

Rev 3:14-22 The GOOD for NOTHING CHURCH

PRELIMS. These words are part of the **last canonical words** of Christ to His Church! As usual, He is doing so in **tender love!** This is the one Church about which Jesus has **nothing good** to say! He said good things about all the other churches but not Laodicea! He **can't** say “*You have kept My word*” as Phila; or “*you have a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments*”; or “*I know your love and faith and service*” to Thyatira! He has **nothing** good to say about them! Yet they were **still** a **Church**! Like all the others, they were still in **His hands!** Isn’t that encouraging? In fact, it was **because** Jesus **loved** them He wrote to them in such endearing terms “*Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous*”[19] He is appealing to them **because** of the **covenant relationship** He has with them! They are still ‘special’ to Him!

APP So a Church that is rebuked by X, is a Church still, and is still the ‘apple’ of God’s eye. How does that **impinge** upon ourselves at Dens Road Church? Do we consider ourselves to be rebuked or chastened by our Saviour? In what way, in what areas? Are we **sensitive** to God’s voice of rebuke?

In rebuking Laodicea, X specifically calls Himself the “*Amen (=truly)...faithful and true witness*”[14] possibly to convey that He knows **absolutely everything** about them, “*I know your works*”, ‘I know what you are doing and what you are up to, and how you really spend your time! I will not hold anything back in My judgment upon you’!

A special reason for calling Himself the “*beginning of God’s creation*”[14]. Just ‘**down the road**’, the church at Colosse had a philosophical problem regarding the Person of Christ. They said X was **created** and not the **Creator**! Paul wrote to **correct** the errors of that philosophy, saying that “*by Him (Christ) all things were created... (and) He is before all things and in Him all things hold together*”[Col 1:16,17] Paul added at the end of that letter “*when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans*”[Col 4:16]! So there were probably still

some in Laodicea who were still a little affected by that error!

APP And in applying that to today there still are Mormons/JWs/Cults who distort the Person of Christ and the Holy Spirit!

Finally, Jesus says "*I know your works*"! Notice, He did **not** say, 'I know your **faith**!' for faith without works is dead! Faith that does not lead to a changed life, is not the real faith!

COLD or HOT?

Generally people take 'hot' to mean 'Godly enthusiasm', and 'cold' to mean 'ungodly antagonism'! But that does **not square** with "**Would that you were either cold or hot**"![15] There is another interpretation. Cold and hot refer to **two positive** things, not one positive and one negative! A Church is either **theologically centred/oriented** or **practically centred/oriented**! A Church that is theologically centred attract those who are interested in the intellect, on doctrine, teaching and are 'big' on a long list of what you must **believe**! The 'cold' Truth! A Church that is practically centred, is not so 'fussy' about what you believe as on what you **do** and on other activities, the Youth Group, the Camps, the Music, the Worship! Warm hearted! Eg, the Reformed Church is heavy on teaching/doctrine/theology, the Charismatic church is heavy on ministries to various groups and healings and helping the poor, etc. Every church **gravitates** toward one or the other of these two.

Now geographically, Laodicea was between Colosse and Hierapolis. Colosse was watered by the **icy streams** coming down from the high mountains which surrounded it. People were refreshed by its cold clear water. Hierapolis on the other hand was famous for its **hot mineral springs** and people were **healed** by **bathing** in its hot mineral springs! So both cities were known for its refreshing, soothing, healing assets. Laodicea was in the centre! Seemingly both these waters met at the bottom of a cliff and the water there was lukewarm and was avoided by all as it was distasteful! So there was a '**play**' on the **geographical** location of Laodicea and its produce for the people. It was well-known that **no** one **benefited** from the warm Laodicean waters.

THREE GREAT RESOURCES

Yet it had a great number of very **useful resources!** It **could** and **should** have been the most **productive** and **best** Church of all! (1) It was a great **Banking/Financial Centre**. In AD61 devastated by an earthquake – but refused Roman government help as it had enough to build the city from its own resources! Thus “*I need nothing*”[17] It was said ‘it doesn’t even need God’!! **APP** What a **curse**, yes, curse, money can be! It certainly does not guarantee calmness, peace, joy and rest. Ask Paul **McCartney** with £825m!! Laodicea as well as many wealthy billionaires do need God!

(2) Laodicea had **manufactured clothing**, its **wool** was world famous. It prided itself in being able to clothe many people – and yet it did **not** know that it needed to be **clothed** so the **shame** of its **nakedness** would not be seen [18]! We may be well-dressed on the outside, but inside, in your soul, you need the **spiritual** “*white garments*” of Christ’s righteousness! The Church in the OT “*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness*”[Isa 61:10]

And (3) Laodicea was a famous **medical centre**. World famous for **ointment** for the **ears**, and **ointment** for the **eyes**! Seemingly it was very self-conscious of its medical skills, yet it did **not** know it needed “*salve to anoint*” its **own eyes** “*so that you may see*”[18c]. That is, see the **spiritual dimension** in life! Many have an **eye** for **business**, for the opposite **sex**, but lack eyes for **spiritual beauty**!

Laodicea had these three resources but **misused** them – in the sense that they **omitted** to **apply** them to themselves in regard to their **relationship** to the God who gave them these resources! All the skills and gifts **you** have must be used for the **glory of God**.

Great Lesson: an **accumulation** of the riches, wealth, honour, pleasures, actually **dulls** the **mind/understanding** toward the **most important** aspects of our lives – our **relationship to God/maker**! A **multitude** of ‘good’ things **distorts reality** in such a way that

spiritual things become either a **non-entity** or **unimportant!** Fact! There is a **real power** in matter! Look “not realising that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked”[17] So true!! Laodicea did not realise these things about itself. It was this **self-sufficiency** which caused Jesus to say “*I will spit you out of my mouth*”[16]! **Strong language** as strong as you will get anywhere in the Bible! Because God truly hates **hypocrisy**!

The INVITATION

The invitation was to **repent!** It was a ‘call’ to take an **honest look** at themselves! You just **cannot repent**, **without** having an honest look at yourself! But it was a look at themselves in the **context** of their **relationship** to God! They were in **covenant** with God – else they would not be in the Church! They were **not pagans?** They were very likely all **baptised** in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – yet they needed to **repent**. Nothing has changed! Same today – churches are full of people who need to repent.

A generation of believers who only **half-believe!** Who know a lot about X and believe a lot about X, but are not **committed** to X! As X said to Church at Phila there are those “*who say they are Jews and are not*” in the **spiritual** sense! [3:9] Paul “*I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea...as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him*”[Col 2:1,6] Paul was **concerned** that they were **not walking** as Xns!!

The invitation was an invite from Jesus to **renew the relationship** and to have **dinner together** with Jesus! Jesus knew there was **no real** relationship together. You can’t ‘kid’ Jesus that you are in a relationship, when you are not! Amazing: Jesus **does want** your fellowship! He really does want **you** to **open** the door to Him! He is standing there right now! The amazing thing is that even those who have **broken their relationship** with Him, have Him outside their door again (that is why the door is closed) and He is asking to come in – because **He** would **love** to have your company again!! Anyone here today, who is **not walking** with the Lord? Anyone here today “*who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says... ”!*