

# The Vomit Inducing Church

by Mike Attwood

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*This sermon delves into the message to the Laodicean church in Revelation 3, highlighting their lukewarmness, self-sufficiency, spiritual blindness, and need for repentance. The city's background, material wealth, and spiritual bankruptcy are contrasted, emphasizing the call to invest in eternal riches, holy living, and spiritual sight. The importance of repentance, hearing Christ's voice, and opening the door for fellowship with Him is emphasized, along with the promise of intimacy and sharing in Christ's throne for the overcomers.*

**Scripture:** Revelation 3:14, Isaiah 55:1, Philippians 3:8, Psalms 119:18, Hebrews 12:6, Revelation 3:20, Revelation 3:21, Matthew 11:15

**Topics:** "Lukewarm Faith", "Spiritual Renewal"

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## Description

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## Transcript

If we could turn, please, in our Bibles to the book of Revelation, chapter 3, and we're going to begin reading in verse 14 to the end of the chapter. This is the last of the seven churches that the Lord Jesus addresses, the Laodicean church, and so we'll begin in verse 14. It says, 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.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

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. 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 eye salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent.

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. 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.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit say unto the churches. And again, God will bless that reading of his word to us this morning. We're going to be thinking about the lukewarm church, or some might call it the apathetic church.

We want to learn a little bit about the city as has been our custom, because so often what the Lord has to say has in view the city and the background kind of really helps to understand it. Now, this city was named after the wife of Antiochus II. She was the Laodicea who the church was named after.

It was rebuilt in 250 BC. Now, you're going to learn today that actually this city has been rebuilt several times, part of it because it's in a part of Turkey that is notoriously bad for earthquakes. And so it was rebuilt in 250 BC after a devastating earthquake by Antiochus II, and he named it after Laodicea.

Two years later, he divorced her, but he still retained her name on the city. And so this is the city of Laodicea. It's 40 miles or 64 kilometers southeast of Philadelphia.

So all these churches, we said they're kind of in a horseshoe formation. We're kind of following them around. This is the last one as we've gone around this horseshoe in the region of Turkey.

One of the problems with this city was that it had no internal water supply. It had no springs of any kind. It was in an area that we were familiar with.

If we know anything about our New Testament, it was in an area called the Lycus Valley. The Lycus Valley is where you had Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea. These three assemblies were established in this Lycus Valley, most likely by Epaphras.

And so in this Lycus Valley, water came from Hierapolis, which was six miles away or 10 kilometers. And there it came out of hot springs, and it was laced with calcium carbonate and was considered a healthy place. It was a kind of a spa town.

And so people would go there and take the hot springs. You can actually go and see them to this day. They're still there.

And they would just kind of soak in these hot springs, and it would have considerable health benefits, so they said. So the water that was in Laodicea came from Hierapolis, and it was brought in ducts, like aqueducts brought it down from there into the city of Laodicea. But by the time it reached Laodicea, it was lukewarm.

And because of the high content of calcium carbonate in the water, when you drank it, it actually induced vomit. It was what's called an anetic. It actually caused people to vomit.

And so even the water they had, it was difficult to drink. On the other hand, Colossae, the other of the three assemblies that we know of in the Lycus Valley that was 10 miles or 16 kilometers southwest, it had ice-cold springs, which were very refreshing to drink from. So you've got the hot springs in Hierapolis.

You've got the ice-cold springs in Colossae. You have no natural water, but the water that's piped in from Hierapolis. By the time it gets to Laodicea, it's lukewarm, and it makes people vomit to drink it.

It tastes so bad. And despite the water issues, this city was very wealthy and incredibly independent. There was an earthquake, another earthquake in AD 60.

So 250 BC, there'd been an earthquake. It was rebuilt AD 60. There was an earthquake that hit the city.

That was the second one that had hit. There was another one in AD 17. The Roman government offered them an aid package.

I guess they had their government help available. The Roman government offered them an aid package. But they refused it because they were so financially independent.

They had a banking center, all the rest of it. They said simply this, we do not need your help. We can manage without you.

