

SARDIS, THE DEAD CHURCH

Revelation 3:1-6

Introduction:

- A. Because of their individual characteristics at the time of the giving of this revelation, these seven churches were chosen to serve as symbols representing the differing and changing characteristics of Christianity as a whole through the 2000 years of the church age.
- B. Christianity refers to any and all religious movements and/or organizations that claim to operate under the name and authority of Jesus Christ.
- C. All of Christianity finds its beginning with the one church that Jesus Christ planted, pastored and left with commissioned orders.
- D. Our last study was by title – The Jezebel of Christianity. The church in Thyatira symbolized the persecution of true churches by the Roman Catholic Church.
- E. The Sardis church represents the time in Church History when the true churches had been driven underground – into the mountains, the wildernesses and the catacombs.
- F. The only Christianity visible to the people of the world was the Roman Catholic Church with all her heretical teachings and practices. Thus, Christianity had a name that she lived; but she was dead scripturally – dead to God and to truth.
- G. Let us look at some practical lessons to be learned from the letter to a dead church. We must remember that churches do not sin; members sin; also churches do not repent; only people can repent. Therefore, the heart of this message must deal with individuals who make up churches.

I. LEARN THAT NAMES AND WORKS DO NOT PROVE SPIRITUAL LIFE NOR ACCEPTANCE BY GOD. V. 1

- A. Jesus said, “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”
- B. Sardis was a working church, but her works were not found perfect before God. Christianity is hard at work, but her works are not found perfect before God.
- C. Sardis had the name of being a lively, thriving church, but she was dead in the sight of God.
- D. The world counts life and works of churches and Christianity on the basis of material progress and gain – church buildings, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and the like without any regard to what is believed and taught.
- E. It is easy for God’s own people to fall into this trap and equate life with numbers and buildings. If that were true, Long Branch MBC is dead as some have concluded.
- F. God counts life and works on the basis of regeneration and obedience to the teachings and commands of His Word.

II. LEARN THAT SOME WHO LIVE AND HOLD TO SPIRITUAL TRUTHS ARE ATTACHED TO DEAD CHURCHES. Verses 2, 4

- A. V. 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; V. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain.
 - 1. There were some saved people in this dead church.
 - 2. Evidently, these were still holding to the truths of God and standing for and performing the works ordained of God.

- B. A person's spiritual condition depends on his own personal relationship to God -- membership in a live church does not save -- neither does membership in a dead church cause one to be lost.**
- C. No doubt, there are many of God's people -- born again saints -- who are members of churches that the Lord does not claim as His own and are therefore dead churches.**
- D. It is also true that there are churches that are alive and hold to the faith once delivered to the saints that are attached to DEAD CHRISTIANITY.**

III. LEARN THE LORD'S REVEALED WAY TO RETURN TO FAVOR WITH GOD. V. 3

- A. You Remember how you first heard the truths of God and you received them; and You repent for your failures; and You return to what you once heard and received then hold fast.**
- B. These instructions were not to dead churches but to God's saved individuals within false, dead churches.**

IV. LEARN THE TRAGEDY OF FAILING TO CORRECT WRONG AND RETURNING TO FAVOR WITH GOD. V. 3

- A. If you don't watch, I will come on thee as a thief and catch you unprepared.**
- B. The tragedy is facing the Lord unprepared and having to answer for having wasted your Lord's talents.**

V. LEARN WHAT IS THE ETERNAL WORTH OF LIVING IN THE FAVOR OF GOD. Vs. 4, 5

- A. Vs. 4, 5 We shall be clothed in white raiment and walk with Jesus Christ in white.**
- B. V. 5 Our names will be in the Book of Life. (This does not suggest the negative; but reassures us of the positive.)**
- C. V. 5 Jesus shall confess our names before the Father and His holy angels.**

VI. LEARN THAT THE LORD WARNS US TO HEAR HIS WORDS.

- A. Only the saved have "ears to hear" these messages.**
- B. To hear means to understand and obey.**
- C. All who have ears to hear can hear, but some will not hear to their sorrow.**

CONCLUSIONS:

- A. Let each of us make sure we have heard the gospel, make sure we have asked God to forgiveness our sin and have asked Jesus to save our hell bound soul. If you have not; now is the time.**
- B. Let all of us who are saved search our hearts with the question -- am I living my life in favor with God?**