

## Revelation week 11

### Laodicea: The Luke warm church. Rev 3:14-22

#### I. Introduction

- a. Perhaps the most tragic theme in all of redemptive history is the sad story of wayward Israel.
- b. The Jewish people were the recipients of unprecedented spiritual privileges: “the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever” (Rom. 9:4–5).
- c. God chose them from all the world’s peoples, rescued them from Egypt, brought them into the Promised Land, loved them, and cared for and protected them (cf. Deut. 4:37; 7:7–8).
- d. Yet despite those privileges, Israel’s history was one of continual rebellion against God.
- e. After their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites’ rebellion brought God’s severe judgment, as an entire generation perished in the wilderness.
- f. The cycle of Israel’s sin, God’s judgment, and Israel’s repentance and restoration runs throughout the book of Judges.
  - i. The Jewish people’s sinful pride led them to reject God as their King and demand a human king.
  - ii. Their first king was the disobedient Saul, and the nation was in turmoil for much of his reign.

- iii. After a period of relative peace and obedience under David and Solomon, Israel split into two kingdoms.
  - iv. All of the northern kings (of Israel) and most of the southern ones (of Judah) were wicked men, who led their people into the gross abominations of idolatry.
- g. All through its centuries of disobedience, rebellion, and apostasy, God graciously called Israel back to Himself: “Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day,” God declared in Jeremiah 7:25, “I have sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending them.” But instead of repenting and returning to God, the Israelites “did not listen to [Him] or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did more evil than their fathers” (Jer. 7:26; cf. 25:4; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4–5; Zech. 7:12).
- h. Finally, God brought devastating judgment upon His rebellious and unrepentant people.
  - i. First Israel fell to the Assyrians, then Judah was carried into captivity by the Babylonians and Jerusalem destroyed.
  - ii. Second Kings 17:7–23 recites the sad litany of sins that brought about God’s judgment on His people:
- i. Israel’s apostasy brought grief to God’s heart.
  - i. In the parable of Isaiah 5:1–3, Israel is pictured as a well-cared-for vineyard that nonetheless produced only worthless grapes.

- ii. In verse 4 the Lord said, “What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?”
- iii. In Isaiah 48:18 He exclaimed, “If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.”
- iv. In Psalm 78:40 the psalmist lamented, “How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness and grieved Him in the desert!”
- j. The New Testament also records God’s sorrow over rebellious Israel. Approaching Jerusalem for the last time, the Lord Jesus Christ cried out, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!” (Luke 13:34).
- k. The Jews’ long history of calloused rejection of God’s person, commands, and messengers culminated a few days later when they cried out for their Messiah’s execution.
- l. The apostle Paul felt the grief of God over his countrymen’s unbelief.
  - i. To the Romans he wrote, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge” (Rom. 10:1–2). In Romans 9:2 he wrote of his “great sorrow and unceasing grief” over Israel’s unbelief. So intense was Paul’s

sorrow over that unbelief that he made the shocking statement that if it were possible, he would be willing to be “accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (v. 3).

- m. Tragically, the sorrowful unbelief of Israel finds a parallel in the church.
  - i. There are many people in churches, even entire congregations, who are lost.
  - ii. They may be sincere, zealous, and outwardly religious, but they reject the gospel truth.
  - iii. They have all the rich New Covenant teaching about Christ’s life, death, and resurrection contained in Bibles they neither believe nor obey.
  - iv. As a result, they are doomed, just as unbelieving Israel was.
  - v. Paul described them as those “holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power,” and then wisely counseled believers to “avoid such men as these” (2 Tim. 3:5).
- n. The church at Laodicea represents such apostate churches as have existed throughout history.
- o. It is the last and worst of the seven churches addressed by our Lord.
- p. The downward spiral that began at Ephesus, and continued through Pergamum, Thyatira, and Sardis, reached the bottom at Laodicea.
- q. Even at Sardis there were some true believers left; as far as can be determined, the church at Laodicea was a totally unregenerate, false church.

- r. It has the grim distinction of being the only one of the seven for whom Christ has no positive word of commendation.
- s. Due to the drastic nature of the situation at Laodicea, this is also the most threatening of the seven letters.
- t. The contents of this letter may be divided into six headings: the correspondent, the church, the city, the concern, the command, and the counsel.

