

## Exploring Revelation 06:

### Blind And Naked But Feeling Fine

An Exposition Of Revelation 3:14-21

**“Unto the angel of the Laodiceans write.” Verse 14.**

The meaning of Laodicea? It is comprised of two words - “Laos” = people. “Dikaios” = righteous, right, lawful, judgment.

[Editor: Others say; “Laodicea” comes from two Greek words which means, judging the people. “Laos” means people, and “dicea” means, judging. The date of the church is 1844 to the end of time until Jesus returns. This is the last church. We’re actually living in the time of the Laodicean church now.”]

Laodicea means The righteous people, or the judged, or justified people. According to the seventh and eighth chapters of Daniel the judging of God's people transpires prior to the Second Advent, commencing in 1844 AD. This is an investigative judgment. On this ground many conclude that the period involving Laodicea is from 1844 AD until the Second Advent of Christ.

Seeing that the seven churches represent the seven periods of the Christian Church, Laodicea, being the seventh would naturally represent the final period. This means that Laodicea must be involved with what scripture describes as “the remnant” (Revelation 12:17), the saints at the end time. The term Laodicea also means a just, or righteous people. This could apply very accurately to the final product of Laodicea, a people ready for translation at the Second Advent of Christ.

The Three Titles Christ Employs: **“These things said the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” Verse 14.**

“The Amen.” This term is borrowed from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. **“That he who blessed himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth.” Isaiah 65:16.**

The expression “God of truth”, in the Hebrew is “The God of Amen”. This is a title of the Messiah, (2 Corinthians 1:20,) and represents Jesus Christ as the truth. **“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6.** This thought was frequently expressed by Jesus when he introduced his teachings by exclaiming, “Verily, verily”, or truly, truly.

**“All the promises of God in him [Jesus] are yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us...” 2 Corinthians 1:20.** In Christ “is the source of all certainty and truth.”

The Faithful and True Witness: This is a repetition of Revelation 1:5 where Jesus is described as “the faithful witness”. Likewise in Revelation 19:11. Jesus, at the Second Advent, is described as “faithful and true”. Why are the above two terms used in addressing Laodicea? The Laodicean message is the most drastic of all the seven churches. It is so strong in reproof that the reaction could be that the charge is an exaggeration. But he who delivers the message is “the Amen” and “the faithful and true witness”. Therefore, his message must be the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

**“The beginning of the creation of God”** This description of Jesus is used by some to show that Jesus was a created being, that He had a beginning. While it is true that as is concerned, he was begotten,

numerous other scriptures clearly declare that he had no beginning, that he was God the Son, that he came from eternity. The original Greek word for "beginning" is "arche". What does this word mean? It can be understood in two ways. It may be translated beginning or beginner. (The Greek word translated "beginning" is "arche". Its meaning is dependent on whether it is taken in its passive sense or active sense. The principle that should govern how one takes this word is; which meaning harmonizes with the rest of scripture. The answer is - in its active sense. This means that it should be translated "beginner" and not "beginning".) How can one know which is the correct sense? He must allow scripture to interpret scripture. Do other scriptures portray Christ as the Beginner of creation, or the Beginning of creation? Indisputably Christ was the Beginner of creation. He was involved in the creation of all things. He is the Creator.

**"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:1, 2, 3, 14.** Christ is, "The prime source of all God's creation." Revelation 3:14. NEB. He is co-creator with his Father. "The Beginner of all creation, its originating instrument." Jamieson, Fausset and Brown on Revelation 3:14.

Is there significance in the emphasis on Christ as Creator in the introduction to this final church? It is in this final age of history that man has rejected the truth of creation and accepted the alternative concept of evolution. Therefore it is most relevant.

