



BECAUSE YOU SAY “I AM RICH”

“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,

‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. **Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’**”

REVELATION 3: 14-17

The message to the church of Laodicea is given by the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God. What credentials these are! Laodicea’s message is coming from none other than the loving Creator Himself. But poor Laodicea, it seems to be unaware of the great privilege it has been given, that of being called as a co-worker with the infinite God of the universe. This last church is smack-dab in the midst of the most momentous days of all time, and it is clueless as to its God-given role in the closing of the Great Controversy.

Furthermore, instead of giving heed to the great light it was gifted regarding to the specific issues involved in the great controversy between Michael and Lucifer, Laodicea not only ignored that light but much worse: lo and behold, it seems to have joined forces with the enemy of God and mankind in attacking the Creator!

The issue involved in the Great Controversy is well known to the church of Laodicea: it was always God’s law. As one of the two covering cherubim, Lucifer was a guardian of the law. But at some point he turned against the eternal law of agape love, which is the law of liberty, and became its fiercest enemy. As “God is love” (1John 4: 8, 16), agape love is His very essence. Attacking the law, therefore, is the same as attacking God Himself, because the law is a transcript of His character.

Notice the light this church has been given:

God’s law is the transcript of His character. It embodies the principles of His kingdom. He who refuses to accept these principles is placing himself outside the channel where God’s blessings flow. COL 305.3

From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan’s purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his rebellion against the Creator, and though he was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon the earth. To deceive men, and thus lead them to transgress God’s law, is the



object which he has steadfastly pursued. Whether this be accomplished by casting aside the law altogether, or by rejecting one of its precepts, the result will be ultimately the same. He that offends “in one point,” manifests contempt for the whole law; his influence and example are on the side of transgression; he becomes “guilty of all,” James 2:10. DD 28.1

Satan claimed to be able to present laws which were better than God’s statutes and judgments, and he was expelled from heaven. He has made a similar attempt upon earth. Ever since his fall he has put forth efforts to deceive the world, to lead men to ruin, that he might be revenged upon God because he was overcome and thrust down from heaven. His efforts to put himself and his devices where God should be, are most persevering and persistent. He has taken the world captive in his snare, and many even of the people of God are ignorant of his devices, and they give him all the opportunity he asks to work the ruin of souls. They do not manifest a burning zeal to lift up Jesus, and proclaim to the perishing multitudes, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!” RH, June 17, 1890 par. 12

The nonviolent Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, is the representation of God’s nonviolent law on earth because as the express image of God, He fulfilled the law (Matthew 5: 17), thus being the visible, living reality of the law of agape love.

Satan claimed to present laws which were better than God’s statutes and judgments! In Psalm 94: 20 we learn that his throne, the throne of iniquity, devises evil by law. His is a violent law which came to be represented on earth by the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden. It was at the Tree that death came into being for God had said, “but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2: 17). Therefore, the Tree represents “the law of sin and death” (Romans 8: 2).

Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You?

PSALM 94: 20

It is not in the scope of this article to explain all that is involved in Satan’s rebellion and the laws that he presented—our books on this subject are freely available here on this website. We are only trying to point out the fact that Laodicea has all the light it needed to fulfill its God-given purpose, and yet it got sucked back into the deceptions of “that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan” (Revelation 12: 9).

The problem of Laodicea and the antidote to its malaise is simple, and is taken from one of the quotes above:

“They do not manifest a burning zeal to lift up Jesus, and proclaim to the perishing multitudes, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!”



If only Laodicea manifested a burning zeal to lift up Jesus Christ it would be healed. And yet, despite failing miserably at lifting up the only One who could help it, Laodicea considers itself rich! Listen to its proud, boastful words again:

I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'

What is Laodicea's wealth? Is it economic wealth, earthly goods, material possessions? Is there something wrong with having material possessions in this world? Hasn't God in the past blessed many of His servants with material wealth? We can think of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Joseph and his brothers; Lot, Job, Boaz, Abigail and Nabal, King David, Solomon, and the list goes on...they were all wealthy. Material possessions can be a blessing from God, there is nothing wrong with that. So what exactly is the problem with Laodicea's thinking that it is rich?

