

ΩMEGA APOSTASY AND LAODICEA

Today God is calling His people out of their Laodicea condition. This book presents the urgency of responding to this call. You will learn how to let Jesus fully into your life and receive the spiritual insight you must have in these last days by “buying” from God the “eye salve” He offers. The “white raiment” of Christ’s justifying and sanctifying righteousness is presented. Also the “gold” of Christ’s character of faith and love must be received to be ready for Christ’s second coming.

Satan has and is doing everything in his power to keep God’s people in their Laodicean condition. For he knows if they do not understand and receive God’s call into their heart they will not come out of Laodicea and not be ready for Christ’s return. This book unveils Satan’s “omega” apostasy, which is aimed at keeping God’s people in Laodicea. When you read this book you will understand what Satan’s “omega” apostasy is and will be able to discern the methods he is using today to propagate his deception.



Pastor Dennis Smith received a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from Colorado State University. While at Colorado State he became a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. After working in engineering for a short time he felt the call to fulltime ministry. Smith has served the church as active laymen, and in pastoral and departmental positions for over 49 years. He graduated from Andrews University Theological Seminary with a Masters of Divinity degree.

In September of 1999 the Lord led Pastor Smith to begin studying the biblical teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As a result of this study he was convicted to specifically pray for this biblical experience. Soon after he prayed for God to grant this infilling experience of the Spirit a new spiritual life began to take hold. Almost immediately Dennis felt led to begin writing about the things he was learning and experiencing. This book and the many previous books are the result of that experience.

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DENNIS SMITH

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Dennis Smith

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Note from the Author

Today God is calling His people out of their Laodicea condition. This book presents the urgency of responding to this call. You will learn how to let Jesus fully into your life and receive the spiritual insight you must have in these last days by “buying” from God the “eye salve” He offers. The “white raiment” of Christ’s justifying and sanctifying righteousness is presented. Also the “gold” of Christ’s character of faith and love must be received to be ready for Christ’s second coming.

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I personally believe the material presented in this book is of such importance at this time in world history and the history of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination I have chosen to offer it to the reader free of charge. You are also welcome to share it with others using any means that is most available to you; email electronic copy or print the book and mail a copy.

My prayer and desire is that the biblical truths presented in this book will prove to be as much of a blessing to the reader as they have been to me. I am convinced the Lord is coming soon and the biblical teachings in this book are important to understand and experience in order to be ready for His appearing.

Introduction

Every student of the Bible knows that the events taking place on earth today indicate the coming of Christ is imminent. Natural disaster, wars, famines, terror attacks, and diseases all indicate time is running out (Matthew 24:4-33). Sometimes events are so terrible and destructive one might conclude that things are out of God's control. However, that is not the case. God is sovereign. He reigns in heaven and earth (1Chronicles 16:31). Nothing happens without His permission. God even sets up kings and rulers, and removes them (Daniel 2:21). Man and nature are all under His sovereign ruler ship.

Some will argue there have always been these kinds of terrible events. That is true. However, today they are different. They are taking place more frequently and are more severe. Paul describes our time with the words:

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”
1Thessalonians 5:3

The destructions are coming as the birth pains come upon a woman about to give birth. The pains become more frequent and more intense. So it is with the destructions coming upon the earth today. They are more frequent and more destructive. The earthquake and tsunami off the coast of Indonesia affected more countries and killed more people than any natural disaster in recorded history. Not long after Japan was hit with a major earthquake and tsunami. Hurricane Katrina brought more devastation than any hurricane before it in the United States. Then there was hurricane Sandy that devastated the northeast US. Pakistan experienced its worst earthquake. I believe we have reached the time Ellen White described in her writings.

“Calamities will come--calamities most awful, most unexpected; and these destructions will follow one after another.” Evangelism, p.27

“Do you believe that the Lord is coming, and that the last great crisis is about to break upon the world?” Special Testimonies on Education, p.132

“There will soon be a sudden change in God's dealings. The world in its perversity is being visited by casualties,--by floods, storms, fires, earthquakes, famines, wars, and bloodshed. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power; yet he will not at all acquit the wicked. ‘The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.’ O that men might understand the patience and long-suffering of God! He is putting under restraint his own attributes. His omnipotent power is under the control of Omnipotence. O that men would understand that God refuses to be wearied out with the world's perversity, and still holds out the hope of forgiveness even to the most undeserving! But his

forbearance will not always continue. Who is prepared for the sudden change that will take place in God's dealing with sinful men? Who will be prepared to escape the punishment that will certainly fall upon transgressors?" Ibid 134

We are seeing these things happen before our very eyes today. We are seeing the "sudden change in God's dealings" with sinful men. It is urgent we know where we are living in time. We must know what hour God's prophetic time clock has reached. Our eternal destiny depends on it. We need spiritual leaders who have "understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do..." (1Chronicles 12:32).

God's Prophetic Time Table

God has a time table or divine prophetic time clock for the events of earth's history. God told Abraham that his descendants would be captives in a foreign land (Genesis 15:13-14). God's Word came to pass just as predicted. Israel, Abraham's descendants, became captive slaves in Egypt. They struggled in Egypt for over 400 years. Then God's prophetic time clock reached the hour of their deliverance. God's Word tells us:

"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt." Exodus 12:40-41

The phrase "the selfsame day" indicates the deliverance of Israel took place at the exact time God had preordained it to take place. God's prophetic clock reached the hour for Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

Israel entered another captivity hundreds of years later. Because of their transgressions against God He allowed them to be overthrown by the nation of Babylon and many were led into captivity by their enemy. Again God foretold how long the captivity would last. They were to remain in captivity for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:12). When the 70 years were accomplished and God's purpose fulfilled God opened the way for His people to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their city and nation.

Hundreds of years passed and Israel longed to see the fulfillment of God's promise of a coming Messiah. Many Old Testament prophecies gave very specific descriptions of his coming and mission. The apostle Paul writes of the first advent of Christ with the words;

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman,..." Galatians 4:4

God's Word is clear. Jesus came right on time; at the fullness of time. Jesus came when God's prophetic clock reached the hour of His coming. In Daniel chapter nine God even foretold the date of Christ's baptism and death. Again we see that God has a very specific time table for the events of earth's history.

Nothing happens on this earth haphazardly. Everything is pre-ordained by God. Nothing is out of His control. That is why God's promise is true that states "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" Romans 8:28. If all things were not under God's control Satan would see to it that all things did not work out for good for those who love God. God has a purpose in everything He allows; even the things that seems so terrible from our perspective. Remember God tell us;

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9

The same holds true concerning Christ's second coming. From eternity past the Father has known and foreordained that great climatic event of earth's history (Matthew 24:36). Christ will return on the exact "day and hour" the Father has ordained Him to return. My personal conviction is that the "day and hour" of Christ's return is very near. However, something has to happen to God's people before that event takes place; something that will prepare them to "stand" in that day (Revelation 6:17). The generation of Christians living when Christ comes will be able to stand in the presence of Christ in all His glory and not be consumed while all those around them are being "destroyed by the brightness of his coming" (2Thessalonians 2:8). They will be as no other generation of Christians that have walked this earth.

A Call From God

Today God' prophetic clock has reached the hour when He is calling that last generation of Christians into existence; His remnant people. He is calling them to come out of their Laodicean condition. He is calling them to prepare for Christ's second coming.

Today God is calling His people to become just like His son Jesus. Why is this call so important? If we do not heed this call we will not be ready for Christ's return. The apostle John tells us:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." 1John 3:2

The Greek word translated "like" in this verse is "homoios," which means one and the same. It means those ready to meet Jesus will be corresponding in nature (2Peter 1:4), the same in conduct, character, authority, dignity and power (John 14:12; Luke 10:19). It is urgent we realize this truth. Only by knowing where the Lord wants to lead us can we cooperate with Him in our journey. This verse in 1John tells us that God wants to make us "just like Jesus." We are not to be kind of like Jesus or merely similar to Jesus. We are to become just like Him! They are just like Jesus because they have

learned how to let Jesus live out His life and ministry in and through them. They are just like Jesus because it is Jesus who is seen 100% in their life.

This is the generation God is calling into existence today; the generation of Christians who will become just like Jesus. They are the ones who will give the three angels' messages in power. They will be the true "remnant" people of God; just like the early church described in the book of Acts. They will victoriously make it through the final crisis (time of trouble) and stand in the flesh in the presence of Jesus in all His glory when He comes and not be consumed. However, for this to happen they must understand God's message to Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22), and allow God to bring about the necessary change described in that counsel.

Satan knows all these things. Therefore, as always, he has devised a plan and is carrying out that plan to hinder the work God wants to perform in the lives of His people. We see this clearly in our denominational history. In Ellen White's day Satan worked through Dr. Kellogg and the teachings brought out in his book, "Living Temple," to try to lead God's people away from the foundation beliefs of this denomination. Ellen White called this the "alpha" of Satan's efforts to bring apostasy into the denomination. She warned that an "omega" would come in the future.

God brought an important truth to this denomination through Jones and Waggoner at the 1888 General Conference Session in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Again Satan worked to hinder the church from receiving the truths presented. If these truths on righteousness by faith had been received and experienced to the fullest the "loud cry" would have taken place, the latter rain of the Spirit would have fallen and Christ would have returned. However, because of Satan's successful counter measures Ellen White wrote in 1901: "We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years..." Evangelism, p.695.

Satan is no less busy today in his efforts to hinder the working of the Spirit God is trying to bring about in the lives of His people. These efforts by Satan are the "omega" apostasy Ellen White warned about many years ago. The "alpha" apostasy came near the beginning of the denomination's development. The "omega" apostasy is coming near the conclusion of the mission God has called the denomination to complete.

My purpose in writing this book is to clarify God's warning to those in Laodicea. We will study God's plan to lead His people out of their Laodicean condition, and will also understand Satan's efforts to hinder God's efforts by means of his "omega" apostate teachings.

Alpha and Omega of Apostasy

In this chapter we will briefly consider what Ellen White called the “alpha” apostasy and a future “omega” apostasy. The alpha apostasy was brought about by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, a prominent physician and leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church during its early history. He formulated a theology that was foreign to the foundation teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and presented them in his book, “Living Temple.” If his false teachings were allowed to continue to be propagated they would severely undermine the church’s teachings and purpose for existence causing many to be led astray and ultimately lost.

The following quote reveals how serious Ellen White viewed this apostate teaching.

“‘Living Temple’ contains the alpha of these theories. I knew that the omega would follow in a little while; and I trembled for our people.

“I hesitated and delayed about the sending out of that which the Spirit of the Lord impelled me to write. I did not want to be compelled to present the misleading influence of these sophistries. But in the providence of God, the errors that have been coming in must be met.

“Shortly before I sent out the testimonies regarding the efforts of the enemy to undermine the foundation of our faith through the dissemination of seductive theories, I had read an incident about a ship in a fog meeting an iceberg. For several nights I slept but little. I seemed to be bowed down as a cart beneath sheaves. One night a scene was clearly presented before me. A vessel was upon the waters, in a heavy fog. Suddenly the lookout cried, ‘Iceberg just ahead!’ There, towering high above the ship, was a gigantic iceberg. An authoritative voice cried out, “Meet it!” There was not a moment’s hesitation. It was a time for instant action. The engineer put on full steam, and the man at the wheel steered the ship straight into the iceberg. With a crash she struck the ice. There was a fearful shock, and the iceberg broke into many pieces, falling with a noise like thunder to the deck. The passengers were violently shaken by the force of the collision, but no lives were lost. The vessel was injured, but not beyond repair. She rebounded from the contact, trembling from stem to stern, like a living creature. Then she moved forward on her way.

“Well I knew the meaning of this representation. I had my orders. I had heard the words, like a voice from our Captain, ‘Meet it!’ I knew what my duty was, and that there was not a moment to lose. The time for decided action had come. I must without delay obey the command, ‘Meet it!’

“That night I was up at one o’clock, writing as fast as my hand could pass over the paper. For the next few days I worked early and late, preparing for our people the instruction given me regarding the errors that were coming in among us.” SpTB02 53-56 Testimonies to the Church containing letters to Physicians and Ministers Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists.

Ellen White recognized that the teachings in the book, “Living Temple,” by Dr. Kellogg would “undermine the foundation of our faith.” She called this apostasy the

“alpha.” It was so serious that God gave her a dream about a ship heading into an iceberg. Then an authoritative voice said, “Meet it.” The engines were put at full steam and the man at the helm steered the ship right into the iceberg. The passengers were severely shaken, but no lives were lost. After the violent encounter the ship continued on her way.

Ellen White understood that she must meet this “alpha” apostasy head on. She knew there would be a great turmoil in the church for a while, but the church would survive the “collision” of truth with error.

Ellen White also stated there would be another great error to come upon the church with the same aim of undermining the foundation of our faith. She called it the “omega” apostasy. She saw it would be so devastating it caused her to “tremble” for God’s people who would be called to face it.

At the time of the writing of this book I have been a Seventh-day Adventist Christian for 49 years. I was baptized when I was 21 years old and a senior engineering student at Colorado State University. I have spent my entire adult life serving as an active layman or as a pastor and departmental director in the denomination. As a young adult church member and a seasoned pastor I have seen many passing fads, sensational teachings and even apostasies come and go. I have occasionally heard warnings of some false teaching being the “omega” apostasy.

Because of this I am somewhat hesitant to make the following statement. However, I feel I must. As Ellen White was convicted concerning the “alpha” apostasy to “Meet it” head on in her day, I am convicted we must meet head on what is appearing as the “omega” of the apostasy. This omega apostasy has been developing for several decades and seems to be widely accepted in many quarters of the church. I believe this omega apostasy concerns God’s message to His last-day Laodicean church, and centers on obedience to God’s Ten Commandments. In short, the “omega” apostasy teaches that God’s Ten Commandments cannot be kept and sin cannot be completely overcome in one’s life.

It is because of my concern for God’s church, His people, and His last closing work on planet earth that I am writing this book. In this book we will consider the Laodicea message found in Revelation chapter 3. We will also especially consider the following two statements by Ellen White in that context.

The first quote is the answer an angel gave when she asked what would cause the “shaking” among God’s people. Remember, those “shaken” from among God’s people will not be ready for Christ’s return. The angel replied,

“...it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people” (*Early Writings*, p. 270).

The second statement concerns the sealing and shaking.

“Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads--it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and

spiritually, so they cannot be moved--just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come." 4BC1161

As you read this book you will clearly understand what God's message to the Laodicean church is, why it is essential God's people receive it and enter into the experience with Christ that He offers to them. You will also see that the "omega" apostasy is the teaching that undermines the Laodicean warning and leads individuals to actually "rise up against it." This last great apostasy is in our very midst today.

