

WHO AND WHAT IS LAODICEA?

A question was asked: When does Laodicea go bad? (Answer), Laodicea did not become bad. Laodicea is bad. There's nothing good about being Laodicea. You can take a church, (Philadelphia), and when it becomes bad it turns into Laodicea. So, once you're in a Laodicean condition there is no good and if you stay that way your condition is hopeless

Ellen White writes in 1888 Materials, page 1051, paragraph 2, "The true state of the church is to be presented before men. And they are to receive the word of God, not as something originating with men, but as the word of God. Many have treated the message to the Laodiceans as it has come to them, as the word of man. Both message and messenger have been held in doubt"...

So, there's a message that comes to Laodicea and that message was given to God's church for example the Israelites in the time of Christ or in the 1888 history of Adventism or in our time and when it was given, people did not accept it because they said it was the word of man and not of God.

In Early Writings, Ellen White writes about the shaking in God's church, page 270, paragraph 2, "I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony (the truth) called forth by the counsel (instruction) of the True Witness to the Laodiceans....., (Next paragraph), I saw that the Testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded (accepted). So, when we talk about the Laodicean condition, first of all we need to see that it is a **condition** that God's church is in, and there's nothing good about this **condition**

Another question was asked if our movement is Laodicean and that's a really interesting question. Our answer comes best by taking a look at the history of Christ. We know that the church at that time is the church of ancient Israel beginning at the time of Moses to the time of the first advent which is a period of about 1,500 years. At the very end, the church is in a really dangerous position. If you look at Daniel 9:24-27, we can see that we've come to the end of the 490 year prophecy. And if we were to paraphrase the verses, it would say something like this: "You have 490 years, specifically the last 7 years to get your house in order and to stop sin and to accept the Anointed One because the end is coming."

When we talk about the end another way to understand is that judgement is going to come and God is going to sort out the problems of the church. The reason that's interesting is because if you look at the word Laodicea, what does it mean? It means judgement or judgement of the people. So this is our first evidence that in the history of Christ it is the history of Laodicea.

Reading from "Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing", page 6. "As something strange and new, these words, (the words of Christ), fall upon the ears of the wondering multitude. Such teaching is contrary to everything they've ever heard from priest or rabbi."

The message that Jesus brings to them is a strange new message which is different from everything that the leadership has taught. And what makes it different is because Jesus is addressing the issue that they need to come out of the Laodicean condition. He brings a message and there's an argument about His words and two groups are created. In the paragraphs following (in Mount of Blessing), it says that in the multitude there were people who felt that they were wretched, miserable, poor blind and naked. But there were also people who felt they were rich and increased with goods. Rev. 3:17. You have the message of Jesus and it produces an effect. You have the church which is Laodicea because it's in a Laodicean condition. And when He gives the message it creates two classes.

Ellen White describes it with Rev 3:17, using the verse in its two parts. One group recognizes that they're bad and the other group think that they're good. BOTH OF THEM ARE BAD!! .

Revelation 3:14-17 (14) And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; (15) I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. (16) So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. (17) Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Beginning in verse 14 we see the church of Laodicea. Verse 15 is an indictment against the church. It says, I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. Verse 16 says they're lukewarm and what they don't realize is that they're poor blind and naked. This condition of being poor blind and naked, in the later verses, God offers a remedy for those things. This poverty is not to do with money. It's to do with our spiritual poverty.

This is Laodicea! A message needs to come to Laodicea, and when it does, as we read in Early Writings, there will be a shaking. And this is the shaking that's being created in ancient Israel in the time of Christ. There will be a division in the church. One group accepts they are bad and one group continued to think that they're good. One accepts the message and the other rejects and refuses it. In that history what happens to those who accept the message. They're baptized and they join the church of Ephesus. So you can see how Ephesus is being created

Let's take a look at Matthew 5:2, 3 which is the Sermon on the Mount.

Mathew 5:2, 3 (2) And He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying (3). Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus begins the sermon with the famous statement. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" So, the word poor means to be in poverty. And the word spirit means to be spiritual. If you're poor in spirit, it's not like most people think. It's not someone who's humble, it's totally opposite. People who are poor in spirit are like the proud Pharisees who think they are better than other people because the spirit that they are poor in is the Holy Spirit. This is a statement that God's people don't possess the Holy Spirit. They're in poverty. It is saying that the people think they're rich not with materialism but it's talking about spiritual pride. So we can see the Jews in the time of Christ are poor in spirit and we see an example of this in Luke chapter 18 which is the prayer of the Pharisee.

Luke 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

The Pharisee is saying (paraphrasing), "I'm a great man and I know that you're happy that I'm not as rotten as that publican." That prayer was not just a prayer of one man. Ellen White says that prayer expressed the feeling of his class and to a great degree, of the whole nation. So the Jews thought that they were better than the Gentiles and the whole nation has got this problem. "God, I thank Thee that I am not as the rest of men."

The next characteristic is blindness. Let's first take a look at Isaiah 1:4-6,

Isaiah 1:4-6 (4) Ah sinful nation a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. (5) Why should ye be stricken anymore? Ye will revolt more and more: **the whole head is sick**, and the whole heart faint. (6) **From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it**; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

It says that the church is sick from the head to the feet. And what's the head? The leadership of the church. From the leaders to the lowest member, the church is sick.

