

The Last Days Lukewarm Church

Revelation 3:14-22

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I'm going to read the whole letter before we go back and unpack it. Follow with me.

"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: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous..."—the word means "boiling hot" or "on fire"—"...and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

We come in our series to the last church of the seven churches of the apocalypse. It is the church of Laodicea. I would describe it as the apostate, lukewarm church of the last days. It's interesting that it follows the church at Philadelphia, the church that Christ had no reproof for, only praise. In this letter to the Laodiceans, He has no praise, only reproof. The church at Laodicea was a church that was apostate, that was outside Christ, and He had no praise for it.

The church at Philadelphia had an open door of opportunity, and they were stepping through it, by faith, in evangelism. The church at Laodicea had shut the door to Christ, and He was outside knocking, seeking entrance.

The Laodicean church is the last days, lukewarm church. Verse 16 says, "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot..." then Jesus literally says, "...I will vomit you out of My mouth." This is a very stern letter to a sad, so-called church in Laodicea.

I found that of all the letters to the seven churches, this one is the most difficult for me to digest and comprehend—that this church was so nauseating to Christ that He had nothing good to say about it. Rather, He said, "I will vomit you out of My mouth."

I want to remind you that these seven churches were actual churches in the area of Asia Minor, in western Turkey. He's writing to these churches about issues that were going on in those churches—seven churches, seven issues; each letter to the appropriate church.

But these letters also give us seven periods, or seven epochs in church history. Some question that interpretation, but I think there are characteristics you can see as you study these letters.

You can study church history from the birth of the church in Acts 2 to Revelation 4:1, to the rapture of the church, when it is “caught up” victoriously to heaven.

There is also a third way to view these seven churches. That is that each of these churches have characteristics, good or bad, that are applicable to all churches today. So as you go through all seven churches, you can say that there is a little of this and a little of that, good things here, bad things there, that apply to the churches today. And you can also see characteristics that apply to us as individual believers.

So the first and primary interpretation of these letters is to the churches there in Asia Minor at that time, but certainly it applies to us today individually and corporately as the church, as well.

In 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul says to his young protégé, Timothy, “In latter times some...”—not all, but “some”—“...will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrine of demons... having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.”

The Bible is very clear that in the last days, which I believe the Laodicean church depicts, it will be a time of apostasy or departure. An apostate is someone who professes to believe in Jesus Christ but doesn’t possess eternal life. At some point in time, they turn around and abandon or forsake their faith in Jesus Christ that they once professed. Peter described them in 2 Peter 2:22 where he said that it was “as a dog returns to his own vomit, and a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.” They were never really regenerated, so they abandoned the faith that they professed.

Now only God knows the heart. And it’s hard to tell the real from the false. In Matthew 13, Jesus gave the kingdom parable. In the kingdom, there is always the mixture of the true and the false, the wheat and the tares. There will always be wheat and tares in the church. The wheat represents true believers; the tares represent false believers, who look like, act like and profess to be Christians, but will be separated when the Lord returns.

So I believe this church in Laodicea is a church of all tares. It is a church that represents an unregenerated, professing church but there is no reality. There is nothing of commendation to this church; it’s only rebuke and counsel.

Let’s look and listen to what Christ says to this church at Laodicea. There are four sections in this letter. The first is in verse 14. We have Christ’s description. “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write...”—and here is the description—“...‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.’”

In all of these letters, we had in the first verse, which is the salutation of the letter, the church, the city and the Christ. As far as the church in Laodicea goes, we know very little about it. We do know that it was near the city of Colosse. When Paul wrote to the Colossians in 2:1, he said to say hello to those in Laodicea, who “have not seen my face in the flesh.” He expounded to the Colossians that he knew some of those in Laodicea, but he had never been to Laodicea to found the church there.

The city of Laodicea was a wealthy, inland city about 40 miles east of Ephesus. It was steeped in Greek culture and learning and was a thriving center of commerce. It was the farthest east of the seven churches in the Lycus Valley. Next to it were the cities of Hierapolis and Colosse in this valley. It had a thriving commerce and was a place of industry. It was on a thoroughfare from north to south and from east to west.

