

7 LETTERS AND 7 CHURCHES (part 5)

Greetings precious ones, we continue this seven part series entitled “7 Letters to 7 Churches”. This week we will look at the Church of Sardis.

Revelation 3:1-6, “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '”

Here we have a church that is near death and in actuality some of it has already died. In the Word of God the Bible, the Church is likened to a physical body. As a physical body has numerous parts, (hands; feet; arms; etc.) they all work together for the survival of the whole body. When all is healthy, the body performs well as long as it is receiving and acting upon the messages from the head. There are times though when a part of the body can die due to injury, disease or other causes such as an infection known as gangrene. If gangrene goes untreated, it can spread and bring death to the entire body.

This is a picture of what was happening at the church at Sardis. Although the exact cause of this infection is not given we know it had a devastating affect on the entire church for Jesus said there are but a “few” names who had not been defiled yet.

No doubt one of the major contributing factors to the death of this church was embracing of false doctrine. Jesus by His own words and the words of His apostles gave numerous warnings regarding false teaching. These false doctrines are still around today and have caused the death of many of churches.

Let me point out a few. Matthew 7:15-16, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits." Luke 12:1, “He began to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” 2 Peter 2, “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words.... They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. ...having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. ...For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.” 1 Tim 4:1-2, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times

some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.”

Today more than any other time in our history are we being exposed to rampant heretical teaching within the Church resulting in the death of many main line denominations that once were used wonderfully by the Lord. Now, because there has been a departure from the Word of God many of these are deteriorating and ceasing to exist.

The key to remaining alive is abiding in the Word of God and having His Word abide in us. Jesus promises life to all that abide in Him in John 15.

Dear ones, if you have departed from the Word of God I exhort you, return now and live!

Drew Macintyre is pastor of Calvary Chapel of Alpine and can be reached at 619-445-2589, or ccalpine@juno.com