

The REVELATION

Sunday,
2-2-20

Rev 3:1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

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

Rev 3:3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

Rev 3:4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

Rev 3:5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Rev 3:6 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

Sardis was located in modern day Turkey, near the small town of Sart.

700 years before The Revelation Sardis was one of the greatest cities in the world. Several famous ancient Greek writers called Sardis a city of renown.

The city dates back to somewhere around 2000 B.C. and was the capitol of the Lydian Empire in 1200 B.C. and was the home city of the royal dynasty of the Mermnades.

It was located 60 miles inland on a popular trade route between Pergamos, Smyrna, Ephesus, Philadelphia, and Phyrigia and

became a very wealthy city.

It's river source, the Pactolus River, was well known for its sandy banks where gold was discovered which led to great riches. King Alyattes, who reigned from 610 to 560 B.C., minted and distributed the world's first currency coins. Alyattes' coins were made of electrum, an alloy of gold and silver.

The kingdom's most noteworthy king was the very wealthy Croesus (Kroisos), who ruled from 560 to 547 B.C. He was the first person to strike and issue the first pure gold and silver coins used in the marketplace. Croesus is probably the historic figure that gave rise to the legend of King Midas.

They were also well known for their fruits and wool.

Their principal deity was the pagan goddess Cybele (whose worship was very similar to the worship of the pagan goddess Diana (Artemis) found at Ephesus).

The Temple to Artemis located here was twice the size of the Greek Parthenon!

The city was built on a hill 1000 feet above the Hermus valley at the foot of Mt Tmolus and was surrounded by sheer cliffs giving the impression the city was impregnable. Battlements were built on top of these cliffs for additional protection and defensive positioning.

The problem was the cliffs were made of clay which is subject to erosion from rain and melt water, and the Sardians weren't very good at maintaining their defenses.

They were arrogant and lax. When attacked by the Persians in 549 B.C. King Croesus left three sides of the city unguarded, because after all, they were impregnable!

After a two week siege the famous Persian commander Cyrus offered a reward to any man who could find a way of scaling the "unscalable cliffs" and find a way into the city. One of his soldiers, Hyeroeades, saw a Lydian soldier drop his helmet over the side of the battlement and watched while the soldier went down to retrieve it, carefully noting the route the Lydian soldier

took, which was of course, unguarded!
 The next night Hyeroeades took a Persian raiding party and climbed the cliffs in the dark, climbed over the unguarded battlement walls, and took the city.

A famous quote says "History teaches us that man learns nothing from history", and this statement is quite accurate!
 335 years later Antiochus came against Sardis and besieged it. His soldier, Lagoras, told the story of Hyeroeades's feat and conquest of the city under Cyrus. They duplicated the historic feat and the city of Sardis was taken *again!*
 Sardis was not watchful, and they didn't learn from their mistakes.

By New Testament times Sardis was losing its former glory. A major earthquake in 17 A.D. destroyed the city, but it was quickly rebuilt.

Historically, this letter alludes to the Reformation Church which began with Martin Luther's '95 Thesis in 1517, and was galvanized in 1521 at the Edict of Worms which officially condemned Luther and banned all citizens of the Holy Roman Empire from defending or spreading Luther's doctrines.

What the Reformation did:
 Return to Biblical Doctrine of Salvation by Faith in Jesus alone apart from works.
 Return to direct access to Jesus and Scripture to everyone, and not through the hand of a human mediator or intercessor.

What the Reformation did NOT do:
 Address Allegorization of Scripture
 Confront Anti-Semitism as unbiblical

Now let's get to the Epistle:
Rev 3:1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis (*remnant*) write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: (*still one of the most contentious*

topics among and within the "church", i/e the Person, Nature, and work of the Holy Spirit) "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

Name: onoma= labeling, being covered by a name- (Denominationalism??)

What is YOUR name? How do you think of yourself? If you had to pick a label, what would it be?

Whatever label you think of yourself, is it stable as a rock to stand on when facing Jesus?

The Reformation was a heroic effort to release the church from the Papal dominance it had assumed over the lives of its members and return to Scriptural mandate of Salvation by Faith in Jesus alone, and not works.

However, their failure to address the two most prominent problems with the church; Anti-Semitism and Allegorization of Scripture (particularly those concerning the Return of Christ for His church- Rapture, and His return to rule and reign with His Brothers- Israel- in the Millennium) left them incomplete. Their works were not adequate.

