

Laodicean State

by J.B. Stoney

The Laodicean state is a condition where an assembly boasts of its intelligence and possessions, but lacks a focus on Christ, leading to a state of self-satisfaction and ineffectiveness in testimony.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5, 1 Corinthians 1:31, 1 Corinthians 8:1, 1 Corinthians 10:12, Galatians 6:3, Galatians 6:14, Colossians 2:8, 2 Timothy 3:7, Revelation 3:16

Topics: "Spiritual Pride", "Christian Humility"

Description

J.B. Stoney delves into the state of the Laodicean assembly, emphasizing the danger of boastfulness in intelligence and acquisitions while lacking pursuit of Christ. This phase represents a state of self-satisfaction and needlessness, rendering the truth powerless when man becomes the primary focus instead of Christ. Throughout history, individuals with great knowledge succumbed to self-gratification, leading to a departure from God's truth and ultimately marring the testimony.

Transcript

The last phase of the assembly as the vessel of testimony for God on earth is the Laodicean; hence what that state is, and how produced, must be of great interest to us. The four latter assemblies run down to the coming of the Lord. Philadelphia is the assembly in light and power before the end. Laodicea will be spued out of Christ's mouth as entirely unfit for the testimony.

In the various phases of the assembly we find gross evil and painful departure from the truth; but it is in the assembly of the Laodiceans only, we hear of boastfulness because of their acquisitions, and yet with this intelligence Christ is not their object nor pursuit. Scriptural intelligence so great as to be a matter of boast has been attained to, but it is ineffectual to form Christ in them. They boast of great intelligence about Christ and His things, but it is not Christ Himself they seek or cultivate.

The truth is shown to be powerless because it is man as he is naturally who commands their attention. If Christ is not my object, man in some form or other must be my object. The Laodicean state is when there is so much intelligence and acquisition that there are data for boastfulness with so much self-satisfaction that there is "need of nothing".

When the assembly reaches this state fully, that is, boasting of its intelligence and possessions, and yet Christ is not the object, then it is plainly unfitted to be the vessel of testimony, and the Lord spues it out of His mouth.

In all other phases of the assembly there was at least no boastfulness as to their condition. It is quite true that very soon the assembly lost its true place as the witness for Christ on the earth; but there never as before boastful self-satisfaction as to intelligence and Christ literally outside.

True, for centuries the assembly had lost the great truths of eternal life and the new creation, now revived; but though these truths are restored to the Laodiceans they have no real effect upon them, they do not cultivate Christ, so satisfied are they with their acquisitions, etc. The Laodicean state may be simply defined thus: the greatest intelligence combined with self-consideration; and when this is the case, the truth has no power and its owner only subjects it to miscarriage.

Beautiful garments only suit those who are worthy of them. The truth in Laodicea is but "a jewel of gold in a swine's snout", the most valuable thing reduced to the level of an unworthy possessor.

No simple follower of Christ could boast of his acquisition because he would have the sense that he now only sees in part, and that he has not yet attained.

When the church avowedly and characteristically promulgates a boast of the possession of truth and the advantages of it, and this coupled with indifference to Christ, then the Laodicean state has fully come. We shall find all through Scripture that it is the intelligent person, who is not under the control of the truth which he knows, who is the one who chiefly mars the testimony for the time.

Eve had light and knowledge through the word of God, but drawn away by self-consideration, when she saw what was good for food, pleasant to the eye, and to be desired to make one wise, she took thereof and did eat, showing that self had more control over her than the word of God, and thus the first state, the state of innocence was lost.

The one who knew the truth had turned from the holy commandment delivered unto her. Noah had light, to him was given the power to rule and suppress evil, but he drinks of the fruit of the vine - gratifies himself, so that he is disqualified for his position; not from ignorance but because he swerved from the control of God's word, to think of his own gratification, not that he intended to unfit himself for his calling by intemperance, but once self-gratification is yielded to by one who knows better, and who is called to higher things, his fall is inevitable, and the testimony is not only marred but ignored. Isaac had the light and truth respecting Israel's future, but he was warped in his mind because he did eat of Esau's venison, and he attempts to confer the blessing intended for Jacob upon him. Aaron, the mouthpiece of Moses, the one who had assisted in all the wonderful deliverances which God had wrought for Israel, the one appointed to stand between the people and God, makes a calf for Israel, thus contravening the whole truth of God.

The one in ability and knowledge most qualified to propound and maintain the mind of God, lends himself, in order to be popular, to disgrace himself, and defame it.

He doubtless did not intend to annul it, but in attempting to reduce it to man's mind, he "Changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass", Psalm 106: 20. Samson, the strongest of men, highly honoured of God, assured of the secret of his strength, led away by self-gratification and indulgence, became the sport of the enemy - a blind prisoner in his hands; not from ignorance, but from being wrought upon through his natural affections, by a designing and degraded woman. Solomon, the man to whom God says, "I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee", loved many strange women, "and the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto

him twice, and has commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded.

"Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant", 1 Kings 11: 9-11. I might adduce other examples, but one in the New Testament will suffice.

Peter, to whom at the time the greatest light was revealed, to whom the Lord says, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven".

Yet we find that almost in the same breath, he attempts to rebuke the Lord for speaking of His death; unwittingly he would spare man; he was possessed of the greatest truth, but he could not bear that the man, as man here, must be set aside in the cross; and this is such a subtle and pernicious error that our Lord, in the most scathing way, denounces it, saying to him, "Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men". In Paul's epistles the teaching is that the first man should be kept out, by the power and knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

It is not so much that the truth of the gospel is denied, but there is a continual attempt of the flesh to get some place in carrying it out. The servants of God who have the most light and who, in any measure or degree, sanction or make use of man naturally in inculcating the truth, however unwittingly, promote and generate the Laodicean state; they really make the cross of none effect; that is, man is not ignored.

They may argue for it their success in arresting and winning souls; but the end can never justify the means, and certainly the work of those servants bears the marks of the workmen.

Though their converts have received grace from Christ there is no thought or intention of living Christ here, but they go on in the world as usual, only more morally and respectably. When a soul is converted or taught by one who acts on the affections by human means, the more light that preacher or teacher has, the more does he indirectly sanction the human thing, so the truth he has is proved inoperative to ignore the old man; consequently, the assembly becomes "the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me".

When there is boastful self-satisfaction as to possessions of light and knowledge but all is directed to the benefit of man, and when even unintentionally Christ is not the object or aim of their hearts, this is the Laodicean state; and when this state characterises the assembly, it is evident it can no longer be used by Christ as a vessel of testimony, and then, alas! it is fit and suited for the beast to carry, in order to consummate Babylon.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jb-stoney/laodicean-state/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net