Thank you very much. So very independent, very prosperous city. How did their money come to them? Well, first of all, it was a place where gold was minted there.

So it was a place where they made gold coins. And they made gold in their kilns, in their mints. It was also famous for wool, a particular black wool that was very shiny.

And it was used in carpets. It was used in clothing. And on top of that, it was also a medical center, famous for its medical center.

And it was especially known for the treatment of eyes, and also for hearing issues. They developed an eye cell. And that was considered to help tremendously in people with inflamed eyes.

It was known as Phrygian powders. And when this was mixed with water and put to the eyes, it was tremendously helpful. Also, they could aid in hearing.

This church would have received letters already, it would have received the letter from Colossae. If you look back with me, please, to the book of Colossians, chapter four, you will notice in some references to Laodicea in that particular letter, Colossians chapter four. So we'll begin in verse 12.

It says, Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record that he hath a great zeal for you and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician and greet you, salute the brethren which are in Laodicea and Nymphos and the church which is in his house.

And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. So what we're simply saying is this, that this church had already had apostolic correspondence. The letter to the Colossians had been read, and then there was a church of the Laodiceans.

Now, a lot of people think the church of the Laodiceans is what we call Ephesians. That was a circular letter written at the same time as Colossians and would have been read. If that's the case, it makes no difference.

Really, at this point, what it's saying is they'd already had correspondence with Paul the Apostle. That was in AD 64, they would have received those letters. And now it's AD 95, and they're getting another letter.

But we can see that things have really deteriorated in those years since AD 64 to AD 95. And when we think of it from a church history perspective, it's not difficult to see that this church represents the church of the 20th century onwards. The last letter brings a solemn end to these letters to the churches, and it's Christ's last word to the church.

And I believe clearly describing conditions in the church before the Lord descends with a shout. The last state of profession before the Lord comes. What will it be like? Well, I think this letter to Laodicea gives us an indication of what the conditions we might find when the Lord Jesus comes.

Once again, the name of the church has real significance. First of all, it has significance because Laodicea is one of those compound words. It's made up of two parts.

Laos, which we know as people, and then dike, which is custom, right, or judgment. And so it literally has the idea of the rights of the people. The rights of the people.

We saw the word Laos in Nicolaitans, that was kind of ruling over the people, conquering the people. Now we've got that word Laos again, the word people, but it's the custom, the right or judgment of the people. And the idea is that people's rights, the democratic will of the people, was dominant in this church.

The very exact opposite of Nicolaitanism. Nicolaitanism is where you have a clergyman or some bishop or whatever, and he is conquering the people. He is exercising his will in the assembly over the people.

Here, it's the people saying, no, we want our rights. We want to do what we want to do. And of course, there's a very simple lesson here.

In these letters, you have two extremes. You have the clergy lady system, which is wrong, where clergy dominate, where it's a top-down, but the top is not the Lord, it's the clergyman down. That is wrong.

But also, you have here the opposite, the pendulum swing is a church dominated by the whims of the people. And what we could say is congregational church government is no more scriptural than a one-man show. They are both utterly unbiblical and disdainful to the Lord.

So how should things be done? The rights of the Lord Jesus should be preeminent. Remember, he is the one who is the preeminent place in the assembly. It's not the people's rights.

Elders are not a decision-making body based on kind of getting a survey of what the people want, and then they make a decision. They're a discerning body. Their job is to discern the will of the head of the church for his assembly.

And where would they find the will of the head for the church? Well, they find it in the Word of God. And that's the job of elders. The church is not a democracy, nor a dictatorship, but it's a theocracy.

It has divine rulership. The Lord is the undisputed head of the church. Churches where people rule tend to say this, smile, be happy, rather than the message of repentance, which would come to us from the risen head.

Smile and be happy. How do the people's rights affect the assembly? Well, it's kind of easy to see. First of all, the role of women would be one area.

Society as a whole demands equality. We have women executives, women politicians, so why not women elders? Why not women Bible teachers? Why not have women take the lead at the Lord's Supper? And that's the mentality, right? This is what democracy demands. We want equality.

