***Jesus Christ:
the Amen, and the Faithful and True Witness

RV59-01***

Please open your Bibles to Revelation 3:14-22. We are studying the last letter of the series of seven. This one is the letter to Laodicea, segment number two. The Christians in Laodicea found themselves living in a city which enjoyed material prosperity. In that respect, it was considerably different than the other six churches in the previous six cities that we've already studied. Laodicea was a wealthy city because it was a center of banking and a center of industry in the Roman Empire. The Christians of the local church shared in this financial advantage. They lived in a community where times were good, and the Christians benefited by those good times.

**Handling our Prosperity**

However, this created the need, on the part of these particular believers, for the spiritual capacity to handle their prosperity in godly ways. That is a problem that Christians face always through the ages. They need the capacity to handle their poverty. Obviously, everybody understands that. But we equally need the capacity to handle our prosperity so that it does not lead to our spiritual destruction. Many a Christian has known how to walk with the Lord when he did not have too much in life, and when he was hard-pressed. Then, as the result of his responsiveness to the Word of God, functioning on divine viewpoint, his life began to prosper, and things got better. As his prosperity and his material well-being increased, he found himself drifting away from the Lord, who had been the source of His blessing. That, unfortunately, is at the heart of this letter to Laodicea. This is what had happened to these people.

They did not have, for some reason, the spiritual capacity to handle their prosperity. Indeed, we must suspect that we must lay the fault for this, in large measure, at the foot of whoever was the pastor-teacher at the time in Laodicea. Prosperity always threatens a believer's sense of dependence upon God's care. When you don't have much, then you're looking to the Lord; then you're aware that you need Him. But when you're well-off, then you forget about going to the Lord and continuing to ask for His blessing, and continuing to seek His guidance for your personal prosperity in the meeting of your needs, because you think you've got it all done, and you think you've got it all taken care. So, your mind drifts off to other things, unless you are the kind of Christian who has the spiritual capacity to know that you never outlive your dependence for God's care. When you do, you will lose it.

**Laodicea**

Laodicea was also an intellectual center, as we have learned: a center of learning; and, a center of art. For one thing, it had a great medical center. It was a center that was engaged in research for cures and for the preparation of various medicines. It had several theaters which presented dramatic productions, and it indeed had a very large circus. As you remember, the circuses in the ancient world were not clowns and trapeze artists. Circuses in the ancient world were an oval structure where they had horse races and they, had a really big one in Laodicea, which indicated to us that their prosperity had expanded into a lot of good-time recreation.

The Christians, then, in Laodicea, were faced with witnessing to a people (a society) which prided itself on its sophisticated intellectualism, and they were tempted, therefore, as believers, to soft pedal the authority of Scripture and the power of the Holy Spirit. It is frightening to Christians to face these people who are intellectuals; who are educated; and, who have a string of some degrees after their name, to come up to them and say, "Hey, the Bible says this, and therefore, that settles it. God has spoken. There is more to knowing what to do than just being smart. There is the leading directly of the person of God the Holy Spirit who indwells me as a believer. Therefore I know some things that you as an unbeliever do not know, because I have a communication line with God that you cannot possibly have."

That's tough to stand up to unbelievers and declare that to be the case, but that's the way it happens to be. In Laodicea, a center of learning and a center of culture, that was tough for Christians to stand up in that way. So, they were very much tempted to become a little more subdued and neutral relative to what the Bible had to say.

**Indulging Human Arrogance**

This combination of money and culture created a sense of smug superiority and of elitism among the citizens of Laodicea. And the local church there, in seeking to appeal to such people, tended to conduct a ministry which indulged human arrogance. Human arrogance finds fertile soil in both money and culture. If it is not oriented to the content of God's thinking, it is a very dangerous area. These people (these believers), in Laodicea, were trying to witness to people who had that kind of arrogance, and they were doing it by indulging that arrogance.

This created a church that apparently was more like a social club or a lodge, because it was merely a place for fun, and it was non-condemning and non-offensive. Young men to this day are sent to seminaries which teach them to be non-condemning in dealing with people, and to be non-offensive. That's why God was such a total failure when He wrote the Ten Commandments. Those Ten Commandments are totally condemning and they are certainly offensive to anybody that's got any kind of a respectable sin nature. So, we hope that you'll be able to tolerate this great deficiency on the part of God if you are being trained in that kind of thinking – to be non-offensive and non-condemning. But that happens to be what the truth is.

The Lord Jesus says, "Listen, I didn't come to get everybody into one big happy family. I came to split you guys. I'm going to split you right down the middle of your family. I'm going to split children against parents, and husbands against wives, and in-laws against in-laws, because once the Spirit of the Word of God comes in, sides are going to be clear. There are those who are going to be for God, and those who are going to be against God. And you can pretend to soft pedal the differences (that they don't exist), but they do exist. You deceive yourself into thinking that they're not there.

So, the local church put on the air of class that fed the lust for prestige associated with human viewpoint mentality. In Laodicea, human viewpoint mentality dominated that society. It seems that the local church there put on an aura of class. They conducted themselves in a way that would demonstrate that they were cultured, refined, and upper-class people. Whatever you can think about a local church operation, with all the accouterments that go into that in order to present that picture to the public at large, that they are a cultured, elite, superclass operation, that's what they were doing here in Laodicea. Human good activities undoubtedly were portrayed as pleasing to God, and as gaining favor with Him: "Do something nice with your money, and feel good" is the concept that comes through from the church at Laodicea. They were encouraging the people in their society that these human good productions were somehow related to Christianity, and that somehow these were related to what God wanted them to do so that He was pleased and would prosper them for it.

So, now we begin at Revelation 3:14, continuing where we've already started: "Unto the angel (that is, the pastor-teacher – the messenger) of the church of Laodicea, write, 'These things.'" "These things" is the Greek word "hode." It's a demonstrative pronoun. It's a word that points to something. Here, it refers to what is present so that you can actually see it, and you can point it out. What it is referring to is what is in Revelation 3:14-22 that Jesus is about to dictate to John. "These things" – this is pointing to what He immediately is about to say.

"These things says." The word "says" is the Greek word "lego." "Lego refers to the content of the letter which is about to be dictated. In fact, this Greek word stresses content rather than the words. When the Lord says, "These things says," He is not saying, "These words say," but, "This content (this information) says." The stress is upon the information: "Pay attention to the information that is in here."

It is in the present tense, which means that it is a constant statement of truth. It is active. Jesus is doing the speaking. It's indicative mood. It's a statement of fact. Then He uses the first title of three to identify Himself to this church. To every church to which He relates Himself, He introduces Himself in a way that that church needs to know Him. Here, He calls himself, "The Amen." This is a title of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, in the Greek, it's actually "*The* Amen."

**Amen**

This word actually comes from the Hebrew word "amen." It is actually taken from the Hebrew, and it is simply transliterated, letter-for-letter, into the Greek. So, you end up coming back the same way: "amen." Now what does this word mean? One of the examples we have, to give us a little clue of it in terms of its Hebrew usage, is in Deuteronomy 7:9. Moses says, "Know, therefore, that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps covenant and mercy unto them who love Him, and keeps His commandments to 1,000 generations:" "Know, therefore, that the Lord your God, He is the faithful God." There's the Hebrew phrase: "The 'Amen' God." So, one of the meanings of the word "amen" is "faithful." When you use the word "amen," it means "faithful." "Fidelity" is at the heart of this word.

Another factor that's in this word is illustrated for us in Isaiah 65:16, where we have a phrase used twice with this Hebrew word "amen:" "He that blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth." The Hebrew says, "The God of 'Amen:'" "He that swears in the earth shall swear by," then he uses it again: "The God of 'amen,'" or "The God of truth, because the former troubles are forgotten," and so on. So, here, twice Isaiah uses this word to convey the concept of truth. "Amen" carries the idea of fidelity; that is, trustworthiness. It also carry the idea of truth, which is also trustworthiness.

