

They say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie.

Is the Laodicean Church God's church at the end of time? Is it the last church in history?

Here is a couple of statements from the Adventist Review that give us the kind of thinking that is typical for Adventist publications and is the mindset that has to do with the way the seven churches in Revelation are interpreted.

"It (SDA church) is God's created, appointed and only means of the salvation of sinners. It is the gate of Heaven for the sin sick soul. No one pretends that God's church is blameless or that it has no fault, but it is God's church and all should stand back and let God deal with His possession." (Adventist Review Feb 1992 p.2 Jamacian addition)

"Many have been tempted to doubt our remnant status or special calling. They are making a mistake that may last for eternity. Inspiration tells us that the noble ship that bears the people of God will sail safely into port and to enter into any new organization would mean apostasy. Scripture is clear, God has established a remnant church for these last days. Corporately, no other church body fits the description but ours which alone has been given His present truth message." (Adventist Review Feb 1994, p.7 Jamacian addition)

Daniel and Revelation by Uriah Smith is typical of Adventist publications about the seven churches of Revelation and it states the seven churches are seven chronological stages of the Christian church beginning with the apostles and follows down through history till now. The last church is Laodicea. So if you accept that the chronological order is the seven last eras of churches then Laodicea must be the last church. Ellen G White has said so many times that the Seventh-day Adventist church is in the Laodicean state. So Adventist have accepted that they are the last church of Laodicea and they use that as a grounds for saying they are the only church that God has on earth because Laodicea is the last church.

This study is going to suggest to you that that theory is not 100% foolproof and it is going to show some things we need to look at concerning the 144,000 and Laodicea.

The interesting thing is that of all the seven churches, there are only two churches that God can find nothing good to say anything about. One is Sardis and the other is Laodicea. He can not find one good thing to say about Laodicea. All the churches He commends and finds fault with. He cannot find anything bad about Smyrna or Philadelphia and even Sardis there were some that had not defiled their garments. But Laodicea, Christ cannot find one good thing! If I belong to Laodicea, I would not be proud of it. The best thing He can say is "I counsel you" and then gives advice. Laodicea has a disease that even God cannot cure.

Let's be logical. God is no respecter of persons. God does not play favourites. If God saves a church like Laodicea, then He should have saved the Jews. Because the

disease that Judaism had at the time of Christ is the same disease that Laodicea presently has. They were rich and increased in goods and in need of nothing. "We are Abraham's own seed and we are special and chosen of God." When people are in that condition, God cannot help them. That was the disease of Israel at the time of Christ. All Jesus could do is weep bitter tears as he left Jerusalem. He stood on the mount of Olives, Sister White says and wept tears of bitter grief for a people that He loved but could not help because they had an incurable disease. The same problem that Laodicea has.

So from the very onset there seems to be something wrong with the theory that Laodicea is the last church. How can a church that produces the 144,000 be described as Laodicea is described? There is just no indication that there is any good in this church.

What Jesus promises to do to Laodicea is "*I will spew thee out of my mouth.*" So it is really difficult to accept the idea that Laodicea is exclusively God's church. This idea has made the Adventist church on the whole very self satisfied, very self righteous, and made them believe that no matter how far they go into apostasy, God will never let them go.

Think about this question. What is more dependable that you can put greater faith in? Is it a prophecy or a principle? If there is a prophecy that says God will never reject you no matter how far you go in apostasy, compare that to the principle that says, God will not tolerate evil. Which is more important? The principle is, right? God does not change. He will not tolerate evil. Anything that tells me that you will be with God no matter what you do, something is very wrong somewhere. It makes God out to be someone who has lost His principles.

The Jews thought God was like that. They claimed the promises of Jeremiah 31 where God says, If the seas should stop roaring, if the sun should stop shining and if the moons should stop giving her light, then God might cast out Israel. The Jews clung to these promises and said, "See, God says the sun would have to stop shining first before we would be cast off. We are Abraham's seed." But....They forgot the but. God never breaks His promises, but sometimes He has to change His definitions. "Israel" they thought was flesh and blood but God changed His definition.

