

## Revelation, Part 5 The Seven Churches — Thyatira, Sardis

As we progress through the seven churches of Asia, we notice the church in its strength and weakness. Another thing that is obvious is the manner in which the Lord revealed Himself to the individual church.

**When He addresses Thyatira, He is the Son of God.**

**Revelation 2:18 NKJV** And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:

**Thyatira was situated 30 miles southeast of Pergamos.**

It was known for its trade in wool and purple dye. Lydia, a seller of purple came from Thyatira, (Acts 16:14, 40). Paul met in Lydia's house in Philippi and all present were baptized. Thyatira was the smallest and least important of the seven churches, yet, this is the longest message. Its believers suffered political and religious persecution and compromised with the world to achieve their personal desires. The city was a sponsor of frequent feasts and orgies in the worship of their idols.

**The Lord's statement had a dual meaning to them.**

They had hope that the Lord saw their circumstances and was able to dispatch all their enemies under His feet. As with the previous three churches, the Son of God's statement shows Who He is and what He sees in them. Daniel had a vision of the Lord that is similar to this.

**Daniel 10:6 NKJV** His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

**The letter to Thyatira shows Who Christ is to the compromising church.**

**Revelation 2:19 NKJV** I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

**Initially, the Lord knew the good things they were doing.**

Even though they were compromising in many areas, the Lord saw some outstanding things in them. They did not lack in works, love, service, faith and patience. In these areas, they were continuing to grow. On a social level the church was excelling, but in other areas they had compromised and had become corrupt.

**This message to every believer that doing good does not invalidate doing evil.**

Some people think that if they do more good than evil they will be all right, but that is not what the Lord is saying.

**Revelation 2:20 NKJV** Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

The corruption in the church revolved around a woman named Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess. She claimed divine inspiration for the false utterances to practice unrestrained sexual immorality. She was teaching and seducing the church to commit sexual immorality and eat food that had been sacrificed to idols. The church knew that what she was doing was wrong, but they practiced toleration and accommodation. Jezebel who was a self-appointed prophetess and teacher was proclaiming this perversion in the church. As a result of her false teaching, seduction, fornication and idolatry, some were participating in her sin.

**Revelation 2:21-23 NKJV** And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

These words get back to the way the Lord revealed Himself. He was giving a stern warning that must be heeded, because He was not going to give more time to repent. God is patient and is not willing that any should perish, however, He will not always hold back. None of us should put God to the test.

*The Lord said, "I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds."*

Pay attention to the fact that God still offers grace and mercy. At the same time, His warning should be taken seriously.

*"All the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works."*

The church should know that the Lord searches the minds and hearts.

**2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

**Revelation 2:24 NKJV** Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

Although there was immorality and compromise in the church, some remained faithful believers who did not know the depths of Satan and this evil

lifestyle. As we have seen in previous churches, Satan had a stronghold in much of Asia. It is absolutely critical in a day of compromise, tolerance, and accommodation that believers hold fast to the truth.

**Revelation 2:25-28 NKJV** But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ — as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.

The Lord is making promises to those who do not compromise with the world and live an overcoming life.

Even in the midst of a society and church that was evil and under the sway of the devil, some were living true to the faith. The Lord’s word to them is relevant to everyone who overcomes Satan’s deceptive schemes.

Jesus said, *“The overcomer will be given power over the nations.”*

They shall rule and reign with Christ and have positions of honor, rule and service in His kingdom.

Then the Lord said the overcomer would be given the morning star.

**Revelation 22:16 NKJV** “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

The ultimate reward for the overcomer is Christ Himself.

**Revelation 2:29 NKJV** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

**Revelation 3:1 NKJV** “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.’”

**Sardis** was located 30 miles southeast of Thyatira.

It was located on an important trade route and was a wealthy city that had industries and trade in jewelry, dye, and textiles. As with some of the previous cities of Asia, it was a center for pagan worship and had a temple of Artemis. A Christian church has been located by archeologist beside the temple to Artemis. The church is the small building on the left hand side of the two tall pillars.



The church in Sardis had a reputation of being spiritually alive, but they were dead.

The Lord made it clear that they were dead. The Lord who searches the heart knows the true spiritual condition of every believer.

**Revelation 3:2 NKJV** Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

The Greek word “be” means to “become, or to begin to be.” It means to start being something that you currently are not. Start being watchful and strengthen the things that remain.

In Sardis and Laodicea, there is no mention of conflict or opposition within or outside the church.

That is a testimony that there was no real threat to Satan or the world within these churches. At one time, the life that is in Christ was in them. They had a testimony that they were alive, but they were dead. They had believed unto salvation, but some had already experienced spiritual death and some were about to die. When the Lord referred to “works,” He was indicating the things that believers should normally do and be when they have a right relationship with God.

This verse should cause the whole church to do a thorough examination.

Are you really “alive” or do you just have a “reputation of being alive?” Our goal should be to be found “perfect before God.”

**Galatians 3:3 NKJV** Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

**2 Corinthians 7:1 NKJV** Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

**Hebrews 10:14 NKJV** For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

The Lord Jesus Christ is looking for the sanctifying, purifying, life changing power of the Holy Spirit in believer’s lives.

Rather than finding “life” there were signs of sin and death.

**Revelation 3:3 NKJV** 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.

The church at Sardis was told to “remember how you have received and heard.”

The Lord was calling them to remember what happened to them when they

first believed. Remember the changes that occurred in your life. Remember the power of the Spirit of life surging in you.

*“Hold fast and repent” is a testimony that there is still hope for those who have become spiritually dead.*

They can come back. The Lord is offering hope of renewed life.

**Job 14:7-9 NKJV** For there is hope for a tree, If it is cut down, that it will sprout again, And that its tender shoots will not cease. Though its root may grow old in the earth, And its stump may die in the ground, Yet at the scent of water it will bud And bring forth branches like a plant.

*The hope the Lord was offering required a response from them.*

If they do not respond, He said, *“I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.”* This is not an unlimited door of opportunity.

*After the warning, the Lord offers a special opportunity for blessing.*

**Revelation 3:4 NKJV** 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.

In the midst of a compromising and dead church, there is hope. There were some in the congregation that had remained true and had not defiled their garments with sin. Those who do not compromise with the world and the devil have this promise.

*“They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.”*

White garments is a sign of purity and righteousness. This should be the goal of the whole church. We want to be able to stand before God in the righteousness that is in Christ and be counted worthy to enter into the blessing of the Lord.

**Revelation 3:5 NKJV** 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.

*Not only will they be clothed in white garments, their name will be included in the Book of Life.*

The Book of Life is referred to six times in the Revelation, (Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27). Those who have their names recorded in the Book of Life have promise and hope in eternity.

*“I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”*

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

The words that were spoken to the church in Sardis must be heard by all the churches. We all want to be included in the blessing of the Lord. You do not want your name to be blotted out of the Book of Life. When you stand before God on the day of judgment, you want Jesus Christ to stand up and confess your name and say: “They are mine. I have their name written down in my book.”