

## **“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 treasuries (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).