So, the concept behind "amen" is "trustworthiness." It indicates for us the foolhardiness of ignoring what God has to say. When God speaks, what He says (the content of what He says), is described by the word "Amen," meaning: "You can count on it, and you better believe it: The Amen is faithful. It is no con job. And it is true. It is compatible with reality. It is not the figment of somebody's imagination.

So, we go from the Hebrew to the Greek, and then the English word is simply from the Greek: "Amen." So, it starts with the Hebrew. They change letter-for-letter into Greek. They take the Greek, and they change letter-for-letter into English: "Amen." All three words, whether Hebrew, Greek, or English, all mean the same thing. We often have this concept of trustworthiness; of faithfulness; and, of truth translated in the King James translation by the word "Verily." Very often, you've heard Jesus say, "Verily, verily I say unto you." Well, what that means is: "It is true. It is true." But when He uses the word "Amen, amen, I say unto you," He is using this in terms of this Old Testament meaning of faithfulness and truthfulness.

In 2 Corinthians 1:20, the concept of "Amen" is attached to the Lord Jesus Christ: "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us:" "All the promises of God are in Jesus Christ. Amen." That means that whatever Jesus Christ has promised to do, either in blessing or in discipline or in cursing, you can count on it. This is very important to this church at Laodicea. They were playing footsie with the Word of God. They were cutting the corners in order to try to fit themselves into that society in which they lived; in order to gain acceptability; and, in order to gain approval with people who were functioning on human viewpoint. And because they did not want to be isolated (they did not want to be alienated from that society) they were willing to pretend that God was no longer "Amen" when He spoke. They pretended that what Jesus Christ had said to them was not really going to be executed – that they could really, in the long-run, afford to pay the price of compromising with the truth of God.

That's what we're talking about: breaking the rules; violating the moral code; violating the principles of personal conduct; violating the warnings against mental attitude sins, and all the consequences of those; and, not living a life that reflects that which is compatible to the image of Jesus Christ, because God's Word assures us that blessing follows those who obey the Word, and disaster follows those who do not obey the Word.

It is tragic to find that out for yourself. But people are stupid, and Christians seem to be the dumbest of all. They know the truth, but they don't live the truth. They know what they should do, but instead, they compromise. They get so used to the blessing that comes to them because they are functioning on the Word of God, that they forget that that's why they're being blessed, so they get sloppy about being faithful to the Word of God. They forget that Jesus Christ is the "amen" of all eternity. His words are to be believed because He is God. He really has spoken that which is trustworthy; that which is the truth; and, that which is faithful. So, the word connotes a finality. There is no court of appeal from the authority of the Bible and what Jesus Christ has said.

The negative volition type person pretends that what Jesus Christ says in the Bible is not clear, so the application is uncertain. If you're playing that little game, you'll be sorry for that, too – to pretend that the Bible just isn't clear. You can always spot a negative volition type because he's always going to argue to you as to what some statement of the Bible means – that you can't know what it means, so, you can't apply it. You don't know what the truth really is. Of course, that's to justify his own old sin nature ambitions and his own human viewpoint arrogance. When you try to come back and say, "Oh, no, this is what the Word of God says, and this is what the word means, and what you're proposing is condemned by the Word of God," then he comes back and says, "These absolutes are simplistic thinking, and what you're doing is forcing your own religious opinion on others."

This is the whole line of attack against the concept of the United States, as a nation, returning to biblical principles and to biblical morality, whether in personal conduct or in the realm of economics. The attack that is being mounted against that return to morality is summed up in just this very attack – that it is simplistic, and that it is trying to shove your moral viewpoints down other people's throats, when it happens to be that we are talking about the moral viewpoints of God. I'll guarantee you that God intends to shove His moral viewpoints down everybody's throats. Some are going to swallow it, and some are going to gag on it to their disaster. But you may be sure that He is not going to compromise His truth. It is really interesting to watch the liberal world now – squealing in pain, because finally somebody has stood up and said, "There is a better way, and we're going to implement that better way," and the American people have been reawakened to their heritage, and to their greatness, and to their potential.

