

# Food for the Flock

## HEAR, PERCEIVE, RECEIVE...

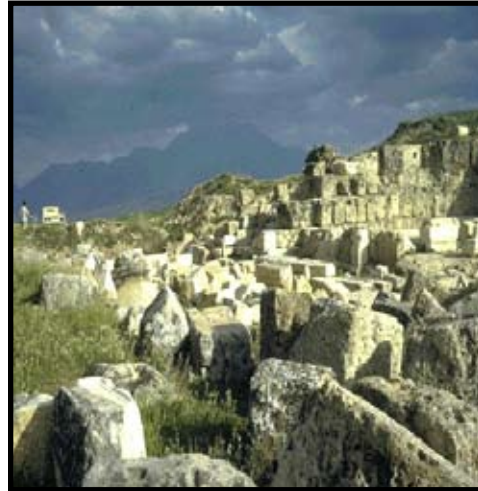
**A**s Christians, we know that there are many conflicts and divisions within the Christian religion as a whole. Within the church there are various arguments about what is truth as well. The question is, how have so many people, who started out at the same place (acceptance of Christ as Savior), ended up at very different places in their beliefs? What personal experience attributes to this fact? What phenomenon allows one person to receive a revelation of truth and another to reject it? To understand this let's look at a time of religious controversy:

**Matt 13:3. "And he spake many things unto them in parables..."**

**vs. 10: "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?"**

**vs. 11: "He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. Why was it given to the disciples to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and not the rest of the people? Was Jesus partial to a favored few? What qualified them to receive understanding?"**

**vs. 12: "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath."** The scripture says that only to he who has already will the mysteries of heaven be revealed. Why? There is no injustice here. Christ is saying that those believers who accept and make use of the truth they already have, will be rewarded with more knowledge, even abundantly. But he who rejects or doesn't make use of what has been shown to him by the Holy Spirit, will lose his spiritual discernment. The light will become darkness. The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are the things not known or understood in the scriptures.



Ancient Ruins of Laodicea

*"And the light  
shineth in  
darkness; and  
the darkness  
comprehended  
it not."  
John. 1:5*

**vs 13: "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."**

**vs 14: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, by hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:"**

The scriptures (prophecies, doctrines) are encrypted to those who deny that a heaven-sent message applies to them. Their perception of themselves and the Bible is incorrect. Spiritual pride, the worst of its kind, will lead to dangerous self-sufficiency and blindness. By slighting truth one rejects it, and becomes cemented in self-inflicted ignorance. No matter how many times the individual may **hear** the truth or **see** evidence of it, they will not *perceive* that it is truth, and is vital for their salvation.

**vs 15: "for this people's heart is waxed gross; and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed;**

"No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. 'Man turns from God, not God from him.' Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and

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warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests with the sinner. By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power. Thus he passes on from one stage of resistance to another, until at last the light will fail to impress, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. Then even “the light that is in thee” has become darkness. The very truth we do know has become so perverted as to increase the blindness of the soul.” {RH, October 24, 1912 par. 2}

**W**hat causes many to choose to live in darkness rather than in the light? Why would people refuse knowledge and choose ignorance instead?

**vs 16: “lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”**

The process of being converted is not an easy one. We have to look at ourselves; it is painful and difficult as change usually is. If we are comfortable in our lifestyles and in our sins, we have no reason to go to Jesus in confession, seeking to be covered by His righteousness. We have every opportunity to be healed from our sins and character defects before this life is over, but if we choose the easy path, the healing that Christ gives will never occur.

“This privilege is presented before every soul. Each may have heaven’s light to guide him. If we discern the truth, and obey it, our whole course of action will be in accordance with the truth; for the truth sanctifies the receiver. But if men refuse to search for the truth as for hidden treasure, if the mind is pleased with the theories of error, the soul will remain in darkness. The course of the life, the development of the character, will be corrupted by false sentiments. Error never sanctifies. It can do no good. And how full of darkness is the soul that receives error as truth, and shapes his course of action in accordance with it.” {RH, August 23, 1898 par. 2}

**Matt. 6:23a: “If thine eye be evil, thy whole body**

**shall be full of darkness.”** It’s significant to see that the “eye” (perception) is evil first, and consequently the body will be full of darkness. So, if our perception is wrong, our actions will be wrong as well.

**T**his was the fateful condition of ancient Israel; their erroneous beliefs kept them from **receiving** Christ, and the first doubts led to the final rejection of Him as Savior. “Unbelief, having once been cherished, continued to control the men of Nazareth. So it controlled the Sanhedrin and the nation. With priest and people, the first rejection of the Holy Spirit’s power was the beginning of the end. In order to prove that their first resistance was right, they continued ever to cavil at the words of Christ. The rejection of the Spirit culminated in the cross at Calvary, in the destruction of their city, in the scattering of their nation to the winds of heaven.” {DA 126} This spirit of rejection still resonates today in the dismissal of truth by individuals and entire organizations alike.

