

“Laodicea: The Church of the Lukewarm”
Revelation 3:14-22

Last Sunday: The Study of Philadelphia, the Church of the Faithful Witness

Today: The Study of Laodicea, the Church of the Lukewarm

Five Parts to Each of These Seven Letters:

- Description: Christ’s self-description; to understand the commendation/rebuke (3:14)
- Commendation: What the church is doing right (NONE)
- Rebuke: What the church is doing wrong (3:15-17)
- Exhortation: Urging the church to take action (3:18-19)
- Promise: If you overcome, you will receive this reward. (3:20-22)

Laodicea, the City:

- 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia
- Named after Laodice I, the wife of Antiochus II
- Known for its banking, medicine, and clothing
- Pagan worship: the emperor, Asclepius, Zeus. They had a stadium and two theatres.
- Like Philadelphia, the city was founded to spread Greek culture in Phrygia, but it failed.

Laodicea, the Church:

- May have been established by Epaphras. Col. 4:13-16 Paul mentions Laodicea, “See that you also read the letter from Laodicea.” Was that a lost letter from Paul?
- The city had a compromised water supply; they received all their water through aqueducts.
- Immense wealth and comfort; they were self-satisfied, self-sufficient, and self-deceived.
- **Historicist:** The church of a future apostasy (falling away from Christ), prophesied in 2 Th. 3 and 2 Tim. 3. What is the time frame? Most believe this to be a future 7-year world-wide tribulation.

3:14/ “The words of the Amen”

- Universal biblical words (transliterations): Hallelujah (praise the Lord).
- Amen: “So be it, it is true.” Goes all the way back to Moses (Dt. 27, Mt Ebal & Mt. Gerizim)
- Is. 65:16, the “God of Truth.” (Elohe-Amen), literally, the “God of Amen.” The Amen is the guarantee that what He says will come true. Christ is our Amen!

3:15/ “I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!”

- 5 miles East of Laodicea – Colosse: Pure cold water, but by the time these waters arrived from Colosse, they were lukewarm; no good for drinking.
- 6 miles North of Laodicea – Hierapolis: Hot Springs filled with mineral water; great for healing, but by the time these waters arrived, they were lukewarm; no good for drinking!

Being a successful **witness** for Christ: Clearly, lovingly proclaiming the gospel and leaving the results with the Lord.

3:17/ “For you say, ‘I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing,’ not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked” – Five Characteristics of the Laodicean church:

1. Wretched: Two Greek words meaning “to undergo a callous.” Full of callouses, miserable.
2. Pitiable: In great need of mercy.
3. Poor: We rebuilt our city without the help of Rome’s treasures (AD 60)! **NO**—you are poor.
4. Blind: We are famous for Phrygian powder eye salve. **NO**—you are blind.
5. Naked: We produce black wool that is shipped all over the empire. **NO**—you are naked.

3:21 “The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with Me on My throne, as I also conquered and sat down with My Father on His throne”

- How did Christ conquer (overcome)?
 - Active obedience: He lived the perfect life, obeying every biblical law.
 - Passive obedience: He laid down his life on the cross, thus paying the penalty for our sins as the perfect sacrifice for us.
- Col. 1:13-14, “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Whatever Happened to Laodicea, the Church of the Lukewarm?

- Unbeliever: Self-satisfied, self-sufficient, and self-deceived. Jim Elliot, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”
- Believer: Be zealous and repent (ask the Lord for His help today).