

LIVING WATER FOR LAODICEA

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Scripture Reading: Rev. 3:14-22

Verse 14 “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God; **15** I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. **16** So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. **17** Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: **18** I counsel thee to 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; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. **19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. **20** 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. **21** To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. **22** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

LOCATION OF LAODICEA

The city known as Laodicea lies at the junction of two important valleys and at the intersection of three busy trade routes. Because of this location, Laodicea was a very wealthy, prosperous city in Asia Minor in the time of Christ.

THREE THINGS FOR WHICH LAODICEA WAS FAMOUS

Laodicea was famous for three things:

#1) You guessed it. It was famous for its wealth. It had many banks that were doing very well. If you wanted to get your gold refined, you went to Laodicea. Unfortunately, an earthquake struck the city around 60 or 61 AD. But not to worry – Laodicea had the resources to rebuild. Several other cities in the area were also hit. Rome offered to help rebuild these cities, but as far as Laodicea was concerned, they did not need any help. They were wealthy enough to rebuild themselves. They were rich, and in the words of Jesus, “had need of nothing”. In Jesus’ letter to the Laodiceans, He called them poor even though they were rich financially and said to them, “Buy of Me gold tried in the fire.” We’ll talk more about that later.

#2) Laodicea was famous for its medical school which developed a miracle eye-salve. Jesus called the Laodiceans blind and said to them, “Anoint thyselves with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” We’ll talk more about the eyesalve later.

#3) Laodicea was known for its clothing industry, especially for a certain type of smooth, glossy black wool that came from the carefully bred sheep around there. In Jesus’ letter to the Laodiceans, He called them naked and said to them, “Buy of Me ... **WHITE** rainment.” Ironically, I’m sure the Laodicean’s thought about their famous black wool when they heard those words. We’ll talk more about the white rainment later.

So the Laodiceans seemed to have it all, wealth, a miracle eye-salve from its world-famous medical school, and famous clothing. What irony then that Jesus called them poor, blind, and naked.

JESUS THE AUTHOR OF REVELATION

Jesus’ letter to the Laodicean Church is found in the third chapter of the book of Revelation. The entire book of Revelation is given to us from none other than Jesus Christ Himself. It is the only book of the Bible that is declared to be entirely from Jesus. Yes, the message was originally given to John the Revelator, who wrote it down, but Revelation’s message was from Jesus.

SEVEN LETTERS

In the first part of the book of Revelation, you will find seven letters from Jesus Christ himself. These seven letters are directed to seven churches in Asia Minor. One of those churches is Laodicea. The letter to Laodicea is the last of the seven letters. I'm going to share with you this morning how **WE** as the church of the last days have become known as Laodicea and we will discuss Jesus' advise to the Laodiceans as well.

LAODICEA'S WATER SUPPLY

But first I want to tell you a little more about the city of Laodicea. You see, in spite of all of the glory of the city of Laodicea, it had one major weakness. It did not have it's own water supply. And so it had to have its water piped in from the hot springs located six miles to the south. The six mile aquaduct of stone pipes was a remarkable engineering feat for its time. The water came from hot springs, but by the time it arrived in Laodicea, it was, just as we read in the text, it was lukewarm. There were hot springs just six miles to the south. There were also hot springs just six miles to the north in a city called Hierapolis. There were clear, cold streams of water coming from the snow-capped mountains to the east in Colosse. But Laodicea's water was neither cold nor hot, it was lukewarm. Coming from the hot springs, it is likely that the water (and the pipes) were loaded with calcium carbonate. Washing your white clothes in it would cause them to turn a dingy grey. White rainment was probably not easy to find in Laodicea.

HOW WE CAME TO BE KNOWN AS LAODICEA

Now that you know the story of the real city of Laodicea, perhaps you can relate a little better when you read the letter to them from Jesus. Let's talk now about how **WE** as a last days church came to be known as Laodicea. Jesus wrote letters to seven churches. There were actually far more than seven churches in Asia Minor, but Jesus wrote specifically to seven. (It is interesting to note that **not only** did Jesus write to seven churches, **but Paul** in the New Testament wrote to seven churches as well: Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thesalonians.)

Seven is sort of a special number, isn't it? In the book of Revelation, there are seven churches, seven plagues, seven seals, seven trumpets, and various other sevens. Now according to Jesus Himself, Revelation is a prophetic book.

Rev 22:7 "Behold, I come quickly: blessed [is] he that keepeth the sayings of the **prophecy** of this book." And **Rev 22:10** "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." Sir Isaac Newton and many other commentators on the Bible have suggested that the seven churches represented seven ages of the future history of the church. And indeed the seven messages match up quite well with seven specific ages from the time of Christ down to our time today. Revelation is a very prophetic book. So it makes perfect sense. For a good study on this, see Mervyn Maxwell's book on the Message of the Revelation and Uriah Smith's book, Daniel and the Revelation. I heard one time that Ellen White was asked why she didn't write more on the prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation and she responded that she saw that God was guiding Uriah Smith as he wrote his book, Daniel and the Revelation, so there was no need for her to write it. Whether or not she ever saw a vision about Uriah Smith, I don't know. But one thing is certain, Uriah Smith's book is definitely a great book.

THE CHARGE TO LAODICEA

The word "Laodicea" means "the judging of the people". A fitting name for the age of the Investigative Judgement that we are now in, isn't it?

The charge brought against the Laodiceans is that they are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot.

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. **16** So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.

This sort of reminds me of the Old Testament phrase, "Weighed in the balance and found wanting." We are in the last days of Earth's history. We have the message. We have all the Bible resources at our fingertips. We have the light of prophecy beaming down our pathway. We have it all! But could it be that we lack the fire, the religious fervor, and the devotion that is expected of us at such a time as this? We've deceived ourselves into thinking we're O.K. We have a good description of this last day condition in 2 Tim 3:1-5: **2Ti 3:1** This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ... **2Ti 3:5** Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn

away.

HOT DEFINED

Let's talk about the hot and cold part.

What does it mean to be "hot"? That's an easy one. On fire! Full of religious zeal manifested in works that a person on fire for the Lord would do, determined witnessing for Christ. In a lukewarm state, there would be no cross-bearing, no self-denial that costs anything. To be lukewarm would be to be in a state of complacency.

I believe some of you have heard the story that C.A. Murray tells about a little church back in the 1800's that actually caught fire. And in that community, most of the members lived close, so they came to help put out the fire. They formed a line, a bucket brigade, with the pastor being the one who finally threw the bucket of water on the fire. And as the pastor looked back at the next person in the line, he noticed that it was someone that he did not recognize. He said, "Hey, I haven't seen you in church before! How come?" And the man responded, "Well pastor, this is the first time I've seen the church on fire!"

COLD DEFINED

But to be **cold** – what is that? Does it mean a state of corruption or wickedness? No. It couldn't mean that because Christ said, "I WOULD that thou wert cold or hot." And nothing is more offensive to Christ than a sinner in open rebellion. So it cannot mean that. Quoting from **Daniel and Revelation** by Uriah Smith, p. 394, we read, "As "hot" denotes joyous fervour, and a lively exercise of all the affections, with a heart buoyant with the sensible presence and love of God, so "cold" would seem to denote a spiritual condition characterised by a destitution of these traits, yet one in which the individual *feels* such destitution. This state is well expressed by the language of Job, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" Job 23: 3. In this state there is not indifference, nor is there content; but there is a sense of coldness, unfitness, and discomfort, and a groping and seeking after something better. There is hope for a person in this condition. What a man feels that he lacks and wants, he will earnestly strive to obtain. The most discouraging feature of the lukewarm is that they are conscious of no lack, and feel that they have need of nothing."

So cold signifies a sense of unworthiness, much like the man in the gospels who cried out, "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner." What does it mean to be cold? I believe it's very much like humility, which according to **The Upward Look (1982), page 16** is "That sense of sin and unworthiness which leads to repentance. But we must be assured of the malignity of a disease before we feel our need of a cure. Those who do not realize the sinfulness of sin are not able to appreciate the value of the atonement and the necessity of being cleansed from all sin."

