

The Lukewarm Church

Revelation 3:14-22

Revelation 3:14-22 (NKJV)

¹⁴“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

¹⁵“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

¹⁶So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

¹⁷Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

¹⁸I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

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

²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

²²“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’ ”

The book of Revelation is divided into three parts. A three-part outline is given in Revelation 1:19. It refers to "the things which thou [the Apostle John] hast seen", which refers to chapter 1 and the vision of Christ; "the things which are", which refers to chapters 2--3 and the churches existing in the present; and "the things which shall be hereafter", which begins in chapter 4 and goes to the end of the book: the time of the Tribulation, the Kingdom, and the eternal state.

The study of the seven letters has been important because they reveal what Christ thinks about the church--what He thinks about it today, what He thinks about it in the day that the letters were written, and what He thinks about different types of Christians in any age. Revelation 2--3 could well be titled, "What Christ Thinks About the Church."

As we study the last letter to the church located in Laodicea, let me remind you of the significance of these letters. First, each one of the churches was an actual church existing in an actual city around +A.D. 95. Second, the seven churches represent different types of churches. For example, one was dead; some churches are dead. One was a suffering church; some believers suffer for Christ. Third, they typify different types of churches throughout history.

Of the seven churches, Laodicea was the worst. Christ doesn't have one good thing to say about it. If there were any true believers there, Christ doesn't say anything about them.

The church at Philadelphia--the true, faithful church--was promised that it would be kept from the hour of temptation. The other word for temptation is trial. That meant that the true church would not go through the Tribulation period. However, no such promise is made to the church at Laodicea. It will go through the Tribulation because it isn't part of the church. The people thought they were a church, but they weren't. Many places today are labeled "church," but they are not a part of Christ's church. As a result, Christ does not spare any condemnation for the church at Laodicea. It had no redeeming feature.

This is a message to the false, unsaved church. I can't understand why people would want to waste their time with Christianity when they don't have the reality behind it. There is only one possible answer--Satan has made religion a substitute for reality.

I. THE CORRESPONDENT

14“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

In each of the seven letters, the introduction begins with the great titles of Jesus Christ. In this letter, Christ is introduced by three titles. These titles refer to the degenerate condition of the Laodicean church. First of all, Christ introduces Himself as ...

A. "... the Amen ..."

1. THE MEANING OF AMEN

The word amen is used often in Scripture. It is frequently translated verily in the gospels when it appears at the beginning of a sentence. When it is used at the end of a sentence it means "so be it." In other words, "God said it and that settles it. The matter can't be changed. So be it." The word amen is an affirmation of the truth of a statement. When Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you ...," He was making a guarantee.

a. The Affirmation of Christ

Why does Christ call Himself "the Amen"? Because every promise that God made in the Old Testament, Christ guaranteed by His first coming, and will guarantee when He comes again.

1) The Abrahamic Covenant

God told Abraham, "... in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). How? From Abraham's seed came the Messiah who would bless all the families of the earth. When Christ came, He fulfilled the Abrahamic covenant--and put an amen at the end of it!

2) The Davidic Throne

God promised David a throne on which one of His sons would reign. And He promised Israel a kingdom. When Christ came, He said, "I will settle that promise. I have come to fulfill it."

Every promise that God made to Israel was fulfilled--or will be fulfilled--in Christ.

b. **The Affirmation of Paul**

In 2 Corinthians 1:20 Paul says,

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ For all the promises of God in Him [Christ] *are* Yes, and in Him [Christ] Amen, to the glory of God through us.

Christ became the "yes" and the "amen" to all the promises of God. Salvation was promised to Israel, then Christ came and said, "I'm bringing it to you." God promised Israel a kingdom, then Christ came and said, "Here it is!" He is the guarantee of all God's promises. Paul said, "... if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ..." (1 Cor. 15:17). The promises mean nothing if Christ isn't who He claims to be.

2. THE MESSAGE TO APOSTATES

Christ is saying, "I am the Amen. God made a promise; now I have sealed it. I am the proof that what God says is true." That is a tremendous message for an apostate church because it is constantly denying the Word of God and the truth of the promises in the Old Testament.

Christ says to the apostate church, "Wake up to the fact that what God says is true. I am living proof of it." The writer of Hebrews said,

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

² has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

The hardest thing to convince a liberal apostate church of today is that the Word of God is true.

B. **"... the faithful and true witness ..."**

The people of Laodicea wouldn't know anything about that because they were phonies. They were false and faithless. In contrast, Christ is the true witness. The false Christian says, "I'm a Christian; I believe that Christ was a wonderful example. But I don't believe He was God." Paul says, "... If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:9). God does not tolerate any emasculation of the personality and deity of Jesus Christ. He is the faithful and true witness. He witnesses to God about man, and witnesses to man about God. Jesus Christ sees everything that ever happens.

C. "... the beginning of the creation of God."

The Jehovah's Witnesses use that title to defend the fact that Christ was created by God. It does not mean that at all. But what does Christ mean when He says that He is "... the beginning of the creation of God"?

The English text is ambiguous here because the word for "beginning" is the Greek word arche. It actually means, "the first cause," or "the origin." This phrase could be read, "Christ is the origin of the creation of God." It doesn't mean that He was created by God; it means that He brought the creation of God into being. John 1:3 says, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Colossians 1:16 says, "... all things were created by Him, and for Him." Christ is the source of everything.

The church at Laodicea seemed to have everything. Laodicea was a rich city. The people were self-righteous in their independence. Christ is saying, "I am responsible for everything you have." They prided themselves on the beauty of their fashions. They prided themselves on their gold. But they possessed those things only because God had made them. Christ is saying to the apostate church, "Don't think that you're independent of Me. I am the originator of all creation."

When Christ says, "I am the Amen, the faithful and true witness, and the beginning of the creation of God," He is telling the liberal church--the apostates who claim to be religious and know nothing of truth--exactly who He is.

II. THE CITY (v. 14)

What kind of city was Laodicea?

A. A Center of Trade

Laodicea was the chief city in Phrygia. It was situated in the Lycus valley about forty-five miles directly southeast of Philadelphia. It was an important city because it was located at the crossroads of three main highways. Trade columns marched along those highways. It was founded about 250 B.C. by Antiochus II and named after his wife, Laodicea.

B. A Center of Banking

Laodicea became a wealthy banking and financial center. In fact, it was the most famous banking center in that part of the world.

C. A Center of Fashion

The city developed a certain type of wool that was raven-black and glossy. Laodicea became famous for the sale of this wool, and it made the city very wealthy. The people became very fashion-conscious.

D. A Center of Medicine

E. A Center of Jewish Population

Interestingly enough, Laodicea had a very large Jewish population. Many Jews had migrated there and developed businesses that made them a great deal of money.

A Unique Census

You say, "How do you know there were many Jews in Laodicea?" Every year the Jews had to pay a temple tax. At Passover time, every Jew twenty-one years and older paid a half a shekel to the Temple. Even the Jews who had immigrated to different places still had to pay. They weren't about to take a boat trip to Jerusalem since that would cost them fifteen times more than the half shekel it took to pay the tax. History records that the Jews in Laodicea always paid their temple tax in gold. Consequently, over a period of years, the amount of gold in the city diminished. That shows that there were many Jews in the city.

Laodicea was similar to other cities in the region based on its pagan worship and idolatry.

III. THE CHURCH (v. 14)

The name "Laodicea" means "the rule of the people" and suggests a democratic church that no longer follows spiritual leaders or the authority of the Word of God. The church is lukewarm, a condition that comes from mixing hot and cold. It is a church with truth that has been diluted with error. The tragedy is that this church is "rich" and knows not that it is poor, pitiful, blind, and naked. What a picture of the apostate church of today, with its prestige, wealth, and political power, yet all the while spiritually poor.

The city of Laodicea was known for its wool, wealth, and medicine, so Christ used those images in v. 18. He wanted to give them the true riches of the Word of God, the garments of grace, and the ability to see spiritual things. There was something wrong with their values, their vesture, and their vision. If they would not repent, He would chasten them in love.

