

The Feast at Laodicea

Open: 357, verse 1 & 2

Close 357, verses 3 & 4

I. Introduction

The book of Revelation describes seven churches in the first three chapters. Most of us understand that these churches represent seven consecutive stages of the Gospel Age. We live in the last stage of the church; the one designated the Laodicean Church. There are a large number of special blessings for us who live at the end of the Gospel Age. And these blessings are all founded upon the Harvest Truths we collectively designate, the Divine Plan of the Age. So, our lesson today is to do an overview of these blessing and these truths that are specially given to those living in the Laodicean period.

II. Body

A. Some Fundamentals about the seven churches and seven messengers

These seven churches were actual ecclesias at the end of the first century. But, as Brother Russell observes:

"There were seven churches in Asia Minor corresponding to those mentioned by name in this connection; but **while this revelation may have been applicable to them in some manner or degree it was evidently in but a small measure.** Those seven churches of Asia Minor, we understand were chosen of the Lord as symbols representing seven different epochs in the history of the one true church of Christ, from Pentecost day until the gathering to the Lord of the last grain of wheat in the end of this Gospel harvest." (R2827:4)

If we think about the Pastor's understanding, it does make sense. Remember what we are told in **Revelation 1:1**:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him **to show unto his servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass:** and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John;"

This is clearly prophetic language. A little later, John wrote this:

Revelation 1:19 - "Write therefore **the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter;**"

This Revelation describes the past, present and future. And it is clearly directed to the church during **the entire Gospel Age**. After all, Why would the Revelation of Jesus Christ, given by the heavenly Father himself, be directed to only seven churches in the first and second centuries?

We might also add that a study of this prophetic books does, in fact, give us many accurate details of the history of the Gospel Age. It verifies itself.

There seems to be general agreement within our brotherhood concerning the periods of the church represented by these seven churches. There may be some differences in the dating, but here is the basic breakdown.

Ephesus - 33 to 73 AD
Smyrna - 73 to 325 AD
Pergamos - 325 to 1160 AD
Thyatira - 1160 to 1378 AD
Sardis - 1178 to 1518 AD
Philadelphia - 1518 to 1874 AD
Laodicea - 1874 AD to end of Gospel Age

The next important things regarding these church periods are the messages and angels. Each of these seven churches has an assigned angel or messenger (YLT). Again, we understand that these angels are not

spirit beings, but rather they are consecrated and spirit-begotten men, chosen for the role by Jehovah and Jesus. They delivered a dispensational message to the church periods in which they lived. Again, there is general agreement among the brotherhood on the identification of these men.

Ephesus - The Apostle Paul

Smyrna - the Apostle John

Pergamos - Arius

Thyatira - Peter Waldo

Sardis - John Wycliffe

Philadelphia - Martin Luther

Laodicea - C. T. Russell

The selection of angel or messenger of a period of the Gospel age is a special role. It is distinctive from other roles that some of these brethren had.

For instance, Paul was an Apostle as well as a messenger for the first stage of the church. The two roles were distinct. As an Apostle, Paul was sent to teach and shepherd the church. His role of messenger was a bit more specific, to alert the church about false apostles and false brethren that had already sprung up in the church. It is interesting that Paul also had one more role.

Acts 14:14 - "But when **the apostles, Barnabas and Paul**, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out"

Did you know that Barnabas was an apostle? Of course, he wasn't an Apostle of the Lamb. But he was an apostle of the church at Antioch as directed by the holy spirit! Remember that the word 'apostle' means "one sent forth." We are told in **Acts 13:2-4** that the church at Antioch "fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" and thus ordained them as their apostles.

Similarly, it is true that the Apostle John had the role of an Apostle of the Lamb and was a messenger to the second church period.

As our interest today is in the Laodicean church, we want to take note of the two roles Brother Russell fulfilled. He was, as we have already suggested, the seventh messenger to the church.

But he also had another function, a more important role. And that is the role of "faithful and wise steward." As with other angels or messengers to the successive periods of the Gospel, Br. Russell had a dispensational message for the Laodicean church. And, to put it very simply, was the preaching of the Divine Plan of the Ages.

