

Syllabus
The Book of Revelation
Chapter 3

Sardis

Rev. 3:1 ¶ *And to 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 thou art dead.*

Rev. 3:2 *Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God.*

Rev. 3:3 *Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

Rev. 3:4 *But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.*

Rev. 3:5 *He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.*

Clarence Larkin, in his The Book of Revelation, gives each of the seven churches short descriptions as follows: Ephesus (A Backslidden Church); Smyrna (A Persecuted Church); Pergamos (A Licentious Church); Thyatira (A Lax Church); Sardis (A Dead Church); Philadelphia (A Favored Church); Laodicea (A Lukewarm Church).

The Lord's saying that Sardis claimed to be living, but was dead—even with things ready to die, reminds me of one of the perils of the last days:

2Tim. 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power (dunamis) thereof from such turn away.

John G. Lake said that electricity is the power of God in the natural realm, and that The Holy Spirit is the power of God in the spiritual realm. How dangerous it is to try to "have church" without the manifestations of The Holy Spirit in power.

Even Sardis was offered space to repent. And even in Sardis there were those who walked worthy of the Lord.

Philadelphia

Rev. 3:7 ¶ *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth:*

Rev. 3:8 *I know thy works (behold, I have set before thee a door opened, which none can shut), that thou hast a little power[dunamis], and didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name.*

Rev. 3:9 *Behold, I give of the synagogue of Satan, of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*

Rev. 3:10 *Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

Rev. 3:11 *I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown.*

Rev. 3:12 *He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name.*

The only church that received only commendation.

“You kept My Word!”

“You have power (dunamis)!”

“You did not deny My Name!”

Again the admonition to “hold fast” that which you have.

A look at what might be future is indicated in verse 10.

An hour of trial, will come upon the world, to test those on the earth.

This may be what is known as the “tribulation period.”

In any case, they will be kept from it. (As will all the true Body of Christ.)

More about the New Jerusalem, the Heavenly City later.

Is the new name He speaks of here that Name of His Father’s, by which He has identified Himself?

Laodicea

Rev. 3:14 † *And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God:*

Rev. 3:15 *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

Rev. 3:16 *So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth.*

Rev. 3:17 *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked:*

Rev. 3:18 *I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see.*

Rev. 3:19 *As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

Rev. 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

No commendation is given this church.

It is important to keep in mind that He is addressing a church, an assembly. Someone called our ministry very upset. They were worried, after hearing someone preach on the end times, that they would not go to Heaven because they might not be considered “hot” or “cold.” Individuals know salvation by grace through faith.

This was a deceived assembly. They thought they were rich. And probably they were rich with riches of this world. But they were spiritually poverty-stricken. Their blindness was “shortsightedness.” They saw only the here and now. He loved them. That’s why He reproved them. There was still space to “repent.”

The 20th verse has been preached to the world, to sinners. Yet to do so is to take it out of context.

Once inside this church, or it would not be a church, He is now on the outside. He has stationed Himself at the door and is knocking. The call is to “any man” within even this lukewarm assembly—to any one who will hear His Voice and open the door. He will come in to him and will sup with him. I am reminded of two unnamed disciples, who walking with Him on the road to Emmaus after He had arisen, did not know Him until, “He was known of them in the breaking of bread (Luke 24:35).”