

Laodicea – “The Apostate Church”

Apostate [ə'pɒstɪt -tɪt] – *n*, a person who abandons his religion, party, cause, etc.



This is the false, unsaved church that will go through Tribulation and become the Harlot. If there are any believers they are not mentioned by Christ.

City of compromise

Laodicea lies at a major crossroads in the valleys of Asia Minor, in what today is Turkey. The city was situated on a hill overlooking fertile valleys and majestic mountains. In Roman times, the city was an important center for administration and commerce. Court cases from the region were heard at Laodicea and funds were placed in the city's banks for safekeeping. Although damaged by earthquakes during the reign of Augustus (27 B.C.-A.D.14) and again in

A.D. 60, the city kept rebuilding and prospering.

Laodicea was a center for the regional textile industry. The sheep that grazed in the nearby valleys produced a black wool that was exceptionally soft. The wool was bought and sold in the city's markets. Great Camel Caravans came from East. Great Valley had difficulty getting water. Laodicea lay on the bank of the River Lycus. Its position produced a sort of triangle between with two other important cities: Colossae to the south-east and Hierapolis to the north-east, each approximately 10 miles from one another.

Laodicea – Justice of the people named after the wife of Antiochus, Laodis. The city represented wealth and great commerce. It had large industries including: medical center, banking, two Roman theaters, and worship Jupiter and Zeus. The city was known for its exceptional high-end clothing and an apparent miracle eye salve minded with a colored clay. Modern chemical analysis of the clay that used to make the salve says there was nothing effective in it.

- **In what areas is it easy to compromise with the world?**
- **How often do you believe the church compromises today?**

V 14 – Amen is used as a proper name for Christ. 2 Corinthians 1:20. Christ is the only faithful and true source. **How much truth is in the world today? Is truth even valued today?**

Do you choose speculation or revelation?

Science's explanations are based on speculation. Carbon Dating, missing link and etc. God's explanation is based on revelation. God does not expect you to check your mind at the door; investigate, if you do you will come to the conclusion that both take faith. So today, choose who you will follow, as for me and my house we will follow the Lord – Joshua 24:15

V 15-16 – works are not cold - nor hot. Luke warm, I spit you out of my mouth.

“The terms cold, hot and lukewarm are likely to relate to waters around and in Laodicea. Nearby Hierapolis was famed for its hot springs; Colossae, also near at hand, was noted for a cold, clear stream of excellent drinking water. Since, however, the River Lycus dried up in summer; Laodicea had to use a long viaduct for its water, which was not only tepid, but impure and sometimes foul, making people sick. The church of that city had that same effect on Christ... (V 16 should not be taken as indicating that the Lord prefers an atheist or

fanatical religious zealot to a tepid Christian. The issue is the possession of genuine life in Christ by those who profess the Christian faith, not the way they hold it.)” *New Bible Commentary 21st Century Edition*

1. **Why would God want us to either be hot or cold?**
2. **How are we lukewarm to Christ as nation, church, family, or personally?**
3. **Based on Rev 3:16, does it sound like Jesus will rapture this Church? If not, then how might that make you wonder about our churches today whether they will be raptured?**

V 17-18 Laodicea and Sardis were the richest cities in the area. Money cannot solve all problems. Smyrna was poor and slaves but they had no condemnation.

- **Why did Christ call this church wretched, miserable, poor blind and naked if they were wealthy?**
- **How do we measure a successful church?**
- **Is there any danger in a church's building programs and worldly wealth?**
- **Why were eye salve and clothing pointed at this church? Matthew 22:1-14 Wedding Feast**

V 20 – There is still time to repent. He knocks. The table is set. Will you open the door? Reflect on that a minute. This church is lukewarm at best and on its way to being the Harlot yet Jesus still stands and knocks patiently waiting for anyone who would turn and choose life. **How big is God's grace?**

V 21 – 22 Notice the use of my. The emphasis is on a personal relationship. Also, this church is not listening to the Holy Spirit and the Lampstand will be removed. This is also a transition for the rapture, which is up next...

