

## Laodicea: The Church Where Jesus Was Not Welcome Revelation 3:14-22

Jesus comes to Church:

Let's Review:

- Ephesus He found **loveless**
  - Smyrna He found **rich**
  - Pergamus He found **tolerant**
  - Thyatira He found **relevant**
  - Sardis He found **lifeless**
  - Philadelphia he found **blameless**
  - Laodicea He found **that he wasn't welcome**
    - Apathetic
    - Deluded
    - Bankrupt
- 
- This city of Laodicea was founded by Antiochus II sometime before 253 BC. It was named after his wife Laodice. He later divorced her – kind of inconvenient after you already named a city after her.
  - The one defensive problem in Laodicea was the fact that there was no ready source of water in the city. Water had to be piped in through aqueducts. Water came from two locations. Hot springs in Hierapolis six miles to the north was brought into the city. Cool Water was also piped in from Colossae, which was located 10 miles to the east. This fact will be important as we move into the passage.
  - Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake in 61 AD. The city was so wealthy and so self-sufficient that they rebuilt their city with their own resources, refusing an offer of aid from Caesar.
  - This was a self-sufficient city a very wealthy city which will also play into the letter written to them.

So what does Jesus have to say? Let's read it!

All churches need to know:

1. Who Jesus is (verse 14)
  - a. The **final** word – The Amen
  - b. The **faithful** witness – Sincere and True
  - c. The **first** cause – He is the genesis of everything
2. What Jesus discovers (verses 15-17)
  - a. A church with **possession** problems – verse 1. “Of the Laodiceans”
  - b. A church with **passion** problems – Here’s a little background
  - c. A church with **perception** problems – They thought they were rich and in need or nothing. Do you know that is the hardest crowd on earth to reach with the gospel! Yes it is! When you are blinded to your needs because of wealth and self-sufficiency it is difficult to see that you need a savior.
    - i. **Finances** - It was a center of banking and finance, known through the Roman Empire for its wealth and financial power.
    - ii. **Fashion** - It was renowned for the soft, black wool produced there. This wool was considered a luxury item and was sought after for clothing and rugs. Laodicea was the center of fashion in its day. The newest styles appeared here first. It was the Paris or New York of its time.
    - iii. **Pharmaceuticals** - There was a famous medical school in Laodicea which produced a tablet that was sold all over the Roman Empire. This tablet was crushed, mixed with water to form a paste. This paste was rubbed into the eyes and was supposed to cure a variety of eye problems.
  - d. A church with **poverty** problems – They were spiritually bankrupt. They had the biggest of budgets, the finest of buildings and the best in worldly possessions but they did not have Jesus; they did not have his Spirit – they were spiritually bankrupt. Wow! I am more and more convinced that we don’t have a clue how to determine the health of a church. Big budgets, nice buildings and busy programming usually win the attention of most people but it may be making God sick. If a church is not rich with Holy Spirit activity and with spiritual worship is a bankrupt church. Only God knows if a church is:
    - i. Truly in **love** with Jesus
    - ii. **Suffers** willingly

- iii. Becomes **tolerant** of false doctrine
- iv. Seeks relevance with the **culture**
- v. Is living on past **reputation**
- vi. Is taking advantage of its **opportunities** for outreach
- vii. Or has become self-satisfied and **rich**

### 3. What Jesus advises (verses 18-19)

- a. Don't trust in **material preparations** for your spiritual needs.
  - i. (Luke 12:20) But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'
  - ii. 1 Tim 6:17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.
  - iii. Their church was more thrilled about **gold** in the bank than souls coming to Christ.
  - iv. So busy **congratulating** each other that they couldn't worship the Lord.
  - v. They were up on style and fashion but were walking around without any **spiritual robes**.
  - vi. They thought that they had clear sight when they couldn't even see that they had left **Jesus outside** of his own church.
    - 1. *2 Corinthians 4:3-5 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake*
- b. Don't doubt God's love in time of **reproof and correction** - Think carefully about this for a moment verse 19 As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.
- c. Don't hesitate to **repent** of heartless religion (Matt 15:7-8) 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.

### 4. What Jesus promises (verses 20-21)

- a. He seeks you **presently** - I stand at the door and knock. Isn't this wonderful! Even after ignoring Him Jesus is still seeking someone to open the door so he can get back into his church? What can keep Jesus on the outside looking in?
- b. He seeks you **personally** – If anyone hears and opens the door -
- c. He seeks you **offering a position** – to the overcomer a place to sit on his throne (1 John 5:5) *Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*
  - i. [Mt 19:28](#) *So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

Verse 22 – You have heard the sermon but did you get the message?

People knocked on the Ark in Noah's day but God **had shut the door**.

The foolish and unprepared virgins knocked on the door to the wedding feast but they were turned away

Here Jesus is knocking on the door of his own church and he does that by knocking on the door of one heart.