

INTRODUCTION

Here we see that God's people, specifically the nation of Judah, was in a state of spiritual decline. **In fact, they had been in a state of spiritual decline for a number of years!** (e.g. *Our Wednesday night Bible Studies in Kings*)

The LORD had sent His prophets crying against Judah's sins and calling on her to repent, but she had turned a deaf ear both to them and the LORD Who sent them!

Jeremiah the prophet was called of God to carry forth His message to His nation near the end of this decline! He spoke of **the LORD's impending judgment in the face of the nation's sins and refusal to return to God!**

Now, understand that Judah had experienced **somewhat of a revival** during the 31 year reign of good King Josiah. There had been a **form** of repentance in the nation, but it was a **shallow** repentance, **not whole hearted!** So after King Josiah was off the scene, Judah **quickly** turned away from God again! **Judah was a nation in need of a real, genuine revival!**

For 40 years Jeremiah spoke as the mouthpiece of the LORD God! But, when he spoke, **not many were really listening to what he had to say!** Oh, they **HEARD** him, but **they really didn't HEARKEN to what he said!**

And that was a very big part of their problem! Not only did they not hearken to his messages, but they ridiculed him and persecuted him! In fact, it got so bad that Jeremiah wanted to quit, but God would not let him quit!

Consistently and passionately he urged the people to repent to avoid the impending judgment of God on the nation! Judgment, that he pointed out to them, had already begun to fall, but had not fallen in its fullness yet! He continually pleaded with them! But, his pleas fell on deaf ears!

Sadly, Judah was hardened in her sin! Her apostasy was full to the brim and even overflowing! Judgment was coming! But she didn't want to hear that! She continued to reject the LORD's call for her to repent and return! And true to the Word of the LORD, the fullness of God's judgment did come just as Jeremiah had said!

In fact it came in the days of Daniel as the Babylonians (*a/k/a The Chaldeans*) conquered the nation and carried it away into captivity!

In many ways, our own dear nation has followed a similar path as Judah!

1. Judah had a Blessed beginning!
2. Judah had a LORD Who loved her!
3. Judah had a LORD Who made her great!
4. Judah began to stray in small ways! (Here a little, there a little!)
5. After a period of time, Judah was in full scale apostasy!

Now understand that the LORD had given Judah a remedy for their spiritual decline many years earlier before it began. (*King Solomon's days*)

In *2 Chronicles 6*, the Temple had been built and was being dedicated to the LORD. There were **sacrifices** being offered! There was **worship and praise** being offered! **The LORD was manifesting Himself in His House!**

Solomon prayed to the LORD realizing that the time might come that the LORD's people would stray from Him and He would have to judge them. So, he asked the LORD to make a way for them to repent of their sin and be turned back to Him and be restored! (*That is what the LORD is all about!*)

2 Chronicles 7, begins with the LORD consuming the burnt offering and sacrifices that had been offered to Him! The glory of the LORD was then manifested in such a way that the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house!

The people were bowing their faces to the ground and worshiping and praising the LORD!

A seven day feast of the dedication was held! It was grand and glorious time! Then on the eighth day, they had a solemn assembly and it was all over! *2 Chronicles 7:10* "**And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.**"

ADDRESSING SPIRITUAL DECLINE-PART 1

JEREMIAH 6:16-19; 2 CHRONICLES 16-17; REVELATION 3:14-22

Then down in *2 Chronicles 7:12* it says that “...*the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer...*”

Then the LORD addressed the part of Solomon’s prayer dealing with the sin and straying of His people:

2 Chronicles 7:13-14 “If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; 14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

In the days that Jeremiah prophesied to Judah, the hand of the LORD against His people was already evident!

Jeremiah 5:12–“They have belied the LORD, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine:”

They refused the LORD’s remedy, hardened their hearts, and wound up with further judgment of the LORD! Could they have repented and not gone into that further judgment? Yes, I believe so, but they didn’t! It appears that they had crossed over to a point of no return!

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SO WHERE ARE WE AS A NATION? Well, I can tell you that we are far, far from where we once were! God is not pleased with what is happening in our land. But, has our nation reached “*a point of no return?*” Well, the LORD alone knows the answer to that question! It is not for us to say!

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WHERE ARE WE AS THE LORD’S CHURCH AND AS INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS? Honestly, as a look at the vast majority of Churches and professing Believers, I believe that we are seeing more and more characteristics associated with the Church Jesus addressed in *Revelation 3:14-22!* (i.e. the Laodicean Church)

Our LORD knows where we are! And if we are honest with ourselves WE know where we are as well!

ADDRESSING SPIRITUAL DECLINE-PART 1

JEREMIAH 6:16-19; 2 CHRONICLES 16-17; REVELATION 3:14-22

The seven Churches in Asia spoken of in *Revelation 2 and 3* portray real issues that plagued seven different Churches in Asia in the Apostle John’s day!

Also, what we see in these Churches are things that we can see even in Churches today!

And, I believe that these seven Churches also show the trend of Church history over the past 2,000 years! In fact, they show how far away from the Bible, modern Christianity has drifted!

We see here that when Christ examined and addressed each of these Churches He told it like it was both good and bad! He praised them about the good He saw and He warned them about the evil that He saw!

However, with the Laodicean Church, He had nothing good to say to them or about them.

When Jesus examines His Churches today, what does He see? How would He describe Churches in general? How would He describe our Church?

I. THE PROBLEM OF THIS CHURCH. (*Revelation 3:15-17*)

What was wrong with the Church in Laodicea?

A. This Church Was Lukewarm!

(i.e. They were neither cold, nor hot)

1. Being COLD would possibly be being totally apathetic and indifferent toward the things of the LORD! (They weren’t there...)

2. Being HOT would possibly be excited and passionate about God and living His word!

Being hungry for things that are true, and right, and clean, and godly and eternal! (They weren’t there...)

3. They Were Lukewarm...what would that entail:

a. Compromising—not wanting to be controversial!
(i.e. *Wanting to avoid certain subjects*)

- b. Ecumenical—tossing doctrine aside for the sake of unity with other types of religions in order to bring everybody together!
- c. Caring only about self, while not really caring about the things that are important to Christ!
- d. Satisfied with being average! Of course it is not a sin to be average in most things.
Many “*Christians*” are just “*average.*”
In the middle of the spectrum!

They are both the best of the worst and worst of the best. When you think of yourself and what Christ wants us to be, where do you think He might place you?
- f. If you we don’t think that’s bad—notice what Jesus said about lukewarmness! (*Vs 16*)

6. **I am afraid that there are too many Believers today who are just like those in the Church of Laodicea.**
Neither hot or nor cold...just lukewarm!
They are just your **average** Believer!
They are **not really growing** like they should be!
They are **not really actively involved** in any ministry as Christ would have all of us to be!
They are **satisfied with the status quo** with no desire to be anything better than what they are!
Luke 6:46—“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

7. **So, how can we know if we are Lukewarm?**
a. **When our pursuit of goods and pleasure have overtaken the pursuit of God!** *Matthew 5:6—“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”*

Luke 12:15—“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

2 Timothy 3:12 – “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (e.g. Series on “Marks Of Godly Believers”)

- b. **When we are only concerned with the things of this world.** (*Matthew 6:24-34*)
- c. **When we are more concerned with living the satisfied life than the crucified life.**
Galatians 2:20—“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
- d. **When we are more concerned with “fitting in” with the worldly crowd instead of having a good relationship and continuing fellowship with Jesus.**

This Church Was Lukewarm!

- B. **This Church Was Self-Deceived!**
“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.”
- C. **This Church Was Self-Absorbed!**
“Knowest not...”
- D. **This Church Was Self-Sufficient!**
“...have need of nothing...”

THE PROBLEM WITH THIS CHURCH...

II. **THE PRESCRIPTION FOR THIS CHURCH!**

(Revelation 3:16-22)

A. **How Does A Church Get Out Of Such A Mess?**

It was definitely a big mess – spiritually speaking, this Church was in deep trouble! But it was not impossible to remedy! They needed to listen to Dr. Jesus! They needed to hear what the Spirit was saying to them! (*Vs 22*)

B. **Christ's Counsel To This Church:**

Here is some wise advice from Jesus – We overcome our, lukewarmness by: (3:18-19)

1. **Repent!**

It all begins with Repentance when we recognize that just being an “average” Believer is sinful.

We have to get serious about getting right with God.
We have to get serious about getting on fire for God.
We have to get serious about pleasing Him all the days of our lives.

We should empty ourselves of what we are full of so we can become filled with the Holy Spirit again!
(e.g. Using a bottle of water)

2. **Replace! (Isaiah 55:1-2)**

- a. Gold – rewards for living right and godly.
- b. Clean, white clothes – washed in the blood of the Lamb.
1 John 1:7–“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”
- c. Eye-salve to restore spiritual eyesight.
The Word of God!

3. **Yield to Christ as LORD once again (3:20) Listen for His voice, and respond (“my sheep hear my voice...” John 10:27)**

- a. Surrender to Him again as Lord of our life!
- b. Lord of our home!
- c. Lord of our heart and emotions!
- d. Lord of our plans!
- e. Lord of our successes!
- f. Lord of our failures!

Conclusion

Be honest today.

Is Jesus on the outside of your heart's door looking in?

Is He knocking on your hearts door looking, longing, and waiting to be let back to His rightful place on the throne of your heart?

If He is, will you open the door

God always offers a remedy if we will recognize and receive it!

2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.