



# THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

## *"Savior-Induced Vomiting"*

3:14-17

**Revelation 3:14** "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

**Revelation 3:15** "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

**Revelation 3:16** So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

**Revelation 3:17 (partial)** Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing...'

One of the accusations that the religious leaders of Israel had against Jesus was that He was a **glutton**.<sup>1</sup> It seems that Jesus was always eating with people.

Remember when He encountered Zacchaeus, who was perched in a tree to see Jesus as He walked by? Jesus stopped and invited

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 11:19 & Luke 7:34

Himself over to Zacchaeus' house for dinner!<sup>2</sup> There are many such episodes where Jesus dined with people.

After Jesus died and rose from the dead, He always had a meal with those He appeared to. He appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, went home with them, and was revealed to them as He ate with them.<sup>3</sup> When He appeared on the shore, while Peter and the other disciples were fishing, He was busy cooking a meal for them all to share.<sup>4</sup>

Why did Jesus eat so much? It helps to know the customs and the culture of first century Jews. Eating with someone was thought to be a form of intimate sharing and fellowship. As each person broke off a piece of bread from the loaf and dipped it in the common bowl, they were each being nourished by the same food. It was a symbol or an illustration of two people becoming more like each other, more familiar with each other, more intimate with each other.

Jesus ate with people, not because He was a glutton, but to demonstrate God's grace. God Himself, in the person of Jesus, was condescending to share intimate fellowship with sinners!

The letter to the Laodiceans revolves around sharing a meal with Jesus. He talks about being invited in by them to dine with them. But it turns out to be a pretty radical dinner. He speaks of two possible outcomes at dinner: He either *spews* them out of His mouth as disgusting to Him, or He *sits* with them as His disciples.

**Revelation 3:14** "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

The **angel** was a Jewish way of referring to the pastor of the local church. It was a term borrowed from the Jewish synagogue for one of its leaders.

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 19

<sup>3</sup> Luke 24

<sup>4</sup> John 21

Right away you notice something odd about this letter. Rather than describing them as the church *in* Laodicea, most Bibles translate the phrase **the church of the Laodiceans**. It sounds like they had taken ownership of the church away from the Lord.

We'll see that was exactly their error. Even the name 'Laodicea' lends itself to that interpretation. It is derived from two words which means *the rule and decision of the people*.

The Laodiceans ruled themselves. They were not submitted to the authority of Jesus Christ.

The church on earth is not a democracy. In fact there is no human form of government that can really apply to it. It is valid to use the term "church government" and to determine how pastors, elders, deacons, and congregations interrelate. But even then we should keep in mind the church is not an organization. It is an organism. The church is a body – the body of Jesus Christ– and He is its head.

In each letter Jesus described Himself in a way that would solve whatever error the church was experiencing.

To a self-governing body Jesus described Himself as **the Amen**. **Amen** translates as *so be it*. It is a statement of agreement. We say "Amen" when we agree with what someone said.

A prerequisite for walking with the Lord is that you will always agree with Him. Before you know everything His word says you have already determined to follow it. You are pre-submitted to the Word of God.

We pre-submit all the time. If you are in the military you are pre-submitted to the decisions of your superiors.

Far from being foolish it shows wisdom to be pre-submitted to Jesus. Other superiors can be wrong; not Him! Jesus was and is **the Faithful and True Witness**.

1. **Faithful Witness** means His Word can be received with confidence. He will keep His Word and has power to do so.

2. **True Witness** means that His Word is never speculation or guess work. It is rock-solid.

Then Jesus said He was **the Beginning of the creation of God**. It's a phrase that confuses us. It sounds, on the surface in English, as though Jesus Himself was a created being.

**Beginning** is the Greek word *arche* and means *the origin*. It doesn't mean that Jesus was the first thing created; it means that He created all things. It means that all things have their origin in Him. As you read in Colossians 1:16,

**Colossians 1:16** For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

Remembering and reverencing Jesus as the Creator of all things puts the punctuation mark on the description. By definition the creature ought to submit to the Creator. Thankfully the Creator is **faithful** and **true** and we should therefore always say **Amen** to His Word.

Next the imagery, the analogy, began. Jesus put Himself at a table with these Laodicean's. They were serving up their **works**. We can almost hear them say, "*How do you like our works, Jesus?*"

**Revelation 3:15** "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot."

Some foods can be good cold or hot. Apple pie is like that (although I love it red-hot with Superior Dairy vanilla ice cream). Some foods can be both at once – like deep fried ice cream.

But there are a lot of foods that need to be one or the other in order to be palatable. You don't generally enjoy cold soup or hot cheesecake.

There may be the slightest hint of encouragement in the description of their **works** as **neither cold nor hot**. The Laodicean's could still look back on **works** that were once **cold or hot** and therefore palatable to the Lord.

Not anymore, though. How did their **works** lose their temperature? We've seen that they were self-governing. Works start to lose their temperature when the Lord is not the one empowering them.

A self-governing people soon become a self-sufficient people. Thus they could say of themselves (in verse seventeen) **I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing.**

How opposite is all of that from the biblical attitude of submission to God and dependence upon Him moment-by-moment.

Jesus was at their table. Their **works** were served-up. Jesus decided to critique their spread – like a food critic visiting a four-star restaurant. Here was His headline:

**Revelation 3:16** So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

Think of yourself peeking through that little window in the door separating the kitchen from the dining room in a restaurant. The waiter has just served the food critic the main course. He bites into it... And promptly spews it out of his mouth all over the table and in plain sight of the other patrons!

A self-governing, self-sufficient church becomes **lukewarm** and its works are not worthy of the Lord. How did they get that way?

Ask yourself this question: How does **cold or hot** food become **lukewarm**? It becomes lukewarm by being out too long and thus it takes on the temperature of its surroundings.

It is from being out too long or too much in the world we grow **lukewarm**. The Laodicean's attitude of self-government and self-sufficiency came from over-exposure to the world.

Remember they said of themselves (verse seventeen), '[We are] **rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing...**'

**Rich** means just what you think it means. They had plenty of money.

**Have become wealthy** is better translated **increased with goods**. They used their riches to buy this world's goods. They invested in the world but not in Heaven.

Rich people who surround themselves with the comforts of this world begin to trust in the external rather than the eternal. It's easy to begin to think you **have need of nothing**.

If this is your attitude then **you have nothing!** You do not have fellowship with Jesus. In a moment He will portray Himself as being outside this church knocking to gain entrance. How sad! Yet how hopeful – there was and is time to repent.

Maybe we're not rich or wealthy or increased with goods. We can still want to be! The very love of those things, the love of the world, will just as quickly 'lukewarm' our works as actually having riches, wealth, and goods.

The application of these truths is intensely personal. A person can be rich but still live in submission to and dependence upon Jesus. A poor person can love the world and be spiritually self-governing and self-sufficient.

Only by examining myself can I determine if I have grown **lukewarm** by being out too much or too long in the world.

