

Checkin' Out My Walk
#42 - Sardis - Sleeping Saints With Dirty Garments

Belief: The promises to the overcomers are rewards for obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ. As someone has pointedly observed, "A command that everyone keeps is superfluous. A reward that everyone receives for a virtue that everyone has is nonsense."

The Dead Church Rev.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, [my spiritual growth & maturity; faithful commitment] for I have not found your works perfect [complete, mature] before God. ³Remember 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. ⁴You 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 Barclay, historic commentator of the Scriptures, relates a fable in which three of the devil's apprentices were coming to earth to finish their apprenticeships.

They were talking to Satan about their plans to tempt and ruin man.

Devil #1: I will tell them, "There is no God."

Satan's reply: That won't delude anyone. They KNOW there is a God.

Devil #2: I will tell them, "There is no hell."

Satan: You will deceive no one. They know deep down there is a hell and punishment for sin.

Devil #3: I will tell them, "There is no hurry."

Satan's reply: You will ruin men by the thousands.

The most dangerous delusion is that there is plenty of time.

Rev. 3:3 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 -There is a consequence for the unwatchful believer. The word translated "watch" here is from the Greek word "threw" (tereo) which means to be alert and on guard.

SLEEPY SAINTS by A W Pink: What an anomaly! [abnormal] Drowsing on the verge of eternity!

A Christian has been: (1) awakened from the sleep of death in trespasses and sins,

(2) made to realize the unspeakable awfulness of endless misery in hell

(3)the indescribable joy of everlasting bliss in heaven, and

(4) thereby brought to recognize the seriousness and solemnity of life.

(5) He has been taught experientially the worthlessness of all mundane things and the

preciousness of Divine things. He has turned his back on Vanity Fair and has started out on his journey to the Celestial City (Phil. 3:20-21).

(6) He has been quickened into newness of life (Rom 6:4).

(7) He has been supplied with the most powerful incentives (Mt 25:21, 23, II Cor. 5:10, I Cor. 3:11-15) to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14).

Nevertheless, it is sadly possible for him: (1) to suffer a relapse, (2) for his zeal to abate (Heb. 6:11-12), (3) his graces to languish, (4) for him to leave his first love (Rev. 2:4-5), and (5) become weary of well-doing (II Thess. 3:13, Gal. 6:9).

Warning: Unless he is very much on his guard, drowsiness will steal over him, and he will fall asleep. Corruptions still indwell in him, and sin has a stupefying effect (Heb. 3:13).

He is yet in this evil world (Gal. 1:4KJV), and it exerts an enervating [feel drained of energy or vitality] influence. Satan seeks to devour him (I Pet. 5:8), and unless resisted steadfastly (James 4:6-7 Eph. 6:11-13) will hypnotize him.

Thus, the menace of this spiritual "sleeping sickness" is very real.

Slumbering saints! Taking their ease while threatened by danger

(1) Lazing instead of fighting the good fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12).

(2) Trifling away opportunities to glorify their Savior (Matt. 5:16, Col. 4:5) instead of redeeming the time (Eph. 5:16):

(3) Rusting, instead of wearing out in His service (Re 14:13; Rev. 22:12).

We speak with wonderment and horror of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning, but far more startling and reprehensible is a careless Christian who has departed from God, bewitched by a world which is doomed to eternal destruction (I John 2:17, II Pet. 3:10-11).

Such a travesty and tragedy is far from being exceptional. Both observation and the teaching of Scripture prove it to be a common occurrence. Such passages as the following make it only too evident: The People Of God Are Thus Overcome.

Rom. 13:11 "It is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"

I Cor. 15:34 "Awake to righteousness, and sin not."

Eph. 5:14 "Awake thou that sleepest."

Each of those calls is made to the saints.

I Thess. 5:6-11 Paul admonishes the believer to WAIT UP for Christ's return by behaving in a godly way. Don't be caught off guard. The Biblical idea of waiting is **HIGHLY ACTIVE**.

I Thess. 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch [alert] and be sober.

Note: Sleep = *katheudo* = refers to spiritual lethargy and negligence with a view to Christ's return > To be spiritually asleep with the result that one becomes secure and unconcerned in sin as well as indolent and careless in the performance of the call on his life and the work God has prepared for him to accomplish.

Note: Spiritually, we are called to be "morning people" for God. Many believers are spiritual sleepwalkers who have been intoxicated by the world and their earthly lives.

It can be very easy to yawn and sleep through life.

Barna & Gallup research demonstrates there is no longer any difference between the behavior of Christians and non-Christians. Our lives are cluttered with things of no eternal value.

Truth: Unless I am INTENTIONAL, it is easy to neglect my spiritual preparation.

I Thess. 5:7 Paul urges us to "CLEAN UP." For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. Paul's stress is on the self-control and alertness that should mark a soldier on duty. Our behavior should NOT be characterized by the sin of unbelievers.

Question: "Do I want to be doing _____ when Christ returns?"

When the answer is "NO!" it is easier to reject the temptation of the moment.

I Thess. 5:8 Paul urges us to "DRESS UP." But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation.

Note #1: The breastplate has 2 features: faith and love. If we live by faith, we will be spiritually stable in spiritual war. Faith and faithfulness will enable us to persevere until Jesus returns.

Note #2 Love is the other side of the breastplate. Our faith must result in love.

II Tim. 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Truth: We are to LOVE Christ's appearing and anticipate the crown of righteousness.

Crosby: Blessed are those whom the Lord finds watching, In His glory they shall share;

If He shall come at the dawn or midnight, Will He find us watching there?

I Thess. 5:9-10 Paul explains why believers will be saved from God's wrath. "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation [deliverance] through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are AWAKE or ASLEEP, we will live together with Him."

Note: This promise extends even to those believers who are not alert. A state of non-alertness affects present sanctification, but does not impact their being taken in the rapture.

II Peter 3:3-4 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation."

Four Reasons For Scoffing, Apathy And Indifference Of Christians:

1. Unbelief - Many professing Christians do not believe Jesus will ever return to this earth due to a liberal view of Scripture. They spiritualize the virgin birth and miracles. His return is nothing more than a fairy tale.

2. Ignorance - Many are apathetic due to ignorance regarding His return and the marvelous future He has waiting for believers. Many discredit prophetic teaching; not important.

3. Fear - Many fear His imminent return for believers because of their lifestyle.

Many believe in a works salvation and fear He will return on one of their "bad" days.

4. Carnality - Carnal Christians cannot get excited about His return because they are in love with the world. They walk with one foot in church and one in the world. They don't want Him to return until they have experienced all the world and this life offer. Don't mess up my life!

DON'T GET CAUGHT SLEEPING! Most Christians are ignorant and apathetic regarding Bible prophecy and the return of Jesus Christ. Did you know that >1/3 of the Bible is prophecy? In the Old Testament there are over 1,800 references to Christ's return.

Of the 260 chapters in the New Testament, there are more than 300 references to Christ's return - that is 1 out of every 30 verses!

23 of the 27 New Testament books give PROMINENCE to this subject. For every Biblical prophecy concerning Christ's 1st return, there are 8 prophecies about His second coming. In spite of this statistics, most are apathetic and have tuned out prophetic teaching.

Damaging Beliefs Of Reformation Church:

1. "Soft" hermeneutics > The Bible is not taken literally.

Scripture is allegorized which leads to a loss of meaning and power of God's Word.

2. Denial Of Inerrancy Of Word Of God

3. Denial Of Millennial Reign > Most of these churches do not believe in a literal 1,000-year reign by Jesus Christ on the earth at the end of the Church age. The angel promised Mary she would give birth to a son who would one day rule from David's throne.

This prophecy is yet to be fulfilled and will be during the millennium.

4. Doctrine Of Imminency Of The Rapture Died

5. Denial Of Israel's Prophetic Destiny > God made 4 unconditional covenants with Israel and Scripture confirms: God Is Not Finished With Israel. Most of these churches believe the Church has replaced Israel because she did not accept the Messiah. This misconception has given rise to very serious anti-Semitism in years past and is on the increase in the world today.

Effect Today: Absence of Biblical devotion > De-emphasis of Gospel of Christ. The gospel message is watered down as words such as "sin" and "repentance" are offensive to the post-modern culture we live in. Messages delivered in churches are about "feel good", "seeker-friendly" and there is a loss of reverence and awe for our powerful and mighty God.

Truth: We are called to wise up to end-times doctrine because God expects us to know what He declares in His Word. We will be held accountable for our knowledge or lack thereof.

Be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

I Cor. 16:13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

[Tense of verbs call for a continual action on the believer's part]

Be watchful or be vigilant means to live a sanctified life, consciously aware of the coming judgment day. Live in light of eternity

Col. 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

I John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

Question: Can I be ashamed? Lose or forfeit all or part of my reward [inheritance]?

II John 1:8 Look to yourselves, that you do not lose those things you worked for, but *that* you may receive a full reward.

Col. 2:18a Let no one cheat you of your reward... [Let no one defraud you by acting as an umpire *and* declaring you unworthy and disqualifying you for the prize,]

I Cor. 3:10b-15 But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of What Sort It Is. If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Note: This is written to BELIEVERS; they are saved in the end.

Believers who suffer loss = Castaway, disqualified; not worthy of inheriting

Note: Loss= forfeit loss of one's rewards/inheritance >could have been in one's possession

Consider: The thief has come when you weren't ready and watching. You can never lose your justification, but you have forfeited a portion of your full reward and inheritance.

Rev. 3:4a You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments;

Belief: I believe the Bible teaches there are 2 different garments a believer can wear.

Garment #1: Believers are given [imputed] the "Garment Of Salvation" at justification.

Isa. 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God;

For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation,

He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

Rom. 4:6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom

God imputes righteousness apart from works:

- a. This external garment is without spot or wrinkle.
- b. Believers cannot defile this garment of justification. It is HIS righteousness!
- c. This garment provides us eternal life and entrance into heaven.
- d. This garment gives us eternal security. No justified believer can be ejected from Christ's righteousness.

Garment #2 - Our Sanctification Garment > Obedience to His Call > Lifelong process

a. The 2nd garment Christ requires for the Marriage festivities is the white, fine linen garment made up of the believer's own "righteous works."

Rev. 19:7-8 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed

in fine linen, clean and bright, for the Fine Linen Is The Righteous Acts Of The Saints.

Note: This garment speaks of internal sanctification of the believer.

b. These are Spirit-led deeds performed after our justification; works of godliness and deeds of righteousness that the Holy Spirit PRODUCES through us.

Phil. 1:11 May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation - the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ - for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

Kenton Beshore: "The Millennial Apocalypse" - "Christ must not only be in us as a robe, but He must be on us as a life."

Good News: A few in Sardis have not DEFILED their GARMENT.

Note: Our 2nd garment can get defiled, stained, and blackened through our own choices.

Defiled = moluno = Strong's 3435 = blacken oneself, to pollute oneself, dirty one's clothing

Basic meaning > To color something by staining it; NOW it needs cleaning

It refers to an internal condition = unfaithfulness & disobedience

Note: We can defile our garment by not being faithful, by quenching the Holy Spirit and polluting our soul. We make choices that block God's Spirit & cause us to walk in darkness.

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this:... to keep oneself unspotted [polluted] from the world.

Rev. 3:4 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.

Note : Worthy = axios = Strong's #514= worthy of on grounds of being fit, prepared and ready; qualified to rule and reign with Christ and hold levels of responsibility

Eph. 4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called

Col. 1:10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

I Thess. 2:12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Consider: No one is EVER worthy of salvation righteousness. Justification is a gift given through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is based on HIS worthiness, not ours. [Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7] The white garment mentioned in Rev. 3:5 is related to the garment in verse 4. It is given as a reward for a WORTHY WALK.

Note: 1. The worthiness is linked to the fact these were believers who have not defiled [blackened] their garments. They are defined as being those who overcome.

Belief: It seems they are the ones who will wear these particular garments

2. Walking with Him in white is a reward for righteous acts or deeds of the saints.

3. This fits with Rev. 19:7-8 ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

4. Walking in white must refer to the white garment of fine linen.

5. The Bride Of Christ is to "clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean."

Consider: When we are born again as a justified believer, we are BETROTHED to Jesus Christ. He is our future bridegroom. Our life is a "preparation time" before we are to be presented to Christ as a pure virgin.

Eph. 5:26-27 describes the way the church is to be presented to Jesus Christ. that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, "that He [the Lord] MIGHT present her [the church] to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."

Note: She is to be sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the Word.

Consider: The "holy ones without blemish" are justified believers who have chosen to keep themselves clean, prepared and ready by obedience to sanctification by the Holy Spirit. They will be arrayed in fine linen, clear and white, which are the "righteous acts of the saints."

II Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I MAY present *you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

Chaste: #53 - hagnos = This is the root from which hagnosmos [#38], the word SANCTIFIED, comes from. Holiness or *hagiasmos* in the Greek has been defined by Wescott as "the preparation for the presence of God."

Notice the words MIGHT and MAY. Consider: It is God's will to present the church "as a chaste and holy virgin, without spot or wrinkle," but it appears to NOT be a given.

Consider: It appears to not be automatic. Something is required of believers.

We are to be obedient to the call of sanctification. When we fully surrender to the Holy Spirit, He does the work in us to prepare us to be the chaste and holy virgin, without spot or wrinkle.

Ponder: Many believers are not obedient to the call to be sanctified!

Rev. 3:4 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.

Rev. 3:5 He who OVERCOMES shall be clothed in white garments

Question: What must they overcome in Sardis? Their deadness [no spiritual growth; works are not complete]; Not Watching and thief comes; they have defiled garments.

Rev. 16:15 Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

Jesus will come as a thief, that is, in an unexpected way.

Stay alert beloved so that you might not be ashamed when He comes.

Eph. 5:15-16 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Acts 20:32 So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His GRACE, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Belief: Those who overcome deadness, spiritual immaturity and the defiling of their garment of sanctification are those who will receive the promises to those who overcome.

Consider: We will find out at the Bema Seat if we are clothed with this "garment of linen" and found worthy.