A. Its Foundation

We don't know how the church at Laodicea was founded. We don't know who founded it, why it was founded, or what it was like when it was founded. We do know from the letter that it was pretty far gone. Paul knew of some Christians in the church. For example:

Colossians 2:1 (NKJV)

¹ For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in **Laodicea**, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,

Colossians 4:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Greet the brethren who are in **Laodicea**, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his house.

B. Its Failure

Evidently, from the time when Paul wrote Colossians (around +A.D. 61) until +A.D. 95, the church had rotted. Whatever true believers had been there had since vanished. The church at Laodicea had been corrupted by the time John penned the letter from Christ. **It is a perfect illustration of every organized church that has no reality.** The church in Sardis was dead, but a few members were still alive. The church in Thyatira was compromising, sinful, and idolatrous, but some of the people had demonstrated love and sound doctrine. But there was nothing good to be said about anyone in Laodicea. The tares had totally taken over the wheat (Mt. 13:36- 43). If any good did exist there, it was so insignificant that it wasn't even mentioned.

The church at Laodicea is a graphic picture of the church in the Tribulation, where there will be no true believers, only false. We are beginning to see the preparation for those days taking place right now. Churches exist, move ahead, and raise money; yet there isn't the slightest bit of concern about Jesus Christ. They talk about Him, but they don't know Him. They operate like churches, but they aren't.

The Progression Towards Christ's Return

The progression of the letters takes us up to the coming of Christ. For example:

1. EPHESUS -- "... or else I will come unto thee quickly ..." (Rev. 2:5).
2. PERGAMOS -- "... or else I will come unto thee quickly ..." (Rev. 2:16).
3. THYATIRA -- "... hold fast till I come" (Rev. 2:25).
4. SARDIS -- "... I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come ..." (Rev. 3:3).
5. PHILADELPHIA -- "... I come quickly ..." (Rev. 3:11).
6. LAODICEA -- "... I stand at the door, and knock ..." (Rev. 3:20).

That is the progress of the church until the time when Christ returns.

IV. THE COMMENDATION

There is none for this church

The next point in our outline would normally be the commendation, but since there isn't one, let's examine:

V. THE CONDEMNATION (vv. 15-17)

¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

No word of commendation was extended to the Laodicean church. They were pictured as utterly repulsive to Christ because they were **lukewarm**. This was addressed to the church and also to the messenger or the pastor whom some believe was Archippus (Col. 4:17). It is improbable, however, that Archippus, if he had been the pastor of the church, was still living. In referring to the church as “lukewarm” Christ had in mind that this was its permanent situation. In their feasts as well as in their religious sacrifices people in the ancient world customarily drank what was either hot or cold—never lukewarm. This rebuke would have been especially meaningful to this church, for water was piped to the city from Hierapolis, a few miles north. By the time the water reached Laodicea, it was lukewarm!

Their being lukewarm spiritually was evidenced by their being content with their material **wealth** and their being unaware of their spiritual poverty. Christ used strong words to describe them: **wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked**.

a. **“... wretched ...”**

The word “wretched” means “vile and sinful.” Paul uses it in Romans 7:24 when he says, “Oh, wretched man that I am!...”

b. **“... miserable ...”**

The word “miserable” means “pitiful.” The Laodiceans deserved pity, not praise. They were a sad, tragic mockery of the truth.

c. **“... poor ...”**

The word used for “poor” here (Gk. ptochos = “beggar”) is the most extreme word for poverty in the Greek language. The Laodiceans claimed to be rich and fashionable, but they were beggars.

d. **“... blind ...”**

How ironic that Christ would call them blind. They had a medical school in Laodicia that specialized in a special eye salve for eye problems.

e. **"... naked."**

This too I find ironic. If the people of Laodicea were very fashion oriented because of the wool that they sold, then clothes would be no problem. However Christ called them naked. I don't know if you have pick up on this or not but it seems just like the church in Sardis, the church in Laodicea thought they were one thing, but not. How sad it is for a church to think that they are one thing, but under close examination from Christ, who has the eyes of fire and the feet of bronze, he sees the truth and reality of the church.

VI. THE COMMAND (vv. 18-20)

|| ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.
|| ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.
|| ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

A. Appeals from Christ (v. 18)

Christ makes the command in the way of an appeal because He's not talking to Christians.

1. REGARDING RICHES (v. 18a)

|| ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich;

The Laodiceans thought they were rich, but Christ tells them that they are poor and that He can make them rich.

a. **True Riches**

Throughout the Bible, we are told of the riches that we have in Christ Jesus. True riches belong to Him. Even though a man might have everything that this world can offer, if he does not have Jesus Christ, he has nothing. Matthew 16:26 says, "For what does a man profit, if he gains the whole world, and yet loses his soul?..." True riches come from Christ. He says, "I counsel you to buy the real thing."

b. Divine Righteousness

What does Christ mean when He says, "I counsel you to buy from Me **gold** refined in the fire, that you may be rich..."

In the Bible, gold often symbolizes divine righteousness, which only comes from Christ. Can a man establish his own righteousness before God? No. The only thing that allows us to be right before God is when He gives us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. When we receive Christ by faith, God imputes righteousness to us (Rom. 3:22). So Christ says, "Why don't you buy true righteousness?"

With all of their money, the one thing the Laodiceans needed, they couldn't buy. Righteousness can't be bought; only faith can apprehend it. If the Laodiceans wanted to be rich, they needed divine, positional righteousness.

2. REGARDING CLOTHING (v. 18b)

||¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold ... and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed...

a. The Clothing of Nakedness

The Laodiceans were blessed with a great clothing industry. They were an extremely fashion-conscious society. Special garments were made in the city of Laodicea that were world famous. The Laodiceans often flaunted their clothing. But Christ says, "You may have all the clothing in the world, but you are naked. You may have all the money in the world, but you are poor." They were poor because they didn't have divine righteousness. They were naked because they didn't have the pure garments that God gives.

b. The Clothing of Righteousness

You say, "What is the white raiment?" The gold represents positional righteousness; the white raiment represents righteous deeds (practical righteousness). Revelation 19:8 says, "And to her [the church] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints." The "righteousnesses" are the righteous deeds of the saints. First, the gold refers to their positional righteousness; second, the white garments refers to their righteous deeds.

Your position and practice are important elements in the Bible. Christ wanted the Laodiceans to put on His righteousness and then do righteous deeds. You can't put on the white raiment of righteous deeds until you acquire the gold of righteousness from Christ. You get divine righteousness by faith in Christ. Then put on the garments of righteous deeds.

3. REGARDING SIGHT (v. 18c)

||¹⁸ ... and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

a. Anointing with the Salve of Man

In the city of Laodicea, a medical school was located in the temple of Asclepius. A tablet called tephra Phrygia was made in the medical school. It became very famous throughout that part of the Roman Empire. You say, "What did they do with it?" The tablet would be crushed into a fine grain and mixed with a small amount of water. Then it would be used as an eye salve for any type of eye ailment.

b. Anointing with the Truth of God

Jesus is saying, "You may think that you are anointing your eyes with tephra Phrygia, but you are blind. If you want to anoint yourself so that you may see, forget the tablet and anoint yourself with the truth of God." Only Jesus Christ, the Great Physician, can apply spiritual salve to blind spiritual eyes and make them see.

Jesus says to the Laodiceans, "You think you're rich, but you're poor. I can make you rich with divine righteousness. You think you're fashionable, but you're naked. I can clothe you in righteous deeds. You think you can see well, but you're blind. I can open your eyes." The Great Physician, Jesus Christ, can touch them and make them see. In each of those cases, Christ is saying, "Come to Me." Laodicea was a lost, hell-bound church. And there are many of them that exist today. There are few passages in all the Bible that are more searching, condemning, and pointed than the message to Laodicea. No message in the Bible is more pertinent to the church today.

B. Admonishment from Christ (v. 19)

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent."

1. REBUKING SIN

You say, "Is He talking about believers?" No. You say, "Do you mean that He chastens unbelievers?" You better believe He does! I don't care if you are a believer or an unbeliever: When you sin, God's wrath falls on you (Gal. 6:17). In verse 19, Christ is literally rebuking, chastening, and punishing the church at Laodicea.

2. REQUESTING REPENTANCE

Christ says, "... be zealous, therefore, and repent." The Greek word for "repent" is metanoia. It indicates that we are to turn around one hundred and eighty degrees from sin to God.

a. False Repentance

Some people repent only when they get caught. Then their repentance isn't the right kind of repentance--they are sorry only because they got caught. For example, they will say, "Everything is going wrong. I must turn to God." But when things start going right, they say, "Goodbye, God."

b. True Repentance

In 2 Corinthians 7:9-10 Paul says,

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.

¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

The world can be sorry for its sin, but that's not repentance. A repentant person says, "I'm sorry; I'm turning to God." So Christ says to the church at Laodicea, "Turn around." Salvation begins with repentance. It can't happen without it. Christianity does not make an appeal for you to jump on the Jesus bandwagon and have a happy life. There has to be repentance, or salvation isn't genuine.

C. Access to Christ (v. 20)

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

We often use these verses to lead lost people to Christ, but the basic application is to the believer. The Lord was outside the Laodicean church! He spoke to the individual—"if any man"—and not to the whole congregation. He appealed to a small remnant in Sardis (Rev. 3:4-5), and now He appeals to the individual. God can do great things in a church, even through one dedicated individual.

Christ was not impatient. "I have taken My stand" is the sense of the verb. He "knocks" through circumstances and He calls through His Word. For what is He appealing? Fellowship and communion, the people's desire to abide in Him. The Laodiceans were an independent church that had need of nothing, but they were not abiding in Christ and drawing their power from Him. They had a "successful program" but it was not fruit that comes from abiding in Christ (John 15:1-8).

Note that when we invite Him in, the supper room becomes a throne room! It is through communion with Christ that we find victory and become overcomers indeed.

The letters to the seven churches are God's X rays, given to us so that we might examine our own lives and ministries. Judgment is going to come to this world, but it first begins at God's house (1 Peter 4:17). In these letters we find encouragement as well as rebuke.

May the Lord help us to hear what the Spirit is saying *today* to the church, and to the individuals in the churches!

In the closing verses, we have what Scofield calls "the place and attitude of Christ at the end of the church age." He is outside the professing church, politely knocking and inviting individuals (no longer the mass of the people) to leave the apostate church in order to have fellowship with Him.¹

Trench comments:

Every man is lord of the house of his own heart; it is his fortress; he must open the gates of it. He has the mournful prerogative and privilege of refusing to open. But if he refuses, he is blindly at strife with his own blessedness, a miserable conqueror.¹¹

Verse 20 is often used as a Gospel invitation, and this application is fine. But the basic interpretation is that Christ stands outside the door of the lukewarm church. This church has wealth and power, but no Christ. He is even willing to come into the life of one person, if that person will but invite Him. How tragic that a church can become so lukewarm and proud that Christ has to leave and stand outside. They are totally indifferent toward Christ. He is left outside their plans and programs, and their hearts.

Just as these churches existed in John's day, so they all exist today. We have busy churches that have left their first love (Ephesus) that often end up as churches that are lukewarm toward Christ (Laodicea). False doctrine begins in a small way, but then it grows and infects the whole assembly. Yet, there is a remnant of true believers (the overcomers) in each church who are responsible to be faithful to Christ until He returns.

It has been pointed out by Bible students that the promises to the overcomers in these chapters resemble OT history: the tree of life in Eden, 2:7; man cast out of the Garden to die, 2:11; the manna of the wilderness, 2:17; the kingdom age of Israel, 2:26–27; the priestly ministry, 3:5; the temple, 3:12; and the glorious throne of Solomon, 3:21. It is as though Christ gathered up the history of Israel and applied it to His people today.

Note, finally, the importance of the Word of God to the churches. Seven times Christ calls the churches to hear what the Spirit is saying. When churches stop listening to the voice of the Spirit through the Word and start listening to the voices of false teachers, they begin to turn away from the truth. We must not deny the faith (2:23), even if it costs us our lives. We must keep His Word

¹MacDonald, William ; Farstad, Arthur: *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995, S. Re 3:20

¹¹(3:20) Richard Chevenix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, p. 225.

(3:8, 10) and not deny His name. Apart from the Word of God, there is no life or hope for the churches.

VI. THE COUNSEL (vv. 21-22)

||²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.
||²² “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’ ”

A. Reign with Christ (v. 21)

||²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

The overcomer is promised that he will share the glory of Christ’s **throne** and reign with Him over the millennial earth. Those who follow Him in humility, rejection, and suffering will also follow Him in glory.²

B. Regard the Counsel (v. 22)

||²² “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’ ”

Then for the last time, the hearer is solemnly advised to listen to the voice of **the Spirit**.

Whatever interpretation we take of the book of Revelation, it is undeniable that the church of Laodicea presents a vivid picture of the age in which we live. Luxury-living abounds on every hand while souls are dying for want of the gospel. Christians are wearing crowns instead of bearing a cross. We become more emotionally stirred over sports, politics, or television than we do over Christ. There is little sense of spiritual need, little longing for true revival. We give the best of our lives to the business world, then turn over the remnants of a wasted career to the Savior. We cater to our bodies which in a few short years will return to dust. We accumulate instead of forsake, lay up treasures on earth instead of in heaven. The general attitude is, “Nothing too good for the people of God. If I don’t pamper myself, who will? Let’s get ahead in the world and give our spare evenings to the Lord.” This is our condition on the eve of Christ’s Return.

²MacDonald, William ; Farstad, Arthur: *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995, S. Re 3:21

Focusing on the Facts

1. Why could Revelation 2--3 well be entitled, "What Christ Thinks About the Church"?
2. Describe the uses of the word amen in Scripture. What does amen mean?
3. Why does Jesus Christ call Himself "the Amen"? Explain.
4. Why is it appropriate for Christ to call Himself "the Amen" before an apostate church?
5. What does Christ mean when He calls Himself "the beginning of the creation of God"?
6. What kind of center was the city of Laodicea?
7. What is the first thing that Christ condemns the church at Laodicea for? (see Rev. 3:15-16)
8. What does "being lukewarm" mean?
9. What five words describe the real condition of the church at Laodicea? (see Rev. 3:17)
10. What three things does Christ ask the church at Laodicea to do? (see Rev. 3:18)
11. What does gold often symbolize in the Bible? Why is that significant in Christ's appeal to the Laodiceans?
12. What does white raiment represent in the Bible? Why did the Laodiceans need white raiment? (see Rev. 19:8)
13. Whom will Christ rebuke and chasten in Revelation 3:19?
14. Describe false repentance. Describe true repentance. (see 2 Cor. 7:9- 10)
15. What will Christ do if anyone hears Him knocking and opens up the door?
16. What does Christ give to the one who overcomes? (see Rev. 3:21)

Pondering the Principles

1. Jesus Christ says that He is "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14). Examine your Christian life. Why is it important for you that He is "the Amen"? Why is His ability to guarantee promises important for you? Why is it important that He is "the faithful and true witness"? Why is it important that He is "the beginning of the creation of God"? Thank Him for all that He is.

2. What role do finances play in your life? Do you find that you trust in your surplus to meet the needs that you have, or do you trust in God as your provider--no matter what amount you may have set aside? Where have your surplus finances come from? Based on that, whom should you depend on? Why is God's righteousness more important than your riches? Do you worry about how you appear before men, or how you appear to God (Jn. 12:43)? Are your deeds merely an outward act designed to attract the approval of your peers, or are they based on a desire to do righteous deeds that spring from the heart? What does God desire of you? Have you become blind to spiritual things, thinking that you know all you need to know, or do you daily search God's Word for instruction on how to live? Has knowledge puffed you up? Be honest in your analysis of these things. Confess and repent of things that are not pleasing to God. Commit yourself to depend on His riches, His clothing, and His insight.