

***“Victory Of Christ”
To The Church In Sardis
Revelation 3:1-6***

Introduction:

1. Let's Open Up Our Bibles:
 - To Revelation 3:
 - As We Start Looking At A New Chapter:
 - And A New Church!
2. This Morning:
 - We Will Look At:
 - The Fifth Letter:
 - That We Come To:
 - In Revelation 2-3!
 - But - Before We Do:
 - Just A Quick Review:
 - Of The Four Letters:
 - That Come Before It!
3. The First Letter:
 - **To The Church In Ephesus:**
 - Was Jesus' Message To:
 - A “Loveless” Church!
 - 2:1-7!
 - And - To Overcome:
 - Their Challenge:
 - Jesus Commands Them To:
 - Remember & Repent & Do The First Works:
 - With The First Love! (2:5)
4. The Second Letter:
 - **To The Church In Smyrna:**
 - Was Jesus' Message To:
 - A “Persecuted” Church!
 - 2:8-11!
 - And - To Overcome:
 - This Challenge:
 - Jesus Commands Them To:
 - Fear Not, But Be Faithful:
 - Even Unto Death! (2:10)
5. The Third Letter:
 - **To The Church In Pergamos:**
 - Was Jesus' Message To:
 - A “Tolerant” Church!
 - 2:12-17!
 - And - To Overcome:
 - The False Teachings Going On:
 - Jesus Commands Them To:
 - Just “Repent!” (2:16)
 - Otherwise - They Would Face Some Serious Consequences:
 - From The Lord Himself!
6. The Fourth Letter:
 - **To The Church In Thyatira:**
 - Was Jesus' Message To:
 - A “Contaminated” Church!
 - 2:18-29 - Which Was Also Contaminated With False Teaching:
 - Which Was Led By A Notorious False Teacher - Who Possessed The Same Kind Of Character:
 - As “Jezebel!”
 - And So - To Overcome:

- This Challenge:
 - Jesus Commands The Church As A Whole To:
 - “Hold Fast” To What They Had As A Church From The Beginning:
 - Which Would Have Been The Truth & Righteousness Found In The Gospel & In God’s Word!

7. And This Leads Us To:

- The Fifth Letter:
 - To The Church In Sardis:
 - Which Is Jesus’ Message To:
 - A **“Dying” Church!**
 - 3:1-6!

- 3:1-6 - “And unto 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 art dead. / Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. / Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. / Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. / He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. / He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!”

8. Once Again:

- We Can Discern In This Message:
 - Seven Distinct Parts:
 - That It Has In Common With:
 - The Other Letters We Have Looked At!
 - And So:
 - When We First Consider:

1. **Jesus’ Commission:**

- To John - To “Write” This Letter:
 - Once Again - We Find The Common Formula:
 - 3:1 - “And Unto The Angel Of The Church In Sardis Write!”
 - The “Angel” Was Probably:
 - A Representative Or Messenger From The Church In The City Of Sardis:
 - Which Today Is The Modern City Of Alasehir, Turkey!
 - As The Book Of Revelation:
 - Made Its Way To The Seven Churches:
 - In The Roman Province Of Asia:
 - First Addressed In 1:4!
 - By The Time It Got To:
 - Sardis - It Had Already Reached The:
 - Geographical Zenith With Pergamus:
 - And Was Now Heading Back South!
 - **So - The City Of Sardis:**
 - Was About 30 Miles South Of Thyatira - And:
 - About 50 Miles East Of Smyrna & Ephesus:
 - Which You Can See Once Again On Our Map!
 - And - Like The Other Cities:
 - That We’ve Looked At:
 - Sardis Was Important & Significant:
 - As Well!
 - The City Of Sardis:
 - **Was A Strong City As Well!**
 - And Even Though Most Of The Business Of The City Took Place:
 - In The Hermus Valley - In Which:
 - During The Time Of Revelation:
 - Was Populated With Over 150,000 Citizens And Residents!
 - Its Power & Strength Was Derived From:

