

## **LAODICEA LOST LOVE**

### I. BACKGROUND

#### A. Geographical/Commercial/Political

1. Located: 40 miles Southeast of Philadelphia, almost due east of Ephesus
2. Commercial: famous for –
  - a. Mercantile banking center
    1. Manufacturing: cloth, garments, carpets made from the wool of local sheep
    2. Located at the juncture of several important trade routes
  - b. Medical School
    1. “Phrygian Powder” – an eye salve that was sold throughout the Greco-Roman world as a cure for ophthalmia (eye problems)
      - Described by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)
  - c. A Wealthy Town
    1. Earthquake: 17 A.D. destroyed the town; accepted Federal Aid
    2. Earthquakes: 60 A.D.
      - The city was rebuilt without any appeal for subsidy from Rome
      - Tacitus (Roman historian) wrote: Laodicea “without any relief from us recovered itself by its own resources.”
    3. Theaters

#### B. Spiritual

1. Many Temples

#### C. Other

1. For all the city’s wealth and prominence, it had a significant fault with its water supply. Nearby Hierapolis was known throughout the region for its natural hot springs. Colossae featured a perennially cold, natural stream. But Laodicea’s nearest sources of water were either too polluted or inconsistent. To solve the problem, they constructed an underground aqueduct to deliver water to the city. However, traveling at least five miles through stone and clay pipes made the water filthy, unpleasant and tepid.
2. Colossians 2:1; 4:15-17
  - Appears that Paul may have been worried that this church was losing its zeal or heart approximately thirty years prior to the writing of Revelation
  - Colossians was written 61-63 A.D.

### II. THE LETTER TO LAODICEA – Rev. 3:14-22

#### A. Who Sent the Letter? Rev. 3:14

1. Christ
2. Christ’s description of Himself:
  - a. The Amen: CERTAINTY
    - Hebrew: truly, indeed, so bit it (implies unchangeable/stability)
    - Denotes a confirmation of something said or done
    - II Corinthians 1:20 – Christ is the Confirmation of God’s promises
  - b. The Faithful and True Witness: CONSISTENCY
    - Compare Rev. 1:5
    - John 3:11 – His words are true thus His witness should be received
  - c. Ruler of God’s Creation: CREATIVITY
    - Compare John 1:1-4

- In perhaps two respects:
  1. Creation of the World
  2. Creation of the Church

B. Strengths: NONE

C. Weakness: v. 15-16

1. No special sin, error or hardship
  - a. No False Teachers
  - b. No Immorality creeping in
  - c. No Persecutions
2. Not WHOLEHEARTED
  - a. Neither Hot nor Cold (LUKEWARM)
    1. Indifferent, Indolent, Mediocre
    2. A tendency to YAWN at spiritual things
    3. "This describes vividly the respectable, normal, rather sentimental, skin-deep religiosity which is so widespread among us today."
    4. "Lukewarmness is the worst form of blasphemy." G. Campbell Morgan.
3. But Christians Are to be "ON FIRE"
  - a. Romans 12:11 – be aglow and burning with the Spirit
  - b. II Timothy 1:6-8 – rekindle the embers; fan the flame
4. Are We Afraid of Enthusiasm?
  - a. On Fire for Christ - Too Much Emotionalism
    1. Religious Fanatics
      - Unthinking/Unreasoning – this is not what Christ wants. But...
  - b. Perhaps We Have Lost
    1. Earnestness
    2. Zeal
    3. Fervor
    4. Fire
    5. Passion
  - c. Perhaps We Too Are LUKEWARM?

III. CHRIST'S OBSERVATION: v. 17

A. You Think You Are:

1. Rich (have acquired wealth)
2. Do Not Need A Thing – Self Sufficient
  - much like the city which refused the earthquake subsidy

B. But, In Reality, You Are:

1. Wretched
2. Pitiful
3. Poor – Nothing with which to purchase salvation
4. Blind – No idea of their spiritual poverty or their spiritual danger
5. Naked – no clothes to fit them to stand before God

C. Conclusion

- The Church Was COMPLACENT (Satisfied)
- Complacency leads to Lukewarmness

IV. CHRIST'S REQUEST: v. 18

A. I Counsel You

1. Giving advice rather than commanding
2. As Creator, and Savior, He has the Right to Command

3. But He respects the Freedom He has given us
  4. He will not Command (Force) Us to Love Him
- B. Buy From Me
- You Are Not SELF-SUFFICIENT
1. Gold – truly rich
  2. White Clothes – cover your nakedness
    - Revelation 19:8 – Righteousness
  3. Salve – so you can see
    - II Peter 1:5-9 – Faith, Goodness, Knowledge, Self-control, Perseverance, Godliness, Brotherly Kindness, Love

V. CHRIST EXPLAINS: v. 19-20

A. The reason for the Rebuke: v. 19

1. Love
  - “Those Whom I love I rebuke and discipline.”
2. Hope
  - “Discipline” implies correction, i.e. the problem could be corrected. Thus, there is still Hope.

B. The Purpose Of the Rebuke: v. 19

1. Be Earnest (Wholehearted)
  - Fan the Flames Again
2. Repent

C. The Sad Picture: v. 20

- “I stand at the door and knock.”
1. To The Individual: “...if anyone....”
  2. To Good News Gathering
    - \*\* Is Christ On The Outside Looking In?

VI. THE PROMISE: v. 21

A. To The Overcomer – A Throne

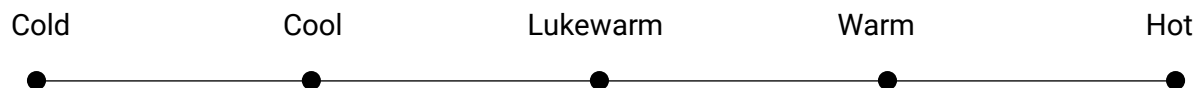
1. Sharing the Glory of Christ’s Kingdom
  - Fit only for Those Who Overcome

B. I Overcame and Sat Down

1. Reward/Rest
  - These are fitting only for those who have first served
  - QUERY: Where Are We In Terms Of Service?

VII. LAST THOUGHTS ON LUKEWARMNESS

1. It Neutralizes Our Perspective.
2. It Neutralizes Our Motivation.
3. It Neutralizes Our Witness.



How would you characterize your life for Christ in terms of the above chart? Where is our Church?

Are you satisfied with where you are? Are you satisfied with where GNG is?

## I. ATTRIBUTES OF THE IDEAL CHURCH

1. Ephesus: First Love
2. Smyrna: Hard Love
3. Pergamum: True Love
4. Thyatira: Pure Love
5. Sardis: Real Love
6. Philadelphia: Love Is A Verb
7. Laodicea: Lost Love

## II. THE FATE OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES

In view of the promises and threats of the Savior to these Seven Churches a concise view of their subsequent history would be helpful. Two of the Churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia, are praised without the slightest censure. Three, Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea, are severely blamed and threatened with extinction. Two more, Pergamum and Thyatira are both praised and blamed, and admonished to repent. The two first, Smyrna and Philadelphia, are now and have been since the first century, the seats of Churches and of a Christian population. Of Philadelphia the skeptical Gibbon says: "Philadelphia alone has been saved by prophecy or by courage. At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom alone for four score years, and then capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect – a column in a scene of ruins, a pleasing example that the paths of honor and safety may sometimes be the same." – Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Chapter LXIV. The three Churches so severely censured and threatened, Ephesus, Sardis and Laodicea, ceased to exist many centuries since, and even the cities have long been uninhabited. The two remaining Churches, Pergamum and Thyatira, were never entirely blotted out and a small Christian population is found in both places to this day.