In the same way, Adventist are making a big mistake when they define "the church" and a big surprise is coming to them just like it did to the Jews because God does not give unconditional promises. That error of thinking that God will save us no matter what we do is building on a shallow and shaky foundation.

Everything hangs up on the question of whether or not we accept that these seven churches of Revelation are in sequential order. Are they really representing God's church over history in a sequence? That is one interpretation but it is not necessarily the only or the correct interpretation. The interesting thing is that these seven churches did actually exist at a time in Asia Minor when Jesus gave this message to John. So there is the possibility that these churches could apply to several aspects of the church in the last days and there is some evidence in Revelation that this could be possible.

Let's now look at Revelation 2 and 3 and see if that confidence that the Adventist Church has is justified.

“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira that which ye have already hold fast till I come.” Rev 2:24

Now does that make sense to say, *“Hold fast till I come”* if this church is not in existence at the time of the second coming?

To Smyrna He says *“Be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life.”* It doesn't suggest that Smyrna will be around.

Rev 3:3 says to Sardis, *“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”* Again, every time you hear about Jesus or the disciples talking about His coming like a thief, what does it reference to? The second coming of Jesus every time! So clearly Jesus is referencing to Sardis about His second coming.

Rev 3:11 says to Philadelphia, *“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”* Now to Adam who died some five thousand years ago as far as he is concerned he closed his eyes and the next time he opens them he will see the face of Jesus. It will be but a moment of time as far as he is concerned. But I don't think Jesus would have said to Adam *“Behold, I come quickly.”* The only people who can appreciate whether the second coming is quick or over an extended period of time is those who are alive. You got to be alive to appreciate whether or not it is quick. So if Jesus says to Philadelphia *“Behold I come quickly, hold fast”* it must be to a people who can appreciate that it is going to be quick or are around to see this final time.

It is clear that these churches are around at the second coming:

Thyatira will be here.

Sardis will be here.

Philadelphia will be here.

Laodicea will be here.

But here is more evidence that this is true.

From the writing of the Spirit of Prophecy it will be shown that Philadelphia is God's church at the end of time and not Laodicea.

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth...” Rev 3:7. Here we see the phrase that the pioneers used to indicate that God had closed the door to the first compartment of the sanctuary and opened the door to the second compartment to the most holy place.

In a practical sense this means that Jesus opened an opportunity for His people into the perfecting experience. No people have ever perfectly followed the Lord but Jesus says He is coming for a church without spot or wrinkle, blemish or any such thing and furthermore, faithful is he that calleth you, and also will do it. He said our bodies, souls and spirits will be found blameless at the coming of the Lord. So God is coming for a church that is ready and that open door signifies that this open door opened the opportunity to this Philadelphian church and the early Adventist saw that this was fulfilled in the early Advent movement. Philadelphia was the early Adventist movement according to the present churches interpretation.

The unfortunate thing is that the present day church says that that phase came to an end and the church moved on to the Laodicean period which they say is now. If that is true, then Laodicea is an offshoot from Philadelphia. Can you see that? Here is more evidence.

Rev 3:8-12 goes on to say, *“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will **make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie: behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet,** and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, **I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation,** which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will **I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.**”*

Here we see that someone is being called the synagogue of Satan, or the church of Satan. Their characteristics are that they say they are Jews and are not, they lie and this church of Satan will be made to *“come and worship before thy feet and to know that I have loved thee.”*

Well, that is strange because that early Adventist movement according to the present day churches teaching has come and gone but we have no record that anyone came and worshipped at the feet of the pioneers. But Jesus said that this would happen to Philadelphia.

Another point from this passage says, *“I will keep thee from the hour of temptation.”* This has been explained to mean that the era of Philadelphia would pass and they would be kept from the trouble of Laodicea in the time of trouble. But the word here translated kept actually means “preserved.” It means that they will be preserved through the time of trouble.

Verse 12 says that Philadelphia would be *“a pillar in the temple of my God,.....and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem,....and I will write upon him my new name.”* Jesus promises to write these things on Philadelphians and nobody else. He also promises that the synagogue of Satan will worship at their feet. Now I am going to quote some passages from

Early Writings that are shocking and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt who the church of Philadelphia really is.

