

The
Pause
of
Mercy

A hand with a red pushpin is shown holding the text together. The hand is positioned between the words 'Pause' and 'Mercy', with the index finger pointing upwards and the thumb pointing downwards, gripping the red pushpin which is pinned to the text.

Introduction

It is amazing, if not perplexing, how events of great importance concerning the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ are transpiring in the heavens and upon the earth – and there is so much ignorance amongst His people as to these. Great days are certainly upon us and we know it not.

Even stranger is the fact that there is a general apathy in the visible Church systems towards prophetic subjects. The hard times have produced a lopsided liking for materialism, and increasing numbers of stewards of truth are having their bent towards prosperity teachings. The result of this trend of affairs amongst believers is the prevalence everywhere of extremely sluggish spirit and great leanness of soul. There must of necessity be a retracing of steps. Moral failures and false values are indices of spiritual decay. God is not worshipped when His word is not revered. We may not be able to convince God as to the sincerity of our convictions if either, we

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helplessly join the throng of spiritual lames or are passive watchers of events.

Saving faith, a work of divine grace in our hearts, demands justifying works from us. Works that show faithfulness to God's word and will. Willingness of a soul to align himself with whatever God is doing at any time is the surest proof of the presence of justifying grace. Let us therefore test and examine ourselves whether we are possessed of this mark.

If God's people begin to turn their hearts to Him through deep repentances there may yet be a recapture of the spirit of true discipleship. And if in this final hour we are found to be seriously working at the foundations for true hope of a resurrection glory with Christ, then we may be blessed with divine interventions that are sure to come upon those whose hearts are rightly disposed to His word.

Or else there can only be fearful prospects of impending judgments of divine displeasure. God's dealings with fleshly Israel are unerring pointers to the fact that these judgments bring with them complete overthrow of iniquity: whether found in the worshipping communities or in the political states. This is a day when God

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is *putting all things straight* and judgemental cleansings begin in his house.

“The Pause of Mercy” seeks to layout through a faithful exposition of relevant scriptures the reactions of our Lord Jesus Christ to marks of grievous unfaithfulness amongst His people;- and how this concerns you in this final hour. And we are doing this as fellow disciples with you of the truth that is Jesus Christ. Join us then in asking God for the prosperity of this word, which is being sent forth in His Name. May the Lord grant it. Amen. The expected readership is of the general sort and we hope for divinely enabled simplicity of expressions to foster ready comprehension.

Christ’s Message to the Laodicean Church

Our main subject will be the examination of the letter, Apostle John wrote to the church in Laodicea. It was written, as it is commonly accepted, a few years before the close of the first century. The significant feature of this letter is that it is wholly revelational. Our Lord dictated the contents to John, and uses the first person pronoun. Thus we find in them the direct utterance of our Lord.

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The first chapter of the book throws light on the purpose of the letter as with its entire message. John simply says: *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet”* (vs. 10).

The **“Lord’s day”** is not a reference to a day of the week; neither Saturday nor Sunday is in view. John was reporting that he was given an entrance into the realm of the Spirit to witness a typical judgment day of the Lord. The book itself is a combination of several divinely imparted spiritual visions. Christ was manifesting to John the score sheets of the various congregations who meet regularly for worship at this time.

That our Lord’s choice of the seven congregations He addressed His judgments to was typical can be easily inferred from the peculiar form the close of each of the letters take. *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”*.

All other congregations at that time had one or more of the features mentioned of the seven in the messages.

And again, John was assured that the things he was witnessing in his visions were true of

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the seven selected congregations then; and that they were things “*which shall be here-after*” (Rev. 1:19). The letters, therefore, are of prophetic significance; pointing to events far ahead of John’s day. Reading through these passages meditatively will prove richly rewarding. In particular, the Laodicean church, the last of these is a prophetic type of the church situation today.

Our Lord’s teachings, especially in the parables of the Kingdom clearly indicate that the close of the church age will be predominantly, a time of judgment. A time of putting things straight with a view to individual placing in or out of the Kingdom. (Please read Matt. 13, Luke 8, Mk. 4). Thus the focus now, as it was in the typical judgments recorded in the second and third chapters of Revelation, is the individual believer.

Now, in a very important sense the church systems were being x-rayed by God. The welfare of members of these congregations was heavily influenced by what was going on in them. But even the judgments of the systems (church organizations) were for the purpose of arriving upon the salvation of individuals.

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So also is it in our day. All organizations bearing the name of Christ are being brought to the judgment-seat of Christ. Judgment has already begun in His house. In a matter of a few years this will be all too evident. It will do us a lot of good to recognize that Christ's right to administer the affairs of His father's house is not awaiting a future day for its' exercise. Whatever we are worth in relation to Christ's Kingdom is receiving right now, a final determination. Each day, some experiencing a binding of their hands and feet, are heading for fuller participation in outer darkness. Each day some are being sealed unto full participation in the Kingdom of light. Each man is to be fully persuaded in himself which of these two is taking place in his life. Ah, strange things are happening today! Almost unwillingly many find themselves bound to things they don't approve of. Some are surprised at the pleasure they find in unsavoury matters. And as if under a spell, they plunge deeper and deeper into God-dishonouring acts and tacts. It is all strange, but may this not be the primary beginnings of the fulfilment of Rev. 22:11?

