

Revelation 3:14-23 - Church at Laodicea

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COURSE COMMENTARY

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3:14 - Laodicea - introduction

Bathhouse Arches at Laodicea



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- 1) An independent and wealthy city, rebuilt after earthquake of A.D. 60 without Roman aid.
- 2) Garment manufacturing center, famous for sales of woolen garments ([Rev. 3:18](#)).
- 3) Medical school which produced an ointment for ears and eyes ([Rev. 3:18](#)).
- 4) Close fellowship with church in Colossae ([Col. 4:17](#)).

3:14 - Laodicea - titles

- [the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness](#)
Amen is derived from a Hebrew word meaning "certainty" or "a reliable support." Jesus emphasizes His faithful and true witness because of His assessment of this church--without commendation! The verity of His witness is emphasized in passages concerning *judgment* ([Rev. 19:11](#)).
- [the Beginning of the creation of God](#)
 "the Beginning" is *arche*. Here it takes the *active* meaning of *author* or *efficient cause*. He is "the Beginner" of creation ([Gen. 1:1](#); [John 1:1-3](#); [Col. 1:15-17](#); [Heb. 1:1-2](#)).

3:15 - Laodicea - criticism

- **I could wish you were cold or hot**
An allusion to the mediocre temperature of the water supply at Laodicea which was probably brought by an aquaduct from Denizli (5 miles distant). Why would Jesus prefer **cold** rather than **lukewarm**? *Inconsistency of conviction* coupled with *hypocrisy* is more damaging and irretrievable than the wrong conviction consistently held!
- **because you are lukewarm... I will vomit you out**
Lukewarm -- the church was at peace with the culture, no longer a shining light. When hearts harden to the point where repentance and return will not be forthcoming, God turns men loose to their own destruction ([Jer. 15:1-4](#); [Zec. 11:9](#); [Rom. 1:20-28](#)).
- **I am rich**
The independence and affluence of the city of Laodicea had infected the culture and the culture had infected the church! Independence of God is sin!
- **have need of nothing**
The classic pattern of those blessed by God is to mistake His blessing for their own abilities ([Deu. 8:11-15](#)). This is the USA today!!
- **do not know... wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked**
Wretched is "afflicted." *Miserable* is "pitiable." Their blindness made them pitiable. They **did not know** they were naked! This is a common situation among churches of our day.

3:18 - Laodicea - exhortation

- **I counsel you to buy from Me**
They were wealthy and making purchases, but from the **wrong source** !
- **gold... white garments... eye salve**
The remedies for the previous ills, for they were *poor, naked, and blind*. They were naked, exposed, and their sin required a *covering*. They were clothed in their own "righteousness" ([Pr. 20:6](#); [Mat. 5:20](#); [Luke 10:29](#); [Luke 18:9](#)) rather than the righteousness provided by God ([Rom. 10:3](#)). See lesson discussing [Revelation 3:4-5](#) where **White Garments** are promised to the church at Sardis.
- **anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see**
An allusion to the ophthalmology associated with the city. They needed the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the *seven eyes*, to see their own condition from God's perspective ([Rev. 5:6](#)).
- **as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten**
The church at Laodicea could take comfort in Christ's rebuke because it indicated His love for them. God chastens those who are His legitimate children ([Heb. 12:5-8](#)).
- **be zealous... repent**
"Zealous" is *ze'leue*, present tense: "be continually full of zeal!" The same root word for "hot" in [Revelation 3:15](#).

3:20 - Laodicea - promises

- **I stand at the door and knock**

The door could represent:

- 1) Close fellowship with God ([Sos. 5:1-6](#)).
- 2) Salvation of the individual ([John 14:21-23](#)).

The One Whose church it is now stands **outside** ! He has been shut out.

- **come in to him and dine with Him**

Denotes intimate fellowship, either for the lukewarm believer or the one who has not yet responded to God. Communion (the Lord's supper) is a precursor to the time when Jesus will dine with believers in the Millennial Kingdom ([Mat. 8:11](#); [26:29](#); [Mark 14:25](#); [Luke 22:18](#)).

3:21 - Laodicea - overcomer

- **sit with me**

They will sit with Christ as He sits with His Father. This speaks of the co-rule of the saints ([Rev. 2:26-27](#))

- **My throne... His throne**

Two **different** thrones! Jesus is not now ruling from **His** throne, but will rule from the *throne of David* upon His return.

3:22 - Laodicea - let him hear

- **last mention of Church**

This is the last mention of "church" (*ekklesi'a*) until the last chapter ([Rev. 22:16](#)). The events which follow *on the earth* take place when the Church is no longer present. The pretribulational rapture is not *derived* from this observation, but this fact supports what is taught elsewhere concerning the timing of the Rapture of the church.

For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).