

“From Philadelphia to Laodicea”

Beginning in Revelation 2:1 through Revelation 3:22, God has given us a snapshot of seven periods of church history. Starting with the Apostolic Church Ephesus, followed by Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, then Philadelphia, and finally Laodicea. Each message starts out by saying “Unto the angel of the church at ____.” The word angel is used to represent the leader/s/leadership/or elders of the church being addressed. Jesus finds fault with and therefore admonishes every church except Philadelphia, which instead receives commendation. Philadelphia means brotherly love. However the church of Laodicea receives the sharpest rebuke of all and its spiritual condition makes God sick. There is no hope for any Laodicean *remaining* in that condition. There will be no Laodiceans in the 144,000 and for that matter, no Laodicean will eat from the tree of life, nor will they enter the gates of the New Jerusalem. We will discuss why that is so and the *necessary remedy*. This study will only be about Philadelphia and Laodicea.

Let us read from the scriptures about the church of Philadelphia, Revelation 3:7–13, **“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and *hast not denied my name*. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.**

Look at that first sentence. It is Jesus who is speaking. **“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; ...”** The period of Philadelphia history wise, was from the beginning of the awakening in 1833, when William Miller went public with the results of his research and prophetic findings, until 1844 and the day of the disappointment, October 22, 1844. The date was correct, but the event was wrong.

Jesus speaks of Himself in the third person as the one that has the key of David that He will open a door that no other man can, and then shut it, that no man can then open it.

Well we need to discover what the key of David is, so we will look at Isaiah 22:22 which reads, **“And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.”**

So, we see that the key is to the house of David. What does that mean? We turn to 2 Chronicles 8:11 for the answer, **“And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David**

unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the LORD hath come."

The house of David is the house that David built that contains the ark of the Lord, which means we are talking about the sanctuary, specifically the Most Holy Place. So, breaking it down we are talking about Jesus, who has the key of David, which is really the right of the holy one who is speaking, to open and close a door in the heavenly sanctuary.

We know in AD 31, Jesus ascended to the Holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to begin His mediatorial work as High Priest on behalf of man. Then in Daniel 8:14 we read about a time prophecy regarding the cleansing of the sanctuary which says, **"And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."** Now William Miller was well aware that since 70 AD, there has been no earthly sanctuary, so he believed this was to be the second coming of Jesus to take home the redeemed and cleanse the earth with fire. It was indeed a sweet message.

The message to the Philadelphia church goes on to say, **"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."** What did Jesus mean thou hast a little strength? This message of Jesus' coming, resonated around the world and on October 22nd 1844, there were over 50,000 Adventists ready and waiting for Jesus to come. But when He didn't come, on October 23rd, there were only 50 of the faithful who clung together to try to find where they made a mistake.

With few in number, (little strength) they studied, they prayed and came to the open door of understanding that the prophecy pertained to, the heavenly sanctuary and Christ's ministry in the Most Holy Place, which commenced the ant-typical Day of Atonement. With the aid of God's gift of the Spirit of Prophecy, the Advent movement was forming a new faith that would eventually bear the name Seventh-day Adventists.

They were a very teachable people and between 1844 and 1846, many of the foundational doctrines of the faith were established by God, including the indisputable proof of a two Divine Being Godhead, and the fact that the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ were indeed the One Spirit, (Galatians 4:4), that is shared and is in fact their omnipresence.

Then it says, **"... and hast not denied my name."** What name of Jesus had they not denied? The fact that He was the only begotten *Son of God* and not the Trinitarian co-eternal, role playing *god the son*.

Next we read, **"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."** Those who were standing in opposition to the Adventists, and the advancing light coming from God, would be those referred to as of the synagogue of Satan. One day they would have to publicly admit their mistake and that God was directing this movement. Did you notice that the message to the Church of Philadelphia carried no rebuke, but was commended and we just read that they were loved by Jesus?

It goes on to say, **"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon**

the earth.” The church of Philadelphia is indeed a special people that God truly loves. They have yielded, without resistance to God’s leading, and have formed characters having the fruit of the Spirit.

