

Revelation 3:14 (Laodicea)

1/10/16

Sunday Morning

**Rev.1:1** The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John,

V.2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* to all that he saw.

V.3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

V.4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

V.5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—

V.6 and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

V.7 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

V.8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

**V.10** I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound* of a trumpet,

V.11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

V.12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

V.13 and in the middle of the lampstands *I saw* one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

V.14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

V.15 His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters.

V.16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

V.17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,

V.18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

V.19 "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

**Rev.3:14** "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

V.15 ' I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot.

V.16 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

V.17 'Because you say, " I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

V.18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

V.14 "And *to the angel of the church in Laodicea* write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

1. "to the angel of the church in Laodicea"

- a. There were several cities by the name of Laodicea
- b. This Laodicea lay on the banks of the Lycus river, and about ninety miles E of Ephesus—not far from Colossae
- c. The town was located on a flat-topped hill. A wall (about ½ - ¾ mile long on each of its four sides) surrounded the crown of the hill
  - i. They had gates on the North, East, Northwest walls
- d. The city was founded by Antiochus II (261-246 BC) of Syria, who named it for his wife Laodice, and who populated it with Syrians and with Jews from Babylonia and cities of Phrygia & Lydia
  - i. He had to divorce Laodice making peace w/ Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt, by marrying Ptolemy's daughter, Berenice
  - ii. After the death of Ptolemy, 248 BC, he recalled Laodice and named her eldest son (Seleucus Kallinikos) as his successor to the throne
  - iii. Laodice in 246 BC had Berenice, her child, and Antiochus murdered
- e. The Romans sometimes gave the Jews tax incentives to populate certain areas b/c where they were wealth came
  - i. We know how many Jewish men over 21 there were in Laodicea in 62 AD
  - ii. Flaccus the Roman governor of province of Asia decreed no gold could be exported from the province of Asia b/c they were running out of gold & needed to keep what they had to bolster their economy
  - iii. All Jewish men, from around the civilized world, sent to Jerusalem ½ shekel of gold each year to support the Temple & worship of Jehovah there. To keep that much money light & in small package for going overseas they used gold as the medium of exchange.
  - iv. The Jews in the district around Laodicea proposed to disregard the ban of the governor & export the gold anyway.

- v. The governor promptly seized it and confiscated it. It weighted twenty pounds. That figures out to be 7500 Jewish men over 21 years old.
- f. Though Laodicea stood on the great highway at the junction of several important routes, it was a place of little consequence until the Roman province of Asia was formed in 190 BC. It then suddenly became a great and wealthy center of industry
- g. It was so wealthy that in 60 AD they were destroyed by an earthquake – but they rejected help from Rome to rebuild and rebuilt the city w/ their own finances
- h. They made their money from the textile industry, medical industry, financial industry
- i. **Textial:**
  - i. They raised a particular type sheep there that didn't exist anywhere else in the world
    - 1. It had a glossy, jet black wool from which they manufactured expensive garments
- j. Medical industry**
  - i. They had a peculiar colored clay that they ground into a fine powder, which they mixed w/ spikenard & shipped worldwide as a cure eye disease – & ear disease to a limited degree
    - 1. They had a medical school there also
      - a. "Medicine" wasn't what you think of as "medicine"
- k. Financial industry**
  - i. Because the textile industry & medical industry were so successful – there was so much money there – they became the chief financial center of the Asian province
- l. They did have one major weakness in Laodicea – it was the lack of a good water supply.
  - i. This need was met by bringing water six miles from the mountains in a system of stone pipes (another sign of Laodicea's wealth).
  - ii. They also got hot springs mineral water from around the river
  - iii. By the time they got the cold water from the mountains it was warm
  - iv. By the time they got the hot water from the mineral springs to the city it was only warm
- m. The Apostle Paul had a deep desire to see the believers at the Church at Laodicea succeed although he apparently never visited there

**Col.2:1 (NP)**

**Col.2:1** For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are at Laodicea, and for

all those who have not personally seen my face,  
<sup>2</sup> that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and *attaining* to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, *resulting* in a true knowledge of God's mystery, *that is, Christ Himself,*

- i. Paul wrote them at least one letter that is lost to us  
**Col.4:12** Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.  
<sup>13</sup> For I bear him witness that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.  
**V.16** And when this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.

V.14 x "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: *The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God,* says this:

1. "The Amen, the faithful and true Witness"
  - a. This is the only place in Scripture where "Amen" is used as a proper name
  - b. The word means to affirm – confirm – signifying something as certain, sure, valid, truthful, faithful
  - c. We see "The Amen" in Christ metaphorically in **1:14**  
**1:14** His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.
  - d. He is the **Ancient of Days**  
**Dan.7:9** "I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took *His* seat; His vesture *was* like white snow, And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne *was* ablaze with flames, Its wheels *were* a burning fire.
  - i. As the "Ancient of Days" He has no beginning, no end  
**Jn.1:1** In the beginning was<sup>(imperfect tense – continuous action)</sup> the Word, and the Word was<sup>(imperfect tense)</sup> with God, and the Word was<sup>(imperfect tense)</sup> God.  
<sup>2</sup> He was<sup>(imperfect tense)</sup> in the beginning with God.
2. "the Beginning of the creation of God"
  - a. This doesn't mean that He was the first thing made
  - b. It means that He is the Creator of all things  
**Jn.1:1 (NP)**  
**Jn.1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.

<sup>3</sup> All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

c. As God – He is Creator of all things

**Phil.2:6** who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

**Col.1:15** And He<sup>(Jesus)</sup> is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

<sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.

<sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

**Heb.1:2** in these last days has spoken to us in *His* Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot.

1. "I know your deeds"

a. In this case their deeds were all bad

2. "you are neither **cold** nor **hot**"

a. This is a direct reference to their water – it was warm – insipid

b. But there is something interesting here – the adjectives "cold" & "hot" are in the masculine gender

c. If they were describing the Church they would be in the feminine gender

d. What or who are they describing? The "angel" of the church – the pastor!

e. The Lord addresses the angel as the embodiment and representative of the Church. The chief minister is answerable for his flock!

i. I have said that it is the pulpit that has weakened the Church

15 x 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot.

16 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

1. "I will spit you out of My mouth"

a. "will spit" – literally – I have in mind to vomit you out of my mouth

i. I am thinking about vomiting you out

ii. It is not a finalized decision – not foregone conclusion at this point

iii. They have a chance to repent & change God's course of action

iv. Is the Church of Laodicea saved – of course, they are a part of the Church – they represent the 7<sup>th</sup> level of the Church

v. Is God happy w/ them? No!

- vi. As we look at the next verses you will never see God asking the lost to do what He tells the Laodiceans to do
  - 1. God never treats the lost like the saved – nor does He treat the saved like the lost
  - 2. We are not treat the saved as lost or lost as saved either
    - a. There is but one issue for the lost – Jesus Christ!
- vii. He is clear that He is thinking of spitting them out of His mouth – b/c they are saved & not acting like it

17 'Because you say, " I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

- 1. "Because you say...I am rich...have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"
  - a. They probably didn't say it so much – as thought it
  - b. There are a few things that stand out like a flashing neon sign –
    - i. **#1. God's economy is not the same as man's economy**
      - 1. Smyrna thought they were poor b/c of their lack of earthly goods

**Rev.2:9** 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

- 2. Laodicea thought they were rich – but they were poor
  - V.17** 'Because **you say, " I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,"** and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

- c. **#2.** The Laodiceans were ignorant of Scripture
  - i. There was certainly self-deception on the part of Laodiceans – but they were primarily ignorant of the truth
  - ii. Self-deception is where you lie to yourself enough that you talk yourself into believing the lie is the truth
  - iii. Being ignorant is just that – not knowing truth
    - 1. Scripture talks of the deadliness of ignorance
      - Prov.14:12** There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.
      - Prov.16:25** There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.
  - iv. The lowest point in Israel's existence is found in the book of Judges
    - 1. The last verse in the book tells us why it is their lowest point
      - Judges 21:25** In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

