

LAODICEA. The self-deluded church The final church that Jesus addressed in Revelation 2-3 was the church of Laodicea. This is the one church that Jesus had nothing positive to say about, but a number of negatives. The church is described as self-sufficient, self-satisfied and proud. **As with most things in Scripture, we have to look at the historical context—the geography and background of the city.** For context gives us understanding...and helps everything make sense...

Laodicea was ideally situated between three major waterways—the Lycus, the Kapros, and the Asopus rivers.

Laodicea was known as a wealthy and powerful city. Early in its history, it was the central seat of the administrative district of the whole of Myasia. It was a banking center for elite travelling Romans and sponsored Roman gladiatorial spectacles. It secured the backing of provincial governors to mint its own silver coins and, was one of a handful of Asian cities tasked with re-striking worn silver coins. Textile garments produced throughout the Lycus Valley became known as “Laodicean” and were exported even as far as or Germany. The city’s two theaters, its immense stadium, and multiple baths and agoras, testify to a large population.

As a testimony to their wealth and pride in their self-dependence when Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake in AD 60, Rome offered financial assistance, but as citizens of one of the most prosperous places in the empire, the people refused Roman charity and rebuilt the city with their own wealth.

Elite members of the empire were happy to associate with Laodicea. Orators and physicians called the city home, and Roman senators gave gifts to the city to display their status. Its wealthy citizens paid for and erected a statue to the Senate and People of Rome in Rome, and made copies of the monumental displays of Augustus and Nero,

in Laodicea. Laodicean citizens were highly regarded in Rome and welcomed as great guests of the empire. The city had wealth, power and prominence and reveled in it!

As Jesus does in each letter to the churches...the background, setting and culture all play a part in how he addresses them. There are over 30 distinct and titles given to Jesus in Revelation.

ESV Rev 3:14 “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

The beginning of God’s creation.... No doubt the church of Laodicea had the letter to the Colossians...

- **Where Jesus is described...**

NLT Col 1: 15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, ¹⁶for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. ¹⁷He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. ¹⁸Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead

Jesus makes sure all God’s peromises are carried out!

NIV 2 Corinthians 1:20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

- Jesus is also telling them that he alone controls creation: He is the very source of their wealth and power.

**Jesus absolutely in control of all things...he is God!
Then he gives them the most scathing review out of all the churches....**

ESV Rev 3:15 “*I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!* ¹⁶ *So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.*

- Laodicea was ideally situated between three major waterways—The Meander, the Lycus, and the Kapros, Asopus rivers.



- The major economic hurdle the city had was its water supply.. There were three key cities in the Lycus valley –Colosse, Hierapolis and Laodicea...
- **Colosse was about 10 miles east of Laodicea and was known for its cold, refreshing, life giving springs.**

- Hierapolis was six miles north of Laodicea and was famous for its hot springs that were sought out for their medicinal healing powers.
- Laodicea was inbetween both cities and had no water supply of its own. The water had to be piped in from the hot springs of Denizli, a city about 5 miles to the south. Which also had hot spring and that is where they would pipe in water from....
- The water did not have enough time to cool in the aqueduct, so when it arrived in Laodicea it was luke- warm and had leached much calcium from the rock pipes and aqueduct on its journey to the city... It arrived warmish, unclean, and undrinkable, the kind of water that makes you sick, that you might spit or vomit out of your mouth...it had to be purified...sitting in cisterns to settle and cool



- So what is Jesus saying...all three temperature represent Christians...Hot and cold represent useful servants to the Kingdom...
- Hot water is great for coffee and teas and other drinks often medicinal in nature for example herbs in hot water that help the sick... Hot water is of great value
- Cold water is of great value ...cold milk and other cold refreshing drinks on a hot day...nothing like a cold drink to refresh the weary!

- So in the spiritual sense hot offers healing to the spiritually sick...cold offers refreshing to the spiritually weary...and worn out
- But luke warm liquids provides neither refreshment nor healing...in fact it does the opposite...especially Laodicean water contaminated with to much chalky calcium...it is good fro nothing except to be spit out for it will make you sick...!!
- Jesus is telling the Laodiceans they are like their water supply, they are useless to the cause of Christ and actually make him sick.
- **Luke warm, they are not totally unconcerned about the things of God...but their time, focus, energy and trust are in their own abilitites, their pride and their accumulated wealth. They have no testimony of Jesus their testimony is of themselves...therefore no power to refresh the weary or heal the hurting**

For Jesus contrast their perspective of themselves with his perspective

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.***

- They say **I am rich...that is how I self identify...I am rich!!**
Who am I? I am Rich, but they are in great spiritual poverty
- They say **I have prospered...I have accomplished my own prosperity... their riches lulled them inot spiritual poverty**
- They say **I need nothing...I am completely self dependent... I can provide all my needs**

Now Jesus assessment of them... Not realizing...they are

clueless about themselves...their pride blinds them to their true condition they are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked...

Wretched means vastly inferior...pitiable so vastly inferior they are to be pitied or felt sorry for...poor no resources, and blind in complete darkness and so need others to help them...they have so little they cannot clothe. Themselves

- **they could not have had a worse investment strategy as believers**
- In the history of the church no one is harder to reach than the self righteous religious person.
- **But he loves them so much he has the remedy for their condition...**

Behold you have placed your riches, power and prominence as if it were your own doing.... *NLT 1 Tim 6:17*

Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment

●
ESV Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

- **Interesting that he does not give a command to them ...but gently offers them instruction, assistance... sit with me and let me impart wisdom to you or counsel**
- **Their bankers could not obtain the gold they needed...the gold they needed was refined differently...that is true riches which will last forever...**

NLT 1 Peter 1:3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation,⁴ and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.⁵ And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

- **Your righteousness is in Christ...it is your clothing that he provides.....not your earthly temporary clothing which leaves you naked in glory, for it is left here....**
- **Laodicea was famous for eye salve and which was more a placebo than anything else and had no power to cure blindness but which they could easily purchase**
- **The medicine Jesus will give opens their spiritual eyes toward Heaven....and the priceless value of their salvation**
- **Live by Faith than....and you will be truly glad!!**

⁶ So be truly glad, There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. ⁷ These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

So why is he counseling them ? because they are his and he loves them....wants the best for them...so receive my correction in the spirit it is sent...turn from the life you think works and repent

ESV REV 3:19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be

zealous and repent.

- **These words are spoken to believers...though this is often used to present the Gospel...in context it is directed toward believers**

NLT Hebrews 12:5 And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the LORD's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you."⁶ For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.⁷ As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? ⁸ If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all.

How? I have counseled you now receive it...I stand at the door...the entry point into your heart...I want restored fellowship with you

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

- **This invitation is not directed to the church but to individuals in it!!**
- Jesus arrives to his believers ...but he comes as a visitor knocking on the door...how far they have fallen in intimacy with him....yet if they open the door he will come in and share a meal with them...he will embrace them ...they will be right with him!

Jesus is appealing to the compromised, worldly flesh driven child of God to repent and turn to him that they may enjoy him !

ESV Rev3: 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. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ’’

- To anyone to the one who conquers ...it takes tremendous courage to confront the Giants we must conquer...these people had beliefs about themselves and their relationship with God...that were all wrong....Repenting and conquering those false beliefs...with the truth is hard...but the reward is
- ...I will open up my throne and let you sit with me and my Father
- *And that person will sit with us in fellowship in heaven....can anything be better??*

end