- Its Acropolis - Which Was Situated On:
 - **The Peaks Of Mt. Tmolus!**
- And So - In Times Of Conflict:
 - The City Had A Place To Go:
 - With Natural, And Virtually Impenetrable Defenses!
- As Far As One Could Tell:
 - There Was Only One Way Up & One Way Down!
 - And So - There Would Be Only One Way In & One Way Out:
 - For An Enemy To Take Over The Fortress Of Sardis!
 - The Cliffs Of Mt. Tmolus:
 - Reached Heights Of 1,100 Feet:
 - From The Valley! (Impressive!)
- So - The City Of Sardis:
 - Was Known To Be:
 - A Strong City!
- The City Of Sardis:
 - **Was Also A Rich City!**
 - The Nearby River - Called The:
 - Pactolos River:
 - Was Said To Have Golden Sand!
 - Which Made The City - And:
 - All Of Its Citizens Very Rich!
 - In Fact:
 - The River Was The Same One:
 - In Which The Fabled King Midas:
 - Washed In, In Order To Get Rid Of His Power To:
 - Turn Everything He Touched To Gold!
 - And - In Doing So:
 - His Power Was Given To The River:
 - Which Made Even Its Sand Turn Into Gold!
 - Of Course - That Was Just A Legend!
 - But - There *Was* A Significant Supply Of:
 - **A Gold & Silver Alloy - Called *Electrum*:**
 - That Was Mined & Used For Coins In Sardis!
 - So - The City Of Sardis:
 - Was A Strong & Wealthy City:
 - In Its Own Right! Also:
- The City Of Sardis:
 - **Was An Influential City!**
 - It Lay On An Important Road:
 - That Led People From The Interior Of The Province:
 - To The Coast - So They Could:
 - Trade With & Tax People As They Came Through!
 - This Was Another Way:
 - In Which They Became Wealthy!
 - But - As Rich & As Influential:
 - As Sardis Was - They Did Have:
 - A Problem!
 - In Fact - Their Very Strength:
 - Became Their Weakness!
 - Because - They Became:
 - **Swelled With *Pride*!**
- They Were Proud:
 - Of Their Strength!
 - They Thought That:
 - Noone Could Climb:
 - Those Steep Cliffs!
 - And So - They Didn't Feel The Need:

- To Build Much If Any:
 - Other Defenses - One The Cliffs Of The Mountain!
- Throughout Their History:
 - The City Of Sardis:
 - Fell To Enemies:
 - Because They Thought They Were Safe!
- All The Way Back To:
 - The Reign Of Cyrus:
 - King Of Persia:
 - A Soldier Quietly Scaled The Undefended Cliffs:
 - And Led The Persians To Victory Over Them!
- Though Sardis Thought Much Of Itself:
 - And Its Strength:
 - Its Pride In Its Strength:
 - Became Its Weakness & Downfall On Multiple Occassions!
- They Were Also Proud:
 - **Of Their Riches!**
 - And They Believed That The Natural Wealth:
 - They Had From The “Golden Sand” Of The River:
 - Would Last & Never Be Depleted!
 - And So - They Used Their Wealth:
 - To Build Up Their City:
 - Like This “Gymnasium” - Which Was The Central Market-Place Of Sardis!
 - However - The Gold Did Run Out!
 - And - They Had Little Else:
 - To Fall Back On!
 - **IE:** Not Unlike Some Of The Silver Mines In Colorado & Gold Mines In California!
 - Though Sardis Thought Much Of Itself:
 - And Its Wealth:
 - Eventually - They Became Poor!
- And - They Were Also Proud:
 - Of Their Influence!
 - Since They Were Able To Control:
 - Everyone & Everything That:
 - Flowed Through Their City!
 - But - Before Long:
 - The City On The Mountain:
 - Was Bypassed - And:
 - So Much Of Its Ancient Glory:
 - Was Forgotten!
 - **The Modern City Today:**
 - Is Barely 1/3 Of Its Size:
 - When Even John Sent This Letter:
 - To The Church There!
- And So - It Was In This:
 - Strong & Rich & Influential City:
 - Another Church Was Formed:
 - Even Though We Don’t Have Any Definitive Information On How:
 - It Was Founded!
 - But - Much Like All Of The Other Churches:
 - That We Have Looked At So Far In Revelation:
 - It Was Very Easy For:
 - The Christians In Sardis:
 - To Adopt The Culture Of Their City!
 - A Danger That:
 - No Church Is Immune To:
 - No Matter Where It Is!

