

Jesus Message to the Church - Sardis (wake up)!

Rev.3:1-6

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We have been looking at the seven churches in Revelation; seven churches to whom Jesus sent seven letters through the apostle John. We have looked at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira and today we will look at Christ's message to Sardis.

Sardis was a very wealthy city in Turkey. It was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia in the 7 century BC. It was known for its crafts and artistry. *This was the first city where silver and gold coins were made.* Sardis became an important Persian city after it was conquered by Cyrus the Great in 6th BC. By the first century Sardis passed into the hands of the Romans. In its history, Sardis was conquered twice due to its lack of vigilance.

Read text. Rev.3:1-6

Title of Jesus: *The one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.*

The seven spirits of God (the Sevenfold Spirit or Sevenfold ministry of the Holy Spirit) This is an idiom for the Holy Spirit (**Isa.11:1-3**) *Every letter contains the expression whoever has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

The seven stars are the seven angels (messengers) of these seven churches
(Rev.1:16, 20)

Jesus knows what goes on in the church: *"I know your deeds (works) (v.1)
You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.*

Admonition: *Wake up! Strengthen what remains in you that is about to die. (2)
I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.* This church's deeds or works didn't meet God's standard. They were unfulfilled or incomplete. When we look back at the other churches, Jesus commended them for their works (*love, faith, service, perseverance in persecution, faithfulness; intolerance of false teaching*) Sardis' works were incomplete before God and not worthy of mention here. This church was truly dead in God's sight.

(v.3) Remember (Call to mind) **what you received and heard** (this is a reference to the gospel message, the teaching of the apostles). Faith comes from hearing and hearing the word of God. Jesus challenged this church to **remember what they received and heard and then to keep it or guard it.** They heard and received the gospel message and they needed to hold firm to it. **1 Cor.15:1-2** Now, brothers

and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

Jesus called this church in Sardis to remember what they have received and heard; obey (keep) it and repent.

Keep it and repent (change the way you think)

Warning!

If you don't wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. The church is sleeping and Jesus would come against it as a thief, unexpectedly to bring judgment on it. Christ's visit would not be pleasant!

The faithful remnant!

Only a small number of people in this church remained faithful to the Lord. (v.4)

This group had not stained their garments (soiled their clothes).

Clothing in the Scriptures has a picture of one's standing before God. In O.T people would change their clothes before they would meet with God. **Ex.19:10-14**

-The priests were to sanctify their garments before ministering before the LORD. If your garments were filthy or stained, then you could not have a relationship with God; you were not in good standing with God. *Only a small group of people in Sardis were worthy because they didn't stain their garments. How could you stain your spiritual garments?* By letting sin in your midst: *Worshipping idols, committing immorality, tolerating false teaching; compromising your convictions. It's really easy to stain your clothing in this world if you continue to sleep spiritually.*

The Christian is one who is clothed with Christ and not with the garments of the world. (Gal.3:27; Rom.13:14)

How is your spiritual clothing today?

Jesus promised this group that they will walk with Him dressed in white because they are worthy. They are pure and dressed now with the heavenly radiance.

Promise for the conquerors (v.5)

-dressed in white (these are the worthy)

-Their names would never be erased from the book of life

-Christ would acknowledge them before God the Father.

Ancient cities had books of record if you were convicted of a crime, they would erase your name from the registry. Jewish people and Hellenistic were familiar with the concept of erasing someone's name from a country or nation. The overcomers won't have to worry about being erased. They are conquerors as they remained faithful to God until the end.

This is a source of motivation for the faithful ones in Sardis.

It's obvious that there were people in Sardis like there are people in churches today, whose names are not written in the book of life. They just go through the motion and haven't truly made Jesus Lord of their life.

What is the Spirit saying to the church today? (v.7) What does Jesus expect of his church today?

-Jesus expects a watchful church that continues to work for his kingdom. Christ doesn't want a sleepy church that is about to die due to its negligence.

-A church that remembers and holds fast to the teachings of Christ-His gospel.

-Jesus expects you not to stain your spiritual garments, but to remain faithful to him.

It would be very hard for you to overcome anything in this world, if you are still sleeping spiritually!

Wake up! Keep watch!