

Pentwater Bible Church

Revelation Message 11

November 5, 2023



Laodicean Ruins from <https://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/laodicea>

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THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA PART I

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THE CHURCH OF THE APOSTASY (A.D. 1900-PRESENT DAY)

Revelation 3:14-22

¹⁴And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; ¹⁵I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. ¹⁷Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: ¹⁸I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. ¹⁹As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. ²⁰Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. ²¹To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. ²²He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (KJV).

The destination of the letter, in verse 14a is Laodicea, which means “people ruling.” The wealthy city of Laodicea was located on the road to Colosse about 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia. About 35 years before this letter was written, Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake, but it had the wealth and ability to rebuild. Its main industry was wool cloth. There is no record that Paul ever visited this city, but he was concerned about it (Colossians 2:1–2; 4:16). This is set in contrast to God’s ruling in the church. It is a church entirely ruled by men, for the Holy Spirit is not present and doing His ministry of guiding.

The description of Jesus is in verse 14b and is taken from Revelation 1:4, 6 and 7. He is described as the faithful and true witness, whereas this church is neither faithful nor true to the Word.

In verses 15-16, they are characterized by lukewarmness. The distinctions between hot, cold and lukewarm can be determined by the overall context. The hot are the truly saved believers. The cold are those who are not believers and do not claim to be believers. The lukewarm are those claim to believe in Jesus but are not truly regenerate believers.

In verse 18, Christ exhorted them to put salve on their eyes. A medical school was located in Laodicea at the temple of Asclepius, which offered a special salve to heal common eye troubles of the Middle East. What they needed was not this medicine but spiritual sight. The church at

Laodicea is typical of a modern church quite unconscious of its spiritual needs and content with beautiful buildings and all the material things money can buy. This is a searching and penetrating message. To all such the exhortation is be earnest, and repent. Christ rebuked them because He loved them, which love would also bring chastisement on this church. He wanted them to turn to Him to correct their apostasy.

Apostasy can be defined as the departure from the truth that one professed to have. It does not mean that they actually possessed the truth. Seldom do apostates actually possess the truth. Rather, it is a departure from a truth they professed to have because of an affiliation with a particular church.

The New Testament clearly predicts in two NT passages that there would be an apostasy in the latter days. The first is found in 2nd Thessalonians.

II Thessalonians 2:1-3

¹Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him, ²That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. ³Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition (KJV);

The second passage is: I Timothy 4:1

I Timothy 4:1

¹Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (KJV);

The prophetic word says that there will be a falling away in the last days. This is a vivid description of the Laodicean Church.

Three NT passages describe the character of the apostasy.

I Timothy 4:1-3

¹Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; ²Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; ³Forbidding to marry, [and commanding] to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth (KJV).

The source of the apostasy is demons, for apostates have essentially given in to seducing spirits and are preaching a system of doctrine, which is a doctrine of demons. Furthermore, they speak lies through hypocrisy, and their conscious has become insensitive.

The second passage is found in II Timothy.

II Timothy 3:5

⁵Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away (KJV).

In verses 1-4 there is a description of the general character of the world in the last days, and it can hardly be denied that these elements are true in this present day. Verse five centers on the religious front, where the last days will be characterized by men having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Apostate ministers, retaining the clerical garb and church titles, have a form of godliness. But they denied the power thereof, for they have denied the true power of godliness. They claim to trust in God but are actually trusting in worldly methodologies.

The third passage is found in II Peter 2:1-22

¹But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ²And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. ³And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. ⁴For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast [them] down to hell, and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; ⁵And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth [person], a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes condemned [them] with an overthrow, making [them] an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; ⁷And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: ⁸(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed [his] righteous soul from day to day with [their] unlawful deeds;) ⁹The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: ¹⁰But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous [are they], selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. ¹¹Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. ¹²But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; ¹³And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, [as] they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots [they are] and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; ¹⁴Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: ¹⁵Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam [the son] of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; ¹⁶But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. ¹⁷These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. ¹⁸For

when they speak great swelling [words] of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, [through much] wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. ¹⁹While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. ²⁰For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. ²¹For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known [it], to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. ²²But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog [is] turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire (KJV).

