



THE SEVEN CHURCHES AND THE SEVEN SEALS

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Part 5

September 29, 2021

Over the past many weeks, we have been navigating through a step by step examination of the Words of Christ to His Churches by the penmanship of the Apostle John. From this time in Church history, we can gather a significant amount of understanding from these passages of Scripture to protect ourselves in our modern day from the failures of this ancient day.

This evening we will be continuing in our study of the Seven Churches so let's dive right! The fifth church noted is the Church of Sardis noted in Revelation 3:1-6. In the Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, the following is noted about this church. "The City of Sardis was noted for its great industries, including carpets. Gold had been discovered in the region, making the kings in the area very wealthy. The city had a "royal road" connecting Sardis with many Persian cities in the east. The chief idol deity was the goddess Artemis, who was worshipped as the "mother goddess". Sardis was destroyed by an earthquake in AD17 but later rebuilt." But in all of this industry and life in the community and city whether it was economically or otherwise, this Church was simply dead.

1. Praise:

a. For this Church, there is no Praise; there are only problems...

b. "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."

- c. Verse 2 records to strengthen what remains and this strengthening of what remains implies that everything has fallen apart with no life found within it at all.
- d. What is all the more saddening about this passage of Scripture is the last part of verse 2, **“for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.”** This Church, even in its dead state, still had works to complete in the sight of God. There was still a prophetic destiny for this dead church.
- e. It’s amazing how Christ doesn’t excuse this Church from its divine purpose simply because of its dead state; He is still expecting Sardis to pull itself back together and finish the race.
- f. Just because something may be dead doesn’t mean its done; there was still life in this dead Church.

2. Reproof:

- a. **“⁸Remember, 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.”**

- b. Strong words are spoken here because Christ is making it clear that if this Church does not repent of its misdeeds and wake up then destruction will be their end.
- c. But I thought Jesus loves everybody and He wouldn't do anyone any harm because we are under Grace? Please reread the last part of verse 3 of this passage of Scripture.

3. Recommendations:

- a. **“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.”**
- b. Notice the righteous remnant in this Church; who have not soiled their garments and have not walked away from Christ, they will have their reward indeed. Christ always has a righteous remnant; but far too many of us are like Elijah trying to convince God that we are the only ones who love Him and everyone else has forsaken Him. But then the Lord corrects us as He did Elijah and lets us know that He has 7,000 prophets who have not bowed their knee to Baal! See Romans 11:1-4 for more insight.

4. Action Steps:

a. **“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.”**

b. If something can be blotted out then it must first be in there.

Too many of us have our faith walk on cruise control and we are not keeping Christ first in our lives. I want to ask a simple question to all of you today, **“Is Christ on the throne of your heart or is it you who sits upon it?”**

c. There are too many of us that have a poor definition of God because we allow everything else to define Him except His Word!

d. The idea of “Judgment” makes us uncomfortable because we desire a God that will coddle us and not correct us; we want a greasy grace Gospel and a Lovey Dovey God that will tolerate our foolish deeds and not have a standard of expectation for our very existence.

- e. So many can't seem to accept this reality but listen to me friend, if that is what you believe then you do not serve the God of the Bible nor are you in line with Scripture.
- f. "But I thought God was longsuffering?" Yes, He is but He is not going to suffer long! There comes a point where He will turn us over to our sins and rebellion! Read Romans Chapter 1 for more insight into this truth.
- g. And it is because of this misconception as well that so many Christians today do not believe in Rapture of the Church, the Second Coming of Christ, the Rise of the Antichrist, the 7 Years of Tribulation, or even the Millennial Reign because we don't believe in the Holy Scriptures.
- h. Friend, the Bible is full of scripture references regarding the Judgment of God being made manifest in the Earth and if you don't believe the Bible, these words long since written down, then you are not a Christian.
- i. I can say that because of one simple fact: Christianity finds its foundation in the Word of God therefore if you do not stand on the Word of God as your ultimate authority for doctrine, life and living then your faith has no merit.

Church Family, the Rapture is Coming. Christ's Glorious Return is fast approaching and all I want to know is this. Is the world crucified to you or does it fascinate you?

The sixth church noted is the Church of Philadelphia noted in Revelation 3:7-13. From the Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, the following is recorded regarding the Church of Philadelphia.

“The city of Philadelphia was located at the foot of a mountain plateau in the area today known as West Central Turkey. It was built on an important travel route linking the city with Laodicea to the south. In AD 17, an earthquake struck the area, destroying much of the city, which was later rebuilt with the assistance of Emperor Tiberius. Wine making, wool production, and agriculture were primary industries in the city.”

