

WHAT GOD INSPECTS

Revelation 3:14-20

INTRODUCTION: In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, the Lord inspects His churches. He gave His commendation or His condemnation according to what He discovered. God judges individual Christians and the church collectively. The church of Laodicea represents the church of the twenty-first century. The word Laodicea means “people rule.” Instead of the Holy Spirit leading and empowering the church, the people were trusting in themselves. The Christian tends to gravitate to his old nature because of the “lust of the flesh.” This applies to the church as well. If the members of the church are not rooted in the Word, filled with the Spirit, and abiding in Christ, it will become a compromising, carnal, and complacent church that has a form of godliness but denies the power thereof.

I. INSPECTOR OF THE CHURCH

A. IDENTITY OF CHRIST.

Jesus is the “Amen.” In the Hebrew the word means truth. He is the “faithful and true witness.” He is the trustworthy witness. (John 14:6) He is the “beginning of the creation of God.” He is the Creator of all creation. (Col. 1:16-17)

B. INSPECTION OF THE CHURCH

1. Spiritual condition revealed. v. 15 “thou art neither cold nor hot”
2. Spiritual condition rejected. v. 16 “I will spew thee out of my mouth”

II. INDICTMENT OF THE CHURCH

A. CLAIM OF THE CHURCH. v. 17a “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.”

“Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Matthew 7:18-27

Chuck Colson: “The greatest myth of the twentieth century is that people are good. We aren't. We're not morally neutral.”

B. CHARGE OF CHRIST. v. 17b “and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”

“The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” Luke 12:16-21

Barna: American Christianity Lukewarm

“The Barna Group in a recent study assessed American Christianity as neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. ‘Most Americans do not have strong and clear beliefs, largely because they do not possess a coherent biblical worldview,’ David Kinnaman, president of The Barna Group, said. That is, they lack a consistent and holistic understanding of their faith. Millions of Americans say they are personally committed to Jesus Christ, but they believe he sinned while on earth.

‘Many believers claim to trust what the Bible teaches, but they reject the notion of a real spiritual adversary or they feel that faith-sharing activities are optional. Millions feel personally committed to God, but they are renegotiating the definition of that deity.’

Most Americans hold few convictions about their faith and have one foot in the biblical camp and one foot outside it. They say they are committed, but to what? They are spiritually active, but to what end? The spiritual profile of American Christianity is not unlike a lukewarm church that the Bible warns about.”

III. INSTRUCTION TO THE CHURCH

A. COUNSEL TO THE CHURCH. v. 18

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live.” Isa. 55:1-3

B. CURE FOR THE CHURCH. V. 19

Lukewarm, complacent, carnal churches make God sick. The only solution for lukewarmness is repentance! Each member must confess their need of Christ and turn from their sins in repentance.

IV. INVITATION TO THE CHURCH

A. CHRIST’S POSITION. V. 20 “I stand at the door”

B. CHRIST’S PERSISTENCE. V. 20 “and knock”

C. CHRIST’S PROMISE. V. 20 “I will come in to him”

LESSONS FOR LIFE:

1. How would Ebenezer measure up under Christ’s inspection?
2. Each member makes up the spiritual condition of the church. How does your life measure up under Christ’s inspection?
3. The presence and blessing of Christ are only experienced by those whose lives are aflame for Christ. Is your life giving light to a lost world?
4. The only solution for lukewarmness is repentance!
5. Jesus said, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” The Spirit has spoken to our church. Will we respond in obedience?
5. The sinner must repent to be saved. Luke 13:3, 5

DR. W. A. CRISWELL

“Imagine this scene. Satan walks down the aisle of my church some Sunday, and says, ‘Dr. Criswell, I want to join the First Baptist Church in Dallas. It’s a great congregation and I want to belong to it.’ So I say, ‘Well, this is amazing, surprising—the devil wants to join the church.’ But I ask him some questions first, and listen to his brilliant testimony. I ask, ‘Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?’ ‘I certainly do. Why,’ says the devil, I believe Jesus is the Son of God. I’ve known Him from before the foundation of the world. I knew Him in heaven. I knew Him before He was incarnate. I certainly believe that He is the Son of God.’

‘Well, do you believe He is born of a virgin?’ ‘I certainly do. I saw the angel make the glorious announcement to the virgin Mary and I was there in Bethlehem when He was born. I saw the star and I heard the angel sing. I believe in the virgin birth.’

So I say, ‘Do you believe Jesus died on the cross?’ ‘Yes sir, I was there. ‘Well, do you believe that He was raised from the dead?’ ‘Yes sir, I was there. I saw the stone rolled away. I saw the Roman seals broken; I saw Him step out. I was there.’

‘Well, do you believe that He’s coming again?’ ‘I do. The apostle John wrote of me in the apocalypse that I had a short time. I believe.’ ‘Well, I’m a Baptist pastor. Do you believe in being baptized? Do you believe in immersion?’ ‘I certainly do. I was at the Jordon River, and I saw John the Baptist baptize Jesus. I’ll make you a good Baptist.’ says the devil. ‘Well, I have another question to ask you, Mr. Devil. You say you want to join this church? Will you come, will you be present?’ ‘Oh,’ he says, ‘I’ll be there

every service. I won't miss a one. I'll stand right by the side of the pastor. In fact, I'll join the choir. I'll get into the members themselves. I'll be a good deacon for you. I'll go to all the deacon's meetings. I won't miss a one. I'll be right there.' Well, with a testimony like that, I make a motion that we take him in. And someone seconds the motion. All in favor say 'Aye' and hold up your hand. Amen. It's unanimous. We have him in the church and he is just as orthodox as he can be. He believes every article of the faith. He does not doubt any of it.

However, there is one other question to ask him—just one. 'Satan, you have walked up and down the earth oversowing God's fields with tares, breaking many hearts. You have afflicted children, you have destroyed homes, and you have ruined lives. Satan, have you repented? Have you turned? Have you changed and do you open your heart to accept Jesus as your Savior? Do you bow down and worship Him as the Lord of life? Do you? Will you? And we all know what his answer would be.