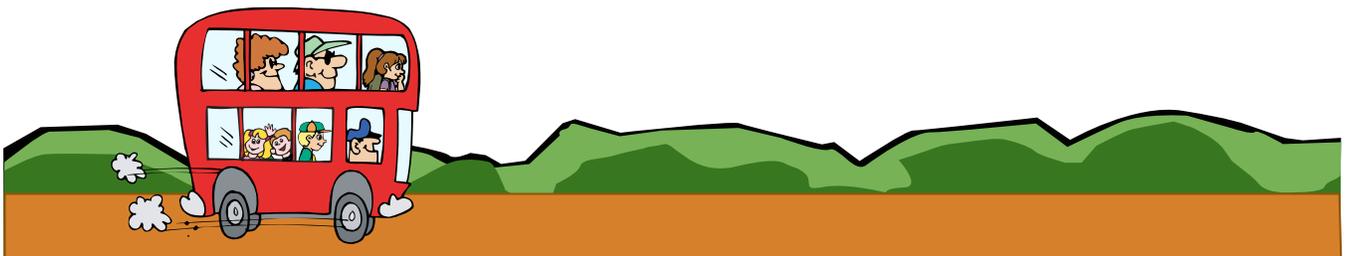


Tour of the Holy Lands - Laodicea



Here we are at Laodicea. Let's climb out and imagine what these beautiful Roman ruins might have looked like 2,000 years ago. Picture a long, grand road on which fine horses and chariots bring well-dressed men to visit one of the wealthiest cities in the world.





In the background, we can see one of three marbled theaters and some beautiful architecture. These buildings were so grand that they attracted many visitors to come and stay in Laodicea. It sure looked as if all of the people living in the city were rich and had everything they wanted. They didn't need God.

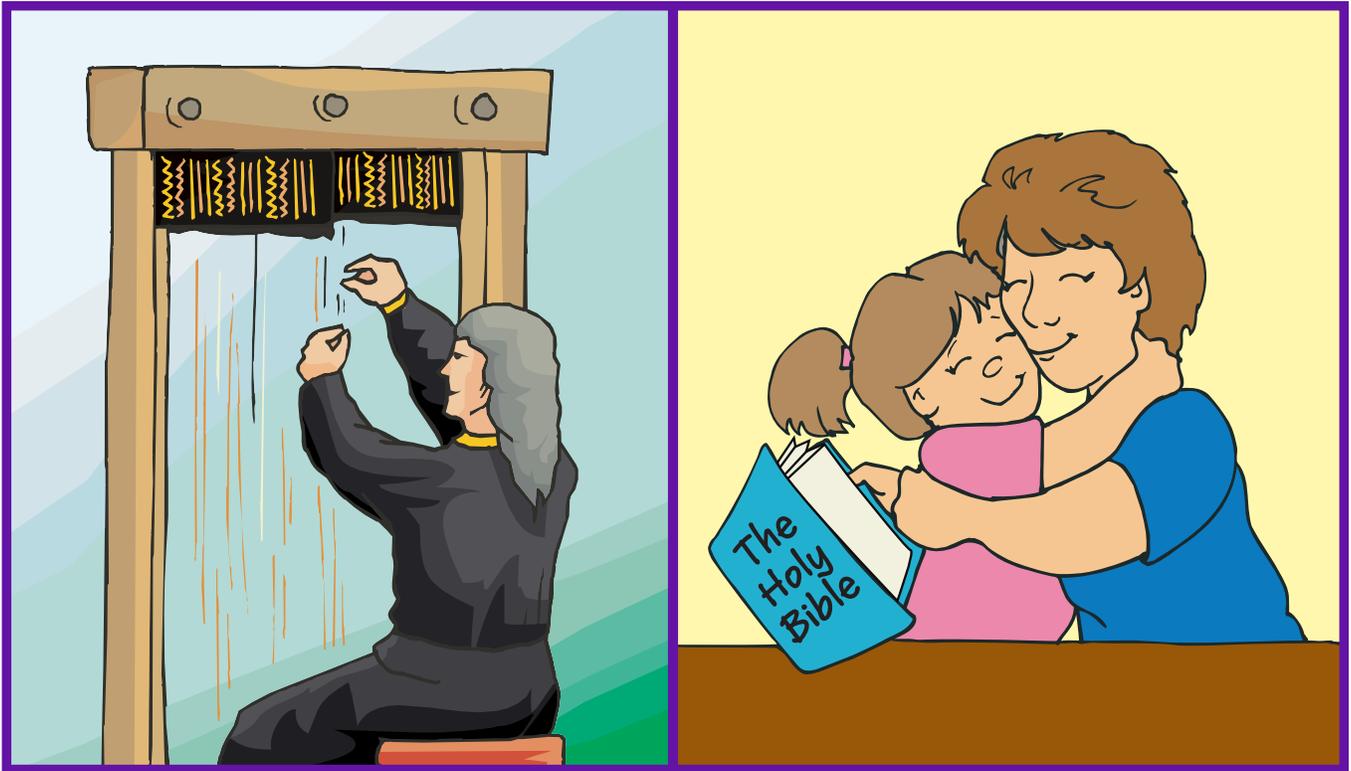
In his letter, the Apostle John offers a different view of life to the church members in Laodicea. He shares what Jesus had to say about wealth. "To be truly rich, you must buy gold from me." Christ has the real riches. This sure is a wake-up call! Reading the letter, the church members feel as if the Christ is right there in their midst.





John gives them another way to understand the Christ by describing a water pipe, like the one pictured below. The city has no water source, so pipes are used to transport water to the city. The pipes cover such a great distance that the hot water is no longer hot and the cold water no longer cold by the time it reaches the city. In a way, the problem of lukewarm water is just like the problem in the church of lukewarm membership. The church has lost its energy and enthusiasm. Just as one swallow of lukewarm water usually leads to spitting out the rest, so Christ rejects such half-hearted Christians. These church members need to get back their eagerness for God and for the Christ, Truth.





The church members liked to show off. Their city was famous for its beautiful black sheep. People came from miles away to buy the wool. The Apostle John encourages them to think more of simple white robes that stand for pure thoughts.

When the church members brag about their famous eye medicine, John writes, "You need to see spiritually, using the medicine of Spirit, God."

The Christ is certainly asking these church members to make a lot of changes in their lives. "I ask you because I love you," he says. Your parents say that, too, don't they? They ask you to think and act in a Christian way because it's the way God wants us all to think and act -- it's good, it's safe, and it's loving.



The Christ is here in Laodicea knocking on doors. Doesn't anyone hear him? If someone opens the door, Christ Jesus will enter, enjoy a meal, and offer words of truth and wisdom. But the people of Laodicea think they know everything they need to know. How sad, and what a good lesson for all of us! Let's be sure we open our doors to let in the Christ and listen!