

SARDIS (Revelation 3:1-6)

Introduction: The Spirit says, “BEWARE OF NOMINAL CHRISTIANITY.”

You can have all the paraphernalia of religion, the machinery, the organization but the vital spark, life, the creative, dynamic thing is not there.

As a rule, what amazed and troubled the Roman Empire about early Christianity was its vitality.

We should be eternally grateful that in the Holy Spirit which was poured out at Pentecost there is divine antidote to all dull, lusterless, shattering complacency.

A. Sardis, past splendor, and present decay!

1. Sardis was a city of past glories.
2. They took false courage in their natural fortifications. Even though they had been captured twice, they still believed that they were impregnable and safe.
3. Sardis had a temple to the goddess Cybele that was believed to possess the special power of restoring the dead to life.

B. Description of Christ!

1. The picture of Christ in this letter gives a unique description of His relationship to the Holy Spirit.
2. The seven-fold activities of the Holy Spirit.
3. Christ's relationship to the Holy Spirit in other passages.
4. A church that is sunken in lifelessness needs the Holy Spirit.

C. Commendation!

1. Christ normally commends before He condemns, but here it is reversed.

2. Ritualism had crowded out Holy Spirit control which left them impotent.

D. **Condemnation!**

1. To the church at Ephesus Christ said, “I know your works,” and there it was a commendation. The same word here is condemnation.
2. Sardis had come to reflect its worldly environment – Are we still doing this?
3. “***You have a name that you live, and you are dead.***” This is the shortest commendation of the churches.
4. Living in a city that was complacent about its safety, the church was making the same spiritual presumptions.
5. It had the reputation of being a faithful church at one time. Steadfast obedience is the result of day-to-day submission.
6. Such complacency had led to the absence of the works of the Holy Spirit.
7. The death of a church is primarily a matter of relation to the Lord by the Holy Spirit.
8. The New Testament relates sin to death (1 Timothy 5:6).
 - Sin is the death of will.
 - Sin is the death of feelings.
 - Sin is the death of all loveliness.

E. **Admonition or the Antidote for Lifelessness!** 3:2-3

(This was not an irretrievable situation)

1. **WATCHFUL!**

- The truly vital church will always be under attack and therefore needs to awaken to watchfulness.
- Become a “watcher” who gives strict attention to spiritual matters.

2. **STRENGTHEN THINGS ABOUT TO DIE!**

- Death was imminent.
- Death cannot happen if we live in the presence of Christ every day.
- Their works had not accomplished what God had intended.

3. **REMEMBER!**

- Remember the message that saved you, the days of blessings and better conditions.
- Searching scripture and depending on the Holy Spirit.

4. **HOLD FAST!**

- A warning to adhere tenaciously to Biblical truth.
- It is bad enough that we haven’t gained more knowledge and pressed our way into more revelations of truth.

5. **REPENT!**

- Obey it and repent.
- There must be a decisive moment when we are done with sin.
- There is a warning here against “spasmodic Christianity.”

F. **Consequences!**

1. Their slumber left them open to Christ’s coming as a thief.

2. They were dull spiritually which made them vulnerable to the fact of robbery.
3. The prophetic Word of God would enhance their consecration.

G. **Promises.**

1. This commendation is not to the whole church but a scarce and pure remnant.
2. In verse four the promise is given specifically to those in Sardis.
3. In verse five the promise is given to all those who will overcome.
4. Three promises:
 - Clothe the overcomer in white garments.
 - Will not wipe out his name from the Book of Life.
 - Confess his name before my Father and before His angels.

Conclusion: