

Church History: “Self-deception” 1850 –

Revelation 3:14-20

(Part 1)

While exiled to Patmos, the apostle John was praying on the Lord’s day, when a voice instructed him to write what he was about to see. John turned and was given a vision of Jesus in His full glory, so awesome that John fell to the ground, stunned. Jesus lifted him up, identified Himself, and told John to write letters to seven churches.

How does Jesus identify Himself to the church at Laodicea? v.14

“When Christ addresses a church that is failing in loyalty and obedience, He is to them the “Amen” of God in faithfulness and in true witness and He is the only one who has absolute power over the world because He is the source of all creation.” “NIV Bible Commentary” p.1153

Why does He want to spit them out of His mouth? vv.15,16

“It is apparent that there is something about the intermediate state of being lukewarm that is utterly obnoxious to God. Far more hopeful is the state of one who has been untouched by the gospel and makes no pretense of putting his trust in Christ than the one who makes some profession but by his life illustrates that he has not really honored the Christ whose gospel he had heard and professed. There is no one farther from the truth in Christ than the one who makes an idle profession without real faith. How many have outwardly conformed to requirements of the church without a true state of being born again into the family of God? How many church members are far from God yet by their membership in the professing church have satisfied their own hearts and have been lulled into a sense of false security?”

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ” John Walvoord p.93

How are they deceived? v.17

“They were useless to Christ because they were complacent, self-satisfied, and indifferent to the real issues of faith in Him and in discipleship. The deeper problem in the Laodicean church was not simply their indifference. It was their ignorance of their real condition. The spirit of the surrounding culture had crept into the congregation and had paralyzed their spiritual life. But did they claim to be materially rich or spiritually rich? Most

likely both were involved; the Laodiceans probably interpreted their material wealth as a blessing from God and thus were self-deceived as to their true spiritual condition.”

“NIV Bible Commentary” p.1153

What does He counsel them to buy from Him? Why? v.18

“They were urged to buy not ordinary gold, but refined gold, referring to that which would glorify God and make them truly rich. Through its banking industry the city had material wealth. But the church lacked spiritual richness. Though they had beautiful clothes, they were urged to wear white clothes, symbolic of righteousness, which would cover their spiritual nakedness. Then Christ exhorted them to put salve on their eyes. What they needed was 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.”

“The Bible Knowledge Commentary” Walvoord and Zuck p.942

What does He exhort them to do? Why? v.19

“Christ rebuked them because He loved them, which love would also bring chastisement on this church.”

“The Bible Knowledge Commentary” Walvoord and Zuck p.942

What does He promise those who repent? vv.20,21

Who will respond to what the Spirit says? v.21

“The letters to the seven churches are a remarkably complete treatment of problems that face the church today. The recurring dangers of losing their first love, of being afraid of suffering, doctrinal defection, moral departure, spiritual deadness, not holding fast, and lukewarmness are just as prevalent today as they were in first century churches. Because these letters come from Christ personally, they take on significance as God’s final word of exhortation to the church down through the centuries. The final appeal is to all individuals who will hear. People in churches today would do well to listen.”

“The Bible Knowledge Commentary” Walvoord and Zuck p.942

