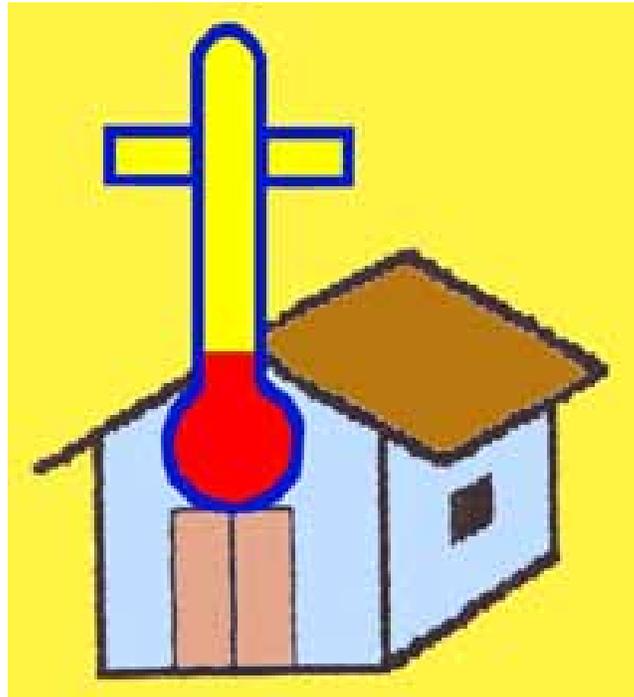


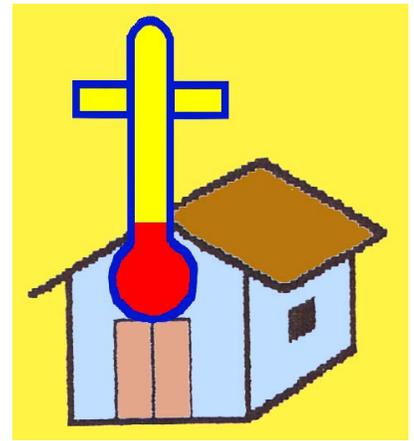
# The Seven Churches of Asia

~~AVdYXV~~



**The REVELATION  
PART ONE  
The Seven Churches of Asia**

**AVCIXV**



The church we will study is the Church at Smyrna.

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**The required minimum attendance for the course overall is 10 weeks.**

**The required minimum attendance for this lesson is 1 week.**

You may take more than 1 week for this lesson should you choose to do so; without any penalty. In fact, some lessons probably will take more than a week to complete for some students. However, though you can take more than the minimum required attendance for each lesson, under no circumstances are you to take less than 1 week for each lesson.

**TESTS:**

Lesson tests must be taken not less than one week apart.

If you fail a test you may not retake that test on the same day that you failed it.

You must wait at least one day before retaking the test. Use that time to restudy the material and find all of the correct answers to every question missed on the test. The copy of the test automatically sent to you has all of the correct answers on it. Use that copy to make sure you have found all of the correct answers in the study materials.

**SCRIPTURES:**

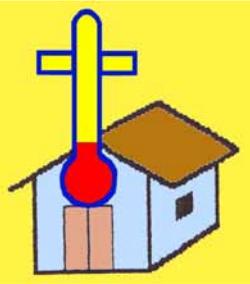
Each scripture referenced in this lesson must be looked up and read in your KJV. Reading the scriptures in the lesson, even if they are fully quoted in the lesson, will not fulfill this requirement. They must be looked up and read in your KJV.

**LESSONS:**

Each lesson is followed by a test. You will find a link to the course main page at the end of each lesson. When you click that link you will be returned to the course main page where you will find a list of tests. There will be instructions concerning whether a particular test is open book or closed book.

The test for this lesson is open book, so you will not need a password to access it. Click the link for it and it will open and you can then take the test. Your next lesson attendance begins the day after you pass the current lesson test.

You may now proceed to the next page to begin the study of the Church at Smyrna.



