EP47 Revelation 3:14-22 P2

The Church at Laodicea

Overall Theme: Let Me In

Revelation 3:14-22

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, now says this: 'I know your deeds, that you are now neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 'So, because you are now lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am about to now vomit you out of My mouth. 'Because you now say, "I am now rich, and have become wealthy, and now have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are now wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I now advise you to buy from Me gold having been refining by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may choose to clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may now see.

'Those whom I now love, I now reprove and now discipline; therefore, you are commanded to now be zealous and repent. 'Behold, I stand at the door and now knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will choose to come into him and will dine with him, and he with Me. 'He who is now overcoming, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 'He who is now having an ear, is commanded to hear what the Spirit now says to the churches.'

In our last podcast we learned that those at Laodicea were apostasy free, but they were plagued by a personal delusion of self-sufficiency. Their view of their condition was in compete opposition to Jesus' view. They say they are now rich, have prospered, and now need nothing at all; but they are now wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Wow! This is how disconnected with the truth we can become when we are fixated on this life and the things of this world.

As a result, they were completely inert and provided no benefit or blessing to those around them. If they were "*psuchros*" or cold, they would be a church who brought life and refreshment to the souls of those who are weary and parched by the suffering and struggles of this life. They would be like a cold cup of water for one who has been wondering in the hot and barren wastelands of life. If they were "*zestos*" or hot, they would bring comfort and healing to others who could come and "bathe" in the warmth of their company; and the fellowship they share would be therapeutic and healing to the soul.

His point is that they are simply not helpful and not useful in this condition to anyone but themselves. They are inert, lifeless, and passive when they should be impacting those who live in their city and all those who come and trade in this city.

Thus, Jesus presents them with His solution, which in good business-like terms, amounts to a bargained for exchange.

Buy from Me

Revelation 3:18

I now advise you to buy from Me gold having been refining by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may choose to clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may now see.

Jesus counsels them as to where they can find the remedy to their sick condition—how they can find healing. Though the prescription will not be easy to swallow, it is very merciful and gentle, for at least they are now aware of the path. And, clearly, these pictures are all a play on the key industries within Laodicea: banking, clothing, and medicine. Like a good friend, Jesus is talking to them in a language they can fully understand and to which they can relate—the language of commerce.

From Him

Jesus was very clear, as a matter of lifestyle, they must buy **from Him** the gold being refined in the fire, the white garments, and the eye salve. There is no other source of these items. Sure, the world mimics the spiritual reality and offers up all manner of substitutes, but they are substandard products not meeting either the quality or the performance standards necessary to address the true need of its consumers. In fact, the solutions offered by this world do not actually address the core issues nor do they solve the problem. And those who buy them remain wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. To buy **from Him**, as our exclusive supplier, is the answer.

Like the idea of repentance, to "buy" is not about a moment in time, or a reaction to a corrective letter. Rather it is addressing something which needs to define our lives.¹

Gold Refined by Fire

But since we must buy this gold, it means we must agree with God that we need it, we must value its worth, and we must engage Him in a transaction to acquire this kind of gold. There must be a willing exchange.

Looking to the **Code**, we find that gold is the color identified with deity. In the same way that gold is the most valuable possession in the economy of man, the *divine nature* is the most valuable possession in the kingdom of God.

This unique form of gold has **already** been and is **continually** being refined by fire. Being rendered in the *perfect passive participle*, it speaks in **Code** of what has been caused to be done while at the same time it speaks of what is being done.

