

Laodicea

Scripture Text: Revelation 3:14-22

About the Text:

- 1) The church at Laodicea is the last church of the seven that Jesus addresses in the book of Revelation.
- 2) It appears in contrast to the church at Philadelphia regarding whom Jesus had no criticism.
- 3) Nothing positive was said regarding this church.
- 4) We can learn much from the correction she received.

I. THE CITY OF LAODICEA

1. The City of Laodicea was founded by Antiochus II in 261-246 B.C.
2. The city of Laodicea is located about 11 miles west of Colossae and about 40 miles east of Ephesus.
3. The city was built along the river Lychus and was on a primary trade route from Ephesus eastward.
4. Laodicea's principle industries were...
 - 1) Banking
 - 2) Black wool.
 - 3) Eye Salve.
5. The city sported a great reputation in these industries.
 - 1) The banking industry here made the occupants so wealthy that they refused aid from Rome in 70 A.D. when an earthquake destroyed their town.
 - 2) As a medical center, the eye-salve that was manufactured was sent throughout the known world in tablet form.
 - 3) Black wool supplied material to make warm winter coats.
6. Jewish people were numbered among the Gentiles here; in fact, so much gold was sent to the temple in Jerusalem from Laodicea that a limit had to be placed on the Jewish businessmen lest they cause a local depression.
7. Nearby the town was a warm spring that became a sort of "health spa" for the people of the day. The city was a resort for the wealthy upper class.

II. THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA.

1. We don't know when the church began, but it was in existence at the time of the writing of the book of Colossians—60 or 61 A.D.
2. Paul wrote the book of Colossians with the church at Laodicea in mind as well.
3. He refers to that church in ...
 - 1) Col. 2:1 – Paul speaks concerning his desire for them to be rich in Christ.
 - 2) Col. 4:13 – Epaphras evidently was a strong worker with the church there.
 - 3) Col. 4:15 – The church seems to have initially met in the house of Nymphas.
 - 4) Col. 4:16 – The epistle to the Colossians was to be read to the Laodiceans as well.
 - 5) This indicates that they may have experienced some of the same problems that the church at Colossae experienced with the doctrine of Gnosticism.
4. The book of Revelation contains the only other New Testament message addressed to them.

III. JESUS MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH.

1. They were spiritually complacent.
 - 1) They were characterized as being neither hot nor cold.
 - 2) They were the church that merely “got by.”
 - 3) They were lukewarm—room temperature.
 - a. The church there was like a tepid cup of coffee or a room temperature glass of milk. They needed heating up or cooling down before they would be palatable again.
 - b. Or perhaps the image of drinking the nearby warm springs with its odious mineral water was that to which Jesus referred.
 - 4) Regardless, Jesus said he would spew them out of his mouth because of their lackadaisical attitude.
 - 5) God desires his people to be zealous – Titus 2:11-14.
2. They were physical wealthy, but spiritually impoverished.
 - 1) They said, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.”
 - 2) Their attitude was that since we are rich, we are saved.
 - 3) They thought that physical prosperity indicated spirituality.
 - 4) Jesus indicated otherwise.

5) Regarding their true spiritual condition, He said, “You are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

6) Their physical prosperity had no bearing upon their spiritual welfare.

7) God desires his people to be rich toward Him – Luke 12:15-21

3. Jesus had the answer to their spiritual poverty. He counseled them to act regarding their spiritual neglect. They needed to buy from Jesus...

1) Gold (which the banking industry had much) refined by fire. They needed spiritual riches, not physical—treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:20).

2) White raiment (contrast black wool) to be clothed (Revelation 7:13, 14).

3) Eye salve (which was abundant there) to cure their blindness (2 Peter 1:5-9).

4. Jesus calls upon them to repent.

1) He loved them, so he rebuked and chastened them.

2) He stands at the door knocking for them, longing for fellowship with them.

3) The one who overcomes will sit with Jesus on his throne.

1. We learn from the church at Laodicea...

1) Jesus vehemently rejects spiritual complacency, but he loves zealous Christians.

2) Physical wealth is no indication of spiritual welfare.

3) Jesus is the answer to spiritual poverty—there is no physical substitution for spirituality in the life of the Christian.

4) But we must repent.

2. Invitation

1) Are you a Christian?

2) If you are, then what is your spiritual situation? Lukewarm? Overconfident? Unrepentant?

3) If you are not a Christian ...

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