- v. Listen to what they truly believed
    - V.17** 'Because **you say**, " I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,
  - vi. They had no incentive to improve b/c they didn't need to improve
  - d. **#3.** This is probably the easiest sin to commit – even for the believer who knows Scripture & doesn't want to deceive self
    - i. They were trusting in something other than God Himself to take care of them
    - ii. A person can know that all they have comes from God
    - iii. They can be thankful to Him
    - iv. They started their Christian life w/ nothing & trusted God to carry them thru life
    - v. But at some point they begin to put their confidence in their accumulated stuff instead of God Himself
  - e. This is not "self-sufficiency – This is stuff – sufficiency
  - f. Be careful not to look to things for peace in this life
2. "you do not know that you are wretched...miserable...poor...blind...naked"
- a. There are 2 different mirrors we can look into to gauge/evaluate our true condition/appearance
    - i. The mirror of the world
    - ii. The mirror of the Word of God
  - b. Looking into the wrong mirror is as old as the temptation in the Garden of Eden

**Lk.18:10** "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer.

<sup>11</sup> "The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer.

<sup>12</sup> 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

**V.13 (NP)**

**V.13** "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

<sup>14</sup> "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

- c. The Church at Corinth was guilty of this sin

**1 Cor.4:8(NLT)** You think you already have everything you need. You think you are already rich. You have begun to reign in God's kingdom without us! I wish you really were reigning already, for then we would be reigning with you.

<sup>9</sup> Instead, I sometimes think God has put us apostles on display, like prisoners of war at the end of a victor's parade, condemned to die. We have become a spectacle to the entire world—to people and angels alike.

<sup>10</sup> Our dedication to Christ makes us look like fools, but you claim to be so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are so powerful! You are honored, but we are ridiculed.

- d.

18 I advise you to *buy from Me gold refined by fire*, that you may become rich, and *white garments, that you may clothe yourself*, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and *eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see*.

1. "buy from Me gold refined by fire"

- This has reference to the fact that they were heavy into financial market & they counted their yellow gold as valuable – God didn't count at all
- Just b/c a person has this world's goods – doesn't mean they are sinning
- Just b/c God has blessed a person w/ material things doesn't mean they are doing what God wants them to do

**Lk.12:15** And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a certain rich man was very productive.

**V.19** 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years *to come*; take your ease, eat, drink *and be merry*.'"

<sup>20</sup> "But God said to him, ' You fool! This *very* night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?'

<sup>21</sup> "So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

- d. The gold we are to buy is found in **1 Cor.3**

**1 Cor.3:10** (NP)

**1 Cor.3:10** According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it.

<sup>11</sup> For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

<sup>12</sup> Now if any man builds upon the foundation with **gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,**

<sup>13</sup> **each man's work will become evident; for the day will**



show it, because it is *to be* revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

<sup>14</sup> If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward.

<sup>15</sup> If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

2. "white garments, that you may clothe yourself"

- a. This has reference to their textile industry
- b. They made black wool garments that were very expensive
- c. Garments speak of righteousness & corruption
  - i. Even in O.T. garments stood for righteousness & unrighteousness
 

**Zech.3:1** Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.

<sup>2</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, " The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

<sup>3</sup> Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel.

<sup>4</sup> And he spoke and said to those who were standing before him saying, " Remove the filthy garments from him." Again he said to him, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes."

**Col.3:3** For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

**V.5** Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

<sup>6</sup> For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come,

<sup>7</sup> and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.

<sup>8</sup> But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth.

<sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices,

<sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him

3. "eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see"

- a. This speaks of the eye salve they sold around the world

It is imperative that we know Scripture – do not deceive ourselves – live a Scriptural life  
– adjust our course of action when we don't live for Christ