



**Blowing Chunks in Laodicea
Lukewarm, Dead and Sickening
The Church of Apostasy
Revelation 3:14-22**

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Laodicea. This city is the home to a problem church. We get a strong hint in the meaning of the word. Laodicea - "laos - people; laity; and dicea - opinion; custom; opinion or custom of the people; = justice of the people; ruled by the people; rule of the majority; democratic; i.e., peoples right or opinions. The people's rights." (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 158)



And right there, we see the source of the problem in this church. It is, to Jesus, a nauseating problem.

Welcome to Laodicea. This city was in one of the richest commercial centers of the world at the time John is writing. This is a city and a people who are affluent, and they know it. Not only was this a banking center, but it was also a center of clothing manufacture using black wool. It was also a center of medicine which was deeply connected with the worship of Asklepios, the god of healing.

The symbol of Asklepios was a serpent, aligned with Satan in 12:9 and 20:2. Members of the cult called Asklepios “savior.” (Akin 2016, 58)

The founding of this city was strange and points to the situation we will find the church in. “The city was founded by the Seleucid king Antiochus II sometime before 253 B.C., when he divorced his wife Laodice, after whom he had named the city.” (Osborne 2002, 201)

That is a point we need to remember. The city was named after a spouse who was later, divorced. This church is supposed to be the bride of Christ, but they act like they have divorced Him prior to the marriage even taking place.

To get to Laodicea, you would head off about 40 miles to the southeast out of Philadelphia. It was located 90 miles east of Ephesus.

Yes, it was destroyed in an earthquake in 60 AD, but was completely rebuilt without the aid of any governmental intervention at all. “In the same year, Laodicea, one of the famous Asiatic cities, was laid in ruins by an earthquake, but recovered by its own resources, without assistance from ourselves.” (Tacitus 1925-1937, 151)

This is a city and a church which Paul fought for. Even during his ministry, the body in this city struggled deciding between what is true wealth and the temptation provided by the riches of this world. A struggle they would decide to surrender to.

Colossians 2:1–3

“For I want you to know how hard I work for you, for those in Laodicea, and for the rest of those who have not met me personally. My purpose is that they may be encouraged, that they may be joined together in love, and that they may have all the riches derived from being assured of understanding and fully knowing God’s secret truth, which is—the Messiah! It is in him that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.” (CJB)

Paul had heard things from his protégé Epaphras, who evangelized this area, of a rot beginning to grow in Laodicea. He mentioned, as we have already seen, this church in his letter to the Colossians. He also directly addressed the pastor of this church, Archippus.

Colossians 4:16–17

“And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”” (ESV)

Thirty years prior to Jesus’ letter, there was a problem, and it appears the needed corrective action did not take place.

Due to the wealth there and demonstrated by rebuilding the city themselves the way they wanted, this is a city of people who liked calling their own shots. This all shows up in the church.



Laodicea had no natural water supply, so it had to be piped in via aqueduct from several miles away in Hierapolis from the same springs there that fed the hot springs. “But in Hierapolis, as warm mineral baths this water was healing and therapeutic; for drinking water, it was pretty lousy.” (deSilva 2018)

The city had a 25,000-seat stadium located next to the baths complex. Yes, they indeed had running water. And then there was the medical school and the most famous medicinal product of Laodicea, “an eye ointment made from a powder produced in Phrygia.” (Storms 2016, Re 3:14-22)

It is to this city, with this background, that Jesus writes.

Revelation 3:14–22

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Origin of the creation of God, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have no need of anything,” and you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to apply to your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. The one who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (NASB 2020)

What jumps out to you? Jesus has absolutely nothing good to say about this church. The church in Sardis sounds not too bad when compared to what Jesus says here about this church.

The names that Jesus gives Himself at the beginning of this letter are, like in all the other letters, significant. Jesus refers to Himself as the Amen, the faithful and true witness. These titles do not come from Revelation 1.

The first title. The amen, points back to Isaiah 65:16. This is a reference to Isaiah 65:16 where the Hebrew אֱלֹהֵי אָמֵן (belohe amen) translates literally as “the God of amen.”

Isaiah 65:16

“Then whoever invokes a blessing in the land shall bless by the God of faithfulness, and whoever takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of faithfulness, because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my sight.” (NRSVue)

God is called the God of faithfulness; but in the Hebrew he is called the God of Amen. Amen is the word which is often put at the end of a solemn statement in order to guarantee its truth. If God is the God of Amen, he is utterly to be relied upon. This would mean that Jesus Christ is the one whose promises are true beyond all doubt. (Barclay 2004, 152)

Jesus adds to this, the faithful and true witness. In Hebrew, the words faithful and true also translate to amen.

He is the triune God, the Amen, Amen and Amen. He is indeed one whose word can be taken and always believed.

Not only is He the triune God, the Amen x 3, but He is also the Origin of the creation of God. Why would this church need to be reminded of God being the creator?



The church of Laodicea is a picture of the church we see all over our planet today. Yes, Philadelphia is alive and well, so is Sardis and Thyatira, but the booming churches today are those who listen to the people and then give them what they want. There is a lie, one which began in the 19th century, that today is considered to be truth.

This church has fully bought into lie of evolution and all the lies that wind up being attached to that one lie. For this church, that no longer believes that God created everything, that rejection means a rejection of God, His word and His rules. Then what is the basis for rules, their opinion and how they do life? Well, they are the basis. Who sets the standards? They do. Who makes the rules? They do. You see, it is the rule of the people in this church.

This is nothing more than Genesis 3 rehashed all over again. It is rebellion, pure and simple.

But now it is rebellion in favor of humanism over any relationship with Jesus. When you throw out the rule maker and creator, then you are free to make the rules as you feel they should be. In the First Church of Me, we're okay with evolution, no creator, situational ethics, no absolutes, no good, no evil, no sin, because now there is no set standard. We all win. We affirm lifestyles that the Bible calls evil, we affirm those who are confused about their sexuality, and we conduct marriages between all. We call the shots and God is not queried until we want to be blessed. We do want that. We want prosperity and health and an easy life.

Why do we see churches today embracing the things the culture says are good and right? Because they have kicked out the creator, the rule maker and determined that they no longer have any accountability to the one who made them. As such, why not embrace pornography, abortion, and affirm all lifestyles including the ones the Bible calls abominations.

When it is all about Me, whatever I want, goes. Here, the gospel is never taught because it might trigger someone. We use pronouns and always use loving affirming language and never mention the "S" word. We care about connecting and being a safe place.

The church should be a safe place. We are all sinners saved by grace. None of us are perfect. We are all still trying to figure it out and learning how to do life together as His church. We should connect with each other.

Do we make mistakes in the church? Yes, we are all sinners, but saved by grace. Do we teach the gospel? Yes. Do we teach on His love? Yes, we do, but we also teach about His wrath over those who continue in their sin.

Do we use pronouns? Not like the woke and progressive churches do. Do we use triggering language like sin, repent, confess, and be saved? Absolutely. Oh, and we also support Israel and look for opportunities to bless the nation and the people. We pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

But for those on the other side, welcome to Laodicea, the gateway to Sodom and Gomorrah. And just like what took place in Lot's house, the culture is trying to force their way into the household of every believer today. Every church today is fighting against Laodicea, Jezebel, legalism and dead religion.

If Jesus is the creator, and He indeed is, then He is unique, pre-eminent and has the supreme authority and power to execute His word including everything He is about to warn this church about. Oh, and if He is the creator, we are all accountable to Him.

This really shouldn't be a mystery to them, it was all in the letter that was read to them 30 years prior when Paul wrote to the church up the road, Colossae.



It shouldn't be a mystery to those churches around us that have kicked out Jesus in favor of the culture either, trigger warning.

Colossians 1:15–18

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation: for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.” (NASB 2020)

He is first, we are second, always, to everyone we meet, talk to and minister to.

Revelation 3:15–16

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of My mouth.” (NASB 2020)

This is not good news. With all the other churches, Jesus talked of their good works, this church has no good works. The works they do reflect a mediocrity about how they are doing life. They are not being faithful and obedient, but at the same time they have not fully rejected everything, they still like the name Christian. They say they are a church of Jesus Christ but spoilers, they live like and embrace the world. They are lost. They know better, but they do not care.

The folks in Laodicea know all about dealing with things that are not hot or cold, that is the story of their water supply. You have hot medicinal waters nearby in Hierapolis and then cold water in Colossae, but it is all lukewarm by the time it gets to Laodicea.

This church had no fervency to it, if they were hot, then they would have been actively serving, but they get along with everyone. They aren't cold either, they have not outwardly rejected Christ and walked away, they are in the worst place they can possibly be.

They give a nod to Christ but are sold out to the culture and the world. They would also give a nod to Caesar.

They look like multiple churches we see all around us today. Like a church in Atlanta which proclaims they are following Jesus yet has multiple conferences affirming various sinful lifestyles. A church denomination which proclaims they are following Jesus yet has leaders and those in the church wearing clothing and celebrating pride rather than Jesus. Marching in parades to celebrate sinful lifestyles and then attributing it to love and pride does one thing for the Lord. It nauseates Him.

