

Revelation – The Return

Revelation 3:1-13

The letter to Sardis:

Sardis was an ancient city with a proud history but was in decline by the time Revelation was written.

Jesus had no praise for the church of Sardis.

- Revelation 3:1-2

The Sardians had a good reputation but Jesus said they were Dead.

- The Sardians were living on past accomplishments and pride.

According to Pastor Chuck Swindoll, a dead church:

- worships its past and is inflexible, making change difficult;
 - We must fulfill God's mission for HCC today while setting up the next generation for success.
- often has carnal and lazy leadership making decisions independent of God's direction;
- neglects its children and youth;
- has an internal focus, ignoring its call to evangelize: ignoring the Great Commission to spread the gospel and make disciples.

The deeds of the Sardians were incomplete.

- Revelation 3:2
- The church of Sardis did not fulfill its divine purpose.
- The mission of HCC is to elevate Jesus, expand the Kingdom as we engage the community, and equip the church for its mission.

The church of Sardis suffered from complacency caused by Deception.

- There was still life in the Sardian church.
 - Revelation 3:4
- Jesus didn't want the church of Sardis to die.
 - Revelation 3:3

We strengthen the church by:

- taking an honest look at ourselves,
- receiving Jesus' truth,

- obeying Jesus and repenting,
- nourishing the church with God's Word,
 - Hebrews 5:14
- allowing the Spirit to work within us, and
- exercising our faith in God's mission.

Jesus warned the Sardians.

- Revelation 3:3
- Jesus will reward the faithful.
 - Matthew 10:32-33

The letter to Philadelphia: only positive feedback

Jesus had nothing negative to say about the Philadelphians.

- Revelation 3:7
- Jesus controls access to God's Kingdom.
- Philadelphia was the doorway to lands where people had never heard of Jesus. When God opens a door, no one can

 - Revelation 3:8 You have kept my Word and guarded my message and not denied my name!
- Jesus opened the door for the church to expand His Kingdom.
- God will use you if you're faithful to Him, have faith in Him, and are willing to be used by Him.
- Jesus opens the door but we must walk through it.

Ask: What doors has God opened for you to faithfully walk through?

Jesus will bless those who are faithful.

- Revelation 3:9-12
 - How do you guard God's Word?
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What is the promise that comes with that?

Remember if Jesus opens a door, we can walk through it.. no one can shut it!

Action Steps

- Read the letters to Sardis and Philadelphia this week and note Jesus' praise, corrections, and promises.

Revelation 3:7b

“These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.”

3 “To the angel^[a] of the church in Sardis write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits^[b] of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ²Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. ³Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

⁴Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. ⁵The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. ⁶Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Philadelphia

⁷“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. ⁸I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹I will make those who are of the

synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. ¹⁰Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

¹¹I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ¹²The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. ¹³Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches

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¹⁰ Because you have guarded *and* kept My word of patient endurance [have held fast the ^[a]lesson of My patience with the ^[b]expectant endurance that I give you], I also will keep you [safe] from the hour of trial (testing) which is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell upon the earth.

¹¹ I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one may rob you *and* deprive you of your crown.

¹² He who overcomes (is victorious), I will make him a pillar in the sanctuary of My God; he shall never be put out of it *or* go out of it, and I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which descends from My God out of heaven, and My own new name.