

“The Knock”

(Rev. 3:14-22)

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I. Introduction

A. One of the best known verses in the Bible

1. Revelation 3:20 “Behold! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”
2. Has inspired many paintings
3. The most famous is by Holman Hunt
 - a. Hanging in St. Paul’s Cathedral in London
 - b. It is entitled, “Jesus, the Light of the World.”
3. The story behind it

Most call it “Christ Knocking at the Door”

But it was the spiritual insight of the artist that gave it the title, “Jesus, the Light of the World.”

It is a picture of a cottage, run down and neglected. Thistles have grown up to the height of the window. Grass has grown in the pathway. The trailing years of vines and weeds are everywhere. The hinges are rusty.

Yet, in the midst of that dishevelment and neglect, there stands the kingliest form that mind could imagine, the Lord in His regal robes.

He has in one hand a lantern from which the light falls upon every crevice, and with the other hand He is knocking at the door. The sense of the artist and the wonder that overwhelmed his soul seems to have been that the light of blessedness and of glory is very close to the soul of any man. There Jesus stands, knocking at the door, and the glory of that light falls upon the neglected cottage.

B. The Final Church

1. The picture of Jesus patiently knocking at the door
2. Invitation to the people of the final church
3. But nobody is answering His knock
4. The most pitiful of all the churches
5. The only one of the seven churches with no commendation

II. Review

A. Ephesus

- The Cold Church (33 AD →)

B. Smyrna

- The Persecuted Church (100 AD →)

C. Pergamos

- The Indulged Church (312 AD →)

D. Thyatira

- The Compromised Church (600 AD →)

E. Sardis

- The Incomplete Church (1500 AD →)

F. Philadelphia

- The Missionary Church (1800 AD →)

G. Laodicea

- The Lukewarm Church (1900 AD →)

II. Text

A. The Author

1. *“These are the words of the Amen”.....v.14*

- a. “Amen” means “so be it”
- b. Or, “truly, truly”
- c. Justin regarding Jim Green’s “amens”

2. *“The Faithful and True Witness”*

- a. He doesn’t lie!

3. *“The Ruler of God’s creation”*

- a. Some translations say “the **beginning** of the creation of God
 1. Can see the eyes of Jehovah’s witnesses light up!
 2. Say this proves that Christ was God’s 1st creation
 - Was He created?
- b. The importance of this issue
 1. If Christ was created....He is less than God
 2. ...and unable to pay for our sins
- c. Jesus was and is the creator...not a creation

1. The Grammar

- a. “arch e” (“ruler”) of creation
- b. The “originator” of creation

2. The Context

- a. Revelation presents Jesus as the “creator”
- b. Only He is Worthy!

*wait till Chapter 5!

3. *What John said elsewhere*

(John 1:1-3)—“In the beginning was the *Word*, and the *Word* was with God, and the *Word* was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

(John 1:14)—“And the *Word* became flesh and made his dwelling among us”

4. *The Letter to Colossians*

a. Had also been given to Laodiceans

b. (Col. 1:15-16)—

“Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”

B. The Congregation (v. 14)

1. The city

- a. Situated 45 miles SE of Philadelphia in Modern Turkey
- b. Founded in 250 BC by Antiochus II
- c. Named for his wife Laodicea
- d. Situated in the Lycas Valley
 - 1. Crossroads of 3 ancient highways
- e. Famous for 3 reasons

1. Banking and Financial Center

- a. Very wealthy
- b. New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina
 - 1. Needed outside help to rebuild
- c. Earthquake of AD 61

Tacitus said—“One of the most famous cities of Asia, Laodicea, was in that same year overthrown by an earthquake and without any relief from Rome, recovered itself by its own resources.”

d. Pride in their wealth

2. Pride in their clothing

a. Special sheep with soft, violet black, glossy wool

b. Sold designs worldwide—the ancient Paris!

3. Medical Center

a. World famous medical school

b. Produced a special tablet

- Sold world-wide
- Would crush and mix with water for an eye salve
- To prevent blindness

2. The Church

a. Had adopted the same personality as the city

b. They had pride in their—

1. Riches
2. Clothing
3. Sight (thought they were so smart)

c. Jesus is about to set them straight

C. The Concern (v. 15-17)

1. ***“I know your deeds, that they are neither cold nor hot” (v.15)***

2. Drinking lukewarm coffee

- a. Me and my coffee
- 3. The church of Laodicea was “lukewarm”
 - a. The primary meaning is NOT lukewarm Christians
- 4. Three types of people
 - a. *Cold toward Christ*
 - 1. No response at all
 - 2. No pretense of being religious
 - b. *Hot toward Christ*
 - 1. True believers
 - 2. No questions about them
 - 3. Various degrees of commitment however
 - c. *Lukewarm*
 - 1. Unbelievers
 - 2. But they belong to churches
 - 3. “Spit them out”
 - 4. Harder to reach for Christ than the “cold” ones
 - 5. ***“I wish you were either one or the other” (v.15)***
- 5. ***“So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” (v.16)***
 - a. Jesus never does this to a believer
 - 1. ***(John 6:37)—“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”***
 - 2. Even if we let him down

