

# 11. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:7-13 Laodicea Part 2

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Start audio file 11

## Part 2

To review where we left off last week

1. Why are you not listening
2. Why will you not honour Me?
3. Why will you not recognise Me?

This church is actually saying "I'm rich" look at us, we're rich, we've become wealthy, we don't need anything. This is their self-assessment!!!

Jesus' response to this was

....*You do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked*

Song we used to sing - I am covered over in the robe of righteousness which Jesus gives to me..... that's what we need, the covering that Jesus gives. The robes should be white.

These people thought they were clothed right but they weren't

Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling, naked come to Thee for dress, helpless look to Thee for grace....

So what has happened today? When did the churches start to go wrong?

Up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century the true church preached the gospel, preached repentance and preached Holiness of living.

Even churchgoers who may not have had a real relationship with Jesus were mostly moral good living people. They were influenced by the fact that we were largely a Christian country and our laws were based on the Bible. And most still attended church which would have had an influence on the way they lived.

# 11. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:7-13 Laodicea Part 2

Student copy

Back in the 60's there were very few divorces. Families consisted of a mother, a father and children all living under the same roof. It was a scandal if you heard of someone who had got a divorce and if a young girl got pregnant it was a shameful thing. The influence of the Church as an institution still had an effect on people.

Everything started to change when our laws started to change and when our laws started to change our churches also started to change and people also started to change they had started to stop going to church so the Christian influence was removed. When that happened the Gospel message affected less people so less people were being changed by the Good News.

Then we had the Charismatic Renewal. An outpouring of the Holy Spirit came to the churches to wake them up and restore the gifts to the Church. The church had a time when many were restored and renewed and became on fire for the Lord.

During the 70's we saw many miracles and lives were changed. But then Satan did a counter move. He will always try to spoil a work of God, a move of the Holy Spirit but he is subtle and deceitful and wicked.

He was going to bring great deceitfulness into the church in such a way that it would not be noticeable at first. We will look at this further next week.

As we have moved through each of the letters we have been able to see clearly how each letter related to each of those local churches.

Each title of Jesus spoke of the condition of that church

The Eschatology of the Visible Church - The things which are - the 7 Churches

The last audible statements of Christ given in the scriptures. The visible church is the local body of believers.

To review so far:-

1. The seven churches were real churches existing in John's day. They represent 7 types of churches that existed at that time.
2. All seven church types exist throughout the Church Age. No matter what part of history you look at the seven types can be found and will continue to be found until the Rapture.

# 11. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:7-13 Laodicea Part 2

Student copy

3. While all seven church types always exist one type dominates a particular era of history. Therefore these letters present a prophetic picture of the seven historical periods in which the visible church will develop. Each of the 7 churches was chosen by Jesus because of the particular meaning of their names and secondly because the situation of that particular church will be characteristic of a future period of church history.

- |                 |                                                                                                                                         |                    |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| a. Ephesus      | Apostolic Church,                                                                                                                       | 30-100 AD          |
| b. Smyrna       | The Persecuted Church                                                                                                                   | 100-313 AD         |
| c. Pergamos     | The Married Church                                                                                                                      | 313-600 AD         |
| d. Thyatira     | Medieval Church -they are told if they don't put things right they <b>will go</b> through the Tribulation. The Church of the Dark Ages. | 600-1517 AD        |
| e. Sardis       | The Reformation & Denominational Church                                                                                                 | 1517-1648AD        |
| f. Philadelphia | The Missionary Church                                                                                                                   | 1745 - 1900's      |
| g. Laodicea     | The Apostate Church                                                                                                                     | 1900 - present day |

Apostacy means a departure from the truth.

## Thess 2:1-3 The Great Apostasy

**2** Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. <sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for **that Day** will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, <sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Remember the consistency of the Bible. The Day, The Day of the Lord, always refers to the tribulation period and the second coming.

The Laodicean church is a description of the apostacy of the last days.