A person in a cold state feels their need of God. When you are cold, you are more desperate to get warm than a lukewarm person. At least you know your condition. Jesus said to the Pharisees in Matthew 21:31, "the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Why? Because they long for something better and seek the Lord wholeheartedly. **Jer 29:13** "And ye shall seek me, and find [me], when ye shall search for me" HOW? "with all your heart." Like the Psalmist says in Psalm 42:1: "AS the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." But a person does not remain in a cold state for long. They do not remain discouraged and destitute. The Lord touches their life and they become hot, on fire for Christ.

LUKEWARM DEFINED

Now let's talk more about the **lukewarm** state. Perhaps you have heard of the Boiling Frog Syndrome. It goes something like this: "If you throw a frog into a pot of boiling water, he'll jump out. But if you place a frog into a pot of lukewarm water and slowly turn up the heat, it will boil to death." In the same way, it must be very difficult for a lukewarm person to get out of their lukewarm state. They are comfortable. They don't want to change. Charles Spurgeon once said, "Five thousand members of a church all lukewarm will be five thousand impediments, but a dozen earnest, passionate spirits, determined that Christ shall be glorified and souls won, must be more than conquerors; in their very weakness and fewness will reside capacities for being the more largely blessed of God. Better nothing than lukewarmness."

However, those that remain lukewarm will finally be rejected. Jesus says, "I will spue them out of my mouth." In order to be spued from His mouth, we would have to be first in His mouth. But how are we in His mouth? By speaking His words, sharing our testimony with others. By witnessing for Him. But when we are neither hot nor cold, He does not speak by us, we are not witnesses for Him, and He spues us out of

His mouth as if the taste is disgusting. Think of the taste of lukewarm water. Its not too good, is it? It is especially bad if it the water has any impurities in it. Our lukewarmness must be even worse to Jesus as well if our lives are full of the impurities of sin. Jesus said that the Pharisees were like whitewashed sepulchers. They looked good on the outside, but on the inside, they were like dead men's bones. By this illustration, a lukewarm person is someone who is cold on the inside and appears hot on the outside. A mixture of hot and cold gives you what? Lukewarm. There cannot be a worse rejection in all the world than to be spued from the very mouth of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As in the Boiling Frog Syndrome, one of the tragedies of being lukewarm is that a lukewarm person is not very likely to even realize their sad condition. The text reads that they *know not* that they are poor, miserable, blind, and naked. As Zig Ziglar used to say, "Pigs don't know pigs stink!" Jesus once told about a lost coin. The lost coin didn't know it was lost. But praise God, Jesus is searching even for those who don't know they are lost.

Because they don't realize their condition, no one ever goes from lukewarm to hot without realizing their great need. People don't go to a doctor until they realize they are sick. So how are you ever going to come to the realization of your great need if you are in a lukewarm state? It must require a little more than someone telling you. It must come from your own personal experience. Unfortunately, some of us have to take quite a beating before we get to the point of admitting our great need. Speaking of the Isrealites, the Scripture says, (in [Psa 78:34, 35](#)) "When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God. And they remembered that God [was] their rock, and the high God their redeemer."

LAODICEA VULNERABLE TO SEIGE

Let's go back for a moment to the story of the city of Laodicea.

Having the water piped in left Laodicea vulnerable to siege. Are you getting your spiritual water "piped in" from a secondary source leaving your heart vulnerable to siege by the enemy of our souls? Do you rely on a once-a-week sermon for your spiritual uplifting? Or do you rely on your mothers prayers to get you into Heaven? Sitting in a church doesn't make you a Christian, just like sitting in a coup doesn't make you a chicken. Sitting in a garage doesn't make you a car. We need to study the Bible for ourselves and have a personal prayer life with God ourselves in order to establish that foundation that Jesus spoke of when He said, "Blessed is he who builds on the Rock." We will not be entering Heaven on the shirt tails of our parents or grandparents either. Each one must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. (Phil. 2:12)

TRYING TO DRIFT INTO HEAVEN

Let us not become complacent. No one is going to drift into Heaven.

