

Revelation Chapter 3

In Revelation chapter 3, we continued with the last 3 of the 7 churches

Revelation 3:1 "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."

Sardis: The Danger of Spiritual Death. 1517 to 1790 A.D., the Reformed church.

This church at Sardis is seen by many as the reformation church. In this study we will look at this church in the light of our modern churches.

Sardis is located 35 miles south east of Thyatira. It was the capital of Lydia and was once a portrait of strength, fertility, and wealth. Idolatry and immorality were its reputation. The church at Sardis had "a name," a good reputation, and it appeared to be alive. But in reality, there was nothing but inward deadness. Their deadness was at least partially due to some type of defilement because the Word says there were only "a few" which had not been defiled (Rev. 3:4).

These people desperately needed the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The mention of the "seven Spirits of God" is a reference to the sevenfold ministry of the Spirit found in Isaiah:

Isaiah 11:2 "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."

This church needed the ministry of the Holy Spirit in these areas. If you are spiritually dead, you need these ministries also:

- (1) The Spirit of Wisdom: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to seek the wisdom of God.
- (2) The Spirit of Understanding: A lifeless dying church or individual needs a true understanding of their condition so they can correct it.
- (3) The Spirit of Counsel: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to heed the counsel of God.
- (4) The Spirit of Might: A lifeless dying church or individual needs new strength to enter into its lifeless body.
- (5) The Spirit of Knowledge: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to flow in renewed revelation knowledge.
- (6) The Spirit of Fear of the Lord: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to have their fear of the Lord rekindled.

If you feel spiritually dead or your church is dying corporately, then you must follow the fivefold plan that the Spirit gave to the church at Sardis (in Rev. 3:3):

- (1) Be Watchful: The amplified Bible says to "Rouse yourself and keep awake." It is time for us to wake up, become alert to the signs of the time, and be active for God as never before.
- (2) Strengthen: Take hold of the things that remain and are ready to die in your life and strengthen them through prayer and the Word.
- (3) Remember: Reflect back on the promises of God, what you have received and heard in times past.
- (4) Hold Fast: Hold fast to your faith and God's Word.
- (5) Repent: Repent so you will be ready for the return of Christ and not caught unaware.

This church is very obvious to me. When I was a child, I went to a certain denomination church. This particular church was seemingly very strong in the Lord. People shouted and said amen. People were prayed for who were sick. Then all of a sudden, something called the National Council of Churches was formed and my church, I had loved so dearly, changed. The National Council of Churches seeks to physically make the church one. God's plan from the beginning has been for the churches to be one in Spirit. You cannot legislate Christianity.

In my church we no longer taught Sunday school from the Bible, but we got lessons from headquarters that we were to use. As best I could see, they had dropped many of the Biblical teachings and went more too teaching social reform.

What had been a way of life for me for nearly all my life had changed. The shouting stopped; the church became too formal for the amen corner. The first thing I knew, I found myself in a cold formal church, not the warm caring church I had loved so well. Church never dared run over fifteen minutes; we had to stay on schedule. Bible studies became fewer and fewer. The congregation was not even made aware of how important Bible reading and study at home was. It seemed my church, which loved all Christian people, had made a detour.

I really believe that churches like this, is what the church at Sardis is all about. They started out just great; but as time went on, they waned away.

Notice in the verse above that Jesus speaks of the seven Spirits of God. When the gifts of the Holy Spirit are denied and even spoken evil of, the true church will dry up. The power of God is in His Spirit. This is why Jesus spoke to this church thusly. The Spirit has gone. This church is still flying the flag of Christianity, but denying the power thereof.

I use this scripture in 2 Timothy a lot but it perfectly describes the time we are living in and describes this church at Sardis best of all.

- (1) 2 Timothy 3:1 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."
- (2) 2 Timothy 3:5 "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Many denominations would have us believe the gifts of the Spirit are not in operation today. If they are not, it is because of our lack of faith. God never changes; we change.

You see, a man without a spirit is like a horse who has lost his wind. A church without the Spirit is slowly dying.

God does not want us to systematically go to church because it is expected of us once a week. He wants us to look forward to fellowshiping with Him. The love in our heart for Jesus should make us desire to go to church and receive everything He has for us.

Revelation 3:2: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God."

Jesus tells them here; there is still some good in this church, build upon those things. Even the good in this church is being watered down to the point, that even it is about to die. I believe the works here spoken of are not saying they are not doing works, but that their works are slanted more toward the world than toward God. This church, if I understand it, is very social minded and helps local government with their projects.

If you took a count of how many true conversions were made within the last year, you would be amazed at the shortage. You see, what we call good works and what God calls good works are two entirely different things. God looks at the Spirit, and we have a tendency to look at the physical.

Revelation 3:3 "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."

"Come on thee as a thief": Here the reference is not to Christ's second coming (compare 16:15; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10), but to His sudden and unexpected coming to His unrepentant, dead church to inflict harm and destruction.

Here again Jesus is saying, your message at the beginning was alright, go back to that, the pure Word of God. Some new Bible translations are watering Jesus down to the point that He is not God in them.

Some Bible colleges would have their people believe that: Jesus was not born of a virgin, that the Red Sea did not part, that Jonah was not truly swallowed by a large fish, and many more things.