## II. **The Correspondent.**

- a. **The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation:** (3:14c)
- b. As in the letter to the church at Philadelphia, Christ did not identify Himself using any of the phrases from the vision recorded in 1:12–17.
- c. Instead, He identified Himself using three divine titles.
- d. First, the Lord Jesus Christ described Himself as the Amen.
- e. That unique title, used only here in Scripture to describe Christ, is reminiscent of Isaiah 65:16, where God is twice called the “God of truth [Heb. amen].”
  - i. Amen is a transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “truth,” “affirmation,” or “certainty.”
  - ii. It refers to that which is firm, fixed, and unchangeable.
  - iii. Amen is often used in Scripture to affirm the truthfulness of a statement (e.g., Num. 5:22; Neh. 8:6; Matt. 6:13; Rom. 16:27; 1 Cor. 16:24; and also Matt. 5:18; 6:2; Mark 9:1; Luke 4:24; John 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19; where the underlying Greek amen is rendered “verily” in the kjv and “truly” in the nasb).

- iv. Whatever God says is true and certain; therefore, He is the God of truth.
- f. Christ also identified Himself as the faithful and true Witness.
  - i. That title further expounds the thought expressed in the first title.
  - ii. Not only is Jesus the Amen because of His work, but also because everything He speaks is the truth.
  - iii. He is completely trustworthy, perfectly accurate, and His testimony is always reliable. Jesus Christ is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6; emphasis added).
- g. This was an appropriate way to begin the letter to the Laodiceans because it affirmed to them that Christ had accurately assessed their unredeemed condition.
- h. It also affirmed that His offer of fellowship and salvation in verse 20 was true, because God’s promises were confirmed through His work.
- i. Finally, Christ referred to Himself as the Beginning of the creation of God.
  - i. The English translation is somewhat ambiguous and misleading.
  - ii. As a result, false teachers seeking to deny Christ’s deity have attempted to use this verse to prove He is a created being.
  - iii. There is no ambiguity in the Greek text, however. Archē (Beginning) does not mean that Christ was the first person God created, but rather that Christ Himself is the source or origin of creation (cf. Rev. 22:13).

- iv. Through His power everything was created (John 1:3; Heb. 1:2).
- j. This letter to the Laodiceans has much in common with Paul's letter to the Colossian church.
  - i. Colossae was not far from Laodicea, so it is likely that the same heresy plaguing the Colossians had made its way to Laodicea (cf. Col. 4:16).
  - ii. That heresy, a form of early gnosticism (from the Greek word *gnōsis*, “knowledge”), taught that Christ was a created being.
  - iii. Its proponents also claimed that they possessed a secret, higher spiritual knowledge above and beyond the simple words of Scripture.
  - iv. Combating that heresy Paul wrote of Christ, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Col. 1:15–17)
- k. “Firstborn” (*prōtotokos*) is not limited to the first one born chronologically, but refers to the supreme or preeminent one, the one receiving the highest honor (cf. Ps. 89:27).
- l. Christ is thus the source (*archē*) of the creation, and the supreme person (*prōtotokos*) in it.
  - i. This damning heresy about the person of Christ was the reason the Laodicean church was spiritually dead.

- ii. Their heretical Christology had produced an unregenerate church. False teaching about Christ, specifically the denial of His deity, is a hallmark of modern cults as well.

### III. The Church.

- a. the church in Laodicea (3:14a)
- b. The New Testament does not record anything about the founding of the church at Laodicea.
- c. Like most of the other six churches, it was likely established during Paul's ministry at Ephesus (Acts 19:10).
- d. Paul did not found it, since when he wrote Colossians some years later he still had not visited Laodicea (Col. 2:1).
- e. Since Paul's coworker Epaphras founded the church in nearby Colossae (Col. 1:6–7), he may well have founded the Laodicean church as well.
- f. Some have suggested that Archippus, Philemon's son (Philem. 2), was its pastor (cf. Col. 4:17), since the fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions names Archippus as the bishop of Laodicea (vii, 46).

### IV. The City.

- a. Laodicea (3:14b)
- b. Was about one hundred miles east of Ephesus, Laodicea was the southeastern most of the seven cities, about forty miles from Philadelphia.
- c. Its sister cities were Colossae, about ten miles to the east, and Hierapolis, about six miles to the north.
- d. Located on a plateau several hundred feet high, Laodicea was geographically nearly impregnable.