Matthew 15:14 Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

So, we see that everyone is blind from the leaders to the followers. That's like alpha and omega. That means the whole church is blind. If the church is to be judged, it's poor, and it's blind and it's naked. Before we deal with nakedness let's see how clothing is represented symbolically in Revelation 19.

Revelation 19:7, 8 (7) Let us be glad and rejoice and, give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (8) And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

So, there's a bride who's ready for marriage and we know she's going to be married because she's got her wedding garment and it tells you what it looks like. Its white linen and we can see that it's a symbol of righteousness. So, if you go back to the story of Genesis chapter 3, after Adam and Eve sinned and they lost their robe of righteousness. What did they do? They got fig leaves and made their own garments. So let's factor this in, Laodicea, in Revelation 3 says it's naked. But it's not really naked because it has garments and those garments would be like the fig leaves. So basically we're covered with fig leaves. We can see that the Jews learned a lesson from Adam and Eve's mistake. What color are fig leaves? Green. And anyone knows if you want to be righteous what color do you need to be? White. So they should have painted their fig leaves white and since they didn't, they were easily spotted. The Jews learned this lesson and what they did is that when they wanted to appear righteous, and when they wanted to honor their fathers. What color did they use? White. We can see this is in Matthew 23, the chapter of the woes.

Matthew 23:24. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

So it's the leaders of the church who are blind.

Matthew 23:25. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

They're hypocrites. A hypocrite is an actor, someone who is in the one condition but pretends to be something they're not. The outside is clean but the inside is left dirty.

Matthew 23:27 Woe unto you, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchres (tombs), which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

So Christ has given us two parables, one of the cup and one of the sepulcher and we can see the symbolism. On the inside, they're dead and on the outside they're righteous or alive. They paint the sepulchers white because they know that white is a symbol of righteousness. Verse 27 says they're hypocrites for doing this. They're actors but in reality they're just dead.

So in the verses of Revelation for the church of Laodicea we see 3 conditions, cold, hot and lukewarm, or just warm. If you're Laodicean what condition are you in, cold, warm, or hot? Most people are going to answer that we're lukewarm. And that's not the correct answer for the simple reason that when God created human beings at one moment they didn't exist then He formed them out of dust and they came in the form of humanity. That soil, was it cold, warm or hot? It was cold because it was lifeless, it was dead. How did Adam go from death to life? Was it a series of progressive steps like evolutionary steps? No. He went straight from death to life. He didn't have this transitional stage. The reason why the bible says we're lukewarm is because on the inside we're dead, full of dead men's bones and on the outside we're white so that we can appear righteous to people. And the combination of being dead on the inside and pretending to be righteous on the outside is a toxic dangerous condition which God calls Laodicea or lukewarm or hypocrisy. So Adventists as we come to the Second Advent just like God's people in the first advent are they spiritually alive or spiritually dead? They're dead. Death is cold. They're no such condition as lukewarm. You're either dead or alive.

So, we've got all the characteristics of Laodicea.

Poor- Matthew 5:3

Blind - Matthew 15:14

Naked - Matthew 23:27

Daniel 9:24-27 says they're a church that has come into judgement and this makes the church Laodicea. Let's make another connection with Matthew 23:27 where it says dead bones. What do dead bones mean? The answer is in the verses and we'll use the technique of repeat and enlarge. Let's turn to verse 28, that's where the answer is in the last part.

Matthew 23:28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

We see in verses 27 and 28 the word full. Verse 27 says full of dead men's bones and verse 28 says full hypocrisy and iniquity. So if we look at Ezekiel 37 we can see that there's a valley full of bones and that's a symbol or condition of God's church. What does dead look like? Hypocrisy and iniquity. And that's the condition of the church in the valley of dead bones in Ezekiel 37. If we wanted to do a study on that chapter we could learn what a valley is and what it equals? In Joel chapter 3 we can see that a valley is a place to make a decision. Here, a decision needs to be made whether you want to stay in hypocrisy and iniquity or do you want to change. In Ezekiel 37, who are the bones and what church are they? Laodicea. And what must the Laodicean church do? It needs to make a decision. And so the question was asked, are we Laodicean?

In Ezekiel 37 we see the house of Israel in a valley and this is a symbol of people that need to make a decision if they want to remain in the condition of dead bones or do they want to change. Let's take a look at a little bit of history about this valley. It comes under a few different names. On one side is the Mount of Olives and the other side can be called two different names? The mountain itself is like 2 peaks because Jerusalem is built on Zion and the temple Mount on Moriah. So we'll call it Mount Zion. The valley has a little stream or river that flows through which is the Kidron River and so it's called Kidron Valley.