Notice how the following passages from Scripture might help us understand what it means to be rich:

Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.

PROVERBS 23: 4

If we use the principle of Hebrew parallelism here, we can see that "rich" refers to "wisdom," but even more specifically, it refers to our "own wisdom." Then this verse could be read like this: "Labour not to be rich in your own wisdom: cease from thine own wisdom."

Looking at Scripture with a spiritual rather than a literal eye, notice again how being rich does not refer to material goods but to one's own spiritual wisdom:

The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.

PROVERBS 28: 11

In other words, someone who considers himself/herself wise in their own eyes are easily spotted by those that don't rely in their "own wisdom" but who rely in the wisdom of God, for God gives them discernment: "the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out." He examines him and figures him out.

In Mary's song of praise we read:

He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he has sent empty away.

LUKE 1: 53

God does not have a prejudice against rich and wealthy people or a favoritism for those who are experiencing hunger pangs in their poverty. God cares for both groups alike. If we look at these



words in a literal way we will miss the greater meaning that God is trying to convey. Thus these words must be understood in a spiritual way. Who are the hungry then?

The hungry are those who receive what God is trying to teach all of us. God sends the manna on the field indiscriminately, but we must go and pick it. Those who are hungry openly receive what God is yearning to impart because they have a hunger for truth, a hunger and thirst to understand God and His kingdom. The hungry want to understand every mystery hidden in the Bible. The hungry is the one who asks God for answers to those seemingly unanswerable questions. The hungry are those that are not satisfied with a surface reading and understanding of God's word. They are those that consider themselves poor in their own wisdom and as a result turn to God only for enlightenment.

And why are the rich sent empty away? Is it because God wishes that it be so? Or because God has a grudge against them? No! The rich don't feel the need to gather the given manna, which is Jesus Christ, "the bread of life."

Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' "

Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

JOHN 6: 28-35

The problem is with the rich, not with God. God's love is infinite, impartial and unconditional. The rich are not hungry because they have enough of their own wisdom and understanding. They are content to rely on their own intuition and wisdom, which, by default as fallen beings, is the wisdom of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Thus they say "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."

The prophet Hosea describes Laodicea perfectly when he says:



Ephraim [LAODICEA] feeds on the wind, And pursues the east wind; He daily increases lies and desolation. Also they make a covenant with the Assyrians, And oil is carried to Egypt.

HOSEA 12: 1

Let's unpack these words a little bit. What does the word "wind" by itself mean?

rûah: A feminine noun meaning spirit, wind, breath. The word is used to refer to the Spirit of God or the Lord.

THE WORD STUDY

How can we understand what is happening here? Ephraim [LAODICEA] is feeding on the "wind," rûah, which means spirit, wind, breath. Taken literally this doesn't mean much. Wind is empty, so it could mean it's just eating empty air, which cannot feed a human being. But understood spiritually it reveals much.

If we understand "wind" to mean "spirit" then we are on to something. Ephraim is feeding on the spirit, but which spirit? How can we know? We can know by the words that follow in the construction of the phrase: "Ephraim [LAODICEA] feeds on the wind, and pursues the east wind." What is the meaning of the "the east wind?" Notice what the Word Study writes:

qāḏīym: A masculine noun referring to the east, an east wind. It indicates literally a wind from the east that brings evil conditions (Gen 41:6, Gen 41:23; Exo 10:13).

THE WORD STUDY

Now we know what kind of wind Ephraim [LAODICEA] is feeding on because the second part of the phrase defines the first.

If at the same time that Ephraim [LAODICEA] is feeding on the spirit, it is also pursuing the "east wind," which is a wind that brings evil conditions, what conclusion can we then come to? Would it be fair to say that Laodicea *thinks* it is feeding on God's Spirit, but the spirit it feeds on is the spirit of demons? Those spirits who bring about evil conditions?

Has modern day Ephraim gone back to the gods? Is Laodicea, through its many rites of spiritual formation, its many books filled with spiritualism, books based on everything but Jesus Christ, books based on His name only but without teaching His teachings, pursuing the "east wind?" Can we really make such a jump?

Take a look at what the SDA Commentary (another source of light given to the Laodicean church) states:

East wind. See on Jer. 18:17. To follow after the east wind is to pursue vain hopes and plans that are impracticable. But to an even greater extent, it is the destructive power of the



east wind that is alluded to, making it figuratively represent even more than something that is vain and empty. It represents that which is harmful and destructive. The east wind in Palestine, coming over large tracts of sandy waste, is parching, scorching, destructive to vegetation, oppressive to man, violent on the sea (see Ps. 48:7) and on land (see Job 27:21; Jer. 18:17). Therefore the figure of following after the east wind signifies destruction. The first part of Hosea 12:1 in the LXX reads, “But Ephraim is an evil spirit, he has chased the east wind all the day.”

Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4 (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1977), 924.

Did you notice what the LXX, the Septuagint, says? “But Ephraim is an evil spirit, he has chased the east wind all the day.” This means that instead of feeding on the great light God has given it, Laodicea has enriched itself with doctrines of demons instead:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

1TIMOTHY 4: 1.

The Laodicean church is enriched with devilish popular teachings, with devilish eastern teachings, devilish medieval teachings, even devilish Egyptian teachings. Rich with a wealth of information of worldly wisdom that resonates quite well with one’s “own wisdom”—the devilish wisdom from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Some, reading this may ask, can we really make such an enormous indictment? Can we really take these verses written to Ephraim over two thousand years ago and apply them to our current Laodicean church? Aren’t we stretching things a bit too far?

No, not based on Hosea’s next words, which apply perfectly to Laodicea:

And Ephraim said, ‘Surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself; *in* all my labors they shall find in me no iniquity that *is* sin.’

HOSEA 12: 8

Can you see how Laodicea is just like Ephraim? Both say: “I am rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing.” “I am rich; I have found wealth for myself. In all my labors they cannot find in me iniquity or sin.” The irony is that Laodicea is laden with iniquity and sin!

By now one would think that we really should just close this study right here; but to do so would be to miss the core of the problem, which is embedded in the word “iniquity.”

The Bible is very clear that iniquity was found in Lucifer at the very beginning of his rebellion against God. Thus, iniquity is the foundational problem with Lucifer’s rebellion. Every Laodicean ought to study that word front, backwards, sideways, in each and every possible way:



You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

EZEKIEL 28: 15

Can you see from Ezekiel 28: 15, that this was the first, the foremost, the most foundational issue in the great controversy? Everything was fine until iniquity was found in Lucifer. We cannot over emphasize how important it is to know what iniquity is, because right now we are choosing between iniquity and its opposite—righteousness. Our choice will determine which side of the great controversy we will find ourselves on. Therefore we invite the reader to look around our website because we have done much research on this word and we do have some answers.

But we will make one connection. If the reader recalls, we started this series of articles by explaining the Greek meaning of the word Laodicea itself:

Laodikeus comes from the word *Laodikeia* (*Laodicia*, a place in Asia Minor: – Laodicea), which in turn comes from a compound word made up of G2992 and G1349. The two words that make up this compound word are *laos* (G2992) and *dike* (G1349).

Laos means “a body of people; a concourse of people, a multitude, Mat 27:25; Luk 8:47; the common people, Mat 26:5; a people, nation, Mat 2:4; Luk 2:32; Tit 2:14; ὁ λαός, the people of Israel, Luk 2:10” (Strongs Concordance).

And *dike* means: “right, justice; in NT judicial punishment, vengeance, 2Th 1:9; Jud 1:7; sentence of punishment, judgment, Act 25:15; personified, the goddess of justice or vengeance, Nemesis, Paena, Act 28:4” (Mounce Concordance).

The combination of these two words mean “justice of the people.” *Laodicea*, the lukewarm church, means “justice of the people.”

1. Laodicea: Listen

And we looked at the meaning of the goddess Nemesis, who is the goddesses of *justice*:

Nemesis was a goddess and personified moral agent, the spirit of “retribution.” She represented the punishments suffered by those who committed injustice, those who violated the established laws, or those guilty of *hybris* against the gods. But *Nemesis* could also represent more destructive anger and vengeance. She was typically regarded as the daughter of *Nyx*, the primordial personification of night, yet there were other traditions about her parentage too.