Because "refined" is rendered in the *perfect* tense, it communicates that this gold has already undergone the fire of testing. This speaks of the suffering which Jesus endured in in His physical body. Through suffering, Jesus learned obedience, and through suffering the Father perfected the man who

¹ "buy" is rendered in the *aorist active infinitive*

would be the author of our salvation.²

With that said, "refined' is also rendered as a *participle*, as something that is ongoing. However, we know for certain that Jesus suffered **once** and for all, so we know that He is not "technically" continually suffering.³ But He is also identified as the head of the church and His believers are identified as His body.⁴ With this image in mind, there are still sufferings of Jesus which must be completed or fulfilled by His body. As Paul said, "*I am now glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am now participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, which is now the church.*"⁵

In other words, Jesus is asking us to go to market and acquire from Him gold refined by fire that we may experience a full expression of His *divine nature*—a full expression of the **Design Point** (Christ in us⁶)., If we are **willing**, the Father will use the fire of sufferings to teach us obedience and to perfect us in Him, just as He did with Jesus.

1 Peter 1:6-9

In this you now choose to greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if it is now being necessary, you having been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is now perishing, even though now being tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you now love Him, and though you are not now seeing Him, but are now believing in Him, you choose to now greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, choosing to now be obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

What a beautiful passage, even though it takes all manner of pain and trauma to cause us to **now** be believing, such that Jesus is the one who lives His life in and through ours. And ironically, we are encouraged to embrace the fire as a necessary part of our lives. We are instructed to buy this gold.

1 Peter 4:1-2

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, choose to arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has chosen to cease from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

God wants us to understand the purpose and the results which can come from the fire, and then to choose to acquire it from Him. In other words, He wants us to downright ask Him for the fire, so we might share in the *divine nature*. Make no mistake, this is a scary prayer, considering what it takes to break down

² Hebrews 2:10, 5:8-9

³ Hebrews 7:27, 9:11-14, 24-28, 10:10

⁴ Ephesians 1:22, 4:12, 5:23; Colossians 1:18

⁵ See Colossians 1:24

⁶ See Galatians 2:20

all our self-sufficiency, complacency, and personal delusion. For me personally, I prayed, and God most definitely brought the fire. I once told Him:

Go ahead and destroy every part of my being, known and unknown, that stands in opposition to you and in opposition to the Father's will being done in and through my life; and do not stop until it is finished!"

This is a prayer which He will always gladly hear and accept (scary though it may be). And if He accepts it, we can be confident that He will act accordingly, for this is a prayer according to His will.⁷

Refinement

God's goal for our lives is to have His nature fill and inhabit our bodies, but to do that He has to remove all that is in the way of His occupancy.⁸ Jesus has given us a new nature, a *New Creation*, which has been created in righteousness, holiness, and truth. The *New Creation* is where the Holy Spirit literally makes His abode in our being.

Accordingly, we are instructed or commanded to **put on** this new self. In other words, just because the Spirit has made His abode in our *New Creation*, His characteristics do not automatically define us. We must learn to put off our old nature (our *flesh*), that is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit (the things that keep us deceived to our true condition) and **exchange** it for all that is new.⁹

The Need for Fire

There is a necessary journey that **Yahweh** takes us through to learn **WHY** we should put off the old nature and **HOW** to put on the new nature. And that is what the fire is all about. By the way, this is what John the Baptist meant in when he said the one who comes after him will baptize in the Holy Spirit and fire and what Jesus meant when He said, *"everyone will be salted with fire."*¹⁰ The fire is necessary if we are ever going to possess more fully the *divine nature* of **Yahweh** (imaged in the refined gold).

Wrong Belief & Unbelief

To purify gold, it is first heated in the fire until it becomes molten, then the dross (or the impurities) which separate from the gold arise to the surface and are swiped off by the smelter, leaving a purer version of the gold. And God is a smelter who operates with surgical precision in that different metals separate at different temperatures. God knows the exact amount of heat that is needed to extract each impurity of wrong belief and unbelief in our soul.

