

Sardis: The Dead Church

Revelation 3:1-6 ¹“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. ‘ ‘I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ²Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. ³Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. ⁴Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

❖ Intro

- A Dead Church
- Overall the church was dead
- Some Christians were walking as they should
- **But it seems**
 - Overall the Christians... they were asleep on the job... doing very little
 - Just riding it out... no life to them
 - And the church is full of unbelievers here.....
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❖ Recap

- Chapter 1 – The Vision of Jesus
- The Church at Ephesus
- The Church at Smyrna
- The Church at Pergamum
- The Church at Thyatira

❖ Remember

- The Letters are: Specifically for each of these individual churches
- Each letter served as a warning or encouragement for the other 6
- The letters were addressed to the individual as well
- Today these letters are designed to encourage and rebuke the churches of our time
- Today these letters are to the individual
 - Do Not look around you:
 - And say... yes this is so true of so and so.... And yes that is true of him or her
 - Look at yourself... At what point do these verses speak of you
 - Self Reflection is the key here...
- **Self Examination – Is the only way to reverse and repent of the negative things Jesus lists...**
 - And to begin doing the things that are pleasing in His eyes
 - If everyone looks around to see what is wrong with their neighbor
 - We all remain arrogant and prideful
 - And we will lack humility
 - And there will never be any change

¹“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write:

❖ The Church at Sardis (for our people who like history)

- Sardis – at one time the greatest of cities (expound)
- Built on a high plateau
- Loaded with gold
- An impossible city to take
- One of their kings Croesus was a little arrogant and tried to take out the Persians
 - He was defeated
 - And came back to his home
 - But dismissed all of his allied armies...
 - Because he did not expect to be attacked... they just rested
- **Because of its height... they thought no one would dare try to attack them**
 - But their enemy the Persians did just that...
 - They climbed up a place that was without guard...
 - Everyone in the city just assumed no one would attack from that spot
 - Had even a child defended that area it would have been kept...
- **So they were defeated**
- **Later on in their history (having not learned their lesson)**
 - They were defeated again in the same manner
- **By the time of Jesus the city was a shell of its former glory**
 - They suffered a great earthquake in AD 17 (while Jesus was alive)
 - Much of the city just collapsed and practically fell off the plateau
- **BUT.... This did not stop the city from thinking very highly of themselves**
 - Because of their great past
 - They continued to think of themselves as a great city
- **The church there was much the same way**

: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

❖ Jesus makes His people Alive

- **Seven Spirits**
 - Simply means He has the Holy Spirit
 - The number seven not an indication of how many
 - Rather it is an indication of what the Spirit is...
 - The number seven is a number signifying Completeness...
 - Revelation 4:5 ⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God,
- **Seven Stars**
 - The leaders of the churches...
 - I also think you can go as far to say, He holds His people...
 - John 10:28 ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.
 - Expound
- **Jesus makes His people alive**
 - The Holy Spirit brings people to life
 - It was the power of the Spirit that raised Jesus from the grave
 - Jesus is Holding His people in His hand
 - And He has the power of the Spirit
 - 1 Peter 3:18 ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

- **He is telling these people, He can make them alive again...**
 - He can bring revival to this dead church

“ I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

❖ **Jesus Knows**

- **I know your works... period**
 - No commendation here... no... they are good, and you love etc...
 - Just I know
 - I know what you have done
 - Remember
 - Two edged sword
 - Eyes like a flame of fire
- **You have a reputation of being alive but you are dead**
 - I know of churches that were dead...
 - I can think of one in particular
 - Living off past merits
 - Wanted to grow
 - But didn't want new people, unless they were their type
 - They were faithful givers...
 - And they saw they gave and bragged about it...
 - **But they did very little for God**
 - No matter how much they were poked and prodded by the word
 - They never seemed to be moved...
 - Never seemed to want to repent...
 - **There were a few there who loved Jesus**
 - And reached out for Him... but the majority wasn't...
- **You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.**
 - **Being alive, but you are dead**
 - This church was a dead church...
 - Samson.... People thought of Him as a great warrior for God
 - ◆ But inside he was dead

²Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

❖ **Jesus is telling you to Wake Up**

- **Wake up**
 - Ephesians 5:14 ¹⁴for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”
 - While the guards are sleeping, the enemy can do whatever they want with the city
 - Same thing for Christians...
 - If they stay asleep to spiritual things... the enemy... Satan and his demons
 - Will run a muck with their lives
 - And they are sleeping through it...
 - 1 Corinthians 15:34 ³⁴Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.
- **Strengthen what remains and is about to die**

- What are you doing now... but it is weak?
 - Prayer.... Bible reading.... Giving... serving
 - It is about to die
- **I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God**
 - They had not Finished
 - **What haven't you finished?**

³ Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent.

❖ Jesus calls you to Repent

- **Think back to the gospel...**
 - Received and heard
 - Keep that
- **And... Repent...**
 - Luke 13:3 ³ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.
 - Acts 2:38 ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

❖ Jesus will come as a Thief

- **This is not a good thing....**
 - The thief comes to destroy
 - And they come when you are not expecting
 - **Expound**
- **Jesus will not stand for His name to be soiled**
 - He promised Pergamum He would come and make war with them
 - He promised in Thyatira he would cause some to be sick, some to be killed
 - And others thrown into great Tribulation
- **I think you can apply that here...**
 - To the Christian that just stops... stops growing.... God will take you out of this world...
 - If you stop fighting the fight of faith... stop fighting sin and growing in Christ...
 - I think He is warning you that your time will soon be up...
 - And you will find no rewards in heaven...
- **To the person not born again**
 - He has given you time to repent...
 - That time will run out...
 - You have hung around the Christians long enough...
 - You have tasted of the goodness of the Spirit of God
 - How He works in kindness through his children
 - And He answers their prayers and brings people to life...
 - **But you have rejected too many times..**
 - He will come like a thief

⁴ Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

❖ Jesus is pleased with the Faithful

- **They have not soiled their garments**
 - Jesus makes our garments white...
- **They will walk with me in white**
 - Because Jesus has made their garments white by His blood
- **They are worthy**
 - Because of Jesus
- **Jesus is Who makes our working possible...**
 - But let me issue a warning to all of us who think we can live however we want...
- **There is a constant running theme of WORKING for God... running through the whole new Testament**
 - And you see it here as well...
 - They have not soiled their garments...
 - These people were actively practicing holiness
- **The Call to DO... and ACT for God is a real one... not to be dismissed because of grace**

⁵The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

❖ Jesus Will Reward

- **Clothed in white Garments**
- **Never blot his name out of the book of life**
 - Expound
- **Confess before my Father and before His angels..**
 - **Matthew 10:32-33** ³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

❖ Who was He warning

- Christians, or non Christians
- Both...
 - There were believers that were true believers, but they had grown cold in their walk with Jesus
 - They had left their first love, followed into sin, and were now just coasting along, with almost no spiritual pulse
 - They needed to wake up
 - The Non Christians...
 - Tasted and seen, but had rejected
 - Didn't want to give up their lifestyle