

## LAODICEA: A RELIGIOUS CLIMATE FOR THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Revelation 3:14-21

Concerning The City Of Laodicea And The Church Residing There:

1. Laodicea means “the judgment of the people” or “the people’s rights”. It is “**marked**” by a “wide road”, an all inclusive “man centered” gospel, which appeals to the masses; 2 Cor. 11:4. The lukewarm church rejects the personal application of the Cross of Jesus Christ; it does not preach or embrace the “full counsel of God”; Acts 20:27; Jer. 17:5

2. Laodicea had considerable wealth and influence in the ancient world. The city was prosperous, and was known for its banking operations, commercial activity and school of medicine. Like Nimrod, some build themselves a city (Babylon), a tower (ministry) and a name (reputation), through human strength and wisdom, the “**mark**” of man; Gen. 11:1-9; 2 Thes. 2:1-7. Babylon reflects the religious, economic and political endeavors of man.

3. Laodicea was known for its prosperous cloth and textile industry; it was a center of manufacturing for clothing. The sheep which grazed around the city were famous for the wool they produced. God sees the “fleecing” of His sheep; His priesthood is clothed in “linen” not with “wool” (a “**mark**” of that which causes sweat, or comes from a “beast”); Ezek. 44:17-18. It was also famous for its school of medicine and the medical cult of Aesculapias, which produced an “eyesalve” and created medicinal compounds for the healing of ears and eyes (Jesus says we need “eyes to see and ears to hear”).

4. This city had no water source of its own (only Jesus has living water); John 7:38. The city of Colosse supplied refreshing, cold water to its citizens; Hierapolis supplied therapeutic hot water to its citizens. An aqueduct was built in Laodicea which piped in water sources from those cities. But by the time it reached the citizens of Laodicea, the water itself was “lukewarm”. The lukewarm water of Laodicea was neither hot nor cold; the lukewarm state is a “**mark**” of spiritual decline. It is descriptive of a self-sufficient, complacent people who had lost their true Christian witness, their godly influence.

5. Laodicea portrays the final era of the Christian Church at the end of the age. It represents the prevailing conditions of today: one that compromises with the world (a worldly spirit) which resembles its surrounding society. The essence of the “**mark**” of the lower beast nature is that it is driven by SELF-WILL, sensuality and carnal desires. We see this influence within the apostate, organized church; those who are self-ruling, self-seeking and self-directed. This mark is IN the forehead (their thoughts, mindset) and IN the hand (their actions). The “beast” (system, govt.) desires to control men, and will require all to receive its “mark”; Rev. 13:15-16; 14:9

6. Jesus does not give a single word to commend the Laodiceans, who were a reflection of the worldly culture in which they lived; Rev. 3:17-18. He says that this church/individual must repent, because He is about to vomit them out of His mouth (reject them); their spiritual condition was nauseating to Him. The “**mark**” of the lukewarm, apostate Church is that they are “wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked”; Is. 19:14; 28:7-8.

7. False teaching and a spirit of error has “**marked**” Laodicea; it contains a mixture of truth and error. It has embraced New Age doctrine and practices; it teaches that godliness is a means of “gain” and that wealth is a sign of God’s approval upon their lives. The merchants of Babylon have set up their business in God’s house, making a profit, through their buying and selling of the gifts; 1 Timothy 6:5-6. But Jesus wants us to have spiritual wealth. We must pay a price for this (by laying down our lives in submission and obedience to Him). We need to “buy” some things from Him; (Rev. 3:18):

a. Gold tried in the fire, to be spiritually rich; true spiritual character is forged in fire, in the crucible of testing and affliction. Real spiritual treasure must be exchanged for the counterfeit. Gold is symbolic of purified faith and the divine nature. We must be thoroughly purged from the “dross” of our own ways; 1 Peter 1:7.

b. White raiment is needed to cover the shame of our naked condition: righteousness and purity through the blood of Jesus. False “coverings” will be exposed; “fig leaves” are unacceptable; Prov. 28:13; Babylonian garments are forbidden; Josh. 7:13, 21; Rev. 19:8.

c. Eyesalve. Bartimaeus knew he was blind (he cried out “have mercy on me”); Mark 10:46-48). The Laodicean church/individual doesn’t know that they are blind. They need to discern their present condition, to see revelation truth, to perceive and interpret what is being revealed in this hour by the Holy Spirit. The eyes need to be anointed for healing; the “spiritually blind” man is unable to offer “the bread of God”; Leviticus 21:18.

8. The lukewarm Church does not sense any need to be broken or contrite before Jesus. They are not stirred by a conviction of their sin, nor will they hear (or receive) a piercing message. They are accustomed to a seeker-friendly, politically correct, self-serving, watered-down gospel of ease and convenience; 2 Timothy 4:3-4. This is a “**mark**” that distinguishes Laodicea: it has lost its “salt and light”. Instead of being “salt”, (a preservative which flavors food and keeps it from spoiling), it has become worthless; worthless salt is “cast out” and “trampled underfoot”; Matthew 5:13-16.

9. Jesus is at the door “knocking”; He will not “force” His way in, but He wants to “sup” with each of us. This word “sup” refers to the evening meal, the main meal of the day in which people lingered in fellowship. A contrite, repentant heart leads to intimate communion and relationship with Him. This will enable him to feast with the Lord, to partake of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The “**mark**” of a prodigal is that they are found among the unclean; they feed upon the husks, the diet of a “beast”; Luke 15:11-32. Jesus said “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent”.

10. Drastic measures are necessary to awaken the lukewarm; Rev. 3:19; Heb. 12:6-7. Jesus may allow conditions to become severe, in order to awaken those who are destined for destruction; Jer. 2:19. He calls Himself the “Amen”, meaning when He has said something, it is final. He does not waiver; His statements are absolute; there is no room for debate. He is the Faithful and True Witness. No man can add to, or take away from, the Words He has written in His Book. Deception is a “**mark**” of the Church at Laodicea. BUT, a promise is given to the one who repents: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne”; Revelation 3:14, 21; 22:18

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