

Introduction:

- In Revelation 1-3, there are 34 majestic terms used of Jesus to describe Him. You will also find 22 rewards mentioned in chapters 2-3 to those who overcome. All 56 of these things are to encourage the church/bride/us in her relationship with her Groom, Jesus!
- Read: Revelation 3:1-6
- In the letters to the seven churches, Jesus is speaking to the church. Note: he is walking among the churches and in the letters He is speaking to them. It is not seven messages (It is a book to the 7 churches) to seven churches it is a message to seven churches, preparing the Church for the events that are about to unfold at the end of the age.
- To the church in Sardis:
 - He is calling them/the church to be faithful and deal relentlessly with their compromise. Resist fear. Resist compromise and embrace the grace for faithfulness.
 - Sardis was a bad news church. Jesus had nothing to affirm in them. The good news is, that in His mercy He was still talking to them and seeking their heart to return! So a good question to ask here is: "What do we learn about Jesus, when we see His interaction with Sardis?"
 - Our goal in studying the Seven Churches is to see Jesus in the letters to the seven churches. In the letters we have a revelation of Jesus, the expectation of Jesus, an affirmation and or rebuke, and picture of the rewards of living for Him.
 - The key to understanding the promises in the seven letters, is to understand what overcoming meant in the context of that letter. In this letter it meant watching, early revival. He is not saying , "If you do that, you will be born again." He says, "If you do that, I will give you a reward"

I. Jesus Walks in Sardis

- A. Sardis was another revival center city. It had seen both the power and grace of God work miracles.
- B. The Contrast
 1. Sardis had earned a wonderful name of being alive in Christ but they were dead.
 2. They had a great spiritual reputation but they were dead.
 3. Though they had enjoyed revival they were not able to sustain their faith when the revival waned.
 - a) Sardis is a church that is known for its past devotion. I do not want to be known that way.
 - b) Sardis was warned by Paul in Acts 20:28-ff that savage wolves would come in among them and attempt to destroy what he had established.
- C. The Primary message to Sardis was be watchful and strengthen what remains.
- D. The City With No Enemies
 1. There is no mention of persecution in Sardis.

2. Jesus does not mention any of their enemies. He does not address any external enemies or internal enemies within the city.
3. Sardis like Laodica was an enemy of itself. Their enemy was a life of ease. I.e. The city which had only one way in was conquered because they did not watch the side that they thought was impossible to attack from. The high cliff was scaled and the city was taken.
4. They failed to maintain their heart. They were 20 somethings during the revival now they are in their 60s and lifeless.
5. They forgot how alive they could be in Christ.

II. Jesus Revealed In Sardis

- A. Revelation 3:1 *"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars* NKJV
 - i. The church in Ephesus hears the same thing (seven stars in hand). Ephesus and Sardis were both touched greatly by the Acts 19-20 revival that spread through all of Asia.
- B. Jesus holds the seven stars (leaders). Three things are immediately revealed about Jesus in this beautiful majestic expression:
 - i. It communicates how precious they are to the heart of God. If His eye is on the sparrow, and He knows how many hairs are upon our head, how awesome is it that He would hold them in His hands!
 - ii. It communicates the authority that he has over them. *"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will."* (Proverbs 21:1, ESV)
 - iii. It communicates the desire of Jesus to nurture them. He is holding them to fashion them. Krotos (to hold) always refers to the power of God in the NT.
- C. He has the seven Spirits of God. This means he has possession of the seven Spirits of God. Spirit of: *"And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."* (Isaiah 11:2, ESV) I.E. The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain!
 - i. Reference is to Is 11:2 and the seven fold spirit of God.
 - ii. It will take all seven facets of the Spirit to be an overcomer.
 - iii. Jesus is saying I have what it takes for you to be an overcome. Fresh oil, fresh fire, fresh baptism=revival. Sardis you need revived!
- D. Jesus is revealed with a commanding, compassionate heart that is desirous of Sardis to repent and remember their first love. He has the Spirit! Ez 37—dry bones live.

III. Jesus' Heart Is Revealed

- A. Jesus is mercifully patient.

1. Revelation 3:2 *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.* NKJV
2. Three exhortations
 - a) Wake up/Be watchful—to give strict attention to. There would not be the suffering of loss had they been watching for the thief. Jesus in vs 3 uses the thief to illustrate what happens when we are not watching. We can stop the thief simply by watching. The lack of watching is what allows/invites the thief to come and steal.
 - (1) Lifestyle of prayer
 - (2) Lifestyle of fasting
 - (3) Lifestyle of obedience
 - (4) All of these are done to encounter Jesus Christ. Mark 13:33-37 *"Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ...35 Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming ... 37 And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"* NKJV
 - b) Strengthen—to set fast, make firm.
 - (1) Develop the heart connection
 - (2) Strengthen what remains from the revival—the life, the vision, the values, the mandates of God. Get back in the discipline of developing your spiritual strength and vitality. I.e. Exercising takes time to build up to solid level.
 - (3) To do it, you must speak it often, live it before others, and enforce it among leaders who do not hold to the values.
 - c) Remember—to call to remembrance, to mention. It is the same exhortation given to the Ephesian church. Remember how and what you received. This is Jesus merciful exhortation to a church that is dying in His hands.
- B. Jesus Gives Promises of three rewards to those who overcome spiritual deadness by sustaining a life of watching.
 1. You will be clothed in white garments
 - a) White garments are not the same as the free gift of righteousness. Justification is a garment give to us by faith based on Jesus worthiness, not ours. White garments are based on our obedience in overcoming.
 - b) The white garments are the expression of each believers dedication and will differ as such.
 - (1) *"it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints."* (Revelation 19:8, ESV)
 - (2) The priestly garments of the OT tell us much and give us keen insight on how God feels about those garments and what they represent. There are eight references in the Book of Rev referring to our garments in the age to come.

- (3) The brightness or whiteness of the garment is the point of this verse.
- (a) 1 Corinthians 15:40-42 *There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead ...* NKJV
 - (b) Matthew 17:2 *and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.* NKJV
 - (c) Revelation 15:6 *out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands.* NKJV
 - (d) White robes means the saints are clean and pure.
- 2. I will not blot out the overcomer's name
 - 3. I will confess the overcomer's name before the Father and His angels
- C. Eph 3:16; Jer 32:40; Jn 14:26 HS brings to remembrance.

Conclusion:

- We need the fire of the Holy Spirit! We can't be passive in our faith.