But his role as "faithful and wise steward" was more of an oversight or management one. One of the more persuasive suggestions to me has to do with the word that Luke uses to describe him.

In the Matthew account we read:

Matthew 24:45 - "Who then is the faithful and wise **servant**, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season?"

The Greek word for "servant" that Matthew uses is 'doulos,' Strong's 1401. It means just that, a slave. But Luke uses a different Greek word:

Luke 12:42 - "And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise **steward**, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?"

The Greek word in this case is 'oikonomos' (οἰκονόμος), Strong's 3623. It literally means 'house law.' Here is Strong's definition:

"Strong's 3623 - 'house distributer - manager, overseer, i.e. an employee in that capacity, a fiscal agent!!"

This definition means one servant in charge of others servants

In Vine's Expository Dictionary we find further agreement here:

"OIKONOMOS (οἰκονόμος) primarily denoted the manager of a household or estate (oikos = a house, nemo = to arrange), a steward (such were usually slaves or freedmen)."

"The Lord answered, "Who then is **the faithful and wise manager**, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?" - NIV

That is the word to describe the role of Bro. Russell in the Laodicean period. And it very well matches the scope of his service to the brotherhood in his life.

You can see another usage of this word in the parable of the 'unjust steward' in [Luke 16:1,3,8](#). And here again we see it referring to an individual who had prime responsibility for the household.

Let go back to our focus on the Laodicean church.

B. The Laodicean Church

The Laodicean Church and period is the final stage of the Gospel Age. It corresponds nicely with the presence of our Lord.

So, as we read the message to the seventh church, we naturally look for historical and doctrinal applications to this period.

C. Timing of the Laodicean Period.

- Most brethren place the beginning of the Laodicean period at the return of our Lord in 1874. And that works fine.
- My own perspective is that it begins in 1878. Why?
- Let's look at a comment to the sixth stage of the church, the Philadelphia stage, in [Revelation 3:11](#):

"I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown."

Note that at this point in the Philadelphia Stage of the church, when the angel of this church period gives his message, Jesus has not yet returned. But he says he is coming quickly in that period. This is important when we look at the Laodicean message. Because in [Revelation 3:20](#) he says he is already HERE, knocking at the door.

D. Verse by Verse

Turn with me to [Revelation 3:14](#):

"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These things saith **the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God:**"

The message starts with an interesting, three feature description of Jesus:

- the Amen
- the faithful and true witness
- the beginning of the creation of God

1. "the Amen"

"The word "amen" is a most remarkable word. It was transliterated directly from the Hebrew into the Greek of the New Testament, then into Latin and into English and many other languages, so that **it is practically a universal word**. **It has been called the best known word in human speech**. The word is directly related -- in fact, almost identical -- to the Hebrew word for "believe" (amam), or faithful. Thus, it came to mean "sure" or "truly", an expression of absolute trust and confidence." (HMM - Henry Melvill)

2 Corinthians 1:19, 20 - "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him is yea. For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea: **wherefore also through him is the Amen**, unto the glory of God through us."

For the consecrated in the Laodicean period, 1900+ years after Jesus' earthly ministry, the assurance that God's promises are still valid and real is faith-strengthening!

2. "the faithful and true witness"

This is a further verification of the character and ministry of Jesus.

It is interesting that the phrase "faithful and true" occurs four times in Revelation.

- Each time it appears it seems to be spoken to the Church of the Laodicean period.
- It would seem that only in the Laodicean period that we can fully appreciate the truth and faithfulness of the real Gospel.

In addition to this instance, we have:

Revelation 19:11 - "And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called **Faithful** and **True**; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

So, this is another title for Jesus!

Revelation 21:5 - "And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are **faithful** and **true**."

Now we have a reference to the words of him on the throne.

Revelation 22:6- "And he said unto me, These words are **faithful** and **true**: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angels to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass."

These are the promises so clearly brought to light in the Laodicean period of the church for an encouragement during the trials of this era.

3. "the beginning of the creation of God"

Here we have the first significant doctrine of the Laodicean period, a bombshell declaration of special import and blessing to the Laodicean church

- **Jesus is not God!** He is a creation of God! In fact, he is the first creation of God.
- This is one of most important repudiations of the false doctrine of the Trinity!
- The Dark Age Error which confuses the identity of Jesus is a particular part of the light shining at the end of the Gospel age.
- And consider, the doctrine of the RANSOM FOR ALL could not be fully understood if one sees Jesus as a part of the eternal God. How can God die?