In literature and art, *Nemesis* was represented with the symbolic trappings of justice, including the all-measuring rod and scales. Her mythology was limited, but she was worshiped throughout the ancient Greek world as a goddess associated with justice and fate, but her earliest cults were Ionic.



Taken from [Mythopedia](#).

Nemesis is only one of many other goddesses or gods that represented punitive justice. We encourage the reader to do a Google search on “gods and goddesses of justice in mythology.”

The type of justice we just read in Nemesis’ description is the core of what iniquity is. This justice is a moral law embedded into our very psyches. It is “the law of sin and death” represented by the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; it is the “flesh” and “the carnal nature.” This is how the throne of iniquity devises evil by law. This law divides and destroys those who live by it.

With all this in mind, look then at what Hosea says about Ephraim in verses six and seven:

Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment and wait on thy God continually.

He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.

HOSEA 12: 6-7

God is calling Ephraim [LAODICEA] to return to Him. But how? By keeping His law of agape love: “Keep mercy and judgment (justice).” Which justice is God calling us to keep? Satan’s punitive justice or God’s merciful justice? And then God describes the root of Ephraim’s malaise: “He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand; he loveth to oppress.”

Lucifer too was a merchant and his merchandise was iniquity, which are the balances of good and evil:

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned:

Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick

EZEKIEL 28: 15-18

The multitude of Lucifer’s merchandise was the multitude of his iniquities which has violence embedded in it. This was the issue at the very beginning of the great controversy. This is how Lucifer tried “to overthrow the law of God” and how he claimed “to present laws that were better than God’s statutes and judgments.” It is this merchandise that Ephraim and Laodicea are peddling, a merchandise that oppresses the entire human race. This is the merchandise that makes Laodicea consider itself rich and increased with goods, and having need of nothing!



So what happens to Ephraim for feeding “on the wind” and pursuing “the east wind?” The prophet says that “he daily increases lies and desolation.” This means that he daily settles more and more into the Satanic deceptions of worldly wisdom—based on Lucifer’s justice of the balances of good and evil.

Because Ephraim eats the lies of devils, the same lies bring desolation to his home, his children, his workplace, his church, his city, his world. Why desolation? Because God is not there. God is slowly being pushed out of his mind, heart, and actions while at the same time the Devil is taking him over.

Ephraim arrives at the point of making an alliance, a covenant, with the Assyrians and the Egyptians:

Also they make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried to Egypt.

HOSEA 12: 1

Oil represents Ephraim’s wealth and power:

This word can be used to signify strength, such as in Isa 10:27 where growing fat meant growing strong. It also frequently relates to fruitfulness and fertile places where good things grew (Isa 5:1; Isa 28:1). The overall picture one gets from this word is that of richness, strength, and fertility

THE WORD STUDY

Laodicea’s wealth, strength, and fertility is surrendered to Egypt, the very place God worked so hard to bring him out of by the hand of Jesus!

The last straw in Laodicea’s statement about itself are these last words: “I have need of nothing!” These words are directed at God and are a slap on His face. This church is clueless as to how much it needs the true God, for the Creator alone is his only protector from the malice and wrath of the god it has chosen to serve. Hear the anguish in God’s voice as He expresses this reality:

Yet I *am* the Lord your God
Ever since the land of Egypt,
And you shall know no God but Me;
For *there is* no savior besides Me.

Hosea 13: 4

O Israel, you are destroyed,
But your help *is* from Me.
I will be your King;



Where *is any other*,
That he may save you in all your cities?

Hosea 13: 9-19

O Israel, return to the Lord your God,
For you have stumbled because of your iniquity;
Take words with you,
And return to the Lord.
Say to Him,
“Take away all iniquity;
Receive *us* graciously,
For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips.”

Hosea 14: 1-2

I will heal their backsliding,
I will love them freely,
For My anger has turned away from him.

Hosea 14: 4

Return O Laodicea, to your God!