But we've got to remind ourselves, this is God's house. First Timothy chapter three, verse 15, how you behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And so he demands behavior that's acceptable to him.

In first Corinthians 14, Paul says, the things I write are the commandments of the Lord. And so he says some things about the role of women. And it's not Paul's opinion, not Paul, the male chauvinist, it's Paul giving the commandments of the Lord.

And so therefore, in the house of God, the commandments of the Lord should have precedent over the whims of the people. And it takes courageous leadership to stand against the current of the age and to be men of conviction and say, this is what scripture says. And then we're seeing other trends, and they all fit together.

Once we give into one, it's kind of like, where do you stop with the people's rights? Our culture now, attitudes have changed. Many in our society have come to accept what God condemns. And so we now have churches accepting ordained homosexual ministers, transgender ministers, performing same-sex marriages.

And again, this is the whim of the people. And we can see in the last days, the so-called professing church will largely capitulate and give in to the whims of the people. But God is not influenced by the whims of the people.

He says, I am the Lord, I change not. And his principles are eternal, and they don't change. And the Lord refers to even these issues.

He says, in the beginning, God made them male and female. End of story. That's the way it is.

And so the house of God, I've been doing a lot of preaching on this, but I really firmly believe that the purpose of the house of God is to witness to divine order in the midst of satanic disorder. It's meant to be a testimony to divine order. And I believe perhaps the last testimony in this world to divine order in the midst of satanic disorder.

So how does the Lord reveal himself to this church as we think of it, a church dominated by people's rights? Verse 14, unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write these things, say the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. First of all, I want you to notice something different. The King James, I love the way the King James Bible does this.

It doesn't say as it does in other churches, for instance, in chapter 3, verse 1, to the angel of the church in Sardis, write. And so it talks about the church that is in Sardis. But here, notice how the King James translators have done this, to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans.

Isn't that subtle? Who does that church belong to? It belongs to them. It's their church. In fact, we're going to see later on, the Lord is outside the door.

He's not even welcome in their church. And so it's the church of the Laodiceans, rather than the church of Laodicea. It's of the Laodiceans, according to the King.

And I like really what they're doing is they're applying what we see in the chapter. This is exactly what's going on in this church. But now we get this revelation of the Lord Jesus.

And it begins with the idea of He's the Amen, which is the last word. There's a threefold description of the Lord here. He's the Amen.

So that's the affirmation and confirmation of all the truth of what God has spoken. When we say Amen, we're saying it is true, we agree with it, so be it. It's full agreement.

Hopefully when we close in prayer, somebody will say Amen to what I've said today. There will be an agreement. And so the Amen is the last word.

All the promises of God are in Christ, yea and Amen. That's 2 Corinthians 1 verse 20. And so Christ really in a sense is the seal of all God's revealed truth, the finality of all the Father has spoken.

Beyond Him, God has nothing more to say to man. He's the last word. He is the last word.

He has the last word. He's the Amen. And so when it comes to people's rights, they all have their opinions.

But let me ask the question, who gets the last word in his house? He does. He's the one who gets the Amen. He's the one who has the last word.

And then not only is He the last word, the Amen, He's also the faithful and true witness. Very different to the Laodiceans. They're clearly not being faithful, and they're not being true to the word of God.

They're just taking what the people want. And yet in perfect contrast, He is faithful, and He's faithful to tell them the truth about themselves. No doubt this church had teachers who knew how to itch their ears and tell them everything they wanted to hear.

But the Lord, He is the faithful and true witness. Faithful, Proverbs 27 verse 6, are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. And the Lord Jesus was faithful.

He was faithful to His Father, even when it was not popular. And He is the faithful witness. Means He's not going to dilute the truth.

He is the true witness, which means He'll not distort the truth. He is the faithful and true witness. He sees through all the shallowness, the outward show of our lives.

He neither dilutes nor distorts what He sees. He just tells us like it is. Tells us it like it is.