Christ... **"Is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn [chief] of every creature** (The word "firstborn!" of Colossians 1:15 should not be interpreted to mean that Jesus Christ was originally created, because this flagrantly contradicts many other scriptures. In the Old Testament the term was used to represent the dignity and office of the first or chief of the offspring of the family - the one who inherited special titles, responsibilities and property. However, the "firstborn" was not necessarily the one who was born first. If the first to be born was a female, she was not 'the firstborn". Sometimes the first son to be born was not "the firstborn!" as such and did not receive the birthright. Example: Esau and Jacob. Genesis 25 and 26. The word "firstborn" signifies "chief" or "head". "His is the primacy over all created beings." Colossians 1:15. NEB.): **for by him [Christ] were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth ... all things were created by him and for him-and by him all things consist." Colossians 1:15-17.**

**"In these last days [God] hath spoken to us by his Son... by whom also he hath made the worlds." Hebrews 1:1, 2.**

Secondly, if Christ is Creator, then he is also divine, he is God the Son. The ability to create is the mark of deity, which means that Christ is all-knowing. **"I know thy works." Verse 15.**

**"Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. Because thou art lukewarm I will spew thee out of my mouth." Verse 15, 16.** Of all the seven churches, Laodicea's need is the most drastic, so much so that if there is no recovery from it, it will result in complete rejection by God. In what way is this lukewarm condition manifested by the Laodiceans?

**"Because you say I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Verse 17.**

The Laodicea attitude is one of spiritual self-satisfaction. He may not literally say it, but within himself he feels assured of salvation. He has the truth, he is on the way to heaven. In other words, he feels that

he has spiritually arrived. He believes he is acceptable to God - he feels or senses no need. What should be the mental attitude of a healthy believer? Saint Paul warns, "Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall."

This means that we are to be aware continually that we are in spiritual danger. This leads to watchfulness, to a realization of ones own insufficiency and inability. He will know that unless Christ is within he has no hope of reaching the standard. He will be conscious that there is a continual battle and that that battle is with self and it will not cease until death or translation. Never will he feel that he has "made it".

The problem with believers in Laodicea is that they believe that they are safe, that they have found the truth, that they are on the way to heaven and all is well. Christ declares that such an attitude denotes spiritual wretchedness, misery, poverty, blindness and nakedness.

**"And knows not that thou are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." Verse 17.**

This is a shocking revelation and what makes it so serious is that the one who is in this condition, is totally unaware of it. No wonder the condition is described by some as "hopeless". But the condition of Laodicea is not hopeless. Care needs to be taken here that an incorrect conclusion is not drawn. The Laodicean message has been frequently used as a weapon to attack the people of God and to condemn them as apostate. This scripture does not indicate apostasy but spiritual self-satisfaction. Apostasy among God's people in the end time is to be sought for in other scriptures. In the stern rebuke to Laodicea Christ holds out the cure for its spiritual disease.

**"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou may be rich; and white raiment, that thou may be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent." Revelation 3:18, 19.**

These two verses cancel out completely that Laodicea is hopeless, or apostate. It is a love message. Christ has to hurt in order to help. He rebukes and calls for repentance, i.e. to turn around, to turn back and the way of repentance is to buy of Christ three particular items which will make one acceptable for heaven. These three are:

1. "Gold tried in the fire" Pure gold, spiritual gold. What does scripture describe as being tried by fire. It is the believer's faith, **"That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."** 1 Peter 1:7. A tried or tested faith is spiritual gold. But what kind of faith? How is it recognized? It is...**"Faith that works by love."** Galatians 5:6.

"Faith active in love." NEB and Moffatt. "Faith which expresses itself in love." Phillips and Knox. "Faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love." Amplified New Testament. "The gold tried in the fire is faith that works by love." "Christ's Object Lessons", page 158.

This is the first and most serious lack among believers in the Laodicean period. A lack of faith which expresses itself in love. It is not love alone, but faith, active faith which is stimulated by love and expresses itself in love. This is not sentimental love but love as a principle. In essence it is renunciation of self, unselfishness or selflessness.

"But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. There

needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely." "Christ's Object Lessons", page 160.

Now while this is the chief lack among God's people in the last days, we believe that care should be exercised not to make a blanket application of Christ's complaint. Are there not those among God's professed people who are earnestly involved in subduing self and looking to Christ for constant aid? The Laodicean must beware of "self" saying to him that all is well, relax, cease struggling. As one discerning Christian warns: "Those whom heaven recognizes as holy ones are the last to parade their own goodness..." "Men who have lived nearest to God ... have confessed the sinfulness of their own nature... At every advance step in Christian experience our repentance will deepen." "Christ's Object Lessons", page 160.

As St. Paul counseled: **"Work out your own salvation with FEAR AND TREMBLING. For it is God who works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." Philippians 2:12, 13.**

The complaint with Laodicea is that there is too little fear and trembling in regard to one's personal spiritual attitude. There are some things that believers must be fearful of, "Fear lest your will shall not be held in subjection to Christ's will, lest your hereditary and cultivated traits of character shall control your life... Fear lest self shall interpose between your soul and the great Master Worker, Fear lest self-will shall mar the high purpose which God, through you, desires to accomplish. Fear to trust to your own strength, fear to withdraw your hand from the hand of Christ and attempt to walk life's pathway without His abiding presence." "Christ's Object Lessons", page 161.

With such an attitude, spiritual self-satisfaction and pride will never gain the ascendancy, instead one will become spiritually "rich".

The second need of the Laodiceans is to buy of Christ: **"White raiment, that thou may be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Verse 18.**

Here Christ is declaring that in heaven's sight many Laodiceans are spiritually naked. This should shock us out of our spiritual complacency! What is it that clothes the Christian - that covers completely his spiritual nakedness? It is the righteousness of Christ which is received by faith - by believing that Christ died as my substitute and that the perfect obedience he worked out while on earth is placed to my credit or imputed to me. But more than that. It also involves the reception of Christ's grace which enables me to be made righteous in character. It is a righteousness that comes solely from Christ and which alone can fit the believer for the kingdom. "White raiment: Christ's righteousness imputed to the believer in justification and imparted in sanctification." Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, on Revelation 3:18.

As the previous author so beautifully penned, "By his perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with his heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness." "Christ's Object Lessons", page 312.

Does Christ's complaint suggest that many Laodiceans are not trusting in or applying the righteousness of Christ? Does it mean that they have a head knowledge of salvation but not a heart experience? If "self" is enthroned in the Laodicean's heart then the above is a natural consequence.

The third need of the Laodicean is to: **“Anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”**

Christ is saying that those who are lukewarm in Laodicea are spiritually blind. They cannot discern between good and evil nor can they distinguish clearly between right and wrong. This is extremely serious in the light of the tremendous deceptions that are to afflict the people of God in the end time. Because of the coming conflict involving the saints, spiritual eye-salve will be an essential requirement. More than human discernment will be needed to detect sin and deception and to know what to do in the crisis.

It is significant to notice that unlike five of the previous church periods, there is no hint of any opponents from without, nor of any heresies from within Laodicea. We suggest that Satan has no need to attack the church when it is in a lukewarm condition. He has no fears for such a church.

**“As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent.” Verse 19.** “Rebuke and chasten.” The word chasten means to punish or discipline with the object of reforming. “To instruct by chastisement”. Here is a prediction as to how Christ is to bring His church to repentance. He is to bring chastisement upon the church. The church is to receive punishment. The Lord must be cruel to be kind. **“When the judgments of God are in the earth, then will the people learn righteousness.” Isaiah 26:9.**

Seeing that Laodicea is the final segment of the church of God, it must therefore be the church that exists at the time of Christ's return. This means that seeing Laodicea is in the woeful condition that Christ describes, something exceptional will need to be done for Laodicea in order for God's people to be ready for translation. Is there evidence of some special experience befalling Laodicea that will prepare it for translation? We believe there is.

Other scriptures show that before the Second Advent there is to be a sorting out, a sifting, a dividing of the wheat and the tares within the church of God. This is often termed “the shaking”. In the parable of “The Wheat and the Tares”, (Matthew 13:24-30) Jesus declared,

**“Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather you together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” Matthew 13:30.**

Later Jesus explained that, **“The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall gather out of his kingdom [the church] all things that offend and them which do iniquity.” Verses 39-41.**

This is alluding to a process in the period of the world's end, when Christ purifies his church. This unquestionably must be the Laodicean church. (Some claim the church awaiting translation is the church of Philadelphia; but that church had no defect in Christ's sight. (Revelation 3:7-13) The church in the period of the Second Advent how ever, is a church that must have separated from it, any “that offend and which do iniquity.” Matthew 13:41.) This purifying process is described as a “gathering out” and a “gathering in”. (Matthew 13:30, 41.) This process is “the shaking” which divides, or polarizes the entire church of God.

