



## Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

### Short Study 065

## Letters to the 7 Churches 7 – Laodicea

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**Read** Revelation 3:14-22.

**Introduction:** In some ways, this is perhaps the most soul-searching of the seven letters. Faithful Philadelphia sets a high ideal to which to aspire, 'dead' Sardis flags up a warning to be avoided; 'Luke-warm' Laodicea is neither one nor the other. It challenges us to examine the strength of our commitment as followers of Christ.

**1. The Sender** (v14). Three descriptions of the Lord are given. Read 2 Cor 1:19-20, which gives the meaning of 'The Amen,' and consider how this contrasts with the luke-warm state of the Laodiceans (Rev 3:16). His witness is 'faithful and true', but witness to what? 'The Beginning of Creation' means originator, rather than the first to be created (see John 1:3).

**2. The Church's Deficiencies** (v15).

(i) They were 'luke-warm' (vs 15-16). Whatever good works they engaged in were conducted half-heartedly. They are described as 'neither hot nor cold'. Why do you think the Lord would prefer them to be 'cold' rather than luke-warm? Have a think about this, then turn to the commentators for their answers (Albert Barnes has a good answer to this.)

(ii) They were deceived (v17). Laodicia was a wealthy city. They were materially satisfied but they were blind to their spiritual paucity. Consider how material security and comfort might contribute to a lack of spiritual zeal (see Luke 18:25).

**3. The Remedies** (v18). The Lord offers three remedies. All three would have been familiar pictures to the Laodicians. Consult commentaries to find out why.

(i) Gold, to ease their poverty. (See 1 Pet 1:18)

(ii) Garments, to cover their nakedness. (Contrast this with Isaiah 64:6)

(iii) Eye salve, to heal their blindness. (See John 3:3)

'Buy' does not, of course, mean with money. What else does the Lord offer, for which He names His 'price'? (See Isaiah 55:1 and consider what is meant?)

**4. Christ's Appeals** (vs 19-20). These are made in love (v19). (See also SofS 5:2-6)

(i) *Be zealous and repent (be earnest and repent - NIV)*. Is lack of zeal a sin?

(ii) *Open the door*. What does it mean to let Christ in (bearing in mind that this was addressed to those who had already professed faith in Christ)?

**5. Christ's Promises** (vs 21-22). Consider or find out what each of them mean.

(i) To Come in and dine with. The promise is to linger, not a quick visit.

(ii) To sit of Christ's throne. Ancient thrones were wide, with room for two.

**To think about:** 'Hot' in the Greek is *zestos*, from which we get the word 'zealous'. Can I be more zealous in my love and service for Christ?

**To dig deeper:** Find out all you can about Laodicia in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD.