

The Church of Laodicea – The Lukewarm Church

The church of Laodicea is the last of seven churches addressed in the Bible Book of Revelation. We are not told who founded the church of Laodicea in the Bible, yet from textual evidence in the New Testament, we know that Apostle Paul mentioned Epaphras in Colossians 1:7-8, as a faithful minister of the church at Colossae. According to historians, this church was one of Laodicea's close neighbors. Therefore, it seems feasible that he may have been responsible also for planting the church at Laodicea.

Revelation 3:15-16 “I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”

First of all Let us look a little bit at the history of the Laodicea Church

Laodicea was a wealthy city during the Roman period. Not only was Laodicea located on major trade routes that connected it to important cities like Ephesus, Smyrna and Sardis, but it was also a center of textile production and banking. The church of Laodicea is noted as being a wealthy church in the Bible according to Revelation 3:17.

It is important to note here that The Book of Revelation was written during the Roman emperor Domitian's reign. Domitian was notorious for being the first Roman emperor who declared himself a god while still alive. The staunchly monotheistic Jews in the cities of the Mediterranean world at the time of Domitian's reign were exempt from the requirements of emperor worship.

However, Domitian persecuted those Christians who would not participate in the imperial cult which was the worship of emperors and dynastic families. Although Jews were exempt from participating, **Christians were not.**

At first, the Christian church was composed almost entirely of Jews but later, more Gentiles (non-Jews) converted to Christianity. As a result, a great percentage of Jewish people in the Christian church decreased immensely thus causing major threats to Christians' as they became the majority.

Why does the author of the Book of Revelation call the church of Laodicea “lukewarm”?

The Christians at Laodicea were affected by Domitian's decrees. Their response to this persecution—which even involved their ability to buy and sell—is what causes them to be called a “lukewarm” church.

It became so hard that those Christians who refused to worship the image the emperor were killed. Christians could no longer buy or sell unless they had taken the mark of the beast (Revelation 13). The pressure upon rich Christians to maintain their wealth was intense. Since a great deal of Laodicea's wealth depended upon trade, the Christian merchants were in a dilemma. Would they cooperate with the imperial cult and maintain their trade associations, or would they forswear Domitian and reaffirm their faith in Christ?

Many of the Laodicean Christians compromised their faith in such ways that the writer of the apocalypse could say, “I will spit you out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:16).

As we studied previously, other churches throughout the Roman Empire responded differently. For example, the Christians at Smyrna are applauded in the Book of Revelation for maintaining their faith in the midst of extreme difficulty by refusing to participate in the imperial cult (the worship of emperor’s God) —even though this meant affliction and poverty for them (see Revelation 2:9).

The Biblical Application Today.

It is important to note that the following Revelation churches represent me and you today. In all of the seven churches, we read that Jesus Christ had something that He saw in them;

1. [Ephesus – The Loveless Church \(Revelation 2:1-7\)](#)
2. [Smyrna — The Suffering Church \(Revelation 2:8-11\)](#)
3. [Pergamos — The Compromising Church \(Revelation 2:12-17\)](#)
4. [Thyatira — The Adulterous / Corrupt Church \(Rev. 2:18-29\)](#)
5. [Sardis — The Dead Church \(Revelation 3:1-6\)](#)
6. [Philadelphia — The Faithful Church \(Revelation 3:7-13\)](#)
7. [Laodicea – the church with the lukewarm faith \(Revelation 3:15-17\)](#)

Today we are studying about the church # 7 – Church of Laodicea – the Lukewarm Church

Laodicea church has nothing good for Jesus to commend. They are lukewarm, they are neither cold nor hot. Revelation 3:15 says; “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I could wish you were cold or hot. Jesus says, ‘I could wish you were cold or hot’ not lukewarm

Hebrews 6:4-6 declares; For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall **fall away**, to renew them again unto repentance.

The people representing by Laodicea church loved the worldly riches and they were running after blessings and prosperity gospel. They seem blessed, wealthy but in reality they were miserable, poor and blind in their worldly wealth.

Revelation 3:17 says; “Because you say, ‘I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing’ – and do not know that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. The church valued worldly blessings and wealth more than spiritual blessings and wealth

The three major warnings for the church (Body of Christ) today

- 1. Warning against worldly prosperity.** Jesus says unto them in Revelation 3:18: "I counsel you to buy Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see..." The church of Laodicea represents many people in this generation. They value worldly wealth more than spiritual wealth. They are seeking worldly riches in the name of blessings showing-off how blessed they are but in reality, they are poor, miserable and naked. Jesus is warning them to turn to Him for true prosperity which is SPIRITUAL. It's better to be spiritually wealthy than worldly wealthy. Why? worldly material wealth has no eternal benefit.
- 2. Warning against self-righteousness.** The prophetic Word from the Book of Isaiah 61:10 says; "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels". We as a church, need to desire to be clothed with the righteousness of God and NOT go bragging about our self-righteous acts. We should desire to be clothed with righteousness. White garment from the passage in Revelation represents Jesus Christ righteousness. It's Jesus who cloths us with His robe of righteousness. **In Isaiah 46:12** God inspires Isaiah to warn Israel that all their "righteousness's are like filthy rags," since their sinful attitudes pollute their deeds. The impurity of their motives taints all their prayers, sacrifices, offerings, and praises, thus God deeply detests and abhors them. Like the Laodiceans, they cannot see their true condition unless they repent (Revelation 3:17). The parable that Jesus gave in **Luke 5:36-39** is a series of contrasts between new and old. Jesus begins with an example of old and new garments: "No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old." In Scripture, going all the way back to the Garden of Eden, garments or clothing are common symbols of righteousness. After Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to cover themselves with something they made with their own hands (Genesis 3:7). Instead, God gave them tunics made of skin (verse 21), requiring the life of an animal, representing the Lamb of God giving His life to cover sin. That what God did. He gave His son Jesus Christ so that whosoever believes in Him may NOT perish but inherit everlasting live (John 3:16). When you repent of your sins and you get born again, you get clothed with the righteousness' of God, the old things are passed away, and the new has come.
- 3. Warning Against Spiritual Blindness.** Lukewarm people are spiritually blind. They have a form of Christianity but in reality, it is religion that denies the power of the Gospel. Majority of them hate being told the truth – corrected – or even rebuked. When you rebuke them, they tell you 'stop judging'. They do not know the difference between judging and rebuking. Revelation 3:19 however admonishes us and says; "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Revelation 3:20 says; Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Jesus' promise to those who overcome lukewarmness

Revelations 3:21 declares; "To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne. Revelation 3:22: "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches"