

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

8. The Church in Laodicea



Introduction

We now come to the last letter given by Jesus, and this is the letter to the church at Laodicea. The city of Laodicea was 43 miles south of Philadelphia, and like Sardis and Philadelphia, it had been devastated by the same earthquake in AD60. Unlike the other cities though, Laodicea did not accept assistance from the Roman government, and rebuilt the city using its own resources. It was famous for its' banking establishments, clothing industry and medical school, which produced a well-known eye ointment. The main problem that Laodicea faced was a lack of water and it was piped into the city from two sources – from hot mineral springs in one direction, and cold water springs in another direction. As you read through this letter you can see each of these characteristics mentioned.

Scripture Reading: Revelation 3:14-22



This church receives no commendation, only correction. Sadly it seems that the church had taken on the same 'spirit' as the city. Describe in your own words what this church was like. Revelation 3:15-18



The picture of the church as 'lukewarm' was one people would vividly understand, as when water was piped into the city from hot springs in one direction, and cold from the other, it had become lukewarm by the time it reached the city. How is the attitude Jesus speaks about in v7a ('I am rich...') linked to being lukewarm? Discuss.

(There is a danger we face when we begin to prosper materially – the danger of depending on our own resources instead of on Jesus. The Christians in Laodicea had fallen into this trap. When we don't realize we 'need' Jesus, we become indifferent, lazy and lukewarm.)



Do you think the church in this country and the country you are from is in danger of becoming lukewarm? How can we avoid becoming like this? See Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 1:6, Hebrews 3:13, 10:24-25



The meaning of the word Laodicea is 'rule of the people' or 'judgment of the people'. Another danger the church faces is that the leaders preach what the people want to hear, to gain their acceptance. In what ways is the church in danger of doing this today?



The Christians in Laodicea thought they were rich and could buy whatever they needed. Jesus saw their true spiritual condition and urged them to 'buy' those things that were of eternal value. What 3 qualities did He urge them to 'buy'? v18

(Gold refined in the fire – so they would be rich, white clothes – to cover their nakedness and eye salve or ointment – so they could see.)



Notice that each of these things Jesus mentions are those things Laodicea was famous for. What does Jesus really mean when He speaks of gold, white clothes and eye salve? Also see 1 Peter 1:7, Revelation 19:8, Jude 23, Psalm 119:18, Luke 24:31, 45

*(The gold refers to faith that has been proven & tested.
The clothing refers to a righteous life, not stained by works of the flesh.
The eye salve or ointment refers to spiritual understanding of God's Word.)*



Although this church disappointed Jesus, He still loved them. In what 2 ways does He indicate His love? V19-20

(He showed them His love by rebuking them, and knocking at the door of their hearts.)



There may have been a time in your life when you became lukewarm and Jesus rebuked you and drew you back. Share your experience.

Conclusion

What is our spiritual condition right now? If we feel it is just like that of the Christians in Laodicea, then let's do something about it. Jesus loved this church and told them to be 'earnest and repent'. The word 'earnest' means: 'to seek or earnestly desire, to be zealous'. Let's cry out to God and ask His forgiveness and earnestly desire to draw near to Him. We need to overcome being lukewarm constantly in our lives, so we are ready when Jesus comes.