Overview of the Laodicean Message

In this chapter I will give a brief overview of the Laodicean message, which will actually set the stage for why the following chapters in this book are written. We find this warning message in the book of Revelation.

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

“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.

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”
Revelation 3:14-22

From reading the text it is clear why this warning is important to heed. Those who ignore it will be “spewed” out of God’s mouth, meaning they will not be ready for Christ’s return and be eternally lost. This is because those in Laodicea do not know their true condition before God. They think they are spiritually rich living in a saving relationship with God. However, they do not realize they are actually “wretched, miserable, poor,” sinners devoid of spiritual riches. They are “blind” to this condition and God’s will. Therefore, in God’s sight they are “naked,” standing in their own self-righteousness ignorant of Christ’s righteousness.

The only solution is to ‘let Jesus into’ their life (Rev 3:20), which indicates Christ is not in the lives of those in Laodicea. They only have a profession of faith, a form of godliness, but not genuine faith and godliness (2Timothy 3:5). It is because God loves them that He gives this serious warning (Rev 3:19).

Thankfully, God not only gives the warning, but also presents the solution to Laodicea’s spiritually void condition by counseling them to “buy” from Him, which means to give oneself 100% to God. And what is it we are to “buy” from God? We are to surrender ourselves 100% to God and receive the “eye salve” of the Spirit, which refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We need to purchase the “white raiment,” which refers to the justifying and sanctifying righteousness of Christ. Finally, if we surrender completely to God in the Spirit baptism and righteousness by faith experience we will be able to receive the “gold” of God’s character of faith and love. This final condition of receiving the “gold” is the last step in coming completely out of the Laodicean condition,

becoming God's last-day commandment keeping people, and being ready for Christ's second coming.

Ellen White also gives a very significant reason to heed the Laodicean warning. In the book, *Early Writings*, we read that she asked the angel about what would cause the "shaking" among God's people. Remember, those "shaken" from among God's people will not be ready for Christ's return. The angel replied, "...it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people" (*Early Writings*, p. 270).

In the Laodicean warning we find that Jesus is the "true Witness," Rev 3:14. Hence, the shaking is caused by those who do not receive Jesus' last-day warning to the Laodiceans. The angel pointed out that those who receive the "straight testimony" will have a "heart felt" experience with Jesus. This experience will lead them to "exalt the standard;" the Ten Commandments, which are a transcript of God's character. They will be so impacted by the warning message it will motivate them to boldly "pour forth the straight truth" of God calling for obedience to God's commandments to prepare a people for Christ's second coming.

However, the angel also said, "Some will not bear this straight testimony," and will "rise up against it." Sad, but true, there will be those who speak and work against God's message to Laodicea. God's call to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit (eye salve), Christ's justifying and sanctifying righteousness (white raiment), and to perfectly reflect Christ's character (gold) will be rejected. Responding to these three will lead to victory over sin and obedience to God's Ten Commandments. Those who "raise up against" these truths have been deceived by Satan's "omega" apostasy and will ultimately be shaken out from among God's people.

The corollary conclusion then is that those who receive the Laodicea message experience God's "seal." This sealing experience will take place prior to the final shaking. Ellen White confirms this when she wrote:

"Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads--it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved--just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come." 4BC1161

From this statement we find that those who receive the "straight testimony" from Jesus to the Laodiceans will become "settled into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved." This is very important for them to experience since many who rise up against the message of complete victory over sin will be brothers and sisters in the faith, and even leaders among God's people. It is always more difficult to receive criticism from those within the church than from those outside. Hence, God's sealed people will have to know for themselves from the Bible what they believe and why they believe. Otherwise they will have no foundation and will give up their faith.

Knowing this prompted Ellen White to write:

“We thank God that there are souls who realize that they are in need of something which they do not possess,-- gold of faith and love, white raiment of Christ's righteousness, eye-salve of spiritual discernment. If you possess these precious gifts, the temple of the human soul will not be like a desecrated shrine.”
Miscellaneous collection – 1888 (emphasis added)

The Laodicea message enables those who receive it not to have a “desecrated shrine;” a soul temple living in sin. Their lives will be one of victory over sin through Christ and His righteousness. They have rejected Satan’s “omega” apostate teaching that victory over sin and obeying God’s commandments is impossible.

The Laodicean message actually describes a sequence of experience. However, it is a reverse sequence. We must “let Jesus in,” (Rev 3:20), which happens when we receive the “eye salve” of the Spirit by experiencing the daily baptism of the Spirit. It is through this Spirit filled experience that Christ lives most fully in the believer (John 14:16-18), who will be able to manifest His justifying and sanctifying righteousness (white raiment) (Colossians 1:27), which will ultimately lead to the believer experiencing the perfect character of Christ; (the gold) of which the Ten Commandments are a transcript. They will be just like Jesus when He comes (1John 3:2).

In this chapter I have given a brief overview of the Laodicean warning message, its contents, and the result of receiving or rejecting it. In the following chapters I will present in greater detail the various elements of the message, which are important for God’s people to understand in order to receive the message, come out of Laodicea, experience the victory over sin the gospel offers, and be ready for Christ’s return.

The Omega Apostasy

Satan knows what the apostle Paul wrote about being victorious over sin (Roman 6:1-18). He also knows John the Revelator wrote about the obedience of God's last-day remnant people. He knows they will be commandment keepers (Revelation 12:17; 14:12). He knows that many verses in the book of Revelation give wonderful promises to those who "overcome" sin in their lives (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7).

Knowing this, it would be expected that Satan would work hard at undermining obedience to God's Ten Commandments especially in these last days. He constantly works to lead men and women to disobey God's commandments.

However, he knows that he could not cause Seventh-day Adventists to outright reject the Ten Commandments and say they are no longer valid. Instead, he has and is working in a more deceptive manner to lead individuals to disregard them. He deceives God's people into believing it is impossible to fully obey them. This is the "omega" apostasy Ellen White warned about, and the church faces today.

Today this apostasy is making itself known in numerous ways; ways that appear to be a blessing. Satan is using the same lure he used with Eve in the garden; the lure of a higher experience that is void of any focus on absolute obedience to God's commands in one's life.

Satan's Accusation

Ellen White was very aware of Satan's efforts in the past and present to misrepresent God's law. She wrote:

"Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts." *Desire of Ages*, p.24

"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." *The Great Controversy*, p.582

"The rabbis virtually represented God as giving laws which it was impossible for men to obey." *Desire of Ages*, p.284

Christ Vindicated God and Proved Satan Wrong

Because of Satan's accusations Jesus came to planet earth as a man to prove his lie about God's law wrong. Jesus, made of a woman (Galatians 4:4), perfectly kept God's law; obeying from the heart every precept. Jesus did not sin in thought, word or action.

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he

suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:" 1Peter 2:21-23

Christ proved Satan wrong in his lying claim that God's law cannot be kept. However, Christ did even more than vindicating God's law by His perfect, sinless life. He also provided for God's people a "righteousness, sanctification and redemption," (1Corinthians 1:30) which could be theirs through faith.

God Uses His Church to Vindicate God and Prove Satan Wrong

It was not only through Christ, but also through the church that God purposed to prove Satan's accusations about God's law wrong. It was through Christ that this purpose was to be fulfilled and manifested in the church. It is through the church that God and His law are to be vindicated as God's people by faith allow Christ to live out His perfect obedience to God's law in and through them. Paul described this when he wrote:

"His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord." Ephesians 3:10-11 (NIV)

According to Paul, before Jesus returns the "wisdom of God" must be made known or manifest in His church (people). This "wisdom of God" was "accomplished in Christ," and is to be seen or manifested through the church to the "rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms." This is the church's primary purpose or mission on earth.

A vital question is, "What is the wisdom of God that was accomplished in Christ?" Paul tells us in his first letter to the Corinthians.

"so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him [the Father] that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness [sanctification], and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.'" 1Corinthians 1:29-31 (NIV)

You see, the wisdom of God is the righteousness, sanctification (holiness) and redemption that Christ provided for His people. This wisdom of God will be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms as the church experiences Christ perfect obedience to God's law in their lives to the fullest extent. That "wisdom" is Christ's righteousness, holiness or sanctification, and redemption from sin; law breaking (1John 3:4). It is when God's wisdom is fully manifest in this manner in the church that His people will have come out of their Laodicean condition, obey God's commandments to the fullest, and be ready for Christ's return.

This is why Satan works so hard to propagate the "omega" apostate teaching that God's law cannot be kept and God's people cannot live a life of victory over sin. Those who accept his "omega" apostasy will never fulfill God's purpose for them nor be ready for Christ's second coming.

Ellen White's Understanding

Ellen White clearly understood the purpose for which God called the church into existence. She knew it was essential for God's people to be an obedient people. For if they are not, they are actually vindicating Satan's accusations against God's law.

"Exact obedience is required, and those who say it is not possible to live a perfect life throw upon God the imputation of injustice and untruth." SW – The Southern Review, December 5, 1899

There are many Seventh-day Adventists today who along with many other Christians say it is impossible to live a victorious life over sin. They don't realize it, but they are actually agreeing with Satan and imputing to God injustice and falsehood. They have accepted Satan's "omega" apostasy.

As long as the church has the attitude that living a victorious life over sin is not possible she will not come out of her Laodicean condition, the full gospel of deliverance from all sin will not be experienced or proclaimed and Jesus will not come.

Concerning this Ellen White also wrote:

"The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the results of obedience to right principles." Christ's Object Lessons, p. 296.

"The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people." Desire of Ages, p. 671

This is why in mercy God has given a serious warning and call to Laodicea. The church has not yielded herself to Christ to the fullest extent so that Christ alone is seen in the church. When Christ is fully seen 100% in His church then His purpose will be fulfilled and Jesus will return. Ellen White understood this when she wrote:

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." Christ's Object Lessons, p. 69

Paul refers to this full sanctifying experience in Jesus Christ when he wrote:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20

The Mystery of God

John in the book of Revelation tells us that the last work God will do in His church is to finish the "mystery of God,"

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” Revelation 10:7

Since finishing the mystery of God is God’s last work in this earth it is important we understand what the mystery of God is. Paul tell us,

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of **this mystery** among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you**, the hope of glory:” Colossians 1:25-27. (emphasis added)

According to Paul, the mystery of God is “Christ in you,” and is our only hope of glory; of glorifying God by reflecting the character of Christ (Christ’s obedience to God’s law) by which the earth will be enlightened with the glory (character) of God (Revelation 18:1). This mystery of God is the gospel of Jesus Christ; a gospel of deliverance from sin. It is Christ’s perfect obedience to God’s law revealed in one’s life.

You see, the mystery of God, the wisdom of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ is the means God has provided for our salvation; our deliverance from sin. The justification God provided in Christ frees us from the guilt and penalty of sin, which is death and covers us with Christ’s imputed righteous obedience to God’s law. The sanctification God provides in Christ is His imparted righteousness, which frees us from the power of sin to rule in our life and leads to obedience to God’s commandments. For we have been sanctified or set aside by God for good works, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10. These good works are works of faithful obedience to God’s law.

Omega Apostasy’s Danger

This is why the “omega” apostasy is so dangerous. When received it thwarts God’s very purpose for the church, keeps individuals in Laodicea, leads many of God’s professed people to rise up against the Laodicea message calling it error, and causes those deceived to be shaken from among God’s remnant people and not be ready for Christ’s return.

Satan knows he cannot lead Adventists to outright reject the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath. So he leads them to believe the next best thing; the commandments cannot be kept. Hence, those who believe the “omega” deception are led to reject the clear injunctions in the Bible that calls the Christian to live a victorious life through Christ. The deception will be so strongly believed that they will rise up against the truth. Concerning this Ellen White wrote:

“The third angel's message will not be comprehended, the light which will lighten the earth with its glory will be called a false light, by those who refuse to walk in its advancing glory.--RH May 27, 1890.

Remember, God's glory is His character, which will lighten the earth through His people (Revelation 18:1). Also, remember, God's law is a transcript of His character. God's last remnant people will be growing in Christ from glory to glory by the Spirit (2Corinthians 3:3, 18). They will be growing in obedience to God's commandments via Christ living out His imparted righteous obedience in and through them. Those who accept the “omega” apostate teaching will call this “false light.”

Because Ellen White knew Satan would seek to lead God's people away from perfect obedience to God's commandments she wrote many statements concerning the obedient life God expects His people to lead.

“Exact obedience is required, and those who say it is not possible to live a perfect life throw upon God the imputation of injustice and untruth.” SW – The Southern Review, December 5, 1899

“God requires at this moment just what he required of Adam in paradise before he fell--perfect obedience to his law. The requirement that God makes in grace is just the requirement he made in paradise.” Review & Herald, July 15, 1890

“Consider the life of Christ. Standing at the head of humanity, serving His Father, He is an example of what every son should and may be. The obedience that Christ rendered God requires from human beings today.” Christ's Object Lessons, p.282

“The obedience of Christ to His Father was the same obedience that is required of man. Man cannot overcome Satan's temptations without divine power to combine with his instrumentality. So with Jesus Christ; He could lay hold of divine power. He came not to our world to give the obedience of a lesser God to a greater, but as a man to obey God's Holy Law, and in this way He is our example. The Lord Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what a God could do, but what a man could do, through faith in God's power to help in every emergency. Man is, through faith, to be a partaker in the divine nature, and to overcome every temptation wherewith he is beset.” Our High Calling, p.48

"I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtained the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action." Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen White, p.113

“‘The prince of this world cometh,’ saith Jesus, ‘and hath nothing in Me.’ There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us.

Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character." The Desire of Ages, p.123

"He who has not sufficient faith in Christ to believe that He can keep him from sinning, has not the faith that will give him an entrance into the kingdom of God.-- Manuscript 161, 1897.

Those who accept the "omega" apostasy must reject or rationalize away these statements as well as her counsel regarding living without a mediator when the judgment ends. Ellen White describes those living without a mediator during the time of trouble in the following way.

"So, in the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins have gone beforehand to Judgment, and have been blotted out; and they cannot bring them to remembrance." The Great Controversy, p. 620}

Satan's Misleading

Satan knows these things and will do all he can to lead individuals to accept the "omega" apostate teaching that complete victory over sin is impossible. He knows that victory can only come by our focusing on Jesus and letting Him live out His life in and through us. So Satan's plan is to get our eyes off Jesus.

He will use one of two deceptions. First, he leads us to focus on the temptations we struggle with. He wants us to think we can become righteous and even perfectly develop Christ's character by focusing on the do's and don'ts, the law; anything but Jesus. He wants us to think that we can be victorious over temptation if we just "try" hard enough, with God's help of course. He leads many to believe that focusing on the do's and don'ts of our religion will bring revival. Such a religion is a burden void of joy. All such effort will fail. The do's and don'ts are important, but they must not be our focus.

Or, Satan will lead many to reject the possibility of perfectly reflecting the character of Christ by obedience to God's law. Most that come to this conclusion have tried to obey in their own strength and discovered the impossibility of attaining complete victory. So they draw back and rest in a justifying Christ only believing that full and complete sanctification is impossible. They conclude that complete victory over temptation and sin is not attainable in this life. This too is a very dangerous position to take. Both legalism and rejection of complete obedience will lead to staying in their Laodicean condition.

Satan's "omega" apostasy teaches that such a view of complete obedience and victory over temptation will lead to boasting and feelings of achieving perfection. Attitudes of boasting or feelings of achieving perfection are impossible for the Spirit filled Christian to experience. The closer they come to Christ the more sinful they know themselves to be. They realize that there is no righteousness in them. They know they could yield to a temptation any moment they take their eyes off Jesus. They know their only hope of victory is by continuing to trust Jesus to live out His victory in and through them. And when Jesus returns they will feel unworthy to be saved. They know their only hope of salvation and victory has been their faith in Jesus. They cast their crowns at Jesus feet because they know they don't deserve the crowns because Jesus did everything for them. All they did was have faith in Him to save them from sin and death. They will know what Paul meant when he wrote:

"so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him [the Father] that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.'" 1Corinthians 1:29-31 (NIV)

Their boast throughout eternity will be boasting in Jesus; praising Jesus Christ for the victory over sin and the eternal salvation He provided for them.

God's Purpose in Calling the Adventist Church into Existence

God raised up the Adventist Church to give the three angels messages of Revelation chapter fourteen to the world. These messages are to warn the world of Christ's soon return and give important biblical insights necessary to be ready for that great event.

The first angel's message (Revelation 14:6-7) includes the gospel of deliverance from sin, and a call to worship God as creator, which includes worship on the seventh-day Sabbath since it was established at the end of creation week by God as a memorial of earth's creation. The first angel's message also includes a declaration that "the hour of God's judgment is come," which began on October 22, 1844 when Christ moved from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary to carry out the cleansing of the sanctuary (Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; Daniel 8:14, Malachi 3:1).

The second angel's message (Revelation 14:8) warns the world of spiritual Babylon's fall because of her sin, which warning will be repeated as the judgment in heaven comes to a close (Revelation 18:1-5). This takes place as the earth is "lightened" with God's glory or character as the result of His people reflecting the character of Christ 100 per cent; the Ten Commandments being the transcript of His character.

The third angel's message (Revelation 14:9-11) warns the world not to receive the mark of the beast. Those who reject God's call to come out of spiritual Babylon will continue to "worship" the beast and his image (Revelation 13:15-16), and receive his mark on their hand or forehead. God's desire is to write His law in the hearts and minds of His people (2Corinthians 3:3, Hebrews 8:8-10). Those who refuse to worship God as creator on the seventh-day Sabbath (which will be evidence that His law is in their heart) as He commanded (Exodus 20:8-11) will receive the beast's mark and will be destroyed by the "brightness" of Christ's second coming (2Thessalonians 2:8-12).

The gospel of deliverance from sin is at the heart of each of these three messages. Also, it is only as one understands and experiences the baptism of the Holy Spirit and righteousness by faith that the full gospel of deliverance can be experienced and individuals be prepared for Christ's second coming. Hence, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's call to give this last warning to the world requires her to understand, experience and proclaim the gospel of deliverance in order to fulfill her mission of warning and preparing the world for Christ's second coming.

By the late 1800's it seems the Adventist church had lost sight of what was to be the heart and soul of her message. Therefore, God sought to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ back to this church in 1888 through two men, Jones and Waggoner. This truth was necessary for the church to understand and experience in order to fulfill her God given purpose and mission to proclaim the three angel's messages in the context of the gospel of deliverance from sin. Ellen White understood this when she wrote:

"Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent." Testimonies to Ministers, p. 91-92, (1895)

Our denomination had become so doctrine focused that Jesus had been lost in our experience and teaching. Our religion had become legalistic, which is the sure result of losing sight of Jesus in one's life. The church needed to once again understand the work of the Holy Spirit and righteousness by faith.

Jones and Waggoner spoke at the 1888 General Conference Session in Minneapolis, Minnesota. They taught a number of biblical truths at that session and the years that followed. In this chapter I am focusing on what I consider to be the heart of their message; righteousness by faith in Christ. Righteousness by faith encompasses both Christ's justifying and sanctifying righteousness. I will focus primarily on the sanctification aspect of Christ's righteousness by faith in this chapter.

The message of righteousness by faith comes through loud and clear as one reads their writings. Following 1888 Ellen White also often wrote on the subject. God used the 1888 message to uplift Christ as never before to our denomination.

Ellen White emphatically supported their teachings on this subject.

"The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders [E.J.] Waggoner and [A. T.] Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, **which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.**" Ibid (emphasis added)

Ellen White clearly pointed out that reception of the message of righteousness by faith presented in 1888 would lead to "obedience to all of the commandments of God." This message would also usher in the loud cry, the latter rain of the Spirit and hasten Christ's glorious return. Ellen White wrote:

"This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice [loud cry], and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure [latter rain]." Ibid

In another place she wrote:

"God gave to His servants, [Jones and Waggoner], a testimony that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel's message in clear, distinct lines." Letter 57, 1895.

The message of righteousness by faith and the third angel's message are one and the same. Both lead to obedience to God's commandments.

The Significance of the 1888 Message

She also declared that the message of righteousness by faith is the message to be proclaimed with a "loud voice" (loud cry) as the latter rain of the Spirit is poured out. As this amazing message of Christ and His righteousness began to be proclaimed Ellen White believed the loud cry of the third angel had begun. Of this she wrote:

“The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.” Review and Herald, Nov. 22, 1892

Ellen White clearly associated the Holy Spirit with the message of righteousness by faith that Jones and Waggoner taught.

“The work of the holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and the holy Spirit is the comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul.” Review and Herald, Nov. 29, 1892

Here she equated receiving the Holy Spirit with receiving the “personal presence of Christ into the soul.” This happens through experiencing the daily baptism of the Holy Spirit. And, it is only as Christ lives in the soul that His righteousness can be manifested in the life. Hence, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the message of righteousness by faith are inseparably linked together.

Ellen White also linked receiving the baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit with the earth being “lightened with the glory of God.” (Revelation 18:1)

“When the earth is lightened with the glory of God, we shall see a work similar to that which was wrought when the disciples, filled with the holy Spirit, proclaimed the power of a risen Saviour.” Ibid

Just as the disciples were empowered to do Christ’s work by receiving the baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost; so also God’s last remnant people will need to be Spirit filled in order to proclaim the third angel’s message in the context of righteousness by faith in power. The early rain, baptism of the Holy Spirit must be received in order to benefit from the latter rain.

By bringing the message of righteousness by faith to His people God was offering to them the Holy Spirit in fullness.

“The grace of the Holy Spirit has been offered you again and again. Light and power from on high have been shed abundantly in the midst of you.” Testimony to Ministers, p. 97

Glorious would have been the result if the Spirit had been received in fullness and the message of righteousness by faith had been accepted by God’s people following the 1888 message. The third angel’s message would have been given in the power of the latter rain of the Spirit, Christ would have been perfectly reflected in the lives of His people, the loud cry would have gone forth, the latter rain of the Spirit would have completed God’s work, and Christ would have come.

God sought to bring the Seventh-day Adventist Church to clearly understand and experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit and righteousness by faith. As we have seen, this was necessary for the church to fulfill her God-given mission.

A Great Disappointment

That is how it would have been. However, sad to say, that is not what happened. Ellen White began realizing that the message was not being received as God intended. Expressing her great concern she wrote:

“Neglect this great salvation, kept before you for years, despise this glorious offer of justification through the blood of Christ and sanctification through the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” Ibid 97

It was a serious mistake for the denomination to not take hold of this God-sent message to the fullest extent. Concerning this Ellen White wrote:

“An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord’s message given through Brethren Waggoner and Jones. By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining the efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.” Letter 96, 1896

Here again she connects the Holy Spirit being imparted to God’s people with the message of righteousness by faith. Both were rejected and God’s people did not experience complete victory over sin that is necessary to perfectly reflect Christ’s character. Because of this Ellen White wrote:

“We may have to remain in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel.” Letter 184, 1901

This prediction has certainly proved to be true. We have remained in this world over 100 years since that statement was made.

It is because of these very significant statements by Ellen White concerning the message of righteousness by faith presented in 1888 that I am compelled to write this book. God is calling His last generation into existence today. In order to be part of that generation who are ready to receive the latter rain and meet Jesus we must understand and experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit and righteousness by faith, which leads to complete victory in Jesus Christ over the power of sin. Only then will the Adventist

church fulfill the purpose for which she was called into existence. Only then will the latter rain of the Spirit fall upon the church.

“Only those who are clothed in the garments of his righteousness will be able to endure the glory of his presence when he shall appear with ‘power and great glory.’” Review and Herald, July 9, 1908

Satan knows this and has been working for many years to develop the “omega” apostasy, which is causing many individuals within the church to reject the teaching that the Ten Commandments can actually be obeyed to the fullest extent. In this they unknowingly are rejecting the message of righteousness by faith.

A Preparatory Time

The reason soon after 1888 the latter rain did not come in fullness and Christ did not return is the necessary preparation had not taken place. Malachi describes a cleansing from sin when Christ would “suddenly come to his temple.”

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts. Malachi 3:1-5

These verses tell us of Christ entering into the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary (temple) to finish His mediatory work in the Christian's behalf. During that work of Christ there would be a work of cleansing from sin going on in the lives of Christians living at that time. This work would lead to “righteousness” in their life (Christ's righteousness manifest 100%), which will be “pleasant unto the Lord.” Once that work is complete Christ will come to deliver His people and bring “swift judgment” against the unrepentant.

Ellen White wrote of this in the following quote.

“This coming is foretold also by the prophet Malachi. ‘The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.’ [Malachi 3:1.] The coming of the Lord to his temple was sudden, unexpected, to his people. They were not looking for him there. They expected him to come to earth, ‘in flaming

fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel.' [2 Thessalonians 1:8.]

"But the people were not yet ready to meet their Lord. There was still a work of preparation to be accomplished for them. Light was to be given, directing their minds to the temple of God in Heaven; and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in his ministration there, new duties would be revealed. Another message of warning and instruction was to be given to the church.

"Says the prophet: 'Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.' [Malachi 3:2, 3.] Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above, are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort, they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative Judgment is going forward in Heaven, **while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth.** This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14.

"When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for his appearing. 'Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.' [Malachi 3:4.] Then the church which our Lord at his coming is to receive to himself will be 'a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' [Ephesians 5:27.] Then she will look forth 'as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.' [Song of Solomon 6:10.]

"Besides the coming of the Lord to his temple, Malachi also foretells his second advent, his coming for the execution of the judgment, in these words: 'And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.' [Malachi 3:5.] Jude refers to the same scene when he says, 'Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds.' [Jude 14, 15.] This coming, and the coming of the Lord to his temple, are distinct and separate events." The Great Controversy, p. 424-426 (emphasis added)

Satan's Deceptions

As we have seen, Satan knows the importance of God's people understanding and experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit, righteousness by faith and complete victory over sin. He works hard to create confusion on these precious truths. He will lead some sincere Christians to fall into a legalistic, works approach to victory. Others he will lead to reject any possibility of complete victory and take a more "liberal" view. Either of these approaches will not yield the victory necessary to receive the latter rain and be ready for Christ's return. Satan's "omega" apostate teaching undermines many of God's people's understanding that complete victory over sin is possible and even necessary to be ready for Christ's second coming.

The “Eye Salve” of the Spirit

In order to come out of the Laodicean condition, become just like Jesus and be ready for His glorious return we must have the “eye salve.” Therefore, since this book focuses on coming out of our Laodicean condition and being ready for Christ’s return, it is essential that the reader understands this very important biblical subject.

What is the Eye Salve?

When Jesus listed the necessity of the “eye salve” He stated it was what gave the spiritual sight. Jesus called the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of truth” (John 14:17). The Spirit is described as the Spirit of truth because it is the Spirit that “guides into all truth” (John 16:13); opens our eyes to see truth. Ellen White referred to the eye salve as the “eye-salve of spiritual discernment.”

Hence, when one studies God’s Word or teaches God’s Word it is essential the eye salve of the Spirit be present in order to clearly understand the Word or enable those who hear the Word to be convicted that it is truth. Jesus emphasized the necessity of the Spirit for the disciples to effectively witness for Him to the world when He said,

“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence...

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:4-5, 8

Jesus made it very clear to the disciples that they must receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to be effective in fulfilling their God given mission. Hence, the “eye salve” necessary to have God’s Word impact one’s life and empower the preaching of the gospel is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Concerning this Ellen White wrote:

“When our eyes are anointed with the holy eye-salve, we shall be able to detect the precious gems of truth, even though they may be buried beneath the surface.” {RH, February 14, 1899 par. 1}

“Their eyes, anointed with the heavenly eye salve will see other lessons in the Holy Word than those seen by readers whose hearts are not cleansed, refined, and elevated. Under the working of the Holy Spirit the conscience will recognize a pure, high standard of righteousness that puts to shame the low, cheap ideas of the surface reader, whose mind is corrupted with sin. They see that the doers of the Word alone are justified before God.” Letter 34, 1896. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 20}

Notice that Ellen White associated the eye salve with recognizing a “pure, high standard of righteousness.” The eye salve opens the eye to see the importance of being “doers of the Word.” The eye salve leads to obedience to God’s commandments; the high standard of righteousness.

Satan’s Plan

Satan does not want you to understand or experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Ellen White was aware of Satan's devices to hinder the reception of this Gift by God's people.

"Since the ministry of the Holy Spirit is of vital importance to the church of Christ, it is one of the devices of Satan, through the errors of extremists and fanatics, to cast contempt upon the work of the Spirit, and cause the people of God to neglect this source of strength which our Lord Himself has provided." *Australian Signs of the Times*, July 24, 1911

The baptism of the Holy Spirit simply describes a special infilling of the Holy Spirit into the life of the believer. This baptism is also called infilling and anointing, and has been available to Christians since the day of Pentecost 2000 years ago. Peter associated the Pentecost outpouring of the Spirit with the "early rain" prophecy of Joel; (Acts 2:16-21).