- e. Its vulnerability to attack was due to the fact that it had to pipe in its water from several miles away through aqueducts that could easily be blocked or diverted by besieging forces.
- f. Laodicea was founded by the (se-lose-id) Seleucid ruler (ann-tie-a-cus)Antiochus II and named after his first wife.
  - i. Since he divorced her in 253 b.c., the city was most likely founded before that date.
  - ii. Though its original settlers were largely from Syria, a significant number of Jews also settled there.
  - iii. A local governor once forbade the Jews from sending the temple tax to Jerusalem.
  - iv. When they attempted to do so in spite of the prohibition, he confiscated the gold they intended for that tax.
  - v. From the amount of the seized shipment, it has been calculated that 7,500 Jewish men lived in Laodicea; there would have been several thousand more women and children.
- g. With the coming of the Pax Romana (peace under Rome's rule), Laodicea prospered.
- h. It was strategically located at the junction of two important roads: the east-west road leading from Ephesus into the interior, and the north-south road from Pergamum to the Mediterranean Sea.
- i. That location made it an important commercial city.
  - i. That the first-century b.c. Roman statesman and philosopher Cicero cashed his letters of credit

there reveals Laodicea to have been a strategic banking center.

- ii. So wealthy did Laodicea become that it paid for its own reconstruction after a devastating earthquake in a. d. 60, rejecting offers of financial aid from Rome.
- j. The city was also famous for the soft, black wool it produced.
  - i. The wool was made into clothes and woven into carpets, both much sought after.
  - ii. Laodicea was also an important center of ancient medicine.
  - iii. They even had a medical school
  - iv. That school was most famous for an eye salve that it had developed, which was exported all over the Greco-Roman world.
- k. All three industries, finance, wool, and the production of eye salve, come into play in this letter to the Laodicean church.

## V. The Concern.

- a. ““I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. , (3:15–17)
- b. Since there was nothing for which to commend this unregenerate church, Christ launched directly into His concerns.

- c. Deeds always reveal people's true spiritual state, as indicated by the Lord's words "you will know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16; cf. Rom. 2:6–8).
- d. Though salvation is wholly by God's grace through faith alone, deeds confirm or deny the presence of genuine salvation (James 2:14ff.).
- e. The omniscient Lord Jesus Christ knew the Laodiceans' deeds and that they indicated an unregenerate church.
- f. Christ rebuked them for being neither cold nor hot but lukewarm.
  - i. His metaphorical language is drawn from Laodicea's water supply.
  - ii. Because it traveled several miles through an underground aqueduct before reaching the city, the water arrived foul, dirty, and lukewarm.
  - iii. It was not hot enough to relax and restore, like the hot springs at Hierapolis.
  - iv. Nor was it cold and refreshing, like the stream water at Colossae.
  - v. Laodicea's lukewarm water was in a useless condition.
- g. Comparing its spiritual state to the city's foul, lukewarm water, Christ gave the Laodicean church a powerful, shocking rebuke: because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.
- h. Some churches make the Lord weep, others make Him angry; the Laodicean church made Him sick.
  - i. Hot people are those who are spiritually alive and possess the fervency of a transformed life.

- ii. The spiritually cold, on the other hand, are best understood as those who reject Jesus Christ.
- iii. The gospel leaves them unmoved; it evokes in them no spiritual response.
- iv. They have no interest in Christ, His Word, or His church.
- v. And they make no pretense about it; they are not hypocrites.
- i. The lukewarm fit into neither category.
  - i. They are not genuinely saved, yet they do not openly reject the gospel.
  - ii. They attend church and claim to know the Lord. Like the Pharisees, they are content to practice a self-righteous religion; they are hypocrites playing games.
  - iii. The Lord Jesus Christ described such people in Matthew 7:22–23: “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.”
  - iv. The lukewarm are like the unbelieving Jews of whom Paul lamented, “For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge” (Rom. 10:2). They are those who “[hold] to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power” (2 Tim. 3:5).
- j. Such obnoxious hypocrisy nauseates Christ.

- i. These smug, self-righteous hypocrites are far more difficult to reach with the gospel than cold-hearted rejecters.
  - ii. The latter may at least be shown that they are lost.
  - iii. But those who self-righteously think that they are saved are often protective of their religious feelings and unwilling to recognize their real condition.
  - iv. They are not cold enough to feel the bitter sting of their sin.
  - v. Consequently, there is no one further from the truth than the one who makes an idle profession but never experiences genuine saving faith.
  - vi. No one is harder to reach for Christ than a false Christian.
  - vii. Jesus' paralleling critique of the self-righteous, self-deceived Pharisees and Sadducees was that "the tax collectors and prostitutes [would] get into the kingdom of God before [them]" (Matt. 21:31).
- k. Unfortunately, such lukewarm churches are common today, making the letter to the Laodiceans especially relevant.
- l. The Laodiceans' lukewarmness was compounded by their self-deception.
  - i. Christ rebuked them for their disastrously inaccurate self-assessment: Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind

- and naked. Their deeds gave the lie to their empty words. “Not everyone who says to Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven,” declared Jesus, “but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter” (Matt. 7:21).
- ii. Like the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16–22), they were deceived about their actual spiritual condition.
  - m. As I said earlier, Laodicea was a very wealthy city.
    - i. That wealth gave the members of its church a false sense of security as they imagined that their spiritual wealth mirrored their city’s material wealth.
    - ii. They were rich in spiritual pride but bankrupt in saving grace.
    - iii. Believing they were to be envied, they were in fact to be pitied.

## VI. The Command.

- a. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup> Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. (3:18–20)
- b. The Lord Jesus Christ could have instantly judged and destroyed this church filled with unredeemed hypocrites.

- i. Instead, He graciously offered them genuine salvation.
  - ii. Christ's threefold appeal played on the three features the city of Laodicea was most noted for and proud of: its wealth, wool industry, and production of eye salve.
  - iii. Christ offered them spiritual gold, spiritual clothes, and spiritual sight.
- c. The Lord, of course, did not teach that salvation may be earned by good works; lost sinners have nothing with which to buy salvation (Isa. 64:5–6).
  - i. The buying here is the same as that of the invitation to salvation in Isaiah 55:1: "Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."
  - ii. All sinners have to offer is their wretched, lost condition. In exchange for that, Christ offers His righteousness to those who truly repent.
- d. Christ advised the Laodiceans to buy from Him three things, all of which symbolize true redemption.
- e. First, they needed to purchase gold refined by fire so that they might become rich.
  - i. They needed gold that was free of impurities, representing the priceless riches of true salvation.
  - ii. Peter wrote of a "faith ... more precious than gold" (1 Pet. 1:7), while Paul defined saving faith as "rich in good works," having the "treasure of a good foundation for the future" (1 Tim. 6:18–19).

- iii. Christ offered the Laodiceans a pure, true salvation that would bring them into a real relationship with Him.
- f. Second, Christ advised them to buy white garments so that they might clothe themselves, and that the shame of their nakedness would not be revealed.
  - i. Laodicea's famed black wool symbolized the filthy, sinful garments with which the unregenerate are clothed (Isa. 64:6; Zech. 3:3–4).
  - ii. In contrast, God clothes the redeemed with white garments (3:4–5; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13–14; cf. Isa. 61:10), symbolizing the righteous deeds that always accompany genuine saving faith (19:8).
- g. Finally, Christ offered them eye salve to anoint their eyes so that they might see.
  - i. Though they prided themselves on their allegedly superior spiritual knowledge, the Laodiceans were in fact spiritually stone blind.
  - ii. Blindness represents lack of understanding and knowledge of spiritual truth (cf. Matt. 15:14; 23:16–17, 19, 24, 26; Luke 6:39; John 9:40–41; 12:40; Rom. 2:19; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 2:11).
  - iii. Like all unregenerate people, the Laodiceans desperately needed Christ to “open their eyes so that they [might] turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in [Him]” (Acts 26:18; cf. 1 Pet. 2:9).
- h. Some argue that the language of Christ's direct appeal to the Laodiceans in verse 19, those whom I love, I



reprove and discipline, indicates that they were believers.

- i. Verses 18 and 20, however, seem better suited to indicate that they were unregenerate, desperately in need of the gold of true spiritual riches, the garments of true righteousness, and the eye salve that brings true spiritual understanding (v. 18).
- j. Christ has a unique and special love for His elect.
  - i. Yet, such passages as Mark 10:21 and John 3:16 reveal that He also loves the unredeemed.
  - ii. Because the Laodiceans outwardly identified with Christ's church and His kingdom, they were in the sphere of His concern.
  - iii. To reprove means to expose and convict.
  - iv. It is a general term for God's dealings with sinners (cf. John 3:18–20; 16:8; 1 Cor. 14:24; Titus 1:9; Jude 15).
- k. Discipline refers to punishment (cf. Luke 23:16, 22) and is used of God's convicting of unbelievers (2 Tim. 2:25).
  - i. So the terminology of verse 19 does not demand that Christ be referring to believers.
  - ii. The Lord compassionately, tenderly called those in this unregenerate church to come to saving faith, lest He convict and judge them (cf. Ezek. 18:30–32; 33:11).
- l. But in order for the Laodiceans to be saved, they would have to be zealous and repent.
  - i. That is tantamount to the attitude of mourning over sin and hungering and thirsting for righteousness of which Jesus spoke (Matt. 5:4, 6).