They are “ **...a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:”**

The church of Philadelphia was more about character. They were diligent in study and humbly yielded to God’s will. When they became bogged down in their studies, His prophet would be taken in vision and given the correct understanding on any particular matter. No intellectual philosophy or strong personalities struggling for domination. Unlike today, these indeed were a people God could work with.

Keep in mind that this church Philadelphia, was formed after the church historical period of Laodicea began in 1844. They had none of the negative characteristics of Laodicea, which would have been in conflict with the will and Spirit of God. Sadly, Philadelphia would eventually be morphed into the worst of the characteristics attributed to Laodicea. Now here is an important point. It is entirely possible that a Laodicean today can repent and become a Philadelphian.

We know that to be true because of the statement “**Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”** That hour is the little time of trouble, which is not very far now in the future. In fact the 144,000 will be Philadelphians that came out of Laodicea. They will have all the fruit of the Spirit, and be without spot or wrinkle, and have no guile (deceit) in their mouths. They will profess the truth of the Godhead as believed by the pioneers, in other words, they will be sealed with the Father’s name in their foreheads. (Rev. 7:3; 14:1)

Then the address to the church of Philadelphia goes on to say, “**Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.**” This is *crucial*. Something the early Philadelphians (our Pioneers) believed, if we discard it for some new light, it could cost us our crown, in other words, eternal life. What exactly is it that Philadelphia had in their possession that Laodicea doesn’t have? Jesus is stressing that they are to hold fast to something. Did He, through His prophet, say what it is that they are to hold fast, or firmly to? Yes He did in this quote from God’s prophet:

“Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study, and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But the waymarks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His word and the testimony of His Spirit. He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority.”--Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 59. (1904.) {CW 52.1}

So we are to hold fast, or firmly, to the *fundamental principles* that are based upon unquestionable authority. God taught those fundamental principles and in particular, the first two beliefs which pertained to the eternal Father God and His omnipresent Spirit, and the second, the begotten Son of the Father. They were not to lose their grip on that understanding. What else did she write?

“In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed that which the Lord has established. ... Where

shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?" -- Review and Herald, May 25, 1905. {Ev 610.3}

"The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error." 1SM 204.2 Imagine that, God through His prophet even told us that the church would say the pioneers were in error, which is what the church does say today.

And this quote: ***"Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith,--the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work, by prayerful study of the Word and by revelation. Upon these foundations we have been building for the last fifty years. Men may suppose that they have found a new way, and that they can lay a stronger foundation than that which has been laid. But this is a great deception. Other foundation can no man lay than that which has been laid."*** {RH, March 3, 1904 par. 13}

What does she say about the foundation that will be laid by those who change the SDA faith? ***"Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure."*** {1SM 204.2}

Please see my study titled **"1SM204.2"** and learn what else Ellen White prophesied about what the denomination was going to do in changing our religion.

In the conclusion of Christ's message to Philadelphia, He said, ***"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."*** It is true that many in Philadelphia had a work of overcoming to do, but what a blessing would be the reward for those that do overcome. Notice also, that in this concluding statement of Christ, He says **"my God"** four times. This certainly confirms the fact that Jesus is not one of three co-eternal gods, because the Father is His God, just as the Father is our God also. John 20:17 ***"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and [to] my God, and your God."*** The Spirit of prophecy does tell us that, although Jesus was not a co-equal, as trinitarians believe, He was made equal. ***"God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son."*** {CCh 76.5}

Now Let us read from the scriptures about the message to be written to the church of Laodicea, Revelation 3:14–22.

"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; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 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: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will

sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

Once again, it is Jesus giving the direction that the message is to be written to the leadership of the Laodicean church. **“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; ...”** Although Jesus was not created, He was begotten (birthed) from the Father, and the scripture states in a general sense, rather than a specific sense, that Jesus was the beginning of the creation of God. The scripture then continues:

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

In order to be cold spiritually, you are virtually doing nothing. But then, to be hot spiritually, you are on fire for the Lord, just like Paul the apostle. But this scripture says the church is neither. This church makes Jesus sick and He says that He will vomit it out of His mouth. That is not a very hopeful place to be. Then He gets into specifics.