Christ's Object Lessons, page 280

"We can never be saved in indolence and inactivity. There is no such thing as a truly converted person living a helpless, useless life. It is not possible for us to drift into heaven. No sluggard can enter there. If we do not strive to gain an entrance into the kingdom, if we do not seek earnestly to learn what constitutes its laws, we are not fitted for a part in it. Those who refuse to co-operate with God on earth would not co-operate with Him in heaven. It would not be safe to take them to heaven."

THE SOLUTION TO LAODICEA'S PROBLEM

And speaking of Laodicea's water supply, water has great significance in the Bible. In John 4:14 Jesus spoke to the woman at the well about living water that would keep you from ever being thirsty again. Of course, Jesus was speaking of spiritual matters. Jesus said, "He that believeth on me shall never thirst." In John 7:37, Jesus says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." That's where it's at friends. We go to Him and He satisfies our spiritual thirst. He supplies the living water. Hearin lies the answer to Laodicea's problem.

"GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE" DEFINED

Jesus says to the Laodiceans, "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; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." [Psa 78:34, 35](#) "When he slew them, then they sought him..." Chastening tends to drive us to our

knees.

Now what is the gold tried in the fire? Let's let the Bible answer itself:

1Pe 1:7 That the trial of your **faith**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

So the gold tried in the fire is faith in Jesus Christ. Your faith is much more precious than gold.

We are to be "rich in **faith**". James 2:5

"**Faith** is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1

And how do we buy these things? Don't worry. The water's free.

Isa 55:1 "Ho, every one that **thirsteth**, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

So we have only to ask, and to replace our sin with the priceless treasures that He has to offer, the Bread that perishes not.

"WHITE RAINMENT" DEFINED

And what is the white raiment?

This is an easy one. Again letting the Bible speak for itself:

Rev 19:8 "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Zec 3:3,4 "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel."

"And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

Is 64:6

"all OUR righteousnesses [are] as filthy rags"

So what would be the opposite? Jesus righteousness.

"EYESALVE" DEFINED

And what is the eyesalve?

1Cor 2:14

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the **Spirit of God**: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are **spiritually discerned**.

And what is it that quickens our spiritual discernment? The Holy Spirit.

Jhn 14:26

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

THE SOLUTION CONTINUED

Jesus has the answer to Laodicea's problem. It is to buy of Him the gold tried in the fire, His white raiment, and His eyesalve. That is, to have faith in Him, be clothed with His righteousness, and receive His Holy Spirit.

Isa 55:1

"and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

So how do we do the buying? We must simply come to Him and humble ourselves and pray.

2Ch 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall **humble** themselves, and **pray**, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

So lets seek Him daily in prayer and in the study of His word. Lets be determined to witness for Him and lets be fervent about our commitment to Him.

BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR

Jesus has another message for the church of Laodicea. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Why? Because God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Pe 3:9) Because He came to seek and save that which is lost. (Luke 19:10) He wants as many to be saved as possible.

How do you respond to Jesus' knocking? Do you open the door, or do you have an excuse? On one occasion, Jesus spoke of a great supper that was prepared and many were invited. The story is found in Luke 14. And starting with verse 18, the text reads:

Luk 14:18 And they all with one [consent] began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

Luk 14:19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

Luk 14:20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

Jesus is knocking at the door to your heart.

Have you bought a piece of land that you need to go take care of? Jesus is knocking.

Have you just bought five yoke of oxen or its modern day counterpart that occupies all of your time? Jesus is knocking.

Are you engaged? He knocks and knocks. Perhaps it's time for prayer meeting or perhaps you have an opportunity to visit someone and share God's love. But you sit back in your easy chair and say perhaps another time. O nauseous lukewarmness! When Jesus knocks, do you have some of the garbage of this world blocking the door?