- ii. While repentance is not a work that saves, the New Testament call to salvation always includes it (e.g., Matt. 3:2, 8; 4:17; Mark 6:12; Luke 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10; 2 Tim. 2:25; 2 Pet. 3:9).
  - iii. In repentance, the sinner turns from his sin to serve God (1 Thess. 1:9).
- m. Repentance means that you realize that you are a guilty, vile sinner in the presence of God, that you deserve the wrath and punishment of God, that you are hell-bound.
  - i. It means that you begin to realize that this thing called sin is in you, that you long to get rid of it, and that you turn your back on it in every shape and form.
  - ii. You renounce the world whatever the cost, the world in its mind and outlook as well as its practice, and you deny yourself, and take up the cross and go after Christ. (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], 2:248)
- n. The message to this lost church, as it is to all the unsaved, is to zealously pursue the “repentance that leads to life” (Acts 11:18).
- o. The Lord Jesus Christ followed the call to repentance in verse 19 with a tender, gracious invitation in verse 20.
  - i. The apostate Laodicean church could only have expected Christ to come in judgment.

- ii. But the startling reality, introduced by the arresting word behold, was that Christ stood at the door of the Laodicean church and knocked; if anyone in the church would hear His voice and open the door, He would come in to him and dine with him, and he with Christ.
- p. Though this verse has been used in countless tracts and evangelistic messages to depict Christ's knocking on the door of the sinner's heart, it is broader than that.
  - i. The door on which Christ is knocking is not the door to a single human heart, but to the Laodicean church.
  - ii. Christ was outside this apostate church and wanted to come in—something that could only happen if the people repented.
- q. The invitation is, first of all, a personal one, since salvation is individual.
  - i. But He is knocking on the door of the church, calling the many to saving faith, so that He may enter the church.
  - ii. If one person (anyone) opened the door by repentance and faith, Christ would enter that church through that individual.
  - iii. The picture of Christ outside the Laodicean church seeking entrance strongly implies that, unlike Sardis, there were no believers there at all.
- r. Christ's offer to dine with the repentant church speaks of fellowship, communion, and intimacy.
  - i. Sharing a meal in ancient times symbolized the union of people in loving fellowship.

- ii. Believers will dine with Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:9), and in the millennial kingdom (Luke 22:16, 29–30).
- iii. Dine is from *deipneō*, which refers to the evening meal, the last meal of the day (cf. Luke 17:8; 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25, where the underlying Greek is rendered “sup,” “supper,” and “supped,” respectively).
- iv. The Lord Jesus Christ urged them to repent and have fellowship with Him before the night of judgment fell and it was too late forever.

## VII. The Counsel.

- a. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (3:21–22)
- b. The wonderful promise to he who overcomes (all believers; 2:7, 11, 26; 3:5, 12; 1 John 5:5) is that Christ will grant to him to sit down with Him on His throne, as He also overcame and sat down with the Father on His throne.
- c. To enjoy fellowship with Christ in the kingdom and throughout eternity is sufficient blessing beyond all comprehension.
- d. But Christ offers more, promising to seat believers on the throne He shares with the Father (cf. Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:29–30).
- e. That symbolizes the truth that we will reign with Him (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10; 20:6; cf. 1 Cor. 6:3).

- i. The right to sit with Christ on His heavenly throne is but one of the many promises made to overcomers in the letters to the seven churches.
- f. Overcomers are also promised the privilege of eating from the tree of life (2:7), the crown of life (2:10), protection from the second death (2:11), the hidden manna (2:17), a white stone with a new name written on it (2:17), authority to rule the nations (2:26–27), the morning star (2:28), white garments, symbolizing purity and holiness (3:5), the honor of having Christ confess their names before God the Father and the holy angels in heaven (3:5), to be made a pillar in God’s temple (3:12), and to have written on them the name of God, of the new Jerusalem, and of Christ (3:12).
- g. As did the other six letters, the letter to the Laodiceans closed with Christ’s exhortation, He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- h. The message to the apostate church is obvious: repent, and open up to Christ before the night of judgment falls.
- i. The implication for true believers is that, like Christ, we must compassionately call those in the apostate church to repent and receive salvation in Jesus Christ (cf. Jude 23).

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<sup>1</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *Revelation 1–11*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 130–143.