

STUDY GUIDE 18

Revelation 3:14-22

Study warm-up: If you drink coffee or tea, do you like it served hot? Iced? Tepid?

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Our study this week focuses on the message to the church at Laodicea.



Figure 18-1

Laodicea

The Greek Empire split into four regions following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC; each region was led by one of Alexander's generals. Asia was ruled by General Seleucus I Nicator and thus began the Seleucid dynasty. Laodicea was founded in the third century BC by Antiochus II Theos, the third Seleucid king. He named the city after his first wife, Laodice.

The name Laodicea consists of two root words *laos*, meaning “people” or “nation,” and *dikē*, meaning “rule” or “justice.” Together, the meaning is “justice of the people” or “ruled by the people.”

Laodicea was located at a key crossroads of ancient trade routes. Travelers and goods from the harbor city of Ephesus would pass through Laodicea on their way northeast into Galatia or southeast toward Syria. The road heading north from Laodicea provided an inland route to the northwestern edges of Asia. (See Figure 18-2.)

Laodicea's location likely contributed to its prosperity. It was a wealthy city known for its textiles, banking, and medicine.

Laodicean wool was glossy black, soft, and warm – very appropriate for outer garment layers. Pliny the Elder, a Roman naturalist, listed Laodicean wool as one of the finest wools in all of the Roman Empire.

In ~60 AD, an earthquake caused extensive damage to the city. But the wealthy and self-sufficient Laodiceans were able to rebuild without help from Rome.

Roman historian Tacitus wrote this single sentence anecdote about Laodicea in his *Annals* (Book XIV, 27):

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.

Outside of the city towards the west there was a medical school associated with a temple to the Phrygian god, the Carian Men. This medical school was regionally famous for an ear ointment and a powdered eyewash, known as Phrygian powder. Laodicea was proud enough of the nearby medical school that some of the doctors' names were included on Laodicea coinage.

The city of Hierapolis was eleven miles to the north of Laodicea and had terraces of therapeutic geothermal springs. (See Figure 18-3.) The city of Colossae, six miles southeast of Laodicea, benefited from cold, refreshing water from mountain streams. The only aqueduct ruins and ancient clay piping located in Laodicea suggest that most of its water came from just over four miles south of the city at the Baspinar spring in the city of Denizli. (See Figure 18-5.) In 2015, archeologists discovered a marble slab in Laodicea inscribed with very detailed laws governing the management of the city's water and specifying hefty fines [forty times a soldier's annual salary!] for anyone illegally tapping into the pipes.



Figure 18-2



Hot Spring Terraces at Hierapolis

Photo: Tim and Jan Cowles

Figure 18-3



Temple "A" at Laodicea

Photo: Tim and Jan Cowles

Figure 18-4



Laodicea Water Pipes
Photo: Tim and Jan Cowles
Figure 18-5

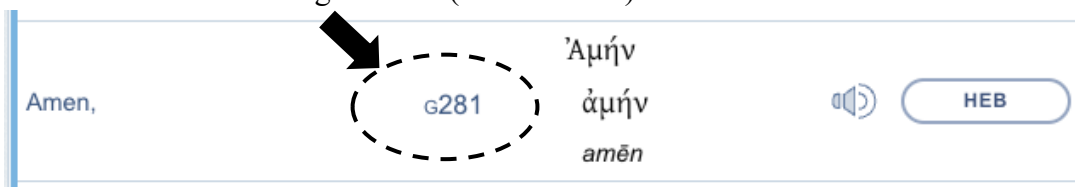


The Cardo [main street] in Laodicea
Photo: Tim and Jan Cowles
Figure 18-6

Read Revelation 3:14-22.

1. At the end of this Study Guide there is a place to summarize the message to the church in Laodicea. Record the following on those pages. (Note that some messages may not have every element.)
 - a. The description of Jesus
 - b. The church's commendation
 - c. The church's admonishment
 - d. Instructions/warnings to the church
 - e. Consequences if the instructions are not followed
 - f. Promises to the overcomer
2. Look again at the description of Jesus in verse 14. What does each phrase highlight about Jesus?
 - a. the Amen – (This is a Hebrew word appearing in the midst of a Greek text. We will do a little word study to confirm its meaning. Use your own word study tools, or follow the outlined steps below.)

Using the interlinear Bible tool available at BlueLetterBible.org, we find that *Amen* in Revelation 3:14 is Strong's G281. (G for Greek!)



Clicking on the Strong's number shows us that word has a Hebrew origin and has Strong's number H543 (H for Hebrew.)

Lexicon :: Strong's G281 - amēn Aa

ἀμήν

Transliteration	Pronunciation
amēn (Key)	am-ane' 🔊
Part of Speech	Root Word (Etymology)
particle indeclinable	Of Hebrew origin אָמֵן (H543)

Clicking the H543 link shows us some definitions:

Outline of Biblical Usage [?]

I. verily, truly, amen, so be it

Strong's Definitions [?] (Strong's Definitions Legend)

אָמֵן 'āmēn, aw-mane'; from H539; sure; abstract, faithfulness; adverb, truly:— Amen, so be it, truth.

and a little further down the webpage we find other places that the word is used – the *God of Amen* usage in Isaiah 65:16 and the suggestion to compare it to Revelation 3:14 looks promising.

(Jump to Scripture Index)

STRONGS H543: Abbreviations

† אָמֵן **adverb** verily, truly Deuteronomy 27:15-26 (12 times) 1 Kings 1:36; Nehemiah 5:13; Jeremiah 11:5; Jeremiah 28:6 & doxologies 1 Chronicles 16:36 (= Psalm 106:48); אָמֵן (ו) אָמֵן Numbers 5:22 (P) Nehemiah 8:6, & in the doxologies Psalm 41:14 [Psalm 41:13]; Psalm 72:19; Psalm 8:9Psalm 48. אָמֵן = Amen: אָמֵן אֱלֹהֵי אָמֵן Isaiah 65:16 (twice in verse) *God of Amen* De Che RVm; compare Revelation 3:14, or *God of faithfulness, God of truth* (RV) (perhaps read אָמֵן Che Di).

Read Isaiah 65:16. When Jesus is described as *the Amen*, what does it convey?

b. the faithful and true Witness (Review your answer from Study Guide 14, question 6a.) (See Revelation 19:11, 12 also.)

c. the Origin of the creation of God (See John 1:1-3.)

There are a couple of ways to understand Jesus' rebuke (verses 15 and 16) of the Laodicean church.

One way reflects the water situation in the region around Laodicea. Hierapolis had therapeutic hot springs; Colossae had refreshing cool water. Laodicea had neither. Some scholars suggest that the mineral content of the water at Laodicea may have made it unappetizing. The church's deeds resembled the region's water circumstances.

A second approach centers around hospitality. Chilled or warmed wine was served to honored guests; whereas it was considered rude to serve a guest lukewarm wine. (Koester)

Other scholars liken the hot, cold, and lukewarm analogy to the church's faith – hot indicating zealotry; cold, unbelief; and lukewarm, indifference.

3. Read the letter to Laodicea again. What does Jesus' rebuke of the church seem to indicate?

4. In verse 17 there is a contrast between the Laodiceans perception of themselves and reality. List the descriptions of each:

Perception	Reality

5. What correlations do you see between the background information provided at the beginning of this Study Guide with your list in question 4?

6. What three pieces of advice does Jesus give in verse 18?

7. How does the advice in verse 18 correspond to the background information on Laodicea?

8. Is Jesus unloving toward the church in Laodicea? Explain.

9. Spend some time thinking about the imagery in Revelation 3:20. What does it convey? (Some thoughts to get you started – why does Jesus knock? why does He wait for the occupant to open the door? what does hearing His voice mean? what is significant about dining together?)

10. What does it mean to sit with Jesus on His throne?
(Matthew 19:28; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:26 and 20:4 may help.)

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

11. How does pride cause [figurative] blindness? What is the remedy or what preventive measures can you maintain?

12. Is Jesus knocking on the door in any areas of your life? What will you do?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) What's the best way to keep an accurate view of one's spiritual condition?
- II) How well do I receive the Lord's discipline? What the best posture to take?

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 Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2024

Additional Scripture for Study Guide 18

□ Isaiah 65:16

Because the one who is blessed on the earth
Will be blessed by the God of truth;
And the one who swears an oath on the earth
Will swear by the God of truth;
Because the former troubles are forgotten,
And because they are hidden from My sight!

□ Revelation 19:11-12

¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. ¹² His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and

on His head *are* many crowns; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself.

☐ **John 1:1-3**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being.

☐ **Matthew 19:28**

²⁸ And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

☐ **2 Timothy 2:12**

¹² If we endure, we will also reign with Him;
If we deny Him, He will also deny us;

☐ **Revelation 2:26**

²⁶ The one who overcomes, and the one who keeps My deeds until the end, I will give him authority over the nations;

☐ **Revelation 20:4**

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their foreheads and on their hands; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

†

Laodicea

pithy description

name meaning (if available)

Jesus' description (a)

Church's Commendation (b)

Church's Admonishment (c)

Instructions/Warnings (d)

Consequences (e)

Promise to Overcomers (f)

Personal Application

The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