- In Fact - The City Of Sardis:
 - Could Be Considered:
 - **"A City of The Past!"**
 - That Is - It Was Always Looking Back:
 - To Its Days Of Glory!
 - It Was Even More Important:
 - Before Revelation Was Written:
 - But - As Time Went On:
 - It Became More & More Obscure!
- However - This Could Also Be Said:
 - About The Church!
 - And This Leads Us To The Second Section Of This Letter - Which Is:

2. **Jesus' Character:**

- That - Once Again - He Reveals:
 - To This Church!
 - He Knows Everything About Them!
 - Which Is Why - In 3:1 - Using The Same Formula We've Seen In The Other Messages:
 - "These Things Saith He!"
 - He Reveals Himself As:
 - The One Who:
 - "Hath The Seven Spirits Of God, And The Seven Stars!"
 - As We Learned Before:
 - Jesus Describes Himself:
 - In Terms Of Both:
 - The Vision & The Virtue:
 - That We Find In Chap 1!
- **As To Jesus' Virtue:**
 - He Is The One That:
 - "Hath The Seven *Spirits* Of God!"
 - This Points Back To:
 - 1:4 - Where We Learned About:
 - "The Seven Spirits Which Are Before His Throne!"
 - So - There Is An Intimate Relationship:
 - Between Jesus & The Ever-Present, Seven-Fold Spirit Of God! So That:
 - Nothing Can Be Hidden From Him!
- **And - As To John's Vision:**
 - Once Again - Jesus Reminds This "Dead" Church:
 - That He Also Has "The Seven *Stars!*"
 - Which Represents The Seven Angels Of The Seven Churches! (1:20)
 - Which Is A Further Display Of His Control And Power:
 - Over Them!
- And - This Perception & Power:
 - Leads Us To The:
 - Third Section Of This Letter - Which Is:

3. **Jesus' Comprehension:**

- Of The Church!
 - Introduced - Once Again With:
 - The Same Formula Found In The Other Letters:
 - 3:1 - "I Know Thy Works!"
 - And - This Time:
 - The Challenge:
 - Faced By The Church:
 - Is Put Before:
 - Any Commendation:
 - Given To The Church! And:
- **The Challenge:**

- Is - 3:1 - “Thou Hast A Name That Thou Livest, And Art **Dead!**”
 - Now - There Is Not Much Hope:
 - For Something That Is Dead!
- After All - When Someone Dies Physically:
 - That Person Can No Longer:
 - Think!
 - Act!
 - Live! Because They Are Dead!
 - And The Only Thing Left Is:
 - The Burial & Funeral!
 - It Is A Hopeless Situation:
 - Because Physical Death Is:
 - A Hopeless Condition:
 - Apart From Jesus!
 - But - What Happens When:
 - A Church Is "Dead?"
 - Like The Church In Sardis?
- This Statement Was Likely Meant:
 - To Shock The Church:
 - Into Listening To What Jesus Has To Day To Them!
- And So - Jesus Is Probably Using:
 - **Some Exaggeration & Hyperbole Here:**
 - Because - In 3:2 - He Talks About:
 - Things - “That Are **Ready** To Die!”
 - And Even - In 3:4:
 - He Talks About - “A Few Names . . . Which Have Not Defiled Their Garments!”
 - And So:
- The Commendation:
 - Was Very Particular - And:
 - Very Brief!
- So - Perhaps - For The Most Part:
 - **Those Who Were Part Of The Visible Church - Were Not:**
 - **Believers** At All!
 - And - Many Of The Rest:
 - Were All But **Lifeless**:
 - In Their Walk With The Lord, Their Worship Of The Lord, And Their Witness For The Lord!
 - They Were Dying - With Just A Few Notable Exceptions!

Conclusion:

1. And So - To Those Who:
 - May Still Have Had:
 - Some Spiritual Life Left In Them:
 - In The Church Of Sardis:
 - Jesus Commands Them To Do:
 - Five Specific Things!
 - And - We Will Look At:
 - This Fourth Section Of The Letter:
 - Next Week!

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