How will this process be initiated? We suggest that one of the instruments employed will be the proclamation within the Laodicean church of the Laodicean message. Other scriptures predict that a startling message is to be presented to believers in Laodicea to prepare them for the Advent. The

prophet Joel whose predictions now have an end time application to spiritual Israel predicted this special call within the church.

**“Blow you the trumpet in Zion [the church], sanctify a fast [abstain from the normal way of life], call a solemn assembly, gather the people. Let the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar [in repentance with their flock] and let them say, Spare thy people O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen [unsaved] should rule over them [oppress them] wherefore they [the unsaved] should say among the people, Where is their [the saints] God?” Joel 2:15-17.**

The apostle James was also inspired to warn God's professed people. This applies specifically to those in the Laodicean condition. **“Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners and purify your hearts, you double minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning [of repentance], and your joy to heaviness [godly sorrow]. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up.” James 4:7-10.**

This is the experience that those in the Laodicean condition will need to pass through in order to be overcomers. Again the prophet Zephaniah reveals the experience that God's end time people must have:

**“Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired [spiritual Israel]; Before the decree bring forth [probably the death decree] before the day pass as the chaff [day of salvation], before the fierce anger of the Lord [plagues] come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you [Close of Probation and the Day of the Lord]. Seek you the Lord, all you meek of the earth. Seek righteousness, seek meekness; it maybe you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.” Zephaniah 2:1-3.**

“O nation not desired.” In the Hebrew “not desired” means “not longed for” or “not ashamed”. This means: (1) this people is unworthy of God's protection, which is true of Laodicea in its present state, and (2) this people is unashamed in regard to its spiritual condition. It has no sense of its guilt. How true this is of Laodicea. (See SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 4 on Zephaniah 2:1-3. ) However, this scripture forecasts a special call to God's end time people to seek righteousness (white raiment) and meekness (the opposite of spiritual pride) in order to be hid or protected during the outpouring of God's wrath in the seven last plagues.

The trumpet is to be sounded in Zion. This tells of an alarm, of a crisis which involves the church itself. We suggest that this will eventuate with the sounding by irresistible instruments within the Laodicean church, of the Laodicean message. It will involve a powerful call to repentance and reformation and as a result there will be polarization and those rejecting the call will remove themselves from Laodicea. (“Testimonies”, Volume 1, page 179-184.)

We suggest that Christ's message to Laodicea, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent” could involve God's effort as outlined above to bring Laodicea to repentance. There is indisputable evidence that this effort will be successful. Many of God's people, comprising Laodicea, will finally be cured of the curse of half warmness. Some teach that true believers must leave Laodicea and join the church of Philadelphia. This fictitious claim is fully dealt with elsewhere.

The Greek word “repent” in verse 19 is in the singular, denoting that the call of Christ to Laodicea is an individual call. Repentance is a personal experience, and each individual believer must seek it if he is to be an overcomer.

**“Behold I stand at the door and knock.”** What door is this? Is it the door of the Laodicean church as a corporate body? No! It is the door of each individual believer's heart.

**“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.” Verse 20.**

The church of Christ consists of individual believers and the only way Christ may dwell within his church is by dwelling within each individual heart. Thus Christ calls to everyone, every individual, to open the door of his heart, (his mind) and receive Christ. An important truth is revealed in this verse. Christ stands at the door of man's heart and knocks. He does not attempt to open the door. He does not employ compulsion. He does not threaten. He does not endeavor to force the will. He knocks and waits. He will only enter into a man's life at the man's personal invitation. Our Creator holds a sacred respect for the freedom of man's will. Never will he breach this principle.