Jesus’ Promise and Example

Jesus promised that the Father would give the Spirit if asked for, (Luke 11:13). Paul tells us we receive this gift by faith, (Galatians 3:14). The reception of this Gift is so important that Paul commands us to "be filled with the Spirit," (Ephesians 5:18). It is not simply an option. It is a necessity if the believer is earnest about experiencing the full deliverance from sin the gospel of Jesus Christ offers.

Jesus is our example in all things. In His life we see the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a special, separate event following His water baptism. This event equipped Him for personal victory over Satan’s temptations and Spirit anointed ministry. His experience is a divine model for every Christian. Christ was "begotten" of the Spirit, (Luke 1:35). He was led by the Spirit in his childhood and early manhood, (Luke 2:52). He received water baptism, which was followed by baptism in the Spirit, (Luke 3:21-22). From that point on He was filled with the Spirit, (Luke 4:1). After this experience of Spirit baptism (infilling or anointing) He was prepared to confront Satan and gain His great victories over this enemy, (Luke 4:2-13). He went forward to minister in the power of the Spirit from that day forward, (Luke 4:14; Acts 10:38).

The experience of every believer is to follow Christ's example. The Christian is first born of the Spirit and baptized in water, (John 3:5-8). However, water baptism is not enough. It is only the beginning. God wants the believer to also be baptized by the Holy Spirit, (Luke 3:16). This Spirit baptism became available to every believer from the

day of Pentecost onward. This infilling of the Spirit is necessary for the believer to have the power to live a victorious life and successfully witness for Christ, (Acts 1:8).

Jesus said the believer would do the "works" He did and "greater works." When Jesus was on earth He could only be at one place at one time. However, when He ascended to His Father He was able to be in many places throughout the earth by indwelling His followers through the Holy Spirit, (1John 3:24). Hence, Jesus empowers the believer to do the same works He did by the Holy Spirit and these works will be greater because they are more widespread.

The fulfillment of Jesus' promise was seen on the day of Pentecost and following. The gospel was preached, souls were won, unity and joy were seen in the believers and the sick were healed, (Acts 2:46-47; 5:15-16). This was the same type of ministry as Jesus' ministry because it was Jesus doing this ministry through His church, which is called the "body of Christ" (1Corinthians 12:27).

Receiving the Baptism of the Spirit After Pentecost

Not every believer was present at Pentecost. A practical question might be, how did believers receive the baptism of the Spirit after Pentecost? The answer is found in the book of Acts. On a couple occasions the Spirit fell on a group while Peter spoke to them, (Acts 10:44-46; 11:15-17). It appears that God led the church to receive the baptism of the Spirit in a more orderly way by the laying on of hands also, (Acts 8:12-17; 19:1-6). Note in Acts 8 the individuals of Samaria were led by the Spirit to accept Christ and be baptized. Yet they had not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Peter and John came to them from Jerusalem for the specific purpose to lay hands on them and pray for the baptism of the Spirit to come upon them. This is a clear indication that water baptism and Spirit baptism are two separate experiences. The Spirit leads an individual to accept Christ and be baptized in water. This is a different work than the baptism of the Spirit, which must be sought separately when one becomes aware of it. We see in Acts that Paul also received the baptism of the Spirit by the laying on of hands and prayer, (Acts 9:17). The one performing this prayer with laying on of hands should be a believer who has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit themselves.

A believer desiring the baptism of the Holy Spirit does not necessarily have to have someone pray for them laying hands on them. When I first began sharing this teaching with our church one of the members decided that very evening to seek the baptism of the Spirit. She earnestly prayed for God to fill her with His Spirit. She said later that she felt the greatest peace that she ever felt come over her. God has not limited Himself to only one method of receiving the baptism of the Spirit. I do believe that the special ceremony of praying with laying on of hands is a wonderful way to seek the infilling of the Spirit. It is always a special blessing to share in this sacred experience with a fellow believer.

Ellen White stated many years ago;

"What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without this, we are no more fitted to go forth to the world than were the disciples after the crucifixion of their Lord." *Review & Herald*, Feb. 18, 1890

"Impress upon all the necessity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the sanctification of the church, so that they will be living, growing, fruit-bearing trees of the Lord's planting." *Testimonies* Vol. 6, p.86

When one reads Ellen White's statements on the baptism of the Holy Spirit it is clear that she saw its importance and urged every believer to seek it. It was clear to her that the baptism of the Spirit was essential for God's work to be finished in the lives of His people and in this earth. This is why those in Laodicea must receive the "eye salve" in order to come out of their spiritually blind condition.

It is also clear from these statements that she viewed conversion by the Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit as two separate experiences in the Spirit. If one automatically received the baptism of the Spirit at conversion or water baptism there would be no reason for Ellen White to state, "What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit." God sought to again draw our denomination's attention to this very important experience in the Spring of 1928, when Elder LeRoy Froom was led to present this subject to delegates and workers at the quadrennial ministerial institutes held in conjunction with the union conference sessions. The book, *The Coming of the Comforter*, resulted from these presentations.

Referring to our neglect of understanding and receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit LeRoy Froom states;

"I am persuaded that this is our colossal blunder. I confess it has been mine. We are not to 'go' until we are endued.... All true service begins at our personal Pentecost." *The Coming of the Comforter*, p.94.

Froom continues;

"For there is an experience beyond and above the initial step by which the Holy Spirit first reveals sin, and begets a new life in the soul, and that is to be filled with the Spirit. For the lack of this, one's testimony is feeble and the spiritual life but partial.

"Alas, many today have gone as far as the baptism of repentance, but no farther." *Ibid.* 142-143

Frooms' study led him to believe that the Spirit's infilling is necessary in order for the believer to be victorious through the time of trouble to Christ's coming.

"It is a relationship into which we may or may not enter, though we are exhorted, yea divinely commanded to, in Ephesians 5; and in order to abide through the time when there will be no high priestly intercession, when mercy ceases and forgiveness for transgressions is ended, we must enter." *Ibid.* 170

There has been much misinformation and confusion about what happens when a person receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Satan fears this experience in the

believer more than any other. He knows that the baptism of the Holy Spirit will break his power in the believer's life and the resulting powerful witness for Jesus Christ will bring Satan's work to an end on planet earth. For this reason he has done everything he can to confuse this teaching and cause many sincere Christians to misunderstand it and even be suspicious of it.

"There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation. When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come." *Review & Herald*, March 22, 1887

Receiving the baptism of the Spirit does not necessarily involve a highly emotional experience. One may or may not feel something at the time of seeking the infilling of the Spirit. However, the Spirit will make Himself known to the one He indwells. His presence will begin changing the believer's life from within. A new power for victory and service will be manifested, and a stronger desire to pray and study God's Word will be experienced.

God desires to give His children this wonderful experience of Spirit baptism. However, in order to receive we must ask in faith believing He will bestow it. Secondly we must be willing to give ourselves completely to God.

"The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost." *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 507

This is why Jesus tells Laodicea that they must "buy" the eye salve from Him. In order to receive one must surrender 100% to Jesus. This was the experience of the disciples as they prayed for 10 days before receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

"They were bidden not to leave Jerusalem till they had been endued with power from on high. They therefore remained in Jerusalem, fasting and praying. They emptied from their hearts all bitterness, all estrangement, all differences; for this would have prevented their prayers being as one. And when they were emptied of self, Christ filled the vacancy. The Holy Spirit came upon them, and filled all the house where they were sitting. Then was the promise fulfilled: 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.'" (*Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1898, paragraph 8,"

Seek the Baptism Every Day

Another very important point is that we must renew this infilling every day. Paul said, "I die daily", (1Corinthians 15:31). The dying to self and infilling of the Spirit is a daily experience. It is not a "once and forever" experience. Paul tells us that the "inward man is renewed day by day", (2Corinthians 4:16). We need the renewing of the Spirit every day of our life. Also Paul's command to "be filled with the Spirit," (Ephesians 5:18), is a continuous action verb in the Greek meaning we are to keep on being filled with the Spirit daily. With the infilling of the Spirit the believer is led by the Spirit. Paul writes of the importance of this being a daily experience when he states; "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:14

Again the verb form in the Greek is continuous action. Paul is saying, "as many as are continuing to be led daily by the Spirit of God" are the sons of God. Hence, we must receive the Spirit every day to be led by Him every day.

Christ is our example in all things. Note what Ellen White writes about the baptism of the Spirit in Christ's daily life.

"Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others." *Christ Object Lessons*, p.139

Jesus Lives in the Spirit Filled Believer

John tells us that the Christians who are living when Jesus comes will be "like" Him (1 John 3:2). How much like Jesus are we to become? The Greek word translated "like" means "just like" Him. How can this happen? Through the daily baptism of the Holy Spirit Jesus will live out His life in us. Paul described this when he wrote:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me:** and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). (emphasis added)

Through the infilling of the Holy Spirit Christ will come and live in each of us. The text quoted above states that the Spirit-filled believer would have the "faith of Jesus." Why; because Jesus is living in them.

The Spirit-filled believer will have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5). They will have the likes and dislikes of Christ, the love of righteousness and hatred of sin Christ has. They will have the same desire to obey the Father that Christ has (Psalm 40:7-8), and the same passion for souls Christ has (Luke 19:10). Paul tells us the wisdom—righteousness—holiness of Christ is theirs (1Corinthians 1:30); every virtue and quality of Christ. They will become more and more like Christ every day as they are changed into His "image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Christ living in the believer through the infilling of the Spirit causes the character of Christ to be fully developed in them. The Holy Spirit produces the "fruit of the Spirit" when He dwells within us (Galatians 5:22-23). This wonderful fruit of character will be manifested in the life more and more abundantly as the Spirit takes greater possession of the life. The Spirit will take such control of the believer that they will become like Jesus in every way (1 John 3:2). Ellen White very nicely describes this in the following statement:

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God, as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us" (*Desire of Ages*, p. 668).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit will bring about the fulfillment of Christ's promise that the believers would do the "works" He did and greater works (John 14:12). Christ will do the same works today through the believer as He did when He walked this earth 2000 years ago. This happens when the believer receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit and continues to walk in the Spirit. In fact, Jesus said the believers would do "greater works" because Jesus' works will be manifested through every believer that receives Him fully. In a very real sense every believer becomes as Christ to the world. We become Christ's mouth, hands, feet, doing the very works He did; preaching, teaching, healing, casting out devils, etc.

It is this full "manifestation of the sons of God" that the whole of creation is waiting for (Romans 8:19). When this occurs in its fullness the earth will then be lighted with God's character of glory and the end will come (Revelation 18:1).

Benefits of Receiving the Baptism

The baptism of the Holy Spirit gives power to our witness and brings forth the fruit of Christ's character in the life. Paul speaks of this when he writes;

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2Corinthians 3:18

God's glory is His character, (Exodus 33:18-19). Paul states here that the believer will be growing in Christ's character, "from glory to glory," by the Spirit of the Lord that dwells in him. The infilling of the Spirit of God will "make you perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever", (Hebrews 13:21).

Ellen White reaffirms the development of character the recipient of the Spirit's infilling receives when she writes;

"When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven." *Desire of Ages*, p.173

We can clearly see why Jesus counsels those in Laodicea to receive this eye salve of the Spirit. It is the only way to come out of their spiritually blind and spiritually weak condition.

We Must Experience the Early Rain to Receive the Latter Rain of the Spirit

It is time for the "latter rain" to fall. If we do not experience the infilling of the Spirit, which is the "early rain" (Joel 2:23), we will not be prepared to receive and participate in the work of the latter rain. I believe God is moving among His people today and leading them into this wonderful experience. I will present this important truth in another chapter.

A Necessity for Coming Out of Laodicea

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in order to come out of our Laodicean condition and be ready for Christ's second coming we must daily experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit filled experience is not an option for those ready to meet Jesus when He returns. It is a necessity! Ellen White confirms this with the words:

"Nothing but the baptism of the Holy Spirit can bring up the church to its right position, and prepare the people of God for the fast approaching conflict." Letter 15, 1889, Dr Burke

The White Raiment – Christ’s Justifying Righteousness

In order for the church to come out of Laodicea and fulfill her purpose it is necessary for her to understand and experience righteousness by faith (white raiment); both justifying and sanctifying righteousness. In this chapter I am focusing on the justification aspect of receiving Christ’s righteousness, which has been called receiving the “imputed” righteousness of Christ. Justification and sanctification, the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ go hand-in-hand when one accepts Christ as Savior. They are two sides of the same coin. God’s desire is for the believer to experience both in the life. The problem through the ages has been confusion concerning what the Bible teaches on these important subjects, and understanding how to experience them to the fullest extent in one’s life.

To be justified is to be declared free from the guilt and penalty of law breaking. For instance, if you are accused of breaking some law you will be taken to court, tried, and judged. If you are found guilty you will receive a just penalty for your law breaking. If during the trial you are found innocent of the charges you will then be declared “justified.” You will be free from the guilt and penalty of the law breaking you were accused of committing.

Man’s Condition

The first step in understanding and experiencing justification from our disobedience of God’s law is to know what the Bible teaches about man’s natural born condition before God. According to the Bible we are sinners through and through. Not one of us is righteous; for we have all sinned (Romans 3:10, 23). Because of this condition we are all condemned to death as unrighteous law breakers (Romans 6:23). This terrible condition came upon mankind through the forefather of us all, Adam (Romans 5:12). His sin brought this sinful condition upon mankind. Along with this sinful condition came the just penalty of death. Therefore, every human being stands before God as a condemned sinner deserving of death. That is our hopeless, helpless condition and unless God does something for us we are all eternally lost; separated from God. This is the reason Jesus Christ became one of us.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already,” (John 3:16-18).

Once one understands this he might say; “I now realize I’m a sinner. So I will begin obeying God’s law and He will accept or justify me; declare me free from the guilt and death penalty of my sin. I will now begin obeying God’s law and become righteous in His sight.”

The truth is that when we come to realize we are sinful law breakers we are powerless to then begin keeping the law of God in order to achieve righteousness and justification; freedom from the guilt and penalty of sin in our life. Concerning this Paul wrote:

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20

No matter how hard we “try” to obey God’s law we still fall short of perfect righteous obedience. No, we are sinners through and through; slaves to sin because of our sinful nature (Romans 7:14, 18). We are filled with unrighteousness

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” Romans 3:10-12

A Fatal Error

This was the spiritual “trap” or error the Jews of Christ’s day fell into. They thought they could be righteous in God’s sight by keeping the law (Romans 9:31-32). They were trying the impossible and didn’t know it. So when Christ came preaching righteousness by faith the religious leaders believed He was teaching heresy. They rejected the only One through whom they could become righteous. The Apostle Paul wrote of their condition and clearly stated that Christ is the “end” or fulfillment of the law for righteousness for all who believe in Him:

“Brethren, my heart’s desire for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” (Romans 10:1-4).