6. We may at times nauseate God—but He won't spit us out
 - a. A loving dad may put up with a rotten kid
 1. But what a disappointment
 - b. Today you are either growing hotter or colder
7. Lukewarm Christians do pay a price
 - a. Lose the Joy of their salvation
 - b. Lose Heavenly rewards
 - c. Lose Earthly Fellowship with Christ
8. Symptoms of cooling
 1. *Stop spending time with God in Prayer*
 - a. Like unplugging the power!
 2. *You ignore God*
 3. *You feel distant from God*
 4. *He no longer feels real in your life*
 5. *You think about everything else but God*
 6. *You get too busy to serve*
 7. *You don't spend quality time with other believers*
 8. *You fail to stick with a church*
 9. *Your passion to reach the unsaved is dying*
 10. *You have a form of godliness...but no power*
9. But the primary meaning of the lukewarm of Rev. 3 is the unsaved
 - a. They have mastered “Churchianity”
 - b. Will typify organized religion of the Tribulation

c. Paul warned us that in the last days many will be characterized as

***“having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;
from such turn away.” (II Timothy 3:5)***

10. They had deceived themselves.....v.17

a. “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’
(v.17)

1. Thought they were safe and secure

b. Jesus said “But you do not realize that you are:.....v.17

1. ***“wretched”***

2. ***“pitiful”***

3. ***“poor”***

4. ***“blind”***

5. ***“naked”***

10. Characteristics of the “lukewarm”

1. They believe they are the true Church

2. They will be the target of much of God’s wrath

(Darby) The immediate occasion, object, inner spring of all the terrible judgment which is coming, is the professing Church itself. It ought to have been God’s witness on the earth, Christ’s epistle known and read of all men; but, having become corrupt, it is this professing Church that primarily and definitely brings down the wrath of God.

3. They look like they are Christians already

4d. They are the hardest to reach for Christ

(Walvoord) 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 has heard and professed. There is no one farther from the truth of Christ than the one who makes an idle profession without real faith.

D. The Challenge (v. 18-22)

1. Here's what they need

a. True gold (v.18)

1. Symbol of Divine Presence
2. Can't be bought or sold
3. Positional – Salvation

b. White garments (v.18)

1. Symbol of righteous deeds
2. Practical holiness
3. They stood naked before God
4. Ultimate indignation

In the ancient world to be stripped naked was the worst humiliation.

c. Let them see (v.18)

1. Need spiritual sight....not just physical sight
2. Only comes after—
 - Positional holiness
 - Practical holiness

2. God still cares for them (v.19)

a. In spite of their folly

1. John 3:16 “For God so loved the (whole) world...”
 - b. ***“Those whom I love”***
 1. “phileo” not “agape” love
 2. “Likes”
 - c. He rebukes them...v.19
 - d. God rebukes the unsaved for sin
 1. Correct the ones we love
 - e. Because He cares!
3. Standing at the door, knocking (v.20)
 - a. Knocks at the heart of every man, woman & child
4. **God uses different methods to KNOCK**

a. Through His word

b. Through His people

The late Dr. Lee Scarborough, the great preacher from Texas, told of the conversion of a well-to-do businessman who came forward at the close of a service. The pastor asked who it was that God used to speak to him about Christ. He had heard the preaching of D.L. Moody, George Truett, and many other outstanding ministers, but said, “None of those great preachers moved me. About eight years ago God saved my wife. I have watched her now these eight years as she has been faithful to Jesus Christ in poverty and in riches. Night after night I’ve watched her kneel beside our bed to pray. I’ve watched her as she went faithfully to prayer meeting and church services, putting Jesus Christ first in every area of her life. Last night as we retired, when she kneeled to pray, I began to think of the difference between her life and mine. As I lay there, I thought of my life as a little molehill of nothing and her life as a great mountain for God and righteousness. I got up out of bed and for the first time in eight years asked her to pray for my soul. Last night, by my bedside, I was led to Jesus Christ – not by D.L. Moody or George Truett, but by my wife.”

There is no question about it. Jesus knocks on the door of men’s hearts through His people.

c. Through nature

- (Rom. 1:20) —“*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, So that they are without excuse...*”

d. Through events

- Often through tragedy
- Draw them toward God

e. Through His Holy Spirit

- Salvation is “supernatural”
- Reaching Muslims
- Dreams and visions

5. Yet they fail to open the door

- a. God can knock...but you must open
- b. These people had heard His call and patient knock yet failed to open

6. Reward to those who let Him in

- a. I will come in...v.20
 1. Salvation
- b. I will dine with him.....v.20
 1. Fellowship
- c. Will be seated at the Throne of God.....v.21
 1. Rewards

7. Final Appeal (v. 22)

- a. Are you a fake?

b. Is yours merely a “form of godliness?”

8. Martin Luther was once a fake

Martin Luther said: “Before my conversion, had you knocked at the door of my heart and asked who lives there, I would have said, ‘Martin Luther lives here.’ Had you come in to see me, you would have found a monk with his head shaved, sleeping in a hair shirt, under his head two tables of stone, a scourge hanging down by the side of the bed. But now if you knock at the door of my heart and ask who lives there, I will reply: ‘Martin Luther no longer lives here; Jesus the Lord lives here now.’ ”

IV. Summary

A. The Savior is Knocking

1. Paul Harvey.... “The rest of the story”
2. Painting by Holman Hunt, “Jesus, the Light of the World.”

A familiar story tells of a discerning man who looked at the picture, went to see Mr. Hunt, the artist, and said: “You have made a mistake. You did not put any handle on the door. It is just a plain door.” The artist replied, “No, not a mistake. You misunderstand. The handle is on the inside. *We* must open the door.” When we do, the glory of that light falls upon the soul.

B. Your decision

1. Jesus does the loving, the dying, and the knocking
2. But only you can do the opening