Here is a revelation of the nobility of the character of our God. “I will come into him.” The Greek may read “I will enter into him”. This is the mystic union of Jesus and the believer. By the Holy Spirit, Christ enters into the believer and reigns upon the spiritual throne of his heart. This is **“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27.)**

“And sup with him.” This is alluding to the spiritual supper of the Lamb. It denotes the unique fellowship that the believer enjoys with Christ but which is incomprehensible to the world. The ministry of Christ is likened in scripture to the experience of human love, courtship and marriage. The Holy Spirit woos the sinner. If the sinner responds, there takes place a spiritual union or marriage. Christ becomes the spiritual husband and the believer becomes the bride. The bride takes her husband's name. She is now a Christian.

The husband becomes responsible for His bride. He provides her with everything she needs. He supplies her garments - the robe of His own righteousness; her food, which is the Word of God and which is likened to spiritual milk, bread and meat. He protects her by providing a spiritual bodyguard - guardian angels, and he assures her that he will never leave her nor forsake her, providing she is faithful. But she always retains the freedom of her will. She is not under compulsion to continue the spiritual marriage relationship. It is based on love and freedom of choice.

**“To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne.” Verse 21.**

This is the grandest of the seven promises to the overcomer. It is the crowning promise. It shows that the Laodicean condition can and will be overcome by at least some or even many in this period. God will have a people out of earth's last generation who will be fit for translation at the Second Advent. Their reward will be greater than those of any other period.

Compare the seven rewards of each period:

Ephesus	Eat of Tree of Life.
Smyrna	Not be hurt of the Second Death.
Pergamos	Eat hidden manna, white stone, new name.
Thyatira	Power over the nations, rule with rod of iron.
Sardis	White raiment, name retained in Book of Life.
Philadelphia	A temple pillar, name of God, New Jerusalem, Christ's new name.
Laodicea	Sit with Christ on his throne sharing his rule.

The overcomers from Laodicea share the eternal throne of Christ in the kingdom. What a privilege! What a reward! What an honor! Why should those of Laodicea be granted a higher honor than those of any other church period?

1. Because this age, is an age of the greatest affluence, tolerance, compromise and enlightenment. While it is probably the age when it has never been easier to become a Christian, on the other hand, never has it been so difficult to retain ones faith and zeal.
2. Those of the last generation pass through the final crisis of the great controversy. They are involved in the conflict with the beast and his image and his mark.
3. A special preparation is required of them in order to endure the time of trouble and finally to stand ready for translation. The final remnant of Laodicea are those who are described in Revelation 7:13-17. They "come out of great tribulation". They are "before the throne" or "in the presence" of the throne and "serve him day and night in his temple". This same group are also on Mount Zion "with the Lamb and are an hundred and forty-four thousand". (Revelation 14:1.) (See Appendix 2.) This indicates that the final group of overcomers of Laodicea comprise the 144,000. This may be why their reward is so much greater than those of any other church period.

**"Even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." Verse 21.**

Here Jesus Christ reminds his followers that because he overcame so likewise may the believer. Jesus, when on earth, experienced life in exactly the same way as we do. In his humanity he possessed the same nature as we have, he had access to divine power exactly the same way as we may. He had no advantages over us. He showed us how to overcome. **"In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33.**

#### APPENDIX I.

In six of the messages to the seven churches, we see the expression, "I will come." When each of these expressions is examined, it appears that the reference is to Christ coming in judgment. Notice the six times the term is used:

**Ephesus:** "Repent...or else I will come unto thee quickly and remove thy candle stick out of his place except thou repent." 2:5.

**Smyrna:** No mention of Christ coming to this church in judgment. Maybe this is because Christ finds no complaint with this church.

**Pergamos:** "Repent or else I will come to you quickly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth." 2:16.

**Thyatira:** "But that which you have already hold fast till come." 2:25.

**Sardis:** "Hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shall not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shall not know what hour I will come upon thee." 3:3.

**Philadelphia:** "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." 3:11.

**Laodicea:** "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him." 3:20. The expression as used to Laodicea, refers to Christ seeking entrance to the heart.