On the other hand, the non-Jews (Gentiles) who accepted Christ attained righteousness before God. How did they do that? They became righteous before God by “faith” in Christ and His righteousness (Romans 9:30). For the Bible teaches that there is no way to become righteous and be saved except through belief in Christ (Acts 4:12). No one is made righteous and saved by their own righteous works. Righteousness and salvation comes only through faith in Jesus (Titus 3:5-6). Paul wrote:

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh be justified in his sight... Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:20, 28

There is no righteousness in this earth except the righteousness of Christ.

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:” Philipians 3:9

This applies to both imputed and imparted righteous (justifying and sanctifying righteousness) in the Christian’s life. The Bible teaches that we receive Christ’s imputed righteousness and imparted righteousness by our faith in Him. We experience both justification and sanctification by faith in Christ (Colossians 2:6).

Jesus’ Gift

This is why Jesus Christ chose to be born a man, live a victorious human life over sin, and allow Himself to be put to death. Only Christ, the God-man, could save man (John 1:1-4, 14). When Jesus walked this earth as a man He lived the perfect sinless, righteous life (1Peter 2:22). He was tempted in all points just as we are and gained the victory over every temptation (Hebrews 4:15).

The Apostle Paul contrasts Adam and Christ in the fifth chapter of Romans. He points out that through Adam’s sin all his descendants (you and me) became sinners by nature. Therefore Adam and all his descendants stand guilty before God and condemned to death (Romans 5:12). On the other hand, Christ came and lived the perfectly righteous life. Because of this the one who chooses to believe in Christ has His righteousness given to him freely (Romans 5:17-19). This transaction happens by “faith.” That is why the Christian becomes righteous in God’s sight by faith in Christ. He has Christ’s righteousness put on him, imputed to him, or is covered by Christ’s righteousness by faith; by believing it is so. The Christian can do nothing to earn this righteousness.

Thus, this is how a man or woman can become righteous. They respond to the Holy Spirit’s conviction that Jesus is their Savior and that they are a sinner. They accept Christ as their Savior, confess their sin and ask God to forgive them. They believe they are forgiven (1John 1:9). They believe they are now covered with Christ’s righteousness. So when God looks at them He sees perfect obedience; the obedience of Christ; perfect righteousness, the righteousness of Christ. They accept the fact that Christ died for their sin (Isaiah 53:5-6). By faith they accept the free gift of forgiveness, righteousness and eternal life Jesus gives them (Romans 6:23; 1John 5:11-13). By faith they stand “justified” before God; free from the guilt and penalty of sin.

By faith in Christ a marvelous exchange takes place in the Christian. Jesus takes our sins and death penalty upon Himself, and He gives us His perfect righteousness and eternal life. Ellen White wrote of this with the words:

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. ‘With His stripes we are healed.’” *The Desire of Ages*, p. 25

Understanding and experiencing Christ’s justifying righteousness is essential for those in Laodicea to come out of their spiritually “naked” condition, and fulfill the church’s purpose and mission. It is only those who are experiencing Christ’s imputed righteousness (justification) and imparted righteousness (sanctification) that will be sealed, experience the latter rain, and be ready for Christ’s return.

Satan knows this and has devised his “omega” apostasy to stop Christ’s righteousness from being manifested in the life. He is leading many to accept Christ’s justifying righteousness, but reject the truth that Christ’s sanctifying, imparted righteousness, which leads to perfect obedience to God’s law. Those deceived rest in Christ’s justifying righteousness believing that is all they need to be saved. They believe Christ’s sanctifying righteousness can only be partial in one’s life and that complete victory over sin is not possible. Tragically these individuals will not come out of their Laodicean condition. They are the foolish virgins without the oil of the Spirit.

The White Raiment – Christ’s Sanctifying Righteousness

The great controversy has always been over Christ and God’s law. We read of this in the book of Revelation when the controversy first began in heaven (Revelation 12:7-10). Satan hates Christ and has always tried to replace Him (Isaiah 14:12-14). He hates God’s law and seeks to replace it.

The same controversy takes place in the lives of men and women today. Satan desires to reign on the throne of the heart. He wants mankind to follow his ways, not Christ’s ways or God’s law. In the area of Christian living he wants to replace Christ’s righteousness with man’s efforts to become righteous, which is legalism. He wants them to look to their own efforts for righteousness rather than Christ and His righteousness. He wants them to look to themselves for obedience rather than to Christ manifesting His obedience in and through them. Or, on the other hand, Satan leads individuals to believe full and complete obedience to God’s law is impossible. Either error is the result of being deceived by Satan’s “omega” apostasy.

However, it is only as God’s people experience Christ’s righteous obedience in their lives that they are able to come out of their Laodicean condition. This is how they receive the “white raiment” God says they must have (Revelation 3:18).

Righteousness by Works – Man’s Natural Response

Seeking to be righteous by our works, by one’s own efforts, comes natural to man. We are raised with the teaching that if we want something we have to work to get it; rewards and benefits are the result of our efforts.

When God delivered Israel from their Egyptian bondage and gave them His commandments and statutes we read their response in Exodus 19:7-8.

“And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.”

God knew that they could not accomplish obedience in their own strength. However, He honored their statement knowing they needed to learn for themselves they had promised something that would be impossible for them to fulfill by their own efforts. This is called the Old Covenant in the Bible; Israel’s promise to obey God by their own efforts; “All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.”

Through the centuries to the time of Christ the Jewish leaders and people still thought they could be righteous by keeping God’s law. The Rabbis and Pharisees were so convinced of this that they created many laws in their traditions, which were not in the Bible, the purpose being to protect God’s law from being trampled on through disobedience. It is these rules and traditions that the Pharisees accused Jesus of

breaking. None of these efforts led to true righteousness. For it is impossible for man to attain to righteousness by trying hard to keep God's law.

Paul was well aware of the Jews failure to attain righteousness when he wrote:

“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;” Romans 9:30-32

“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Romans 10:1-4

Paul understood that Christ is the only source for righteousness for mankind. That is why he wrote, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness,” The “end” or goal of the law is righteousness. For the law's precepts define righteousness, which is unattainable by man's efforts to obey it. Therefore, God sent Christ to fulfill all the requirements that the law demands for righteousness. Hence, one can become righteous only by faith in Christ's justifying and sanctifying righteousness.

New Covenant – God's Righteousness

God providing law righteousness through Christ is what the Bible calls the New Covenant, which is based on better promises; God's promise to fulfill His commandment's requirements for them and in them. Old Testament prophets foretold there would be a New Covenant.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Jeremiah 31:31-33

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” Ezekiel 36:25-27

Throughout the New Testament it is declared that Jesus Christ fulfilled the law’s righteous requirements. Concerning this Paul wrote of his desire to, “...be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Philippians 3:9.

Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant, which is based on God’s promises to provide righteousness for man, and not man’s promise to become righteous by keeping God’s law.

“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Hebrews 8:6-12

Christians today can easily fall back into the Old Covenant obedience once they accept Christ. I would guess that most every Christian has followed the example of Israel in the wilderness. When one accepts Christ and is thankful for the salvation He gives them it is natural to ask the Lord what He wants them to do. He reveals His will in His word, the Bible. Then the natural response is, “I love you, Lord. Therefore, all that you ask me to do I will do.” This is an Old Covenant response. However, the young Christian doesn’t know yet how impossible it is for him/her to fulfill that promise. So he/she enters into a life of sporadic obedience, falling and failing time and again. Their Christian walk becomes a discouraging one and a burden.

The Christians in Galatia fell into this same Old Covenant attitude. They became a Christian through the converting power of the Holy Spirit, but then began trying to

become just like Jesus by keeping God's law through their own efforts. Of this Paul wrote:

“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” Gal 3:3

Paul's purpose was never to do away with or abolish God's law. In answer to this false accusation he replied:

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” Romans 3:31

When the Christian enters into the New Covenant through faith in Christ for his righteous obedience the law is being established in his heart and life by his faith. The Holy Spirit begins writing God's law in the heart.

“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.” 2Corinthians 3:3

Hence, we see that the New Covenant does not do away with God's law. God's law is still present. The only change that has taken place is the Christian's relationship to the law. Before one accepts Christ the law condemns him as a sinner deserving of death. Once one accepts Christ as his Savior the law's condemnation no longer rests upon him because Christ suffered on the cross for him the condemnation and death penalty for his sin. Therefore, he is free from the guilt and death penalty for sin. So, as Paul stated the matter, “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” Galatians 3:24.

Once the Christian accepts Christ he wants to keep God's law because the Spirit is putting the desire in his heart to obey. However, he soon learns that it is impossible to keep God's law by trying hard to obey. So the law becomes his “schoolmaster” pointing him to Christ as a “sanctifying” Savior. He then learns to “look to Jesus” (Hebrews 12:1-2) when he is tempted asking Christ to give him His victory over every temptation that comes his way. Therefore, he experiences Christ as his justifying Savior and sanctifying Savior. He enters fully into the New Covenant experience through faith in Christ.

The Gospel of Deliverance from Sin

The apostle Paul understood the gospel of victory over sin when he wrote:

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? ” Romans 6:1-2

Here Paul clearly states that the follower of Jesus Christ should not be living a life of habitual sin. He then goes on to explain why this is so.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.” Romans 6:3-7

Paul is telling us in these verses that all who have accepted Jesus Christ died with Him on the cross and were buried with Him in the grave. Therefore, the old sinful nature you; the sin loving you, the prideful you, the unforgiving you, the angry you, the lustful you, is dead and buried with Christ. Therefore, your old sinful nature is dead and buried, and need not control you any longer.

So when you are tempted to sin you are to believe that the old sinful nature that once controlled you need not control you anymore, and you do not need to yield to the temptation to sin. At the moment of temptation you simply put that sinful you back on the cross and believe it is dead and buried with Christ. This is what it means to “die daily” and to “take up your cross daily.”

Knowing this to be a fact and that you don’t have to live the old life of sin Paul goes on to write:

“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” Romans 6:8-14.

Because you have died with Christ and were buried with Him, you have also been raised up with Christ and can live a life of obedience to God. For you are now “dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Therefore, you need not “yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but can now yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace”

In his letter to the Galatians Paul clearly describes how the Christian is to live an obedient life through Christ.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” Galatians 2:20

Here Paul states how the Christian is to live the obedient life by telling us how he did it. First, he accepted the fact that he was “crucified with Christ.” The old sinful Paul was dead and buried with Christ. Then he is quick to point out that “nevertheless I live.” However, it is not Paul that is actually living and controlling his life. Rather he states, “yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” For Paul Christ living in him was a reality. Therefore, Paul depended on Christ for victory over sin, which he states with these words, “the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” The phrase, “the faith of the Son of God” means the Son of God’s faithful obedience to His Father. So, what Paul is saying is that he lives the obedient Christian life by depending in faith on Christ, Who is living in him, to continue to live a life of obedience to His Father in and through Paul. So, Paul’s obedience is actually Christ’s righteous obedience manifest in and through him. This is the true biblical experience of sanctification by faith in Christ alone. Christ’s righteousness is “imparted,” or becomes the believer’s life.

In order to have the victory God wants us to have we must keep our eyes on Christ constantly or as Paul puts it, “Pray without ceasing” 1Thessalonians 5:17. We must become diligent to be led by the Spirit moment by moment, and be sensitive to the Spirit’s conviction when temptation comes our way. This will require 100% surrender of self-100% of the time. This is how the believer “buys” the “white raiment.”

You see, our sinful nature will try to dominate us. It will cry out to be satisfied by us yielding to the temptation. Our part is to willingly choose to turn away from the temptation; “deny self,” “take up our cross,” “die” to the yearning to fulfill the temptation and look to Christ asking Him to give us His victory over it and believe He will do just that. All we can do is choose and believe. We choose by giving our will to God and then believe Christ will give us His victory. This is the experience those will have who come out of Laodicea, receive the latter rain and are ready for Christ’s return.

You may find yourself having a desire for a certain sin that you really don’t want to give up. In that case, again look to Jesus. Ask Him to give you His desire concerning that particular sin. For Jesus not only gives us forgiveness for sin, but also repentance; a desire not to want the sin (Acts 5:31).

“The victory is not won without much earnest prayer, without the humbling of self at every step. Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. The stronghold of Satan would not be broken. The will must be placed on the side of God's will. You are not able, of yourself, to bring your purposes and desires and inclinations into submission to the will of God; but if you are ‘willing to be made willing,’ God will accomplish the work for you, even ‘casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.’ 2 Corinthians 10:5. Then you will ‘work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.’ Philippians 2:12, 13.” Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 142

Sanctifying Faith

This issue was at the heart of the Protestant Reformation. The battle cry of the reformation was “sola fide,” “by faith alone.” This issue is at the heart of the gospel and the message of righteousness by faith. It is also how one avoids falling into Satan’s “omega” apostasy.

The Bible is clear on the matter. Concerning the Christian’s walk with God Paul wrote:

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:”
Colossians 2:6

The way one receives Jesus Christ as his justifying Savior is by faith. He believes Jesus is the son of God, died for his sins, forgives his sins and gives him eternal life. One becomes a Christian by faith in Christ. Works are not involved. God does not require a lost sinner to begin doing good works before coming to Christ. The sinner does not have to “clean up” his life and try to make himself acceptable to God before receiving salvation. No, the sinner simply comes to Christ as he is and accepts Him by faith as His Savior; accepts what Christ has done for him. The same principle of faith applies to the Christian being sanctified; living the obedient life.

Once one is born again and begins seeking to live the Christian life it is natural for him to focus on his own efforts to obey God’s law. However, he soon discovers that this is impossible. Paul described this impossibility.

“I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Romans 7:21-23

Paul had personally experienced the impossibility of obeying God's law through his own efforts. He was forced to cry out:

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
Romans 7:24

He then gives the answer to his cry, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord..." Romans 7:25. The Apostle Paul had learned that faith in Christ was the only way to victoriously live the obedient Christian life.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be **fulfilled in us**, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:3-4 (emphasis added)

In order to walk in the Spirit one must daily experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit and choose to yield to the Spirit's promptings. Once the choice is made to yield to the Spirit's promptings we are to then look to Christ to live out His victory over the temptations in our life. This is why Paul wrote that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Christ, Who lives in the Spirit filled believer will fulfill the righteousness requirements of the law in him as he yields or "walks" after the Spirit. It is Jesus Who does the fulfilling of the righteous requirements of the law in the believer.

Any righteousness that we seek to obtain by our own efforts is actually unrighteousness since it is impossible to attain to any righteousness apart from faith in Christ's righteousness. The prophet Isaiah wrote: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isaiah 64:6

There is no righteousness separate from faith. That is why Paul wrote: "...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Romans 14:23

The ONLY way to live a victorious Christian life is to look in faith to Christ when tempted to sin (Hebrews 12:1-2). The ONLY way one can become righteous is by faith in Christ's righteousness. The ONLY way one's obedience can be holy is by faith in Christ living out His holy, righteous, obedient life within him. When tempted he turns immediately to Christ asking Him to manifest His victory over that temptation. Christ's righteous obedience will then be manifest in his life. He will be experiencing righteousness by faith in his walk with the Lord. He will have bought the "white raiment." That is why Paul wrote:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" Romans 1:16-17

The true gospel of Christ is a gospel of “power.” It is the very power of Christ living in us through the baptism of the Holy Spirit bringing “salvation” to us through our “belief” or faith in Him. Hence, the justified Christian lives by “faith” in Christ alone for righteousness.

John recognized faith as the only means of overcoming the temptations of Satan.

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1John 5:4

You can see why Satan wants to blind God’s people to the marvelous experience of righteousness by faith in Christ alone. First, he wants to replace Christ from that aspect of the Christian’s life by looking to our own efforts to overcome instead of looking to Christ. Secondly, he doesn’t want us to have victory over temptation and sin. He does not want God’s law to be obeyed. For through experiencing righteousness by faith we place Christ at the very center of our walk with God, and our life will be a life of obedience to God and His law. Through our faith in Christ obedience to God’s law will be manifest in and through us by Christ. And that is true righteousness by faith. However, for us to receive this “white raiment” we must have the “eye salve” to remove our blindness to Satan’s “omega” deception.

Ellen White certainly understood the centrality of faith in the Christian’s life. She wrote:

“The knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith, is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired.” *Review and herald*, Oct. 18, 1898

She knew faith in Christ was the only way to victory. She knew that faith in Christ’s righteousness was the only way to be righteous. She knew that faith in Christ was the only way to perfect obedience of God’s law. This is why she endorsed the message of righteousness by faith so strongly. She knew it was the only way to have Christ central in the life, and become the people who come out of their Laodicean condition, fulfill God’s purpose for His church, receive the latter rain and are ready to meet Christ when He returns in glory.

The Struggle of Surrender

The believer’s part in experiencing righteousness by faith is to surrender his sinful desires to Christ and let Christ give him the victory. Even though one has accepted Christ he still has sinful desires within himself. At times his sinful nature will manifest strong desires to sin. The besetting sins in one’s life are the habitual sins that have dominated him even when he wanted to obey Christ. Time and again they gain the victory even over one’s best desires to do right. The only solution to this battle with self is to make a complete, 100% surrender (“buy” from God) at such times of conflict with one’s sinful desires. There may be times when the Christian will cry out as Christ did in the Garden, “If possible let this cup pass from me.” However, the Christian at such times must also say what Christ said, “Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.”

Once Christ gained the victory of surrender in the Garden the victory of the cross was assured. The same is true of the struggling sinner. Once the victory of surrender is gained the victory over the sin is assured because at that point Christ will manifest His victory in the life as the sinner asks Christ to do so, and believes He will.

The Christian must realize that he will face strong battles with his sinful desires. However, the victory can be gained not by trying hard to overcome these sinful desires. No, the victory will be gained when one chooses to surrender that besetting sin to God, and then ask Christ to give him His victory over that temptation. Choose to surrender the sinful desire to God, and believe Christ will give you His victory. It is just that simple. 100% surrender 100% of the time, and looking to Jesus 100% of the time for victory is the answer to living the consistently victorious Christian life.

Ellen White pointed out the cooperative nature of victory when she wrote:

“What the people want is instruction. What shall I do that I may save my soul? We need more and still more of vital godliness brought out...”--Letter 21, 1896.

“The work of gaining salvation is one of copartnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection [100% surrender]. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success [faith in Christ’s obedience]. Human effort of itself is not sufficient [100% surrender]. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man [100% surrender], who must draw his power from God [faith in Christ’s obedience]. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness.” Acts of the Apostles, p. 482 (emphasis added)

It is also important to ask Jesus to give us His desire toward any sin and temptation we face. Jesus will do that if we ask in faith. Remember, Jesus gives the Christian both forgiveness and the desire to not commit a particular sin.

How Can It Happen in Your Life?

So, what is the answer to how we can live a consistently victorious Christian life? The answer is letting Jesus live out His life in us. Paul taught: “...we have the mind of Christ.” 1Corinthians 2:16

Christ’s mind was filled with pure, holy, virtuous thoughts. If we have asked Christ to live in us through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, if we believe He does and if we believe He will manifest His love, His pure, holy, virtuous thoughts in our mind He will do just that. It is a matter of faith; believing He will truly manifest Himself in our life.

This is also why Ellen White wrote: “‘The prince of this world cometh,’ said Jesus, ‘and hath nothing in Me.’ John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. **So it may be with us.** Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the

conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, **sin has no more dominion over us**. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, **that we may attain to perfection of character**.” Desire of Ages, p. 123 (emphasis added)

The living Christ within the believer is to be his very life. Every believer is to be able to say, “Christ lives in me.” The Christian’s need is to learn how to let Jesus live out His life in and through him/her. That is why the following scriptures emphasize the reality of Christ living in the believer.

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be **saved by his life**”. Rom 5:10 (emphasis added)

“When Christ, **who is our life**, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Col 3:4 (emphasis added)

There is a science or methodology to salvation and victory over sin. These are the biblical principles for victory. Ellen White wrote:

“The Bible contains the science of salvation for all those who will hear and do the words of Christ. The apostle says, ‘All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’ [2 Timothy 3:16, 17.]” Christian Education, p.84

How does this happen? Simply put, the steps are these.

- When you become aware of a temptation to sin choose to turn your mind immediately away from it (Philippians 4:8).
- Believe that your sinful nature’s attraction to the temptation is broken.
- Believe Jesus is in you.
- Ask Him to manifest His virtue in you in relation to the temptation. Be specific.
- Believe that He will manifest Himself in that manner.
- Rest in that belief and don’t fight the temptation. When we fight the temptation we are actually focusing on it and trying to resist it in our own strength. Instead look to Jesus for His victory in you (Hebrews 12:1-2)
- Thank Him for the deliverance He has just given you.

Let’s take the example of anger and unforgiveness. For example, Someone does something to deeply hurt you, which has made you angry and you don’t want to forgive them. The application of these steps would go as follows:

- As soon as you become aware of the temptation to become angry and unforgiving you **surrender** that sinful desire and choose to turn your mind away from what is making you feel anger.
- Believe that the “angry you” and “unforgiving you” was crucified at the cross and that the power of your sinful nature’s desire to become angry and unforgiving is broken.
- Believe Jesus is in you.
- Ask Jesus to manifest His “peace” and “forgiveness” in and through you toward that person.
- Believe that He is doing that at that moment.
- Rest in that belief and don’t fight the temptation to become angry.
- Thank Him for the deliverance from anger He has just given you.

Another example is when you are tempted to impure thoughts. Do the same thing with that temptation.

- As soon as you become aware of the temptation to think impure thoughts **surrender** that sinful desire and choose to turn your mind away from what is making you think those impure thoughts.
- Believe that the “impure thinking you” was crucified at the cross and that the power of your sinful nature’s desire to think impure thoughts is broken.
- Believe Jesus is in you.
- Ask Jesus to manifest His “pure thoughts” in and through you.
- Believe that He is doing that at that moment.
- Rest in that belief and don’t fight the temptation to think impure thoughts.
- Thank Him for the deliverance from the impure thoughts He has just given you

Ellen White understood that the only way to be victorious over temptation is by faith in Christ’s righteousness.

“The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end.” Desire of Ages 324 (emphasis added)

A Process

Paul made a very important statement when he wrote: “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,” Galatians 4:19. Christ being formed or manifest in the Christian’s life is a process. Paul’s statement that he “died daily” also

describes this process. Day-by-day the Christian under the conviction of the Spirit and the enlightenment of God's Word chooses to yield his sinful desires to Christ and lets Christ manifest His pure desires in his life. Ellen White explained this amazing miracle of transformation.

“When His words of instruction have been received, and have taken possession of us, Jesus is to us an abiding presence, controlling our thoughts, and ideas and actions... It is no more we that live, but Christ that liveth in us, and he is the hope of glory. Self is dead, but Christ is a living Saviour.” Testimonies to Ministers, p.389

Ellen White was very clear on the matter. She clearly states here that it is Jesus' abiding presence that controls our thoughts, ideas and actions. If we choose to believe that He will do this and believe our sinful nature's power over us is dead, then Christ will most definitely live out His life in us. It is just that simple!

As this process continues in the believer's life he who, for example, in situations where anger would have arisen in the past, there is no anger now. Instead, Christ's forgiveness and peace fills the heart. The power of the sinful nature will be totally subdued, and Christ's sinless nature will be totally dominant in the life.

Ellen White described this level of relationship with Christ.

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that **when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses**. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God, as it is our privilege to know Him, **our life will be a life of continual obedience**. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us." Desire of Ages, p.668 (Emphasis added)

“The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up--the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God.” Christ's Object Lessons, p. 98

However, it is important to remember this is a process. Such dramatic changes don't usually happen instantly. We must daily grow in the experience of letting Christ live out His life in us. If we do that then God will see to it that we are ready to receive the latter rain, to live without Christ as our mediator and be ready for His return.

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:” Philippians 1:6

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” 1Thessalonians 5:23-24

Christ is Waiting for a Victorious Remnant

So the truth is, Christ has been waiting for a remnant people who are 100% surrendered and 100% victorious over temptation and sin. As we have seen, this will not happen by trying harder, but by understanding and experiencing righteousness by faith in Christ alone for victory.

John also described those who will be ready for Christ’s return.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” 1John 3:2

As we have seen, the Greek word translated “like” in this verse means “just like.” Those ready for Christ’s return will be just like Jesus in character, authority, life, ministry, etc. Why is that the case? They are just like Jesus because Jesus Himself is being manifested in their life 100%.

Those who yield to God’s work of purification in their life described in Malachi chapter three will have Christ living and reigning in their life to such a degree that when obeying Him they will be but carrying out their own impulses. Their life will be a life of “continual” obedience. It is at that time that the following statement by Ellen White will be fulfilled.

“Christ is waiting with longing desire for the **manifestation of Himself** in His church. When the **character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced** in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69 (Emphasis added)

John wrote in Revelation that God’s last remnant people will be a victorious commandment keeping people; not a people trying hard but failing to keep God’s commandments.

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which **keep the commandments of God**, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17 (emphasis added)

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they **that keep the commandments of God**, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12 (emphasis added)

“Blessed are they that **do his commandments**, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14 (emphasis added)

Some translations read “wash their robes” in the above verse. The robe is what is seen. Hence, their life of disobedience will be washed by the blood of Christ and His obedience is what is seen in their life. This is the “white raiment” of Revelation 3:18, which is the righteous obedience of Christ in the life.

Many other verses in Revelation describe God’s last people as those who “overcome” Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7. What do they overcome? They have victoriously overcome all temptations and sin that Satan brings against them. This victory must be the experience of those who come out of their Laodicean condition, receive the latter rain and are ready for Christ’s return.

Satan’s Misleading

As previously discussed, Satan knows these things and will do all he can to confuse the issue and lead us astray through his “omega” apostasy. He knows that victory can only come by our focusing on Jesus and letting Him live out His life in and through us. So Satan’s plan is to get our eyes off Jesus. Instead he wants us to focus on the temptations we struggle with. He wants us to think we can become righteous and even perfectly develop Christ’s character by focusing on the do’s and don’ts, the law; anything but Jesus. He wants us to think that we can be victorious over temptation if we just “try” hard enough, with God’s help of course. He leads many to believe that focusing on the do’s and don’ts of our religion will bring revival. Such a religion is a burden void of joy. All such effort will fail. The do’s and don’ts are important, but they must not be our focus.

Or Satan will lead many to reject the possibility of perfectly reflecting the character of Christ by obedience to God’s law. Most that come to this conclusion have tried to obey in their own strength and discovered the impossibility of attaining complete victory. So they draw back and rest in a justifying Christ only believing that full and complete sanctification is impossible. They conclude that complete victory over temptation and sin is not attainable in this life. This too is a very dangerous position to take. Both legalism and rejection of complete obedience will lead to one not being ready to receive the latter rain of the Spirit.

Some are fearful that such a view of complete obedience and victory over temptation will lead to boasting and feelings of achieving perfection. Attitudes of boasting or feelings of achieving perfection are impossible for the Spirit filled Christian to experience. The closer they come to Christ the more sinful they know themselves to be. They realize that there is no righteousness in them. They know they could yield to a temptation any moment they take their eyes off Jesus. They know their only hope of victory is by continuing to trust Jesus to live out His victory in and through them. And

when Jesus returns they will feel unworthy to be saved. They know their only hope of salvation and victory has been their faith in Jesus. They cast their crowns at Jesus feet because they know they don't deserve the crowns because Jesus did everything for them. All they did was have faith in Him to save them from sin and death. They will know what Paul meant when he wrote:

“so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him [the Father] that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: ‘Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.’” 1Corinthians 1:29-31 (NIV)

Their boast throughout eternity will be boasting in Jesus; praising Jesus Christ for the salvation He provided for them.

We must daily be filled with the presence of Jesus through the baptism of the Spirit (eye salve), and let Him live out His victorious life in us (white raiment). Christ is to live out obedience to God's law in us. Then and only then will we begin the process of complete victory (gold). Then and only then will come out of Laodicea. Then God will pour out the latter rain of the Spirit on His people because then they are ready to receive it. Then and only then will they fulfill the purpose for which God called His church into existence, and Christ will return.

Today is not too late. Will you say yes to God's call to come out of Laodicea and become part of the last victorious generation of believers who allow Christ to manifest Himself in their lives and perfectly reproduce His character of obedience to God's law in them, and allow the manifold wisdom of God to be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms? I pray you will.

The Gold

God's message to Laodicea is to buy from Him gold, white raiment and eye salve. As we have seen these are actually listed in reverse order of experience. First one must daily experience the eye salve of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which does two things. First it gives the spiritual discernment to see one's actual spiritual condition of being wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Secondly, Jesus lives in the believer most fully through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is absolutely necessary for him/her to experience the white raiment of Christ's righteousness.

