolen garments. They didn’t have the spiritual garments of salvation, and if they don’t repent, will be exposed for who they truly are.

Some wonder if **Hans Christian Anderson** based his fable “**The Emperor’s New Clothes**” on what Christ says here. In the fable, the king’s servants pretended to make new garments for the king, claiming it was invisible but beautiful. Everyone played along as if they could see them. One day the king went out to PARADE his new garments for all to see. Everyone played along until one little boy in the crowd whispered aloud: “***But the emperor doesn’t have any clothes on***”. The whisper spread like wildfire until even the king heard. But still, they took even greater pains in the pretense that the king had on new robes.

This describes the nominal church of Laodicea. They thought they were looking good, but Christ says, “You are poor, blind, and naked”.

Christ now speaks to them in a language that materialistic people would understand – the language of the merchant corresponding to the pride of the city. Christ counsels them regarding the spiritual counterparts of the three major industries represented among them, namely, gold, garments, and eye salve.

**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.**

Note Christ doesn’t harshly command them – but even now seeks to reason with them through counsel. This is the spirit of “let us reason together” (Isa. 1:18). He invites them in the spirit of Isaiah 55:1.

### **Slide # 8**

#### **Isaiah 55:1 (NKJV)**

1 “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, **buy** and eat. Yes, come, **buy** wine and milk  
**Without money and without price.**

How can you buy (double emphasis) without money? The only way you can do this is on the basis of someone else paying. You buy at someone else’s expense. And those of us who know the full story know that we acquire spiritual blessings at Christ’s expense. This is called GRACE – God’s Riches at Christ’s Expense! It is all grace and yet put to our account on the basis of faith – the right kind of faith – a change of mind kind of faith involving the element of REPENTANCE.

To “buy” is to come and receive on Christ’s terms, which in the next verse is shown to be REPENTANCE. It will cost you your self-willed rebellion. It’s all FREE! God’s eternal life and all that goes with it are absolutely offered free of charge. The only requirement is that one must COME on God’s terms. And God’s terms are that there are no terms other than coming in repentance and faith to receive Jesus for WHO He is as Lord and Savior!

Each item he counsels them to buy is a different way to figuratively refer to salvation, which one can only get from Christ. Note Christ specifically counsels them to buy from Him! You can only get this from Jesus! He has a corner on this!

They boasted in their wealth but Christ counsels them to buy refined gold (pure gold) from Him that they may be spiritually rich. The true gold, the true riches are found in Jesus. The truly well-off are those who have Jesus! In Christ we have all “spiritual blessings” (Eph. 1:3). In Christ the overcomer “shall inherit all things” (Rev. 21:7).

Christ counsels them to buy white garments from Him so that they may be clothed in righteousness, so that the shame of their nakedness will not be seen (cf. Isa. 61:10). Outside of Christ, “all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6; Zech. 3:3-4). We are, as it were, clothed in filth. But in Christ He robes us with His imputed righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). That this is what is in view is buttressed by the parenthetical thought in Revelation 16 in which similar language is used to express the importance of being ready when Christ comes.

### **Slide # 9**

#### **Revelation 16:15 (NKJV)**

**15** “Behold, I am coming as a thief. **Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.**”

In the midst of these climactic judgments is this parenthetical warning from Christ to **be ready so** that you don’t have to face this awful period of time! Christ’s coming as a thief is consistently tied with the Rapture (cf. Matt. 26:43-44 and the Day of the Lord Judgment that immediately transpires on its heels (cf. 1 Thess. 5:1-4, 2 Peter 3:10; also Rev. 3:3). So closely are they related that both are spoken of as coming as a thief in the night.

In view here in Revelation 3 may be a contrast between the black wool garments the merchants of Laodicea specialized in, and WHITE garments which Christ alone could supply.

And then Christ advises them to secure from Him eye salve by which they could anoint their eyes and see. Laodicea prided itself on the industry of eye salve, but what they needed was spiritual sight, which could only be acquired from Christ. In verse 17, Christ said they did “***not know***” the terribleness of their spiritual condition. They could not see it! They needed to come to Christ to have His spiritual eye salve applied so they could truly see. It appears they had never really seen themselves as helpless sinners. After all, they were very self-sufficient!

These descriptions strongly argue that they lacked salvation and needed to HUMBLE THEMSELVES and come to Christ to meet their spiritual needs. They prided themselves on self-sufficiency from these trades, but Christ, in the language of the merchants, counsels them to acquire these corresponding spiritual realities from Him.

In view of their dire spiritual condition, Christ states this truism!

**19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.**

Normally, the cross references related to chastening relate to believers (cf. Prov. 3:11-12; 1 Cor. 11:32; Heb. 12:7-11). And while that is true, the surrounding context of verses 16-18 and also verse 20 uses language that would seem to be more fitting in addressing unbelievers.

It is for this reason that I think Christ here in verse 19 is stating a truism related to how He works, in seeking to reason with them. The principle applies. Even though the rebuke is severe, it is really out of love that seeks their ultimate good in seeking to bring them to repentance. Even in their nominalism, Christ still loved them enough to confront them. God's love is demonstrated in that "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8). Even in his misguided lostness, Jesus looked with love on the rich young ruler who came to Him (Mk. 10:21; also see Mt. 26:50 and Jn. 13:5).

I think the point here is that even though this message is very strong and severe, as seen in the threat to "vomit you out" (v. 16), and you "do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (v. 17), yet this strong confrontation is motivated by love.

**Rebuke** is the idea of reproof in the sense of exposing, convicting, or correcting. This very same word is translated as "convict" in John 16:8 where Christ says when the Spirit comes, "He will **convict** the world of sin...".

The word "**chasten**" literally means "to correct with blows". It has the connotation of instructing or educating in a painful or stinging manner. While **rebuke** emphasizes verbal admonishment, **chastening** emphasizes action designed to correct. The word translated here in Rev. 3:19 as "chasten" is also used in 2 Timothy 2:25 in reference to unbelievers.

**Slide # 10**

## 2 Timothy 2:25 (NKJV)

**25** in humility correcting [same Greek word translated as chasten in Rev. 3:19] those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

My point is this same language used here in Rev. 3:19 is also used in reference to unbelievers elsewhere, so for me the CONTEXT is the major thing that sways me to the view that Christ here in verse 19 is stating in principle how He works, and that is, His harsh assessment and rebuke is really borne out of love with the goal of bringing about the correction of repentance.

Christ says, “**Therefore be zealous and repent.**” This is a call to sincere repentance. They have been playing “church” for too long. They needed to come to true repentance. What Christ says here is a description of genuine repentance. Repentance literally means to have a change of mind. In the Bible, repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of direction in life. Acts 11:18 speaks of “repentance to life.” God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

The word “**zealous**” literally means “**boiling hot**” from which we get the word “zesty”. Note, he doesn’t say “**be cold**” but rather “**be boiling hot**”. This is indicative of true repentance. In 2 Corinthians 7:10 Paul said, “**godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation.**” He then described the nature of this repentance.

## Slide # 11

## 2 Corinthians 7:11 (NKJV)

**11** For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

The energy of this verse is almost untranslatable.

– **Wycliffe Bible Commentary**

This is the stuff of true repentance that proves itself to be real. This is the stuff that defines the red-hot zeal of true repentance. No more games! No more nominalism, no more lukewarmness, Christ is calling them to genuine repentance!

The call to repentance goes hand in hand with the invitation of verse 20. The mass will not heed the call to repentance, but individuals may. Christ in love still extends His call to repentance to individuals in apostate churches.

In regard to this APOSTATE Church, Christ is standing outside the church that claims to know Him. The organization as a whole is not listening to Christ and does not have a saving relationship with Him.

“History affords little ground for optimism that an organization that has departed from Christ will return. But our Lord does appeal to the individual...” - **Leman Strauss**

Corporately apostate churches almost never turn around. My mentor, Dr. John Whitcomb, called this “***The Ecclesiastical Second Law of Thermodynamics.***” By this, he meant churches and para-church organizations that start out strong tend to weaken over time and end up in apostasy. And once there, they don’t make a comeback. What happens then is that certain individuals break away and start a new work, and then the process starts all over again.

The church, as a whole, had, in practical reality, kicked Christ out of the Church, and at this point, was full of itself in its self-sufficiency - doing things its own independent way. However, in that same context, Christ still continued to appeal to INDIVIDUALS to come to repentance! This is reflected in the appeal of verse 20.

**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.**

This, in effect, is the door of the church. Christ is outside wanting to come in. And yet, while the appeal is to the church as a whole, it targets individuals. For this reason, I think it is appropriate to say that, in effect, the door represents the heart of individuals. The appeal is to individuals to repent. The appeal is to anyone who will hear and answer the door. The appeal is to anyone who hears Christ’s voice to respond and let Him in. This is ultimately a HEART response presented in metaphorical language.

The custom of the time was to knock at the door of someone's house and, at the same time, speak out, identifying yourself (cf. Acts 12:13-14). OPENING the door was a response of WELCOMING THEM IN! This response of the heart is in keeping with the call for repentance in verse 19.

**Slide #12**

While most commentators have taken this invitation as addressed to lapsed, half-hearted Christians, the terminology and context (v. 18) suggest that these Laodiceans were for the most part mere professing Christians who lacked authentic conversion to Christ...Verse 20 is, therefore, more evangelistic than admonitory.

– **Expositors**

Christ needs to be invited in! John 1:12 says, “as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” In John 10:27 Jesus said, “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*” The true sheep respond to Christ’s voice!

“This is the climactic decision of a lost person in turning to Christ for salvation.” – **Robert Thomas**

*Note very carefully that Christ says, “I will come into him”. This is the language of salvation, this is the language of conversion. The Bible says, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27). The Bible in Romans 8:9 says, “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” And then it does on to say, “Christ is in you” as a believer. He resides in you in the form of the Spirit. This is the defining issue in terms of being a true believer. Christ spoke in terms of “you in Me, and I in you” (Jn. 14:20).*

**2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV)**

**5** Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

Jesus Christ in you is defining issue of salvation. Christ coming into a person is a matter of being saved.