In the history of the Kings some wicked things happened in that valley. In the time period of apostasy Israel began to copy the nations and everyone knows in order to save the nation someone needs to die. And who needs to die? Jesus, the first born. But, these are idol nations so they don't know about Jesus and begin to practice human sacrifice and it has to be the sacrifice of the children, (first born). So, human sacrifices of the children began to occur in order to appease God. All of this was copied from the plan of salvation. The Israelites began to copy the world and the leaders or the kings would sacrifice their children and the way they would do that is that they would take them into this valley and make them walk through fire. And as the children were forced to walk through the fire, they would scream in pain and it became disturbing because the people in Jerusalem could hear the cries of the children. So what they would do is they would get a drum and beat the drum to drown out the noise of the death cries. These were called the drums of Tophet. And therefore this began to be called the Valley of Tophet. You can read about the Valley of Tophet in the Old Testament. What we see in Ezekiel 37 is that these bones become a symbol not just of God's church but of all those children that have been killed by their parent's sin. So when we talk about the sins of the fathers whether it's in this movement or about the history of the Millerites or of 1888 or Exodus 20, the punishment comes upon the children in the form of their death and it's our fathers who have killed us. But there's hope because in this dead Laodicean condition, what can we do? We can make a decision. So this decision that we can make is what is being portrayed in Matthew chapter 5:3. God understands that Adventists are in a dead condition and what has made us dead are the sins of our fathers.

PLACEMENT OF THYATIRA

Now God's church is going to be judged as we approach the Second Advent just like it was judged while approaching the first advent. But they're not the only times God's church is being judged. We can see that they are judged in the history of Samaria, in the history of Nebuchadnezzar, in the history of Christ in the first advent, in the history of the Millerites and then finally at the end of the world. There are many different understandings of the experience of the seven churches of Revelation when we think about Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamus Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

If you go to Revelation chapter 2 and look at the 4th church, Thyatira, we see the history of the papacy in the 1260 years of papal persecution. When we go to Revelation 17:5. We see a woman who is called mystery Babylon. She is the mother of harlots or the mother church and her daughters are apostate Protestantism.

All the story of the 1260 years is in Revelation 2:18-28. This is the same history. This is Thyatira and it's the 4th church. It says in this passage in verse 20...

Revelation 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

It talks about Jezebel, the prophetess, a false prophet who is going to teach God's people and seduce them. And all of those people that committed adultery with her are going to be punished unless they repent. This fornication is identified in Revelation 17:2,

Revelation 17:2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

So the kings and all other subjects, all of the people have committed fornication. So this story of the 1260 is the story of corruption and a story of Jezebel.

Let's read a passage taken from Prophets and Kings Page 714. Paragraph 1

Today the church of God is free to carry forward to completion the divine plan for the salvation of a lost race. For many centuries God's people suffered a restriction of their liberties. The preaching of the gospel in its purity was prohibited, and the severest of penalties were visited upon those who dared disobey the mandates of men. As a consequence, the Lord's great moral vineyard was almost wholly unoccupied. The people were deprived of the light of God's word. The darkness of error and superstition threatened to blot out a knowledge of true religion. God's church on earth was as verily in captivity during this long period of relentless persecution as were the children of Israel held captive in Babylon during the period of the exile. PK 714.1

This is an important passage for us to remember. Ellen White is going to compare two separate histories. She says today in the history after 1844 we're free to do whatever gospel work that we want to do, but in the past for hundreds of years God's people were restricted. They were not allowed to preach the gospel and they were punished by the government if they tried. This period is the 1260 years. That's what she's referring to. The people were deprived of the light of God's word. She said God's church on earth was truthfully in captivity during this long period as were the children of Israel when they went to Babylon. So she says that the 70 years of captivity was the same as the 1260 years of papal persecution.

And you can count through the other churches. Now if the 70 years = the 1260, what we know is this is the experience of the Christian church, spiritual Israel. And, this is the experience of the Jews or ancient Israel. Literal Israel, spiritual Israel. Ancient Israel, modern Israel. So this is the experience of the 4th church in the Christian dispensation and this is the experience of the 4th church in the Jewish dispensation. So we can see how we can lineup the 4th church with the 4th church and this gives us the ability to go back to the 1st church, Ephesus. And this would go all the way back to Moses. Moses is Ephesus. The 70 year captivity is Thyatira. And where is Laodicea? This is the time of Christ so this is church number 7, Laodicea.

So if we know that after Christ died in the book of Acts, the disciples are doing miracles. And what did the leaders of the church tell them? They bring them to court and they say you are forbidden to talk about Jesus. And what did the disciples say? They say, you decide, is it better to obey God or obey man, because they're not going to listen to man anymore. And then they begin to separate. They have their own meetings. They take care of themselves. And then someone's going to come and punish them. Who's that? That's Saul of Tarsus. Saul, who works for the church is going to punish this remnant until what happens? In AD34, he meets Jesus on the road to Damascus. He has a conversion experience and basically creates the New

Testament story as we know it. So if you go to the story of ancient Israel, you have 7 churches, 1 to 7 and we've looked at 3 of them, Moses, the 70 years captivity, and the history of Christ. We saw the 70 years and we saw the 1260. Upon the testimony of 2 we have an established truth. If you know there's a 7th church all you have to do is know where they started. At Moses, what are they given at Mount Sinai? The Law! And that Law is put in a Box. The Box is called an Ark. The Ark of the Covenant because the Law is a symbol of the covenant.