The Church of Philadelphia seems to have Praise and Action Steps applied here but no reproof is noted. Let us look at this text together.

1) Praise

- a) Rev 3:7-13 - ⁷“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.’⁸“I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open

door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.⁹ Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.¹⁰ Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

- b) Regarding the Church of Philadelphia, it seems that Christ has a very tender heart towards them due to what they are having to endure but even more so this notion is propagated by the Words of Christ when He says, ⁸““I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.”
- c) Notice how Christ celebrates the fact that they kept His Word and did not deny Him. Church family, there is a blessing that comes with keeping the Word of the Lord. By standing upon the Authority of His Word and not allowing the things of this life to distract us from the Call of Christ!

d) And notice that there is a blessing found in obedience! ¹⁰“Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.”

2) Actions Steps:

a) ¹¹I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. ¹²The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. ¹³He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

b) In these action steps listed, they are laced with blessing and benefits which all find their access upon our obedience and willingness to serve Him and not ourselves. A Crown, a Pillar, an Eternal Dwelling, a New Name are all found in our faithfulness to serving Jesus in this life and in the life that is to come!

The last church noted in this list of Seven Churches is the Church of Laodicea found in Revelation 3:14-22 and if I may submit to you that it is this Church that represents the current church age that we are living in. And comparatively speaking, this last church is in a deplorable state indeed. From the Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, the following is recorded regarding the Church of Laodicea

The City of Laodicea was located forty miles from Ephesus and was steeped in Greek Culture. The city (and region) had experienced many earthquakes over the years. The city was a cultural center with schools, libraries, and a banking center that brought strong economic and financial resources. Two widely used eye and ear salves were produced in the city, as it was also a well-known medical center of its day.

The one weakness in Laodicea was its water supply; water had to be piped into the city from other places. Cold water could come from the abundant supply at Colossae, but by the time it traveled the ten or so miles from the cold springs, it was lukewarm. About six miles away in Hierapolis were hot springs but that water, too, was lukewarm when it reached Laodicea. If they piped in either cold or hot water, it arrived at Laodicea lukewarm.

Thus Christ's warning to their spiritual condition - of being lukewarm to the Laodiceans because they dealt with lukewarm water supply issues every day.

There is no praise for this Church at all but only a blunt force addressing of what is wrong!

1. Reproof

a. Revelation 3:14-22, ¹⁴“And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. ¹⁵“I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.”

b. In reading this passage of Text from Christ to the Apostle John to this Church, it is strangely reminiscence of the Apostle Paul's Warning to Timothy about the Last Days...

c. 2 Timothy 3:1-7, “But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. ⁶For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.”

d. This Church has become the victim of the culture around it and it is because of this that the Church itself has become lukewarm.

e. Not only is this Church lukewarm and apparently not aware of their spiritual condition, they are also quite arrogant which Christ addresses in verse 17. Jesus said, “¹⁷For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.”

- f. They are so numb to the truth that they literally perceive themselves to be something that they are not. They believe that they are rich and prospered and have no need for anything. But Jesus hits them with some truth when He says, in no uncertain terms, that they are wretched and pitiable, poor, blind and naked.
- g. They were convinced that they were something that they were not. They were persuaded to believe that their spiritual state was better than what reality bore out. They had convinced themselves of a lie.
- h. Romans 1:21-23 speaks to this very issue, “For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.”

2. Recommendation:

- a. ¹⁸“I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. ¹⁹Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.”
- b. What is amazing about this passage of text is that even though this Church was in a terrible spiritual condition, Jesus is still willing to give them counsel and recommendation to recover from their lukewarm state.
- c. Jesus speaks to four specific things in this passage: gold, white garments, salve for their eyes and His discipline. His Grace is amazing in that He was willing to speak the raw truth to them about their current condition and then, in turn, offer His grace through correction in hopes that it would drive them to repentance.
- d. Notice verse 19, ¹⁹“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.”

- e. The heart of Christ is that His correction would be a moniker of His Grace and this disaster of a Church would see that therefore repent and become zealous for the things of God again.

3. Action Step:

a. ²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. ²¹The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²²He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

- b. It is very interesting to me that Christ almost makes the same statement to this Church as He did to the Church of Thyatira regarding conquering or to the one who conquers; Church Family there is a benefit and reward to being willing to conquer and to be a conqueror. And our ability to conquer is only as powerful as your willingness to Repent.