

Sardis, A Dead Church

Revelation 3:1 -6

“One would hope that there are few churches like the one in Sardis today, but there are many. Lack of spiritual vigilance in a secular world is as prevalent today (perhaps more so) as it was in John’s day. It is easy to get so caught up in the things of this life that we lose sight of the fact that only Christ controls the “stars”/churches. That is the heart of watchfulness, to acknowledge the supremacy of Christ in everything. Many churches, even entire denominations, have so compromised their beliefs and practices by accommodating to the fads of intelligentsia or the ways of the world that they have virtually ceased to be Christian. Every passage on the return of Christ in the NT (e.g., Rom. 13:11; James 5:8; 1 Pet. 4:7; 1 John 2:18) makes the point of living life from the perspective of future accountability to God. In such churches the righteous few, as here, must stand up and be counted. They must consider themselves missionaries to their own church and wake up those who are about to die while there is still time. In fact, they are responsible before God to do so.” Grant Osborne

- I. Sardis had no pulse toward the righteousness of Christ, it was spiritually dead. For a church to be dead spiritually means to be void of the Holy Spirit, to be empty of His presence in life changing ways. It means that a church is dead in its transgressions and sin because it follows the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient (Eph. 2:1-2). It is of the flesh, therefore it will never please God (Rom. 8:8). Those who are a part of a church like that will never enter God’s heaven because, truth be told, they are ashamed and embarrassed of the gospel and its stand on righteousness, i.e., living by the moral absolutes of God’s Word through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Rev. 3:1

Col. 1:17

Isa. 11:1-2

Zech. 4:6

Acts 1:8

Eph. 1:13b-14

Eph. 5:15-20

Eph. 4:30

1 Thess. 5:16-22

νεκρός nekρός - *spiritually dead, destitute of a life that recognises and is devoted to God, because given up to trespasses and sins, inactive as respects doing right, destitute of force or power, inactive, inoperative. Strong’s Concordance.*

- II. Jesus gives the church of Sardis ***five commands*** to obey to bring it back to life as an effective witness for Him. Each command is meant to reverse what brought about their spiritual death in the first place. First, it failed to keep examining itself to see if they were remaining true to the Lord. 2nd, it failed to keep its relationship with Christ a priority. 3rd, it failed to remember and value what Christ did for them on the cross. 4th, it minimized their responsibility to live by the truth of God's Word. And 5th, awareness of sin and the need to address it and turn from it through repentance didn't matter anymore.

Rev. 3:2-3
Rom. 13:11

1 Cor. 15:1-2 *15 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. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.*

- III. A believer, who by nature is an overcomer, has been given a tremendous responsibility to keep his or her heart from being dirtied and stained by the world and its evil ways. It takes a concerted effort to do so, especially because of its appeal to the sin nature. The unsaved, unless they get saved, will never walk with Jesus, will never be dressed in the clothing of righteousness, will never have their names written in the book of life, and will never have their names honored before the Father. So why walk with them, dress like they do, and live as if Jesus doesn't know us. It makes no sense whatsoever, especially in light of what we've been given in Christ.

Rev. 3:4-5
2 Cor. 2:14
1 Jn. 5:4-5

Blot out his name from the Book of Life: Does this mean that someone can lose their salvation? That someone is saved one day — their name is in the Book of Life — and another day, they have fallen away and their name has been blotted out from the Book of Life? We need to first see the context here in Revelation 3:5. The focus is assurance, so we should not think that names are being constantly erased and then rewritten. The focus here is not the idea that Jesus sits in heaven with a busy eraser. At the same time, we should carefully consider what the Word has to say about the Book of Life. Guzik