

# REVELATION

The Church at Laodicea:  
Respond Correctly to the  
Lord's Discipline

# Laodicea





Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 60.

*Roman historian Tacitus: “Laodicea arose from the ruins by the strength of her own resources and with no help from us.”*

# Laodicea



Laodicea received the harshest message of the seven. Nothing good is said about the church or any individuals within the church.

Revelation 3:19-20 says, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. 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.”

Christ gave a harsh message. But He reminded them that He loves them, and He disciplines them *because* He loves them.

Main Question: How do we respond to the Lord's discipline in our lives?

# 1. Christ revealed Himself as a genuine witness to the Laodiceans.

- ❖ The Laodiceans won't like or expect what Christ says, but He speaks the truth.
- ❖ Revelation 3:14: And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the **Amen**, the **faithful** and **true witness**, the **beginning** of God's creation.



# 1. Christ revealed Himself as a genuine witness to the Laodiceans.

- A. Christ is the Amen.
- B. Christ is the faithful witness.
- C. Christ is the true witness.
- D. Christ is the beginning of God's creation.
  - ❖ Christ began and sustains creation, so He has authority over it.

# 1. Christ revealed Himself as a genuine witness to the Laodiceans.

- ❖ Colossians 1:16-17: For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
- ❖ Colossians 4:16: And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.

## 2. Christ went directly to the failure of Laodicea.

A. Christ pointed to their poor water supply to show their spiritual condition.

❖ Revelation 3:15-16: I know your works:  
**you are neither cold nor hot.** **Would that you were either cold or hot!** So, because **you are lukewarm**, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

## 2. Christ went directly to the failure of Laodicea.

A. Christ pointed to their poor water supply to show their spiritual condition.

- ❖ They would understand this reference based on their water supply.
  - ❖ Hierapolis: hot water (good for medicine)
  - ❖ Colossae: cold water (good for drinking)
  - ❖ Laodicea: lukewarm water (good for nothing)
- ❖ They may call themselves Christians, but they are not living faithfully according to Ephesians 2:10.

## 2. Christ went directly to the failure of Laodicea.

B. Christ pointed out their self-sufficiency.

- ❖ The city was famous for being self-sufficient and not needing Rome's help.
- ❖ Likewise, the church thought it was self-sufficient.
- ❖ Revelation 3:17: For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

## 2. Christ went directly to the failure of Laodicea.

B. Christ pointed out their self-sufficiency.

- ❖ Christ knows their true condition. They think they are self-sufficient, but they desperately need God's grace and help.
- ❖ Romans 7:24-25: **Wretched man** that I am! **Who will deliver me** from this body of death? **Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!** So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

## 2. Christ went directly to the failure of Laodicea.

C. The church in Laodicea lacked discernment.

- ❖ Their bad condition of verse 17 was compounded by the fact that they didn't recognize it.
- ❖ Paul recognized his wretchedness and need for God; the Laodiceans were blind to their true condition.

## 2. Christ went directly to the failure of Laodicea.

D. We must heed this warning.

- ❖ We can grow content with where we are spiritually and not see the need for growth or service.
- ❖ Marshall Neal: Such self-deception is present in churches and in Christians today. We have just enough Christianity to ease our conscience and still our fears of judgment but not enough to keep us dissatisfied with ourselves and seeking to grow in the Christian life.



### 3. Look at Christ's response to this church.

A. Christ counseled them to find true spiritual growth.

❖ Revelation 3:18: 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.

❖ Isaiah 55:1-3: Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

### 3. Look at Christ's response to this church.

A. Christ counseled them to find true spiritual growth.

- ❖ Christ contrasted their physical wealth with the spiritual riches He provides.
  - ❖ They had a large banking industry: He offered them gold.
  - ❖ They were famous for black wool: He offered white garments.
  - ❖ They developed eye salve: He offered true spiritual sight.

### 3. Look at Christ's response to this church.

B. Christ reassured them of His love.

- ❖ Revelation 3:19: Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.
- ❖ Proverbs 3:12: For the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.

### 3. Look at Christ's response to this church.

- ❖ Hebrews 12:5-6: And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.
- ❖ God's discipline is for our good.
- ❖ God's discipline reminds us that we truly are His children.

### 3. Look at Christ's response to this church.

C. Christ pictured Himself as standing at the door.

- ❖ Revelation 3:20 says, “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.”
- ❖ In Song of Solomon 5, Solomon stood at the door and knocked.
- ❖ Despite their failure, Christ still offered them fellowship with Him.

# Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?

- How do we respond properly to the Lord's discipline?
- Revelation 3:19: Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so **be zealous** and **repent**.

# **Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?**

- If we have become lukewarm, we must be zealous for the things of God and repent of what has turned us from them.



# Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?

- If we genuinely are not lukewarm, we must remain zealous for the things of God so we do not slip into complacency.
- Titus 2:14: who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

NEXT TIME:  
REVELATION 4:1-7

- The Throne  
Room of Heaven