There has been an attempt on the part of Trinitarian thinking to obscure the meaning here by translating "beginning" as "ruler." (or chief or originator, etc.)

- This Greek word here is Strongs 746 - αρχη arche ar-khay'
- It means simply "beginning" or "first"
- We have several examples of this Greek word in our English language:
 - Archive - storage of that which is the oldest, or first
 - Arch Enemy - the enemy first on the list
 - Patriarch - literally means "first father"
 - Arch Duke - the first or highest Duke
- If the Apostle John had intended to mean "ruler" here, there is another Greek word for "ruler" and it is Strongs 758 αρχων archon ar'-khon
- In fact, John used this word in chapter one where he meant "ruler."

Revelation 1:5 - "and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood;

So, the first verse of the message to Laodicea establishes Jesus as the created son of God and the most important person in Jehovah's Divine Plan.

The fact that this is part of the Laodicean message prophetically suggests that the identity of Jesus is made clear and unambiguous during this last stage of the church.

Revelation 3:15, 16:

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

The message here to us is the need for a deep, abiding and **passionate CONSECRATION**.

- We live in a time of great distractions
- We must keep our eyes on the prize, which will come from a daily rendering up of our ALL which we promised to do.

Jesus is a prime example of hot and cold.

Hebrews 1:9 - "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee With the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

"loved" = HOT

"hated" = COLD

God is pleased to use us in his service, as imperfect and prone to mistakes as we are.

- BUT we must constantly cultivate in our hearts the desire to serve!!
- And in harmony with that, we must be looking always for opportunities to serve the purposes of God.

The real sin of the church during the Laodicean period is lukewarmness, that laissez-faire attitude of laxness and hands-off. It reflects a lack of appreciation for the greatest offer in all eternity to be part of the divine family. And unless that bad attitude is changed, God will remove such a one from his service like spitting out a bad taste in one's mouth.

The Greek word for "spew" here is actually stronger than this translation. Here is the Weymouth translation:

"Accordingly, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, before long I will **vomit** you out of My mouth."

Getting rid of a bad taste in your mouth is one thing, but vomiting it out of your stomach is much worse. And this word is selected to invoke that kind of physical and emotional reaction.

It is evident from this that one of the trials of the Laodicean church is **complacency**. This is suggested more pointedly in the next verse:

Revelation 3:17:

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked:

What is implied by each of these phrases?

- I AM RICH - Some are over-rejoicing in what they have instead of what we are becoming
- I AM INCREASED WITH GOODS ("BECOME WEALTHY" = NAS)
Sounds like a boast over what others have or do not have.
 - o We possibly fulfill this if we scoff at "poor Babylon" which doesn't have the honor of having received this windfall!
- I HAVE NEED OF NOTHING is an attitude we display when we refuse to listen to reason; when we think no one has anything to offer us; when we think we understand everything there is to understand at this end of the age. It also, worse yet, shows that attitude which says "I've made it." While we might not say such a thing in so many words, we can say it by acting out a weekly routine of thinking we are just fine because we know the truth and attend studies.
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- WRETCHED -- Because we think we are rich, we can't see that we

are WRETCHED (Strong's 5005 -- enduring famine or craving).

- MISERABLE -- Strong's 1652 = pitiable. This is surely as God, or even mature Christians, look at us. If we have not learned to value truth above POSSESSING it, we are indeed to be pitied.
- POOR -- Poor in application, in spirituality -- NOT in what we have in the way of information!
- BLIND -- NOT blind necessarily to the Laodicean truths, but blind to our own shortcomings. What is more blind than a wealthy man who doesn't know what to do with his wealth? The answer is a Christian who doesn't know what to do with truth.
- NAKED -- This word not necessarily mean WITHOUT CLOTHES. It has been applied to being without the robe of righteousness. While this might be true in a partial or accommodated sense, it seems more generally to mean INADEQUATELY CLOTHED. Consider another text in Revelation to the Laodicean church:

Revelation 16:15 - "(Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.)"