But the battle is very great. Our strength lies in knowing that our Lord is the Amen. What He has told us is the truth, and we can rely upon it, because there are powerful forces that constantly maneuver, in public and private life, to lead us into human viewpoint disasters, and to tell us that we can't really know what we should do: what is right, and what is wrong? We can't know it morally. We can't know it economically.

Some months ago, during the previous administration, our Congress passed a monetary act. There are few of you here who know about it. There are few in the United States anywhere who know about it. This act was in a hearing. We have a tremendous congressman named Ron Paul, who is a medical doctor in the Houston district. Part of the redistricting battle that you are hearing about in the state legislature now is in trying to chop up Ron Paul's district so that he cannot get reelected. Tip O'Neill, who is the speaker of the House currently, put out the word that Ron Paul was to be defeated in this last election. He was, under no conditions, to be permitted back into Congress, because Ron Paul has crazy ideas like having gold to represent our money so that you can't forever inflate; having a balanced budget; and, all these other crazy things because he has read the Bible. Unfortunately, they got a guy who's not only a Christian, but he's a knowledgeable Christian, and he is one tremendous man. I just marvel when I read his communication newsletters – the orientation of this man to the Word of God.

Well, it's no wonder that the big guns are after him. But he was on this committee, and in this particular bill was the statement that the United States, through its Federal Reserve, would be given the permission to monetize the debt of any nation in the world. When you have a debt, what you do with the debt is that you pay it off. You have to pay it off with money. Well, if you don't have the money, and you're the United States government, then you just make money, and you pay it off that way. It's not money that has been the product of people producing goods and services so that the money has value. It's just money you print, and then you pay off the debt. That's called "monetizing the debt." That is Keynesian economics.

Ron Paul, because he's a careful congressman, looks at this, and he catches this. It says that the Federal Reserve can monetize the debt of any nation owed to the United States, because the debt is owed to Citicorp; to the Bank of America; and, to all of the Rockefeller consortium of banks. These people have lent something like $70 billion to maybe $100 billion to communist countries. This is the result of kind of like what we're doing with China now. China says, "I need your technology." So, General Electric says, "Wonderful. We want to sell your two nuclear power plants." But Red China says, "But we don't have any money." General Electric goes to the government, and they say, "No problem." They go to the United States Export-Import bank. President Reagan just signed authorization for $120 billion dollars from the Export-Import Bank, which has been filled with money by American taxpayers. That's where the money comes from. This will now be loaned to Red China so that she can buy from General Electric these two power plants – at 7% interest, to be starting payments in 1988. The United States government will stand behind it.

So, we have sold to Red China valuable technology, but we sold it to them by giving them the money to buy it. That is a wonderful way to do business. Ron Paul comes along and says, "Wait a minute. That violates a biblical principle. That's going to bring us to national disaster, and that's wrong. Furthermore, if that isn't bad enough, they made all these other loans. I don't know how much Poland owes us. When is Poland going to pay? Well, the big banker says, "Hey, we're in real trouble."

So, they put in this act: The government of the United States can monetize any foreign debt, which means that the bankers won't lose their money, and you will find an inflated economy like you wouldn't believe. Well, when Ron Paul found this, he raised such a howl, the chairman says, "Well, OK. If you don't want it, we'll take it out." Well, Ron Paul says, "I want it out." They took it out. When the bill got to the floor of Congress and was passed, and they reread it, they had slipped that feature back in. The Monetary Act is now law. At any time that any one of these countries looks like it's going to completely be unable to pay the bankers of this country their money, our government will pay for it with your money. That's known as compassion. That's what the liberals mean by compassion. I don't know who's on which end of the line there, of the compassion, but that's it.

My point is that all of that is a violation of scriptural principles of economics. We pretend that we can forget that God says, "When I have given you guidelines for finances (personal and national), there's an Amen at the end of that, and you're not going to violate it and get away with it." What makes you think that you can personally violate it, or that we can nationally violate it and get away with it? You're a fool if you do so.