And keep in mind, He is not targeting our sinful behavior, as that is just a fruit of what we believe and what we feel and think. What He is targeting is the sin of **wrong belief** and the **unbelief** which is buried down in the deep recesses our soul, as these "enemies" keep us from betting our lives on **Yahweh**.¹¹ The enemies of wrong belief and unbelief fight to keep us trusting in ourselves (in the "Me"), trusting in things

⁷ 1 John 5:14-15

⁸ Galatians 2:20; John 15:4-5

⁹ Ephesians 4:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:10

¹⁰ Matthew 3:11, 9:49

¹¹ See John 16:8-9

of this world, in religion, trusting a God of our own creation, and so on. Wrong belief and unbelief are the nutrients upon which our *flesh* feasts. Therefore, God applies the heat in varying degrees, over various amounts of times, to address each such enemy with the goal of defeating them with the truth.

The fire is so useful in that it brings to the surface all the slag, the dross, the sinful behavior, attitudes, and thoughts, and it reveals the quality of the "metal" so-to-speak. And when the fire brings our dross to the surface, it is always ugly and very messy, and our response will often be quite un-Christian like. And it is easy to become ashamed, overwhelmed with guilt, and afraid that God, as well as those in our life, are going to "punish" us or "judge" us for what we do and what we speak. And in that fear, we hide.

The whole point of the fire however is to bring all the slag up to the surface. He does this not to shame us or humiliate us, though that does tend to happen because so many in the household of God do not understand the purposes of the fire, so they tend to shame those who are seemingly not doing it right. But the irony is that those who are letting God turn up the heat, notwithstanding the consequential behaviors and attitudes that flow out, are the ones who are doing it right. Those living in their religious delusion pretending to be good are the fools who should be ashamed and humiliated.

Yahweh must get to the truth of what we really feel about Him so we can stop hiding from Him and decide if we really want His friendship and if we really want to bet our lives upon His name.

Therefore, when we go through the fire, we must remember that Jesus died for our sins, forgave all our transgression, and that every accusation that could ever be made against us that is hostile to us, has been nailed to the cross.¹² Therefore, we can let go of the shame and the guilt. It is not ours to bear; He bore it all for us.

I know all too well how difficult it is to let go of the shame and the guilt, especially if other people have been impacted by our decisions and are constantly reminding us of our failures and sin. But we need to dig down deep in our soul and choose to **now** be forgetting what lies behind and choose to **now** be reaching forward to what lies ahead.¹³ If we stay stuck in the past, ruminating on our so-called "failures," it will be extremely hard to move forward. Hence, Jesus said that no one after putting his hands to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom.¹⁴ Our life lies ahead of us, and God intends it to be a life of freedom from our past.

Besides, if we believe in (bet our lives upon) **Yahweh Adonai, Yahweh Raah, Yahweh Mekoddishkem,** and **Yahweh Qanna**, then we can be confident that every place we walked in the past was an appointment from **Yahweh** (for us and for those impacted by our choices), and completely necessary as He jealousy pursues our separation unto Him (and ironically, their separation).¹⁵

We also need to be cognizant of the fact that the dross **MUST** first come up to the surface, or it will never be swiped away. The point of suffering is to pull the dross and impurities from our lives, and that process is always messy, painful, and unfortunately, quite visible. But rest assured, it always reveals our wrong belief and unbelief.

Hence, it is normal—completely normal—for us to behave in ways that are hardly godly. After all, God

¹² Colossians 2:13-14

¹³ *Philippians 3:13*. Both "forgetting" and "reaching forward" are rendered in the *present middle participle*.

¹⁴ Luke 9:62

¹⁵ Yahweh the Sovereign Lord; Yahweh the Shepherd; Yahweh who makes us holy; Yahweh who is jealous.

knows that fire burns and causes a tumultuous reaction. Thus, it is ok if we kick and scream along the way—even throw fits of anger and wallow in our despair—we just need to go to Jesus with our complaint and look to Him, and only to Him, for our answers. We must also remember that He alone is the Alpha, the initiator of all things in our lives.

