

Laodicea

*A Self Righteous People
Judgment of the People*



The Scriptures

Revelation 3:14–18 – “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning 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 need of nothing’, and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and 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, so the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.”

Revelation 3:15-16 – *“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.”*

To get a better picture of the hot and cold images used in this passage, one needs to understand the culture and location of Laodicea.

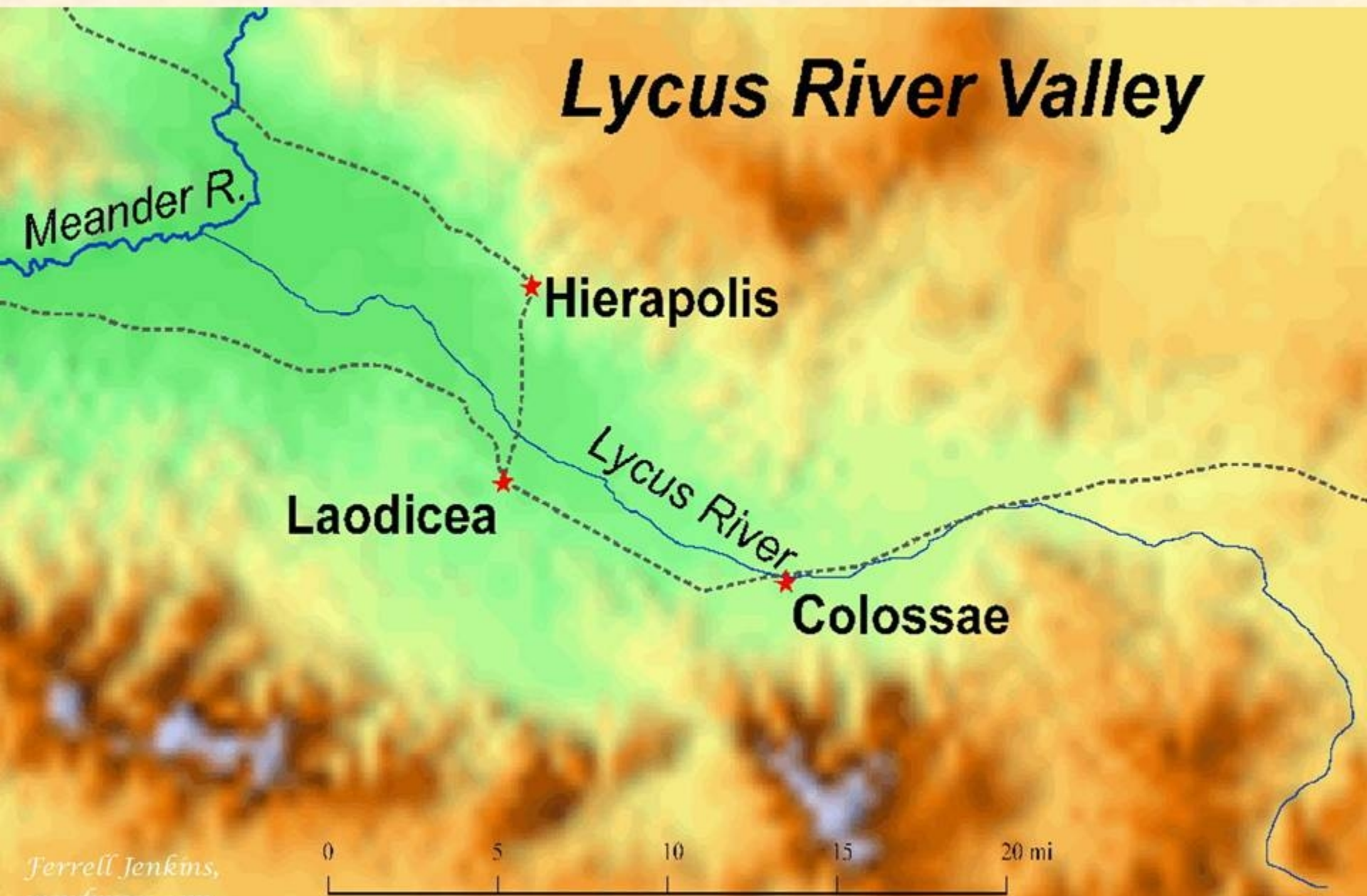
Laodicea was centrally located only six miles south of Hierapolis and eleven miles west of Colossae.

Because Laodicea lacked a natural water supply, it was dependent on its neighbors for this vital resource and therefore drew water from Hierapolis and Colossae, as well as from other surrounding sources.

By the time the water reached Laodicea, it was “lukewarm”, neither “hot” nor “cold”.

The Location of Laodicea

Lycus River Valley



Hierapolis – Source of the Hot Water

Hierapolis [Ἱεράπολις G2404] was an ancient Greek city located on hot springs in classical Phrygia in southwestern Anatolia. Hierapolis means: sacred city.

The hot springs have been used as a spa since the 2nd century BC, with many patrons retiring or dying there. The great baths were constructed with huge stone blocks without the use of cement and consisted of various closed or open sections linked together. There are deep niches in the inner section, apparently including the bath, library, and gymnasium.

Its biblical significance lies in the fact that Hierapolis has the Tomb of Philip the Apostle.

The cliffs of Hierapolis formed by the calcified waters



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The steaming hot mineral baths of Hierapolis



Colossae – Source of the Cold Water

Colossae [Κολοσσαί G2857] was a city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, in the upper part of the basin of the Maeander, on the Lycus, situated on a hill near the junction of the Lycus with the Meander, and not far from the cities Hierapolis and Laodicea. Colossae means: colossal.

It was one of a triad of cities in the area (the other two being Laodicea and Hierapolis), resting at the foot of Mount Cadmus.

The holiness and healing properties associated with the waters of Colossae during the Byzantine Era continue to this day, particularly at a pool fed by the Lycus River at the Göz picnic grounds west of Colossae at the foot of Mt. Cadmus. Locals consider the water to be therapeutic.

Its biblical significance lies in the fact that the book of Colossians was addressed to the church here and that Philemon lived in this city.

The ruins of Colossae



The cold water river of Colossae



Laodicea – Recipient of Lukewarm Water

Revelation 3:15-16 – *“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.”*

In the Revelation message to the Laodicean church, Yeshua speaks of the luke-warmness of Laodiceans, that they were *“neither cold nor hot.”*

This local allusion would have been clear to citizens of Laodicea, who knew of the cold, pure waters of nearby Colossae, the hot, mineral laden waters of nearby Hierapolis, and the lukewarm waters they received at their location.

Are you hot?

*The word, **hot**, then refers to hot mineral spring waters, generally 95 degrees or warmer. Hot water has many medicinal benefits, such as:*

- it can help promote feelings of physical and psychological well-being.
 - it stimulates the immune system
 - it relieves the pain and stiffness of arthritis.
 - it reduces muscles spasms and alters the sensation of pain, reducing stress.
 - it increases body metabolism, stimulating the intestinal tract and the liver, aiding digestion.
 - it loosens mucus, relieves sinus congestions, and opens breathing passages when breathed as steamy vapors.
 - it stimulates circulation, boosting all the body tissue's health by carrying oxygen and nourishment to the cells.
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Are you cold?

*The word, **cold**, then refers to refreshing spring waters, generally 60 degrees or cooler. Cold water also has many medicinal benefits, such as:*

- it relieves depression helping to promote feelings of physical and psychological well-being.
 - it relieves the pain and inflammation after acute injury or surgical procedures.
 - it can reduce the amount and severity of headaches at high altitude, when taken in quantity.
 - it quickly cools and keeps the body at an optimum temperature to reduce swelling for up to 2 hours.
 - it lowers the temperature of the injured tissue, which reduces the tissue's metabolic rate and helps the tissue to survive the period following the injury.
 - it contains health-restoring minerals like lithium, calcium and magnesium, which help sustain healthy blood and oxygen levels.
 - it serves as a detoxifying agent to flush out toxins, can provide an added energy boost, and can increase mental alertness for those who drink it regularly.
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The Industrial Qualities of Laodicea

Gold, clothing, and eye salve represent the three major industries of Laodicea:

1. A banking center for the province of Asia Minor, including money lending, currency and gold exchange. So huge were its assets that, when it was demolished by a first-century earthquake, the city refused Rome's offer of help, rebuilding with its own funds.
 2. The textile center where glossy, black wool was woven into garments called *trimata* that that was prized by the wealthy all over the world. Clothes reveal status: A man in a well-tailored suit falls into a different category than a beggar in rags.
 3. The location of a major medical school known worldwide where an eye salve called *kollourion* [κολλούριον G2854], or Phrygian powder, was made from a local stone which was reputed to cure certain kinds of eye diseases. Another salve supposedly healed ear problems. People came from all over the Roman world in search of the many pharmaceuticals and remedies for their ailments.
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The Industrial Qualities of Laodicea

A Laodicean deals with wealth on a scale few people have seen in the history of the world. Writers of the ancient world speak openly of their envy of Laodicean wealth.

They dress better than most other people, and, they have medical facilities that rival any other facility in the world.

