



Implosion Prevention—21st Century Challenge
Sardis—The Stagnant Church (Part 4)
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Objective Sentence: Everyone can live a life that pleases God by avoiding the pitfalls that the five of the seven churches in Revelation fell into.

Ephesus—Complacent; Pergamos—Compromise; Thyatira—Tolerance; Sardis—Stagnant

Matt. 16:18 Jesus said, ***“I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*** The church will not and cannot be defeated from without; its defeat comes from within—through implosion. In **Rev. chapters 2-3** the Lord addresses the weaknesses, vulnerabilities and proclivities of churches and people towards sin. These seven churches typify the communities of believers throughout history and the conditions of these churches are a reflection of what has occurred in its past and will continue to happen in its future.

Read 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. ² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. ³ 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. ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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. ⁶ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.””

William Booth, a British Methodist Preacher was born April 10, 1829 and died August 20, 1912; he was founder of Salvation Army: I consider that the chief dangers which confront the

coming century will be religion without the Holy Spirit, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, and heaven without hell.)

I. Sardis Church was Stagnant (*Rev. 3:1 ... 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.*

A. Definition of stagnant: *having no current or flow; still; motionless; static; stationary, dead, slack, foul, stale, putrid, smelly—like stagnant water; showing no activity: dull sluggish, inactive, lethargic, flat, depressed, declining, dying, dormant. The church of Sardis received no commendation.*

1. Drooping and Dead (*Isaiah 29:13-14 NKJV* The Lord said, "these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men, ¹⁴ Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden)

- a. *J. Seiss:* The Church of Sardis was but a drooping plant and a dead carcass. It started fresh and new; it had received the true life of a saint; but it soon had more profession than vitality, and more boastfulness than purity or fruit.
- b. *Ezek. 33:30-32* As for you, son of man, your people are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, 'Come and hear the message that has come from the LORD.' ³¹ My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to hear your words, but they do not put them into practice. Their mouths speak of love, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. ³² Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice
- b. *Pastor Dan:* Paul issues a warning (*2 Tim. 3:1-5 NLT*) You should know ... that in the last days (perilous times will come) there will be very difficult times. ² For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. ³ They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴ They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. ⁵ They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that
- c. *Jn. 14:21, 24 NLT* Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them. ²⁴ Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me
- d. *G. Campbell Morgan:* There is a marked change in the attitude of the Lord in dealing with the church of Sardis. In the proceeding letters Christ began each of his

messages to the churches with words of commendation but here he begins with words of condemnation ... it had a reputation among the churches in the area; it was considered a spiritual church ... but from the divine standpoint it is considered as a church that had only a name of being alive but was actually dead as far as spiritual life and power were concerned.

- e. *C. H. Spurgeon*: Stagnation in the church is the devil's delight.
- f. **Matt. 7:13-14, 17-20** Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction (NLT the highway to hell is wide), and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it ... ¹⁷ A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. ¹⁹ So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions (and inactions). (**Matt. 13:22** cares choke)
- g. *Oswald Chambers*: We lose ground when ... allow the cares of this world to enter our lives and clutter our minds with confusing thoughts and worries.
- h. *Barclay*: A church is in danger of death when it ... when it is more concerned with forms than with life ... when it loves systems more than it loves Jesus Christ ... when it is more concerned with material than spiritual things.

2. **Growth--Implosion Prevention** (**2 Pet. 3:18** *Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to him be glory both now and forever.*)

- a. *Warren Wiersbe*: Anyone who has ever really lived knows that there is no life without growth. When we stop growing, we stop living and start existing. But there is no growth without challenge, and there is no challenge without change. Life is a series of changes that create challenges, and if we are going to make it, we have to grow.
- b. **Jude 20** Beloved building up yourselves on your most holy faith praying in the Holy Spirit ...
- c. **Rom. 8:5** Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things ...
- d. **1 Pet. 2:1-3** So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. ² Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, ³ now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.
- e. *Pastor Dan and Back to the Basics*: Word of God, Prayer, Church (community), Baptism of the Holy Spirit, Witnessing, Giving (tithe), Service, Surrender etc.
- f. *Pastor Dan*: God always moves on the altar of pure sacrifice—there is no growth without sacrifice (**Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 12:1**) .
- g. **Col. 2:6-11** As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. ⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰ and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

- h. **John 15:4-5** *James L. Allen*: You cannot travel within and stand still without. *Pat Riley*: Anytime you stop striving to get better, you're bound to get worse. *Bruce Barton*: When your through changing—you're through. *Elenor Roosevelt*: When you cease to make a contribution you begin to die.

Closing and Invitation: There are two major bodies of water in the land where Jesus walked. One is the Sea of Galilee, a beautiful lake 13 miles long and 7 miles wide filled with fish and surrounded by lush foliage. The other body of water is the Dead Sea, 50 miles long and 11 miles wide, the shoreline of which is 1300 feet below sea level. Seven million tons of water evaporate from the Dead Sea every day. The saline or salt content of the water of the Dead Sea ranges from 26-35%, making it 10 times saltier than the oceans of the world. There's no seaweed or plants of any kind in or around the water. There are no fish or any kind of swimming, squirming creatures living in or near the water. As a matter of fact, what you'll see on the shores of the Sea is white, crystals of salt covering EVERYTHING. According to extremescience.com, fish accidentally swimming into the waters from one of the several freshwater streams that feed the Sea are killed instantly, their bodies quickly coated with a preserving layer of salt crystals and then tossed onto shore by the wind and waves. Both the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea are fed by the Jordan River. There is really only one difference between these two bodies of water, really only one thing that causes the Sea of Galilee to be beautiful and alive while the Dead Sea is barren and lifeless. The Sea of Galilee has an outlet; the Dead Sea does not! Water flows through the Sea of Galilee. Water flows into the Dead Sea but not out! Spiritual input but no spiritual output = Stagnation. If you and I have Spiritual input but no spiritual output, we will become stagnant, lifeless, bitter, and caustic. Both of these bodies of water are beautiful but one is dead and the other alive.