

“Because you are lukewarm”
Letter to Laodicea
(Rev 3:15-19)



Truth Matters Church, Inc.

The Seven Churches of Revelation



Scripture Reading



Revelation 3:14-22 (NASB)

14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 16 So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, 18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

Scripture Reading



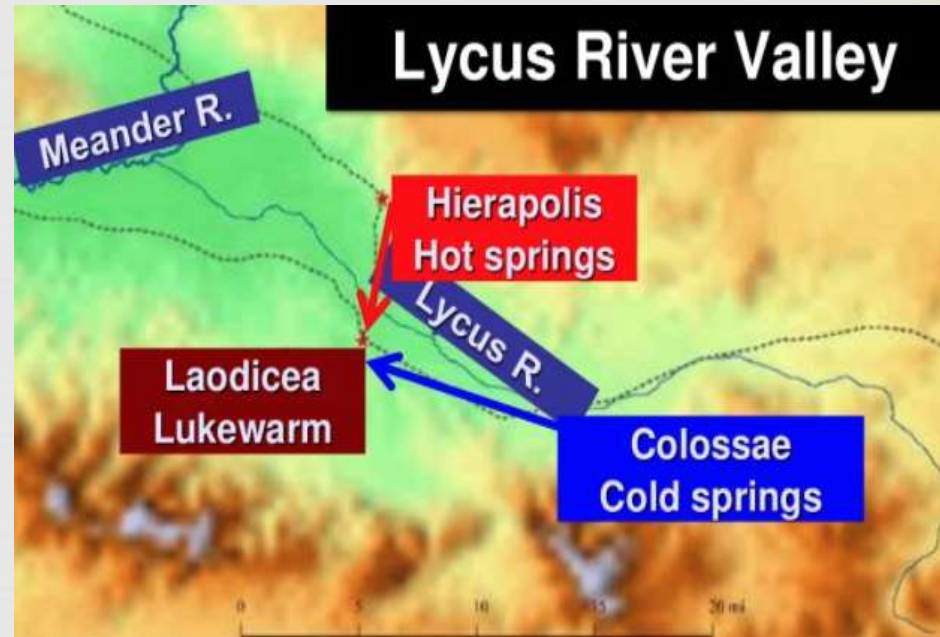
19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. 21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, 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.'"

Exposit 3:15



15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

- ☞ "I know (oida) your deeds" the Lord Jesus already completed His assessment of them in chapter 1
- ☞ He found they were "neither cold nor hot" a reference to their neighboring towns
 - ☞ Hot Springs of Hierapolis
 - ☞ Cold Springs of Colossae
- ☞ "neither cold nor hot" [more on this]



“neither cold nor hot”



- ❧ Contrary to some teachings out there, “cold” does NOT mean bad or something negative
- ❧ Some teach “hot” is good and “cold” is “bad” or something negative
- ❧ And that Jesus wished they were either fully good or fully bad
- ❧ This is NOT what is being communicated here
- ❧ To say or imply that our Lord wished or desired any ill will towards a man or woman created in His image and something negative towards anyone is contrary and foreign in Scripture
- ❧ If anything, He desires the opposite!
2 Peter 3:9 The Lord [Jesus] is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, **not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**

“neither cold nor hot”



- ✧ Thus, if our Lord wished for them to be “hot” zestos or “cold” psuchros , both must be for their ultimate good
- ✧ So what is being spoken of with this cold or hot reference?
- ✧ Won't spend too much time but lets look briefly at the Scripture

“neither cold nor hot”



- ❧ “cold” is psuchros and speaks of cold temperature
- ❧ It’s root word speaks of breathe, blow
 - ❧ When it’s cold outside, and you blow cold air (like smoke)
- ❧ psuchros only other usage in the NT is in Matthew:
Matthew 10:42
 - 42 And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of **cold (psuchros)** water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.”
 - ❧ The idea here is cold refreshing water
- ❧ CASE IN POINT: “cold” psuchros is not a bad thing, it’s a good thing!
- ❧ Same goes for “hot” ...