They truly believe that they are quite self sufficient.

However,

Their one weakness was the water supply. Water had to be piped in to Laodicea. Cold water could come from the abundant supply at Colossae, and hot water from Hierapolis. But by the time it reached Laodicea, it arrived at temperature that can only be described as lukewarm.

The Spiritual Condition of Laodicea

Gold and Wool

Yahweh has no objection to a person having wealth or wonderful clothing. A person is, however, to buy gold refined in the fire (1 Peter 1:7, Revelation 3:18), and get proper white garments (Isaiah 61:10, Revelation 19:8). Yahweh does not want a person to be zealous at making money, making great clothes, building a house, or at filling his social calendar, but instead to be zealous making disciples!

The Laodicean is distracted with busyness, with this world, with getting ahead in life, with everything else rather than what he should be involved in – Yahweh instructs the Laodicean to be busy with the things of God.

The Laodicean is so well dressed that he pretends to be righteous – Yahweh instructs the Laodicean to dress himself in the holiness of God to cover his spiritual nakedness and self-righteousness.

The Spiritual Condition of Laodicea

Eye Salve

A person looks at their material and social circumstances and evaluates them-self as spiritually sound. On the other hand, Yahweh looks at the same person and sees spiritual poverty.

The Laodicean allows his wealth to lead him into self-satisfaction, self-sufficiency, and complacency, and pretends to be righteous in his own right.

The Laodicean's heart is lifted up and he is so focused on his own well-being that he cannot see God – Yahweh instructs the Laodicean to get eye salve so he can see his spiritual condition clearly.

The Spiritual Condition of Laodicea

Spiritual Compromise

The Laodicean judges that he is balanced, right in the middle, and has no need to change his position. However, since Laodicea was so dependent upon other sources for their water, they became masters of appeasement, accommodation, and compromise! In short, lukewarm!

Like Balaam, the Laodicean has built a façade. Externally, he looks righteous but all the while inside he is totally hypocritical. In his heart of hearts the Laodicean believes that he really does not need God at all – Yahweh instructs the Laodicean to “*store up for themselves wealth in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and burglars do not break in or steal*” (Matthew 6:20).

Conclusions

- The geographical and water delivery backgrounds, then, give us a more accurate biblical interpretation of what Yeshua was saying.
 - The imagery does not state that "hot" is good and "cold" is bad, but that both hot and cold water are useful, whereas lukewarm water is useless.
 - The Laodicean church was providing neither *healing for the spiritually sick* (as would hot water from Hierapolis) nor *refreshment for the spiritually weary* (as would cold water from Colossae)!
 - The church was simply providing lukewarm water which was not helpful at all. It was, in fact, useless for any kind of healing or medicinal benefit.
 - For this reason, Yeshua says he would vomit [ἐμέω G1692] them out of his mouth.
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Conclusions

- As Christians, we are to provide either **hot water** or **cold water** to those who are spiritually sick or weary.
- Which water will you give to others in their need - hot water or cold water?
- Give one, or the other, but do **not** give lukewarm water and be vomited out!
- As Christians, we are to be like refined gold, dressed in righteousness, and see clearly. We are to be spiritually discerning and not hypocritical. Our treasures are to be in heaven, not here on the earth.

One does not want to be found wanting as one asks: "How close are we to the return of our Lord and Savior, Yeshua Ha'Mashiach?"

Final Comments

Many scholars, pastors, lay people, and others explain this to mean that Yeshua wishes you were either for him or against him, that you are "*on fire*" for him, or giving him a "*cold shoulder*", that you would choose either to be holy or unholy, that you would choose good or evil.

One cannot use modern English idioms of the words hot and cold to interpret 2000 year old Hebrew statements written in Greek!

Never, ever, does Yahweh desire or encourage us to choose against good and choose evil, to chose against Yahweh and choose Satan.

Scripture is loaded with passages that encourage us to be holy, to be set apart, to separate ourselves from worldly things and choose the things of heaven.

Yahweh/Yeshua changes **not** - he is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Yahweh/Yeshua does **not** change his tune in this passage and thereby contradict the rest of his scripture.



Q & A

Questions
and
Answers

*Y'varekh'kha Yahweh v'yishmerekha
Ya'er Yahweh panav eleikha vichunekka
Yissa Yahweh panav eleikha v'yasem l'kha shalom*

Yahweh blesses you, and keeps you;

• Yahweh makes His face shine upon you, and is gracious to you;

• Yahweh lifts up His countenance upon you, and makes you whole.

**Thank You
for attending
this teaching
about**



Laodicea