God's aim is to get us come face-to-face with our behavior and attitudes so we can begin to consider the WHY of it all. Why are we afraid? Why do we think He is a God of punishment? Why do we need to grab and take what we can get to protect ourselves, to feel good about ourselves, even if it is just for a moment? Why do we hide from everyone, including God, behind our walls of self-protection and selfsufficiency? Why do we fight so hard to protect ourselves? Why are we so angry, depressed, and filled with despair? Why do we depend upon our own wisdom to guide our lives? Why do we love our religion and all the ways we try to be good for God and for others? Why does shame run so deeply in our veins? Why is there still so much pain locked in the recesses of our soul, and why are we desperately trying to avoid it? The list of "WHY's" can go on and on as they inhabit every expression of our *flesh*.

It takes a while to lead us to consider these questions, but inevitably, the Spirit will bring them to our attention. And then we must decide, we must choose, if we will be honest and face these questions. For example, the fire made me realize how much despair I had toward my future. Why? I realized I held a lot of bitterness toward God for my past. I felt that He did not care for me with the love and tenderness of a Father. Truth be told, I felt He was mean, harsh, and was always dangling an unreachable carrot in front of me. Yet, at the same time, He seemed ready to thump me anytime I did not do things right. In hopelessness, I feared my past would become my future.

Clearly, this is so far from the truth that God has revealed about Himself, but it was how I interpreted my experiences in life and projected them on to God. Those who were supposed to be gentle, tender, and kind to me were not. And so, I transferred all that angst to **Yahweh Adonai** who I knew was ultimately responsible for it all. After all, I had a deep seeded belief (wrong though it may be) that if He really loved me and was watching out for me, He would have protected me from the cruelty and harshness that I experienced from others.

The fire brought all of this to the surface and gave me the opportunity to honestly consider what I truly believed under the surface of my religious platitudes. I knew what I felt, I knew I could not make sense of the things that happened in my life, nor reconcile them to a sovereign loving God. But I also knew what God said about Himself and about me, but I just could not connect what I knew to what I felt and what I believed.

Over time, however, God showed me **WHY** He did what He had to do and **HOW** He was preparing me, throughout my entire life, to be His spokesman, to extract the precious from what is worthless, and to stand in the midst of great opposition.¹⁶ God had a plan for my life, and He began training me from the earliest of ages. He knew that what I went through would, for a time at least, result in me building all these walls of defense and attitudes of aggression against Him, still He was not afraid to take me through what He had to take me through.

Ironically, those walls and defenses protected me for a time until He was ready to reveal Himself to me. All along, He knew that one day He would lead me to the truth and give me the opportunity to be

¹⁶ Jeremiah 15:19-21

willing to let the Spirit help me choose to have **Yahweh** set me free from all the wrong belief and unbelief that kept me from acquiring refined gold.

THE PURPOSE OF THE FIRE IS TO LEAD US FROM REACTION (WHERE WE ARE A VICTIM) TO A CHOICE—WHERE WE GET TO CHOOSE TO DECIDE IF THE TRUTH GOD HAS REVEALED ABOUT HIMSELF IS GOING TO BE OUR TRUTH.

He Will Lead Us in All Truth

The Holy Spirit promises to lead and guide us in all truth.¹⁷ In other words, it is His job to make us aware of the choices we must make, in terms of believing, that will result in the exchange of our *flesh* for His refined gold. And it is our choice. It is an expression of our personal sovereignty. God does not make it for us. He leads us to the choice, but it is still ours to make. He does not force Himself on anyone.

In the face of the pain, in the face of the fear, we must decide if we are going to bet our lives on the truth revealed by His name or to continue to believe the lie: **the wrong belief which provokes our unbelief in God**. Like good businessmen and businesswomen, He wants us to do the analysis, examine the data, and then choose to **exchange** the lie for the truth; the truth is a much more valuable currency.

THE FIRE ALLOWS US TO HONESTLY COME TO GRIPS WITH OUR WRONG BELIEF AND UNBELIEF

If you think about it, this entire process is good news. It is Jesus answering all the prayers we have ever spoken, or the songs we have sung, asking to have more of Him. This is how the **Design Point** (*"it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me"*¹⁸) is realized in our lives. In fact, it is through the refining process of intense fire (what Paul likens to crucifixion), that God teaches us both **WHY** and **HOW** to choose to be that little child that looks only to **Yahweh** to be their personal caretaker in all the deep recesses of their soul, trusting Him for all things all the time. Without the fire, we would likely never take **Step 2** of our salvation journey, where we choose to live by grace through faith, just like a little child.

