

NASB 1977 Laodicea The lukewarm church that is neither hot nor cold.
Revelation 3:14 - 22

14 "And 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 would 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, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. 19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, 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.'"

We're closing in on our final letter to the final church this morning.

Let me lay some important groundwork for your understanding this morning, because I've had a problem with this language in the past. In the christian movement, historically, I didn't get to assign the language, but for at least 100 years there has been a theology of so called modernism, that began in Germany and Europe that the living church has named . . . liberalism. Theological liberalism. Liberal theology. It's a religious school of thought. Not political at all. It's religious liberalism.

Liberal christianity. So called. Although great men have said, it isn't christianity . . . at all. It may call itself that, but it's something else entirely.

So if I use those terms, liberal theology, and other uses of that word, please, I'm not talking politics. It's just the name that grew out of that movement by people describing a certain movement's resulting theology.

We had a previous attendee that used to lose his mind because I would talk about liberalism in the church and the hair would stand up on the back of his neck because he was equating that with politics. No. Liberal theology. I didn't name it. There may be crossover into politics, but I'm talking about a way of systematizing theological thoughts and beliefs when I say liberal in the context of christianity.

They have a word for me just like I have a word that categorically defines their group. To them, I'm a fundamentalist. A little better because it doesn't have a crossover into politics, (except for nutso arab groups) so at least that problem is avoided.

So we've got christian liberals, liberal theology, and christian fundamentalists, fundamentalism, on far opposing ends of the religious pole, and in the middle we have evangelicalism. Evangelicals. The bland middle that means almost nothing at this point.

So we're not talking about cults and roman catholics here with these terms, just people who claim to have roots in protestantism. Main line denominations, rooted in the reformation, but who have migrated to a completely different position with no power to save from sin, over time. Good starts, not so good ends.

Fundamentalists were simply folks who said, we've drifted so far from our main roots and stated doctrines that we're out to sea. Adrift. No moorings with historic realities. And they said, we have to get back to fundamental truths.

Inspiration of scripture. Inerrant scripture. Authority of scripture alone. Belief in literal interpretation. All of it. Virgin birth. Miraculous healings and other miracles. Dead people raised back to life. Jesus walked on

water. Jesus spoke and the wind obeyed. That happened. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day. Jesus ascended into heaven.

It was a reaction against liberalism in the church. And liberalism, talking christianity here folks, not politics, liberalism had it's roots in the beginnings of idustrialism. Modernism brought by machines and cultural shifts from agrarian society to modern cities.

The church bought into an idea that with massive modern changes in culture, no one would believe in miracles and a lot of other things baked into the scriptures by non modern origins. The liberal theologians said, no one who can flip a light on in the dark with a switch and electricity is going to believe that a donkey spoke to Balaam. We've got to get rid of the nonsense.

Well, the scripture is what the scripture is. The texts weren't going to change, so what happens and what continues to happen is that revisionists and editors put themselves in authority over the texts and they write, this part is true, this part isn't. This probably happened, this could not have, because it's spiritual, or miracle.

So you clean up every idea that modern science has no definition for. Men tailor make a Bible that fits what they want. Men, and forgive me folks, I'm a bit old fashioned, but when I say men I mean humans both male and female are in on this, make their own biblical narrative.

Let me give you a current definition that is revealing of what I'm talking about, and you can accuse me of crossover into politics if you like, but this is so perfect in explaining an approach to theology where man is authoritative over scripture, instead of scripture authoritative over man.

James Talorico is a seminary graduate. He attended Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He is for womens rights to murder babies in the womb. How does a seminarian get there? He says that for example of a womans rights, the angel who visited Mary and spoke of the child she

would bear, Jesus the Christ, was actually asking Mary's permission, and Mary grants that permission, because Mary had the right of choice over her body, but she grants permission for her body to be used to bring Jesus into the world. Therefore all women should have rights to decide whether their body will permit a baby to dwell inside or not. It's her body, she could have chosen to say no, but she said yes.

James Talorico's pastor of his church he attends said, that might be a viable argument, except, that whole account is fictional fantasy anyways. So you've got two men, Talorico who claims he's a devout christian with a seminary education, and his pastor, who claims to be a shepherd, one arguing abortion is simply the choice Mary was given in the bible, she rules over her body, and his pastor saying, weak argument because you're basing it in a fantasy account that never happened anyways. That's liberal theology folks.