The city known for their fruit had a church whose fruit was rotten...

"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

One of only two letters which have ZERO commendations!

Mat 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Mat 7:22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

Mat 7:23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Their "name" didn't bring them life! Only a personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Savior will give eternal life.

Works, religion, labels; all these things fail the test and produce rotten, dead fruit.

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

Be watchful:

Remember the crumbling unguarded walls of Sardis? We also have walls to guard (be watchful, diligent)!

We have to guard against the wiles of the devil,

Against false teachers,

Against false doctrines,

Against temptation,

AND we have to be watchful and diligent to look to His coming!

Mat 25:1 “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

Mat 25:2 Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

Mat 25:3 Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,

Mat 25:4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

Mat 25:5 But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

Mat 25:6 “And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’

Mat 25:7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

Mat 25:8 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’

Mat 25:9 But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’

Mat 25:10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

Mat 25:11 “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’

Mat 25:12 But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

Mat 25:13 “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Being watchful and diligent, looking for the cry "Behold! The Bridegroom comes!" at any second will make a difference as to how we live!

1Th 5:4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

1Th 5:5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

1Th 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

Even though we don't know the day nor the hour, if we expect it any second we won't be surprised.

Exhortation:

Rev 3:3 Remember **therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast (keep: Present imperative tense- keep and keep on keeping! it's a continuous action...) and repent. (Aorist imperative tense: a definite action, a decisive moment.)**

Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

Just like the warring enemies of Sardis came upon them without warning, the Lord will come upon His enemies (those who reject Him as Lord and Savior) like a thief without warning.

Sardis was spiritually dead and in mortal danger of Christ's judgment, and they weren't even watching!

Let's be clear, this is NOT talking about Christians who have committed their lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior but aren't perfect yet!

It's talking about those who trust in the fallible impregnability of RELIGION and Organization and dead works, rather than in the solid rock of Jesus Christ in faith.

Nevertheless, they had a remnant who WERE watching! What about them?

1Th 5:5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

1Th 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

1Th 5:7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are

drunk at night.

1Th 5:8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

1Th 5:9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

1Th 5:10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

1Th 5:11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

The watchful will NOT be taken by surprise at Christ's coming, because they are expecting it!

Tit 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

Tit 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

Tit 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Tit 2:14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

Tit 2:15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

This is their promise:

Rev 3:4 You **have a few names (always a remnant) even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.**

"They shall walk with Me"- Enoch- Genesis 5:22-24

Enoch wasn't surprised, he just kept walking with God til they wound up in heaven!

"In white"-

Mat 17:2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

Psa 104:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very

great: You are clothed with honor and majesty,

Psa 104:2 Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.

To walk with Him in white is to be clothed in His righteousness, which shines like the sun.

To be clothed in anything less (works, religion, being a "good person", doing good things, etc.,) is just like the filthy garments worn by Joshua the high priest in Zechariah 3:1-3 - "filthy" means covered in excrement.

"for they are worthy. "

What makes them worthy?

Rev 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Rev 3:5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life;

What does it mean to be blotted out of the Book of Life?

Some teach that the Book of Life contains the names of those that Christ died for. A limited atonement if you will. This position says that only those who are chosen had their sins paid for, that those who reject Jesus didn't get their sins paid for on the Cross.

Psa 69:28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.

Dan 12:1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Everyone who is found written in the book.

Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of

Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

Rev 20:13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

Rev 20:14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Rev 20:15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

These passages make it clear that only those whose names are found written in the Book of Life will inherit eternal life.

So whose names are on the list??

Heb 7:26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

Heb 7:27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did **once for all** when He offered up Himself.

Everyone's name is on his list. He paid the price for the sin of mankind ONCE, and for ALL.

Those who reject Him will have their name blotted out....

but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Luke 12:8 “Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God.

Luke 12:9 But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

Let this sink in for a second....

If you accept Jesus there will be a day when Jesus personally proclaims YOUR name in the presence of the angels and His Father as being His own!

However, if you reject Him, there will also be a day when Jesus personally proclaims your name as someone He never knew...

Rev 3:6 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to

the churches." '

Today is the day, now is the time! Hear what the Spirit says to us as a church, as a fellowship, and as individuals.

Don't be like Sardis counting on false appearances, put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ to be your Savior and Lord!