## The character of an Apostate

**1 Tim 4:1-3** Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, <sup>2</sup> speaking lies in

# 11. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:7-13 Laodicea Part 2

Student copy

*hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

**2 Tim 3:5** *...having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

## 2 Peter 2:1-22

### The mark of an Apostate.

**2 Peter 2:1** *their teachings are portrayed as destructive denials or heresies.*

**1 John 4:2-3** *denial that Jesus came in the flesh. (thus denying the incarnation) also 2 John 7*

**2 Peter 3:3-4** *knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

So the teachings of apostacy involve destructive denials of the person and work of Jesus Christ especially with regard to His place in the Trinity, His Deity, His incarnation by means of the virgin birth and the fact that He is coming back again physically. On top of this there is the basic denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures themselves. Once a person moves away from the acceptance of the authority of Scripture, there is no longer any safeguard for other crucial doctrines.

**Jude 17-19** *But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: 18 how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. 19 These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.*

On Jan 20<sup>th</sup> 1891 Charles Augustus Briggs gave an address at the Union Theological Seminary in New York where young men were being trained for the ministry. These were his points

- He said 'There are three great fountains of truth, the Bible, the Church and reason.' (by saying this, reason and the church became equal in authority to the Scriptures.)
- He said 'Some of the Old Testament prophecies were not fulfilled and even reversed.'
- He questioned the Mosaic authorship of the five books of Moses.

## 11. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:7-13 Laodicea Part 2

Student copy

- He questioned the unity of the book of Isaiah suggesting it was written by more than one person.
- He stated that those who died unsaved would have a second chance
- He said sanctification is not complete at death.

Thus there were many young ministers sent out into the churches with a very liberal outlook.

The first two decades of the twentieth century began to have doctrinal error seep into the churches all over the place. It seemed to begin in America but didn't take long to come over here as well.

Some further examples of heresy

Late in 2015, Larycia Hawkins stated "I stand in religious solidarity with Muslims because they, like me, a Christian, are people of the book. And as Pope Francis stated last week, we worship the same God."

The Second Vatican Council affirmed in 1964 that Muslims "together with us adore the one, merciful God,"

Wayne Grudem, professor of theology and biblical studies at Phoenix Seminary and founder of the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, along with other well-known complementarian theologians, have presented "a different God than that affirmed by the church through the ages and taught in Scripture" to justify biblical gender roles, in which women are subordinate to men. In short, their theology makes Jesus subordinate to God the Father.

**Jer 2:13** *'My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.'*

Rick Warren describes Fundamentalist Christians as *"those that stopped listening....it is an attitude that doesn't want to listen to anybody else."*

**Rick insults those who strictly adhere to the fundamentals of the faith:**

"Today there really aren't that many Fundamentalists left; I don't know if you know that or not, but they are such a minority; there aren't that many Fundamentalists left in America. The word 'fundamentalist' actually comes from a document in the 1920s called the Five Fundamentals of the Faith. And it is a very legalistic, narrow view of Christianity." --Rick Warren speaking at The Pew Forum on Religion, May 23, 2005

# 11. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:7-13 Laodicea Part 2

Student copy

**Rick Warren compares those who believe in the fundamentals of the Christian faith to extremists and radical Muslims:**

In his interview on *Larry King Live* on December 2, 2006, Rick Warren compared biblical fundamentalists to Muslim extremists. He said: “There are all kinds of fundamentalists, Larry, and they’re all based on fear. There are Christian fundamentalists. There are Muslim fundamentalists. I’ve met some Jewish fundamentalists. You know that there are secular fundamentalists. They’re all based on fear.”

In the January 10, 2006 *Philadelphia Inquirer* Rick was quoted as saying that Christian fundamentalism will be an enemy of the 21st century.

## Exhortation

### 4. why won't you receive from Me

**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.*

This is the greatest declaration of mercy we could read. Jesus offering a group of bankrupt Christians an answer to their predicament.

- **The Remedies Proposed**
- He speaks to the businessmen in their own terms; Buy from Me....their blindness and nakedness are not incurable:
- The Ultimate Refiner offers His "Gold": **Ps 19:7-11; 12:6; cf. 1 Cor 3:12.**
- The Bridegroom offers His covering: White raiment, vs. glossy (raven coloured) black wool.

