

Encountering Jesus at Laodicea

An Introductory Lesson

Almost 2000 years ago John was being held captive on an island because of his witness as a disciple of Jesus. God sent him visions to tell him about the end of time. He wrote them down and they became the last book of the Bible called Revelation.

In chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation there are seven short letters written to seven churches that existed on the land that we now call the country of Turkey. The members of these churches were people like our churches today, with some being very strong in their commitment to God and others very weak. God sent messages to them to help them truly receive and keep salvation through Jesus. Many people view these letters as a prophecy of what God's people would look like through the centuries from John's time to the very last days, starting with the first church and ending with the seventh.

That seventh letter was written to the church in Laodicea and is a special message for the last church living before Jesus returns. The city of Laodicea was a rich city that made fine black wool from sheep and had a school of medicine. They also manufactured something called Phrygian powder as a medicine for eye problems. Neighboring cities had excellent water. Hierapolis had soothing hot springs. Colossi had fresh, cold water. Laodicea did not have rivers or springs and had to bring water by canals, so it tasted lukewarm and not delicious.

Jesus used this setting as symbols to give a special message for the church members living at the end of time. God intends that this message will change the church into an on-fire group of people who love God more than anything else and work with a mighty faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit to give the final witness to the world. We need to study it carefully.

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22. What do you think it means to be lukewarm instead of hot or cold?
2. In what ways are we and our church a mix of the world and Jesus instead of 100% for Jesus?
3. What solutions to this lukewarm problem do you find in this passage?
4. To explore what the eyesalve might represent, read John 16:7-8, 12-13. Read also Psalm 119:130. What does the Holy Spirit and the Bible do for us according to these verses?
5. Read 1 Peter 1:6-9. To what spiritual quality does this text compare gold refined in the fire?
6. Read Galatians 5:6. How can you tell if a person has real faith?

7. Read Revelation 19:8. What do clean garments mean in this text?
8. Isaiah 64:6. How does the Bible describe the good deeds that people try to do?
9. Read Revelation 7:13-14. How can a person have clean garments?
10. It seems impossible for a lukewarm person, who is so poor that they don't have clothes, to be able to buy things such as precious as gold, beautiful garments, and medicine. Read Isaiah 55:1-2, 6-7. Since God's salvation is free and we have nothing good in ourselves, what can we give God that He would want in order to receive His faith, love, the Holy Spirit,
11. Review Revelation 3:14, 19, and 20. How does Jesus describe Himself as He appears to the Laodicean church and what does that mean to you personally?
12. Jesus says in verse 21 that we are to overcome like He did. What successful methods did Jesus use to overcome Satan?
13. What promises do you find in Revelation 3:14-22?
14. Take a moment right now to ask God to use the Holy Spirit and His word to convict you of any sin, wrong thinking, or bad habit. Ask Him also to show you any good thing that He wants you to do that you are not doing. Look closely at the beauty of Jesus and His deep love for you. By His power turn from all sin and surrender yourself completely to Him. Ask for forgiveness and a new heart. Believe that He covers you completely with Christ's righteousness. You belong to Him!
15. With whom will you share this message to Laodicea and help to be revived into a close relationship with Jesus and a witness to the world?

Some of Ellen White's Quotes on Laodicea

"The great Redeemer represents Himself as a heavenly merchantman, laden with riches, calling from house to house, presenting His priceless goods" (Bible Commentary, Volume 7, 965).

"The Laodicean message has been sounding. Take this message in all its phases and sound it forth to the people wherever Providence opens the way. Justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ are the themes to be presented to a perishing world" (Bible Commentary, Volume 7, 964).

"Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation" (Testimonies, Volume 1, 187).

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans.

This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people" (Early Writings, 270).

"The message to the Laodicean church is applicable to our condition. How plainly is pictured the position of those who think they have all the truth, who take pride in their knowledge of the Word of God, while its sanctifying power has not been felt in their lives. The fervor of the love of God is wanting in their hearts, but it is this very fervor of love that makes God's people the light of the world....

Here is represented a people who pride themselves in their possession of spiritual knowledge and advantages. But they have not responded to the unmerited blessings that God has bestowed upon them. They have been full of rebellion, ingratitude, and forgetfulness of God; and still He has dealt with them as a loving, forgiving father deals with an ungrateful, wayward son. They have resisted His grace, abused His privileges, slighted His opportunities, and have been satisfied to sink down in contentment, in lamentable ingratitude, hollow formalism, and hypocritical insincerity." (Selected Messages, Volume 1, 357).

"Jesus is going from door to door, standing in front of every soul temple, proclaiming, 'I stand at the door, and knock.' As a heavenly merchantman, He opens His treasures and cries, 'Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.' The gold that He offers is without alloy, more precious than that of Ophir; for it is faith and love.

The white raiment He invites the soul to wear is His own robe of righteousness; and the oil for anointing is the oil of His grace, which will give spiritual eyesight to the soul in blindness and darkness, that he may distinguish between the workings of the Spirit of God and the spirit of the enemy. 'Open your doors,' says the great Merchantman, the possessor of spiritual riches, 'and transact your business with Me. It is I, your Redeemer, who counsels you to buy of Me'" (Bible Commentary, Volume 7, 965).

Experience more of what God intends to do through this message by personally studying or leading a group in the 8-part Bible study *Encountering Jesus at Laodicea* by Pastor Scott Griswold available at mlml.org/blogs/encountering-jesus-at-laodicea.