

# 01 Balanced or Lukewarm?

## 1. The Message to Laodicea

- a. In the book of Revelation Jesus gives a message to seven different churches. Even though they were literal churches in John's day, they were chosen by Jesus because they represent the whole of church history, from John's day until the Second Coming. The last church is Laodicea.
  - i. **Revelation 3:14-21:** "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'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.'"
- b. Jesus directs strong reproof to this church for being lukewarm. What does it mean to be lukewarm? It means to have one foot in the world and one foot in the church. They have too much church to be "happy" in the world, and too much of the world to be happy in the church. They do not understand their spiritual need. They consider themselves spiritually rich, that they are alright and not in need of any changes. They have a form of godliness but deny its power (**2 Timothy 3:5**). They wear piety as a mask. They attend church as a tradition, but they have no enthusiasm, no power or motivation to make changes in their lives or do God's work. They are busy with worldly cares – they climb the ladder of success, they strive for their own ambitions or goals. They hunt the latest fashion, the coolest gadget, the latest TV-show. They have not surrendered their will completely to Jesus. They have not let Jesus in to their heart. They have not granted Him access to every part of their lives. They want Jesus to be with them when it is convenient, but leave Him out of their minds when they feel that it is not convenient. They don't want Jesus to tell them what to do. They don't want Jesus to meddle in their habits of eating, dressing, spending, dating etc. They feel no need for reformation in their own lives. They believe that as long as they go to church, claim to be Christians and give something in the offering, they are measuring up. They have no need for reproof.
- c. Jesus represents Himself to Laodicea as the Faithful and True Witness. He says that He knows their works. We may try to hide them for others. We can act pious. But what happens when no one is looking or listening in? All this, the Faithful and True Witness takes notes of. He is acquainted with our deeds and most intimate thoughts. He knows our motives, our feelings and He hears our words and intonation. Jesus loves Laodicea, and His heart yearns for them with an intense longing to come in to and dine with us. He pounds at the door, but does not force Himself in. We need to let Him in. Will you let Him in? What do you have to lose in doing so? Are you afraid it might be too risky? Are you worried that He might want to do some changes that you are not comfortable with? But, let not these thoughts hinder you. Open your door widely and let Him in, you will never regret it.

- d. How does Jesus speak to Laodicea? The words of a witness are called a testimony. The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy which the last church would be characterized by. (**Revelation 12:17, 19:10**).
- e. If we have been convinced that Ellen White is the prophet that Jesus has sent to His people in the last days, this must then mean that her writings are the message of Jesus to Laodicea. Ellen White wrote nine volumes of something called *Testimonies to the Church*. The message in these books are for the most part direct and practical exhortations concerning everything from salvation, theology, health, entertainment, and finances, to evangelism, family life, education and church life. This is what Laodicea needs to hear.
- i. **Manuscript Releases 1, p. 349**: "Testimonies had been given correcting and counseling the church and many had made a practical application of the message to the Laodicean Church, and were confessing their sins and repenting in contrition of soul. They were hearing the voice of Jesus, the heavenly Merchantman, "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" (Revelation 3:20)."
  - ii. **Testimonies for the Church 5, p. 682**: "God has given sufficient evidence, so that all who desire to do so may satisfy themselves as to the character of the Testimonies; and, having acknowledged them to be from God, it is their duty to accept reproof, even though they do not themselves see the sinfulness of their course. If they fully realized their condition, what would be the need of reproof?"
  - iii. **Proverbs 29:18**: "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law."
  - iv. **2 Chronicles 20:20**: "Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."
- f. To be blunt: The messages in the Testimonies, written by Ellen White, are Jesus' personal reproof to Laodicea. Those who reject the messages from the Spirit of Prophecy and do not repent are they who will be vomited out of Jesus' mouth (that is, be ejected from His Body – the Church – in an unpleasant way). Satan is enraged at the Spirit of Prophecy and his last efforts will be a direct attack on Ellen White's writings.
- i. **Revelation 12:17**: "And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."
  - ii. **Testimonies for the Church 4, p. 211**: "It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the Testimonies. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the Testimonies, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction."
  - iii. **Selected Messages 1, p. 48**: "The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony."
- g. Satan knows that if he openly attacks the Spirit of Prophecy, he will not convince as many Adventists. Most Adventists claim to believe that Ellen White was a prophet. Few would openly deny that they believe she was a messenger of God. Instead, Satan makes effort to make the Testimonies of "none effect". A similar thing was done by the Jews in the days of Jesus.
- i. **Mark 7:9-13**: "He said to them, "all too well you reject the commandment of god, that you may keep your tradition. For moyses said, 'Honor your father and

your mother'; and, 'he who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' but you say, 'if a man says to his father or mother, "whatever profit you might have received from me is corban"--' (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.'"

- h. Satan gets church members to avoid reading the writings of the prophet, or insinuate doubts that take away the edge of the message. Perhaps he gets them to reason that "What Ellen White wrote, was good for her time, but her messages are not relevant to us." Or "I believe her messages, but I do not believe that they apply to me." Thereby the Testimonies are made of no effect. Those who reason this way are in fact saying: "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing."

## **2. The relationship between fanaticism and compromise**

- a. One of Satan's most effective weapons in making of none effect the writings of Ellen White is fanaticism. People with extreme views quote Ellen White, left and right, and many are allured by the persons' eloquence and professed great knowledge of the Spirit of Prophecy. Others realize that the views of these people are extreme and therefore falsely assume that Ellen White also had the same extreme views.
  - i. **Testimonies to Ministers, p. 51-52:** "Almost my whole lifetime has been devoted to this work, but my burden has often been made heavier by the arising of men who went forth to proclaim a message that God had not given them. This class of evil workers have selected portions of the Testimonies, and have placed them in the framework of error, in order by this setting to give influence to their false testimonies. When it is made manifest that their message is error, then the Testimonies, brought into the companionship of error, share the same condemnation; and people of the world, who do not know that the testimonies quoted are extracts from private letters used without my consent, present these matters as evidence that my work is not of God or of truth, but falsehood."
- b. Some do not go so far, but still make the assumption that a too close of a reading of Ellen White's writings leads to extreme views and unsound ideas. They see a danger in reading too many of her books and distance themselves from giving them too much authority. In either case, Satan has succeeded in getting people of God away from the Spirit of Prophecy, and a sound understanding of her writings. The Lord has warned us for both extremes.
  - i. **Deuteronomy 5:32-33:** "Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess."
  - ii. **Isaiah 30:21:** "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left."
  - iii. **Proverbs 4:25-27:** "Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil."
- c. On the Narrow Road, there are two ditches, two extremes – compromise and fanaticism. These have only one thing in common; none of them are *on* the road. The problem is that those in the right ditch, rightly considers it horrible to be in the left ditch, but they often identify the middle with the left. Those in the left ditch rightly consider it terrible to

be in the right ditch, but they often identify the middle with the right. If you wish to walk the straight and narrow road, be prepared to be attacked from both sides.

- i. **Testimonies for the Church 5, p. 305:** "There is in human nature a tendency to run to extremes and from one extreme to another entirely opposite."
- d. How can we avoid falling into one of the ditches? The answer is actually a simple one, and is clearly written in the quotes verses: follow *all* that God has revealed through the prophets, not just a little part of it. It is when we only follow a part of the messages from the prophets that we fall into one of the two ditches.
  - i. **Luke 24:25-27:** "Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."
  - ii. **Joshua 1:7:** "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go."
- e. The same is true concerning Ellen White's writings:
  - i. **Selected Messages 1, p. 44:** "Letters come to me entreating an answer; I know that many men take the testimonies the Lord has given, and apply them as they suppose they should be applied, picking out a sentence here and there, taking it from its proper connection, and applying it according to their idea. Thus poor souls become bewildered, when could they read in order all that has been given, they would see the true application, and would not become confused. Much that purports to be a message from Sister White, serves the purpose of misrepresenting Sister White, making her testify in favor of things that are not in accordance with her mind or judgment. This makes her work very trying. Reports fly from one to another regarding what Sister White has said. Each time the report is repeated, it grows larger. If Sister White has anything to say, leave her to say it. No one is called upon to be a mouthpiece for Sister White."
  - ii. **Selected Messages 1, p. 42:** "The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture."
- f. Both the compromisers and the fanatics have the same problem at heart. They choose to believe some parts of the *Testimonies* which happen to agree with their ideas, while that which does not suit their mind, they discard. They might say: "Ellen White is inspired by God, but sometimes she puts forth her own opinion. Therefore not everything is inspired." Thereby they set themselves up as judges over what is inspired by God and what is not. Ellen White opposed these ideas plainly.
  - i. **Testimonies for the Church 5, p. 691:** "Do not by your criticisms take out all the force, all the point and power, from the Testimonies. Do not feel that you can dissect them to suit your own ideas, claiming that God has given you ability to discern what is light from heaven and what is the expression of mere human wisdom. If the Testimonies speak not according to the word of God, reject them."
  - ii. **Testimonies for the Church 5, p. 67:** "In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision--the precious rays of light shining from the throne."
  - iii. **Testimonies for the Church 1, p. 234:** "My labor has been most discouraging... [Certain] brethren took this position: We believe the visions, but Sister White, in writing them, put in her own words, and we will believe that portion which we think is of God, and will not heed the other. This course they have pursued, and

have not corrected their lives. They have professed to believe the visions, but have acted contrary to them. Their example and influence have raised doubts in the minds of others. It would have been better for the cause of present truth had they both opposed the gifts. Then the people would not have been deceived, and would not have stumbled over these blind teachers."

- iv. **Selected Messages 1, p. 27:** "Yet now when I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion of Sister White. You have thereby insulted the Spirit of God. You know how the Lord has manifested Himself through the Spirit of prophecy. ... A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. Is this work of the last thirty-six years from above or from beneath?"
- v. **Testimonies for the Church 5, p. 688:** "Some who wish to strengthen their own position will bring forward from the Testimonies statements which they think will support their views, and will put the strongest possible construction upon them; but that which questions their course of action, or which does not coincide with their views, they pronounce Sister White's opinion, denying its heavenly origin and placing it on a level with their own judgment."
- g. According to Ellen White's own claims, she never wrote anything in spiritual lines that was not in harmony with her visions. If there was a subject she had received no light on, she would say so.
  - i. **Selected Messages 3, p. 51:** "I am not at liberty to write to our brethren concerning your future work.... I have received no instruction regarding the place where you should locate.... If the Lord gives me definite instruction concerning you, I will give it you; but I cannot take upon myself responsibilities that the Lord does not give me to bear."
  - ii. **The White Estate Compilers, Selected Messages 3, p. 60:** "NOTE: EXCEPT FOR THAT WHICH IS IN THE NATURE OF EVERYDAY MATTERS OR BIOGRAPHICAL, THAT WHICH MRS. WHITE SET BEFORE THE PEOPLE WAS BASED UPON THE VISIONS GIVEN TO HER, WHETHER OR NOT SHE USED THE TERM "I SAW." SHE, IN HER DAY, AND WE TODAY, DRAW THE LINE, NOT BETWEEN BOOKS AND LETTERS, ET CETERA, BUT BETWEEN THE SACRED AND THE COMMON. NO ONE NEED BE CONFUSED."
- h. Fanatics select details from its context and make a big thing of their distortion. They turn nonessential details into testing truths.
  - i. **Evangelism, p. 215:** "O how many might do a noble work in self-denial and self-sacrifice, who are absorbed in the little things of life! They are blind and cannot see afar off. They make a world of an atom and an atom of a world. They have become shallow streams, because they do not impart to others the water of life."
  - ii. **Manuscript Releases 12, p.337:** "Satan will work to distort everything to our vision, and make a mountain of a molehill. Our eyes must be steadfastly fixed upon Jesus."
- i. But what is then essential and what is not? We need to let the prophets tell us:
  - i. **Early Writings, p. 63:** "I saw the necessity of the messengers, especially, watching and checking all fanaticism wherever they might see it rise. ... There are many precious truths contained in the Word of God, but it is "present truth" that the flock needs now. I have seen the danger of the messengers running off from the important points of present truth, to dwell upon subjects that are not calculated to unite the flock and sanctify the soul. Satan will here take every possible advantage to injure the cause. But such subjects as the sanctuary, in connection with the 2300 days, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, are perfectly calculated to explain the past Advent movement and show

what our present position is, establish the faith of the doubting, and give certainty to the glorious future. These, I have frequently seen, were the principal subjects on which the messengers should dwell.”

- ii. **Selected Messages 1, p. 165-167:** “The work that the Lord has given us at this time is to present to the people the true light in regard to the testing questions of obedience and salvation--the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. ... Let us confine our public efforts to the presentation of the important lines of truth on which we are united, and on which we have clear light.”
- j. The 28 fundamental beliefs is what Seventh-day Adventists consider essentials. If you do not agree with them, study the Bible until you do. They are Biblical and you risk losing your salvation by rejecting them. But do not make a test out of something that God’s word has not made a test.
- k. The logical conclusion of fabricating tests, is declaring that the Seventh-Day Adventist Church is fallen, since they don’t go along with their ideas. They go on and try to call people out to a purer group of Adventists, all the while they claim to believe in the messages of Ellen White, who says the exact opposite:
  - i. **Selected Messages 1, p. 179:** “You will take passages in the Testimonies that speak of the close of probation, of the shaking among God's people, and you will talk of a coming out from this people of a purer, holier people that will arise. Now all this pleases the enemy. We should not needlessly take a course that will make differences or create dissension. We should not give the impression that if our particular ideas are not followed, it is because the ministers are lacking in comprehension and in faith, and are walking in darkness.”
  - ii. **Testimonies for the Church 1, p. 417-418:** “There are little companies continually rising who believe that God is only with the very few, the very scattered, and their influence is to tear down and scatter that which God's servants build up. Restless minds who want to be seeing and believing something new continually are constantly rising, some in one place and some in another, all doing a special work for the enemy, yet claiming to have the truth. They stand separate from the people whom God is leading out and prospering, and through whom He is to do His great work. They are continually expressing their fears that the body of Sabbathkeepers are becoming like the world, but there are scarcely two of these whose views are in harmony. They are scattered and confused, and yet deceive themselves so much as to think that God is especially with them.”
- l. Fanatics commit the same error as the compromisers. Both choose to follow certain parts of the Testimonies, but not that which disagrees with their own feelings or opinions. At this time they often claim to have divine illumination so that they can discern what is from the human mind and what is from the divine.
- m. Let us turn neither to the right nor to the left ditch. Let us read and believe ALL that the prophet has spoken and we will receive a balanced and prosper.