And so He's the faithful and true witness. Now notice the final thing in this revelation of Christ is that He's the beginning of the creation of God. Now, not the beginning of the creation by God, as in the G.A.W. translation.

The idea is this, that the Lord is the first cause of all creation. Cultists often use this verse to say Jesus is a created being, not coequal with the Father. But the Greek word translated beginning here is the word Arche, A-R-C-H-E, which actually means the origin.

He is the origin of the creation of God. He is the creator. Colossians, they got this letter from the church at Colossae.

Again, emphasizing Christ as creator. They would have read that. He is the creator and sustainer of everything.

Colossians chapter 1 and verse 16. Let's just read that very powerful verse that they would have previously read. For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they're thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.

All things were created by Him and for Him. Christ the creator. John 1, 3, beautiful verse.

All things were made by Him. Without Him was nothing made that was made. Aren't we glad that He is creator of all things? So when we put these things in reverse order, what we say is this.

He's the creator of everything. He is the faithful witness to creation. And He is the last word in creation.

He's the Amen. And I like that idea. He's the beginning of creation, the faithful witness to creation and the final word.

He clearly will have the final word in creation. And isn't that wonderful? We're looking forward to that day when the Lord comes from heaven with flaming fire, taking judgment on all them that know not God and that obey not the gospel. He's going to have the last say, the final word, the beginning.

He's also the beginning of the new creation, which is the church. And perhaps this is a reminder to these wealthy individuals of where they derived their wealth from. The source of their riches was all in creation.

The sheep that they got their wool from, the gold that was found in the ground that they were able to mint and make into gold coins. And then even the medicinal substances that they were able to use and make their eyes out from was all things that He had created and put into His universe. And so there's a danger sometimes of forgetting where our wealth comes from.

Deuteronomy 8, verse 17 and 18, recognize this subtle danger in the human heart to start to think that we made ourselves rich because of our smartness and cleverness. And this is what Deuteronomy 8, 17 and 18 says, and thou say in thine heart, my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant, which He swear unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

In other words, if we are in a prosperous condition, it's because of the Lord. He's the one who's given us ability and skill and has enabled us to make wealth, produce wealth. It's Him.

And He is the one that needs to be acknowledged. But in their wealth, we're going to see He was neglected. So we've had this revelation of Christ.

We want to think now of the problem in Laodicea. Like Sardis, he doesn't have a good word to say of commendation to this church. No commendation at all.

He says, write these things. And then verse 15, I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou were hot or cold.

No commendation, just as he had no condemnation for the Philadelphia church, he has no commendation for them. Sardis was, if you like, a cold church. It was dead.

Philadelphia was a hot church. They didn't have a lot of strength, but boy, they had a lot of zeal for the Lord. And Laodicea is a lukewarm church.

They were apathetic. They were complacent. They were indifferent to the Lord Jesus.

Lukewarm. Convictions are shallow. Everything can be tolerated.

Anything condoned. No heat is generated. No zeal displayed.

It's amazing that, again, I keep going back to Colossians, and forgive me if we're doing this, but I can't help but seeing the parallels in Colossians. You'll notice, and we read it earlier, Colossians chapter 4 and verse 12 and 13, how there was great zeal displayed on behalf of the Laodicean church, but they didn't seem to have any zeal. By the way, the word zeal means hot.

It means to be red in the face. Zealous is hot. You're not complacent.

You're red hot about this thing. And Colossians 4, 12, it says, Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluted you. Always laboring fervently, that word fervently means a boiling point, laboring fervently for you in prayers that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

I bear him record that he has great zeal, great heat for you and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis. The work started because of the zeal of a man called Epaphras. He was the evangelist.

He was the one who had prayed for them. He was a hot brother. He was really hot, zealous, but they were lukewarm.

The Lord Jesus, by the way, was hot. John 2, 17, when he cleansed the temple, the disciples remembered this, and it was a quotation from Psalm 69, zeal for thy house hath eaten me up. He was hot about the house of God.