Now in the time of Christ, they're going to receive a new law which is the New Testament which they call a law of love. But, it's not a new law. You can go to Hebrews chapter 8 and it says this law of love, this new law of God that was written on stone gets written upon your heart. So on whose heart is this law written? Is it the Sanhedrin, the conference structure, the leaders of the church? No! In fact, in John chapter 3, when Christ speaks to Nicodemus, Nicodemus has no idea about how this even works. Jesus rebukes him. He says you're supposed to be a leader of the church and you don't even know about the law and how it's supposed to be written upon the heart. We know that Nicodemus, a proud Pharisee who we just read about in Thoughts of the Mount of Blessings goes away and learns and studies and he realized that he was wretched, poor, miserable and blind and converts. And when he converts, what does he do in AD31 at the cross? He saw a big pearl and he sold everything that he had and became poor to buy that pearl. So you see that he joins Ephesus.

So we have the story of ancient Israel and then we have the story of spiritual or modern Israel. It starts with the 1st church and goes to the 7th church. So what we know in the story of the New Testament is the tension between Laodicea and Ephesus This tension between them, these are the people that we read about that are blind.

Matthew 23:38, Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

After strongly rebuking them, Jesus makes a pronouncement upon the temple. And remember the temple which is symbolized by a tower is itself a symbol of what? A church. I'll give you the reference in Matthew 26 Verse 65. You know the story. There at the court case of Jesus and the high priest Caiaphas, what does he do? He takes his garments and he tears them from the top to the bottom. He tears them downwards. So when he tears his clothes, Ellen White says at that moment he had broken the law and he forfeited his right to be the high priest. He lost his right. So if he's no longer the high priest, who's the high priest? Jesus! A couple of hours later there's another garment that's torn from top to bottom. And what was that? That was the curtain of the temple. And when that garment/ curtain was torn, what was that showing? That the earthly temple Matthew 23 verse 38, was now desolate because the transfer is happening from the earthly to the heavenly. We can read that in Galatians chapter 4:24 and 25.

So we can see that there is this transfer from Laodicea to Ephesus. In the history of the New Testament, does the gospel go to all the world? It does! Colossians 1:23. The gospel is taken to every creature under the sun. The only people that can take the gospel to the world is not the world, it has to be the church. Which church takes the gospel to the world, Laodicea or Ephesus? We know the answer because it's Paul who does most of that work. And he's part of Ephesus. So when we start thinking about the everlasting gospel, it's Ephesus who will do that work not Laodicea. History repeats! The history of the first advent is typifying the history of the Second Advent. They're both parallel histories so we know at the end of the world when we're dealing with Laodicea rather than Laodicea going to the world with the everlasting gospel which is what many believe and is a wrong belief.

Someone else will do that work. From Laodicea a remnant will be saved. We see a remnant in the histories of the bible. That remnant has a name. It's the church of Ephesus. In the history of Laodicea, in the history of Adventism the experience of the 7 churches is going to be repeated again. We can see that the history of church number 4 is going to be repeated again in our history. But it's not a particular time period, it's an experience we call the Sunday law. We are now in the history where Ephesus which is the remnant of Laodicea is now being called. We're not talking about physical separation we're talking about a change of mindset. We're talking about the message to Laodicea. Some people call it the midnight cry or the loud cry. It first needs to go the church. Which church is that? It's Adventism but its Laodicea just as it was in the time of Christ. And once this work has been done as it was in the history of the disciples, there's going to be a gospel that's taken to the world which is the history that comes after the Sunday law. We need to see how history repeats so we can understand the experience that we need to have and be clear of who's going to give the loud cry to the world at the Sunday law. It's not the whole of Adventism (Laodicea). It's going to be Ephesus which is the remnant. Just as it was in the history of Christ.

1850 LAODICA - COVTEOUSNESS

How does Satan confuse the world and the church in the history of 1850? Ellen White writes about this in Early Writings. We can see 2 chapters called Spiritualism and Covetousness. If you read those two chapters, this is a meeting that Satan is having with his angels. Many Adventists today say that the church is going into spiritualism. And I would argue that the church is not running into spiritualism because we follow the bible. Even though we're in apostasy, even though we're doing things wrong, the church is still not into spiritualism. So, Satan has this meeting, and he says this church understands the sanctuary, is going to give the third angels message and is on a solid platform. He sees that we're getting ready to do something. He sees that 1850 is coming and we're going to be gathered and the second coming is soon to be. He says there are two groups we need to deal with: the world, and the church. He says the world, the way we'll deal with them is by introducing spiritualism. We need to know the history, there are these sisters named the Fox sisters who began to hear these rapping noises and it became a great phenomenon in the United States and it introduced the movement of spiritualism. Satan's plan was "let's get the world involved with spiritualism so that they won't be interested in studying the word. Then, if you read the next chapter called Covetousness, he says this: you cannot use spiritualism with the church because they study the word of God. So it's a different strategy with Seventh Day Adventists. He says, what we will do is that we'll confuse them. We'll confuse their priorities. We'll get them interested in money, in buying property, in education, basically to get settled down here on earth and his plan is successful. And this is covetousness which is another word for worldliness which is another word for Laodicea. So the important point is that our church became Laodicean. It wasn't us just being lazy or saying we're not going to be nice to one another or we're going to dress in the wrong way and eat the wrong things. Laodicea was a planned strategy by Satan in order to stop the church from doing its mission. The church needed to be gathered in preparation for the Second Advent. And to prevent that he made us focus on the world and not on heaven. This happened in 1850, when he begins to introduce the concept for Laodicea. So what ends up happening is that we begin to compromise with the world. Now what church out of the seven compromises? Which church after being persecuted allows the world to come into the church? Pergamos, church number three. It's Pergamos who compromises with the world, (Laodicea). Now if you're going to become Pergamos and compromise, what's going to happen next? Thyatira. And what is Thyatira? This

is punishment or scattering just like what happened during the 1260 and it's this way we can accurately know when we transition from Pergamos to Thyatira. This happens in 1863. We become Thyatira. We need to remember we're still Laodicea. Laodicea runs all the way through but we're Thyatira also. We were Thyatira for 1260 years and it begins again in 1863.

TIME – NO TIME

Our church is allowing the congregations to be taught by Jezebel and to be seduced by her, who is Jezebel? The papacy! It's the papal doctrines. Now, if I were to ask you, tell me what the major doctrines are? List them out for me...the main one that people all know about...it's the state of the dead and the Sunday. And there's a third one that people do not know, so I'm going to read that to you. That's taken from Spirit of Prophecy vol. 4. Page 235. It's going to talk about the doctrines of the papacy. Now in this history here, (1260), you have the German reformation, and then you have the Counter Reformation, I'm not sure if you're familiar with that history? This is the story of the Jesuits. We know what a counter attack is...there's a reformation and a counter reformation. And in that Counter Reformation there was a thrust made by the Catholic Church, through the Jesuits, to destroy the understanding of time because Satan foresaw that God's people need to understand time in this history (1798 – 1844), so we read...

Prominent among these false doctrines (doctrines of the papal church) is that of the temporal millennium...so the temporal millennium today comes by a different name...it's called the secret rapture. They made movies about this. So, it's a thousand years of spiritual peace, then it (book) talks about the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and then about the Sabbath. But it says prominent. In this history, (1798 – 1844), the prominent doctrine (for protestants) is that there is no time. So, when the Millerites come, there argument is all about time. So, here, 1863...when you have Jezebel, what's her prominent doctrine that she does not want us to understand. It's time! Because we all know about the Sabbath, and the state of the dead. That does not matter because you can preach about the Sunday Sabbath sacredness, and how evil that is. You can warn people about spiritualism but if you don't know when these things are happening people will not be able to get ready. So, we say...no time! That is a Catholic doctrine, as our church went into a Laodicean condition. As we've come out of that condition from 1989 onward we've been confronted with these problems. We weren't aware of them at the beginning, but as time has gone we've become increasingly aware of what this story (our history) was all about. That Laodicea is not about bad behavior, it's about having a message that's not connected to time.

FIRST AND SECOND MESSENGER

So, in the time of Christ, the church is Laodicean, and a man comes, and who's that man? John the Baptist. And he tells everybody to do what, to make a decision. He says your deadened people, hypocrites in iniquity, make a decision. And that's what he is saying when he says repent. So, lots of people repent. They become his disciples, 5 of them are going to become Jesus's disciples, John, Andrew, Peter, Phillip and Nathaniel. They're the first 5 and then 7 more come. When you go through their story of 3-1/2 years training, they say things like this. Jesus, why are you upsetting the leadership? We need their help. We can't do this mission without them. They have all the power and control. And Jesus says, "Leave them alone, they're blind leaders of the blind." So Jesus is not going to listen to them. Then Jesus says, I'm going to die. And what did they say about that? God forbid you. That can't happen. We read the bible and it says you can't die. So we can see that they've got some wrong ideas.

John begins his ministry. He gets these Laodicean conditioned people. The first thing he says to them is to repent! And in their repentance, they begin to join the church of Ephesus. This is the first step. Or the first angel's message. Christ is the second step. Or the second angel's message. So there's these two steps and Christ is finishing the work that John began. The disciples had already repented but they didn't fully understand the sinfulness of sin. And part of the reason for that is because of John's ministry. We're all aware that even though John the Baptist was the greatest of prophets and even though the words he says are truth, he made some mistakes. He had a misconception of what the Messiah's work was and Ellen White is clear on this. (Desire of Ages). If you read the story when he goes to prison what happens to him in his mind? What does he begin to think? He begins to have doubts because he looks at Jesus, and what can he not see? He can't see all of those plows.

Joel 3:10 "Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong."

