

LETTERS TO THE CHURCH

Sardis: The Dead Church

Revelation: 3:1-6

Sardis



- The city of Sardis was about 30 miles southeast of Thyatira
- The city of Sardis was a city with two locations
- There as the older section of the city that was built on a mountain and the lower part that was in the valley below
- The older portion of Sardis was situated on top of a steep mountain about 1500 feet above the surrounding valleys, with steep cliffs on three sides
- What appeared to be a safe and secure

location caused the inhabitants of Sardis to become overconfident and arrogant

- On two occasions, Sardis was conquered because they were overconfident
- Sardis was a wealthy and prosperous city
- It was known for its wools, textiles, and jewelry industries
- The first coins produced in Asia Minor were produced in Sardis
- Sardis was also known for pagan worship of the temple goddess Cybele
- No one was allowed in the temple of the gods to worship without white garments
- The people of Sardis were known for its loose living, pleasure seeking and the luxury lifestyle

Jesus Introduces Himself

Revelation 3:1-6 (KJV) ¹ And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; 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 art dead.*

- As with the letters to the previous churches, the addressee is the pastor or spiritual leader of the church
- Whatever changes Jesus wants done amongst the people church in Sardis, it starts with the pastor
- Then Jesus introduces Himself as **“He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars;...”**
- He that hath the seven Spirits of God
- Jesus is emphasizing the His character is the Master of every spiritual power and authority
- In John 14, Jesus revealed the sevenfold ministry of the Holy Spirit

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is the Comforter, John 14: 16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He the Spirit of Truth, John 14: 17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is the personal presence of Christ John 14:18-20
--	---	---

LETTERS TO THE CHURCH

Sardis: The Dead Church

Revelation: 3:1-6

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is the very special manifestation of Christ in the believer, John 14:21-22 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is the abiding presence the Trinity, John 14:23-24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is the Teacher, John 14:25-26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is the peace of Christ, John 14:27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

- The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son to the believer
- The believers were to walk by the Spirit of God and to deal with the sin in their lives through honest confession or they would hinder or grieve the Holy Spirit ***Ephesians 4:30 (KJV) 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 (KJV) 19 Quench not the Spirit.***
- The *seven stars* refers to the pastors or spiritual leaders of the church
- The pastors proclaim the Word of God to the churches
- The pastors have been placed in the churches by Christ to do the will of Christ
- But another weakness of the church in Sardis was the Word of God was not being communicated consistently with opportunities for personal application

No Commendation, Only Condemnation

I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

- As Jesus says with each church, I know they works...
- Unlike the previous churches, Sardis did not receive single commendation whatsoever from Jesus, only condemnations
- Jesus told the church “though it has a name...”, a reputation, a brand
- The church was busy, with programs, meetings, events, committee meetings, and activities
- The church in Sardis was doing all the right things, it was well attended, well liked, prosperous, busy, and full of fellowship
- The church in Sardis had the right beliefs, the right doctrine and had all the missions and activities
- Despite all the name recognition and activity, Jesus says the church was dead
- What was happening on the outside was not the inward reality, the church in Sardis was dead
- Jesus didn’t tell Sardis to stand strong against persecution or false doctrine, because Sardis being dead presented no threat to Satan’s territory
- How could a church be so active, well attended and prosperous, and still be dead?
- The sin in church grieved and quenched the Holy Spirit and little attention was paid to
- They were going through the motions as a church ***2 Timothy 3:5 (KJV) 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.***

LETTERS TO THE CHURCH

Sardis: The Dead Church

Revelation: 3:1-6

- They focused on the rituals, ceremony, and worship instead of Jesus
- They focused on developing a “brand” and a “following” instead of Jesus Christ
- The preaching and teaching did not challenge the members to live for Jesus

What Jesus Wants Sardis to Do

² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. ³ Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

- What was happening in the church in Sardis could not continue
- Jesus counsels the church in Sardis to change
- Jesus tells the church to:
 - *Watch* – to watch means to wake up
 - Jesus wants the church to wake up and realize their true spiritual condition before it's too late
 - Jesus wants the church in Sardis to wake up, stir their thoughts and minds and become alert and live to Jesus, the Word of God, and sensitive to the Holy Spirit
- *Strengthen the things which remain* – build on what's left
 - The remnant of believers remaining needed to rekindle their spiritual flame **2 Timothy 1:6 (KJV) 6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.**
 - The remaining faithful believers need to stir themselves up so they can stir up the carnal Christians and get them back to living and working for god again
- Jesus says He hasn't found any of their works perfect or complete, nothing was being done in Sardis that was up to Jesus' standards
- Jesus then warned the church in Saris to do four things:
 1. Remember how they heard and received the gospel
 2. Hold fast to how their former life of faith
 3. Repent – of how they wandered away from the Spirit of God and the Word of God
 4. Realize the judgement of Christ will fall on them if they refuse to repent
 - Jesus is not referring to the Second Coming, He is coming to judge or discipline Sardis and that discipline would catch them by surprise

The Promise

⁴ Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. ⁵ He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. ⁶ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

LETTERS TO THE CHURCH

Sardis: The Dead Church

Revelation: 3:1-6

- Jesus makes promise to two groups in the church in Sardis, those who had not defiled themselves and those who are overcomers
- To those who have not defiled themselves are those believers in Sardis that have not spotted their lives with the worldliness of the day
- Because they kept themselves pure, they will *walk with Christ in white*, which means they will walk with Christ day by day in the presence of Christ
- They will walk in open confession for before Jesus, therefore keeping themselves clean before Him
- They will walk in victory and purity with Christ forever
- To the overcomers:
 - They will be clothed in white – This is the garment of righteousness and purity that will be given to believers when they enter into heaven
 - They will not be blotted out of the Book of Life – This is the book God keeps and your name is written in the book when you are born
 - The names of unbelievers are erased from the book when they die and are judged to eternal death
 - The names of true believers are never touched and they receive eternal life
 - The overcomer will be acknowledged by Christ before God
- He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches