

What If Jesus Wrote This Church A Letter?

Laodicea: The Lukewarm Church

(Revelation 3:14-22)

- Introduction:
1. Who do you think might be the hardest person to reach with the gospel?
 - a. The atheist who rejects God and his sovereignty over all creation?
 - b. Perhaps the zealous religionist who is steeped in error.
 - c. What about the postmodern agnostic who says we can't be sure about anything; that truth is relative?
 2. While these people certainly present challenges, I believe the most difficult person to convert may be the self-righteous, lukewarm, follower of Jesus.
 3. This precisely describes the Christians at Laodicea.
 4. I also believe that this "skin-deep" Christianity may best describe the church in the 21st century.

I. Background to the Text

- A. Laodicea was an important center of trade and commerce and was therefore wealthy and prosperous.
- B. When destroyed by an earthquake in AD 60, they rebuilt their own city without Roman help.
- C. They were also known for developing an eye salve sold throughout the world.
- D. Jesus refers to all three of these facts in his letter to them.

II. Jesus' Identification

- A. Amen, Faithful and True Witness (Rev. 3:14).
- B. The Beginning of the creation of God (Rev. 3:14).
 1. This does not suggest that Jesus was created.
 2. "Arche" can mean "start" or "source." Which makes sense with reference to Jesus? (John 1:1-3).

III. Jesus' Assessment

- A. Laodicea has the distinction of having Jesus say nothing good about them.
- B. They were lukewarm and found disgusting to God (Rev. 3:15-16).
- C. They were blind to their own spiritual condition (Rev. 3:17-18).
- D. Threatens discipline if they don't repent (Rev. 3:19).
- E. Offers hope (Rev. 3:20-21).

- Conclusion:
1. He who has an ear, let him hear!
 2. Let's learn from these letters Jesus sent to these churches and realize their application to us today.