

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 11TH, 2024 // REVELATION

### SARDIS: A DEAD CHURCH (REVELATION 3:1-6) "THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD"

Jesus reminds Sardis that He is "the one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars." We clarified that the seven spirits are the Holy Spirit's attributes mentioned in Isaiah 11, and the stars are the churches.

- The number 7 also represents perfection.

#### THIS CHURCH RECEIVES NO APPROVAL!

Jesus gets right to the criticism of Sardis because He sees nothing good in them. The main accusation against them is that their reputation is faulty. **They fool everyone into thinking they're alive, but they are spiritually dead.**

- This was a church full of nominal Christians.

#### THE ADVICE FROM JESUS

God said to "be alert" and strengthen what little passion they had left. He says, "I have not found your works complete," meaning they are not done. Jesus also commands them to repent.

- **Apathy and entitlement may be the greatest enemies of the church! We must wake up and realize we have much work to do!**

#### SARDIS WAS NOT BEING PERSECUTED

The church of Smyrna had no criticism in the midst of extreme hardships. But Sardis, where it was convenient and easy to follow Jesus, received no compliment because of their apathy. **This demands change.**

- **God threatens to "come like a thief." This isn't the 2nd coming but an abrupt stop to their earthly blessings.**

#### WHITE CLOTHES, BOOK OF LIFE, AND NAMED

White clothes represent the righteousness of Christ given to followers of Christ.

- The Book of Life represents **Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith.** He writes down the names but no one can remove them.
- When Jesus acknowledges Believers, He declares that **He KNOWS each one.**
- **He knows us!**

#### LIVING OUR FAITH IN THE DAY-TO-DAY GRIND

The Bible calls us to righteous living. That means our **faith is not just on the weekends but in our everyday lives.**

- **Worship is not just singing; it is how we work, treat others, and live our lives in a way that honors God. True faith is not perfect, but it is always on the clock.**

### PHILADELPHIA: AN OPEN DOOR (REVELATION 3:7-13)

#### "...ONE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID"

This is a reference to Isaiah 22:22. It relates to Jesus telling the church in Philadelphia that they serve the God Who opens and shuts doors.

- This congregation was small, so it had little strength to oppose evil. Yet **they kept close to Christ—any obstacle can be overcome through Him.**

#### THE APPROVAL OF THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH

Jesus assures them that He has placed a "door that no one can close" in front of them because of their faithfulness to the Word and His name amid severe persecution.

- Some believe this is good works that they will do, but it may be referring to their salvation and the door of heaven.

#### THE "SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN"... AGAIN

Once again, we see that the members of the Jewish synagogue were causing serious trouble for the local Christians.

- Similar to Smyrna, there is no accusation against this church, yet they still suffer heavy persecution. **We are reminded again that allegiance to Christ isn't an escape from hard times.**

#### THE ASSURANCE AND APPEAL TO PHILADELPHIA

Because of their endurance, Jesus promises they will have "an open door no one can close," that the Jews would "bow down at your feet," and that He would keep them from the "hour of testing."

- The "door" refers to salvation. Bowing "down at your feet" probably refers to Philippians 2:10-11: "every knee will bow..."

#### KEEPING THEM FROM THE "HOUR OF TESTING"

This is the first reference in Revelation about the "Great Tribulation" that God will initiate. Jesus promises this church that they will not suffer through this awful time.

- This is where people begin to disagree. Does this passage mean a "rapture," or is Jesus saying He will protect them from His wrath?

#### DISAGREE WITHOUT DOGMA

V. 10 does not settle the question of the time of the rapture in relation to the tribulation. Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Trib theories agree that the critical issue isn't physical protection from earthly trials but spiritual protection from eternal wrath. **Our Lord protects us to the end and forever!**

#### "HOLD ON TO WHAT YOU HAVE"

He tells the Philadelphia church to stay strong, so "no one takes [their] crown." Also, God will make a pillar for them in heaven. This symbolizes **security and permanency with God forever.**

- We get a little glimpse of eternity as Jesus mentions a new city descending down for us.

### LAODICEA: SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS (REVELATION 3:14-22)

#### "...THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS"

The church at Laodicea was reminded that Jesus is the "true witness" because there was a problem with this church being trustworthy.

- One of Revelation's most famous and misunderstood passages is about the Laodicean church not being "cold nor hot" but "lukewarm."

#### STRAIGHT TO THE ACCUSATION

There is no compliment to Laodicea; there is only criticism about not being hot or cold but lukewarm.

The temperature does not refer to the state of their faith (on fire or ice cold spiritually) but to the location of this church.

- Laodicea fell between a medicinal hot spring in Hierapolis and Colossae with cold pure springs.

#### THINK COFFEE

Coffee is great, either hot or ice cold, but it is just plain wrong when it becomes room temp. The reference Jesus is making to temperature is about different ways to minister. **Being "lukewarm" implied just doing nothing.**

- **There is no neutral with Jesus. We are either progressing or regressing.**

- Matthew 12:30

#### THIS MAKES JESUS VOMIT?

God uses graphic imagery to describe how He feels about apathetic Christians. The source of the apathy was self-righteousness. The Laodiceans said, "I'm rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing."

- Jesus rebutted with, **"You don't realize you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked."**

#### DON'T MISS THE POINT

The point is not money, but humility. We're so quick to point the finger at others, but the fact is **all of us can slide into self-righteousness and self-sufficiency.**

- **We've been sold a lie that we're perfect just the way we are and to follow our hearts.**

**There is nothing good in us apart from God!**

#### BUY THINGS YOU DON'T THINK YOU NEED

The advice for the Laodiceans was to buy "gold refined in the fire." Unlike the material things they had put their love into, Jesus tells them to **invest in the real thing that withstands the heat of life.**

- He also says to cover their "shameful nakedness," meaning to **stop doing unrighteous acts.**

#### A CENTER FOR FAMOUS EYE OINTMENT

Laodicea was globally known for an eye salve made in the city. Ironically, a city that was known for eye health had Christians who couldn't see spiritually.

- Jesus recommended they use another ointment, the Holy Spirit, to help their spiritual eyes.

#### THE MOST UNDESERVING GET THE KINDEST FEELINGS

This is something we need to hear! Jesus strongly rebukes this church, but clarifies His actions by saying, **"As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline."**

- **Too often, we mistake discipline and correction for punishment. A good father disciplines his children because he knows what is best for them!**

#### "BE ZEALOUS AND REPENT!"

Jesus advises they turn away from their self-righteousness and apathy. He also says, "I stand at the door and knock," giving us ample opportunity to answer the door, let Him in, and "eat" with us.

- **If we will humble ourselves and rely on Him for what we truly need, we will sit with God on His throne.**

#### WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

- **Are we honest people?** Is what you see what you get? Have Christians become the most skilled mask wearers?
- Are we Christian in name only? What are we doing to change that?
- **Do our actions speak louder than our labels?**

#### WARM, COMFORTABLE, AND DISTRACTED

- Our biggest obstacles will be the very things that bring us "comfort" and distract us from being what we can be if we focus on Him.
- **Humility and an understanding that we must depend on something greater than us is the linchpin to it all!**

#### THE BIG QUESTION

- The big question today is not: **"Is God speaking?"**
- The real big question is: **"Are you listening?"**