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“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still”.

We are persuaded by the Spirit of God to sound forth that a time of mercy is being graciously held out to all who have ears to hear. We shall in a ten point consideration of Christ message to the Laodicean church extend His call to the willing hearted. (we have for your convenience and our common purpose reproduced Rev. 3: 14-21 here).

14. “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodeceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;
15. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.
16. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth

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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, and poor, and blind, and naked:
18. 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.
19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent.
20. 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.
21. 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.

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The Lord's Introduction of Himself

“The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation”.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the one sealed by the Father to fulfil the work of redemption. He is the principal candlestick and bears out to all of His people what standards are required of them. There is no measure of loss in Him. The Father's pleasure is faithfully carried out by Him. One may straightaway proclaim what the Father is doing at any time by looking at this pattern candlestick of God. His works are vitally His father's. No irrelevances, no disloyalty. No perversions in doctrine or life. All coming to Him are coming to the Father by Him. Men supremely love the Father when they are supremely devoted to Christ. The interest of one is proven to be the interest of the other. This is how we see Him in His first advent. This is the way we are seeing Him now. No wonder He administers His Father's universe; possessing as He does the very fullness of the Father's throne glory.

Tested first, then exalted. He is faithful still. All ordained events that ultimately show forth the absolute sovereignty of God over all things

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find their 'Amen' in Him. The glory of God intensifies day by day as the light of His countenance burns brighter and brighter amongst His true disciples. A great corporate voice unceasingly proclaiming His majesty: *"Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, who is to come"*.

The overthrow of all rebellion is a sure event and it is all secured in a person: **"The Amen"**. Grace has provided that the Church should be an executive arm (instrument) for carrying out of God's purpose under Christ's leadership and directives. But the 'Amen' cannot and will not countenance treachery of any form from that instrument. He will admit not delays. He judges the instrument and considers it unsuitable if unfaithful. And for the glory of Him who has laid out His plans, He would take out of the Church systems such as could be fitted to faithfully fulfil their roles. He will then constitute them a body for Himself. The worship that must come from the nations to God must be pure and undefiled. And those whose job it is to lift up humanity to this estate must themselves be true worshippers. The Lord will never accept to

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direct in the service of God that which is not suitably available to Him.

These things are implied in our Lord's introduction of Himself to the Laodecean assembly.

Christ's Assessment of the Church in Laodicea

"I know your deeds that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So because you are lukewarm-neither hot nor cold I am about to spit you out of my mouth".

The solemn truth about His Church in Laodicea is that Christ is thoroughly dissatisfied with her life and testimony. As an instrument for manifesting Christ's saving works, it is altogether lacking. Well, it is not that the Church is spurious, without evidence of saving faith. It has enough things to command a handsome followership. Her faith has produced affluence of some sort and she is generally satisfied with her exploits. The Laodicean Church certainly have enough fire-power to qualify it as not cold.

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Her measure of warmth is evidence of possession of some Charisma: yes, of gifts of the Holy Spirit. But in the things wherein Christ was rich - faithfulness to Good, true witness of His plans - this assembly was altogether lacking. Whatever promise their firepower may have suggested at the onset has thinned out of existence. Every input into the system was only sure to waste. She was in her state in full comforts and certainly considered herself the very glory of God in the earth. Hear what she says of her achievements:

“I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing”. You cannot help such a thing once it has become an atmosphere in a place. Every effort bounces back unreceived. Sometime, a powerful word that calls to repentance and renewed dedication to God is hailed but each time the fruit of such a word, in that kind of an atmosphere is just withering leaves. Her proud soul goes marching on and her testimony waxes louder and louder: *“I am rich, I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing”*. Now hear what Christ’s answer is to this grievous condition: *“You do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked”*.

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What a contrast! Now suppose a normal church service in Laodicea was to be visited at the time what would you hear from the pulpit? And what would the choir be singing? We may be sure that both sermons and music will be filled with the name Jesus. Yet between and betwixt would be words whose tenor sounds thus.

“I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing”. The situation is not much different today. Especially is this immediately evident in assemblies vaguely referred to as **“Pentecostal”**. Cheap confessions that belie the actual state of affairs in public and private life always draw a lot of applause. And the world keeps trooping in and out of this Church type as though some sort of spiritual trade fair is going on. And the people love it so. And even when in the material sphere there seems to be nothing to boast of, the vain pride of religious tribalism fills the gap. And with equal potency tribalism (denominationalism) like vain shows deadens the senses to spiritual things. The common denominator for all forms of spiritual vanity is an over emphasis on numbers which invariably leads to recruitment drives of all sorts.

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Spiritual Lukewarmness Explained

Before listing out five particulars of the spiritual unfitness of the Church in Laodicea, our Lord simply describes her as neither cold nor hot. The tested elements were their faith system (they were unfaithful to Truth) and character build (they were poor evidences of the power of Christ's saving grace).

Their *poverty* consisted in an almost complete ignorance of what the ministry of the Church is in essence. The provisions of the covenant were unknown and therefore untaught. The contents of the Christian faith were neither understood nor the subject of diligent prayerful search.

The spiritual adornments of the Church which God provided for her beauty is not known and so not sought for. Consequently, she is *wretched* in spiritual appearance, and totally unprepared to prevail in the spiritual battles of this end of age. The *pitiful* condition of being in the midst of the battle overwhelmed on every side by the enemy is all that may be expected of an untaught people. "*My people perish, says the Lord through lack of knowledge*". As it was then, so it is in our day – that there is so much of

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teaching and preaching but little or no addition to the spiritual stature of the people.

Then the nakedness: The reference is to the character build of the membership of this congregation. Gross carnality, moral failure, hypocrisy, worldliness, self-centeredness and every other work of the flesh featured in the Laodicea Church. It was no use making mention of some vices as it was the case in four of the other six congregations. These have lost their garments; it was not the case of having spots on them.

Initially, they made efforts to appease their conscience whenever they sinned against God's word. But they never took repentance seriously. A vicious cycle of confessions and 'claiming' forgiveness soon got the robe of justification 'torn'. For when this mock repentance no longer meant anything to their dead conscience they hid under the thought that holiness is only possible in heaven. Such resignation is in effect the putting away of the garment of justification. For true "*Justification by Faith*" always looked forward to a fulfilling experience of righteousness here on earth. The greater many of professing believers today are naked.

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Absence of a growing longing to be exactly like Christ is the surest proof of spiritual nakedness.

The Lord's Counsel

The Lord's Counsel aims at recovering the individual from all false hopes which dead works may give him. When the voice of the Lord is received it produces the right kind of zeal.

“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 your nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with *eye salve*, that thou mayest see” (Rev. 3:18).

The Lord's Counsel helps us to see clearly that thorough heart searching, moral adjustments, mind preparations, and characterize the walk of a man who really seeks to serve God acceptably.

Let us look briefly at what the Lord is offering to His people. We would also give attention to the price that is to be paid for what the Lord's offering.

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First of all, “**Gold**” typifies the sure word of God; living truth that imparts the divine nature to an individual. The Lord says this ‘gold’ will make one rich. Partaking of the divine nature enables the believer to operate in harmony with the divine will, mind and heart. Certainly, peace with God in His service is true wealth. Enjoying the confidence and support of God makes one fruitful in spiritual work. Here we are talking of fruitfulness in relation to that which provides God real satisfaction. There is a lot that is out of place today in the spiritual labours of many a professing believer.

We know that it is in line with the principle of God’s word to say that true riches are obtained at a cost. God does not give what is holy to dogs; divine wealth cannot be placed at the disposal of swines (Matt. 7:16; Amos 3:3, 7; 2Cor. 6:1). The spiritual coins with which one may buy ‘truth’ from Christ must include *purity of thought and life*. A purged conscience is the first step to moral uprightness. True repentance attracts mercy and cleansing. And once a soul has been reclaimed to right living he must there after seek to maintain an *obedient attitude*. It would then be easy to acquire more of the coins

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that enable the purchase of truth: *prayer* dependence upon God; biblical *fasting*; a *ready ear*; a *willing mind*; *availability* to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The seven things italicized above are what we must present to Christ to be lifted up from spiritual wretchedness. Dear friend, if you own these and are prepared to thoroughly use them, the truth that makes alive shall transform you in this last hour (Isaiah 55:1-4).

Next, let us examine the matter of purchasing "***white raiment***". Well, if one is being called from a "naked" state then what the white raiment will include are the robes of justification, of sanctification and of priestly service. These all speak of outgrowth of divine character, wisdom and power. The "***white raiment***" is available to all and only to all those who make it a real business cleaving to Christ in true fellowship. The discipline required to sustain an unbroken fellowship with Christ is an expensive thing. The bride of Christ makes herself fully prepared for her Lord, as she is daily nourished in His presence. More often men are more at home seeking to prove faithful to denominational activities than their desire

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for Christ and His saving power. Let us aim at being among the very few, manifesting a proper bridal disposition – yearning for deepening intimacy with the bridegroom. If this is our true desire, we shall be greatly favoured with His loving assistance.

Thirdly, the desirable graces of humility, self-denial, the fear of God (not the fear of man, and man-made system), faithfulness, meekness, perseverance are ingredients which Christ compounds into eyesalve. Anointing the eyes with these enables the believer to have and keep sound judgment. They keep the believer in spiritual wakefulness.

One may ask, if these things make one wise why are the wise virgins amongst the ‘sleeping and slumbering class? (Matt. 25:1-10). One answers by saying that –*darkness, night, sleep* – are related spiritual concepts. ‘*Darkness*’ and ‘*night*’ provide an environment in which a good pair of eyes may not see. Many wise ones are lured to sleep because their spiritual and social environments are sick with ‘*darkness*’ and ‘*night*’. Wisdom is certainly not at work when a man expends his money and energy funding and sustaining organizations that are a shame

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to the divine purpose. No one can close his eyes to moral failures, treachery, hypocrisy, immorality, doing this all the time, without going to '*sleep*' eventually. Such may never hope to SEE until swept off the feet in the current of divine judgments which shall soon be visited upon all desolate Church systems. This word of caution is clear, but only loud enough to awaken those whose compromise with evil systems has not totally damaged their ears. Christ's word of Counsel is for those *who have ears to hear* (Rev. 3:22).

The Lord's Position

We are considering the Lord's position vis-à-vis the visible denominational systems of our day typified by the Laodicean Church.