Peter is not displaying any attitude of love or tolerance toward the apostates. The Bible and particularly the Lord Jesus do not display any toleration toward apostasy and it castigates it very severely, as these verses clearly show.

Peter also tells us what the mark of an apostate is. Their teachings are portrayed as destructive denials.

The teachings of the apostates are called destructive heresies. The content entails denying even the Master that bought them. In other words, the content of apostate teaching involves the denial of the Person (the Master) and work (bought them) of the Lord Jesus. Other NT passages provide more specific aspects of this denial. First, a denial of the Trinity is discussed in 1 John 2:22-23.

I John 2:22-23

²²Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. ²³Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also] (KJV).

1st John 4:1-2 comments on a denial of the Incarnation:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

The same is true of II John 1:7

⁷For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist (KJV).

Third the denial of the Second Coming of the Messiah is the concern of II Peter 3:3-4

II Peter 3:3-4

³Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, ⁴And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation (KJV).

So the teachings of apostasy involve the destructive denials of the Person and work of the Messiah, especially with regard to His place in the Trinity, His deity, His incarnation as the God-Man by means of the Virgin Birth, and the fact that He is coming again physically. Basic to all these denials, of course is the denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures themselves.

ONCE AN INDIVIDUAL DENIES THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE, THERE IS NO LONGER ANY SAFEGUARD FOR OTHER CRUCIAL DOCTRINES.

One type of deed that will be performed by apostates is mockery.

Jude 1:17-19

¹⁷But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; ¹⁸How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. ¹⁹These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit (KJV).

They will mock the fundamentals of the faith such as the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the Virgin Birth, the substitutionary death of the Messiah, and His physical resurrection from the dead. II Peter 3:3-8 states that they will mock the doctrine of the Second Coming.

II Peter 3:3-8

³Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, ⁴And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation. ⁵For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: ⁶Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: ⁷But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. ⁸But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (KJV).

A second deed is that of creating schisms or separations (Jude 19). Because they begin denying some of the fundamentals of the faith, they convince some but not all. In the course of time this produces a split within the church. Throughout this age of apostasy there has been schism after schism. Church after church and denominations have split over denials of the Trinity, the incarnation and the Second Coming.

These characteristics, heretical teachings and deeds of separations have become prevalent, as church history has progressed from about 1900 to the present day. This is the age of apostasy.

The roots of his began in Europe, particularly with German Rationalism where the inerrancy of the Scripture was denied with the development of Biblical Criticism and particularly with the documentary hypothesis. One Julius Wellhausen developed this concept. He insisted that human reason only, not the Bible, could be trusted. He presented the idea that the Bible, far from being God's Word was just a collection of human documents. His particular contribution to the "Closing of the Book" was a denial of the authorship of the first five books of the Bible by Moses. David Breese in his book, *The Seven Men Who Rule the World from the Grave* states that from these destructive heresies the church leaders quoted everything but the Bible and preached everything but the gospel, and reality was gone. Religious liberalism was born. Breese continues; "the calamities that came upon Europe such as Communism, Nazism, fascism, the world of the occult and other diseased ideas have been promulgated by the absence of a spiritual core made of divine life and spiritual blessing. Wellhausen and his liberalism destroyed the spiritual life in Europe and nearly succeeded in the spiritual destruction of the United States." Today less than 1% of the population of Europe is made up of Evangelical Christians.

So that we do not think that people are not able to negatively influence others in order to keep them out of The Kingdom listen to what the Lord Jesus had to say to the Pharisees:

Matthew 23:13

¹³But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in [yourselves], neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in (KJV).

Liberalism is like a plague within the church. It exists within us and seeks to be like us but it denies the fundamentals of the faith. Liberals still want real Christians to think of them as "one of us." It is a set of diseased ideas.

AS A CONSEQUENCE, IT IS ALMOST A RULE OF LIFE THAT LIBERALS DO NOT LEAVE THE VISIBLE CHURCH!

They stay and continue to spue their poison to whomever they can get to hear them. They attempt to create doubt in the marginal believer. They try and influence the one where the seeds did not fall on good ground. (Matthew 13:5)

This is Satan continuing to impart doubt into the minds of those with marginal faith.

Genesis 3:45

⁴⁵And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil (KJV).

NEXT WEEK: REVELATION MSG. XII

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