But Christ must be received on His terms! He must be welcomed in for WHO He is. In John 1:12, those who receive Christ do so by believing in His NAME – that is, Who He is. Here in this address to Laodicea, Christ began by presenting Himself as the Amen, the Creator of all. Jesus as Lord-God over all stands at the heart's door and knocks, wanting to be received in for WHO He is as sovereign Lord. This involves REPENTANCE as seen in verse 19. Repentance and Lordship go together. This was a Lordship issue!

This was the problem at Laodicea. It was a LORDLESS Church. They were not all in with Jesus, and Jesus was not in them; rather, they were lukewarm. They needed to repent and welcome Jesus in as the Amen – the Creator of all, which is to say as Lord.



The nominal church is a LORDLESS gospel Church. This is the problem with so many “evangelical churches”. The “Lordless gospel” results in lukewarm churches that make Christ sick.

Note that Christ does not force Himself upon people. He does not break down the door and enter in some irresistible manner – that is not the picture here. He stands waiting, knocking, and calling – waiting for a response.

“He stands at the door and knocks. He will not crash the door. Regardless of what some extremists say on this matter of election, the Lord Jesus has moved heaven and hell to get to the door of your heart, but when He gets there, He will stop and knock. You will have to open the door to let Him in.” - **J. Vernon McGee**

Yes, there is mystery here. Yes, God must take the initiative as Christ is clearly doing here, but we must respond. There is human responsibility and human response. Christ awaits their response (cf. 2 Cor. 6:1-2; Rev. 22:17).

**There is a famous painting of Christ** standing outside a door knocking.

### **Slide # 13**



When it was first on display, a critic said to the painter, “*You have painted a MASTERPIECE, but you have made one serious mistake. You painted the door without a handle.*” **“That is no mistake,”** replied the artist, **“The handle is on the inside.”** And so it is. The handle of the heart is on the inside. We must open the door and let Christ in, and we do this through repentance and faith – through a change of mind kind of faith that changes the whole direction of our life.

To those responding by opening the door, Christ says, **“I will come in and dine with him, and he with me.”** This is the language of fellowship. In the Bible, eating and sharing intimately go together and are a picture of sweet fellowship. The result of OPENING the door is that Christ will enter in and the person will have sweet fellowship with Him. It is what a personal relationship with Jesus is all about. As 1 John 1:3 says, “truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

This fellowship is but a foretaste of what is to come. In Luke 22:30 Christ spoke of those who will “eat and drink at My table in My kingdom”. This is the destiny of all those who respond in repentance to the voice of Christ.

The one who refuses His invitation is vomited out, but the one who voluntarily receives His invitation will enjoy [dining] with Him.

– **David Levy**

**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.**

Overcomers are true believers. They are those who repent and welcome Christ in for Who He is as Lord-God and Savior. In 1 John 5:4-5, John says that overcomers are those who are born of God and that they are those who believe in Jesus as the Son of God – which is to say they believe in Him as God! To really believe in Jesus is to believe in Him as “My Lord and my God” as expressed by Thomas when he saw the risen Lord (Jn. 20:28).

Jesus promises these overcomers that He will grant them to sit with Him on His throne, just as He overcame and sat down with the Father on His throne.

Note the distinction between Christ’s throne and the Father’s throne. The Father’s throne is the sovereign throne of the universe. This is where Christ and the Father are seated right now (cf. Ps. 110:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2). God is always on this throne as sovereign over all.

But Christ’s throne is the throne of David, which He will sit on in the kingdom. He is not seated on this throne yet, but He will be seated on it in the kingdom (cf. 2 Sam. 7:13; Mt. 25:31).

#### **Slide # 14**

**Luke 1:31–33 (NKJV)**

**31** And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name **JESUS**.

**32** He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him **the throne of His father David**.

**33** And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and **of His kingdom there will be no end.**”

But the promise here in Revelation 3:21 is that overcomers will sit on Christ’s throne with Him! Can you imagine such a thing?

Believers will rule and reign with Christ. We will share in His kingdom reign (cf. Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 1:6, 9; 2:26-27; 5:10; 20:4-6).

In each letter, Christ makes glorious promises to those who are overcomers.

All seven words to the overcomer picture the future bliss of the new heaven and earth. – **Robert Thomas**

## **22 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’ ”**

I read this in a magazine years ago. It said that an African Pastor had this pinned up on his hut.

### **My Commitment as a Christian!**

I’m part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I’m a disciple of His.

I won’t look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I’m finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap living, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity.

I don’t have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded.

I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way rough, my companions few, my Guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He will have no problems recognizing me – my banner will be clear!

Is your banner clear? Are you merely a lukewarm Christian, or is your life the expression of true repentance and faith? Do you really know Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? Is Christ knocking at your heart's door? What is your response?

***“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’***