Here those mentioned HAVE garments which they are admonished to KEEP -- to take care of, to keep from tears and soiling and wrinkling lest he walk about NOT naked, but *inadequately covered -- inappropriately covered to their shame.*

Those who do not overcome will become members of the Great Company Class -- forced to make their garments appropriate. The lesson in **Revelation 3:17** is that **IF we exult in the riches of truth WITHOUT using it to better our characters, we are relying on our minds, our understanding, to justify ourselves -- a justification which is just filthy rags.** When we APPLY truth, with Jesus' help, to our characters and trust

Him to make up the deficiencies. THEN we are keeping our robes of righteousness appropriately.

So, what is the antidote?

Revelation 3:18:

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see."

This brings us the second significant doctrine of the Laodicea period - **the churches share in the sin-offering.**

- Now this is a difficult concept for some because they think it means that there is some merit in the sacrifice of the church.
THERE IS NO LEGAL MERIT IN THE CHURCH!
- Of course, **all of the merit lies with Jesus!**
- But the participation of the body members with their Head in the future removal of sin is what sharing in the sin-offering is all about.

The church is told to "buy" three things:

"gold tried in the fire"

"white garments"

"eyesalve"

The key expression here is "gold tried in the fire."

- in order to become Kings and Priests with Jesus, we must be tried and developed.
- We must undergo the same training process as our Head.
- And that means enduring fiery trials to help develop the character of Christ.

1 Peter 4:12, 13 - "Beloved, think it not strange concerning **the fiery trial** among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: but inasmuch as **ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice**; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy."

Incidentally, fiery trials can be either corrective or proving, two very different outcomes. In the first case, these are directed by God for the purpose of chastising us correctively. We'll talk more of chastisements in a little bit. But these trials make us better.

But Peter says they "prove" us. That is quite different. The trial is not to effect change, but rather to collect evidence. Jesus was proved by his fiery trials, never corrected. This is all the more reason to rejoice in this type of fiery trials because it is a golden opportunity for us to show our love and loyalty to our heavenly Father.

Similarly in 1 Peter 1:7:

"that **the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire**, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ:"

- This is Jehovah's definition of true wealth - "gold tried in the fire"
 - the crystallization of a godly character

"white garments"

How do we buy white garments?

- Buying is a purchase transaction. There is a cost and one acquires the product.

- The "white garments" bring to mind the justification we have in Christ. "White" is a symbol of purity, cleanness. In this case we add the idea of righteousness, getting free from sin.
- The group being addressed here had, in some way, allowed their garments to become dirty, sin soiled to some degree. But there is still time to clean them in the blood of the Lamb. **We must do that daily if we are to make our calling and election sure.** If we do not, we will be forced to do it at the end of our walk and will have lost our membership in the divine family.

"eyesalve"

- Their spiritual sight had become dim.
- They were unable to see the blessings of the period
- They needed medicine to heal their spiritual sight.

What is the "eyesalve?"

Anything that enables you to see spiritually more clearly.

This category of spiritual medicine will include:

1. Experiences
2. Active Exercise of Godly Traits

Have you ever heard anyone that has gone through a bad experience say, "I'm never going to try that again!" Experience has enlarged their insight. And they have learned to make better choices.

We can learn much from reading and hearing. But experience drives it home.

Job 42:5 - "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; But now mine eye seeth thee:"

Until we adopt the divine perspective on ALL THINGS, we risk having poor spiritual eyesight.

We have a dramatic example of Jesus making an eyesalve in [John 9:6, 7](#):

"When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

There are three parts in this miracle of removing blindness.

1. Jesus' spittle
2. Clay
3. Washing in the pool of Siloam

Let's put this together.

We cannot help but associate the spittle from Jesus' mouth as **his words of truth, his teachings**. Spittle is mostly **water, another symbol for truth**.

The account says he spit to the ground, and combined his spittle with the dust of the ground to make a clay, and that is exactly what the Greek word means - clay. Paul used the same word in [Romans 9:21](#):

"Or hath not the potter a right over the **clay**, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?"

Jehovah God made man from the dust of the ground. So, this idea of clay seems to convey something about the humanity and human perspective.