He was zeal, consumed him for the house of God, but lukewarmness was fashionable. There's a certain sense in all of us, if we're really honest, we just want to be comfortable, not too hot, not too cold. We want to adjust the thermostat, a comfortable Christianity.

We don't want anything to disturb our comfort. That was the condition in Laodicea. Hot is fervent, that boiling point, bubbling over.

Cold would be somebody that maybe doesn't have any interest in spiritual things, lukewarm, outward profession, no inner reality, the hardest to deal with. Lukewarm is hard to deal with. Saul was once cold towards the gospel.

In fact, he was hostile towards the gospel, but he became Paul, he became hot for the gospel. The Lord is saying, if instead of being lukewarm, you were so cold that you could feel that coldness, then the very feeling of your need might drive you to the true warmth. But now in your lukewarmness, you have just

enough to protect yourself against the feeling of need.

And so someone has suggested another alternative view is that cold water is refreshing. You can drink it in Colossae, it's refreshing. Hot water, at least you can get a soothing kind of spa bath, and that's going to do something to your aching bones without calcium carbonate.

But here in is just nauseating lukewarmness that just makes you want to throw up. And that was their condition. We might ask the question, seeing as we're on this topic, what is the spiritual temperature of our lives for God? See, in our own world, if you have a fever, you're sick.

But could we say this, that in God's economy, if you don't have a fever, you're sick, you're lukewarm, you're apathetic, you're indifferent. You just want to be comfortable. Don't disturb me.

Don't stir me up. I'd like my comfort and ease. How is our spiritual temperature? The world is always at peace with a lukewarm church, because that kind of church is no threat to the world.

It doesn't get persecution. It's just ignored. It's marginalized.

It's so lukewarm. And so the Lord says, verse 16, so then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Like the lukewarm water of Laodicea, this church had an emetic effect on the Savior.

It made him want to vomit them out of his mouth. Now, remember, we've gone through these churches, and we've said in each of them, there's a parallel with the Old Testament. And in this case, there's a definite parallel.

If Philadelphia had Hezekiah in view and the last kind of revival before judgment fell, Laodicea takes us to the last days in the captivity period. And how do we know that? I want you to go back with me to the book of Leviticus for a moment, please, in chapter 18. Leviticus chapter 18.

And you might put a ribbon in there, because there's another kind of link we want to bring to this chapter. But Leviticus 18, verse 28, he describes the sins of the Canaanites. And then he goes and talks about verse 27, for all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled.

And then he says that the land spew not you out also, when you defile it, as it spewed out the nations that were before you. So initially, God judged the Canaanites, he sent Israel in to be his instruments of judgment. And the reason is, and if you want to understand why did God allow the judgment of the Canaanites, read Leviticus 18.

It's horrible reading. It's all the sins of the Canaanites that caused the land itself to vomit them out. And so God says, now listen, when the people of God, when Israel become like the Canaanites, I have to be consistent to my character.

I have to do the very same thing I did to the Canaanites, and the land itself will vomit you out. And so clearly, that's exactly what happened in the captivity period, right? They had out sinned the Canaanites. And so God cleansed the land, and he drove them out of the land into captivity to Babylon.

It has been well said that the early church was marked by poverty, piety, and power, but it has given place to wealth, worldliness, and weakness. Now I think that's a profound statement. The early church was

marked by poverty, piety, and power, but it has given place to wealth, worldliness, and weakness.

Notice verse 17, it says, because thou sayest, this is why he's going to spew them out of his mouth, because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and of need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Now I want you to notice something very subtle here that you might not just get from a casual reading, but we said that the Lord has no commendation for this church. He commends the other churches, with the exception of Sardis, but he has no commendation here at all.

But they commend themselves. Notice who's saying this, because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and of need of nothing. They're bragging about, we've got it all together.

We don't need any help. We didn't need any help from the Roman government. And by the way, we don't need any help for you either, Lord.

We've got this taken care of. We're doing fine here. They had material abundance.

We're rich, and we don't need anything. You know, where we really see whether we're Laodicean or not is by our attendance at the prayer meeting. Because at the attendance of the prayer meeting, the reason we're there is because we see our need.

We say, we don't have it, Lord. We don't have everything that it takes. We can't do this Christian thing ourselves.

It's our common confession, Lord, without you, we can do nothing. And if our attendance, and I heard the other day of a megachurch that thousands attend, but the prayer meeting, 16 people. Amazing.

What does that tell us? We don't need you, Lord. We're fine. We're doing okay.

We've got this covered. And this was where they were at. Now, it's very different to the Lord what he said in his Sermon on the Mount.

Remember he said, blessed are the poor in spirit. These people are not poor in spirit. There's nothing humble about them.

We've got it all taken care of. We don't need anything. We're self-made men.

We're wealthy. We've got everything that we need. New Testament assemblies demand a high state of spirituality to work well.

North America is probably one of the hardest countries in the globe or continents on the globe for New Testament Christianity to work, because materialism saps our commitment and eats away at our dependence upon the Lord. In fact, it's so much easier to hire a professional staff to run our programs and keep things looking good, while at the same time, demanding little or nothing from the large crowd which attends the entertainment. This is Laodicea.

This is what Laodicea looks like. While the assembly thinks it's rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing, evidenced by poor attendance and lack of fervor at the prayer meeting, we can always throw money at the problem. If we have difficulties, we just need a new program.

We need some new kind of financial planning or whatever. The Lord says, here's the problem with this church. You know not.

You say, I am rich, increased with goods, need of nothing, and knowest not. The problem of the Laodicean church is that they did not realize they had a problem, and that was their problem. We don't need any help.

We've got this covered. We're fine. They don't know their true condition.

And so the Lord says, the faithful and true witness says this to them. Let me tell you what you really like. He says, you don't know that you're wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

Wow. What a stunning revelation of their true state. They're wretched.

The only other time this word wretched is used in the New Testament is in Romans 7 verse 24, and it's of the wretched man or wretched man that I am who will deliver me from the body of this flesh. And so it's a man who's recognizing I can't live the Christian life in the energy of the flesh. And he's brought to that place of recognizing he's a wretched man.

Unfortunately, Laodicea has not got into Romans 7 yet. They don't recognize their wretched state. And they're miserable.

Again, miserable is used in 1 Corinthians 15 about people who are denying the resurrection. And again, I'd say Laodicea are living without resurrection power, and they're of all men most miserable. They're living for this world, and they don't know anything of resurrection power in their own lives.

They're miserable. They're poor. They're not rich towards God.

Now, again, we have to keep reminding ourselves, Abraham was a very rich man, but he did have a zeal for God. So it's not saying, okay, give all your money away. What it's saying is you can't depend on materialism.

You can't depend on wealth. You have to depend on the Lord. That's what he's saying.

But he says, you're miserable, you're poor. They're not rich. They're like the man that were building bigger barns, and he says, this man was not rich towards God.

Despite material wealth, spiritual poverty was tangible. They're blind, blinded by the God of this age. Now, I want to just think about blindness for a minute, because it's kind of an interesting thing that we mentioned this Old Testament allusion to the captivity period.

Well, the last king of Judah was a man called Zedekiah. And the interesting thing is that what happened to Zedekiah was, and you can read this in 2 Kings 25 verse 7. I'm just going to give you the scriptural references here. We're not going to look them up, but we're just going to mention them.

But the last king of Judah, his sons were killed before his eyes, and then his eyes were burned out. And so the last king of Judah ended up blind. The last church in Revelation 2 and 3 is blind.

The last judge was Samson. How did Samson end up? Judges 16 verse 21. He had his eyes put out.

And what is he doing? He's going in circles, grinding out corn for the Philistines. The last priest in, if you like, before we come into 1 Samuel, the last priest in the judges period is Eli. And remember what Eli's

problem was.

Again, 1 Samuel 3 verse 2, his vision was dimmed. He didn't have clear eyesight, probably had cataracts, extreme cataracts, I would think. And then the Pharisees.