“neither cold nor hot”



- ❧ “hot” is zestos and also speaks of hot temperature, often boiling temperature
- ❧ There’s no other usage of zestos in the NT
- ❧ Some teach “hot” speaks of zeal or fervor, I will hit pause on that for now
- ❧ But from what we learned about “cold” psuchros is a good thing, so whatever our Lord was communicating by “hot” zestos is a contrast of a good thing too
- ❧ And if we can use Matthew 10 as an example, we can swap them out for comparative purposes only

“neither cold nor hot”



❧ **Cold** in a positive light:

Matthew 10:42

42 And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of **cold (psuchros)** water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.”

❧ The idea here is cold refreshing water

❧ **Hot** in a positive light:

And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of **hot (zestos) cocoa** to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.”

❧ The idea here is hot drink on a cold winter day

“neither cold nor hot”



- ☞ CASE IN POINT: “cold” properties is a good thing; “hot” properties is an equally good thing
- ☞ Our Lord desired for the Laodiceans to be either cold or hot, but found them neither and in between
- ☞ Next verse...

Exposit 3:16



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

- ❧ “you are” is in the present tense
- ❧ “lukewarm” as we learned in our intro by the time the hot springs of Hierapolis or the cold springs of Colossae made its way to Laodicea, the water was neither cold nor hot, collected mineral deposits and has a bad taste and even smell
- ❧ In other words, the Laodiceans have spit out lukewarm water from their own lips and can relate



Exposit 3:16



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

- ❧ "I will spit you out of My mouth" - is in the future tense - this is prophecy
- ❧ "I will" Jesus will personally do this
- ❧ "spit" is emeō, which means to vomit
- ❧ "My mouth" from the very mouth and lips of our Lord
- ❧ **PROPHETIC WARNING:** This is a warning of impending judgment!
- ❧ When will this occur?



Exposit 3:16



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

- ❧ "I will spit you out of My mouth" - is in the future tense - this is prophecy
- ❧ "I will" Jesus will personally do this
- ❧ "spit" is emeō, which means to vomit
- ❧ "My mouth" from the very mouth and lips of our Lord
- ❧ PROPHETIC WARNING: This is a warning of impending judgment!
- ❧ When will this occur? At the end of the age when they are raised and judged!



“My mouth”



- ❧ In Rev 1:16: out of Jesus's mouth came a "sharp two-edged sword"
- ❧ In Rev 2:12 (to Pergamum):
 - ❧ Jesus described Himself as the One who has the "sharp two-edged sword" (v.12)
 - ❧ And warned them to repent or else He is coming quickly and make war against them with "the sword of My mouth" (v. 16)
- ❧ Take these into consideration when we come to this letter to Laodicea
- ❧ When Jesus found them to be neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, He warns that He will spit vomit them out and will make war against them with the sword of His mouth come judgment!
- ❧ He tells us why this warning is so severe...

Exposit 3:17a



17a Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,”

- ❧ “Because you say” whose “you”? The Laodiceans
- ❧ “you say” – Jesus is quoting them
- ❧ As we learned in our intro, Laodicea was characterized as a city or town with riches and treasures
- ❧ The 1st century Laodiceans benefited from their economic wealth
- ❧ “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing”, these words came out of their own lips
 - ❧ It’s as if Jesus was a fly in the wall and listening in on their conversations
- ❧ NOTE: Could this have prophetic implications concerning the state of the church at the end of the age? Yes I suppose it could, but will leave it here for now

Exposit 3:17b



17b and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

❧ "you do not know (oida)" – they did not know their true state

❧ How Jesus viewed them in Rev 1

❧ "you are" present tense - by 95/96 AD, this was their present state

❧ "wretched" is talaipōros and means distressed or miserable, Paul uses this to describe his unredeemed condition:

Romans 7:24 Wretched (talaipōros) man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

❧ Paul equated this present unredeemed body in a distressed and miserable state

Exposit 3:17b



17b and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

✧ “miserable” is eleeinos which means most pitiful, most to be pitied

1 Corinthians 15:19 (concerning Christ’s resurrection) 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied (eleeinos).