But the focus in verse 14 is not the city but the Christ. This description is apropos for the need in the church of Laodicea. Christ is described in three ways. The first is “the Amen.” Some don’t understand this, because we usually put Amen at the end of a prayer. We say, “In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

But the word “Amen” is actually Hebrew. It is a transliteration from the Hebrew that literally means “true.” So when you say, “Amen,” you’re saying, “That’s true” or “I agree with that.” In the Hebrew mind, it meant that it was true. There are a couple of references in the Old Testament of God being the God of Amen. In Isaiah 65:16, it says “the God of truth” or “Amen.”

When Jesus would teach, sometimes He would introduce what He was going to say with the words “verily, verily.” That is the word “Amen” or “truly.” So the word “Amen” means that Jesus is the true and living God, the God of Amen. Jesus is the final authority and revelation of God. He’s the divine affirmation whose promises are true and certain to be fulfilled.

We’re not used to this concept of Jesus being the Amen. It means that He is the affirmation, the confirmation, the truth of all that God says in His Word. It was apropos to the church in Laodicea.

Secondly, Jesus is described as “the Faithful and True Witness” of God. This is in contrast to the false witnesses of the prophets. He sees and knows all things, and He can testify truthfully and faithfully about God the Father.

One of the doctrines I so love in the Bible is the doctrine of revelation. One of the chief ways that God reveals Himself is in His Son Jesus Christ. God cannot be known apart from revelation. God has to reveal Himself, and He has done that by sending His Son, Jesus. He reveals Himself in His Word, in creation, in the conscience, through prophets, in dreams and in angels. But the primary way God revealed Himself was to come down to earth in the Person of His Son, through the womb of the Virgin Mary, becoming the God-man, who revealed to us the nature of God.

In John 14, Jesus said that He was going to the “Father’s house.” A little later in the discussion, Philipp said, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” I like the Lord’s response: “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”

Now don’t misinterpret that statement. Jesus is not the Father; He reveals the Father. So by seeing Jesus, you see the Father, in His nature and character. He is the revelation of God the Father. He is not the Father, but He came to reveal God the Father, because He is God the

Son. So Jesus is the Faithful Witness.

Thirdly, in verse 14, Jesus describes Himself as “the Beginning of the creation of God.” This is so important. We have to make sure we don’t misunderstand this statement. The word “Beginning” here means “chief” or “source.” It has nothing to do with chronology; it has everything to do with priority.

He’s not saying He is the first one created. That’s an ancient heresy known as Arianism, which was picked up by the Jehovah’s Witnesses today that taught that Jesus Christ was created by God the Father as Michael the Archangel. Somehow—I don’t know how—he morphed from Michael the Archangel into Jesus the Son of God. This is not taught anywhere in the Scriptures.

In John 1:1, it says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” He’s eternal. “The Word was with God”; He’s face to face with the Father. He’s personal. “The Word was God”; He’s divine. So He’s the eternal Word, the personal Word and the divine Word. And then in John 1:14, He’s the incarnate Word; “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

What Charles Erdman said about “the Beginning of the creation of God” is that it is “Not a part of creation but the uncreated principle of creation from whom it took its origins.” I would rephrase that by saying that “He is the uncreated creator of all things.”

Have you ever had your kids ask you, “Who made God?”

You say, “I don’t know. Don’t ask those questions.”

No one made God. That’s the simple, true answer. God made all things. Everything came from God. Our triune God is eternal—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. But Jesus is the uncreated creator of all things. Colossians 1:16 says, “For by Him...”—that is, “Jesus”—“...all things were created.”

It’s interesting that if you reverse the order of His description, you have that He is “the Beginning of the creation,” the source of all things; He’s “the Faithful and True Witness” of everything that emanates from God; and He is “the Amen,” the ultimate and final authority. So all things come from Him, He reveals all things of the Father and He is the final and ultimate authority of God.

For this church at Laodicea, it was so important for them to understand that Jesus Christ is God, He is the Amen, the final authority and the final witness of all things. Why is that? Because it is very possible that this church, being near Colosse, had begun to be invaded by false teachers, who denied the deity and authority of Jesus Christ. A lot of people would give Christ an important place but not the ultimate, important place.

When Paul wrote the epistle to the Colossians, his theme was Christ; that He is to have

preeminence—not prominence but preeminence. Colossians sets forth the deity of Christ. It is a marvelous Christological epistle. If you want to know Christ, read Colossians. It is possible that the Laodicean church had a false doctrine, which led to their apostasy, denying the deity of Jesus Christ.

This is important, because if you're wrong about Christ, you're wrong about God. If you're wrong about Jesus, you're wrong about Christianity. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." You'd better be right about Jesus Christ. You'd better not have a false doctrine when it comes to Jesus Christ. There is nothing more important than your Christology, your doctrine of who Jesus Christ is.

So it could be that Jesus described Himself this way because the Colossian heresy began to infiltrate the church in Laodicea. But this is the same thing that we need today. How my heart aches for the church universal today—to know the Biblical Christ. How my heart yearns to see a doctrinally sound, Biblical-focused church—not only our church but all churches. I desire that every church that congregates would preach expositionally the Bible and teach sound doctrine. It's so important; if we're wrong about Christ, we're wrong about God.

So in the second section, the condemnation, in verses 15-17, Christ condemns the church at Laodicea. He said, "I know..."—which means "I know intuitively," "I'm omniscient" or "I understand"—"...your works..."—or "your deeds"—"...that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit..."—or "spit" or "spew"—"...you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked...."

It's pretty bad when the Lord says you're "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." That comes from the lips of Jesus Christ. But when the Laodicean church looked at themselves in the mirror, they said, "We're rich! We're increased with goods. We have need of nothing." But Jesus said, "No; you're wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked."

It's interesting that the city of Laodicea had a water problem. They had to get their water from two sources: Hierapolis and Colosse. The water from Hierapolis was from a hot spring that came through a conduit, but by the time it arrived in Laodicea, the hot water had become lukewarm. The water that came from Colosse was cold water, but by the time it got to Laodicea, it was lukewarm. Hierapolis provided hot water, Colosse provided cold water, but by the time it got to Laodicea, it was nauseating, lukewarm water. That's why Jesus said, "I will vomit you out of My mouth."

Now what does Jesus mean by "lukewarm"? This is the challenge of this passage. I believe they were most likely professing Christians but not genuine, true, authentic, possessing Christians. I do believe that it is possible for you to be saved and to slip into carnality, apathy and complacency. Many people have applied this to carnal Christians or apathetic Christians. By all means, if you're a complacent, apathetic Christian, wake up, repent and get right with

God. Be on fire.

But in the context here, the church at Laodicea, the apostate church of the last days, I believe it is actually a reference to professing Christians in name only. Simply stated, they weren't really saved; they weren't really Christians.

Have you ever driven by a church that said First Church of Christ? But that doesn't mean it is filled with people who are Christians. That doesn't mean they're saved. Remember that there are wheat and tares growing together. There is the leaven stuck in the meal, and it grows together.

So the doctrine of the last days is that the church will turn away from "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." That is happening in the time that we live in. I believe that we live right now in this Laodicean era, in this time of apostasy and lukewarmness. I don't believe these Laodiceans are saved. They had no zeal for God, nor absolute repudiation of the Lord. In other words, they weren't on fire for the Lord, nor were they against the Lord. They were just neutral or lukewarm.

Someone described them as "evangelical but not evangelistic." I like that. They were an evangelical church, but they didn't reach out to the lost. How do you win the lost when you're lost? How do you evangelize people when you need to be evangelized? So they were like tepid water that actually worked like an emetic that causes vomiting. They would actually use lukewarm water to cause someone to vomit intentionally. It was a medical term for this water they drank that would cause them to vomit.

I know it's kind of radical, but Jesus is actually saying, "You make Me sick. You make Me want to vomit." That's why it is so hard to digest what He is saying to this church. And to think that this could be the tenor of the church today! Now this doesn't mean there is no wheat, no genuine believers, but many of the mainline denominations in our nation today, in the last 50-60 years, have abandoned the doctrine of Christ—the inerrancy, infallibility and inspiration of the Scriptures. They have adopted a cultural Christianity. They are apostate in every sense of the word. So God says, "I'm nauseated by you. I'm going to spit you out of my mouth." Jesus actually said these words. They are so powerful.

The question is, why was He nauseated? Or why will He spit them out? Because they didn't take Jesus or His Word seriously.

These are the hardest kind of people to reach. He says in verse 15, "You are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."

The hardest kind of people to reach with the Gospel are those who think they are saved but are not. Have you ever asked someone, "Have you been born again?" and they say, "I'm a Christian; I believe in God, I go to church, I've been baptized, I take communion." And you know that they're really not born again by the way they respond or their understanding of what a

Christian is. But they are so hard to reach.

Jesus said that you're not going to go to the doctor unless you know that you're sick. If you don't know you're sick, you're not going to go to the doctor. Jesus dealt with this so often in the Scriptures.

This leads me, in verse 17, to the second thing that He condemned them for. Not only were they lukewarm, but they were self-deceived. The worst deception is self-deception. In this verse, Jesus is giving us the reason why He will spew them out of His mouth and why they are lukewarm. He said, "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'..."—that was their view of themselves—"...and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked..." Another way to say this is that they were sinners. They were lost. They thought they were okay. They thought they were fine. So they misdiagnosed themselves.

It reminds me of Hans Christian Andersen's story, *The Emperor's New Clothes*. The emperor was walking down the street in his underwear, and everybody is applauding the emperor, proclaiming that he was awesome, but a little boy said, "He's naked!" Then he realized that he had no clothes.

How many people today think they're all clothed in the righteousness of Christ, but they're only clothed in their own self-righteousness? The Bible says that "Our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" in the sight of a holy God. How important it is to have God's estimation of ourselves.

Charles Erdman said, "Tepid religion is nauseating. One who has made no profession of faith and is conscious of his or her lack of moral life and spiritual condition is in a more-helpful condition than one who thinks himself to be a Christian and yet has no real spiritual life and is oblivious to his desperate need."

Remember the parable of the Pharisee and the publican that Jesus gave? The Pharisee was the most religious of the Jews; he had the broad robes, the phylactery, the prayer shawl and everything goin' for him. But the publicans were synonymous with sinners; they were tax collectors. The Pharisee and the publican both went down to the temple to pray. The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself, "God, I thank you I am not like other men." He probably pointed to the publican and said, "Like this sinner over there." He prayed, "I give tithes of all I possess. I fast twice a week, on Monday and Tuesday. I'm awesome!" You could hear people clapping for him. "Wow! You're awesome! You're amazing! Can I touch you?" Then the Pharisee went on to pray, but it wasn't a prayer; it was a bragging session about how awesome he was.

Then Jesus said that this other man, this poor publican, this sinner, came in and looked down—he didn't even want to look up he was so humble and broken. The Bible says, "A broken and a contrite heart...God...will not despise." The publican beat on his chest and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." And Jesus asked, "Which one of those two went down to his house justified?" Everyone immediately knew the answer. Jesus said in His Beatitudes, "Blessed are

the poor in spirit....Blessed are those who mourn....Blessed are the meek." That's what it means to come to Him.

So the self-righteous Pharisee didn't see his need, but the publican saw his need, and he went home justified.

The great Bible teacher. G. Campbell Morgan, said, "Lukewarmness is the worst form of all blasphemy." How powerful is that!

So the Laodicean church was apathetic, complacent and self-deceived. Jesus said in Matthew 9:12, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." And these people were sick: They were "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked" in their unconverted state.

The third section, in verses 18-20, is the counsel of Jesus. I would have abandoned them, just spit them out of my mouth and said, "I'm done with you!" But oh, the love of God! The mercy of God! The patience of God! In verses 18-20, we see the love, patience, kindness and mercy of God. He said, "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love..."—this is what motivated Christ's words—"...I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous..."—the word means "boiling hot" or "on fire"—"...and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."

There are three things He counsels them to do in this section. The first one is, "I counsel you to buy from Me." Now right away we ask the question, "How are we going to buy from Him?! He just told us that we're poor!" He said they were "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked." How do they buy anything from Him? The answer is, by faith.

Isaiah 55:1 has the answer: "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat." I like that. That's where I often say that's me in the Bible: "you who have no money." That's my verse. But I can have riches from God freely by faith. I may not have what the world has to offer, but I have what the Lord has to offer, because I can come to Him by faith.

How do we buy from Him, and what do we buy from Him? In verse 18, He tells us what to buy from Him: "gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich." The city of Laodicea had several banks which kept gold. It was known as a wealthy city. The gold was known as true, genuine faith. 1 Peter 1:7 says it was "tested by fire."

Jesus also told them to buy "white garments, that you may be clothed." These "white garments" referred to the righteousness of Christ. Laodicea was known for its wool. They actually specialized in black wool. It was said to be very silky and beautiful, and people would go there to buy that wool. So Jesus said to buy of Him "white garments."

There is an interesting Greek word translated “white” here. It doesn’t just mean white in color; it means “bright.” It’s like having sunlight in these garments. It would be a beautiful, radiating white, which is the righteousness of Christ.

Thirdly, He said, “Anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”

So get gold from God to be rich in spiritual things. Get white raiment from Him, so you can be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. And get your eyes anointed with eye salve so you can see.

How interesting that the city of Laodicea was famous for eye salve. They actually invented this ointment that you put in your eye to bring healing to your irritated eye. I believe this represents the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 2:14, Paul says, “The Natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Be he who is spiritual judges all things.” So our eyes are open.

All of this is spiritual: spiritual gold—riches of God; garments that are imputed to you by faith—the righteousness of Christ; your eyes anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Remember when you got saved, you had new eyesight? The Bible was like, “Wow! Where’s this book been?! I never saw that before!” The Holy Spirit not only regenerates us, but He illuminates us. When you read your Bible, you should pray and say, “God, give me eyes to see. ‘Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.’”

So Jesus is saying to them, “This is what you need to buy.”

Now the second counsel is in verse 19: “Be zealous and repent.” He said to this unregenerated church, “As many as I love...”—that’s what motivated Him; this is the *phileo* love—“...I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.” He wanted them to turn back to God.

The third counsel is in verse 20. It is one of the most popular and well-known verses in the entire Bible. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will...”—it’s a promise—“...come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” So open the door.

So He says to “buy from me...be zealous and repent” and open the door.

I’ve always liked verse 20. Jesus invites Himself over for dinner. It’s Biblical. Try it out. Stand in the foyer and say, “‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock.’ If you open the door, I’ll come in and eat your food.” Jesus did it. He went to Zacchaeus’. When Zacchaeus was up in the tree, Jesus said to him, “Come down. I’m going to your house for lunch.” He invited Himself! I think it’s cool!

What does Jesus mean by “I stand at the door and knock”? This is one of the challenging verses of this letter, but I believe that He’s knocking at the door of the church, primarily, in context. He wants back in the church of Laodicea; they had kicked Him out. The church has His name on it; it’s the First Church of Christ. It’s called the Christian church. It’s called a Bible church, but they don’t read the Bible.

Can you imagine that?! Jesus is outside the church trying to get in! He’s the head and the Lord of the church! How sad to think that some churches throughout history—and even today—have moved Christ outside of the church. He’s not central anymore.

When you come to this church, you should hear about Jesus and worship Jesus. The Biblical Christ should be preached and glorified in all things, because He is “the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through [Him].”

So what Jesus is knocking on is the door of the church. He wants back in this apostate, lukewarm, unsaved, Laodicean church.

But I think it also has a secondary application. The text also alludes to this, as He is talking to individuals. He says, “If anyone...”—this is also an individual invitation—“...hears my voice...”—that’s the work of the Holy Spirit convicting the human heart—“...and opens the door...” I believe it applies to the human heart.

You might say, “Well, hearts don’t have doors.” But metaphorically speaking, He says that if you open the door of your heart, He will come in. The promise is there, but you have to open the door of your own volition.

In the oriental mind, to eat with someone was to become one with someone. This is why Jews would never eat with Gentiles, because you didn’t want to become one with a Gentile. So Jesus said that if you open the door of your heart, He would come into your life. The heart was the whole inner person. If you open your life and let Him come in and take control, He’ll come in and have supper with you, become one with you and have fellowship with you. What a glorious picture that is of salvation!