They were famous for the speciality black wool they got from the local sheep. Very sought after and it made shiny black clothing with the appearance of plastic. Incredibly valuable. Jesus offers white garments. They needed to realise their nakedness.

## 11. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:7-13 Laodicea Part 2

Student copy

- The Great Physician offers His remedy to really open their eyes—the Holy Spirit. They were famous for their eye salve which they made into a hard pill and it was shipped off and when received the customer would grind down the pill and mix it with water and put it on the eyes. It was very good for eye infections.

See how relevant Jesus is with His usage of these things. His eye salve is better than any they have got. And His garments are WHITE not black.

**Rev 22:17** *And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.*

### 5. Why will you not answer Me?

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

This shows that these people are Christians but they are so lost. Jesus is saying Those whom He loves He rebukes. This letter is one long rebuke but in the end He is offering a way back to God through repentance.

**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.*

A beautiful evangelistic call; however, consider the context: Jesus is outside the **church** desperately calling "any man...": here, it is an indictment of this fellowship! The handle of the door is on the inside.

[In the romance of Ruth, in Chapter 3, despite the kinsman redeemer's (Boaz) love for Ruth, it had to be her move!]

# 11. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:7-13 Laodicea Part 2

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## Promise to the Overcomer

**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.*

**22** *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' '*

On whose throne? **Heb 1:3**. Over Israel (**Luke 22:30**); Angels (**1 Cor 6:3**);

"He who has an ear...": 7 times in Revelation + 7 times in the Gospels (**Matt 11:15, 13:9,43; Mark 4:23; 7:16; Luke 8:8; 14:35**).

Who is "the Overcomer"?

**1 John 5:4,5**

*For whosoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

Quote:-

Thus speaketh Christ our Lord to us:

Ye call Me Master and obey Me not.

Ye call Me Light and see Me not.

Ye call Me Way and walk Me not.

Ye call Me Life and choose Me not

Ye call Me Wise and follow Me not.

Ye call Me Fair and love Me not.

Ye call Me Rich and ask Me not.

Ye call Me Eternal and seek Me not.

Ye call Me Noble and serve Me not.

Ye call Me Gracious and trust Me not.

Ye call Me Might and honour Me not.

Ye call Me Just and fear Me not.

If I condemn you, blame Me not.

—An inscription on a cathedral in Lubeck, Germany



# 11. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:7-13 Laodicea Part 2

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## Prophetic Profile? The Lukewarm church

Admonitory Level (to all churches)

- Ephesus Devotion, not just doctrine.
- Smyrna Endure persecution.
- Pergamos Purify ambassadorship.
- Thyatira Pagan practices.
- Sardis Watchfulness, diligence.
- Philadelphia Missionary outreach.
- Laodicea Prosperous compromise. Lukewarm

- **Personal Application (Homiletics)**

- Ephesus Neglected Priorities. The Apostolic Church (can't bear false teachers)
- Smyrna Satanic Opposition. The Persecuted Church (not hurt by 2<sup>nd</sup> death)
- Pergamos Spiritual Compromise. The Married Church (Satans throne but some faithful)
- Thyatira Pagan Practices. The Medieval Church (Jezebel, false doctrine)
- Sardis Watchfulness, Diligence. Denominational Church (if you don't watch caught out, compromise)
- Philadelphia Loyal Ambassadorship. Missionary Church (kept from hour of trial)
- Laodicea Materialistic Lukewarm Apostate

## Overcomer's Promises

Ephesus Eat of Tree of Life.

Smyrna Not hurt of second death.

Pergamos Manna stone Name

Thyatira power over nations

Sardis walk with Him in white, name not blotted out

Philadelphia Pillars in the temple

Laodicea Sit on Jesus throne

# 11. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:7-13 Laodicea Part 2

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Apostate Church

Specific References To His Second Coming

Smyrna

Pergamos

Both Smyrna and Philadelphia have no criticism; both of these cities are the ones remaining still today. Let's remember that each of the churches had a different perception of themselves that the Lord Himself had. How sobering to us in our own conceits.

**Heb 10:22-23** *let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

End of audio file 11