

**Week 5**

The Letters to Thyatira and Sardis are so different yet it is helpful to compare them and think about how these churches would have heard each other's letters.

	<b>Thyatira</b>	<b>Sardis</b>
<b>Description of Christ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Son of God</li> <li>&gt;eyes like flame of fire</li> <li>&gt;feet like polished bronze</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;He who was-who is and who is to come (I AM)</li> <li>&gt;Has the 7 Spirits of God and 7 stars (fullness of Holy Spirit)</li> </ul>
<b>What Jesus speaks well of...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; love, faith, service, patient endurance</li> <li>&gt;your recent works greater than your earlier works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;only a few who have not soiled their clothes</li> <li>&gt;who walk with Jesus in white</li> <li>&gt;a few worthy</li> </ul>
<b>What Jesus is not pleased with</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; tolerance of Jezebel</li> <li>&gt;idolatry, adultery, sexual immorality, tolerated false and mysterious teachings, eating things sacrificed to idols</li> <li>&gt;failed to protect vulnerable</li> <li>&gt; refusal to repent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;reputation of being alive but you are (spiritually) dead</li> <li>&gt;your works are imperfect and incomplete</li> <li>&gt;&gt;false sense of security</li> </ul>
<b>What does the Church need to do?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Repent</li> <li>&gt;hold fast (to what is good)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;wake up</li> <li>&gt;strengthen what remains</li> <li>&gt;complete your works</li> <li>&gt; remember and hold fast to teachings</li> <li>&gt;obey</li> <li>&gt;repent</li> </ul>
<b>What promise is given to the one who overcomes?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;I will give authority (same authority Jesus received from the Father) (to rule the nations)</li> <li>&gt;I will give the Morning Star (intimacy with Jesus)</li> <li>&gt;victorious ones will be</li> <li>&gt;clothed in white and names never erased from Book of Life and announced by Jesus before the Father and will sit with Jesus (on His throne)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; you will be clothed like the faithful</li> <li>&gt;your name not erased from Book of Life</li> <li>&gt;will be confessed to the Father and His angels that you are Mine</li> </ul>

1. What do you think Thyatira could learn from what Jesus said to Sardis?

- > *they could also decrease to become only a few- due to their tolerance of Jezebel, immorality, adultery, etc.*
- > *they need to stay awake and complete their works - not become complacent*
- > *hold fast to sound teachings and obey*
- > *walk worthy of the Lord*

2. What do you think Sardis could learn from what Jesus said to Thyatira?

- > *to focus of faith, love, service and endurance*
- > *not to tolerate sexual immorality, adultery*
- > *protect the vulnerable by holding fast to what is good and good teaching*
- > *keep your garments white*
- > *strive to be an overcomer*

3. Do you think that the 7 churches benefited from hearing what the Spirit was saying to each of them? Explain your answer.

*> I suspect that many would have responded to the encouragement the Spirit gave and repented at the words of warnings as well, but it may not have been enough. I think it's hard to expect each assembly/church to last for many years because leadership changes and people move and die. We seem to have ebbs and flows over history. With the churches that have arisen that do NOT elevate and uphold the Word of God- I think we see that they did not benefit in the way the Spirit directed because of the many deaths of the churches.*

## **Week 6**

1. This week, write a letter to the Church of America from the Lord using the structure you have come to expect: (1) a description of Jesus from the descriptions of Christ in chapter 1 (or any of the letters), (2) what Jesus would commend the church for, (3) what you think Jesus would rebuke the church for, (4) the challenge you imagine lies before us in the form of an exhortation or warning from Christ, and (5) a promise that you think the church needs to hear.

2. After you complete your letter, pray about what you have written. Then share in a sentence or two how this assignment and prayer impacted you personally.

1- I AM the One who begins and sustains and brings to completion all things to Myself.

2- Commends- I see your care and works for community, missions,

compassion for the poor and education for the people.

3- But I see that you are comfortable, overly secure, and complacent, unfaithful, and not seeking the Kingdom but things of this world which will not last. Be faithful as I AM Faithful, for time is short - seek the higher callings.

