



## A Systematic Expository Study on the book of REVELATION

### **STUDY 13: CHRIST'S COUNSEL FOR A LUKEWARM CHURCH** **Revelation 3:14-22**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Amen, the Faithful and true Witness, called the church in Laodicea a lukewarm church. Christ first introduced Himself to establish His right and authority. As **"the Amen"** what He affirms is true and what He promises or threatens is certain. As **"the Amen"** He is characterized by sincerity and truth, hence He looks on lukewarmness, indifference, half-heartedness and self-deception with displeasure. The Amen, the Faithful, the true Witness will not approve or have pleasure in insincerity. He is a Witness for God and His truth and He can approve of nothing that the God of truth would not approve. Christ is also **"the beginning,** (the first cause, the originator, the author) **of the creation of God."** What knowledge, power, wisdom and authority He has! He knows all things and can do all things.

He diagnosed the spiritual sickness of the Laodicean church as lukewarmness and then prescribed the spiritual remedy, which would bring them back to spiritual health. Like Esau, they thought and affirmed that they had enough when they had neither **"the blessing of Abraham"** nor the approval of the Father. They were conceited and so said they were rich and had need of nothing while they were Christless, spiritually poor, wretched, miserable, blind and naked. **"For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful"** (Psalm 36:2).

#### **CHRIST'S PERCEPTION OF THE LUKEWARM**

Revelation 3:14-17; Hosea 10:2; 7:8,9; Numbers 32:11; Luke 9:57-62; Proverbs 14:14; Hebrews 5:11; John 15:2,6; Exodus 32:33; Luke 16:15; Titus 1:16; Isaiah 44:20.

Christ declares, **"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot...Thou art lukewarm."** The Lord spoke to them in a language they understood. Laodicea was not far from Colosse and Hierapolis. In the district of Hierapolis, there were hot mineral springs. The water from those springs was transported to Laodicea overland in conduits. By the time the water reached Laodicea, it was no longer hot, but lukewarm. Cold water was piped from Colosse, but it, too, was lukewarm by the time it arrived. It was nauseating and those who attempted to drink the water would spue it out.

Christ had nothing to commend in this church. In their lukewarm, nauseating condition they had lost everything worthy of praise. Their christian profession was flabby and anemic. They were not on fire for Christ. They had compromised their christian conviction and zeal and they felt comfortable and complacent. They boasted that they were rich but they were really poor in God's sight. The city of Laodicea was a wealthy banking centre, and the spirit of the market place had taken hold of their hearts. Proud and rich in straw that will be burnt up, they were destitute and poor in gold that cannot be burnt up. Although Christ threatened to vomit them out of His mouth, He offered them an opportunity to repent.

#### **CHRIST'S PRESCRIPTIONS TO THE LUKEWARM**

Revelation 3:18; Proverbs 23:23,26; Isaiah 55:1-7; Matthew 13:44-46; Psalm 19:7-10; 1 Peter 1:7; James 2:5; Psalm 132:9,16; Revelation 19:8; Ephesians 1:18; 3:8,9; Matthew 13:16.

As a doctor prescribes medicine for a sick human body, so the Great Physician prescribes remedy for this sick, anemic spiritual body. For their lukewarmness, Christ prescribes zeal and repentance. For their spiritual poverty, wretchedness and misery, He counselled them to buy from Him (not from the world) gold tried and refined in the fire, that they may be **"rich in faith"** and **"rich toward God."** For their spiritual nakedness, our Lord counselled them to get white raiment, the robe of righteousness from Him. For their spiritual blindness, Christ prescribed, **"eye-salve"** to be obtained from Him so that their spiritual eyes can be restored to clear vision to see eternal realities.

Gold here is emblematic of pure religion and undefiled before God - that which makes us truly rich before God. The white raiment refers to salvation and righteousness obtained through faith in Christ. The eye-salve represents the grace of God, received through Christ, which enables men who were blind to their spiritual condition and blind to the love of God, to see clearly the love of God, the provision of the gospel, the loveliness of the person and work of Christ, the beauty of holiness and the glory of present and future relationship with Christ.

## **CHRIST'S PRECEPT AND PROMISE TO THE LUKEWARM**

Revelation 3:19-22; Acts 3:19-21; 17:30,31; 2 Chronicles 7:14; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Acts 2:37-42; Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:28-30.

**"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."** Christ's reproof for their lukewarmness was a proof of His love for them. As a father, in love, calls back disobedient children with rebukes and painful chastisement, there is no higher proof of Christ's love than when He rebukes us to bring us back to the highway of holiness, leading to heaven. **"Be zealous, therefore, and repent."** Be earnest and turn to God in true repentance. Lose no time, spare no labour, seek the Lord until you are free from complacency and you obtain God's grace, devotion and unquenchable fire of love for God in your soul. And then Christ stands at the door, knocking and seeking entrance into responsive hearts. For all who open their hearts' door, He will enter and establish fellowship with them.

**"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."** The overcomers will reign with Christ in His Kingdom.

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