So, I would suggest you pray for men like Dr. Ron Paul, and help him to survive in this redistricting, and help him to pull through, because he is now fighting a repeal of that monetary feature of that act. If it isn't repealed, that is just about the last straw for this national survival. That is what these people are howling about when they're saying, "You're trying to force your views down my throat. You're trying to force your morality down my throat. You're walking around like you're the last word." Do you know the truth of it? You are the last word. You are the Amen. As long as you have the Word of God, you are the last word. And that is an amazing thing that the world cannot address.

So, they ridicule your viewpoint. They ridicule the principles of Scripture. I want to remind you that that's an old game. Way back in New Testament times, the believers were being hit with that kind of ridicule. One such incident is recorded for us in 2 Peter 3:4, where we have recorded: "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Here, they were making fun of the fact that way back in Genesis 3:15, God says, "I'm going to send you a Savior." And all through the Scriptures, He says that a Savior is coming. Moses came along and said, "God is going to send you a Prophet like me, but He is going to be such a Super Prophet that you won't believe it." And we had all the coming; the coming; and, the coming. Where is His coming? And the Christians had to say, "He's on His way, because God is the Amen, and when He has spoken, His Word is final. It is trustworthy. It is faithful. It is true."

The church in Laodicea was filled with Christians who had forgotten this about the Word of God. So, they were obviously compromising with the evils of their day for personal gain, and for their ambitions, and for their money. While Jesus Christ is immutable in the truth, this Laodicean church was filled with spiritual chameleon's trying to be relevant to their day – meaning, trying to be like the world of Satan. The testimony and the commandments of Jesus Christ are never fickle, and they are never deficient. Hear Him: He is the last Word from God.

We won't take the time now to read, but I just want to give you a series of passages that you would find interesting to consult, which declares so clearly that you're not going to hear anything more from God in communication from the other side beyond what Jesus Christ has brought: Hebrews 1:1-3; Matthew 17:5; Matthew 24:35; John 6:63; John 12:48-49; John 17:8; Hebrews 2:1-4; and, Hebrews 4:12. Those are all very exciting verses, and they all sum up in one concept: Jesus Christ is the Amen of all the communications from the living God. He is the only person who has ever lived, to whose statements you could always add the word "Amen." Do you realize that" Only to the statements of Jesus Christ, could you always add the word "Amen." That's not true of any of us here, and that's not true of anybody who has ever lived. It is only true of Him.

For this reason, we should give serious heed to the Lord's words in Matthew 7:24: "Therefore, whosoever hears these things of Mine and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it did not fall, for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that hears these sayings of Mine and doesn't do them shall be likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." The truth that Jesus Christ has declared is so trustworthy: It's a rock of security; or, it's a rock upon which you will break yourself in pieces. The Word of the Lord Jesus Christ is a rock of security and stability that will carry you through in every crisis of life, or it is a rock upon which you will dash yourself to pieces when you oppose it and resist it. That is a startling statement that could only come from a person to whose words one could always add the significant word "Amen."

So it was in the day in which Jesus spoke to the people who listened to Him. Notice verses 28-29: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." That was because the scribes could not lay "Amen" to the end of what they said. Only Jesus Christ could do that.

**A True Witness**

Furthermore, this Lord is not only "Amen," and He identifies Himself to that church that needs to know that about Him, but He also says that He is the faithful and true witness. The word "witness" looks like this in Greek: "martus." This is a legal word for a bonafide witness in a court of Roman law. Jesus Christ is the witness for the Godhead to mankind of what he has seen and heard of divine viewpoint facts. The Bible repeatedly stresses to us that He is exactly that. He is God's witness to us. That is the place that we get the information concerning spiritual things. You don't get it from human beings. John 7:7: "The world cannot hate you, but Me it hates, because I testify of it that its works are evil." That's how we know that what our society is out to do is basically evil, unless it has been redirected by the Word of God, because it is Satan's society.

John 18:37: "Pilate, therefore, said unto Him, 'You are a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. To this end I was born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears My voice.'" If you are positive to the truth, you are open to it, you will listen to the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 6:13 says, "I command you in the sight of God, who makes all things alive, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilot witnessed a good confession;" that is, He declared that which was true.

Let's look at one other passage. Moses, looking down the years, records for us in Deuteronomy 18:15: "The Lord your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of your brethren like unto me. Unto him you shall hearken." He's speaking about the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ: "According to all that you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord, my God, neither let me see this great fire anymore that I don't die.' And the Lord said to me, 'They have well-spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto you, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command them. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken onto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him.'" The Lord Jesus Christ is the witness of the Godhead. Way back here to Moses, God said, "I am going to send this witness, the Son of God, and anybody who does not listen to Him will deal with Me personally."

**Faithful**

We are further told that this divine witness of Jesus Christ is faithful. The Greek word is "pistos." This is a verbal adjective. It means "trustworthy" or "reliable." The Lord Jesus Christ can be trusted to continue to keep us informed through the Bible and through the Holy Spirit. We need an authority in spiritual things that tells us what we need to know about ourselves relative to God, not just what is expedient. That's what they were doing in Laodicea. They were telling people what was expedient for that organization as a local church, not what people in that society needed to hear about themselves, and about what God had to say.

So, Jesus Christ is not only the final word (the "Amen"), but he also is God's witness who acts as the faithful witness. He tells us specifically what we need to know. He tells us with authority, in spiritual things, what we need to know about our relationship to the living God.

**True**

Furthermore, He is not only faithful is that witness, but He is also true. That's the word "alethinos." This is a word that connotes "genuine" or "real" – a very important quality in a witness. What Jesus Christ tells us is not only the facts, but it is also the truth. Did you get that? He tells us not only the facts, but it is also the truth. Do you realize you can tell the facts without telling the truth? Preachers do that all the time. Con-artists do it all the time. They tell you the facts, but they don't tell you the truth.

What would you think if one of Mr. Thomson's junior high students went home to his parents and said, "Mr. Thompson came to class sober today?" That would certainly be a fact, but you can see that it would imply something that was not the truth, as to how he was coming the rest of the time.

I've already told you about the man out West in the old days, whose grandfather was hanged as a horse thief. When he was asked as to how his grandfather died, because he was embarrassed to say he was a horse thief, he said, "My grandfather was attending a public occasion when the platform upon which he was standing collapsed and he was killed, which meant that they sprung the gallows door. He certainly told the facts as to what happened to his grandfather, but he did not tell the truth.

So, this is important. Here is this little slithery con-artist church here in Laodicea, telling the facts, but not telling people the truth, because the truth would divide and offend. They wanted to be accepted. They wanted those offerings to come in. They'd gotten used to sitting on those soft chairs, and they just wanted more of them. They were used to this good life and the social program they had, and all the beautiful music they had. They would open up the evening service, and there was a big band playing Sousa marches. They didn't want to give that up. They wanted all this class and all this big-time stuff. They weren't going to offend people. They wanted to get those chairs filled so they could buy more of them.

The Lord Jesus Christ not only informs us, but He tells us the truth as it is. That's the only way to go when you're dealing with your eternal soul and its destiny.

This was in contrast to the compromising preachers and churches which substitute human arrogance for divine truth. There is a lot of that among us today. The Laodicean church was a church which was speaking and acting in sharp contrast to that which characterized the Lord that it was supposed to be representing.

So, He has presented Himself to these people as the final word, the "Amen." He has presented Himself as a witness who is faithful, reliable, and who tells the truth. Then He presents Himself with one more characteristic, and that is that He calls Himself "the beginning of the creation of God." The word "beginning" is "arche." This word means the "origin" or "the active cause of creation." The Greek word is "ktisis." This means "the created world." This word primarily means "the act of creating" or " the creating act in progress." We have this word "ktisis" used in Romans 1:20: "From the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world." The creative acts in progress from when God is creating the world are clearly seen and understood by the things that are made, and so on.