"Behold I have stood by the door and I am knocking...." (Rev. 3:20a).

The above rendering of Rev.3: 20 is consistent with the Greek text as can be easily confirmed. The 'Emphatic Diaglott' puts it this way. The earnest reader may want to check the meaning of the Greek verb '*to stand*' used in this verse. It is '*hislime*' and carries the idea of an

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abiding situation, a standing still, continuing at a place, holding up, setting up of oneself at a place.

Thus the message the Holy Spirit desires to quicken to our understanding is that *Christ is speaking of taking a position outside the unfaithful church system. He is not about to enter but being already out of the system in disgust, is in mercy pausing at the door for a redemptive purpose. He is walking away to bring the place under judgment. But in a final pause, he seeks to get out of the system all who have ears to hear Him.*

This great act of allowing a pause of mercy before final judgment sweeps the unfaithful systems is graphically illustrated in Ezekiel Chapters 8-11. It is an unveiling of Christ's loving care for those of His locked up in religious Babylon who have an ear for His counsel.

This is what the Holy Spirit is saying at this time: *"The pause of mercy will soon run its time out. The time of judgment is already setting in. Hearken to the voice of Him who bids you come. Come be washed, cleansed, dressed and fed. Come out of the worldly order of today's church systems. Become faithful to God, given to truth*

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and its' practice alone. He who by these overcome shall share with Christ His throne glory".

The Lord's Position Explained

A faithful study of Ezekiel Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11 will be thoroughly rewarding. A proper understanding of that passage helps us to interpret Christ's word to the Churches at this end-of-the-age period.

The main points to be noted are briefly given below.

- (1) An unveiling by the spirit to the faithful (typified by Ezekiel) of the gross unfaithfulness of the general household of God (typified by the nation of Israel) – (Ezekiel 8:1-17).
- (2) A declaration by the spirit to the faithful that divine judgments will be visited upon His people because of their evil backslidings (Ezekiel 8:18).
- (3) The raising up of a ministry to separate the precious from the vile; and the sealing up of the precious. This ministry

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is to go forth before judgment comes upon the land (Ezekiel 9). Note particularly the intercessory elements of this ministry. (Ezekiel 9:8, 10:14). Also see Matt. 13:41, 42, 48-50.

- (4) The preparation and commissioning of the instrument of judgment (Ezekiel 9, 10:1-2). God's instrument of judgment in this last hour will be a people processed by Him and suitably fitted and empowered to do His will.
- (5) The journey of the Lord of the house out of His house to give way to judgment. Note with much attention Ezekiel 10:3-5, 18-19, 11:22. *God moves away from the unfaithful house by degrees.* The journey away from His dwelling place in the congregations is interrupted by pauses. A hesitating situation as it were, because of His loving care for His house. (Rev. 3:19).
- (6) Note particularly, the pause at '*door of the east gate*'. Ezekiel 10:19. This corresponds to the Rev. 3:20 situation.

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Departing from this position is the final signal for the full judgment and overthrow of the unfaithful systems of men.

A Ministry going forth at this Hour of Mercy

“Behold, I have stood at the door, and I AM KNOCKING...”.

The ministry which Christ exercises toward the unfaithful denominational Churches, is borne by men and women enlisted by Him for this purpose. These servants of His suitably clothed in white linen, have under training, girded up their loins to possess the ‘writer’s inkhorn’.

Through the ministry of the word and of prayers they are being divinely enabled to harvest the ‘*wheat*’ and bind the ‘*tares*’. They are reapers working by means of the sharp sickles of truth which the ‘*Faithful and true witness*’ communicates to them (Rev.14: 14-19; Matt. 13:36-43).

These Servants of His see clearly that the Pentecostal movement in her unfaithfulness is

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the most potent ally of religious Babylon. Many organizations under its umbrella are foremost in leading so many of God's true children astray. These servants of God are therefore bold to proclaim as the Lion of God roars out His command – *“Come out of her my people and be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues”*.

Those who will be saved by it

There is a divine ordering of things in favour of the ministry, which God has raised to warn His people of impending judgments. There is an *open door* situation created by divine interventions in which increasing number of people are getting fed up with the denominational systems and their lukewarm bearing. God is behind this thing – and more and more persons will seek Him for that *“evening meal”* which is available in the land today. Only God can claim the glory for it.

“I will sup with him, and he with me” is a provision, which hundreds of thousands shall embrace, in this last hour. Those that are His can never accept to be caged in with *“every unclean and hateful bird”* (Rev. 18:2). They

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cannot call *good* what God is calling *evil*. Even in the past they 'sighed and mourned' for what they are made to behold in the City of religion (Ezekiel 9:4). They now are finding out through the testimony of the corporate man with the writer's inkhorn that the unfaithful systems are thickly set in their evilly chosen path. They would come to see and agree with the Holy Scriptures that Babylon cannot be healed (Jeremiah 51:9).

We say again: there is a divine ordering of things and no power can hinder it. The present work of Christ amongst God's people is a fulfilment of Scriptures.

"Gather together unto me my Saints,
those that have made a Covenant with
me by sacrifice" (Ps. 50:5).

The work of gathering to the LORD those who will not sell their birth right will continue to completion under the faithful hands of Christ Jesus. He will save to the uttermost all that hear and hearken to His voice. The Lord's temple will, surely be built. And the glory of it shall be all-excelling.

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Those who will be hardened by it

The word that is going forth at this hour possessing the “*Savour of Life unto life would prove to be the savour of death unto death*” if rejected. (2 Cor. 2: 11-17).

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come... but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil...” (John 3:19, 20).

The judgment of God comes to burn the ‘*chaff*’ with unquenchable fire. The evil in the unfaithful system is this ‘*chaff*’. But there are those whose lives are so inseparably bound to the ‘*chaff*’ that the overthrow of the systems carry in its trail their unwise souls.

Some labour to give ‘*suck*’ to babylonish denominations because their carnal pleasures are ministered to by it. Others draw their daily bread from these denominations. Then there is the class of materialists who say: “*Unto us is this land given in possession*” (Ezekiel 10:1-5). Those, overtaken by the cares of this life and the delight in filthy wealth take shelter in the materialistic doctrines of their “*reverend*

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ministers". Certainly the ears of all such are dull of hearing and it might require an '*earthquake*' to jolt them up from their spiritual stupor. And there shall be earthquakes in diver's places. The crumbling of a denominational system is a symbolic earthquake. Such an event will speak more authoritatively and relevantly than would a physical earthquake. O that men hear God and live. That is the only anchor a soul can possess in the times of '*rain*', '*great floods*', '*adverse winds*' that will come shortly.

We do know many will react sharply against the Lord's call to His people. Such reactions will be the beginning of self-hardening. Rebellion against truth is an evil, which attracts the heaviest penalty.

It is sad to think of men once treated to truth and light now nurturing interests that are opposed to God's Kingdom. Our prayer is that the Lord will spare nothing in bringing about a change of heart to those who once toiled by His direction. Amen.

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Further Work Amongst the Called out ones implied

The tenor of the Lord's message to the Laodicean Church reveals that the call to separate from spiritual environments that no longer vitally represent the interests of God on the earth will be heeded by believers in their individual capacity in response to truth. That these believers will be processed further with a view to fitting them for spiritual vocation is implied in Rev. 3:18, 7:2, Ezekiel 9:1-4.

The '**sealing**' referred to in Rev. 7:2 and the Ezekiel passage certainly requires a time period to fulfill. So also is the obtaining of 'white raiment', '**eyesalve**', '**gold**'. The ministry the Lord is raising up in this last hour would prove to possess the grace to lead itself and others to the feet of Jesus Christ to benefit from the crowning work of Salvation.

Thus we are to look unto the Lord for the arrangements He has made leading to the realization of His purpose as set out above. Looking closely at the passage under consideration we see a leading word, which will help us appreciate the *pattern of things at this*

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time of the end. This will be the subject of our next investigation.

A Two-fold Promise of the Present Hour

The Lord's word to the Laodicean Church closes with a two-fold promise. In this promise we discern clearly how the Lord intends to work out His purpose.

“Behold, I have stood at the door and I 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 sat down with my Father in His throne” (Rev. 3:20, 21).

We can easily identify two parts to the promise Christ made to this Church. The first is to be seen in verse 20 whilst the other is in verse 21. To enable a thorough understanding we shall list out the general outlines of the promise. We shall follow this up with a brief

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consideration of each verse, concluding the message with these.

The constituting elements in the promise as seen in verse 20 are as follows:

- A. (a) Hearing the voice of the Lord, and knowing its import
- (b) Heart deliverance for those who open to the Lord. (Though a measure of the fear of God has been there in those who respond to Him).
- (c) Partaking in the evening meal of the present truth enabling:
 - (i) strengthening of the heart.
 - (ii) An enlightening of the mind
 - (iii) A rapid growth through the grace of revitalized communion with the Lord
 - (iv) A new meat offering to be presented to the Lord.
- B. The involved elements in verse 21 are as follows;
 - (a) Realizing the upward calling of God to the throne

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- (b) What this implies.
- (c) The power to admit to the throne lies with the Lord
- (d) The medium of the outworking of God's purpose
- (e) The place of House Fellowships.

Elements in the Promise as seen in Rev. 3: 20

Hearing the voice of the Lord and knowing its Import (Rev. 3:20a)

The ministry of the word going out in this present time must be listened to before any proper judgment on it can be reached by an individual. This will require great humility on the part of many who think all is well with them. In this verse, the Lord is speaking of '*hearing*' and '*opening the door*'. This implies that the membership of the Laodicean systems have effectively '*closed the door*' against the Lord. But this also means that they are open to all kinds of voices leading them into wretchedness, blindness, poverty, nakedness, and misery.

In order to truly open the door to the Lord one must deliberately close the door against the

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hireling shepherds of our day. One can only look unto the Lord by looking away from all things which hinder us. Some want to open the door to the Lord and at this same time keep their hearts open to ministries that have constituted themselves enemies of the cross. This is a manifestation of a sick and unstable heart condition. Progress cannot be made under such a situation. Moving away from '*strange husbands*' is a test of fidelity for the prospective bridal class.