So, instead of getting their plows and going to the blacksmith and turning them into swords, Jesus is just going around with disciples and healing people and He's not doing anything. John is expecting the Messiah to be a warrior king and Jesus is failing in that mission according to John's understanding. And so he has doubts while in prison. He sends his disciples to inquire of Jesus what He is doing and Jesus tells them to watch. They go back to John, and John is comforted. The Holy Spirit speaks to him and he realizes the true mission and work of the Messiah. John has a misunderstanding and Jesus has to correct it. John thinks Jesus is going to be a warrior king and just like the rest of the church he thinks that the Messiah is going to come to make the people free...set my people free. (Let my people go). Free from what, from the Roman bondage. It's the same thing the Pharisees are teaching and even though John had been separated from them, the influence of the church was so corrupting. What happened? He imbibed the false theology. Even though he was preparing the way saying "Someone is going to come after me whose shoelaces I can't even tie because He's so high and He's going to cut you down. Is that what Christ was going to do? No!! Christ came to heal the wounded. So, John has this misunderstanding which he learned from the church. And that becomes the necessary part of the story to remember because it's happens again in other dispensations. John has done his work. He says repent because the Messiah King is coming and He's going to destroy the Romans. Jesus has to correct that misunderstanding. The church had never heard a message like this. Jesus' message is not to turn the plowshares into swords but to do a work of introspection, (self-examination), to look into ourselves. And He says, if the Roman's tell you to work hard, instead of complaining, work twice as hard. If they tell you walk one mile you walk two miles. The proud Israelites didn't want to hear this message. They refuse it because they do not accept that they are in a Laodicean condition. But there are some people like the disciples who are touched and it breaks them. They have a heart conversion. They enter into a new covenant. They accept the message to Laodicea. This is Peter, who says, "I am sinful." Therefore he tells Jesus to go from him because he's not worthy to be in Jesus' presence. So Jesus walks away, and what's Peter doing? He's holding his leg and not letting Jesus go. It's this relationship of tension and it's the relationship that we tend to have when we don't have full confidence in Christ to totally take away our sins. This is the message to Laodicea. And part of it is connected to the work of the first messenger who has made mistakes in his message.

So the disciples have a wrong understanding of prophecy. But it gets fixed after the resurrection and by the time you get to Pentecost, now they have a full understanding, So, I want to suggest that it's in the midnight cry history that they begin to have a proper understanding of what they're supposed to do. John is baptizing people and we're all Adventists, and if I ask you what you were baptized into you wouldn't say that you got baptized into the truth. You wouldn't say that you got baptized into repentance. You would say that you got baptized into the church. All of those Jews are already members of the church. They have a patriarchal system and all the men are circumcised at birth and their circumcision covers the whole family. They have a cover to society and the church. The symbol of covenant is circumcision and they're all members of the church. John comes and he says you need to be baptized and baptism means entrance into the church or the kingdom of heaven. So, if they're already a church member, what church are they a member of? They're a member of the Laodicean church.

They're going to be baptized into the church of Ephesus because you know that Ephesus is the beginning of the Christian church and then it goes to the end which is us, Seventh Day Adventists, the last church, Laodicea. Are those disciples Laodiceans or Ephesians?

They're members of the Ephesus church but they've got Laodicean mindset.

The church has a remnant to the end. Taking a look at the history of the first advent, the churches go all the way through to the seventh church. And by the time you get to AD 70, the whole church is going to be destroyed. So, what happened to the church then if it all got destroyed and there were no longer God's people? Before that event, there was a remnant saved. That's the disciples. They come out of the church just before destruction and they continue the story. So in our history, Laodicea will go all the way to the end but before it's destruction a remnant will come out and the church will carry on past the destruction of Laodicea. The only safety for any of us is to come out of the Laodicean mindset, the Laodicean condition. Many people have a misunderstanding of what that means. What does it mean to be in a Laodicean condition? Lots of people think it's about bad behavior and that you become worldly. It's not that simple.

Here's an example, if you're ill and have type 2 diabetes and it's because of a bad lifestyle and someone tells you to eat properly and exercise and you'll cure your diabetes, which it does work. So you say, okay, I'm not going to eat bad food and I'm going to exercise. You made a decision today. You enter into covenant. Are you cured from diabetes? No. Now you have to put it into practice. Now the healing has to begin. So, just because you're a member of Ephesus it doesn't mean you're healed from the Laodicean mindset. It takes time! And the problem is people like us who say we believe 1989, 9/11, the daily, the 2520, and therefore we're Ephesian in our mind. And now you start to ask yourself what about all those other things you're holding on too? We're still quite Laodicean in our thinking. Some more than others. Some of us don't want to let go of these ideas and some want to get rid of them as soon as they can. This movement, like the disciples movement is the movement of Ephesus. But we're not all healed. And many of us have got the Laodicean mindset. And the Laodicean mindset is not what we've been taught it is. It's not people who are bad. It's not people who eat bad food. It's not people who dress wrong. Laodicea's fundamental problem is that it doesn't understand end time prophecy, just like the Jews. Did they dress properly? Yes. Did they fast properly? Yes. They paid tithe and offerings properly. How can they be Laodicean then? Because they don't know the day of their visitation. When the Messiah comes, and His forerunner, John the Baptist. They don't even know who he is? They say who are you? What they mean is, we didn't send you out.

We didn't give you authority. This is what Laodicea is. This is the problem between this movement today and the church. We do not have the church's blessing or authority to do anything. They disagree with our understanding of end time prophecy. But now we're beginning to see that even us, we still are holding on to some of our wrong ideas. And I would encourage us/everyone as we study together this weekend to ask yourself to be willing to examine your position of what you think is right and wrong specifically to do with prophecy. When we think about things like the United States, the EU, Russia, the Middle East, we need to understand them correctly in order to come out of the Laodicean mindset and into the mindset of Ephesus. The time for that to happen is now, in the midnight cry. We need to be educated so we can serve properly.