He convinces us quite thoroughly that trusting in anything other than Him to be the resource—or the riches—to meet our needs is a terrible idea and something we must reject. And those who ultimately choose to not become like that little child, they will **NOT** enter the kingdom of heaven.¹⁹

Riches

To experience more of His *divine nature* in our life is the greatest of riches. We should therefore rejoice when we are going through the fire, for the testing of our faith, by fire, produces endurance, and when endurance has its perfect result, it makes us complete, lacking in nothing.²⁰ In other words, we will have

¹⁷ John 14:17, 16:13

¹⁸ Galatians 2:20

¹⁹ Matthew 18:3; Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17

²⁰ James 1:2-4

a plethora of moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and an abundance of His *agape* love. And if these qualities are ours and increasing, they render us neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.²¹

When we share in His *divine nature*, we will know how to love others with God's *agape* love, and how to exist in His *agape* love and therefore found to be "in Christ."²² This is the gold, this is true riches, and it is what God gives in **exchange** for all our wrong belief and unbelief.

Buy White Garments

"I now advise you to buy from Me ... white garments so that you may choose to clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed." Jesus also counsels them to buy from Him white garments and He exhorts them to choose to cloth themselves and to cover the shame of their nakedness. These white garments stand in stark contrast to the lovely black garments for which they were famous.

With "white" being **Code** for righteousness and purity, this is a beautiful picture that speaks of the way Jesus wants us to stand in His righteousness only, and not in our own self-sufficiency and *flesh*, which is as black as the garments which they sold.

As we studied in the letter to Sardis, "white garments" represent the righteous acts or deeds of people who let God, the only one who is good, do His good works in and through their lives. They will walk with Jesus in white. **Yahweh Tsidkenu (Yahweh** our Righteousness) is our only possible source of goodness. As King David declared: "I have no good besides You."²³ And Isaiah declared: "You have performed for us all our works."²⁴

We have nothing good to offer God except our **willingness**, and nothing good to do for God except to let Him have His way in our lives.²⁵ But before we can walk around in white garments, we must first make an exchange for the gold. We must clear the way for the **Design Point**, for Christ to possess our being, such that He can be our righteousness. It is how He covers our nakedness.

Trying to find something to cover our nakedness, including the garments we make, no matter how lovely they may be, still leaves us wanting and, in the eyes of all those in the spiritual realms, naked. This reminds me of the story in which Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves which they had sown together to conceal their nakedness.²⁶ Clearly, not a highly effective nor sustainable solution. And this is how ridiculous we look when we try to cover our nakedness with the resources our own goodness, regardless of how abundant they are. It is not an effective solution to our condition.

Understanding their inability to adequately source their solution, God sacrificed an animal for their sin, and then clothed Adam and Eve with the skins of the sacrifice. His provision not only dealt with their true nakedness, their sin that was now exposed before all the heavenly realms, but their practical nakedness as well. This foreshadowed the time when **Yahweh Tsidkenu** would become our living sacrifice, so that we might be clothed with Him and only with Him, such that He becomes our only good and does good on

²⁴ Isaiah 26:12

²¹ **2** Peter **1:3-8**

²² See **1 John 2:3-11**

²³ Psalm 16:2

²⁵ Romans 3:10-18

²⁶ See Genesis 3

our behalf from within the *New Creation* which He imbues in our being. It foreshadowed how He would provide for us everything we need for life and godliness through the true knowledge of Christ.²⁷

As with the gold, we must purchase, or buy, these garments. In other words, there must be an exchange of value to receive these clothes. God will sell us the garments of **Yahweh Tsidkenu**, but in exchange we must be willing to surrender to Him all our own attempts to cover ourselves with the clothing that we have created from our own efforts, the clothing with which we barter and trade for amongst those in the world. He wants it all, and in exchange He will give us all His goodness.