By the way, when He says you are “wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked,” that’s a description of being lost. But now He says that He is knocking, and if you open that door, He’ll come in. He comes back into the church through the hearts and lives of people who repent, who open the door of their lives and repent.

Jesus knocks through His Word. John 5:24 says, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life.” Secondly, Jesus knocks through His Spirit, John 16:8: “And when He...”—that is, “the Holy Spirit”—“...has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” Thirdly, Jesus knocks through His people sharing His Word in the power of God’s Spirit. Fourthly, Jesus knocks through providence. It might be through the loss of a job, loss of your health, loss of your wealth or through some other situation that God allowed in your life to wake you up, to get your

attention. So this is how He knocks on the door of your heart. He wants to come in.

I don't know what you're going through right now, but it might be the voice of God knocking on the door of your heart.

You say, "Well, I'm in church every Sunday." That doesn't make you a Christian. You have a door to your heart that needs to be open to Him. For every one of us, either Jesus is outside knocking or He's inside having communion with you. Where is He? Is Jesus on the outside knocking? Then open the door and let Him come in. If Jesus is already in your heart, then, by all means, be boiling hot, be on fire for Him.

This letter closes, in verses 21-22, with a promise or a comfort to the overcomers. "To him who overcomes..."—that's a reference to true believers—"...I will grant to sit with Me on My throne." Think about that: Jesus is promising the true believers that one day we will sit with Him on His throne. "...as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

When will that happen? That will happen when we get raptured into heaven, experience "the marriage supper of the Lamb" and then return in the Second Coming of Christ with Him, and He sits upon the throne of David. In the Old Testament, He had promised David that "Your seed will sit upon the throne forever and ever. You will have Messiah in your line." It's called the Davidic covenant or promise. That will be fulfilled in Jesus Christ when He comes back in the Second Coming, He sets up His kingdom for 1,000 years and we will co-reign with Christ. So He's promising us that we'll reign with him in the Davidic kingdom for 1,000 years.

Then He closes in verse 22: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart, by the Holy Spirit, but you must open that door.

There is a famous, beautiful painting, by an artist named Holman Hunt, done many years ago. It has become a classic. It was of a beautiful garden, and at the end of the garden, there is a door on which Jesus is knocking. After Homan Hunt finished that painting, he invited some of his artist friends to come to critique it. One was looking at the painting and said, "But Holman, you forgot something."

Holman said, "What have I forgotten?"

He said, "You forgot the doorknob." If you've ever seen the painting, you know there is no doorknob on the outside.

But Holman said, "No, no; that was intentional. The doorknob's on the inside. There is no knob on the outside."

Jesus didn't say, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If you don't open it, I'm bustin' it down! I'm comin' in!"

We used to sing a song as a boy growing up.

“There’s a Savior who stands at the door of your heart,

He is longing to enter. Why let Him depart?

He has patiently called you so often before,

But you must open the door.”

If God has spoken to you through this message today, and you’re not sure you’re a child of God—maybe you don’t know that if you died today, you would go to heaven, you’ve never really trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—I would like to lead you in a prayer right now inviting Christ to come into your heart and to be your Savior.

So as I pray this prayer, I want you to repeat it out loud, right where you are, after me. Make it from your heart, inviting Christ to come in and be your Lord and Savior. Let’s pray.

“Dear Lord Jesus, I’m sorry for my sin. I pray that You’ll forgive me and come into my heart and make me Your child. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, and help me to live for you all the days of my life. I believe in You. I receive You as my Lord and Savior. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

If you prayed that prayer and you meant it, God heard that prayer and God will and does forgive your sins.

We’d like to help you get started growing in your walk and relationship with Jesus Christ. God bless you.

If you just prayed with Pastor John to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, we are so excited for you, and we’d like to send you a Bible and some resources to get you started in your relationship with the Lord. Simply click on the Contact link at the top of the page and tell us something like, “I prayed to accept Christ.” We’ll get your Bible and resources mailed out to you right away.