

Laodicea

City of the Lukewarm Church



■ Modern city of Denizli in Turkey.

■ Location:

- Laodicea was the capital of Phrygia.
- Located in the southern part of Phrygia near the junction of two small rivers, Asopus and Carpus.
- Located 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia.
- Two miles south of the Lycus River.
- Due to its proximity to the Lycus River, Laodicea has been called “ad Lycum.”

■ Description:

- Mountains to the south of Laodicea rise to 8,000 feet.
- Mountains to the north rise to 5,000 feet.
- The city itself is perched on a square plateau several hundred feet high.

■ Size:

- The ancient ruins with traces of the aqueduct and other buildings cover about one square mile.
- Strabo says that the city was very large.

■ Brief history:

- Laodicea had other names (Dispolis & Rhoas) before Selucid times.
- Credit is given to Antiochus II, king of Syria (262-264 B.C.) for the founding of the city.
- Antiochus II named the city after his wife and queen Laodice.
- The city was originally built as a military base to guard the northern frontier of Antiochus’ kingdom.

- Phrygia was given to Eumenes by the Romans in 189 B.C.
- The city was destroyed by an earthquake in 60 A.D. then rebuilt.
- The population was diverse.
- Many Jews lived in Laodicea.
 - According to Reinach, the annual taxation of Jewish men included some 7,500 persons.
 - This may indicate that some 20,000 or so Jewish men, women, and children lived in Laodicea.

■ Political status in New Testament Times.

- Under Roman rule.
- Had a provincial court.

■ Commerce:

- Laodicea was famous for its wealth. One writer refers to the city as the “home of millionaires.”
- Due to the wealth of her citizens, Laodicea was able to decline the offer of financial aid from Nero when the city was rebuilt after the earthquake in 60 A.D.
- A prosperous city of commerce, industry, and banking. Cicero, a Roman statesman and philosopher, wrote of cashing his treasury bills of exchange in Laodicea
- A large part of the city’s wealth was due to the wool produced there.
- Excellent location for trade.
 - Located at the junction of three major highways.
 - Was along the most important trade route from Pergamos to Attalia on the Mediterranean Sea.
 - Was a main crossroads from eastern Asia Minor to the West, namely the ports of Miletus and Ephesus.
 - Laodicea’s roads ran directly to Philadelphia, Sardis, Thyatira, and Pergamos to the Northwest, and to Ephesus (about 127 miles) to the West.
 - Laodicea’s main road, which led to Ephesus ran southeastward through Colossae (about 11 miles away) toward Syria and into Attalia.
- A school of medicine famed for the remedy for weak eyes was located some 13 miles west of Laodicea.
 - Noted for its salve for the eyes. Aristotle mentions the Phrygian powder obtained by crushing Phrygian stone which was used for the eyes.

- John made a reference to eye-salve in his letter to the Laodiceans in **Revelation 3:18**.
- Galen mentions the ointment for strengthening the ears (made from the spice nard) as having been originally prepared in Laodicea.
- Laodicea lacked a supply of fresh water, so water was piped from springs south of the city through a six mile long aqueduct.

■ Architecture:

- Aqueduct some six miles long.
- Fountain house (Nymphaeum).
- Stadium.
 - 1,000 feet long.
 - Used for gladiatorial games.
- Gymnasium.
- Theaters from both Greek and Roman times.
- Temples

■ Religion:

- Zeus Laodiceus was worshipped. Probably had the largest temple.
- Laodicea was a center of the worship of Asklepios, the god of healing.
- They worshipped Men Karou, the Phrygian god of the valley.
- A center of emperor worship.
- Other gods that were worshipped:
 - Dionysus - Hades/Serapis
 - Helios - Mithras
 - Nemesis
- Other goddesses that were worshipped:
 - Hera
 - Athena
 - Tyche
 - Aphrodite
 - Laodice — founder of the city

■ The Church at Laodicea.

- Is mentioned only in:
 - **Colossians 2:1**
 - **Colossians 4:13, 15, 16**
 - **Revelation 1:11**

- Revelation 3:14

■ The letter to the Church at Laodicea — Revelation 14-22

14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

15 'I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked --

18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

22 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

■ NOTE:

- The Lord had no commendation for the church at Laodicea
- While Laodicea was a renowned business center, the church at Laodicea needed to do business with the King of Kings.

