

LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA

Introduction:

1. Laodicea was located about 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia and about 40 miles east of Ephesus.
2. The area around Laodicea was known for its natural springs – both hot and cold.
3. However, the city itself had no source of fresh water; instead, it was piped in through a 6-mile-long aqueduct from hot springs to the south.

- I. Salutation Revelation 3:14a
 - A. It is not known how, when or by whom this church was founded. {*We do know that it was not founded by Paul (cf. Colossians 2:1).*}
 - B. Laodicea is also mentioned in Colossians 2:1 and 4:13-16.

- II. Description of Jesus Revelation 3:14b
 - A. Jesus is called the “Amen.”
 - B. Jesus is called the One who is “the faithful and true witness.”
 - C. Jesus is called the “beginning of the creation of God.”
 1. The word “beginning” means, “origin, leader, active cause; one that commences.”
 2. Jesus is not a created being, for He is eternal (John 1:1-4).
 3. Jesus has supremacy over all creation – even the church.

- III. Commendation
 - A. The Lord had no words of commendation for the church at Laodicea.
 - B. This had not always been the case (cf. Colossians 2:1; 4:13-16).

- IV. Condemnation Revelation 3:15-18
 - A. The Laodiceans were condemned for being lukewarm.
 1. They were not cold – “chilly,” often in reference to one having not become a follower of Christ.
 - a. There was medicinal value to be found in the nearby cold springs.
 - b. But there was no spiritual healing to be found in this church.
 2. They were not hot – “to boil,” often in reference to one’s zeal or being fervent in service to the Lord.
 - a. There was medicinal value in the nearby hot springs.
 - b. They were even a source of water for Laodicea.
 - c. However, this church offered no healing or life-giving service to the city of Laodicea.
 3. They were lukewarm – “tepid,” indicating a mixture of hot and cold, double-minded; therefore, sickening and nauseating.
 4. Lukewarm Christians are dangerous to themselves and the church.
 - a. They are a breeding ground for sin (cf. James 1:13-15).
 - b. They bring reproach to the church by their hypocrisy and inconsistency.

The Book of Revelation

Lesson Ten

Revelation 3:14-22

- c. Their divided allegiance brings them heartache and keeps them from serving the Lord.
 - B. The Laodiceans were condemned for inaccurate self-examination.
 - 1. They thought they were rich and wealthy.
 - 2. They thought they were royally attired in the best clothing.
 - 3. They thought they possessed perfect vision.
 - 4. However, they were wrong!
 - 5. They needed to return to the Lord and see themselves accurately.
 - a. He could give them true riches – gold tried in the fire (refined and free from impurities – a spiritual necessity [1 Peter 1:7]).
 - b. He could give them white garments to cover their nakedness – pure clothing to cover their sins, cleansed by His blood (7:14).
 - c. He could give them medicine for their eyes to allow them to see – spiritual vision brought by His Truth.
 - 6. Outward appearances do not necessarily reflect inward realities.
 - C. The Laodiceans were condemned for trusting in riches instead of in God.
 - 1. They said that they “have need of nothing.”
 - 2. They thought that their money was sufficient for anything they needed.
 - 3. All Christians must guard themselves against a love for, dependence upon and trust in uncertain riches (cf. 1 Timothy 6:17-19).
- V. Warnings Revelation 3:19
 - A. The warning came in the form of a rebuke from the Lord.
 - B. It was also a chastening (discipline) from Him.
 - C. God warns and disciplines those He loves (cf. Hebrews 12:5-11).
 - D. It was a warning to become hot (zealous) in their dedication and service.
 - E. It was a warning to repent or perish.
- VI. Exhortations Revelation 3:20
 - A. Jesus exhorted them to open the door to Him.
 - 1. How sad it is that Jesus had been shut out of His own house!
 - 2. How encouraging it is that He had not given up on His people.
 - 3. Jesus will knock, but He will not force His way in.
 - B. Jesus exhorted them to hear His voice.
- VII. Blessings Revelation 3:21
 - A. Those who overcome will sit with Jesus on His throne.
 - 1. The faithful share in the reign of the Messiah.
 - 2. As His cause is victorious in the world, Christians share in that victory.
 - 3. This is an important and central theme in the book of Revelation.
 - B. Those who overcome will be rewarded just as Jesus was.
 - 1. Jesus overcame Satan, sin and death through His resurrection and ascension.
 - 2. If we are faithful, we will be raised from the dead, meet the Lord in the air and live with Him forever!