

The First-Century Church
"The Church in Laodicea"

Introduction:

1. The New Testament contains information (positive and negative) that was written "about" as well as "to" various congregations in the first century.
2. By "rightly dividing" this information we can know the Lord's will for His church today.
3. This lesson is a study of the message that the Lord sent to the church in Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22).

Discussion:

- I. (vs.14) THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS MESSAGE
 - A. This message was sent to *"the angel [messenger] of the church of the Laodiceans."*
 - B. Although John recorded this message, it was actually spoken by the Lord who described Himself as:
 1. *"the Amen"*
 2. *"the faithful and true witness"* (1:5)
 3. *"the beginning of the creation of God."*
 - a. This does not mean that Christ was part of God's creation.
 - b. He is a member of the eternal Godhead (John 1:1-3).
 - c. He created all things (Colossians 1:15-18).
 - d. This expression is one of several that emphasize His preeminence over all things.
- II. THE LORD DID NOT COMMEND THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA
 - A. By comparison, He did not reprove the congregations in Smyrna (2:8-11) and Philadelphia (3:7-13).
 - B. Also, even though the Lord rebuked the churches in Ephesus (2:1-7), Pergamos (2:12-17), Thyatira (2:18-29), and Sardis (3:1-6), He commended them for their good points.
 - C. The Lord did not speak one word of commendation to the church in Laodicea.
- III. (vs.15-17) THE LORD STRONGLY REBUKED THIS CHURCH
 - A. He was able to rebuke this church because:
 1. of who He is (vs.14b)
 2. He knew its works (vs.15a).
 - B. (vs.16) The Lord saw this church as being *"lukewarm."*
 1. It was not *"cold,"* and it was not *"hot."*
 2. In being *"lukewarm,"* this church was indifferent, apathetic, self-satisfied, and mediocre.
 3. Because this church was *"lukewarm,"* it made the Lord sick to His stomach.
 - C. (vs.17) This church's main problem was the way it saw itself.
 1. It saw itself as being *"rich," "increased with goods,"* and in *"need of nothing."*
 2. The Lord saw it as being *"wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."*
- IV. (vs.18-19) THE LORD CALLED UPON THIS CHURCH TO REPENT
 - A. (vs.18) He counseled this church to come to Him so it could receive some special blessings it needed, including true riches, clean garments, and spiritual vision.
 - B. (vs.19) He revealed His motive for rebuking this church -- *"love."*
- V. (vs.20-21) THE LORD PROMISED TO BLESS THOSE WHO OVERCAME
 - A. (vs.20) He would have close fellowship with those who heard His voice and opened the door.
 - B. (vs.21) Those who overcame would be with Him at His throne, just as He overcame and was placed at the Father's right hand.
 - C. The church in Laodicea had to make a choice.
 1. It could remain in its lukewarm condition and be rejected by Christ.
 2. It could repent and overcome and be with the Lord forever.