I'd like to read a couple of statements I found by a very godly woman by the name of Ellen White:

The Review and Herald, November 2, 1886 "Says the true Witness, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Every warning, reproof, and entreaty in the word of God, or through his delegated messengers, is a knock at the door of the heart; it is the voice of Jesus, asking for entrance. With every knock unheeded, your determination to open becomes weaker and weaker. If the voice of Jesus is not heeded at once, it becomes confused in the mind with a multitude of other voices, the world's care and business engross the attention, and conviction dies away. The heart becomes less impressible, and lapses into a perilous unconsciousness of the shortness of time, and of the great eternity beyond. The heavenly Guest is standing at your door, while you are piling up obstructions to bar his entrance. Jesus is knocking through the prosperity he gives you. He loads you with blessings to test your fidelity, that they may flow out from you to others. Will you permit your selfishness to triumph? Will you squander God's talents, and lose your soul through idolatrous love of the blessings he has given? There are some whose hold on life is weakening. Disease is preying upon them. Soon will come the time for the separation from all earthly things. Will they venture to trifle with God now? Will they rob him by withholding help from his cause? Are there any who will prefer perishable, earthly treasure to the heavenly, immortal substance? Christ is making his last appeal to hearts. How importunate his entreaty, how reluctant he is to give you up to separation from his love and presence forever! Still is heard the step of Him who waiteth at your door; his voice is yet pleading for entrance; but there is a point beyond which his forbearance will not reach. "

S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7, page 964 "Brethren and sisters, are your thoughts after this order?

"These sharp, decided words do not mean me; I am in a fairly good condition spiritually, though I may not have all the fervor and zeal that some have. I believe the truth. Those to whom this message belongs may take it. I think some need it." You who think and reason thus, be assured that you are the very ones to whom this message belongs. While the costly wares of heaven are open before you, draw nigh and buy that which you have lost--the gold of love and faith, and the white raiment which is the righteousness of Christ." (Letter 30a, 1892)

"May it not be our great anxiety to succeed in this world; but may the burden of our souls be, How shall I secure the better world? What have I to do to be saved? . . . The position all must come into, is to value salvation dearer than earthly gain, to count everything but loss that they may win Christ. The consecration must be entire. God will admit of no reserve, of no divided sacrifice, no idol. All must die to self, and to the world. Then let us each renew our consecration to God daily. Everlasting life is worth a lifelong, persevering, untiring effort." **Our High Calling (1961), page 308**

INCENTIVES

Jesus has far better plans for you than you could ever have for yourself. Jesus says, “20 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. 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.”

How shall we overcome? **Rev 12:11** “And they **overcame** him by the **blood** of the **Lamb**, and by the word of their testimony...”

The Faith I Live By (1958), page 116 “It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall overcome. It [sanctification] is not merely a theory, an emotion, or a form of words, but a living, active principle, entering into the everyday life. It requires that our habits of eating, drinking, and dressing be such as to secure the preservation of physical, mental, and moral health, that we may present to the Lord our bodies--not an offering corrupted by wrong habits but--"a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."

What are His plans for us?

1Cor 2:9 “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”

His plans are better than we can even imagine. How can any earthly attraction divert our attention from this heavenly prospect? Jesus really does have far better plans for you than you could ever have for yourself.

Psa 37:4 “Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”

Near the end of the book of Revelation, in 22:12, Jesus reminds us:

Rev 22:12 “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

And in verse 17 He says:

Rev 22:17 “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Yes, Jesus has the answer to Laodicea’s problem. Jesus **IS** the answer to Laodicea’s problem. He is the living water.

Closing Hymn: “I’d Rather Have Jesus” Hymn #327 (Spanish #404)

Closing Prayer: Dear Father in Heaven, Help us to be hot or cold and not lukewarm. Awaken us from our comfortable stupor. Help us to be “on fire” for You, or to at least to realize our great need of Christ’s robe of righteousness, to sense our unworthiness, so that we will come to Jesus as He has invited us, so that we will not hesitate to put down this world’s goods and open the door to Christ’s knocking. You know our hearts. You know the need of each person here. We ask of You that “gold tried in the fire” that Jesus spoke of. Strengthen our faith in You. Please give us Your “eyesalve”. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Bless each one here today and go with us now. In Jesus Name we ask it, Amen.