WHO HATH EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR

If we turn to Matthew 13. Jesus is in Galilee. He spent about 1 year in Judea. Particularly in the vicinity of Jerusalem. This was after His baptism. After His ministry is rejected there he turns His attention to Galilee. And it's when He returns to Galilee that He first really begins to speak in parables.

And Ellen White confirms this. Reading from Christ Object Lessons, page 20, paragraph 2.

In the earlier part of His ministry, Christ had spoken to the people in words so plain that all His hearers might have grasped truths which would make them wise unto salvation. But in many hearts the truth had taken no root, and it had been quickly caught away. "Therefore speak I to them in parables," He said; "because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand..... For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed..." Matthew 13:13-15

So this confirms what was mentioned a moment ago. In the first part of Christ's ministry, the first full year after Jesus cleanses the temple in John Chapter 2, He spent His time in the city of Jerusalem and He spoke in plain words. But the people of God had rejected His message, they wouldn't listen to it. She says, but in many hearts the truth had taken no root. It had been quickly caught away. I don't know if you're familiar with Matthew 13, and the parable that says a truth comes, a seed, it bears no root and it's quickly caught away. If you're familiar with that story, it's the story of the sower. So even in this story about His ministry in Judea, Ellen White uses the symbolism of Matthew 13. After His work Jesus goes to Galilee and now He's going to begin to speak in parables. So she quotes Matthew 13:13-15, if we go to the Bible, He's quoted His first parable in verses 1-8 and then in verse 9 He says,

Matthew 13:9. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

He's going to talk about this concept of having ears and listening. In other passages He talks about having eyes but not seeing or having a heart but not understanding. I'm sure we all know that when the Bible speaks about the heart it's talking about our minds. This concept of the eye, ear and the heart, possessing them, but not being able to use them, you can't see, you can't hear you can't understand is a theme that's used in both the Old and New Testament.

So we understand that the eye is the same as an ear is the same as the heart. They're all symbols of our ability to accept truth when it's given to us. Whether it's a living parable that's acted out that you see, for instance, Jesus, or it could be a message that you hear and it's all based upon that we don't understand what we're seeing or hearing. The Bible talks often about this. It says in verse 9 (paraphrasing), If you claim to have ears then you should hear and hearing means understanding with your mind.

So if you have physical ears or physical eyes, a functioning mind, then God expects you to understand what is happening. Now you know that all human beings have eyes and ears which is symbols of the mind. They become symbols of the mind because the eye just both physically goes straight into your brain just as your ears do. And we know that the eyes are the windows to the soul which is another way of saying the window to the mind.

Let's take a look at a story found in a number of the gospels. We'll go to the one in John 18:10

Before we turn there, most humans are right handed as you know, and the direction of the right ends up having a symbol attached to it. A symbol of strength, action, ability. When Jesus went to heaven, where does He go? He goes to sit where, on the right hand of the Father. At the end of the world, in Revelation 13, when you get the mark of the beast, where is it given? It's either put on your forehead or on your hand. Which hand, the right hand. So the right hand or the right side, the right, becomes a symbol of strength, power, or ability to do something. You remember, the eye and the ear are symbols of the mind and if you have a mind, God expects you to think and understand. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned and if you don't have the Spirit of God within you, you can have a mind, ears, eyes but you won't understand what's going on. But all of us have these things so you have an opportunity of being saved because you can hear the message, you can see it and you have the opportunity that Jesus through the Holy Spirit will save you.

John 18:10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

This is at Gethsemane, Jesus has prayed, the disciples were asleep, Peter had already been warned to be on guard. The priests with Judas Iscariot and the Roman soldiers, three people, three groups, a threefold union. Let's remember that. They come against Jesus and what does Peter do? He runs forward, takes a sword and cuts off the servant's ear. Which ear? His right ear. And who is this person? Now you have to go through all of the gospels to get a broad understanding. The verse tells you both his name and for whom he works.

This is the high priest's servant. If I said to you having ears you're not listening to me, what would I be saying? You have the opportunity listening to the gospel. How do you have the ability to do that? It's been symbolized because you've got ears to listen. Peter cuts off the ear, what does Jesus do straight away? He picks up the ear, puts it back. What is that story about? It's connected to Matthew 13.

We have mentioned before that there are two groups in Adventism. There's the high priests, the leaders, the Sanhedrin and who else is there in reference to this verse? His servant, which makes two groups. Now Peter, remember because this is a parable. This is a story to teach you about prophetic truth. All the stories in the scriptures serve that purpose. If you jump forward a few hours, Jesus is on trial. Before He goes to Pontius Pilate, He's on trial with the high priest. They ask Him lots of questions, don't they? And what does Jesus say back to them? Nothing! He's silent! He won't speak to them anymore. Why will He not speak to them? Because they're day of salvation has come to an end. Do you remember how we've spoken about this in the story of Noah? His attention is on the people for how long, 120 years. And they could hear but they don't do anything and at the end of the 120 years, what happens? Suddenly there's a great noise, the cry of the animals. As all these animals start coming, Noah's attention turns from the people to the animals. How many groups of animals are there? Two groups. So, there are three groups now. There's the people, the clean animals and the unclean animals. Three groups. The Priests, Levites, and Nethinims. You see these three groups over and over again. Animals, in the Old Testament particularly are a symbol of whom? If I said the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the lion is a symbol of people who are of the tribe of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom of Babylon is identified as what animal? A lion. Medo-Persia, a bear. Greece a leopard. So, identifying human beings as animals, whether it's a goat or sheep or a lamb is well understood. If we start talking about dragons or beasts in the New Testament, this is a symbol of people. Let's go to the book of Acts, chapter 10. Peter is in the town of Joppa, a coastal town and he's

