

LAODICEA: LUKEWARM, PART 1 - Rv 3:14-17

040421P

INTRODUCTION

1. Laodicea: Rv 3. Historical & societal context of church in Laodicea.
2. Center of Roman rule - known for lavish living: banking; garment industry; medical center. Self-sufficient, well-clothed, famous eye-salve.
3. Yet home could be billeted & H2O was undrinkable & had to be piped in.
4. Rv 3:14-22

1st: The Address and the Author - v14

1. *to the angel of church* - on battlefield - threat from outside & inside.
2. Col 4:16 - maybe planted by Epaphras; now 30+ yrs old.
3. *The Amen* - 1:6, v7 - conclude prayer or benediction: affirmation
 - i. liturgical - vocalized in public worship - audibly confirm - 1C 14:16
 - ii. Jesus' teaching - *Truly, truly I say unto you*: underscore the truth
 - iii. *THE Amen* = Jesus as the Divine approbation of God's revealed truth.
- 04. *faithful & true witness* - [3:7]; 1:5 *faithful witness* - adds *true*. *Witness* is crucial term - legal - courtroom & testimony given to others.
 - i. John's words are *faithful & true* - Rv 21:5b; 22:6
 - ii. Pilate [Jn 18:38] - *what is truth?*
5. *the Beginning of the creation of God* - Rv 22:13. The beginning of the original or the new creation? Could argue for both.
 - i. If original creation: church needs to learn that wealth is common grace blessing - use it wisely [1T 6; Lk 16:9]
 - ii. If new creation: Jesus urges vigor of resurrection life of wh/ He is *the beginning - the author* [founder - ESV] & *finisher of our F* [Hb 12:2].
 - iii. Laodicea needs a new beginning w/ new life.

2nd: The Evaluation of the Spiritual Condition - v15a, v16a, v17

1. *I know your deeds* - entirety of our human acts [Hb 4:12]
2. Sober: no word of commendation. *The Amen* can't find anything in Laodicea about which He can say "Amen"!
3. *that you are neither cold nor hot* - allusion to Laodicean water
4. v17a - What Laodicea was saying & what Laodicea couldn't see.
 - i. OT allusion - sin of pride - Hos 12:8.
 - ii. Jesus quotes Laodicean's own words - a slogan, perhaps from Epictetus [50-135AD] Stoic philosopher. Is Laodicea more familiar w/ phrases from popular cultural figures than from Christ?
5. What Laodicea couldn't see - v17b
 - i. *have need of nothing* - pride [1T 6:17]. Money displaces Christ as basis for hope; self-sufficiency rather than grace [1C 4:7].
 - ii. v17b Christ tells them what they *do not know* - no insight; famous for eye-salve - but Xns cldn't see themselves clearly - Rm 12:3
 - iii. *wretched & miserable & poor & blind & naked*.
 - a. *wretched*:
 - b. *miserable*:
 - c. *poor*:

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- d. *blind*:
- e. *naked*:

Applic #1: We Must Guard Against the Love of Money

1. Problem: misplaced affections: love, faith, trust, hope: *lukewarm* - v19 *be zealous*. Uproot weeds: *worries & riches & pleasures of this life* [Lk 8:14].
2. Problem is not being wealthy, but being weedy. Not money but the *love of money* chokes. The currency of life: time; invested according to hope.
 - i. Rich Fool [Lk 12:15ff]
 - ii. Traits of apostasy - 2T 3:1-5 *lovers of self, money, pleasure rather than lovers of God* while *holding to a form of godliness* [religion].
3. As affluent people - we should be warned.

Applic #2: We Must See Ourselves From Jesus' Vantage Point

1. Jesus presses us against eternity as *the beginning of the creation of God*.
2. W/o Word of God, *you do not know*. Word is mirror [Jms 1:23-24] in wh/ we see self in relation to Christ & Kingdom. Jesus shows Laodicea's condition to call to repent [v19]. The Jesus who loves us calls us to repent.
3. To continue... Jesus will not let His people suffocate but calls us to deeper fellowship w/ Him & faithful witness for Him.