You see, they are reducing the miraculous workings of God and trying to analyze them with what they call scientific knowledge. This is just another attack of Satan to destroy the beauty of Christianity. These are basic to belief in salvation through Jesus Christ. If a mere man died for your sins, you are lost. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. He was the perfect Lamb of God. He was and is LIFE. To deny that He was born of a virgin, denies that He is God the Son. You see, His Father must be God.

These false teachers say the Red Sea did not part, but was just a marshy area. If this is true, explain to me how the Egyptian soldiers were drowned.

You see, the whole thing is a conspiracy to deny the deity of Christ. This is very dangerous. If we deny Him, He will deny us before the Father (Matthew 10:33).

Of course, these false teachings include a teaching that there is no heaven and no hell. That they are just a state of mind. The Bible speaks explicitly about both and even tells us what they will be like. All of this is slightly preposterous.

We must believe the Bible in its entirety or not believe it at all. As for me, I believe it in its entirety. Jesus was Immanuel, God with us. I believe to deny Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, is to deny salvation through Him."

Revelation 3:4 "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."

"In white": The white garments of all the redeemed (compare 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:8, 14), speak of holiness and purity. Such white robes are reserved for Christ (Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:3), holy angels (Matt. 28:3; Mark 16:5), and the glorified church (19:8, 14). In the ancient world, white robes were commonly worn at festivals and celebrations.

Jesus is saying here there are a few people even in this church of Sardis, or our fallen away church now that are still strong in the Lord. They believe the truth rather than a lie.

A defiled garment is one not washed in the blood of the Lamb. You see, the white that we must wear is a white robe made whiter than snow by being washed in the blood of the Lamb. This is our robe of righteousness that we will wear in heaven. "Righteousness" means in right standing with God.

Most of the churches now that are like this church in Sardis, do not like to preach or teach on the blood of Jesus. It was the shed blood that defeated Satan and purchased our salvation. We read in Hebrews, just how important this shed blood is.

Hebrews 9:22 "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

You see, if we are not washed in the blood of the Lamb, then we are walking in sin. We will study in a later lesson, in chapter seven of Revelation, about the great number from all nations standing around the throne in their white robes.

Revelation 7:14 "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

To deny the power of the blood, would deny us our right to stand before the throne of God. Do not be deceived. Believe the Word of God, the Bible. Let no one convince you that it is not true.

Revelation 3:5 "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."

“Book of life”: A divine journal records the names of all those whom God has chosen to save and who, therefore, are to possess eternal life (13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19; Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20). Under no circumstances will He erase those names (see note on Phil. 4:3), as city officials often did of undesirable people on their rolls.

This is one of the greatest promises in the Bible. We must Overcome the world and its teachings to inherit eternal life. If we do overcome, our name will be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, which will insure us eternal life in heaven with Jesus.

If we confess Jesus before men, He will confess us before His Father. Jesus is the Judge. We stand or fall by His command.

You see from the statement above that overcoming is not a bed of roses, but a battle. Jesus won the war. We must enlist in this army of Jesus. We must fight to the death, if necessary, for the principles He has taught us in the Bible.

Be strong; do not be led away by all these new teachings of heaven on earth before Jesus comes. The only time the earth will be like heaven is the 1000 year reign of Jesus here. Withstand the devil and he will flee from you. Be part of the elect who cannot be deceived.

Revelation 3:6 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Again we are told to hear what the Spirit said to the churches.

Revelation Chapter 3 Questions

- (1) What happened to the city of Sardis?
- (2) What seven things does God have mentioned to Sardis?
- (3) What does Jesus say he knows about this church?
- (4) What do many see the church at Sardis as?
- (5) What do the new Sunday school books teach?
- (6) Why does Jesus speak to this specific church about the seven Spirits of God?
- (7) This church is flying the flag of _____ but denies the power.
- (8) The power of God is in His _____?

- (9) This church has a form of godliness but denies the _____.
- (10) If the gifts of the Spirits are not in operation in our lives, it is because of what?
- (11) A man without a Spirit is like a horse without what?
- (12) What are these people warned to do?
- (13) Why is Jesus disappointed with their work?
- (14) God looks at the spiritual and we have a tendency to look at the _____.
- (15) Jesus tells them if they do not watch, He will come on them as what?
- (16) What are many new Bible translations doing to Jesus?
- (17) Why is this dangerous?
- (18) Who was Jesus? What was Jesus?
- (19) When we deny the virgin birth, what are we saying?
- (20) To deny Jesus as the Christ the Son of the Living God, is to do what?
- (21) Was everyone lost in the Sardis church? Why not?
- (22) What is a defiled garment in God's sight?
- (23) What will Christians wear in heaven?
- (24) What does "righteousness" mean?
- (25) What has our modern churches stopped preaching on that is very important?
- (26) By the law, what must almost all things be purged by?
- (27) Who shall be clothed in white?
- (28) If we confess Jesus here, who will He confess us to in heaven?
- (29) What book do we want our name in?
- (30) When is the only time there will be heaven on earth?
- (31) What do you think this lesson is saying to individuals in any church (in your own words)?