We have learned that this white raiment represents both Christ's justifying and sanctifying righteousness; His imputed and imparted righteousness. Experiencing the fullness of Christ's righteousness (white raiment) will next lead to the believer growing into the full character of Christ, which is the gold of faith and love.

First, "faith" refers to 100% faithful obedience to God and His law. This kind of faith can only happen as one allows Christ to live out His faithful obedience to God in and through them. Paul described this when he wrote:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20

Paul tells us in this verse that he lives the Christian life by allowing Christ, Who lives in him, to live out His faithful obedience to God in him.

Secondly, the gold of "love" is the perfect love of God that can only manifest in one's life as they daily experience the Spirit's infilling and allow Jesus lives out God's love in them. Concerning this Paul wrote; "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" Romans 5:5. Also it is only as one is filled with the Spirit that the fruit of the Spirit develop in the life; the first fruit being love (Galatians 5:22-23). This fruit is actually the character of Christ (white raiment) and will grow into maturity ultimately manifesting the pure gold of His character 100%. When this gold is fully manifest in God's people Christ will then return to take them home.

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." Christ's Object Lessons, p. 69

God will allow trials to come to His children in order to develop the gold of character within them.

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,^[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." James 1:2-4 (NIV)

In the physical world intense heat is required to remove the dross from the quarried rock in order to get the pure gold. So also in the spiritual world; the heat of

trials and difficulties are required to remove the dross of our life so the pure gold of Christ's character will be revealed.

“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” 1Peter 1:6-7 (NIV)

Ellen White understood this when she wrote:

“But time and circumstances will surely prove us and bring to light the gold of character or discover the baser metal. Not one of us is known or read of all men, till the crucible of God tests us. Every base thought, every wrong action, reveals some defect in the character. These rugged traits must be brought under the chisel and hammer in God's great workshop, and the grace of God must smooth and polish before we can be fitted for a place in the glorious temple.”
Testimonies, Vol. 4, p. 540

God's people will come out of their Laodicean condition as they buy the eye salve of the Spirit, the white raiment of Christ's righteousness, and submit to God allowing Him to bring forth the pure gold of Christ's character 100% in their lives. When this happens they will be “fitted for a place in the glorious temple.”

Some learn this truth easier than others. However, if they will surrender 100% (buy) from God as He instructs them they will be purified of sin. God is faithful and will seek to work in the lives of all His children. Remember He tells us, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten...” Revelation 3:19. Only God knows how much fire of tribulation is required to bring forth the pure gold.

“If the soul is to be purified and ennobled, and made fit for the heavenly courts, there are two lessons to be learned-- self-sacrifice and self-control. Some learn these important lessons more easily than do others, for they are exercised by the simple discipline the Lord gives them in gentleness and love. Others require the slow discipline of suffering, that the cleansing fire may purify their hearts of pride and self-reliance, of earthly passion and self-love, that the true gold of character may appear and that they may become victors through the grace of Christ.”
Faith and Works, p. 86

However, we can be assured our loving Father only allows into our life that which will work out for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28).

“There is eloquence in the quiet and consistent life of a pure, true, unadulterated Christian. We shall have temptations as long as we are in this world. But instead of injuring us, they will only be turned to our advantage, if resisted. The bounds are placed where Satan cannot pass. He may prepare the furnace that consumes the dross; but instead of injuring, it can only bring forth the gold of

character purer than before the trial.” Bible Echo and Signs of the Times, October 1, 1889 par. 6

Malachi describes the process with the following words.

“But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.” Malachi 3:2-4

Those who endure this purifying process, which results in the pure gold of Christ's character will be able to “stand when he appears.” However, those who are deceived by Satan's “omega” deception and refuse to hear God's call to come out of Laodicea to a life of perfect obedience to God's commandments will not be able to stand or survive the second coming of Christ. Why, because sin is still residing in their life. They have not entered into the purifying experience, which would allow Christ to present them “faultless before the presence of His glory” Jude 24. Christ's glory when He returns will be as a consuming fire to sin and sinners (2Thessalonians 2:8).

Laodicea and the Wise and Foolish Virgins

The book of Revelation describes the church as being in a Laodicean condition (Revelation 3:14-16). Those who remain in this condition will have accepted the “omega” apostasy. The sad truth is that those in Laodicea are unaware of their condition (Revelation 3:17). However, anyone in Laodicea must come out of that dreadful spiritual condition if they want to receive the latter rain and be ready for Jesus’ returns. If they don’t they will be lost.

The Foolish Virgins

Jesus gave a parable describing Laodicean Christians in His parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-12). The foolish virgins in the parable are not ready when the bridegroom comes and are told by him “I know you not” (Matthew 25:12). These foolish virgins do not have the extra oil that the wise virgins have. This oil is representative of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Ellen White described the foolish virgins in the following way.

"The name 'foolish virgins' represents the character of those who have not the genuine heart-work wrought by the Spirit of God. The coming of Christ does not change the foolish virgins into wise ones... The state of the church represented by the **foolish virgins, is also spoken of as the Laodicean state.**" Review and Herald, Aug. 19, 1890 (emphasis added)

Note that the foolish virgins and the Laodicean Christians are one and the same. Ellen White went on to write:

"The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working...the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God....Their service degenerates into a form." Christ's Object Lessons, p. 411

The foolish virgins “have a regard for the truth.” They believe in the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath. They believe the church’s teaching on the mark of the beast. However, the foolish virgins did not yield themselves to the Holy Spirit’s working. They refused to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and yield to His leading; they did not have the extra oil. They accepted the “omega” apostasy, rejected the Laodicea warning, and did not allow Christ to perfectly reflect His character in them.

The Wise Virgins

The wise virgins on the other hand have the extra oil, which is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Because of this they reject the “omega” apostasy, come out of their Laodicean condition and experience the revival and reformation in preparation for the latter rain

and earth's final events. The baptism of the Holy Spirit allows God's law to be written on their heart by the Spirit (2Corinthians 3:3, 18). They obey God from the heart, which means God has placed within them the desire to obey; it is heartfelt. They are fully reflecting the character (righteousness) of Christ, which Ellen White said the "oil" represented.

"Now is the time to entreat that souls shall not only hear the word of God, but without delay secure oil in their vessels with their lamps. That oil is the righteousness of Christ. It represents character, and character is not transferable. No man can secure it for another. Each must obtain for himself a character purified from every stain of sin. Testimony to Ministers, p.334 (emphasis added)

The wise virgins do not obey God's law simply because it says to obey; to do this or not to do that. That is legalistic obedience. No, they truly have the desire in their heart to obey God. Ellen White described obedience from the heart in the following manner:

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God, as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us." Desire of Ages, p.668

Note that obedience from the heart leads to consistent obedience. In fact, she said "when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses," and that "our life will be a life of continual obedience" when it comes from the heart. This is the level of obedience the Holy Spirit will lead the wise virgins to experience. Jesus will be constantly living out His life of obedience in them and they will not yield to temptation. This is the experience Satan is trying to lead God's people to reject when they accept his "omega" apostate teaching about God's Ten Commandments being impossible to keep.

In order for Laodicean Christians to come out of their condition and become wise virgin Christians they must let Jesus into their life (Revelation 3:20). This happens only through daily receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18, 1John 3:24). Ellen White clearly understood that the Holy Spirit brings the presence of Jesus into our life.

"The work of the holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and the holy Spirit is the comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul." Review and Herald, Nov. 29, 1892 (emphasis added)

This is why she wrote:

“Nothing but the baptism of the Holy Spirit can bring up the church to its right position, and prepare the people of God for the fast approaching conflict.”
2Manuscript Release 30, Ltr 15, 1889

God tells those in Laodicea to buy from Him gold, white raiment and eye salve. The gold represents the character of faith and love, which we can only receive from the Holy Spirit abiding in us fully. They are the fruit of the Spirit (Romans 5:5, Galatians 5:22-23). The white raiment is the justifying and sanctifying righteousness of Christ. It is only as we learn how to let Jesus live out His righteous obedience in and through us that we will be clothed in His white raiment of righteousness and fully manifest the “gold” of Christ’s character. The eye salve is received only by the Spirit’s infilling. It is the Spirit that heals our eyes from their spiritual blindness of our Laodicean condition. If we refuse to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit we will continue in our spiritually blind condition, accept the “omega” apostasy, and not grow into the fullness of Christ.

When we receive the daily baptism of the Holy Spirit the presence of Christ will begin to permeate our entire being.

“The sanctification of the soul by the operation of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ’s nature in humanity. It is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ revealed in character, and the grace of Christ brought into active exercise in good works. Thus the character is transformed more and more perfectly after the image of Christ in righteousness and true holiness.” Selected Messages, Vol. 3, p.198

Hence, daily experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit and entering into the experience of righteousness by faith in Christ alone by learning how to let Jesus live out His life of obedience in our life are the only means of coming out of our natural Laodicean condition. Also, this is the only way the church will fulfill her God given purpose of manifesting God’s wisdom under latter rain power.

It is urgent we understand and experience these if we want to come out of Laodicea, receive the latter rain, victoriously make it through earth’s final events and be ready for Christ’s return. It is because of this failure on the church’s part to perfectly reflect Christ’s character that the latter rain has not fallen and Jesus has not returned.

“Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” Christ’s Object Lessons, p.69

Who Receives the Latter Rain of the Spirit?

The purpose for writing this book is to clarify what God's message to the Laodicean church is and how His people can come out of their Laodicean condition. I have heard ever since I became a Seventh-day Adventist that the church needs to come out of Laodicea. I have also heard many times expressions of how much we need the latter rain of the Spirit. Of course, the church needs to come out of Laodicea and needs the latter rain of the Spirit. In fact, receiving the latter rain will play an important role in bringing to final fulfillment God's purpose for the church. However, I personally believe there is a very important truth being overlooked concerning receiving the latter rain.

I believe it is important to pray for the latter rain of the Spirit. However, I caution every Christian to be careful not to focus on the latter rain only and ignore the preparation necessary to receive the latter rain when it falls. My great concern is that many Adventists are waiting for the latter rain thinking it will bring about the major changes in their life necessary to be ready for Christ's second coming. Many believe it is the latter rain that will finally bring the church out of Laodicea. This can be a dangerous attitude. It is the attitude that Satan's "omega" deception propagates.

In this chapter I will present what the Bible and Ellen White state about who will receive the latter rain of the Spirit. I personally believe this subject is absolutely essential to understand since it appears that so many Adventists and other Christians are confused about the latter rain of the Spirit. No one will receive the latter rain if they remain in the Laodicean spiritual condition.

Joel's Prophecy about Rain

Joel prophesied there would come to God's people an "early or former" rain of the Spirit and a "latter" rain of the Spirit (Joel 2:23). He stated these would take place following the appearance of the "I AM" (Jesus Christ) in Israel (Joel 2:27), and that God would pour out His Spirit on "all flesh" (Joel 2:28) meaning all believers would be able to experience the Spirit in this manner.

Peter understood Joel's prophecy and applied it to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"
Acts 2:16—18

Therefore, the first fulfillment of Joel's prophecy about the Holy Spirit took place on the Day of Pentecost when those in the upper room experienced the early rain baptism of the Holy Spirit. As a result the gospel went to the then known world, devils were cast out, the sick were healed and even the dead were raised. That early church did the "works" Jesus did because Jesus was living and ministering through them via the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Joel's prophecy foretold two outpourings of the Holy Spirit; the early rain and the latter rain of the Spirit. The latter rain of the Spirit will take place as the work of God comes to a glorious climax in this earth. It will be necessary for God's people to receive it in fullness if they are to be faithful to God through the time of trouble and be ready for Christ's second coming. However, they must be spiritually growing in the "eye salve," "white raiment," and gold God graciously offers to His people.

The Experience Necessary to Benefit from the Latter Rain

Because of the absolute necessity of God's last remnant people experiencing the latter rain of the Spirit, Satan has worked hard at confusing the issue. He knows that God's people must come out of Laodicea, and grow into the fullness of Christ under the early rain baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to benefit from the latter rain of the Spirit.

Because of Satan's success in causing confusion concerning who receives the latter rain it is important we take a closer look at what the Bible and Ellen White says about being prepared to receive the latter rain of the Spirit. Peter understood the experience in Christ that was necessary for Christians to benefit from the latter rain of the Spirit.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:" Acts 3:19-20

The times of refreshing Peter referred to is the latter rain of the Spirit. Those who have committed their life 100% to Christ ("buy" Revelation 3:18) and have experienced Christ as their deliverer from sin ("white raiment" and "gold" Revelation 3:18) are the ones who will benefit from the latter rain. Ellen White clarified what true conversion is by contrasting it with the characteristics of the unconverted Christian.

"Often the question arises, Why, then, are there so many, claiming to believe God's word, in whom there is not seen a reformation in words, in spirit, and in character? Why are there so many who cannot bear opposition to their purposes and plans, who manifest an **unholy temper**, and whose **words are harsh, overbearing, and passionate**? There is seen in their lives the same **love of self**, the same **selfish indulgence**, the same **temper and hasty speech**, that is seen in the life of the worldling. There is the same **sensitive pride**, the same **yielding to natural inclination**, the same **perversity of character**, as if the truth were wholly unknown to them. The reason is that they are **not converted**." Christ's Object Lessons, p.99 (emphasis added)

Hence, Ellen White clarified what it means to be the "converted" Christian that Peter referred to in his sermon. The only truly converted Christians are those who **are victorious** over anger if their plans are opposed, over an unholy temper, over harsh-overbearing words, self-love, selfish indulgence, sensitive pride that is easily wounded, and yielding to natural inclinations to sin. In short, they will be victorious over the sins in their life. These are the truly converted Christians who will receive the latter rain of the

Spirit. That is why Satan's "omega" apostasy teaches that complete victory over sin is impossible.

Peter also pointed out that the latter rain of the Spirit will take place just before the end of the judgment when our sins are blotted out when Christ completes His high priestly mediatory work in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.

The NIV translates Peter's statement in the following way.

"Repent then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, the times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you – even Jesus." Acts 3:19-20 (NIV)

Both translations of Peter's words indicate a very important sequence of events. First, in order for one's sins to be blotted out they must repent of their sins, be converted or turn to God 100%. Peter points out that this full and complete conversion/commitment to Jesus and victory through Jesus is necessary for the times of refreshing (latter rain) to come from the Lord. Plus, full and complete conversion/commitment (victory) and experiencing the latter rain of the Spirit are necessary for God to send Jesus (Christ's second coming).

