

# Kevin Tregenza: Sardis (17/8/19)

**Scripture Reading:** Revelation 3:1-6

## **Introduction:**

Sardis was the fifth church on the mail route. There weren't a lot of good things said about the church in Sardis. There is nothing in this message that condemns Sardis for any particular sin or heresy. They were just dead!

**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: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."

"Seven spirits" - Revelation 1:4

"Seven stars" - Revelation 1:20

When Jesus introduces Himself to the church in Sardis, He introduces Himself as He who has the perfect representation of the Spirit of God.

Sardis had a name/reputation for being alive, but really they were dead.

What is more important? Reputation or character? They were placing all the emphasis upon reputation rather than perfecting character.

"living... but dead..."

James 2:20 - Faith without works is having claims without actions. According to James, these works are dead.

Ephesians 2:1 - Our natural condition is spiritual death, but God is the life giver.

## **The City:**

Each city had a patron god. For Sardis it was the goddess Cybele (the same as the Greek goddess Artemis). This goddess was believed to be able to restore the dead to life.

Those who came to worship Artemis had to come in a spotless garment. If there was a single blemish they would not be allowed in.

John 10:10,28 - In contrast to the promise that the goddess Artemis failed to fulfil for these worshippers, Jesus promises to bring fulness of life.

The temple of Artemis was considered impregnable. Because of this, they were lulled into sleep.

**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."

"Be watchful" - Unlike many of the other messages to the churches, Jesus gives no commendation to Sardis. He begins straight away by telling them to "be watchful."

In 547 BC, Cyrus the great took this impenetrable city in the dead of night when no one was watching. In 218 BC, Antiochus the great used exactly the same method to penetrate the heavy walls of this city.

When Jesus said to them "be watchful" it would have resonated deeply with these people.

Mark 14:38 - In this great time of need, Jesus asked His disciples to "be watchful."

Unfortunately they too went to sleep. Had they watched, Jesus indicates, they may not have run away in His time of need.

"Strengthen the things that remain" - When there were strong earthquakes in the district, the city of Sardis suffered damage and loss. After the quakes they had to strengthen what was left.  
Ephesians 5:16 - We too, have something that remains. We have time to use. So we ought to make the most of what is left by prayer, Bible Study, and faith.

James 2:20 - Faithless works are "dead." Therefore, redeem the time and pursue works of faith instead.

**Revelation 3:3** - "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you."

"Remember" - There are some other things that the Bible tells us to remember. For example, the Sabbath, Lot's wife, and many other things.

John 14:26 - The Holy Spirit speaks in order to bring remembrance.

"Hold fast" - We are to hang on tight.

Hebrews 6:19 - Hope holds us fast when we are focussed on Jesus.

"Repent" - Repentance is a complete 180° turn around in once trajectory.

Acts 17:30,31 - God is going to judge the world, so He desires for us to turn around in order that judgment isn't executed. Even though we have a reputation for being dead, Jesus is able to make us alive.

"Watch" - Referring again to their overthrow.

Matthew 24:42-44 - We need to be ever-ready!

**Revelation 3:4** - "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy."

"There are a few names who haven't been defiled" - There was a remnant in Sardis who hadn't been defiled.

"Garments" - What are the garments spoken of?

Isaiah 61:10 - Jesus' righteousness is to be worn like a garment.

"White" - What does it mean to be white?

Daniel 12:10 - "Purified" = made white. Their garments are pure righteousness. The only way we can have pure righteousness is through Jesus.

"Worthy" - How? We are sinners!

Luke 21:36 - "Watch" and you will be considered worthy.

2 Thessalonians 1:4,5 - "Endure" and you will be counted worthy.

Our only worthiness is found in Christ.

**Revelation 3:5** - "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

"He that overcomes" - God is calling us to overcome temptation the same way that Jesus overcame.

Revelation 3:21 - As we overcome like Jesus overcame we will be rewarded as He is. Jesus overcame temptation by: faith, the Word, and submission to God.

Revelation 12:11 - We overcome by faith in the blood of the Lamb and by faithfulness to death.

Matthew 5:6,8 - Righteousness and purity.

"White raiment" - This garment that Jesus offers to give us is a robe of His pure righteousness.

"I will confess" -

Matthew 10:32,33 - If we confess Him, He promises to confess our names before God.

Luke 12:8,9 - Luke adds to this that our names are also confessed to the angels.

**Revelation 3:6** - "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

The final command is to "hear" what the Spirit is saying to you...

Here are some of the things that Jesus says to the church in Sardis:

1. Watch
2. Strengthen
3. Remember
4. Hold Fast
5. Repent
6. Watch