This is not a church worshipping Jesus but rather a church busy worshipping at the altar of the world even to the point of publicly blessing those who are confused while denouncing those who love the Lord, as haters and behind the times. This church has pastors who go and pray blessings over abortion clinics opening in town and agree with the latest social justice movement, even if it runs in direct opposition to what the clear teaching of the Bible is.

Jesus tells this church He will emeo them. This Greek word is under translated in terms of its force if you simply say vomit. It means “to spew out, eject from the stomach...to reject with loathing. (Bloomfield 1840, 121)

When Jesus tells them He will vomit them out of His mouth, He is inferring He will blow chunks and spew them out. Not the prettiest picture is it.



It all began when this church, in agreement with Lucifer said, “Has God really said...” That is where it all begins.

Has God really said that salvation is through Christ alone? Has God really said that those who do not come to Christ will be eternally separated from Him in hell? Has God really said that human sacrifice is wrong? Has God really said that being confused about sexuality and cross dressing is wrong? Has God really said that He has no pronouns? Has God really said there are objective Biblical standards that must be followed? Has God really rejected the gay lifestyle as sinful? Has God really said marriage is only between a man and a woman?

And you could go on with the latest lies coming from progressive churches and those who have lined up with them.

Rob Bell, former pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville, Michigan, and a New York Times bestselling author, has played an influential role in challenging and undermining biblical beliefs, including its teaching on hell. Bell’s book Love Wins is an up-to-date treatise on universalism, which, in its purest form, teaches that all of us, no matter how bad or good, no matter what we do or do not believe, will end up in heaven. (Giammona, Anderson and Jeffress 2022, 51)

John 14:6

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.” (NASB 2020)

Revelation 20:11–15

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them; and they were judged, each one of them according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (NASB 2020)

Those who are truly participating in a Laodicean environment, think everything is ok. They have bought the lies, they have given God a nod, and they really believe they are good to go and can feel really comfortable in their current lifestyle no matter what. After all, love wins.

Revelation 3:17

“Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have no need of anything,” and you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked,” (NASB 2020)

There is nothing worse than lying to yourself and then believing your own lies. If you find yourself relying on where you were born, or simply because you go to church, but you do not know Jesus nor do you have a relationship with Him, Jesus Himself says this.

Matthew 7:21–23

““Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?’ Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers!’” (CSB)

The bottom line...don’t be caught dead without Jesus.



The Laodicean Church and the Church of the 21st Century have much in common, a disbelief in the supernatural aspects of the scriptures, a rejection of the authority of the scriptures, a rejection of miracles and looking at God as the “friendly old man in the sky” plus reducing Jesus to be a teacher and nothing more.

Jesus must remind the church in Laodicea, and the church in the 21st Century that HE IS THE CREATOR.

These are not atheists having the problem, but purported believers.

Forget the atheists. These miraculous stories are distrusted by self-professed Christians, people who believe in God’s existence. While it makes little sense to me to say you believe in God but do not believe he can do miraculous things, nonetheless many liberal Christians are anti-supernatural in their approach to Scripture, all the while proclaiming they believe in a supernatural God. (Kuligin 2017, 24)

The problem in Laodicea, and in churches today, is cognitive dissonance.

Cognitive dissonance is an inner tension resulting from the attempt to hold two contrasting thoughts at the same time (Festinger 1957). One of those thoughts may result from behavior. Therefore, if an attitude contradicts action, dissonance results. (Meier M.D., et al. 1991, 164)

The reason why some evangelicals are jettisoning a traditional reading of the first Adam is because they believe science (especially evolutionary science) contradicts it. To be consistent, these evangelicals should reject all miracles on the same “anti-scientific” grounds. The biblical worldview of creation, meaning, and purpose has always been antithetical to the reigning secular or pagan context. (Kuligin 2017)

If we, today, look at scripture with a jaundiced eye and no longer adhere that it is the Word of God, which is where this all began last century, if we dismiss the authority of the scripture and we no longer believe the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God, that it is without error and it is the final authority for faith and life. Then yes, you are a Laodicean.

Why? Because this involves rejecting God. Those who are into this, as we will find as we look at this church, are not believers at all, but lying to themselves and this lie has eternal consequences.

The problem is clear: The Laodicean church, like its city, was inordinately wealthy. But the problem was not in the wealth as such but in the smug self-satisfaction it engendered. Like so many of the super-rich, they had become self-obsessed and complacent. (Osborne, Revelation: Verse by Verse, Osborne New Testament Commentaries 2016, 92)

Plainly put, they think they are fine, Jesus says, no, you aren’t fine. You aren’t rich either, in reality, you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. So many churches today are filled with, in some cases, thousands who think it is really all about them.

They really believe it is all about them having their best life here on this planet right now and Jesus is telling them, no, you really aren’t ok. Your best life is found in Jesus Christ and nowhere else. It isn’t all about you, it is all about Him.