✧ “poor (ptōchos) and blind (tuphos) and naked (gumos)” and speaks of a poor beggar who is destitute, blind and poorly clothed

✧ Just like Sardis had the appearance of being alive, but were dead

✧ So too did the Laodiceans have the appearance of being rich and wealthy, but were spiritually poor, destitute, blind and poorly clothed

✧ Because of their true spiritual state, Jesus gives them advice

Exposit 3:18



18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

☞ Lots going on in this verse

☞ “I advise you” – counsel directly from our Lord on how to become truly rich and wealthy, that is to

☞ “buy from Me gold refined by fire” [more on this]

☞ To clothe themselves with “white garments” [more on this]

☞ To conceal the “shame of your nakedness” [more on this]

☞ And also to buy from Jesus “eye salve to anoint your eyes [more on this]

“buy from Me gold refined by fire”



- ☞ “buy from Me” – did you know that Jesus was an entrepreneur and in the gold business? 😊
- ☞ Kidding aside, we know that Jesus is not in the business of selling actual physical gold
- ☞ In context, the Laodiceans were materially wealthy and claiming to be rich
- ☞ But after examining them, Jesus found them not recognizing their true spiritual state of being poor, pitiful, miserable, blind and naked
- ☞ Thus, Jesus is giving them counsel from heaven
- ☞ And that counsel is to “buy from [Him] gold refined by fire”
- ☞ I’d like to touch briefly on gold refined by fire

“gold refined by fire”



- ❧ The process to refine gold in ancient times was through fire or flames
- ❧ This is still is one of the common methods used to refine gold today
 - ❧ Especially when it comes to larger quantities of gold
- ❧ In ancient times, a craftsman would sit next to a hot fire with molten gold in a crucible being stirred and skimmed to remove impurities or dross that rose to the top of the molten metal making it easier for removal



“gold refined by fire”



- ❧ The flames or hot fire would reach temperatures of 1000 degrees Celsius making it a hazardous and dangerous job for the gold refiner
- ❧ The more impurities removed, the greater the value
 - ❧ 24k gold is nearly 100% pure gold with very few impurities
 - ❧ 18k is ~75% pure gold; 14k is ~58% pure gold; 10k is ~42%
- ❧ The more impurities removed, the greater its value and purity



“buy from Me gold refined by fire”



✧ With that in mind, to help us better understand what Jesus means by this statement, I'd also like to cross reference Peter:

1 Peter 1:6-9 (concerning our inheritance that is to come)

6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being **more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire**, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

✧ What I want to point out in this passage is gold is perishable even when refined by fire, whereas

✧ Our faith is NOT perishable even though tested by fire

“buy from Me gold refined by fire”



- ✧ Thus, when Jesus offered the Laodiceans to buy from Him gold refined by fire
- ✧ He's not speaking of physical gold that is perishable though the purest level of gold is achieved (24k)
- ✧ He's speaking of gold that is not from this earth and is imperishable
- ✧ What is greater in value and purity and is imperishable that surpasses that of perishable and pure gold? Hint: Peter just told us

“buy from Me gold refined by fire”



- ✧ Thus, when Jesus offered the Laodiceans to buy from Him gold refined by fire
- ✧ He's not speaking of physical gold that is perishable though the purest level of gold is achieved (24k)
- ✧ He's speaking of gold that is not from this earth and is imperishable
- ✧ What is greater in value and purity and is imperishable that surpasses that of perishable and pure gold? Hint: Peter just told us **- OUR FAITH!**
- ✧ TRANSLATION: When Jesus advised them to buy from Him gold refined by fire, Jesus was offering SAVING FAITH! That is accompanied with true riches and true blessings because it comes with all of God's promises!

“white garments”



- ❧ “white garments” are mentioned 3x in the NT and only in Revelation
- ❧ The other 2x mentions was earlier in this chapter in letter to Sardis (Rev 3:5) and in the next chapter concerning the attire of the 24 Elders (Rev 4:4)
- ❧ What is “white” in this book were: white hair like white wool, white stone, garments, white horses, white robes, a white cloud, white linen, and a Great White Throne
- ❧ White in short speaks of or associated with someone who is pure and righteous
- ❧ In the promise to Sardis, Jesus promised “He who overcomes will thus be closed in white garments”
- ❧ The 24 Elders were clothed in white garments
- ❧ Thus, to be clothed in white garments is to be clothed with Christ’s purity and righteousness, this flows and is in contrast with concealing...