Heart Deliverance

The beginning of real deliverance is the enlightening of our affections and the recovery of the same from all forms of carnality, idol worship and evil allegiances to human systems. The prophetic word is to turn the hearts of God's people towards His Son so that they SEEK HIM AND DELIGHT IN HIM. (Mal. 3:1). To those whose hearts, having been delivered from all vile affections, are turned to Christ is the promise of His coming. (Mal. 3:1, 2; Heb. 9:28; 2Tim. 4:8; 1John 3:1-3).

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Partaking of the evening meal

Partaking of the evening meal of the present truth (Rev. 3:20b) enabling:

- (i) A strengthening of the heart: The heart that is purged from all evil affections and associations receives strength through feasting upon God's word. The sealing work of the Holy Spirit is effected progressively until completion under this circumstance. A stable heart condition results when under the enlightening aid of the revealed word there is a total re-direction of its affections in full consecration, to the Lord. And when the new heart desires find their fulfillment in the Lord's word and service it is a feasting upon the "*tree of life*". Such a one possessing this distinctive mark knows assuredly that he shall not be "*hurt of the second death*". Blessed be the Name of the Lord.

- (ii) An enlightening of the mind: The power of the evening meal of the present truth effects more than a stabilized heart

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condition. An enlightened heart makes the illumination of the mind easy. And a man's mind will always submit to the dictates of his heart. When the mind is being thoroughly instructed in the truth of God's word, the Holy Spirit's work of "*sealing the foreheads*" of the believer progresses to fullness, (Rev. 7: 2, 3; Ezekiel 9:4). This is also a principal quality to be developed in the SEED OF CHRIST who receive a "*sitting with the Lord Jesus in His throne*". To share in the administration of the universe requires a working understanding of the principles of the Kingdom.

- (iii) A rapid growth through a revitalized communion with the Lord. The environment of spiritual increase is in fellowship with Christ. The power of prayer communion with Christ, if allowed to be vitally sustained by the quickening effect of the present truth, is seen in the rapid spiritual growth it produces. Intimate fellowship with Christ is of singular importance in this last hour. Intimacy of relationship presupposes that

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the line of direct communication is in use. We come to know the Lord as we hear Him speak to us. The written word is the Lord's mouth; the Old Testament being the lower lip, the New Testament is the upper one. He speaks from the written word whenever the "Spirit of wisdom and Revelation" is at work (Eph. 1:17). Thus the revealed word supremely enables intimacy. Fervent heart cries to the Lord for the impartation of His overcoming life (the manchild) intensifies into labour pains as we become fully pregnant with the light and life of God's word. Whatever else the Lord's word will quicken to our understanding there can be no practical entry into the things of God if we do not use the privilege of daily communion with Him. It is the Lord we know we can serve acceptably. He will undertake to share precious things only with His friends (John15:15). There is a refining work that takes place in his presence, as we yield to His dealings with us. Real growth can only come this way.

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(iv) a new meat offering to be given to the Lord: A 'meat offering' speaks of service rendered by one who has come under the processing of the Lord, it is an offering in righteousness (Mal.3:3,4). So much of dead works are being done in His name in the Church world. But a people are arising today who patiently wait on Him to receive the grace to do His service acceptably. Only such work carried out in harmony with the principles of the present truth can justify any soul. Now, we sup with him when our works give the Father pleasure and satisfaction. He eats (accepts) what we prepare Him. He then strengthens us to further minister to His needs. But it is Christ who first sups with us. This He does by ministering to us more and more of His saving truth. He lays out elements of the Fathers plan (a word of wisdom, '*Sophia*'); gives us a thorough appreciation of His plan (a word of understanding, '*Sunesis*'). Finally, concerning the revealed word, He gives us practical ability to share in the many-sided aspects of its outworking (prudence, might in the inner man;

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'Phronesis'). Thus the lord, by directing and enabling us in His service, sups with us. Those elements in the Father's redemptive plan which are due to be fulfilled in the closing hour of the church age is the substance of the PRESENT TRUTH-meat in due season. May we be thoroughly blessed with this gracious provision. Amen.

Elements in the Promise of Revelation 3:21

Realising the upward calling of God to the throne

The mention of a possible admission into the throne rights of Christ, (this being the principal element in the promises upon which the new Covenant is established introduces us to the upward calling of God. The promise to share the throne with man which Christ makes here is a feature in God's dealings with us which is absent from the old covenant. It is the extremity of all divine favours. We can easily identify a placement on the throne as the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phi. 3:14). We may also see the throne placing as the prize

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to be won upon successfully running the race that is set before us. (Heb. 12:2).

And if coming to such a glory with Christ is predicated upon being thoroughly exercised in the upward calling of God, then possessing a working understanding of this call of God is of utmost importance. Enlightening the willing-hearted with covenant provisions associated with the upward calling is a central feature of Christ's ministry; more so at the time of the end. The promise of the throne being especially given to the seventh of the seven typical Churches of the book of Revelation reinforces the conviction just expressed above.

What this implies

From the foregoing we come to a conclusion that the Lord Jesus Christ, at the time of the end, prepares a richly served table of His word, and by the sovereign work of His Spirit draws to this table all that truly seek and delight in Him. The scriptures give us to understand that "*wheresoever the body is thither will the eagles be gathered together*". (Luke 17:37).

Another witness of the scriptures provides for a gathering together of consecrated disciples

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at the time judgment is due in God's house – Psalm 50:1-6 which read with particular emphasis on the last three verses.

