

LAODICEA ... THE PYRITE¹ CHURCH

I COUNSEL YOU TO BUY FROM ME
GOLD REFINED BY FIRE, SO THAT YOU
MAY BE RICH, AND WHITE GARMENTS
SO THAT YOU MAY CLOTHE YOURSELF
AND THE SHAME OF YOUR
NAKEDNESS MAY NOT BE SEEN, AND
SALVE TO ANOINT YOUR EYES, SO
THAT YOU MAY SEE.

(REVELATION 3:18 ESV)



¹ PYRITE—AKA "FOOL'S GOLD"

1. THE AMEN—THE NEVER WAVERING FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS—SPEAKS THE REALITY OF GOD AND ETERNITY TO THE LUKEWARM CHURCH AT LAODICEA, 3:14-16.

- (Revelation 3:14–16 ESV) And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation. 15 I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ speaks the reality of God and eternity as the Amen of God.

The word “amen” is a transliteration of the Greek word “ἀμήν” which means firm, sure or truly—an expression of absolute trust and confidence.

In Jesus Christ—the Son of God, the Amen—we find the ultimate affirmation of all the promises of God. He is the foundation from which we proclaim Amen to God in joyful anticipation of his glory.

- (2 Corinthians 1:19–20 ESV) For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. 20 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

When we read “verily, verily” or “truly, truly” in our English Bibles, this is literally “amen, amen” as demonstrated in the verses below in the gospel of John.

- (John 5:24 ESV) Truly, truly [Amen, amen], I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
- (John 5:25 ESV) Truly, truly [Amen, amen], I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.
- (John 6:47 ESV) Truly, truly [Amen, amen], I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.
- (John 8:51 ESV) Truly, truly [Amen, amen], I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.

We therefore have the utmost trust and

confidence in the “truly, truly” words because they are based on the firm foundation of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

B. Our Lord speaks the reality of God and eternity as the faithful and true witness of God.

- (Revelation 19:11–12 ESV) Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

C. Our Lord speaks the reality of God and eternity as the source and the first fruit of God’s new creation.

- (Revelation 3:14b ESV) ... the beginning of God’s creation.

PATTERSON ... the emphasis is not on the beginning of the Christ but on the beginning of everything else in Christ. ... Christ is the affirmation of God, the faithful and the true witness, and the One who rules preeminently over all God’s creation. [Patterson, P. (2012). *Revelation*. (E. R. Clendenen, Ed.) (Vol. 39, p. 138). Nashville, TN: B&H.]

LADD ... The beginning of God’s creation. This phrase in itself is capable of two translations: the “beginning” of creation, or **the “source and origin” of creation.** The latter is quite certainly the correct meaning, for John clearly regards Christ as eternal. [Ladd, G. E. (1972). *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (p. 65). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.]

BEALE ... Despite what most commentators think, the titles in 3:14 do not link Jesus to the original creation, but are an interpretation of Jesus’ resurrection drawn from 1:5. **His resurrection is viewed as the beginning of the new creation,** which is parallel with Colossians 1:15b, 18b; cf. “first-born of all creation” ... **The latter phrase refers to the resurrection as a new cosmic beginning** ... This is parallel with 2 Corinthians 5:15, 17, where Paul understands Jesus’ resurrection as bringing about a “new creation”. [Beale, G. K. (1999). *The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 298). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.]

COSMIC ... relating to the universe or cosmos, especially as distinct from the earth; of or

relating to the cosmos, the extraterrestrial vastness, or the universe in contrast to the earth alone; infinitely or inconceivably extended; vast.

- (Revelation 1:5 ESV) And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.
- (Colossians 1:18 ESV) And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
- (2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

**AS IS SO OFTEN
THE CASE, THE
LAODICEANS HAD
A HUGE GOSPEL
PROBLEM!**

D. The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of creation knows—AND KNOWING WHAT HE KNOWS—he will spit them out of his mouth.

Jesus Christ never hesitates to draw a clear, bold line between good and evil. And as the faithful and true witness he never wavers between yes and no. He tells the Laodiceans in very clear terms what he thinks of them. Their dead works revealed the inauthentic, “fool’s gold” nature of their faith and he will spit them out of his mouth.