“the shame of your nakedness”



∞ Definite allusions to the Fall

∞ Before the Fall, Scripture tells us:

Genesis 2:25 And the man and his wife **were both naked and were not ashamed.**

∞ After the Fall, Scripture tells us:

Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and **they knew that they were naked**; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

∞ Adam and Eve attempted to hide the shame of their nakedness with fig leaves

∞ This never truly hid the shame of their nakedness and adequate covering for their sin

“the shame of your nakedness”



- ❧ Which is why after pronouncing judgment on them and Satan, Scripture tells us:
Genesis 3:21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.
 - ❧ A picture of the sacrifice of Christ
 - ❧ TRUTH: the only covering that can cover the shame of man's nakedness and sin is a covering that can only be provided by God Himself, more specifically, by the sacrifice of Christ!
- ❧ Thus, not only was Christ offering them SAVING FAITH, but offering to cover their true state of shame and nakedness of their sin that remains and they inherited due to the Fall
- ❧ Jesus continues to offer them more...

“eye salve to anoint your eyes”



- ❧ That is to buy from Jesus “eye salve to anoint your eyes”
- ❧ Jesus is not only in the gold business; but the eye medicine business too 😊
- ❧ As we’ve covered in our introduction, Laodicea had a thriving economy and part of that was their production of their eye salve; eye medicine
- ❧ In context, the eye salve may have contributed to their riches hence Jesus mentions of a different eye salve
- ❧ It’s an eye salve that Jesus Himself offers them
- ❧ And to get to the heart of what Jesus was communicating by this phrase, I’d like for us to cross reference John’s gospel

“eye salve to anoint your eyes”



John 9:39-41 (in context, man was healed of his blindness on a Sabbath by Jesus, the man was interrogated multiple times by the Jewish authorities concerning this miracle; the Jewish authorities alleged that Jesus is not from God because He did not keep the Sabbath, Jesus speaks of this concerning them)

39 And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” 40 Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?” 41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

“eye salve to anoint your eyes”



- ❧ What was characteristic of the Jewish authorities was characteristic of the Laodiceans
- ❧ They both believed they can see, however, because they do not recognize their true spiritual state, that they are wretched, pitiful, miserable, blind and naked, their blindness remains
- ❧ Thus, when Jesus offered them “eye salve to anoint your eyes”, He was offering them SAVING FAITH, a white robe to cover their nakedness and eye salve to give them eyes to see their true spiritual condition and Who Jesus really is

Exposit 3:19



19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

- ❧ “Those whom I love” – initially I struggled with this verse
- ❧ What is clear up to this point is the Laodiceans weren't converted
- ❧ Yet our Lord says to “Those whom I love I reprove and discipline” – doesn't discipline apply to the household of God, the children of God, the converted? Does this mean although their spiritual state was as such, in spite of that Jesus loves them and they are saved?
- ❧ Can someone be called wretched, pitiful, miserable, blind and naked and yet be saved?
- ❧ Thankfully that struggle was short lived

Exposit 3:19



19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

- ❧ “love” is not agapē (unconditional determinative love), but phileō (which speaks more of a brotherly love, love by association)
- ❧ This is significant
- ❧ Had agapē been used, this would have rocked my theological world
- ❧ But the fact that phileō was used kept what we’ve been learning in balance
- ❧ The Laodiceans by association (the Christian church) is loved (phileō) by Christ, this does not give them a free pass on their true spiritual condition
- ❧ Because of that connection and association, Jesus is reproofing and disciplining them

Exposit 3:19



19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

- ✧ “reprove” is elegchō which means to expose, convict and by implication there is proof of wrongdoing
- ✧ “discipline” is paideuō which means to chasten, correct, punish with the intention of forming properly habits of behavior
- ✧ Jesus’s intent behind this letter is to reveal and expose their true spiritual condition and cause them to “be zealous and repent”
- ✧ “zealous” is zēleuō to have warm feelings for, to be jealous for their affection and we know what “repent” means it’s to change one’s mind or direction
- ✧ This hard truth of their state is intended by Christ to lead them to repentance and turn their affections to Christ