

The Seven Churches

Part 5

“Church of Sardis”

Revelation 3

“To the angel of the church in Sardis write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. **2** Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. **3** Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

4 Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. **5** The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. **6** Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

A Few Facts about Sardis:

- The first coinage ever to be minted in Asia Minor was minted in Sardis
- Sardis was the place where modern money was born.
- Sardis was also a city well known for its softness and luxury. It had a reputation for easy money and loose moral values.
- The city had a natural defense as it sat high above the valley and was surrounded by deep cliffs.
- Because of this there was a false sense of security and the military became loose. It was later defeated because soldiers would lower their defenses and abandon their posts.
- You can see how the attitude of the culture might have had an effect on the church.

Vs. 1

“These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.”

- As Jesus describes Himself, He uses terms that emphasize His character as the Master of every power and authority.
- Jesus has the fullness of the Holy Spirit in Himself, and He also **has** the Holy Spirit in fullness to give to the Church.

This was spoken by the Prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 11

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

2

The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—

3

and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

Vs. 1b

I know your deeds; **you have a reputation** of being alive, **but you are dead.**

- Jesus knew the church at Sardis had a *reputation* - of life and vitality. Much like the city had signs of life and vitality.
- In the church of Sardis, like the city of Sardis, everything seemed alive and good.

We are not to get the impression that the Church in Sardis was a dysfunctional mess with the building a wreck, the members scattered, the pastor ready to resign. It was a busy church with meetings every night, committees galore, wheels within wheels, promotion and publicity,

something going on all the time. It had a reputation of being alive and wide-awake.

But the fact is Jesus said, **“You are dead.”**

- **Dead** despite their reputation of life...
- **Dead** indicates no struggle, no fight, no persecution...
- It wasn't that the church at Sardis was *losing* the battle. A **dead** body has *lost* the battle, and the fight seems over.
- In this letter, Jesus doesn't encourage the Christians in Sardis to stand strong against persecution or false doctrine, probably because there simply *wasn't* a significant danger of these things.
- A **dead** church is no significant threat to Satan's domain, so it wasn't worth attacking.
- The church in Sardis was "A perfect model of inoffensive Christianity"

Vs. 2,3

2 Wake up! (*Be watchful!*) **Strengthen what remains** and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.

3 Remember, therefore, what (*how*) you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent.

Be Watchful - The very thing that was going on in the city was the thing Jesus was warning the Church about.

Remember therefore (*how*) you have Received...

- There obviously was a time when they were Thirsty for the things of God...
- The Lord reminds them of how they use to be...
- How they use to receive...
- He says, The same rain that makes the fertile field fruitful runs of the surface of hillside of parched soil...

Ex: Parched Ground has become so dry it can't receive moisture when it comes.

Stay Thirsty my friends...

Vs. 4 Yet you have a **few people** in Sardis **who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me**, dressed in white, for they are worthy.

- This picture of walking with God in close fellowship and friendship is like that which was seen with Enoch, who *walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.*
- This is for those who have remained faithful and true to God and have not soiled their clothes with the world...

Vs. 5,6

The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. ⁶ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.