

**A Journey Into the Heavens**  
**Laodicean - The Self-Deceived Church**  
**November 11, 2015**

The last of the seven letters is written to the church at Laodicea. Let's review the significance of these letters. First, like the other six churches, Laodicea was an actual local church at the time John wrote. Second, the letters to these seven churches have messages for all generations because they represent different kinds of churches. For example, there are churches today that have left their first love, like the church at Ephesus. There are churches today that seem to be alive but are dead, like the church at Sardis; and other churches are very evangelistic, like the church at Philadelphia.

These seven churches were chosen by our Lord because in them were characteristics that would be prevalent in churches throughout history. However, of the seven churches, it seems Laodicea was the worst, for the Lord has not one good word to say about it.

**I. The \_\_\_\_\_ (3:14)**

Laodicea was about 45 miles southeast of Philadelphia and almost 100 miles east of Ephesus. It was a very wealthy city with extensive banking operations and was famous for a type of black glossy \_\_\_\_\_, which had contributed to its wealth.

Laodicea also had a famous school of medicine known for an eye ointment called "Phrygian power" that was supposed to cure eye problems. This city was so wealthy that when it was destroyed by an earthquake in 17 A.D., it refused imperial aid for rebuilding and did it entirely on its own.

**II. The \_\_\_\_\_**

There is \_\_\_\_\_ word of commendation to the church at Laodicea.

### **III. The \_\_\_\_\_ (3:15-17)**

As with other churches, Christ says, I know thy works...(vs.15). He usually meant \_\_\_\_\_ works that He was going to commend. However, they had no good works to commend; they only had sin to condemn. Christ says of this church, ...that thou art neither cold nor hot... (vs.15). Based on the context of verses 15-16 in this letter, this phrase seems to refer to people in the church who had some degree of interest in the things of God, who went to church, and who professed to be Christians.

No one is harder to reach for Christ than a \_\_\_\_\_ person who is moral or just religious enough to go to church services, but is so good that they do not see their need for Christ!

Christ not only condemns the Laodicean church for its lukewarmness, but also for being self-deceived. Their material wealth had caused them to deceive themselves into believing they were spiritually rich as well. Here we clearly see our Lord's condemnation did not refer simply to spiritual laxity but to spiritual destitution before God. This church is the complete opposite of the church at Smyrna that we studied earlier (2:9)

### **IV. The \_\_\_\_\_ (3:18-20)**

The commands of Christ correspond precisely to the self-deception of the Laodiceans. First the Lord says, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich... (3:18). The verb buy is reminiscent of an Old Testament invitation in the book of Isaiah. (Isaiah 55:1-3)

The phrase "gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich" refers to the true wealth believers have in Christ. We are rich in Christ, lets look at a few passages to see how \_\_\_\_\_ we really are in Christ. (Ephesians 1:7, 2:7; Philippians 4:19; Colossians1:27)

Also, the Lord commands the Laodiceans to buy...white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear... (3:18). The Laodiceans were world-famous for their fine clothes, especially those made of glossy black wool. However, even dressed in the finest clothing (or robes), they were “naked” before the Lord. Why? (Revelation 19:8,14)

Though Laodicea was also famous for its special eye ointment that was suppose to cure vision problems, Jesus says they need to allow Him to... anoint thine eyes with eyeslave, that thou mayest see (3:18). Only the Great Physician can apply “Spiritual Eye slave” that can make the spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ see.

Christ’s last command to the church is found in 3:19, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent.” What is the spectrum of Christ’s love and rebuke? (John 16:8-11)

After the commands, Christ offers one of the most beautiful and simplistic invitations in the Bible: 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 (3:20.) The door obviously refers to the door of one’s \_\_\_\_\_. Though the message was given to the church as a whole, the response was to be on an individual basis, for Christ says... if any man...

The English artist Holman Hunt painted a picture that expresses visually what Jesus is saying in verse 20. One of the most famous paintings in the world, it is called “Jesus, the Light of the World.” It pictures Jesus, standing, knocking on a door, and holding a light or lamp in the other hand. When Hunt painted the picture, he invited his artist friends to criticize it. One of them said to him, “Holman, you have left off the latch.” Mr. Hunt replied, “This is not an ordinary door; this is the picture of the human heart and Christ knocking for admission. The latch is on the inside!



**“Jesus The Light of the World” by Holman Hunt**

To the unrepentant church-goers in Laodicea and to all individuals today, Jesus is standing and knocking for admittance. If one will open the door of his heart, Christ says, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me! The Greek word translated sup literally means to dine. It refers to the evening meal, which was the main meal of the day, when all labors for the day were complete and everyone could sit around the table and fellowship. The promise then is one of intimate, divine fellowship with Christ!

## **V. The \_\_\_\_\_ (3:21-22)**

The comfort is sharing in Christ's reign in His coming \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 21). To the overcomers Christ promised a place on His throne. This is the position of special honor and authority. The implication is that the overcomer will share with Christ in the administration of His kingdom.

The seven letters all close with the same words of exhortation; he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (3:22). When something is repeated \_\_\_\_\_ times in the Bible, it must be of utmost importance.

In this letter Christ says to all who will listen, Behold, I stand at the door and knock...

# THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Church	Commendation	Condemnation	Command	Comfort	Modern Example
<b>Ephesus</b> (2:1-7)	Did not tolerate those who were evil. Had patience and worked hard.	Had left their first love.	<i>Remember and repent.</i>	Overcomers will eat of the tree of life.	Church or believer whose Christianity has become mechanical and routine
<b>Smyrna</b> (2:8-11)	Endured suffering, poverty, and persecution.	NONE	<i>Be faithful unto death.</i>	Overcomers will receive crown of life and not be hurt by second death.	
<b>Pergamos</b> (2:12-17)	Had been faithful to Christ and had not denied the faith.	Had compromised with the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans.	<i>Repent.</i>	Will receive hidden manna, white stone and a new name.	
<b>Thyatira</b> (2:18-29)	Love, service, faith, patience and works	Tolerated Jezebel, her teaching, and immorality.	<i>Repent.</i>	Will have power over the nations and receive the morning star.	
<b>Sardis</b> (3:1-6)	Some had not defiled their garments.	Had a reputation for being alive but were dead.	Wake up, strengthen what remains, remember what was received and heard	Shall walk with Christ in white and be confessed before the Father.	
<b>Philadelphia</b> (3:7-13)	Had kept Christ's words and not denied His name. Were patient.	NONE	Hold fast to what they had. Christ would deliver them from the hour of trial.	Will be pillars in Temple of God and will have a new name.	
<b>Laodicea</b> (3:14-22)	NONE	Lukewarm, wretched, poor, blind, and naked	Buy from Christ gold, white clothes, eye salve, and repent.	Overcomers will sit with Christ on His throne.	