Heb 2.3 So what makes us think we can escape if we ignore this great salvation that was first announced by the Lord Jesus himself and then delivered to us by those who heard him speak?

4- You are yet unprepared for dangers that lie ahead. It is through My word and My Spirit that provides the growth, wisdom of God, and strength.

5- Those who hear My voice and draw near and place their confidence in Me, I will open doors and prepare you and increase you and keep you steady from the attacks from the evil one.

Psa 91.14 The LORD says, "I will rescue those who love me.  
I will protect those who trust in my name.

91.15 When they call on me, I will answer;

I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them.

91. 16 I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation."

6- I always pray everyday- and I followed your instructions to pray after my initial letter. I believe it did alter some of what I wrote and gave better clarity to what to write. I was a bit surprised- though I shouldn't have been. Gives me greater confidence faith in prayer and a lesson and reminder to always pray.

## **Week 7**

Choose one of the 7 churches that have impacted you the most and review their struggles and pressures. Consider the task Christ put before them so that they can overcome.

1.What impact do you think this opening vision would have had on this church after receiving their letter? For example, would it be comforting? Explain.

2.Write out an intercessory, heartfelt prayer for this church knowing that there is a church or churches out there struggling with similar problems and in need of a similar correction. Trust God for these brothers and sisters you never met, for one day you may see them in heaven and this prayer was instrumental in helping them overcome!

The SARDIS church letter was the most striking- the strongest warning given with the greatest condemnation. They thought they were alive but were not- **they were dead**. They also were or thought they were self-sufficient and I believe fell to the deception of riches- and not needing God.

The opening vision included a specific letter to each specific church- would have/SHOULD have brought each church to a place of ATTENTION- God's speaking to us/to me - just as God sent prophets to Israel to speak to them in their time and place (Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.) They should have shaken in their boots at such a stark word from the Lord.

They should have understood that some of what the prophets spoke before - has already come to pass. (for example- the blessing of the promised Messiah in Micah- being born in Bethlehem-- to the Babylonian captivity revealed to Isaiah and Jeremiah).

What did God reveal to them in the Vision- that He HIMSELF is the fullness of God (7 spirits and 7 stars.)

If you are dead as Jesus said- then you do NOT know the risen CHRIST who IS alive but also that HE leads, directs, and speaks to His children. They are playing at religion- and doing works of their own making- just like Cain. They do not know they not are responsive to the Spirit.

But God WARNED them- to WAKE UP and repent and remember and obey AND He also provides the WAY to respond--- WAKE up-strengthen- remember- obey- repent. This is His grace if they will respond. And He will promise to be clothe them like the faithful and being confess them to the Father- that should have been a strong word of Encouragement to GODLY FEAR rather than a word of - give up- it's all over for you. God's grace.

I'm inclined to think of the Catholic Church as being dead (a generalization). Great works of community support (church buildings, Schools, hospitals) certainly all over America and church buildings all over Europe- but how many of their congregation/followers know the Risen Lord or even care to. Sadly I know many in my family, neighborhood, work place and others- they wouldn't miss Christmas eve mass but don't know the word of God nor Jesus personally? Taking Jesus of no real importance- just playing religion. And this is what the Lord may say to so ,any people:

Matt 7.21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.

*Dear Lord God, If I were to live a life of self deception and thought I was OK- but was not- would you please come and tell me. I only have one life and I can't go back and change things. If I am in a church congregation with leaders that are NOT upholding your truth to me - so that I can see what I must do- then I pray for that leadership to be convicted to change. Do not let weak and false leadership continue to influence people's lives- shut them down. Open their eyes and mine to see - hear from You - repent if need be and follow You. Let Your truth shine brightly here among us. Lord encourage us to respond appropriately to the voice of Your Spirit and not let it casually go by. Touch my inner self. And Lord- shine brightly to these churches that are dead to WAKE UP. Thank You Lord- You alone opens hearts. Amen.*