And yet another witness of truth says that at the period when the Lord is revealed to judge His house, *“they that feared the LORD spake often one to another...”* (Mal. 3:16).

Thus the pause of mercy which the Lord graciously gives as He wholly departs from the denominational systems is with a view to gathering to Himself and His word those who have ears to hear Him.

In their new spiritual environment, (as He prepares them to share His throne with Him) He stepwisely provides them with **“Gold”**, **“white raiment”**, and **“Eyesalve”**. He makes His own to appreciate that only a divine person can sit on the throne of God. Thus they see why the purchase of *“gold tried with fire”* is a necessity. Again, the Lord makes the obedient to desire a truly priestly character and training. For the priest upon His throne will be required to shepherd the nations to the worship of God.

These priests must of necessity, first of all, break to shivers the vessels of rebellious opposition of the nations. This they will do

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through the use of that rod of iron whose measure is a fully developed passion for God's glory. (Rev. 2:26, 27). But these priests must have the moral and ministerial character of their Shepherd, King Jesus. It must be a white raiment that they put on.

The spirit of God is also saying that none can be given the unlimited powers of the throne if he does not possess "*eyes within and without*". (Rev. 4:6b). That means quite a journey in the path of life for someone recovered from a sleeping and slumbering state. Spiritual – stupor is the inevitable result of marking time in the confused and corrupt environments of the babylonish denominations. To move from a closed eye condition to unlimited seeing, will need a luxurious application of "*eyesalve*" by the hand of Christ in the medium of the spoken word of the present truth. Amen.

The Power to admit to the throne lies with the Lord

We must all realise this. He is the "*faithful and true witness*". He cannot admit into the administration of the new heaven those who have not been appropriately prepared for it.

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The royal priesthood will be made up of those who hearken to the call and attain to eminence through choosing to be faithful. (Rev. 17:14).

Upon Christ has the Father set the seal. He has the right to execute judgment; dispensing increasing favours to those who habitually obey Him (John 5:26 27; Heb. 5:9). No one identifying with the evil contradictions of the unfaithful church systems should hope for a place in the house of sons. There is a call to go forth unto Him who at this present time is outside the camp of the denominations. (Heb. 13:13). No sustained revival efforts within the camps of these religious tribes can possibly attract any longer the '*winking*' of God's eyes. (Acts 17:30). He commands every man everywhere to repent from dead works. The ministry of any servant of God must derive from Christ. Then, and only then will He approve his works.

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The medium of the outworking of God's purpose

The teachings of Apostle Paul in Ephesians 3:1-11 indicate that a body concept is central to the realisation of God's purpose, and to the manifestation of the divine life. The body is an instrument of life, and God has provided that there be an expression of His purpose and life in every place. (1Cor. 12:27 read in conjunction with Matt. 18:18-20). The practical implication of this is that the present day ministry of Christ must have an expression in, and be supported by, a body of believers meeting regularly for fellowship.

It is evident that we are not to look for this fulfilment in the denominations. The system of things sustained by these religious tribes has greatly distanced itself from the purposes of God. The two thousand years of the Church's history have produced an organisational structure in the denominations that is totally alien to the pattern of things set forth in the New Testament. Just like the twelve tribes of Israel in their wilderness journey were made to dwell in camps "*far about the tabernacle of the congregation*" so also is the present Church

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systems far removed from the divine purpose. (Num. 2:1). There is a great gulf fixed between man's order and the divine order. This gulf cannot be bridged by anything; not even by the determined, feverish activities of some blind guides who set aside God's counsel to establish their own. Man's order of things is devoted to destruction.

This is the day in which Christ is thoroughly establishing a new order which must characterise the walk of those who are clean escaped from the denominations and their numerous extensions. The new arrangement which Christ is communicating to His own is the subject with which we will close our meditation.

The Place of House Fellowship

We have seen from our discussion that the medium of outworking of God's purpose is the local expression of the body of Christ. We have sufficiently shown that the scope of work being carried out in and amongst those who have come out of Babylon require the regular meeting of these believers. The vital question that must be asked is: what is the form the

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regular meetings must take, and where should they gather?

We will begin with the second part of the question: where should they gather? It is a principle of truth that the Holy Spirit always points to the time of the beginning in setting forth how things must stand at the time of the end. A careful reading of the first few verses of the chapters of John's gospel and his first epistle will prove fruitful; John's writings conclude the New Testament canon. This principle is provided an additional support in the closing verses of the book of Malachi. Please read carefully through the following verses (mal. 4:4-6).

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse”

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The book of Malachi concludes the Old Testament scriptures. The main thrust of the prophet's burden is the setting forth of the divine reaction to Israel's gross unfaithfulness to their covenant with God. He calls upon them to remember things as they stood at the beginning. At Mount Horeb the statutes and judgments were dictated to Moses who passed these on to the Israelites. All of Israel's moral life and spiritual service were to be measured against the standard set out for them at the beginning.

The fifth and sixth verses of Malachi chapter 4 speak of the raising up of a prophetic ministry which would lead the obedient back to proper worship. The Lord Jesus declared that John the Baptist was a primary fulfilment of this scripture in His first advent. He then pointed to a larger fulfilment of this in a many-membered body ministry at the time of the Second Advent. The children of God in this end of time begotten, as it were, by the writings of the apostles of the Lamb were to have their hearts turned to the practice of the early Church.

The book of the Acts and the Epistle agree in their testimony that the early Christians met in

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homes. There are strong evidences in church history to confirm that this pattern of things was maintained for nearly three full centuries after the resurrection of Christ.

What is more, the Romanish woman started her mysterious "*leavening of truth in three measures*" about the same time Church edifices began to be built. Officiadom became fully incorporated into the ministry of the church during this period also.

There must be therefore a decisive return to the pattern adopted by the apostles of the Lamb who were divinely enabled to chart the course of affairs for the Church. (Eph. 2:20-22). The temple of God is a living organism not a concrete structure.

The Holy Spirit with great emphasis is stressing the need to return to home units or else rented apartment as indicated in the book of Acts. These being more easily adapted to the biblical requirements need never seek a corporate status. Thus there would not be the necessity for an intricate net-work system. And following biblical example, the home units need not carry a name for identification. Thank God, there is the presence of home Churches

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throughout West Africa. We have good reason to believe the situation is so the world over.

We now come to the first part of the question: what is the form the regular meetings must take? Much of the answers to this have already been touched in the course of this meditation. The house fellowship or home church should operate along lines similar to that indicated below.

- (i) It must be a gathering unto the Lord. All comers ought to properly set their focus upon Jesus Christ. Praise and worship from grateful, adoring hearts should be given singular attention.
- (ii) The ministry of the word must be kept fresh and relevant to the divine working at this present time. This will require the active preparation and participation of all. As there ought not to be official “*prayer warriors*” or “*special choir*” so body ministry is a highly desirable thing in this new order. But all who want to share a word should do so only as they are enabled

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by God. Democracy is not a spiritual rule; it must not be confused with '*body ministry*'.

- (iii) There must be in operation an effective ministry of prayers involving all who come for fellowship.
- (iv) The conduct of the meeting should allow for the liberty of the Spirit. The spiritual atmosphere must be made conducive to the diverse working of the Holy Spirit. This position must be sought for and sustained by earnest, believing prayers. This will fully prepare the body to receive and properly harness the later rain as it falls.
- (v) The home Church should evidence an ever increasing passion for God's glory. This is revealed in being engaged in directed service which must be in harmony with the divine will.
- (vi) In this regard, every home church ought to earnestly seek the Lord for the raising up amongst them of ministries possessing prophetic abilities and priestly graces.

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Since a singular purpose of the gathering would be to enhance the spiritual walk of the individual, every member should strongly desire to possess this mark.

- (vii) It is the responsibility of every church to identify those the Lord wants to use in leadership positions. It should be remembered that leadership is a plural concept. In a growing situation leadership grace should come upon more and more persons in the home unit. What has been observed above lead us to expect that those called to leadership should minister with a view to preparing the body for the work of the ministry. This will enable the increasing fulfilment of Ephesians 4:16.

It must be born in mind that there can be no spirituality in the absence of a divinely constituted leadership. Legislative functions belong exclusively to the Holy Spirit. But He will develop in humble teachable persons the grace to effect loving spiritual discipline in the body.

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- (viii) There ought not to be any '*paid ministry*' as the burden of ministry in a faithful set-up is to increasingly rest on all. Great grace coming upon some will show in an increasing demand for the service of such. But these should seek to be self-supporting as much as possible. We are persuaded of God to say that in no case should the burden of this class of people be officially laid on the shoulders of any home church. If the Lord calls any to totally separate himself from secular work for any period of time, He will provide for such a one in a way that will not encourage professionalism in ministry.
- (ix) If a home church becomes too full to accommodate its membership in a house setting, there should be a splitting into smaller units. Each unit must be functional but strictly autonomous. The word of God provides for the ministry of "*joint of supplies*" who may be required of God to visit and encourage the home church in a sub region. But there ought not to be any deliberate arrangement which sees several

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home churches under the firm control of any individual or group of individuals. Such a situation is abhorrent.

- (x) Every home church may use all three ordinances given to the church by Christ. But the emphasis should not be in mere ceremonies or rituals. The spiritual signification of these ordinances must be powerfully stressed. Under increasing light these ordinances would be seen to teach the responsibilities and privileges of the consecrated class in relation to the testimony of the anointed Jesus, the Lord. The physical observance of any ordinance should not be taken as a qualifying ground for admitting into fellowship.
- (xi) Every home unit must activate itself to the mutual care of her members. Thus, of a necessity, a purse should be kept.
- (xii) It is the privilege of a home church to willingly, of its own accord, associate with as many home churches as possible. However only an evil convenience may be

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gained by attempting to form an association with a moderate or rigid control of its members. Every coming together of several home churches for purpose of strengthening one another must use a system of coordination that has only a loose grip on willing participating units. We must bring our meditation to a close. All who hearken to the call to “*come out of her*” should earnestly seek to find fellowship in a home church bearing the marks mentioned above. Should there be none in your locality you may look to the Lord, to evolve one as you use faithfully your devotional times with God. If there is a determined prayer preparation, one can with much assurance expect the leading of God as to the formation of one. May the Lord of the harvest continue to graciously help us to know and do His will supremely. Amen.

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