Both men define themselves as devout christians. Millions claim to be christian but reject the scriptures. Well not all the scriptures. There may be useful stuff in there, but you're in charge of deciding what it is. You have authority to accept and reject anything this book seems to say.

Can you see how that might make Jesus want to vomit? Everything I'm going to say about the status of laodicean so-called believers has a direct connection to a low view of scripture. And since Jesus and the book have a direct connection, a low view of scripture is automatically a low view of Jesus.

A bit more background before we dive in. In all of the other letters there is a remnant of believers present with the error. Here, there are no christians. None. Jesus is standing outside this church saying, Hey, I'm out here, if anyone wants to open the door. Nobody in this church is even saved. The whole thing is going to get vomited out of His mouth. No remnant present here.

When authority based in scripture goes, spiritual regeneration from death to

life is impossible. It's like the baby in the bathwater. It all goes away. Faith that saves is based in written, spoken truth. If the Bible is just men's words and ideas, there's nothing for faith to be rooted in. Salvation becomes impossible.

We'll see these truths in play powerfully in the introduction of the correspondent.

*14 “And to the angel of the church in **Laodicea** write:*

Laodicea is about 100 miles east into the interior of modern Turkey from Ephesus. These seven churches form a sort of loop, going up the coast from Ephesus, and then inland, and sort of circle back around so that Laodicea is due east from where we started.

Laodicea has two sister city's. Colossae, who got the letter from Paul, and Hierapolis which gets mentioned. One is 6 miles away and one is 10 miles away, I forget which, but they are sister cities.

It's historically interesting that Hierapolis had lovely hot water. I picture it like what Benton hot springs enjoys. That water in Benton that we enjoyed last week is both hot and surprisingly soft. Beautiful crystal clear spring water that's hot. It feels soft on your skin. Lovely. Very potable after it cools. I make my coffee with it every morning when I'm there, and it's hot enough to wash the dishes, right out of the hose. Beautiful water.

Colossae on the other hand was in the Lycus river valley and had cold sweet thirst quenching waters.

Laodicea had a creek that was murky and unreliable. As the population grew, another source was needed to sustain people. And there's a famous ancient underground aquaduct that was built. Quite a feat in those times to build miles of aquaduct.

The problem was the source for that aquaduct was nasty tasting water full

of chemicals. Archeologists have found remains, so clogged with minerals that the different pipelines are almost clogged shut.

So by the time that nasty water actually got to Laodicea, it was lukewarm from it's journey and tasted so nasty, it triggered the vomit reflex. Jesus uses those realities to them to explain their spiritual condition.

First we'll look at the correspondent.

14 "And 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:

The Amen. Amen is what we say when someone else says something that is absolute in it's truthfulness. It's the agreement with truth.

When our kids were small, we were attending the Baptist church, faithfully, and there was a fellow who began attending, and almost as if to try to trump up some life in a very dead environment, he would say, quite loudly and often, amen. Amen! Amen! over and over as the pastor, who wasn't saying much at all, was preaching.

My kids sort of recognized what was going on was kind of bogus. And they referred to that guy as the Amener. Kind of wishful thinking amen amen. That pastor wrote his sermon notes on a matchbook cover the morning of the sermon as he walked from the parsonage to the church.

But real Amen's are an agreement with real truth. When Jesus in His dialogue begins with verily verily I say unto you, the actual word is Amen. Amen Amen - what's coming next is absolute truth, you need to hear it.

I laughed at myself as I drove to Gardnerville the other morning, and I was listening to recorded sermons about our subject this morning, my way of audial study in preparation, and I caught myself saying Amen, more than once, out loud. It's like a built in reflex. You hear something true that delights your heart and grounds your own belief system in the absolute

truths of the scriptures, and you say, Amen!

Jesus says, I AM the Amen. He is the physical embodiment and ultimate source of any and all truth. He is the scriptures, in bodily form. He is the very revelation of God to men, in human form. He is our living speaking walking talking picture of the invisible God. The Bible is the written word. Jesus is the living visible physical Word. I AM the Amen!

John, speaking about the eternality of Jesus, says; In the beginning was the _____ (what, class?) Word, capital W. The logos. The revelation of God to men. We have the written version, intact, complete, inspired, innerrant, available. And we have the complete record of God revealing Himself to us in His Son. Jesus.