**City:** Laodicea was located near the headwaters of the Meander and Lycus rivers, 90+ miles East of Ephesus and Southeast of Philadelphia in the beautiful Lycus River Valley. The importance of the city lay in its

## LAODICEA

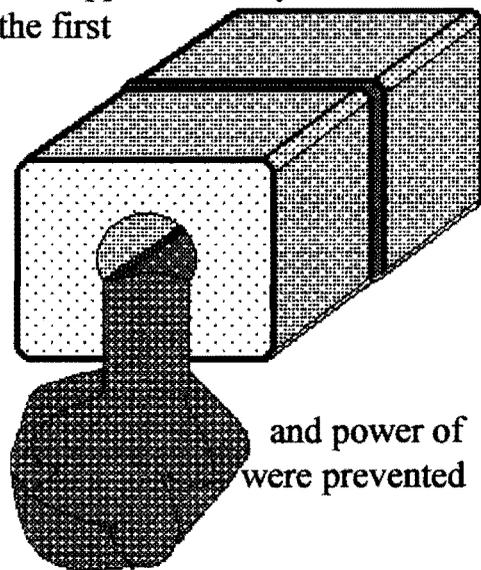
position as an interior connecting point with the four quarters of Asia Minor and beyond. To the

southeast was the mountain pass to Perga and to the east was the highroad through the Lycaonian plains and the Cilician gates to reach Mesopotamia, by way of Tarsus and Antioch, on the North and East coasts, respectively, of the Mediterranean Sea. Of course to the west lay Ephesus with its nearby seaport; and to the north along the military and commercial highway system lay Philadelphia, Sardis and other cities of commercial importance.

Because of its central location and the wealth passing through it, it became a very important banking center. However, Laodicea liked to boast of its self-sufficiency because of the industries indigenous to the region. Among these were the manufacture of rich garments of black, glossy wool as well as a medical school that made powders for the treatment of eye problems. (They possibly even made the "Phrygian powder," famous from that time and area.) In fact, the city was so rich that it refused financial help from Rome to help in rebuilding the city after its devastation by an earthquake in A.D. 60. (Refer to the comments in **Rev 3:17-18**)

The city also boasted of a sophisticated aqueduct system which supplied the city with water. The water source was quite some distance from the city and the first part of the system was an open aqueduct that, unfortunately, subjected the water to direct heating from the sun. Closer to the city the system was comprised of piping made up of stone blocks, bored through the middle and then cemented together. Ruins of the system can still be seen today, crusted with calcium carbonate, giving testimony to the tepid (lukewarm), bad tasting water for which the city was infamous. (Refer to the comments on **Rev 3:15-16**.)

**Commercial impact on the area:** Because of the import Laodicea, its two close neighbors, Hierapolis and Colossae, from reaching their full potential.



and power of were prevented

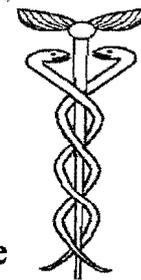
**History:** Originally known as Diosporus and then later as Rhoas, Laodicea was refounded in the mid-third century B.C. by Antiochus II, who named the city after His wife, Laodice.

By New Testament times the city had become famous as a banking center by virtue of the wealth funneled through it as a major crossroads of commerce for the Roman Empire.

The Muslim Wars of the Middle Ages resulted in the destruction of the city and its abandonment. By the Seventeenth century it was noted that it was only inhabited by wolves and foxes. This desolation has continued to the present day. The ruins are a short distance

from modern day Denizli, Turkey.

**Religion:** Because of the medical school there, one of the main deities worshiped at Laodicea was, of course, Aesculapius, the god of medicine.