These are the generation that came back from the captivity. And maybe we'll just take a minute to look at this, because I just was really stunned by this when I saw it the other day. Look at Matthew 23.

Matthew 23, verse 16, it says, Woe unto you, ye blind guides. Speaking of the Pharisees, look at verse 17, you fools and blind. Verse 19, you fools and blind.

Look at verse 24, ye blind guides. Look at verse 26, the blind Pharisee cleansed first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. And so as the Lord denounces this post-captivity generation that came back with great zeal.

Remember the zeal of Ezra and Nehemiah to rebuild the house of God. But their, as it were, their offspring had become the Pharisees. And what was their condition? The Lord says, you're blind guides.

And here we find ourselves with the last church. And what is this church like? He says, of them you're blind, wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and then naked. And again, this reference to naked again goes back to Leviticus 18.

And remember we said, keep a marker back there. And I'm good at telling you to do that. I'm not doing it myself, but Leviticus 18 is very interesting that in this chapter that speaks of the conditions, the word nakedness occurs over and over again.

Verse 6, none of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to uncover their nakedness. Verse 7, the nakedness of thy father. And I'm not going to go through it all.

You can go through and underline it. But again, it's just as the last days of the kingdom of Judah is in view Old Testament-wise. A blind king, a naked people, and a Lord ready to vomit them out.

We find exactly the same thing here in Leviticus. Naked. Remember Noah? How did Noah end up, by the way? Genesis 9.21, after a great service to the Lord, Noah ended up naked and drunk in his tent.

So it's just kind of interesting, all these allusions here. The contrasts are shocking. But what they thought they were, and what they really were, was so far apart.

What they saw, we're rich, we don't need anything. And what the Lord saw, again, pulls apart. The wealth and affluence of their city was matched by their own spiritual bankruptcy.

And so the Lord counsels them. And he says in verse 18, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see. Was again, the Lord has always got the answer to every church's situation.

I counsel thee, he says to buy of me. It may seem strange to us, the term buy of me, to buy something means to exchange something. We tend to think of using money to do that exchange.

But in times past, it would mean services for services, or it could be you swap some crops for some services or whatever. But the idea is an exchange has to be made. Instead of devoting themselves to materialism, they needed to devote themselves to him.

They needed to buy of the true riches, the gold that's tried and tested that does satisfy not the world's goals. I think of Isaiah 55, one hit whole everyone that thirsted cometh ye to the waters. He that hath no money, come ye buy and eat.

Yea, come buy wine and milk without money, without price. Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, do labor for that which satisfieth not, hearken diligently to me and eat ye that which is good. Let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Incline your ear, come to me here and your soul shall live. And so just this idea of come to me and buy. Buy the truth, Proverbs 23 says, and sell it not.

You need to invest in eternal riches, that true gold, gold that would speak to us of glorious and divine things. This is what you need. You need the true riches.

And you need to ditch the things that are captivating your heart and invest in that which alone can really satisfy. Remind you the words of Paul in Philippians 3, about this idea of exchange. And so in Philippians 3 verse 8, yea, doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things.

And do count them but dumb that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is by the law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. And so this idea of making an exchange, dumping that which can never satisfy and exchanging it for that which is eternally satisfying, dynamic living relationship with the Lord from heaven. And so he says, buy of me gold tried in the fire.

This is tried and tested. Throughout the ages, men have found the Lord Jesus, the true riches to really satisfy the heart. Things of the world can never satisfy.

And so he says, buy of me gold tried in the fire. This is tried and tested. There's no dross here.

This is going to satisfy that thou may be rich, real riches, true riches. White raiment thou mayest be clothed. Again, in Laodicea, you'd stand out like a sore thumb if you were wearing white raiment, because they all wore black, woolen, shiny garments because of the wool that they sold in the city.

And so walking with Christ does make us distinctive from the world and different. We stand out. This white raiment, characteristic of Christ displayed in holy living and sanctified living.

Revelation 19 verse 8 would help us in this idea of white raiment. 19 verse 8, it says, 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 or righteous acts of saints. Kind of weaving our own garments, as it were, of holy sanctified living, to stand out for the Lord Jesus in this dark world.

Then he says, anoint thine eyes with thysself. Psalm 119 and verse 18. We read this.

Psalm 119 verse 18. The Lord, sorry, one verse. Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

They were good at selling thyselt to others. They needed to apply some to their own situation. Apply some of your own medicine that you sell to others, that you see things that are of eternal value.

They were blinded to their true condition. They needed I sell. Now, what's interesting is that the Lord loves this church.

I want you to notice verse 19. He says, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent. And we read in Hebrews 12, this is where this idea comes from, that part of the idea, the reason we know we belong to the Lord is who the Lord loves he chastens.

It's part of the evidence of his love for us is that he does spankers. He chastens us when we need a spanking. Love doesn't ignore wrong.

It rebukes when needed and chastens when needed. And the end in view, what the Lord is looking for is repentance. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent.

He wants them to come to repentance. And interesting, be zealous. Again, that's that word hot.

That's the very thing they're not. They're lukewarm. They're indifferent about everything.

And he said, if you want to see a change in Laodicea, you need to get hot. And one of the things you need to get hot about is repentance, repenting, changing your mind and obeying what I say. Repent, not try something new.

You see, again, this is what happens in a materialistic culture. Instead of repentance, a church thinks, oh, I just got to tweak some things. I just need a program.

I just need, I need, you know, maybe rearranging the furniture. Maybe I need to hire a new preacher or something like that. In other words, it's always we find a way to get around issues.

And what the law says is I don't want any of that stuff. What I want is repentance. That's what I want from you.

Don't try something new, but simply acknowledge your true condition. Get real, get honest, and then change your mind, followed by a change of ways. And then verse 20.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and will sup with him and he with me. Now, this is an appeal to the individuals now within the church.

It seems that he is on the outside, but individuals within may respond to his knocking and may hear his voice and may open the door to him. He wants their fellowship. What a contrast.

Philadelphia, he says, I've set before you an open door. Laodicea says to the Lord, we've set before you a closed door. You're outside.

You can't come in. And it's amazing. No doubt there was lots of activity in the church at Laodicea, because it seems that with all the noise and all the activity that they weren't able to hear his knock or his voice.

And it's easy, isn't it, in the busyness of life, to be so busy that we can't hear the Lord. Be still and know that I am God. Sometimes we just need to get quiet before the Lord, ask him to search us, to show us our true state, and if need be, repent where repentance is needed.

The church had wealth and power, but not Christ. He's outside. Like Samson, they wist not the Lord had departed from them.

I wonder if going to the meeting, they all would say to one another, you know, it says where two or three are gathered, there the Lord's in the midst. But clearly here he's not. He's outside.

It's kind of interesting that in Revelation, there's open doors. There's an open door outwardly for service in Philadelphia. I've set before you an open door.

You'd go out and reach people with the gospel. They were a missionary church. And then there's an open door inwardly here for communion with Christ.

He wants us to, as it were, open the door and let him in. He wants our fellowship. He wants to sit with us.

He wants to sup with us. He wants to dine with us. He wants intimacy and communion with his people.

And we have to open that door for communion with Christ. And then there's in chapter four, verse one, we'll see it next week. There's an open door upwardly for translation.

There's a door open in heaven, and there's a day coming when the sound is going to come, come up here and we're going to be gone. Three different open doors. Well, to him that overcomes and not easy to be an overcomer in a culture like this.

I'll grant to sit with me in my throne. You talk about intimacy. You're going to share with me in my glory on my millennial throne.

And then ultimately on his eternal throne, as he overcame and sat down with the father on his throne. What a marvelous reward for the overcomer, intimacy and fellowship with the one who was seated on the father's throne. And so he simply says this, he that hasn't here to hear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches.

One of the greatest lessons of Laodicea is that a church with gift and riches can function apart from the Lord. However, without his presence and blessing, but the show can go on even though he's not there. May God encourage and challenge our hearts as we contemplate this very startling letter to the church of Laodicea.

Amen.

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