

## Anointing Our Eyes

### Spiritual Blindness

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Please turn with me to Revelation chapter 3. I am going to begin in verse 14. You can probably recite these verses in your sleep by now, but given that this is the Laodicean era, I think it is appropriate that we are familiar with what God writes to us living at the end time.

**Revelation 3:14-22** "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'""

Notice God's instructions in verse 18 for overcoming the spiritual condition. He tells us first to go ahead and endure the trials that are set before us. Do not take the easy way out because these trials are what refine us and help us to see things the way God sees them. This is interesting in light of the description of Babylon in Revelation 18, where one of her characteristics is

the avoidance of suffering. She says, "I sit as a queen, . . . and will see no sorrow." But God counsels the church era that is extant at the end time to not back away from adversity by compromising like the rest of the culture does.

Second, He tells us to buy white garments which symbolize righteousness, and this is a reference to the righteousness of Christ that covers us. God says the Laodiceans need Christ's righteousness, for they say they are doing just fine.

God's third pointed suggestion, which we will be examining today, is anointing our eyes so we can see clearly. Eye-salve is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible, but there are enough clues here to tie into other established principles in the Bible that we can begin to get an idea of how to apply this command.

When you combine this instruction in verse 18 with the Laodicean's own assessment of himself in verse 17, we can see that God is saying that the Laodicean does not have the spiritual eyes to see his own condition. The Laodicean suffers from a spiritual blindness that keeps him from honestly evaluating his own condition. And because of that, all of those other spiritual judgments are going to be somewhat twisted as well. If we cannot see ourselves as God sees us, how are we going to be able to see anything else the way that God sees it?

In the instructions God gives in Leviticus concerning the sacrifices in the priesthood, physical blindness is a factor of disqualification in a number of ways. For example, if an animal was blind, it was judged to be unfit to be a sacrifice. If we carry this through to the spiritual plane, it gives an indication of why God is so displeased with the Laodiceans. We are called to be living sacrifices and to imitate Christ in His fulfillment of such things as the burnt offering and the meal offering, which symbolize devotion and commitment.

If we are spiritually blind, though, our devotion and our commitment to God and to man will suffer, and we will not be qualified to be these sacrifices in type. God also says that physical blindness would disqualify a priest from his duties. The spiritual implication of this is also clear. If we are spiritually blind, we will be unable to perform the duties of the New Covenant priesthood. And this fits right in to what God says to Laodicea. If we are

spiritually blind, God will cast us aside, and we will not be a part of the holy nation of kings and priests when Christ returns.

So what causes us to see things differently from God? To make judgments that are contrary to His own? And to evaluate the world from a perspective that is so anathema to God that He promises to vomit us out of His mouth? The basic answer is sin. We shall see, even though all have sinned and all still do sin, there are certain elements that affect our spiritual vision much more drastically than others.

**II Timothy 3:1-5** But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

**II Timothy 3:7** always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

This is just another way of describing spiritual blindness.

**II Timothy 3:13** But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Self-deception goes hand in hand with spiritual blindness.

The context reveals that the perilous times of great stress and trouble is not a reference to the persecution of the fifth seal or the events of Matthew 24. Even though Paul makes references to persecution in the letter to Timothy, the verses preceding and following this passage are all in reference to events within the church.

Paul predicts with deadly accuracy that right before the end, the same period of time as the Laodicean era, that one of the major problems will be self-centeredness. The last days will be perilous to Christians, not necessarily

because of persecution, but because Satan will have the entire world imitating him and exhibiting his own characteristics. The state of man will be so geared toward the self as Satan is that there will not be any room for God or for fellow man.

In God's instructions to mankind, He says, "Do it My way. It is the only way that is compatible with eternal life."

In a contrast, Satan does not tell us directly to follow him. He says, "Do it your own way."

Every one of the 19 attributes listed in II Timothy 3 is an indicator of being focused inward rather than upward and outward. Human nature may be neutral at birth, but because of Satan's influence, it quickly develops an intrinsic self-focus and self-concern. We all have varying degrees of this satanic quality, but as Paul shows in II Timothy 3:2, as the end draws near, men will become more and more lovers of self and utterly self-centered, as the *Amplified Bible* has it.

This self-centeredness is devastating because it causes an individual to elevate himself above God and above the rest of God's creation. When everyone is only looking out for his own interests and overlooking the interests of God and other people, the result is the very antithesis of eternal life in God's Kingdom. And one of the first casualties of self-centeredness is truth, especially the truth about the self. The view of reality is seen through the lens of the self.