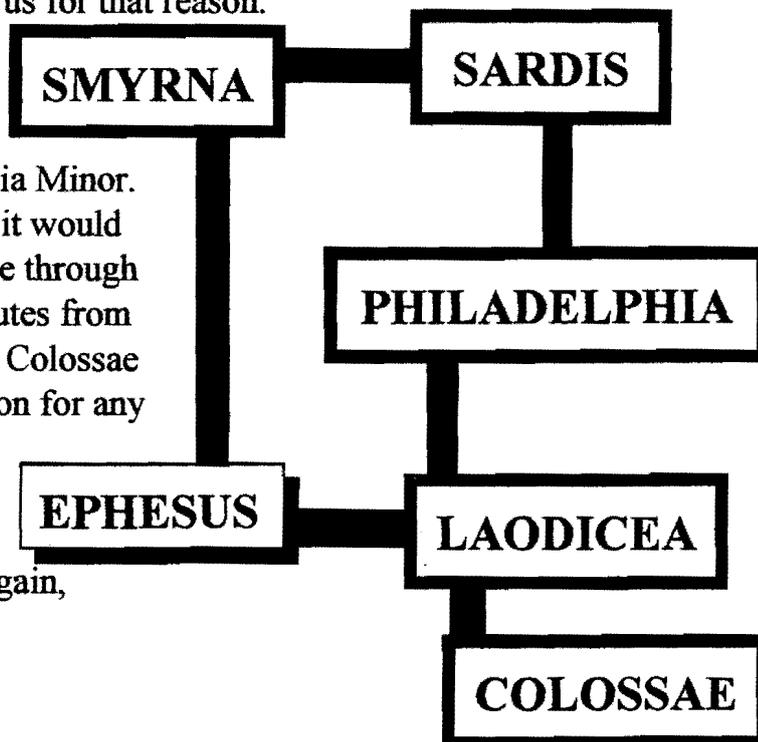
**Christianity:** In the area of Christian worship, Laodicea was the seat of the Christian church in that area. Philemon’s house church is reported to have been started in Laodicea. Also, the congregation that existed in Laodicea itself during the first century met in the home of Nymphas, a Christian brother of that city and congregation. (Col 4:15) It is likely that Epaphras of Colossae, Paul’s compatriot in Rome, had a hand in the establishing of the Laodicean congregation.

**Col 4:12-13** “Epaphras, who is [one] of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them [that are] in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.”

**Col 4:16** “And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the [epistle] from Laodicea.”

This last verse, mentioning an epistle from Laodicea, is taken by some scholars to indicate that Paul wrote an epistle to Laodicea. Some believe that this may have only been a reference to a duplicate of the Ephesian epistle; while others believe that it may have simply contained information not preserved by God as necessary for us today. Another possibility extended by some is that it may have contained information adequately covered in other canonical writings and not preserved for us for that reason.

Personally, I think another possibility is that it was only a reference to the Ephesian letter itself, or some other letter that was currently circulating in Asia Minor. In the natural course of such circulation, it would have, of course, have to come to Colossae through Laodicea which was first on the trade routes from Ephesus. From Ephesus to Laodicea to Colossae would be the natural course of propagation for any epistle. Even if an epistle left Ephesus on the northern route rather than the southern and more direct route, it would still eventually have to reach Colossae, again, through Laodicea.



## THE LETTER TO LAODICEA (Rev 3:14-22)

**3:14 COMMISSION: The Pastor and the church at Laodicea.**

Who from and who to?

From Jesus Christ to the Pastor and the church at Laodicea.

**3:14 CHARACTER:**

A description of Christ, applicable to the Laodicean church, in that they need to be like Christ and turn to Him:

**A. Faithful and true. (19:11)**

**B. "... the beginning of the creation of God."**

Beginning, Gk αρχη *ar-khay*, that by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause.

**Col 1:15-17 "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things and by him all things consist."**



The verse, Rev 3:14, refers to the Laodicean's boasting of self-sufficiency (see the section on the city of Laodicea) and their need to come to Christ as the "beginning," i.e., the originator and provider of all things.

**COMMENDATION: - NONE -**

As you will recall, the church at Sardis also received no commendation. In Sardis, however, there was a personal commendation for "a few," (3:4) whereas here in Laodicea even that meager commendation is not extended to them from Christ.

**3:15-18 CONDEMNATION: "... thou art lukewarm..."**

This obviously is a spiritual comparison of the church with the physical problem of the deplorable water supply for the city.

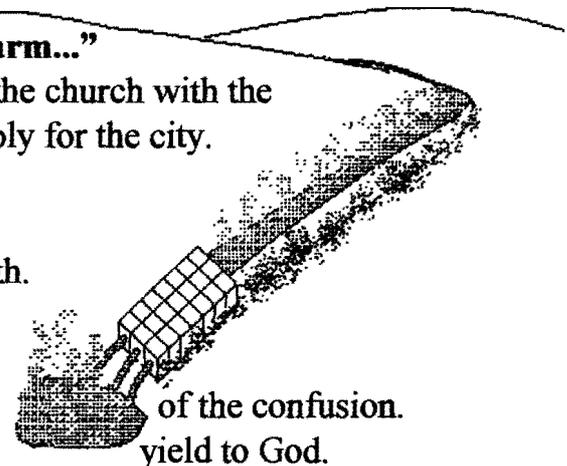
**A. The effects of lukewarmness.**

1. Not greatly disturbed at heretical teaching.
2. Not very vigorous in the defense of the faith.

**(Jude :4)**

**B. Results:**

1. Not many will be drawn to Christ because of the confusion.
2. Those in the church are not taught to fully yield to God.



3. Therefore, you have a church full of spiritual pygmies.

C. Application of Christ's reaction:

1. If you're going to do evil, claim to be evil; but, if you claim Christ, do good, or else Christ will vomit you out.
2. Be hot or cold, but not lukewarm.
  - a. It needed to be stimulatingly hot. (cf, Ps 69:9; II Cor 9:2; Ti 2:14)  
**Ti 2:14 "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."**

Definition: "zealous," Gk ζηλωτην (dzay-low-tayn) from ζεω (dzayo), def. *to boil, to be hot.*

- b. Or else it needed to be refreshingly cold. (Pr 25:13, 25)  
**Pr 25:13 "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, [so is] a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters."**  
**25:25 "[As] cold waters to a thirsty soul, so [is] good news from a far country."**

c. But not lukewarm.

**Rev 3:16 "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."**

D. Contrasts & Warning. (:17-18)

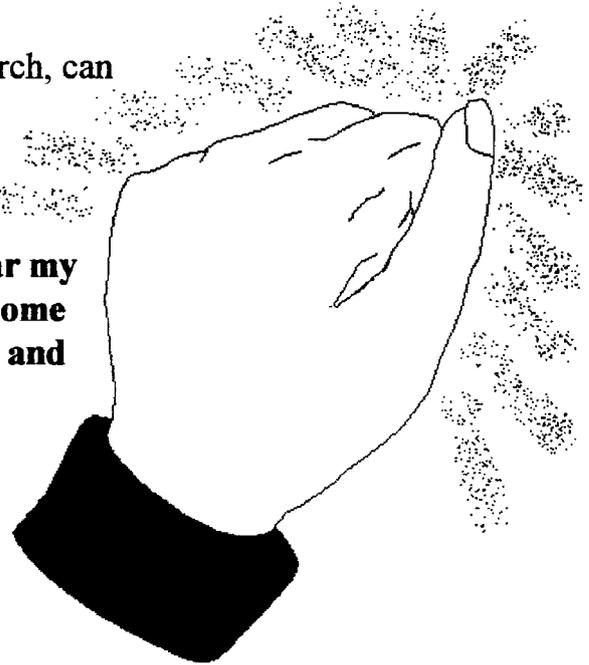
1. Contrast: Self-sufficient is destitution. (:17)
  - a. They needed "gold refined by fire," not the gold that flowed so freely through the city. (I Cor 3:10-14; I Pet 1:6-7)
  - b. They need white garments, which is the righteousness of the saints, not the glossy black wool garments, the popular export of that city and area.  
**Rev 19:8 "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."**
  - c. They needed spiritual "eyesalve," to take away their spiritual blindness to the things of God, such as Bible truths and Christian responsibility.  
 (Is 29:18; II Pet 1:5-10; I Jn 2:11)
2. Contrast: Christ-sufficiency is true sufficiency. (Rev 3:18)

**3:19-20 CORRECTION**

- A. Warning: I love you; therefore, get ready. (:19a)
- B. Be zealous and repent. (19b)

C. Individuals, even in this lukewarm church, can yield and then have fellowship with Christ. (:20)

**Rv 3:20** “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”



**3:21 CHALLENGE**

Overcome and rule with Christ.

- A. This same offer was given to the Apostles. (Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30)
- B. And to all of the saints. (I Cor 6:2)

**NOTE: Overcomer.** (I Jn 5:4-5)

**3:22 CALL** “... he that hath an ear...”  
To anyone that will listen.