This also indicates that the Lord of the Laodicean church is the Creator of all the material things that the people in Laodicea, as we shall see, so wonderfully esteem. They fell in love with their money; they fell in love with their material possessions; and, they were in love with the things that Jesus Christ had created more than they were with Him who is the Creator? He is the originator of creation. That's what these two words mean. He is the beginning of the creation. That does not mean that he is the first thing created. Some of the cults try to teach that. But obviously, we know better than that from Scripture. For example, Colossians 1:15-18 tell us that Jesus Christ is the one who did the creating. Before Him, there was nothing: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence."

So, He created everything. If He was a created being, the Bible couldn't say that, because He would be excluded. He is the Creator, and He has the preeminence. Furthermore, He is the one who keeps it all together. Everything consists by Him.

John 1:3 further makes it clear that He is the Creator, not the one who was created.

Now, the creative power of Jesus Christ reminds the Laodicean Christians that He is God, and that the words which He has spoken as God in human flesh are not mere human opinion. He is speaking as the Creator God. He has produced what the Scriptures call the creation of *the* God. The Greek has the definite article, meaning God the Father. He is the immediate agent of creation, while the Father is the ultimate source of it.

1 Corinthians 8:6 stresses that to us. Jesus is the agent, and the Father is the originator: "But to us there is but one God, the Father of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." So, the Lord holds the preeminence in all the universe. Colossians 1:18, declares to us that He has the preeminence: "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning of the firstborn from the dead; that in all things, He might have the preeminence." Because he is the Creator, He has the preeminence.

What this means is that He is the only celebrity that you and I ideal with. The arrogance of the sin nature causes many fools among us, and many of them are preacher idiots, who like to portray certain people as being some kind of celebrities. They like to give people the impression that they're celebrities.

In 3 John 9-10, you have a fellow named Diotrephes who was doing this in the New Testament. John says, "I wrote unto the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, did not receive us." Here was a leader who was portrayed as being something upon a pedestal: "Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words: and not content with that, neither does he himself receive the brethren, and forbid them that would, and cast them out of the church." Here was an arrogant type in leadership in this particular church that John is writing to, saying, "I'm going to take care of that bird when I come. He is carrying on a preeminence that belongs only to Jesus Christ, and he is substituting for the authority of Christ instead of being an under-shepherd of the Lord Jesus, the Chief Shepherd."

So, this phrase, "the beginning of the creation of God, the originator of the divine creation," stresses the preexistence of Jesus Christ. The local church in Laodicea was not reflecting its Lord in the capacity in this way of one who carried this kind of unique, fantastic, preeminent authority.

So, the Lord speaks to this church. He has nothing good to say about it. In verse 15, He is ready to lay into the condemnation which we shall begin next time. But before He does, He identifies Himself with good reason as the one who is the Amen of God, the final Word from God – and "final" means that it's going to be executed. He presents Himself as the one who is the witness from God.

You're not going to find anything about God from anybody else. Look around you. "From whom can you find anything about God except that which they have learned from Scripture?" Nobody. The only place you're going to learn it from is what Jesus Christ is witness to. And that witness is faithful and it is a true witness. Then you are dealing with the person who is the preeminent one in all the universe. He is number one. He is the living God. He is the originator of all creation.

So, who are you? You're a fallen, sinful worm. How can you have an arrogance toward what this God has said, and counter, and challenge, and undermine, and seek to take a place of preeminence yourself; to try to be something that you're not; and, to try to demand your rights, your woundings, your place in the sun in your lack of patience and of toleration. When you deal with Christians, you deal with people who have frailties; you deal with people who have to be understood; you deal were people who have to be sympathized with; and, you deal with people who need another chance. Jesus Christ, the preeminent celebrity of all the world, gives us another chance and another chance and another chance. In Laodicea, the Lord was saying, "I have nothing but loathing for what you're doing as a church. I'm going to give you another chance. I'm going to explain it to you. I'm going to call your attention to it. I'm going to give you a faithful witness. I'm going to give you a chance to turn around."

Right now, wherever you are, you may need to do some turning around. The God and the Savior who is the Amen, who is a faithful and true witness, and who is the supreme celebrity of this universe, is the only one who can give you that chance, and He's quite ready to do it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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