

Revelation

The Churches

CHURCH 6: LOADICEA

Revelation 3:14-22



BACKGROUND

The Church of Laodicea, located in modern-day Turkey, is the last of the seven churches addressed in the Book of Revelation.

It is unique among the seven letters because it contains no explicit commendation, praise or rebuke.



INTRODUCTION

In 2005, sociologists coined the term “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism”. The central goal of life is to be happy and feel good about oneself. Church becomes a wellness tool - a spiritual self-help clinic. God exists and wants people to be “nice,” but He doesn’t need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when needed to resolve a problem.

1. How far do you agree with this modern definition of the church?
2. Do you agree that ministries have unconsciously become a form of consumer capitalism (often called “McChurch”)?

THOUGHTS

1. Do you think being fully self sufficient is a reason people don’t always take their faith seriously?
2. What do you make of the description of the church in verse 17?
3. One commentator says, “the absolute worst state to fall into is indifference”. Do you agree?
4. How easy do you think it is to become stagnant and lose drive when life is comfortable?
5. What do you think it means to be “victorious” for the church at Laodicea?
6. Do you think being described as “lukewarm” is worse than being called “dead” (Sardis)?
7. Why do you think Jesus offers the church an invitation in verse 20?

PHILADELPHIA

Laodicea was primarily a financial centre. After a major earthquake in AD 60 they refused aid from the Roman Senate due to their private wealth. It was known for the production of high end black wool used for luxury carpet and garments. It also had a medical school and became famous for eye treatments. The city had no water supply so had to import from far away springs. By the time it arrived it was a stagnant, warm, mineral rich sludge that often made people sick.

APPLICATION

1. How can we ensure we avoid falling into indifference?
2. Is there a danger that MPBC could become “lukewarm” and overly comfortable?
3. How can we avoid being busy but ineffective?
4. How easy is it in the modern world to allow social media and TV to rob us of real connection and growth?

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THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA

What makes Laodicea fascinating is how perfectly the biblical critique of the church aligns with the city's actual geography, economics, and infrastructure.



LAODICEA

A Royal Name: The city was founded between 261 and 253 BCE by the Seleucid King Antiochus II Theos. He named it Laodicea in honor of his wife, Laodice.

Strategic Relocation: The city forcibly populated relocating residents from surrounding villages to build a massive, fortified bastion along the critical trade routes of Asia Minor.

The Earthquake: In the year 60 CE (during the reign of Emperor Nero), a massive earthquake completely leveled Laodicea and its neighboring cities.

The Inverted Siphon: To transport water from the springs of Denizli (nearly 5 miles away), Roman engineers built an advanced inverted siphon system.

Phrygian Powder: The city's famous medical school was heavily tied to the production of an eye salve made from Phrygian stone ground into a fine powder, mixed with oil and saffron.

Stadium: The city possessed one of the largest stadiums in the ancient world, measuring roughly 280 meters (918 feet) in length, used for athletic games and gladiatorial combats.

Religion: Zeus Laodiceus: The chief patron deity of the city was Zeus, but a very specific regional version whose image was stamped onto local coins.



Eye Salve



Roman Theatre



Black Wool