

## THE CHURCH OF LAODICEA – REVELATION 3:14-22 (THE PRESENT AGE)

The last of the seven churches is probably the most disheartening. Laodicea was a wealthy inland city about forty miles from Ephesus. It was steeped in Greek culture and learning, as well as being a thriving commercial city. Named after the wife of Antiochus II, it was destroyed by a great earthquake about A.D. 66. Later it was rebuilt by Marcus Aurelius and was known as the “Seat of the Christian Church.”

- The town was originally called *Diospolis*, "City of \_\_\_\_\_"
- Laodicea was founded on the site of the older town by [Antiochus II Theos](#), king of the [Seleucid Empire](#), in 261-253 BC in honour of his wife \_\_\_\_\_, together with several other cities of the same name.
- It lay on a major trade route and in its neighbourhood were many important ancient cities; it was 10 miles west of [Colossae](#), 7 miles south of [Hierapolis](#).
  - Hierapolis – Known for its \_\_\_\_\_ springs and mineral baths
  - Colossae – Resort city know for its \_\_\_\_\_ refreshing waters that flowed from the mountains.
- It had 4 major shopping centers with over 4000 shops – Tens of thousands of merchants flowed in and out of the city.
- It was the \_\_\_\_\_ center of that part of the world.
- It was revered for its \_\_\_\_\_ industry
- Laodicea had a famous medical school that was founded because of the temple of Men Carou (later, Asklepios) located 13 miles NW. Two famous medical teachers were Zeuxis and Alexander Philaethes who even appear on their coins.
  - They followed the medical theory of Herophilos (330-250BC) who believed that compound diseases required compound medicines.
  - Two of the most famous and successful where:
    - an \_\_\_\_\_ ointment from spice nard
    - \_\_\_\_\_ made from "Phrygian powder" mixed with oil.

The local church must also have also been wealthy. (3:17) Presently, there are three ruins of churches dating back to the early days of Christianity. It was difficult to have one church in a city, much less three. **Despite their blessed status, no information is given about the \_\_\_\_\_ of this church.**

When we consider this present period of church history and the words that Christ used to identify this church, it is evident that Laodicea is alive and well. Laodicea comes from two words meaning “people’s rights.” This period of church history is governed more by the “rights of the people” than the Holy Spirit. This is a demonic doctrine that has imbedded itself in the fabric of the modern church. Now the church is a democracy, not a theocracy. Furthermore, never before in history has the church been as blessed as it is today. In the early years of the church in America, our fathers struggled to exit. Today we inhabit beautiful, air-conditioned

cathedrals filled with the finest of cultural tools. Unlike the early church, we cannot say, “Silver and gold have I none...” Sadly, we find this modern church void of the presence and power of a living Christ. Jesus himself is trying to get back into His church. **Will we open the door?**

A. Commendation: \_\_\_\_\_

**TRAGICALLY, THIS CHURCH HAS THE DISTINCTION OF BEING THE ONLY CHURCH WHOSE CONDUCT IS SO BAD THAT EVEN CHRIST COULD NOT FIND A SINGLE THING TO COMPLIMENT.**

B. Condemnation:

- i. They are Lukewarm
  - 1) He said that they were neither hot nor cold – “hot” meaning *zealous in the faith* and “cold” meaning *lifeless*.
  - 2) This city was located on a flat-top hill. A stadium was built on this hill to Vespasian around 79 A.D. Since hot and cold springs were all around this area, a stone aqueduct was built that ran for five miles to baths. Because of the long distance that the water had to travel, however, it was neither hot nor cold when it reached its desire destination.
  - 3) Nothing is worse than expecting something and getting something else. This *lukewarmness* makes God sick at His stomach.
- ii. You are Deceived
  - 1) “You say you are rich and have need of nothing...”
  - 2) In the Greek the word that is used is claiming to be “The Richest”
  - 3) “Increased with goods” – means “\_\_\_\_\_”
  - 4) The blessing of God is not always an indication of His good pleasure. Sometimes God blesses us to get our attention turned toward His goodness.
  - 5) This church had everything that is considered successful by today’s standards; but they did not have Christ. Sometimes we can become so tied up in the work of the Lord that we forget about the Lord of the work.
- iii. You are Wretched
  - 1) Even though this church gave itself lessons on positive thinking and took self- help courses, it was still incomplete in God’s eyes.
- iv. You are Poor
  - 1) Rich in materials, they were poor in \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ.
  - 2) In the Greek the word that is used is claiming to be “The Richest”
- v. You are Blind
  - 1) Although they had more materials, books, and information capabilities, they were still spiritually blind.
- vi. You are Naked
  - 1) Laodicea was known for its expensive black wool.
  - 2) For Christ to say that they were naked was an insult to them. They prided themselves in their garments.

- 3) Jesus told them to buy *white* clothing – white represents righteousness.

C. Counsel:

- i.                      Gold Refined in the Fire
  - 1) Our faith in Christ is more precious than gold (1 Peter 1:7)
- ii. Buy White Clothes to Wear
- iii. Buy Salve to Put on your Eyes
- iv. Be Earnest and Repent – This lukewarm, indifferent, materialistic church is challenged to repent of their sins and turn to Him.

D. Challenge:

- i. Be an Overcomer
  - 1) Christ keeps restating the overcomer will sit with Him in authority.
- ii. He Who Has an Ear Let Him Hear
  - 1) The Spirit of God is calling us back to the basics.
  - 2) Not everyone in this generation will have an ear to hear and heed the warnings given in these churches.

**Conclusion: The most shocking reality of this church is that Jesus is found “outside” the church pleading to be allowed into the fellowship. It is mind-blowing for me to image that Jesus isn’t welcome in His own house...**

- Revelation 3:20 – Jesus stands at “the door” and knocks
- “knocks” = Greek for incessantly pounds

**It seems from the flow of the passage in Rev. 3 and 4 that the Philadelphia church goes through the open door in Rev. 4 and that the Laodicea church never opens its door. Could this be saying that one church (the remnant) will be ready for the appearing of Christ and that the other church (false church) will miss it?**