“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: ...”

So the church sees itself one way, and Jesus tells it what its true condition is. It's as if the SDA church today is saying, “Look at our beautiful university buildings and our hospitals and our impressive General Conference building in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A. But, Jesus has been down that road before with His disciples in Matthew 24:1, 2

“And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple.”

The sun was hitting the building just right and it was truly an impressive sight. But what good is a beautiful building if the leadership is rejecting the true Son of God and His teachings? Jesus goes on to tell His disciples of the temporary situation of the temple in verse 2.

“And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

And so what good are the university buildings when false doctrines are taught and student enrollment are now more from the world than the church. What good is the Adventist Health System when a Roman Catholic health system is either merging or taking over many of our institutions? Why has the denomination never taken a stand on abortion? Because abortion has been a good source of revenue. The General Conference building is almost as impressive as was the temple in Christ's day, only its existence will be much shorter in time than the temple. It is the General Conference president who highly supports the Trinity doctrine, ecumenism and warming relations with Rome. And the majority of the church says AMEN!

Then Jesus tells them their true spiritual condition, **“... knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: ...”**

What makes the Laodicea of today so **wretched**? Could it have anything to do with the fact that they have replaced the One True eternal God the Father, with three co-eternal gods? Or maybe calling the fundamental principles of the pioneers which were founded on unquestionable authority, as error?

Listen to God's clear warning of the direction the remnant church was going to take: ***"The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless."*** (1SM 204.2)

So when we read how Jesus sees the SDA Church today, "... **knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: ...**" **Wretched** and **miserable** is profoundly accurate but tame for what it has done.

Rich in this world's goods but "**poor**" in eternal worth. Throwing out the Spirit of Prophecy in many of the churches, as well as her quotes in the Quarterlies, has contributed greatly to its "**blind**" condition. **Naked** is a perfect way to describe its wedding garment. But this did not have to be. Spiritual pride makes its case near hopeless.

Given the fact that the SDA Church today has fallen so far into the Omega of apostasy, is it really still God's church, and if not does Jesus, through His prophet, describe what constitutes a church today? Yes and here is what Jesus had her write by His Spirit:

"God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep** His commandments. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Where Christ is, even among the humble few, (a house church) this is Christ's church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church." {17MR 81.4}

Some will say the quote says the church is those who love God and keep His commandments. Doesn't that mean all of the SDA denomination? Everyone who embraces the fatally flawed, Fundamental Beliefs #2, 4 & 5, are breaking the first commandment. The first commandment does not say, "Thou shalt have no other God before us!" That would be the first commandment of a god described as, a unity of three co-eternal persons. However, the first commandment says, "**Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**" That 'me' is the One true eternal God the Father. That is how Jesus describes His Father while He was praying to Him in John 17:3. "**And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**" Jesus is the , truly begotten Son

of the only true God. And notice the implied condition for eternal life. First, that they know and understand that the Father is the only true God. And second, that they know the true Son-ship of Christ.

Why were more than a million Jews destroyed by the Roman army in 70 AD, while they were dutifully keeping the Sabbath of the fourth commandment? It was because they rejected the Son of God. Why will most SDA's be lost? Because they worship a trinity that does not recognize a real begotten Son of God. They say the Father and Son relationship is not real, it is only a metaphor. Rejecting the true Son-ship of Christ, while dutifully keeping the Sabbath, will cause the loss of many millions. Think about it. The trinity god of the SDA church is the same trinity god of the beast power in Rome. Jesus found no fault with the God Philadelphia worshipped. Answer tis question: What is more important, who you worship or when you worship?

Is there hope for Laodicea?

I do not see that the SDA denomination will ever have unity, as it is divided on so many issues, and it is bowing to Rome in so many areas. Its fatally flawed, fundamental beliefs have become a creed and a test of, and holding office, while causing all who give it adherence, to break the first commandment. But there is definitely hope for God's people who are in Laodicea, who are serious about their salvation. Here is God's counsel:

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

What are we counselled to do? We are to buy gold from Jesus. Salvation is not for sale. Money cannot buy God's favor. What does He mean to buy of Him gold? Isaiah 55:1, 2 **“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.”**

This tells us that first we are to come to the waters, then we are to buy without money something to satisfy our hunger and thirst, which means we are to obtain wine and milk that we can eat and drink, and since verse 2 ends stating that our soul is to delight itself in fatness, we can know for a certainty that it is not physical food we need to obtain, but spiritual food. What waters are we to come to? Jeremiah 2:13 says the **“fountain of living waters”** which of course would be Jesus. John 4:14 **“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life;”** John 7:38 **“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”** So, we are to search the scriptures and prayerfully (eat and drink) read and understand that which is good and true. We just read in Isaiah 55 verse 2, which cautions us, **“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?”** In other words, we are not to study and waste precious time on that which proves to be false doctrine, and that is not in harmony with the Scriptures.

Now let us return to the scripture of counsel to any Laodicean who is open for truth, **“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”**

It is through diligent prayer and Bible study, and an emptying of self, that we are to obtain gold tried in the fire. What is this gold? The gold represents the spiritually rich, FAITH and LOVE. ***“The gold tried in the fire is faith that works by love. Only this can bring us into harmony with God. We may be active, we may do much work; but without love, such love as dwelt in the heart of Christ, we can never be numbered with the family of heaven.”***{COL 159.1}

And what is the fire? ***“In this life we must meet fiery trials and make costly sacrifices, but the peace of Christ is the reward. There has been so little self-denial, so little suffering for Christ's sake, that the cross is almost entirely forgotten. We must be partakers with Christ of His sufferings, if we would sit down in triumph with Him on His throne. So long as we choose the easy path of self-indulgence, and are frightened at self-denial, our faith will never become firm, and we cannot know the peace of Jesus, nor the joy that comes through conscious victory.”***{CET 189.4} (Christian Experience and Teachings)

“... gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness (self-righteousness) do not appear;” The white raiment is the wedding garment, the “righteousness of Christ.” This is the counsel of Jesus and anyone in Laodicea that will follow His counsel will have gotten rid of two undesirable Laodicean characteristics, **“poor and naked.”**

The counsel goes on to say, **“... and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.** This is crucial for your understanding. When you embrace a third co-eternal god called “god the holy spirit” you have given permission to Satan to distort your discernment. But when you allow the Spirit of our eternal Father God, to anoint your eyes, then the undesirable characteristic of blindness will be replaced with Spiritual discernment. Ephesians 1:18 says, **“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, ...”**

Acts 26:18 says, **“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”**

Anyone who is holding to a godhead consisting of a unity of three co-eternal gods is in the dense fog of Trinity darkness and under the power of Satan. This is the condition of the majority of the Laodicean SDA church and its leadership, and it makes me profoundly sad to even say this.

After the loving rebuke of Jesus, He then proceeds to give the Laodicean who is waking up to his/her true spiritual Laodicean condition, the following hope, **“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”** A deep heartfelt repentance is necessary as the present truth light scatters the trinitarian darkness, and then Christ by His Spirit will come in upon invitation, and feed the hungry soul what they have been lacking.

His conclusion of His message to Laodicea is this, **“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”**

Wouldn't you love to sit with Jesus on His throne? It can't happen as a Laodicean, but if we become Philadelphians, embracing the same foundational doctrines and Fundamental Principles of our Pioneers, with all the fruit of the Spirit, without spot or wrinkle and no deceit in our mouths, we can be that holy nation, the royal priesthood, that peculiar people, by living the truth instead of just mouthing the words.

Although leadership and many evangelists whom we admire, has fallen for Satan's subtleties, even defending the false doctrines, and have therefore betrayed us, we must understand that we are saved as individuals. We must be restorers of paths to dwell in and boldly follow the Lord, even if it involves suffering loss. Listen to these closing words of Ellen White,

“The greatest want of the world is the want of men,--men who will not be bought or sold; men who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.”--Education, p. 57. (1903) {CM 54.4}

AMEN.

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