Listen to what is actually a parallel account of what Jesus is saying to identify Himself as correspondent, written 40 years earlier, by Paul, to the sister church at Colossae, just a few miles distant; Colossians 1:15 - 19

Talking about Jesus;

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

16 For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or

authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, And in Him all things hold together.

18 And He is the head of the body, the church;

Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

19 For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

Isn't it interesting that 40 years earlier, there was already the beginnings of heresy that is now full blown in nearby Laodicea, that Jesus writes to, that Paul was battling earlier.

We can read between the lines and sort of reconstruct the heresy using the correctives we have and some history of those times.

There was a group called the gnostics. Gnosis is greek for literally to know. These people were the people who know. Above and beyond revealed truths, they had gone farther into knowing.

If you know above and beyond the revealed scriptures, you've done the same thing the modern liberal theologians have done. You hold authority over the truth, the truth doesn't restrain and maintain authority over you. Modern liberal theology is tantamount to gnosticism in how it gets to where it's at by abandoning scripture as authoritative. Scripture is here. We know more.

The original gnostics taught Jesus was just an emanation from God. A single wave length with a connection, but not the full God. He's an emanation, one of many, a vapor, not physical reality. Jesus was an incomplete reality that came from God but not God, not a physical person. Lots more to know about God, lots more to discover. . . blah blah blah. Gnosticism. People who know beyond what we claim is the full revelation of God. Other truth beyond the scriptures.

Jesus writes them a letter and begins defining Himself, as the correspondent, as the Amen. The final living definition of all absolute truth.

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

The faithful and true Witness. Capital W, Witness. Same as what we just said. Jesus is the visible living Witness of God.

Belief is based in our senses witnessing things. Courtrooms arrive at truth by witnesses testifying to what they witnessed. Truth is based in sight and experience. That's why I believe AI is demonic in its origins. AI obliterates all truth claims because it can generate anything for eyes to see out of nothing at all.

Jesus is the faithful and true witness. He is a human picture of perfect God. We believe He rose from the dead, even though we missed the event, because of other reliable witnesses that wrote down the reality. Over 500 witnesses could testify to the reality of Jesus rising from the dead.

AI is a demonic undermining of truth based in realities witnessed. Nothing can be proven true after the initial incident. Last week I jokingly said, I need to buy a dash cam. Because utter lawlessness has overtaken the highways, I need a dash cam. Don't invest in the future of dash cams. We're about 5 minutes away from them being useless as evidence. Thank you AI.

Truth established by witnesses who saw something and testify to it later, is under direct attack. Belief because of witnesses who testify that they saw an event happen is being undermined. I believe that's satanic. This is THE WITNESS Satan is ultimately trying to undermine. *The Amen, the faithful and true Witness*

The writer of Hebrews, which we believe is a single 50 minute long sermon in it's original form, says this.

1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; Hebrews 1:1 - 3

Sounds like an echo in the room. Three authors all saying the same thing to different audiences at different times in different places.

But all 3 audiences have the same problem. They have lost their high view of Jesus and are sliding into powerless religiosity without Him. That was

the problem that the author to the Hebrews was addressing.

That's the problem that Paul warns of that was beginning to take shape at Colossae. And it's the problem in full blossom at Laodicea. Jesus is less than God. The scriptures are less than authoritative absolute truth. Both sources of God's revelation of Himself to sinful man are rendered impotent.

In 2026 you can add AI to that and say, why would anyone believe anything? There's no such thing as absolute truth. Somebody thought they saw something and based claims in something perceived. Not any more.

Interesting that in each of those attacks, the correspondent, the writer of Hebrews, and the Apostle Paul, and Jesus Himself here, use the exact same language.

Jesus is the single source of everything. All of creation came by Him and holds together in Him. He owns all things. Visible and invisible. Spiritual and physical. Explainable with science, and indefinable with natural understanding.

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

Don't stumble over the words here. The Beginning of the creation of God. That does NOT mean Jesus is created first by God, and then He created all things. No.

The greek word translated beginning is arche. It means the source. The cause. We get our word architect from this greek word. Jesus isn't the first thing created and then it all gets created by Him. Jesus is the architect of all things that ARE.

If I go 20 miles out into the desert and build a city, someone might say; Jim is the beginning of the creation of that city. We wouldn't say it that way, We'd say Jim is the builder, the source. There would be no city if he didn't

go there and build it.

Jesus is the arche. The source. The cause of every created thing. The creative source behind all things is the author of this letter to you, Laodicea. Not some emanation from God, God! God owner of everything God. Jesus IS God. Before Abraham was, I AM. That's the author who is corresponding in this letter.

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

A couple of days ago, I was working on one of these fabulous treatises of mine to you, writing and studying, and I picked up my coffee cup and took a large drink of coffee. A mouthful. It wasn't hot hot any more, so a good intake was possible.

Ever do that and there's a dead moth floating in that stuff that you didn't see. Suddenly you've got something foreign and disgusting . . . in your mouth.

The reflex is instant. Lucky the mug is in my hand or it would have gone everywhere. Ptttthhhhhwwwwwwaaaaaa! Out it comes! Disgusting! That's how Jesus feels about these folks at this church. They initiate His vomit reflex. The word literally describes spewing out.

Hot people are passionate! Cold people are reachable. Lukewarm people are all the folks in between that have got religion and life all figured out and have no need for anything different than what they think they've got.

The hardest mission field to reach are all the religious folks, spiritual folks, who've got it all figured out. Don't confuse me with the facts, I neither need nor want your version of Jesus. I've got my own, and mine loves me no matter what I do, and requires nothing of me in return. Just go away.

Jesus is like, give me hot, or give me cold, but this lukewarm stuff is about to get spewed. Vomit. This church is projectile vomit. That's what the greek word indicates. Hurl.

Let's talk about what that means for all four possibilities that these churches represent. 1) real historic churches in real time, 2) types of individual christians, 3) types of individual churches corporately in all times, and finally, 4) a prophetic era in the history of the total church over time.

Lots of individual people in the churches in every era who think they're spiritually wealthy but they're bankrupt. Lots of churches in every time period that think they're doing great things for God, but they're useless. But what of this as a prophetic era in the church.

Note please that these folks, whoever they are, will not be in heaven with the true church. That's frightening.

Can this be telling us that most of what calls itself christian, in 2026, is actually going to be vomited out of Jesus mouth at the rapture of the true church. Are we in the Laodicean era of the church where the most predominant type of church by far is vomit? Lukewarm and disgusting to Jesus.

I'm going to stick my neck out and say YES. I believe this is descriptive of much of current mega church evangelicalism now. As we speak. I've been saying it for as long as you've allowed me in this pulpit. The church in America is 3000 miles wide, and an inch deep.

Low view of Jesus. Low view of scripture. Tailor made for tares. Coffee bars. Music that damages your hearing. No biblical substance. Social clubs. The spiritual equivalent of facebook. Money machines. Vomit.

The moderns who began liberal christianity were just the beginnings. The modern church knows so little about anything biblical or salvation oriented, like spiritual bankruptcy because of sin, the big questions have become

moot, because nobody's asking any of them. Big self satisfied social clubs with christianized words getting bantied around.

They know the lingo. They talk about a saviour they neither know or feel any need for. The pastor gives a 20 minute ted talk that makes people feel that all of their hopes and dreams are about to come true.

In the gospel accounts, during Jesus earthly ministry, crowds in the literal thousands came to see the show. Miracles. Teaching that was mesmerizing in it's power. He fed 5000 men. Men are always attached to women and children. A good guess is that crowd was 20 - 25,000 people that day.

Pack up the babies, grab the old ladies Everyone goes, everyone knows Brother Love's a show. Jesus was a traveling salvation show. Many thousands saw the show. But, in the end, after His murder, there were about 120 believers assembled that remained from all those thousands that came to see the show.

Real believers, in this case, the folks who are HOT, are always a small remnant. That's why I never worry about people who visit for a short time and then exit. Same problem Jesus had.

Covid was a stress test indicator of the health of the church. Post covid numbers in church were different than pre covid. Many churches got boarded up. What happens when it's a real test?

These letters are a grace. Every possible type of christian, every possible type of church to measure ourselves against. Has doctrine killed love here? Quite the opposite it seems. Are we tolerating sin, in the name of love. Are we drowning in sin, way past tolerating it. Are we dead. Are we a vomit church. Or are we studying so that we can be a Philadilphia type church.

Jesus gave us these letters as a ruler. A measuring barometer of health or sickness, or death. About 98% of evangelicalism would look at you with a

quizzical stare in utter confusion if you asked them what the seven letters in the book of revelation are about.

Go forth and ask everyone who claims they're OK. Claims to be spiritual. Claims to be a christian but doesn't need church or fellowship with other christians.