

Bible Prophecy and the book of Revelation, Lesson 7

7 Letters to the 7 Churches, The Church at Laodicea

- ↪ Only two letters have no good news, and this is one of them. **Revelation 3:14-22**
 - ↪ **South of Philadelphia, at the juncture of three main thoroughfares, was this large prosperous city.**
 - ↪ Its twin city, Hierpolis, had a wonderful hot spring where people went to convalesce. This hot water was carried by an open aqueduct to Laodicea 6 miles away and when it got there, it was lukewarm.
 - ↪ Its closest neighboring city, Colossae, essentially a suburb of Laodicea, had a wonderful cold spring which was brought by an open aqueduct to Laodicea 1 mile away, and when it got there it was lukewarm.
 - ↪ Not positioned to be militarily defendable; therefore, it was vulnerable and developed a characteristic of compromise. It was named after the wife of Antiochus II, Laodase. Paul writes a letter to this church indirectly, **Colossians 4:16**.
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↪ **Economy**

- ↪ Handled the caravan trade that extended all the way to China's Yellow River and the Punjab River. Much wealth flowed through this city. It was a city of merchants, bankers, and gold refiners.
 - ↪ Its textile industry was a major source of income for the city. They raised an unusual strain of black sheep and were known for a very unusual shiny, black wool which made very fine garments.
 - ↪ It was famous for its school of medicine, which was most well-known for its eye ointment, which Aristotle also described in his writings.
 - ↪ **Verse 14** Laodicea = Lao = people = "the rule of the people," which is fine if it's the government, but terrible, if it's the church.
 - ↪ "Amen, True and Faithful Witness" Amen is the Hebrew for true or truly. "Amen and amen I say to you;" Jesus is calling it just as He sees it and His estimation is accurate.
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- ↪ The Greek word "arche" means "The beginning of the creation of God," which is where we get our word architect from which means "the originator." The beginning in that He is the source of all created things. As a man, He had a beginning, but as God He was the beginning!
 - ↪ Jesus refers to Himself this way because that is where the rub is; they have a heretical view of the person and work of Christ. You can't be wrong about Jesus and go to Heaven. Start naming the cults that have their idea of Jesus as a part of their theology. Believing on your idea of who Jesus is will not save you.
 - ↪ **This represents the worst church period of the Seven.**
 - ↪ There is a downward spiral present in the 5 churches that are involved in some form of sin. Ephesus left their first love; Pergamus was in a compromised position; Thyatira was in a full-blown affair; Sardis was dead with a few who hadn't soiled their clothes, but Laodicea has no one that is indicated to be saved!
 - ↪ **Verse 15-16** No good news at all, but really bad news; this church makes Jesus sick!!!
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- ↪ **Verse 17** This is the most mistaken church of the Seven. **Smyrna** thought it was poor. **Philadelphia** thought it was weak, and they were!!! Without Jesus we have nothing, but with Him and as we rely on Him, we have everything.
 - ↪ This describes the churches of our day in increasing numbers. **2nd Timothy 3:5** Characteristic of end times. **2nd Thessalonians 2:1-3** The apostasy is the falling away which speaks of the church, not the unchurched.
 - ↪ V. 18 Speaks to them in terms they understood such as water, gold, clothes, eye salve. Spiritually, the descriptions of this church are that they are not rich towards God in good works. They are not relying on His righteousness as a garment and are spiritually blinded and undiscerning.
 - ↪ One of the largest movements in Christianity today is the health and wealth gospel. This is written to that movement especially to the Western church which is the wealthiest the church has ever been.
 - ↪ Laodicea was devastated by an earthquake at one point and Rome offered to fund the rebuilding, but Laodicea refused the funds and rebuilt with their own funds. Tacitus writes, "Laodicea arose from the ruins by the strength of her own resources and with no help from us."
 - ↪ In the same way, this church spoke of God, but relied on their own resources; they just threw money at stuff and did not really pray or seek God's help or intervention.
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- ↪ Verse 19 "zealous" = "hot" as opposed to lukewarm. "I wish that you were cold or hot." Cold represents the hardened outright unbeliever, indifferent to the things of God like the hardened soil of the path.
 - ↪ Laodiceans have a form of godliness, but have denied its power; like the Pharisees, they were almost impossible to reach. Jesus is saying that He would rather deal with those who are cold, dead, and lifeless than those who are dead, but think they are alive.
 - ↪ The hardest people to reach with the gospel are those who think they have already accepted it. This church had come up with its own religion and labeled it Christianity.
 - ↪ Verse 20 In every other letter, Jesus held out hope for the entire congregation. Here there is no such hope, only to the individual is there hope kept. Notice His patience and kindness toward the apostate church; we need the same. This letter is the knocking of Jesus on the door of their lives.
 - ↪ Verses 21-22 We live in a very bad and dangerous time in which the church has lost her influence and has lost her connection with the Savior and does not know it!!!
 - ↪ People think the church is entering into her most glorious age, but the church is finding favor with the masses. This was never to be so; Jesus said the masses would hate us. When the world starts accepting us, we are in very bad shape.
 - ↪ The Church is only powerful when she is weak!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
 - ↪ We are taught that God wants us to be healthy and rich; it seems to me that that was the downfall of the Laodicean church.
 - ↪ We are taught to be seeker friendly, as if the church of the Scriptures were not, but the Scriptures teach us that "no one seeks for God." Romans 3:11
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- ↪ We are taught that to appeal to the lost, we need to speak on self-esteem and felt needs and tell people that God has a purpose for them; they are not required to confess that they are wicked sinners deserving Hell.
- ↪ We are taught that God is doing the greatest things He's ever done in our churches, but churches have the least effect on our society as they historically have ever had. The statistics of divorce, adultery, abuse, alcoholism, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, etc. are the same in the church as they are in the world; is this God's great thing?