*“The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus’ new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the **synagogue of Satan knew that God had love us who could wash one another’s feet and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet.** (EGW Early Writings page 15)*

*“.....And as we were about to enter the holy temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, **“Only the 144,000 enter this place,”** and we shouted, “Alleluia.”*

This temple was supported by seven pillars, all of transparent gold, set with pearls most glorious. The wonderful things I there saw I cannot describe.....I saw there tables of stone in which the names of the 144,000 were engraved in letters of gold. After we beheld the glory of the temple, we went out and Jesus left us and went to the city. Soon we heard His lovely voice again, saying, “Come, My people, you have come out of great tribulation, and done My will; suffered for Me; come in to supper, for I will gird Myself, and serve you.” (Early Writings page 18)

Here we see plainly, that Ellen G White describes the 144,000 in the exact language used in Revelation to describe the church of Philadelphia. This is proof that Philadelphia exists in the last days and the only way to get around it, is to deny Ellen G White as a prophet of God. But if she is, then God is linking the 144,000 to Philadelphia.

The 144,000 have God’s name, the new Jerusalem and Jesus new name written on their foreheads. They are the ones who endure the tribulation and are translated as overcomers. The 144,000 come out of the church of Philadelphia, not Laodicea. Here is more proof.

*“You think, **that those who worship before the saint’s feet**, (Rev 3:9), will at last be saved. Here I must differ with you; for God shewed me that **this class were professed Adventists**, who had fallen away, and “**crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.**” And in the “hour of temptation,” which is yet to come, to show out every one’s true character, they will know that they are forever lost; and overwhelmed with anguish of spirit, **they will bow at the saint’s feet.**” (EGW A Word to the Little Flock, page 12)*

The people who are worshipping at the saints feet will be here when? “In the hour of temptation.” Which Adventist is this talking about? They are not Philadelphians, they are those who say they are Jew and are not, but do lie. In Revelation there is only one group that looks very Jewish to me. They say they are in need of nothing. They say they are increased in goods. They say they are the “only means of Salvation.” They say they are the “gateway to heaven for the sin sick soul.” They claim to be spiritual Israel.

It is so striking when you look at it, it is frightening. It makes you sick at heart. You can understand why Jesus looked at Jerusalem and wept.

In Revelation God draws the veil aside and gives us His perspective. In Revelation we see things how God sees things. He tells us how He looks at the churches. If there are people on the earth who still believe in that open door experience. Or people that have that Philadelphian characteristic of brotherly love. If there are people on this earth that believes in holding fast till He comes. Has Philadelphia passed?

An offshoot from Philadelphia, an imposter that calls themselves the true Jews but Jesus says they are not, they lie and they are the synagogue of Satan and Jesus will make them come and worship at the saints feet. Sister White said God showed her that they are professed Adventist.

*“Those who claim to believe the truth do not possess that power that God would bestow upon them if they really believed, and were striving for conformity to His image. **The church is in the Laodicean state. The presence of God is not in her midst.**” (EGW Notebook Leaflets, page 99 MS 166 1898)*

That statement was made in 1898. The church had already slipped into the Laodicean state back then. Imagine what she would think of “the church” today? Where does Revelation say Jesus is in relation to Laodicea? He is outside of the door knocking and trying to get in. No matter how many glowing reports we hear from the false witness of the Review that they are leading the good ship safely into harbor, Jesus our true witness says that He is outside knocking. This church is sick and it is going to be spewed out!

“The state of the church represented by the foolish virgins is also spoken of as the Laodicean state.” (EGW Review and Herald, August, 1890)

There are ten virgins waiting for the bridegroom but how many are saved? The fact that they are all virgins suggest that they come from the virgin or pure church. But they divide and the five foolish virgins never get in and are represented as Laodicea. They are outside knocking to get in.

I would not want to be Laodicea, would you? The only sensible response to Laodicea is “Get out of that state and anything identified with it as fast as you can!” You can’t stay in Laodicea and not be lukewarm. You can’t be Laodicea and be saved. You can migrate to Philadelphia but Laodicea is a lost church.

(thoughts taken from a sermon by David Clayton of Restoration Ministries
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