All of this emphasizes the practical reality that **Only God is Good** and that **the source matters the source is everything!** We have covered this ad nauseum, but it is so hard for us to accept the reality that we are spiritually impoverished, naked, without covering, and that all our vain attempts to do it right and to be right are less than worthless in God's sight. We need Him to be our covering. We need Him to be our goodness. We need Him to be the fulfillment of the law in us. We need Him to simply live His life in-and-through our being, so we can stand covered in the draping of **Yahweh Tsidkenu—Yahweh** our **Righteousness**.

Now, the reason it is something we must buy from Jesus is that this is a truth that we must have in our heart, mind, soul, and our strength. He wants a complete exchange, and make no mistake, the price is steep. But this must become to us **our truth** and not just a truth. It is not enough to be able to repeat these truths as a spiritual mantra, "Only God is Good, the source matters the source is everything." No, this truth must replace everything else in us that holds to an opposite belief. He wants us to give Him the currency of our self-reliance and self-aggrandizement, and He wants our entire savings.

Buy Salve for Your Eyes

"I now advise you to buy from Me ... eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may now see." The sad reality is that they were blind to the huge disconnect between their view of their spiritual condition and God's view. They were legitimately unaware of their personal delusion. Their personal bias distorted the data such that when it came to their soul, they were making terrible business decisions.

Being an allusion to the famous eye salve of Phrygian powder mixed with oil, which they manufactured in their medical schools, this is a picture of their need to be anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit so that we too may see.

In this image, we have another throwback to Sardis, with Jesus being the one who has the seven Spirits of God, which gives Him (Jesus) perfect sight—complete understanding of all things. And since the Spirit is *"the Spirit of truth"*, Jesus can declare that He is the **faithful and true witness**.²⁸ In that light, the Spirit is the member of the Godhead who illuminates us with the truth, teaches us all things, and is our helper.²⁹ If we buy the Spirit's slave from Jesus, He will cause us to see the truth and be able to break through our bias and personal delusion of self-sufficiency.

Again, this is something we must purchase, there must be an exchange. We must be willing to exchange our view of this world, our view of our life and all that has happened to us, our view of the ME and what we expect from this world, our view of what we think we deserve in this life, our view of what we demand

²⁷ 2 Peter 1:3

²⁸ John 14:17

²⁹ John 14:26, 16:13

from others, and our view of relationship and love, and so on for the view that He will give us when we apply the salve of the Spirit of God.

For instance, I used to see only through the lens of what's been done to me, but once God applied some of this salve to my eyes, I can now see others through the lens of what has been done to them. I can see how they are hurting and desperate for love, care, attention, belonging, and so on. Seeing from **Yahweh's** perspective has fundamentally altered how I respond or react to many of those in my life; but Lord knows, I need some more salve.

Gold, White Garments, Salve

We need to purchase the gold, refined in the fire, and not run from the fire. For once we share in His divine nature, we begin to understand why we are desperate for His white garments—desperate to be covered in His righteousness, as all our own clothing is nothing but filthy rags, woefully inadequate for the task.³⁰

Once we are covered, feeling safe and secure in His goodness, we can feel safe and secure to start to see things from His heavenly perspective, and not our worldly perspective. Once we feel safe, we can learn to be **willing** to see outside our bias and personal delusion of self-sufficiency to the true spiritual condition of our soul—to our abject neediness for **Yahweh** in everything, all the time. This view enables us to also see others through a new lens, so-to-speak. It enables us to see others as He sees them, and it frames for us our need to have mercy on others understanding that they too need to buy from **Yahweh** His gold, His white garments, and the eye salve of His Spirit.

But it all starts by inviting in the fire!

Let's stop here and we will pick up in **3:19**, with the promise that those who Jesus now loves, he now reproves, and now disciplines.

³⁰ Isaiah 64:6