on the roof of Simon. And what's Peter doing there? He goes to sleep, wakes up and starts feeling hungry. In response to his need, God gives him a vision of unclean animals coming down from heaven and he says eat them, you're hungry. Like us, Jews will not eat unclean animals. What does God tell him? He says you will eat that and don't call something unclean that is clean. Peter doesn't understand what's happening and they get a knock on the door and who's there, some Gentiles, the workers of Cornelius. Peter understands what the vision means. Unclean animals equals the Gentiles. If unclean are Gentiles, who are the clean animals? It must be God's church.

If you go back to the story of Noah, Noah's preaching to the people, (priests), first group in the church, then the clean animals, the second group in the church and then the unclean animals, the Gentiles.

So, coming back to our story in John 18, this servant works for the high priest and everyone in the church at least has an opportunity to hear the gospel, don't they? What if you didn't have an ear? Could you hear? No. Because having ears you're required to hear. So I want us to understand prophetically what's happening in John 18. One of the disciples without consulting with Christ makes a decision that this second group in the church have lost their opportunity of listening to the gospel because he's chopped off his ear. And Jesus says, no! I'm going to put his ear back on so that having an ear, what can the servant do if he chooses too? He could hear. He still has an opportunity because he's part of the second group before the work goes to the Gentiles. His boss, the high priest thinks he's got an ear, but Jesus won't speak to him. So I want us to see when we start talking about the gospel how the Bible talks about having an ear and not hearing. The question you need to ask yourself is that all Adventists have got ears, why are we not hearing? What is the symbology of having a heart that doesn't understand? This kind of a heart is a hard heart, a damaged heart, the old heart, a heart of stone. And God wants to give us a new heart. What will the new heart be like? A heart that receives the Law and a heart that understands. So when Jesus talks about ears and not hearing He's talking about people who are not in a covenant relationship with God. They have the form of Godliness but they deny the power. We call them and the bible calls them Laodicean. It's a condition of being lost.

Matthew 13:10. And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

The disciples then come to Jesus and say, why do you speak in parables because no one understands what you're saying. They hear the words, but they don't understand. So that should teach us that the only people that can properly understand parables are those people who have accepted the Holy Spirit in their lives. In John 10 it's explained this way. My sheep hear my voice. The Christian, they can hear God's voice, can't they? They can, in the Word. They can see his providence working in their lives. We can have a sense when God has entered into our experience and He's doing something for us

Matthew 13:11. He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

So, he tells them why parables are given to explain the mysteries of God and the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. And this mystery is only going to be taught to those who are willing to listen, not those who are refusing to listen. I want us to remember that this is all happening in the church. This is not the world. Let's pray...

THOUGHTS FROM THE MOUNT OF BLESSING

CHAPTER 2 – THE BEATITUDES

“He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:2, 3.

As something strange and new, these words fall upon the ears of the wondering multitude. Such teaching is contrary to all they have ever heard from priest or rabbi. They see in it nothing to flatter their pride or to feed their ambitious hopes. But there is about this new Teacher a power that holds them spellbound. The sweetness of divine love flows from His very presence as the fragrance from a flower. His words fall like “rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.” Psalm 72:6. All feel instinctively that here is One who reads the secrets of the soul, yet who comes near to them with tender compassion. Their hearts open to Him, and as they listen, the Holy Spirit unfolds to them something of the meaning of that lesson which humanity in all ages so needs to learn. MB 6.1

In the days of Christ the religious leaders of the people felt that they were rich in spiritual treasure. The prayer of the Pharisee, “God I thank Thee, that I am not as the rest of men” (Luke 18:11, R.V.), expressed the feeling of his class and, to a great degree, of the whole nation. But in the throng that surrounded Jesus there were some who had a sense of their spiritual poverty. When in the miraculous draft of fishes the divine power of Christ was revealed, Peter fell at the Saviour’s feet, exclaiming, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5:8); so in the multitude gathered upon the mount there were souls who, in the presence of His purity, felt that they were “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17); and they longed for the “grace of God that bringeth salvation” (Titus 2:11). In these souls, Christ’s words of greeting awakened hope; they saw that their lives were under the benediction of God. MB 6.2

Jesus had presented the cup of blessing to those who felt that they were “rich, and increased with goods” (Revelation 3:17), and had need of nothing, and they had turned with scorn from the gracious gift. He who feels whole, who thinks that he is reasonable good, and is contented with his condition, does not seek to become a partaker of the grace and righteousness of Christ. Pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. There is no room for Jesus in the heart of such a person. Those who are rich and honorable in their own eyes do not ask in faith, and receive the blessing of God. They feel that they are full, therefore they go away empty. Those who know that they cannot possibly save themselves, or of themselves do any righteous action, are the ones who appreciate the help that Christ can bestow. They are the poor in spirit, whom He declares to be blessed. MB 7.1