Laodicean churches, Laodicean pastors and staff, are more interested in ensuring you have a great experience when you come to church. We’re interested in that as well, but not for the same reasons. We want to make certain that there are no hindrances to the word of God being made plain and taught as simply as possible. I am not interested in getting the number one rating on coffee service for a church.



Here is one more example of Laodicean creep in the church today.

Per George Barna, most churches no longer have a mid-week Bible study and many have also dropped Sunday night studies as well.

Most churches have eliminated their Sunday or Wednesday evening services— and many have scratched both. In many churches, those events have been replaced by “small groups” that meet in people’s homes, but attendance at those gatherings has also dropped from 23 percent to just 10 percent in the past decade. Further, Christians across the nation indicate that the emphasis in these meetings is more on developing a sense of community than providing insightful biblical instruction. (Barna 2016, Kindle Locations 567-571)

The mission remains the same as it was 2,000 years ago.

Matthew 28:19

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (ESV)

Revelation 3:18

“I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to apply to your eyes so that you may see.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus approaches this church as a financial advisor would. “I advise you” to are words I have actually heard from folks who work in that role. We expect them to give us this advice, I mean that is what we are paying for. This is a rich church, those in it have investments everywhere and are always on the look out for good advice. Jesus gives the best advice ever.

Jesus is upfront with them; you have been shopping at the wrong store. Satan’s Store sells nothing but knockoffs, counterfeits and things that just don’t last. It looks good, almost like the real thing and the price may look good, but at the end of the day, it stops working and stops satisfying. It is a counterfeit, a knockoff. It is now way past time to change your buying habits.

If you have been shopping churches that make you feel good about yourself, then you are in the wrong place as all they sell is junk food.

Peter emphasized what kind of store and food we, as believers, must crave.

1 Peter 2:1–3

“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation, if you have tasted that the Lord is good.” (CSB)

As Jesus provides them advice, He does so using topics they would be familiar with. First, the world of finance. Those in this church really believe they have gold in what it is they believe. Jesus tells them, essentially, it is fool’s gold. What they have is bogus and worthless.

A church that has social justice as the primary focus may accomplish a lot of “good works.”

Those in that church are all in with the message of social justice as well. Yet without Jesus as the center, it means nothing. You feel good because you can go out and “minister” to others by feeding them or caring for them, but are you sharing Jesus with them? If evangelism is not the goal, it is fool’s gold. In the



eternal scheme of things, it means nothing. Benevolence must always be done in the name of Jesus. As we love others by helping them, we also love them by telling them about who it is we serve. Yes, people do indeed come to Christ because of being ministered to this way.

If you have no true relationship with Jesus, then fool's gold looks good.

Jesus says first, get true gold from Him, that would be salvation.

Then He takes an example from the garment industry in town. The idea is the same. Just because you dress well on the outside does not mean it looks the same on the inside. Scripture exposes all of us for who we really are, sinners. I could come to church dressed to impress or as I have also seen, dressed to attract, but without Jesus we are shamefully naked. We come to Him and He covers us with white garments, white indicating purity and salvation.

A side note about dressed to attract; I am always impressed by how Jesus changes us when we are saved by Him. There are those who come to church looking for love in a spouse and they dress to do so.

They find love, but it is the love of Jesus they find. Over the following months, as they grow to be more like Jesus, the clothes change. It is no longer about dressing to attract someone, it is instead, dressing to worship the Lord. Hem lines tend to drop, shorts aren't quite as short as they used to be, shirts and tank tops start becoming a bit larger and no longer fit quite as tight as they did before.

Jesus uses a third example, eye salve. Remember, this is a city with a medical school in it and they do indeed produce an eye salve. Jesus is telling those who are in this church that because they do not know Him, they are spiritually blind.

The classic example of blind men walking and believing they weren't blind is the Pharisees in the Temple. After healing a man born blind, who became a believer as a result, Jesus had this to say.

John 9:39

"Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, in order that those who do not see will see and those who do see will become blind."" (CSB)

Across the world today there are those in Laodicean churches who believe they are serving Jesus simply because they are in church. They are blind and do not see at all.

How do we solve this blindness problem? Just like we dealt with the finance problem and the clothing problem...Jesus.

I am going to stop here, we are not out of Laodicea yet, this is a church we see all around us today. You may have even gone to one of them at one time or another. If you have the spiritual gift of discernment and you attend a church falling into this mold, you know it. Is there any feeding of the flock going on there? No, none at all.

As Jesus said, those who are there who believe they have all they need, really do not. They are poor, blind and naked. They need Jesus.

Romans 3:21–24

"But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For



everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."" (NLT)

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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