

# The Revelation

by Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish



Revelation 3:14-22 The Church at Laodicea

## Introduction – Laodicea

- In the ancient Roman world there were at least 6 Laodiceas. Ours here was called Laodicea on the Lycus.
- Founded in 250 BC by Antiochus II of Syria, he built the city on top of more ancient communities. He named the city for his wife, Laodice I. His father had been one of Alexander the Great's generals and had battled his fellow generals for control of pieces of Alexander's empire. The kingdom Antiochus I left to his son stretched from Turkey and Syria in the west to deep into India in the east. Antiochus II ultimately was murdered by Laodice who then put her son on the throne.
- The city became important in Roman times, beginning in 188 BC. It sat on three major trade routes: the road from Ephesus on the northern coast, spur roads leading to Pergamum and the regions of Pisidia and Pamphylia, and a road leading all the way to the southern port of Perga. Further, it sat on the Lycus River, which was fed by two other rivers to the north. With the Pax Romana, the city became incredibly wealthy, being in the center of both land and river trading.
- Naturally, with all its wealth it became a major banking center, as well as clothing manufacturing center, and a medical center, specializing in the treatment of the ears and eyes with crafted ointments and salves.
- In 61 AD the city was devastated by an earthquake, but the city's wealth was such that it needed no outside help from Rome or anywhere to rebuild.
- The city had a large Jewish population. In 62 BC, the Roman governor realized how much money the Jews were sending to Jerusalem and ordered an embargo on the export of currency and seized gold bound for Jerusalem equal to 15,000 days wages!

- A third century work, The Apostles Constitutions, says the first Bishop of Laodicea was Archippus. This man is chastised in Colossians 4:15-18. Written some 30 years before The Revelation, it seems that the rot was already settled into the church.
- They were so wealthy that they needed nothing, nor no one, not even God. The clothes they manufactured were such a source of pride, they could not see their nakedness. They so valued their medical cures for the eyes, they could not see their blindness.

#### Vs 14

- The English translation of Isaiah 65:16 is that God is a God of truth, but literally in the Hebrew, He is the God of Amen.
- Amen: solid, true, the final word. John 1:51 – Verily, Verily or Truly, Truly, the Greek literally is Amen, Amen.
- Faithful and true: He can speak of God for He is from God. He is the Amen. His words are solid, final, and true.
- The Beginning: John 1:3; Colossians 1:15, 18

#### Vss 15-16

- Unlike every other letter, there is no praise of any kind, only condemnation.
- The church is neither freezing or boiling.
- What Christ is condemning is indifference, for it is the hardest thing to combat.
- CS Lewis said that he believed it was harder to do evangelism in Oxford in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century than for Paul in his time. Paul was battling against false gods. Lewis was battling indifference.

#### Vss 17-18

- Laodicea prided itself on its wealth, its clothing trade, and its medicine, especially its eye salve. But Christ says they are poor, blind, and naked. Their solution they need is 1) to buy from Christ gold refined by fire (1

Peter 1:6-7). Wealth won't save you. Material things always fail. 2) they need to buy white garments from Christ so they will not be ashamed. In the ancient world nakedness was always shameful (Nahum 3:5) and clothing a sign of honor (Gen. 41:42, Luke 15:22). They need to have their sin-stained garments destroyed. 3) they are to buy eye salve from Christ that they may see (John 9:6-7).

Vs 19

- I reprove and discipline those I love: Prov. 3:12
- But Jesus changes the word love from *agapan* to *philein* meaning the most tender affection
- Job 5:17

Vs 20

- At the door: (Mark 13:24-29)
- Come in and dine: *deipnon* – the evening meal. A long, slow dinner for close fellowship.
- But WE must open the door. He will not kick it in.

Vss 21-22

- The victorious will sit on the throne with Christ! This promise is not confined to the Laodiceans, but is for all, for you and me.
- We need to be LISTENING to what the Spirit is saying to US!!