The progression of the letters takes us up to the coming of Christ. For example:

1. EPHESUS -- "... or else I will come unto thee quickly ..." (Rev. 2:5).
2. PERGAMOS -- "... or else I will come unto thee quickly ..." (Rev. 2:16).
3. THYATIRA -- "... hold fast till I come" (Rev. 2:25).
4. SARDIS -- ". I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come." (Rev. 3:3).
5. PHILADELPHIA -- "... I come quickly ..." (Rev. 3:11).
6. LAODICEA -- "... I stand at the door, and knock ..." (Rev. 3:20).

That is the progress of the church until the time when Christ returns. Chapter 4 will mark the end of the church age and the start of Jesus taking control/title of this world.

A deeper Look from John MacArthur into **THE CONDEMNATION** (vv. 15-17)

A. Luke warmness (vv. 15-16)

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth."

1. INDICTING THE LUKEWARM ONES

That is strong language. Christ likens the church at Laodicea to a drink that is supposed to be either hot or cold, but is nauseatingly lukewarm. If you ever had occasion to drink a lukewarm soft drink, you know the feeling. Christ uses the illustration of a lukewarm drink to describe the distaste that makes Him spit out the church at Laodicea. He doesn't want to have anything to do with it.

The first thing that Christ condemns the church for is Luke warmness. The Laodicea church was neither hot nor cold; it was nauseating to God. The risen Christ literally spews the church out of His mouth.

2. IDENTIFYING THE SPIRITUAL STATES

Who are the people that Christ spits out of His mouth? Someone will say, "They are lukewarm Christians." I don't think so. First, why would lukewarm Christians be in an apostate church? Those people can't be Christians. Second, God does not vomit up Christians. In John 6:37 Jesus said, "... him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." But Christ is referring to three different spiritual states: cold (Gk. psuchros, which means "cold"), hot (Gk. zestos, which means "warmth" or "fervor"), and lukewarm (Gk. chliaros, which means "tepid water"). What do these three spiritual states represent?

a. The Cold Ones

Who are the cold ones? In verse 15 Christ says, "... thou art neither cold" What does it mean to be cold? I believe that Christ is referring to the many people in the world who are totally cold to the things of Christ--the gospel leaves them totally unmoved. They don't respond at all. They are not hypocrites. They are blatant about being cold, ungodly, and unconcerned. They don't even make a pretense about knowing Christ. They are lost, unsaved, irreligious, and cold. Those kinds of people are easier to reach than the lukewarm. It is the sense of coldness that awakens a man to feel the chill of lostness, and to know that he needs to be found. If you don't think you're lost, you won't look for anyone to find you. God can reach the person who is cold and lost in sin. That is why Christ says, "I would rather have you cold so that you can sense your chill and lostness."

b. The Hot Ones

I believe this refers to believers. The hot ones are believers who show genuine spiritual fervor. There is no question about their eternal life, the sanctifying power and presence of the Holy Spirit in them, or their Christian testimony. They know Christ.

Salvation is the transformation from cold to hot. A man who is icy cold, freezing in his sin, and estranged from God, becomes hot when God redeems him. The new birth is a transformation from coldness to warmth. It happened to Paul on the Damascus road (Ac. 9:3-6). It happened to Moses, who chose "to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin" (Heb. 11:25). Salvation is a transformation from the coldness of sin to the warmth of godliness. That's what happens to all of us when we are given life while in spiritual deadness. There is nothing as cold as death, but life brings warmth.

c. The Lukewarm Ones

Who are the lukewarm? They are not believers because they have not been transformed from cold to hot. The lukewarm ones are professing Christians who play religious games with God, but are not really His. They have been touched by the gospel in some way, but they don't belong to Christ. They nauseate God because they know the truth but reject it. They live within the context of Christianity but make a mockery out of Christ.

There is more hope for one who has been untouched by the gospel and makes no religious or phony pretense of following Christ than one who makes the pretense of being a believer. No one is further from God than the one who makes an idle profession of belonging to God. This is Satan's big lie: He wants to catch people in the lukewarm, nauseating environment of false religion. They actually think they sense some kind of religious reality. Apostasy nauseates Christ. The church at Laodicea was tragic. The false warmth of religion captures people, but Christ spews them out of His mouth.