R3520 - "The secretions of our Lord's mouth might well represent his grace and truth, while the earth used may well represent the poor earthly talents of us and his disciples."

But let's go to the last element - washing in the Pool of Siloam.

Jesus told the blind man to go to the Pool of Siloam to wash. The concoction that Jesus made and put on his eyes was not sufficient to remove blindness. It required one more step, the washing with water.

Remember, we are speaking of those in the church of Laodicea who had become blind. They not only needed to listen to the words of Jesus better, and get away from their limited human perspective that was blinding them, but they also need to 'wash.' They had become unclean.

Ephesians 5:26 - "for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word,"

The truth washes us, it cleans us up, at least as much as we take advantage of it. But the Apostle Paul in this verse also notes the necessity of being sanctified. This is interesting because it relates to the Pool of Siloam. Let me read an important part of **verse 7** in **John 9** again:

"Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (**which is by interpretation, Sent**)"

We are told an interpretation here. Siloam means "sent." The Greek word is Strong's 649, ἀοστέλλω, apostelloō (*ap-os-tel'-lo*). Remember from earlier, that 'apostle' means "one sent forth." Let me read the Strong's definition.

"From **G575** and **G4724**; **set apart**, that is, (by implication) to *send out* (properly on a mission) literally or figuratively: - put in, send (away, forth, out), set [at liberty]."

This is the exact meaning of sanctification! "Set Apart." So, these poor, blind Laodiceans are in need of washing and sanctification. And this required proactive movement on their part. Remember Jesus' directive?

I counsel thee to

- buy of me gold refined by fire,
- buy...white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself,
- buy... eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see."

They had to DO THINGS!

The Apostle Peter in [2 Peter 1](#), after advising the church to add diligence, faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love he writes:

[2 Peter 1:8, 9](#) - "For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.**"

These verses admonish the same lessons as we see in the Laodicean message. If we don't strive to acquire that beautiful list of character traits and get them, we will be blinded and need renewed cleansing. The reference to "old sins" means the old, limited human perspective is dominating and the robes have gotten spotted.

[Revelation 3:19](#):

"As many as I love, **I reprove and chasten**: be zealous therefore, and repent."

Our development in the character of Christ involves many things. But it definitely includes **chastisements**!

Hebrews 12:5-11 - "and ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons, **My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of him; For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.** It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. **All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness."**

The purpose of these chastisements is correction. All of us need correction from time to time. But these Laodiceans needed it abundantly. And they needed to repent.

Revelation 3:20:

"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."

Here is the third important doctrine of the Laodicean period - **The doctrine of Jesus' invisible return and second presence**

The nominal church is completely unaware of the presence of our Lord. A full treatment of this is outside of the scope of our lesson today. But

our lesson is about the special blessings of truth that accompany Jesus' second presence.

When someone is knocking at our door, we do not say, "Somebody's coming." No, we say, "Somebody's HERE!" We have heard Jesus' knocking through the manifold signs of his presence.

"hear my voice" - Jesus' presence is discerned by faith in the statements of God's Word. We all heard it declared by his people, the disciple of Jesus who are the church. We hear Jesus' voice in the voices of his followers. And when we hear it, we preach it that we might open the door for others to believe it too.

And the blessing for us is that we will:

"sup with him" - The church at the end of the Gospel age during the Laodicean period will have a great feast of spiritual food. Truth lost since the first century will be recovered, expanded and shared throughout the fellowship of the true church.

There is no where else on earth, other than being in the fellowship of the Lord's people, where such a feast can be enjoyed! And what a feast it is! We have been privileged to understand the Divine Plan of the Ages in all of its beautiful features and sublime detail.

Jesus himself testified to his intention to serve and feed us!

Luke 12:35-37 - "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, **when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him.** Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that **he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them.**"

Take note of several items here:

- The servants were watching - VIGILANCE
- They open to him at his return - RESPONSE
- They are served meat by Jesus - FEASTING

And we will one more time observe the primary conduit for Harvest Truth:

Luke 12:42-44 - "And the Lord said, Who then is **the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?** Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath."

Dear brethren, or as Bro. Ed Lorenz would say, dearly beloved of the Lord, how zealously are we appropriating to ourselves this feast that Jesus has prepared? Is Jesus seeing our love of his truth in our activities and behaviors every day? Or are we falling to one degree or another, into a complacency. What a lack of appreciation we would show to our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus if we do not, with great passion, avail ourselves of the privilege of partaking of this boundless spiritual that has been served to us.

We do not identify ourselves as BIBLE STUDENTS for no reason. It is our chief activity in our consecrations to God. And it is absolutely necessary to make our calling and election sure.

Golden Table of Showbread - God's truth as food to sustain us
Golden Lampstand - God's truth as a light giving us direction

Revelation 3:21:

"He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne."

OVERCOMING - It will be necessary to overcome in order to be given the highest reward of Kingship.

Isaiah 13:3

Daniel 7:22

Romans 12:21 - "Be not overcome of evil, but **overcome evil with good.**"

1 John 2:13 - "I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him who is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because **ye have overcome the evil one.** I have written unto you, little children, because ye know the Father."

2 Peter 2:20 - "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first."

- **We must overcome entanglements with this world!!**

1 John 5:4 - "For whatsoever is begotten of God **overcometh the world:** and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, **even our faith.**"

Revelation 3:22- "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

Simply stated: Listen!! God is speaking to you!

Conclusion

Take aways:

1. We live in the seventh stage, the Laodicean period of the Gospel Age, the final epoch of the church.
2. It is an age of unprecedented abundance of spiritual food and spiritual blessings
3. It is also an age of tremendous trials.
4. The chief trouble in the Laodicean church is complacency.
5. There are three special Laodicean doctrines of truth
 - a. Jesus is not God, but the beginning of God's creation
 - b. The church's share in the sin-offering - gold tried in the fire
 - c. The Second Presence of Jesus - I stand at the door and knock

So dear brethren, let us take heed of ourselves.

- Are we basking in the presence of Jesus and the feast he is serving us? Or are too beset by the distractions and comforts of the world?
- Are we striving to make our calling and election sure with fear and trembling? Or are we coasting along in self-centered contentment thinking we have everything we need.

Each of us needs to do this self-examination every day to insure we are staying on the course that God has set for us. If we do this, then we can say with the Apostle Paul in **Romans 8:35-39**:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written,

For thy sake we are killed all the day long;

We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, **in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us**. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**"

Other References:

Luke 17:20 - "And being asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, **The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:**"

"There are many reasons for concluding that while the messages were given to the seven churches specified and were applicable to them, they should properly have a still wider application to the whole church of Christ, the number seven representing completeness and the order representing different epochs in the history of the church. Thus the church at Ephesus would represent the condition of the church in the Apostle's days at the time of the writing of the messages, while the Laodicean church would represent the church in our day—in the end of

this Gospel age. The other churches would correspondingly represent different epochs intermediate, between the beginning and now. To think otherwise would be to attach more importance to those seven comparatively small churches of Asia Minor than they would seem to have deserved, and would have implied an ignoring of other churches more numerous and more influential than they; as, for instance, the churches at Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Colosse, Philippi, Thessalonica, etc. Furthermore, the details of the messages given to these seven churches apply to and fit historically the one church of the living God, over every member and branch of which the Lord has a care. This thought, that the seven represented completeness, we find emphasized in the other symbolical representations—in the seven golden candlesticks, the seven stars, etc.” (R3569:2, 3)

‘Ephesus covers the period during the lives of the apostles; Smyrna, the time of the Pagan persecution, reaching to about 325 A.D., when Constantine became Emperor of Rome and declared in favor of Christianity. Pergamos embraces the transition period during which the Papacy had its rise; Thyatira, the space during which the true church was in the wilderness, and the apostate church sat as a queen and lived deliciously with the kings of the earth. Sardis includes a short interval just before the Reformation; Philadelphia, the period from the Reformation until recent times; and Laodicea, the nominal church of today.” (R5992:3)

“... we are given the names of the cities to which the messages were sent. Seven cities then existing, and which remain (some in ruins) until the present. Whether the condition of these local churches in John’s time was such as would be specially and respectively blessed by these messages, we know not; but it seems evident that these cities were chosen from a peculiarity in their names which fitted God’s purpose.” (R336:1, W. I. Mann)