### Perception Essential to the Church’s Prosperity

Today, as a church blessed with great advantages and knowledge as Israel was, SDA’s are in danger of following in the same footsteps. Confirmation of this fact is given in the message to the Laodiceans. This solemn injunction reverberates Christ’s warning concerning the absolute necessity of having the right perception. **“The Laodicean message applies to the people of God who profess to believe present truth.” 4T p. 87**

Rev 3:14-21. **“And unto the angel (ministers) of the church of Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and True Witness, the beginning of the creation of God;**

**vs: 15, 16: 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.**

**vs: 17. “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest**

**not that thou art wretched, and miserable, an poor, and blind, and naked:** The people of Laodicea are described as in a shocking state of spiritual deficiency; the cause of which can be attributed to their “blindness”. “The Lord here shows us that the message to be borne to his people by ministers whom he has called to warn the people, is not a peace-and-safety message. It is not merely theoretical, but practical in every particular. The people of God are represented in the message to the Laodiceans in a position of carnal security. They are at ease, believing themselves in an exalted condition of spiritual attainments.” {RH, September 16, 1873 par. 4}

### What is the Counsel to the Laodiceans?

**Rev 3:18, 19; “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.”** The Lord is telling them to gain character (riches) by overcoming difficulties in the flesh, so that they may be clothed in the wedding garment (Christ’s righteousness). They are to let the scriptures (eyesalve) shape their perception so that they can see correctly.

“Maintaining Truth Not to Preclude New Light.— It is a fact that we have the truth, and we must hold with tenacity to the **positions that cannot be shaken**; but we must not look with suspicion upon any new light which God may send, and say, Really, we cannot see that we need any more light than the old truth which we have hitherto received, and in which we are settled. **While we hold this position, the testimony of the True Witness applies to our cases its rebuke.** ‘And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’ Those who feel rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing, are in a condition of blindness as to their true condition before God, and they know it not.”

“What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right, when they are all wrong? The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness

breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true situation of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake; for it is the True Witness who speaks, and his testimony must be correct. It is difficult for those who feel secure in their attainments, who are believing themselves to be rich in spiritual knowledge, to receive the message which declares that they are deceived and in need of every spiritual grace. The unsanctified heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” {RH, September 16, 1873 }

### The Strength of Truth Breaks Deadly Deceptions

**W**hat remedy can help souls to wake up and see the reality of their condition before God? The only logical thing that has the power to break a deception or misconception is the truth. If we reject it, we continue on in that deception. This rejection of truth is the unforgiveable sin, --the sin against the Holy Spirit; for it is the Holy Spirit which “leads us into all truth”. (Matt. 12:32, John 16:13) What more can God do if one will not see, hear, or receive the workings of His Spirit? He will not force the will. (Luke 16:31) Bible truth is what opens our eyes to the reality of ourselves, this life, and the life to come. Knowing that Laodicea’s biggest problem is blindness, which leads to all the other spiritual ailments-- lukewarmness, and spiritual pride, shouldn’t we pray for the eyesalve (correct perception)? When this is accomplished, we will be willing to **hear** the truth, **perceive** that it is truth, and **receive** the healing that follows. Christ is pleading with us; if we lose our eyesight, we lose everything!

“The eye is the sensitive conscience, the inner light, of the mind. Upon its correct view of things the spiritual healthfulness of the whole soul and being depends. The “eyesalve,” the Word of God, makes the conscience smart under its application, for it convicts of sin. But the smarting is necessary that the healing may follow, and the eye be single to the glory of God. . . . Says Christ, By renouncing your own self-sufficiency, giving up all things, however dear to you, you may buy the gold, the raiment, and the eyesalve that you may see.” {OHC 350.5} **“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves... But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”** 2 Cr. 13:5,

NONE ARE SO HOPELESSLY ENSLAVED THAN THOSE WHO FALSELY  
BELIEVE THEY ARE FREE --GOETHE

## Food for the Flock: Psalms 119

**“T**hy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee... Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.

Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness... Through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they [are] ever with me.

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation...

I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts

I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto

my path.” Psalm 119:9, 66, 36, 98- 102, 105

When I think about the what state of mind David was in as he wrote these words, I know that he was in a spirit of worship. He cherished every word that came from the Lord, and was grateful for it! He knew that receiving this word was the key to his vitality, his prosperity, and wisdom.

More than that, David was happy that the Lord had given precepts, testimonies, and set laws and judgments in place. He knew it was with his greatest good in mind, that God set limits for him. How many times have we doubted the wisdom of God in setting limits for us? How many times have we disregarded the law, the word, the testimonies? Here is where wisdom lies. It is ours for the taking, and it is provided that we may live *abundantly*. **“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”** Mat. 4:4