Ellen White on numerous occasions expressed her concern that God's people understand the experience they must have in order to receive and benefit from the latter rain.

"I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful, and were looking to the time of 'refreshing' and the 'latter rain' to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord, and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore **they could not receive** the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God." Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen White, p. 112 (emphasis added)

"I saw that **none could share the 'refreshing'** unless they obtained the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action." Ibid.113 (emphasis added)

Understanding and experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit and righteousness by faith are essential for the Christian to enter into the mystery of union with Christ, come out of their Laodicean condition, and be prepared to receive the latter rain of the Spirit. **Victory over every temptation and sin is to take place under the early rain baptism of the Holy Spirit** as the Christian allows Christ to live out His righteous obedience in their life ("white raiment" Revelation 3:18). Expecting the latter rain to deliver us from our Laodicean condition and bring about this change in the life will prove tragic to all who fall into that deception.

"The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the **former rain** [baptism of the Holy Spirit] has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade

will not spring up. Unless the early showers [baptism of the Holy Spirit] have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection." *The Faith I Live By*, p.333 (emphasis added)

Ellen White clearly associated the former rain in the above quote with the "sanctification" of the church stating without it "no seed" will come to "perfection." In the following quote she associates the baptism of the Spirit with the "sanctification" of the church when she wrote:

"Impress upon all the necessity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the sanctification of the church, so that they will be living, growing, fruit-bearing trees of the Lord's planting." *Testimonies Vol. 6*, p.86

Ellen White understood that the early or former rain of the Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit are the same thing, and that the baptism of the Spirit is not the latter rain of the Spirit. It is this work of the baptism of the Spirit that brings the church to sanctification and perfection. The reason the early rain, baptism of the Spirit is necessary is that it is through the baptism of the Spirit that Christ lives in the believer.

When one reads Ellen White's statements on the baptism of the Holy Spirit it is clear that she saw its importance and urged every believer to seek it. It was clear to her that the baptism of the Spirit was essential for God's people to receive the latter rain, and for God's work to be finished in the lives of His people and in this earth. This "eye salve" (Revelation 2:18) is our only hope of coming out of Laodicea and proclaim the three angels message in power.

"What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without this, we are no more fitted to go forth to the world than were the disciples after the crucifixion of their Lord." *Review & Herald*, Feb. 18, 1890

These statements also indicate that the Christian does not necessarily automatically receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit at conversion or water baptism. If that were the case Ellen White would not tell Christians that this is an experience they need.

All of God's people must take seriously God's call today to receive the early rain baptism of the Spirit ("eye salve"), and gain complete victory over sin through Christ ("white raiment"). It is our only hope of coming out of Laodicea and being prepared to receive and benefit from the latter rain outpouring of the Spirit.

"Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the **latter rain**. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but **we shall not discern or receive it**." *Testimony to Ministers*, p.507 (emphasis added)

"Nothing but the baptism of the Holy Spirit can bring up the church to its right position, and prepare the people of God for the fast approaching conflict." *2MR* 30 (emphasis added)

Victory Over Sin Necessary

The above scriptures and Ellen White's statements make one thing very clear; it is only a people who gain victory over their sins and temptations through Christ who will come out of Laodicea and receive the latter rain. Throughout Ellen White's writings she constantly calls God's people to obedience. Neither Ellen White nor the Bible gives an excuse for God's people to live a life of willful disobedience to God.

Paul is very clear on the matter.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?... Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin...Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Romans 6: 1-2, 6-7, 11-14

In the book of Hebrews Paul instructs the Christian to "lay aside every weight" (every sin) and even their "besetting" sins; those sins they have the most challenge getting the victory over. They are to do this by "looking unto Jesus" Who will give them His victory.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2

Peter admonished the Christian to turn from a life of sin to a life of obedience to God.

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:" 1Peter 2:21-22

In these verses Peter calls the Christian to follow Christ's example of living a life of obedience. In his second letter he wrote:

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption

that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 2Peter 1:4-10

Peter calls the Christian to escape the “corruption that is in the world through lust.” The Christian is to be free from the sinful influences in their life by letting Christ live out His obedience in them.

Ellen White again and again called for victory over sin in the Christian’s life. Because of Christ’s victory there is no excuse for a Christian to be living a life of sin.

“Exact obedience is required, and those who say it is not possible to live a perfect life throw upon God the imputation of injustice and untruth.” SW – The Southern Review, December 5, 1899

“God requires at this moment just what he required of Adam in paradise before he fell--perfect obedience to his law. The requirement that God makes in grace is just the requirement he made in paradise.” Review & Herald, July 15, 1890

“Consider the life of Christ. Standing at the head of humanity, serving His Father, He is an example of what every son should and may be. The obedience that Christ rendered God requires from human beings today.” Christ’s Object Lessons, p.282

“The obedience of Christ to His Father was the same obedience that is required of man. Man cannot overcome Satan’s temptations without divine power to combine with his instrumentality. So with Jesus Christ; He could lay hold of divine power. He came not to our world to give the obedience of a lesser God to a greater, but as a man to obey God’s Holy Law, and in this way He is our example. The Lord **Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what a God could do, but what a man could do, through faith in God’s power** to help in every emergency. Man is, through faith, to be a partaker in the divine nature, and to overcome every temptation wherewith he is beset.” Our High Calling, p.48 (emphasis added)

Our Great Need

Robert H Pierson, former President of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, made the following statement in 1975.

“The greatest need of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today is not more money, bigger budgets, more buildings, more institutions and facilities. It is not even more evangelistic crusades. What we as Seventh-day Adventist Church members need is *to be saved from our sins*. God is not waiting for more storms, more political furor, more wars and rumors of wars, before Jesus can come. He is waiting for His people to gain the victory over sin, so that he can trust them with heaven. Jesus came ‘to save his people from their sins’; to help us to be overcomers.”

That was written in 1975; 40 years before the writing of this book and still it seems we haven't learned the lesson. We are still confused on whether God requires us to have complete victory over sin in our life. We are still confused over why the latter rain hasn't fallen and Jesus hasn't returned. We seem to think, as we have for decades, that we need more money, bigger budgets, more buildings, more institutions and facilities, more evangelistic crusades. This is not what we need. We need a “victorious” church who has come out of their Laodicean condition.

Since the baptism of the Holy Spirit and righteousness by faith are so vital to receiving the latter rain and being prepared for Christ's second coming it is important we understand what the Bible teaches on these subjects. So you see, **the church's lack of understanding and experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit and righteousness by faith is at the heart of why the church is still in Laodicea, the latter rain has not fallen and Christ has not returned.** This is why the Lord has brought the serious Laodicean warning to the church. It is also why Satan continues to advance his “omega” deception leading many to believe that obedience to God's law, complete victory over sin is impossible. All who accept his deception will be lost!

Conclusion

The issues are clear. God's Word in both Old and New Testament calls God's people to be an obedient, commandment keeping people. Satan's goal has always been from eternity past to lead angels and man into a life of sinful disobedience to God's law. In these last days he has devised a masterful deception that has been developing for decades, which Ellen White called the "omega" of false theological theories designed to lead God's people away from the foundation teachings of the church. She trembled for God's people when she realized there would be such a powerful "omega" deception of Satan.

This "omega" apostate teaching leads individuals to believe that God's Ten Commandments cannot be kept and sin cannot be overcome in one's life. This false teaching is directly counter to the very reason God called the Seventh-day Adventist church into existence. We were called to warn the world of Christ's second coming and call individuals to accept Christ's justifying and sanctifying righteousness, which results in perfect obedience to God's commandments of love.

Sad, but true; many Adventist both laity and leaders have and are accepting Satan's "omega" lie. Those who accept this deception will not receive God's warning to Laodicea and will therefore remain in their Laodicean condition. And if that were not enough, they will even rise up against God's warning and instruction to Laodicea, and strongly criticize those who accept and proclaim the true biblical teaching about victory over sin. Those who are proclaiming the truth will be called legalists, perfectionists, and fanatics. They will be looked upon as causing confusion and teaching false doctrine, which will ultimately lead to division in the church.

Those who accept the "omega" teaching will feel very strongly about their views because they have seen in the church fanatical movements, legalistic individuals divide churches, "holy flesh" and perfectionistic teachings lead many away from the church. So they will look at themselves as the true defenders of the faith and church.

When this rising up against the truth grows into a prominent voice of criticism of those who are responding to God's Laodicea warning and instruction it will be a challenging time for the true followers of Christ. This is why it will be important for them to have "settled into the truth" as Ellen White put it so they "cannot be moved" away from the truth.

Because of the many who have received the truth of victory and many who have accepted the "omega" false teaching that victory over sin is impossible there will come a great dividing among God's professed people called the shaking. I'm sure it will be a difficult time for both sides. Friends, family, and even church leaders will be divided over the issue. Because of this God's true remnant will press together more than ever before. This crisis will cause them to feel a deep need for one another's encouragement and prayers.

These events lay just before us. The "armies" are being gathered; some to Satan through the "omega" deception and some to Christ through the truth of victory. This is why it is essential every reader of this book prayerfully consider what I have presented. In the end everyone will be on one side or the other; either the side of the truth of victory over sin or the side of the "omega" deception.

Books By: Pastor Dennis Smith

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

This book presents the biblical teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the benefits of receiving this Gift in fullness, and why it is necessary for the Christian to receive this special Spirit infilling in order to become like Jesus.

Spirit Baptism & Evangelism -

The relationship between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and witnessing for Christ is presented along with Christ's method of evangelism. The spiritual problems last-day Laodicean Christian's face and the solutions to those problems are discussed.

Spirit Baptism & New Wineskin Fellowship -

This book gives a biblical and historical study into; how the early Christians "did church", the historical "falling away" from God's original plan for His church, the implications of how this apostasy is still influencing the church today, and why "new wineskin" fellowship is necessary for the Christian to grow into the fullness of Christ.

Spirit Baptism & Deliverance

It is God's will to deliver His children from every influence and oppression of Satan in the Christian's life; spiritually, emotionally and physically. Along with powerful testimonies of deliverance, the biblical principles of how these deliverances took place are presented in a manner that every Christian can apply to their own life.

Spirit Baptism & Prayer

Prayer is the most powerful force on earth. Prayer moves the arm of God on behalf of His people. In this book the necessity and method of intercessory prayer for the unsaved and fellow believers.. The question: "Why does God need our prayers?" is answered. What it means to pray in the Spirit, persevere, unite and fast I prayer are presented.

Spirit Baptism & Christ's Glorious Return

This book gives the characteristics of those who are ready for Christ's return. The question is answered; what do I have to do to be among that final generation whom God is calling into existence today?

Spirit Baptism & Abiding in Christ

This book explains how the Christian is to obtain victory over every temptation and sin by allowing Christ to live out His life in and through them. When this is experienced one's life will never again be the same. Victory is no longer a struggle and joy in Christ is experienced as never before.

Spirit Baptism & Waiting on God

This book presents the biblical teaching about waiting on God for everything: prayer, guidance, service, Christ's character, and why God allows trials and difficulties to enter the Christian's life.

Spirit Baptism & the 1888 Message of Righteousness by Faith

In 1888 God brought the message of righteousness by faith to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This book presents what that message was and why it is essential we experience righteousness by faith in Christ alone today in order to be ready for His second coming.

Spirit Baptism & Earth's Final Events

This book unveils Satan's last-day prophetic deceptions, and reveals the role the baptism of the Holy Spirit and righteousness by faith plays in preparing God's people for earth's final events.

Spirit Baptism & the Latter Rain

The latter rain of the Spirit has been long prayed for and earnestly desired by Christians for centuries. This book presents what the latter rain is, why it has not been poured out in fullness, and the spiritual condition necessary for God's people to receive this powerful Holy Spirit experience.

Transformed by the Spirit

The true story of Juan Cubero, a young man who went from serving Satan in gangs, drugs and prison to being a minister for God. Juan's inspiring story will be a blessing to all who read it.

Omega Apostasy and Laodicea

Today God is calling His people out of their Laodicea condition. This book presents the urgency of responding to this call, the meaning of the gold, white raiment, and eye salve God's people must receive to be ready for Christ's second coming. Also, Satan's "omega" apostasy, which is aimed at keeping God's people in Laodicea, is unveiled.

40 Days – Book 1 (English & Spanish Editions)

A 40 day study and prayer devotional focusing on the needed relationship God's people must have in order to be ready for Christ's second coming. A daily prayer focus is provided with an emphasis on reaching others for Christ. It can be used individually, in a small group or by a church. It is an excellent preparation for evangelistic meetings.

40 Days – Book 1 NKJV

This is a smaller, black and white, NKJV edition of the original, larger, full color [40 Days - Book 1](#).

40 Days – Book 2 (Revival),

A daily devotional focusing on revival, God's sovereignty, how God uses the difficult times in the Christian's life to bless, how God works in one's life to strengthen their relationship with Himself, and much more.

40 Days - Book 3 (Health)

A 40 day devotional focusing on God's principles to achieve spiritual, physical, and emotional health; and the role these principles play in preparing for Christ's second coming.

40 Days – Book 4 (Earth's Final Events)

A daily devotional focusing on earth's final events and the spiritual experience God's people must have in order to remain faithful to God through these events and be ready for Christ's return.

40 Days – Book 5 (The Cross of Christ)

A daily devotional focusing on the cross of Christ and its meaning in the life of the Christian.

10 Days – Prayers & Devotions to Experience the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

A 10 Day devotional that will make it possible for you to develop a truly meaningful, consistent, and powerful life in the Spirit. Watch your life totally change as these principles are put into use in your life during the 10 days of devotion and prayer, and your relationship with Christ grow deeper and richer.

Pastor Smith's books can be ordered from:

Adventist Book Centers

or

Dennis Smith - Phone: 203-389-4784 Email: smith06515@msn.com

Websites: www.spiritbaptism.org www.40daysdevotional.com

For Distribution Outside of North America Please Contact:

Colin Hone

Email: colin.hone@murrayhone.com.au

About the Author

Pastor Dennis Smith received a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from Colorado State University. While at Colorado State he became a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. After working in engineering for a short time he felt the call to fulltime ministry. Smith has served the church as active laymen, and in pastoral and departmental positions for over 49 years. He graduated from Andrews University Theological Seminary with a Masters of Divinity degree.

In September of 1999 the Lord led Pastor Smith to begin studying the biblical teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As a result of this study he was convicted to specifically pray for this biblical experience. Soon after he prayed for God to grant this infilling experience of the Spirit a new spiritual life began to take hold. Almost immediately Dennis felt led to begin writing about the things he was learning and experiencing. This book and the many previous books are the result of that experience.

Website: www.spiritbaptism.org