

A CALL TO REVIVAL

Revelation 3:14-22

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HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Wealth And Self-Sufficiency

Laodicea was a prosperous city in the Roman province of Asia, a center for banking, trade, and manufacturing.

Banking: The city was a major financial hub.

Black wool: It was particularly known for its production of expensive black wool garments, sourced from a breed of black sheep native to the region.

Medical center: Laodicea was a renowned medical center, famous for producing a popular eye salve made from local *"Phrygian powder"*.



Water supply: The city had a significant water problem.

Both hot and cold water had to be piped in from external sources via aqueducts.

However, by the time it reached the city, the water had become lukewarm, a far less refreshing temperature than the hot springs or cold streams it originated from.

Pride and self-reliance: The people were known to be proud.

After an earthquake devastated the city in 60 A.D, they famously refused Roman financial aid to rebuild, a sentiment summed up in the phrase, *"I have need of nothing"*.

CONNECTION TO THE BIBLICAL PASSAGE

"Lukewarm": The lukewarm water supply serves as a powerful metaphor for the spiritually apathetic state of the church, being neither hot nor cold in its commitment.

"Blind": The reference to spiritual blindness connects to the city's famous eye salve. While they used an earthly salve to "see," the church was spiritually blind to its own wretchedness and need for Christ.

"Naked": This alludes to the church's spiritual poverty despite its material wealth, and the need for Christ's righteousness to cover them.

"Poverty": The verse states the church thinks it is rich but is "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked," highlighting the contrast between worldly wealth and spiritual bankruptcy.

The message to the church in **Laodicea** (Revelation 3:14-22) is an unadulterated rebuke, with not commendation, focusing on its spiritual **Luke warmness, self-sufficiency** stemming from material wealth, and resultant spiritual **blindness** and **poverty**.

EXEGESIS OF THE LAODICEA CHURCH

The exegesis of the passage in **Revelation 3:14-22** is deeply intertwined with the specific social and economic context of the ancient city of Laodicea, which was known for its wealth, textile industry, and medical school.

"Lukewarm" (neither hot nor cold): This central metaphor likely alludes to the city's water supply.

Laodicea had no natural water source and piped water in via aqueducts from distant hot springs (Hierapolis) and cold springs (Colossae).

By the time the water arrived, it was lukewarm, mineralized, and considered nauseating and useless for either medicinal (hot) or refreshing (cold) purposes.

Spiritually, this refers not necessarily to a lack of effort, but to a state of **spiritual indifference**, compromise, or an inability to offer true spiritual life or healing to others, making the church "useless" in its service to the Lord.



The main lesson from the Laodicea church is a warning against spiritual lukewarmness and self-sufficiency, urging instead for fervent commitment and self-examination.

The church was spiritually complacent, believing they were rich while being spiritually poor and blind, and the lesson is to avoid this state by having a genuine, zealous relationship with God rather than going through the motions of religious activity.

"I Am Rich; I Have Acquired Wealth And Do Not Need a Thing": Laodicea was a major financial and banking center, so wealthy that it famously refused financial aid from Rome to rebuild after an earthquake around AD 60.

Jesus uses this civic pride to highlight their spiritual self-sufficiency and their delusion that material prosperity equated to spiritual well-being.

Wretched, Pitiful, Poor, Blind, And Naked": Christ's true assessment directly

contrasts with the Laodicea's' self-perception.

Poor: Despite their banking industry and gold, they lacked the true spiritual riches (faith refined by fire) that only Christ could provide.

Naked: The city was a hub for a prosperous black wool textile industry. Yet, spiritually they were naked, lacking the "white clothes" of purity and righteousness that cover shame.

Blind: Laodicea had a famous medical school known for producing an eye salve (Phrygian powder). Ironically, the church members were spiritually blind, unable to see their own dire condition or God's perspective.

"I Stand At The Door And Knock": This poignant image suggests that Christ was on the outside of the church, seeking to re-enter and have intimate fellowship (symbolized by dining together) with anyone who would open the door and repent.

KEYWORDS

The key biblical and exegetical terms associated with the church of Laodicea are:

- **Lukewarm** (Neither hot nor cold)
- **Self-sufficient** (or self-reliant, proud)
- **Materialistic** (Focused on worldly wealth over spiritual)
- **Indifferent** (Apathetic, complacent)
- **Wretched and Miserable**
- **Poor, Blind, and Naked** (Spiritually destitute)
- **Repentance** (Call to be earnest and turn from their ways)
- **Overcomer** (The promise to those who heed the warning and open the door to Christ)
- **"I stand at the door and knock"** (Christ's plea for personal fellowship)

KEY LESSONS

Avoid Spiritual Lukewarmness: The church was neither fervent (hot) nor

fully committed to faith (cold), but lukewarm, a state Jesus finds detestable.

The lesson is to be actively committed, not indifferent or apathetic in one's faith.

Beware Of Self-Deception: The Laodicea's thought they were wealthy and self-sufficient, but Jesus stated they were "wretched, poor, blind, and naked".

This highlights the danger of self-deception, where one may be going through the motions of faith but is not genuinely connected to God.

Prioritize a True Relationship with God: The warning is not about being a "bad" Christian, but about being a "religious" one without a true, personal relationship with Jesus.

This involves examining one's heart to ensure one's faith is genuine and not just a performance

Be Zealous and Fervent: The church's lack of zeal was a significant problem. The lesson is to be passionate and diligent in one's faith, serving the Lord with genuine spirit and not letting indifference set in.

Examine Your True Spiritual Wealth: The church was blinded by its worldly wealth and status. The lesson is to not place ultimate hope in material possessions or worldly success, as true wealth is spiritual and eternal.

Open The Door To Christ: The strong, central command to the church is "Listen! I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to them". This is call to let Christ into one's life and allow Him to be the center of one's being.

CONCLUSION

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