

*In search of...*



# Truth & Right

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## Thou Art Dead

Jesus charged the apostle John to write to the church in Sardis, "These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead" (Revelation 3:1).

I read this passage, and I wonder how many churches there are today like Sardis. Can you picture a congregation of the Lord's people thinking it was very much alive, but only to hear the Lord pronounce that church

dead? Christ says, "I know", and this is repeated by the Lord in all these letters to the churches. He knew them, because Christ looks at the spiritual strength, and outward actions do not always reflect spiritual conditions. I sit here writing this article and thinking to myself: What causes a congregation of the Lord's people to be dead?

1. What would cause my Lord to say, "Thou art dead?" Teaching and following error. The Lord never promised to bless

those who follow error, no matter how sincere they may be. Paul exhorted Timothy to charge some men not to teach a different doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3-7). Accepting false doctrine would produce unfaithfulness (1 Timothy 4:1-3). It will cause the Lord to remove His candlestick and fellowship from this place (Revelation 2:5; 2 John 9). "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6). God wants us to hate every false way (Psalm 119:104).

2. What would cause my Lord to say, "Thou art dead?" Conforming to the world. Jesus told the apostles, "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). Worldliness is one of the greatest dangers facing the church of the Lord. Satan, as the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), puts all kinds of pressure on the church to conform to the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and

the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17). "No man can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). We cannot make friends with the world (standards) without becoming the enemy of God (James 4:4). When Christians, and the church exhibit desire for and make compromises with the world, they are guilty of spiritual adultery, and the church will die!

3. What would cause my Lord to say "Thou art dead?" Neglect of members. What do we need to do to cause the Lord to say, "Thou art dead?" NOTHING! "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but do them not; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their gain" (Ezekiel 33:31). "And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand" (Matthew 7:26). This is the height of stubbornness. But, then it is nothing new and is one of the problems in the church today. The children of Israel made a conscious choice not to do the will of God, just as many people do today. Individual members who engage in sinful activities and do not repent or change their

ways, thus bringing reproach on the body of Christ. We neglect to do those things that make the church vital and alive.

4. What would cause my Lord to say, "Thou art dead?" Not being united! After all, the church is to be "fitly joined together" (Ephesians 4:16). "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and (that) there be no divisions among you; but (that) ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). "Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?" (Amos 3:3) Brethren, this implies cooperation by brethren; unity, harmony, being "fitly joined together" is a mark of Christianity. Nobody even likes that person who always has to have his own way, or will not cooperate with others. Who always thinks their way is the only way. When I was a child, playing at recess in school, there was always someone that insists everything must be as he calls it. Do you know what happened? Soon the others would leave him, and there he is all alone. The same thing is true on the adult level. God is not pleased with the uncooperative person who is unwilling to sacrifice himself for the benefit and good of others. God is not pleased with such a person. A lack of this attitude hinders the progress of the cause of Christ. God wants us to love one another, "For ye yourselves are taught of God to love one

another" (1 Thessalonians 4:9). And what does love do? "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

To have spiritual life with Christ, and to dwell with Him eternally, we must not teach or follow error, but His word. As the church, the called out, we must not conform to the world. The church must separate from the world and be transformed into the image of Christ (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). As the church, to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10), we must not neglect our duties, but be doers of the word (James 1:22). We must as the church, be united! The church that does follow and teach error, conforms to the world, neglects its duties and is not united in Christ, will surely hear the Lord say one day, "Thou art dead!"

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# John Beheaded

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A Z K Y X L U H S N P H I L I P V C O D  
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- Herod the tetrarch had John the Baptist killed (Matt. 14:1)
- He thought Jesus was John raised from the dead (vs. 2)
- Earlier Herod had seized John and bound him (vs. 3)
- And put him in prison because of... (vs. 3)
- ... Herodias, the woman Herod lived in sin with (vs. 3)
- She was his brother, Philip's wife (vs. 3)
- John rebuked them saying it was not lawful (vs. 4)
- Not killed at first because Herod feared the people (vs. 5)
- Herodias' daughter danced on Herod's birthday (vs. 6)
- He made an oath to give her whatever she asked (vs. 7)
- She asked for John's head on a platter (vs. 8)
- The disciples came and buried the body (vs. 12)