Perhaps the greatest irony of self-centeredness is that even though a man is focused on himself, he is not really aware of himself. This is similar to the adage of not being able to see the forest because of all of the trees. A self-centered person is so focused on himself that he cannot see himself clearly. He considers what is best for him, what he agrees with, how he sees things, how things will affect him, or have already affected him, and is quick to shift blame away from himself at every turn.

What he does not consider is whether his actions are best for everyone else; whether his point of view is the only valid one, how he is affecting people, how he has affected others in the past, and what he really is to blame for. It is

easy for him to recount all the wounds and injustices that he has received but is oblivious to what pain or damage he has inflicted on others as a result of his self-focused haze.

His focus is on what he perceives to be the best for the self, but not the reality of the self. When we sin, when we fall short of the glory of God, or when we miss the mark, it is because our judgment and our perception are not in line with God's. We see things spiritually in a different way than God does.

And as a result, we act in ways that are contrary to His character and His standards. Sin begins in the heart or in the mind, and even though there are typically physical consequences of sin, there is always a certain amount of damage done to the mind of the person committing it.

Sin destroys innocence by perverting the mind, so one does not look at life in quite the same way as before. Sin destroys ideals by altering one's outlook. When sin is repeated, it destroys the will; sin becomes easier and easier to repeat.

Sin produces slavery because sin becomes the master over the person, and sin tends to produce more sin, and ultimately it produces death.

But the good news in all of this gloom is we have been called by God, been given understanding, and God has allowed the sacrifice of Christ to cover our sins. He has also given us His Spirit to guide us into all truth, and to create a unity with God. When we sin, we can repent because we have access to God's throne and can ask for His forgiveness. We can also ask for His healing of the effects of sin, healing that can be physical, spiritual, mental, or emotional.

So while it is true that the root cause of spiritual blindness is sin, there is more to this equation, as the example of the Laodicean church shows. The other six churches were also composed of human beings, and the law of numbers dictates that those people committed sin as well. But yet, God's letter to them did not center on spiritual blindness. So, what is the difference in these churches?

**Matthew 5:3** "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

We have the saying: you cannot help someone who does not want to be helped. And this is at the root of the problem. The poor in spirit are those who recognize their spiritual poverty for what it is, and they do this by comparing themselves with God and not with their brethren, their family, their neighbors, or the world. We can always elevate ourselves by finding somebody somewhere that we are doing better than in some regard. We know that this is an exercise in futility, but it is exactly what God is describing about the Laodicean.

The people who will be happy and spiritually prosperous, filled with joy and satisfaction regardless of the outward conditions, and the ones who will receive God's Kingdom are those who recognize their own spiritual poverty perpetually, and allow that reality to form the basis of their world view.

The Laodicean, in contrast, is afraid to look inside because of what he suspects he will find. And so, he assumes a sort of infallibility that he is really pretty much okay, and with only an occasional slip up. He does not really want to be helped. He does not want to see the need, but if this self-centered lie is allowed to continue, it begins to manifest itself in the things that Paul wrote to Timothy about, such as pride, arrogance, abuse in relationships; debate, murmuring, complaining, seeking a personal advantage; rejection of authority or instruction; unthankfulness, callousness, intemperance, pursuit of worldly amusements and distractions; a lack of self-control, treachery, rashness, and self-conceit.

It may never get to the point of blatant Sabbath breaking or murder or adultery, but if he is unwilling to look inside and make this very painful comparison with God, the end result will be the same.

We will not turn to it, but II Thessalonians 2:10-12 describes the people who do not love the truth. And once again, the context is those that God has given understanding to.

The *Amplified Bible* says they did not welcome the truth, and refused to love it, even though it is the truth that leads to salvation. These individuals refuse

to adhere to, to trust in, and rely on the truth. And because they chose to be deceived, God allowed them to be deceived even more.

As I mentioned before, you cannot help someone who does not want to be helped. The sons of God will not back away from the truth, even the truth about their own spiritual condition, and their need for the righteousness of Christ.

Jesus Christ is standing at the door and knocking. We have only but to tear our eyes away from ourselves, and we can take part in the marriage supper of the Lamb. God has offered to let us sit at His very throne with Him. All we have to do is overcome, and that begins with seeing ourselves in relation to God, obeying His instructions, and stirring up the Spirit that He has given to aid us. And this is how we can anoint our eyes with eye-salve.