2. THE AMEN—THE NEVER WAVERING FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS—CALLS ATTENTION TO THE WRETCHED, PITIFUL, POOR, BLIND, NAKED STATE OF THE LAODICEANS, 3:17.

- (Revelation 3:17 ESV) For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

The Laodiceans were spiritually bankrupt and they needed to see the futility and foolishness of trusting in riches that they could obtain apart from God.

They had one hope to see the reality of their wretched state and that was to humble themselves and accept the reality of God and eternity in regard to their lives as spoken by the faithful and true witness.

Their wretchedness was self-inflicted—the result of building a relationship with God based on the false gospel of human achievement.

Wretched means wretched; enduring trial, i.e. miserable; enduring toils and troubles; afflicted.

The Laodiceans had never “struck gold”—never having come to understand the grace of God in truth. Their lukewarm state does not seem to be a result of “good faith gone bad” but a result of never truly having faith in God’s gospel of grace.

HERE’S A QUESTION: Could a person ever come to understand the grace of God in truth in salvation and remain in lukewarm indifference to the true things of God? I don’t see how. So shouldn’t the answer be a firm “no” since the gospel of grace is the wellspring from which our passion for and our hope in the things of God abounds—both now and forever.

- (Colossians 1:5–6 ESV) Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

3. THE AMEN COUNSELS THE LAODICEANS CONCERNING THE ONE WAY OUT OF THEIR WRETCHED STATE—THEY WERE IN DESPERATE NEED OF REFINED GOLD FROM GOD, 3:18.

- (Revelation 3:18 ESV) I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

A. The church at Laodicea was a defeated church which had lost the battle over true riches.

The battle had raged for over thirty years. Since about AD 61-63 the Apostle Paul had warned the Laodiceans about the “plausible arguments” and the “high-sounding nonsense” of “human thinking” but in the end they chose the wisdom and riches of this world.

B. Paul had fought for them.

- (Colossians 2:1–4 ESV) For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I say this in order that no one

may delude you with plausible arguments.

C. Epaphras had prayed hard and worked hard for them.

- (Colossians 4:12–16 ESV) Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, **always struggling on your behalf in his prayers**, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that **he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis**. 14 Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers at **Laodicea**, and to Nympha and the church in her house. 16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the **Laodiceans**; and see that you also read the letter from **Laodicea**.

D. Their great need was to buy gold from God. (Notes from Isaiah ... buying from God).

YOUNG ... Not only is the one addressed thirsty, but he is also unable to satisfy that thirst. In theological language we may say that he is totally depraved and totally unable to remove that depravity. ... But how can one buy without money? The language is evidently designed to point out that the water, wine, and milk are **obtained not by human purchase but by divine grace, the free gifts of God**. Nevertheless, it may be that the form of expression chosen is also for the purpose of emphasizing the legitimacy of the transaction. Indeed, **there was a price paid that man might have water, wine, and milk; and that price consisted in the fact that the chastisement of our peace was upon the Servant of the Lord. As a result of that transaction one may eat and his soul will be filled**. [Young, E. (1972). *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66* (Vol. 3, p. 375). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.]

MOTYER ... The thought of purchase is not set aside; this is no soup-kitchen, even if the clients are beggars. There is a purchase and a price, though not theirs to pay. **They bring their poverty to a transaction already completed. Contextually, this is another allusion to the work of the Servant**. [Motyer, J. A. (1996). *The prophecy of Isaiah: an introduction & commentary* (p. 453). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.]

- (Isaiah 52:13 ESV) **Behold, my servant shall act wisely**; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.
- (Isaiah 53:5–6 ESV) **But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed**. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; **and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all**.
- (Isaiah 53:10–11 ESV) **Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him**; he has put him to grief; **when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring**; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge **shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities**.
- (Isaiah 55:1–2 ESV) **Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price**. 2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

4. THE BEGINNING—THE SOURCE AND THE FIRST FRUIT—OF GOD'S NEW CREATION OFFERED THE LAODICEANS, AS A CHURCH, A WAY BACK TO FELLOWSHIP AND VICTORY, 3:19-21.

- (Revelation 3:19–21 ESV) Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so 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 eat with him, and he with me. 21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.

(REVELATION 3:22 ESV)