

Lesson 8

The Church of Sardis-the powerless church

Review so far

Reference Revelation 1:19

The book of Revelation is the only book of the Bible that has the chutzpa to promise a blessing to those who read it and hear the words therein, and heed what the book says. Remember for the first part of the divinely inspired outline, John was to write down the things that he had seen. John had completed this part of the outline by the time chapter 1 breaks to chapter 2. Next, John is to write down the things “which are,” which happens to be the seven letters to the seven current local churches of the day. These seven letters are given to us in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation. So far we have looked at the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, and Thyatira. With this lesson 8 we will look at the fifth church of these seven churches, the Church of Sardis. There are two remaining churches in this study that we will explore in the coming weeks. Beginning in chapter 4, we start to see those things that John is to write down after these things, meaning after the Church is taken out of this world and the raptured are moved to heaven in the presence of Christ, the Father, and the seven-fold Spirit of God...the Trinity. From the actual words that are recorded beginning in chapter 4, “After these things,” we can conclude that the judgments on the earth and the earth dwellers (the wrath of God) found in Revelation 6 through 16 will begin after the Church is in heaven or after these things of chapters 1-3. The judgments come in sevens, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls. It is very interesting that we do not see the Final judgment, or the White Throne Judgment, given until chapter 20 after all the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments are completed (see Revelation 15:1) and the wrath of God has been spent. Let’s review the descriptions of Jesus that we have seen so far in each of the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, and Thyatira.

To the Church in Ephesus, Jesus is described as the “One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands.” Christ explains the seven stars that are in His right hand as being seven angels who are assigned one each to one of the seven churches. Jesus is also explained as the One who walks among the seven lampstands. Some of you wondered when we looked at the first chapter of Revelation the association between the lampstands being the church and the lampstands also being the Holy Spirit. The lampstands are symbolic of the seven-fold Spirit of God and represent the Spirit right there in the midst of each church; and they also represent each church.

In the letter to the Church in Smyrna, Christ is revealed as the First and the Last, the *Rishon Va-Acharon*, who was dead and has come back to life. Christ has all authority and sovereignty given Him by the Father including what is about to happen to those who are in Smyrna. He will stand with them in death. They will die for their faith. Christ has been the First Fruits or the Promise of eternal life for the church of Smyrna. Just as God raised His Son from the dead, He promises to also raise those in the Church

of Smyrna from the dead. They will not experience the second death.

To the Church of Pergamum, Jesus has explained Himself as the One who has the sharp two-edged sword. If those in Pergamum do not repent of their tolerance to those in their fellowship who hold to the teachings of Balaam and Balak and to the teachings of the Nicolaitans, He will make war with the Church of Pergamum using the sword of His mouth. Some find it too hard to sacrifice now for the good things of Christ that will come later. I have to be mindful of this one. Actually, I think all of us need to be mindful of this one. We see the authority of Jesus here in two names we are given in the cross-references, *Malek Yahweh Tsabaot* or *King LORD of Hosts* and *Ga-al* or the Redeemer of Israel. Jesus is the authority over all angelic hosts and He is the God-Man Redeemer of Mankind.

Finally, we come to the Church of Thyatira, where the Son of God is made known to them as He, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and feet like burnished bronze, the *Righteous Judge*. We looked at the name, *Bar Enosh*, the *Son of Man*, used in Revelation 1:19 rather than the *Son of God* used in the letter to the Church of Thyatira. The Son of Man is the Son of God. We also have seen Jesus as the *Shophet Tsaddiq*, the Just Judge and as the *Esh Okla, El Kanna*, a *Consuming Fire*, and a *Jealous God*. God sees the deeds of the Church of Thyatira and those who tolerate the woman, Jezebel. Jesus will judge Jezebel and He will also judge those of the Church of Thyatira who approve of immorality in the church of the same kind as belongs to Jezebel. If these repent and overcome, they will rule over the nations with Him. We explored the Shemash that is symbolic of the Messiah. The Messiah is the *Vine* and we are the branches. We looked at *His Majestic Glory* or *Naddir Kavod*. He is the *Everlasting Light, Or Olam*, and finally, He is *God of Glory, El Ha-Kavod*.

Days 1-2 The Church of Sardis

Background History of Sardis

Sardis was one of the great cities in the Ancient World. The city's history dates back to 2000 B.C. Around the time of 1200 B.C. Sardis was the capital of the Lydian Empire. Located inland and built on a small elevated plateau (1000 feet above the lower sea level) which rose almost perpendicularly above the Hermus Valley, the city of Sardis was considered inaccessible and thought impenetrable by foreign militaries. The city could only be accessed on the southern side by a very steep and difficult path. As the city grew, the small, elevated plateau on which the city was built became inadequate for the growing population. So, a lower city was built on the west side of the city. The older city on the elevated small plateau was used as an acropolis in defense. The older city and the lower city made it a double or twin city and they named their city Sardis, which is a plural noun. Sardis became noted for its wealth. There were many wealthy Jews living there in Sardis as evidenced by an elaborate synagogue which has been recently unearthed in the middle of the city. Coins were first minted in Sardis around the third century BC. The Lydian city's last royalty, Croesus, was considered the wealthiest man in the world for that time period. Electrum was produced in Sardis. Electrum is a

laminate of gold and silver. It was thought to have mystical properties as it was used in divination. The electrum was also used to gild gold onto the statues of gods for the temples.⁴⁷ The Lydians thought they were protected in their city and impregnable from the militia of other nations, but they were wrong. They were overcome by the Persians and then by Alexander the Great and then by one of Alexander's four generals, Selucid, the Ruler of Syria, and then finally, by the Romans. The many wealthy Jews who lived in Sardis not only thought that their city was impregnable from the aggression of other nations, but they thought their wealth was secure as they deposited it in a citadel atop a hill with steep cliffs surrounding it on three of four sides. Among the reasons these Jews lived here in Sardis was because those given authority over Sardis favored the Jews. The historian Josephus wrote that a Roman proconsul in the first century B.C., upheld the rights of the Jews in Sardis to practice Judaism. The Roman historian Tacitus, reported that an earthquake in 17 A.D. almost destroyed the city completely. Twelve other cities in that area in the same year also fell by an earthquake. Because of the city of Sardis's location, they were not only a route for trade of goods between Mesopotamia and the Greek cities, but they were a crossroads for trade of ideas. The city had a temple to Cybele and also a temple to Apollo in their city. The ruins of these two temples are still there today. Cybele was known as Diana in Ephesus and Artemis in Greece. However, Sardis was inland from the other great cities of the day, and when Cybele came inland, she took on the character of a nature goddess. She was the goddess of the moon, and her brother Apollo was the god of the sun. Cybele supposedly had a son whose name was Midas, and everything he touched turned to gold. After the sixth century A.D., Sardis declined in importance and size. Today Sardis has become the little town of Sart and has only fragments left of the once wealthy civilization. Interesting tidbit about Sardis: it means "Remnant." In the history of the Church, this parallels the time of the Reformation. This covers the Church period between A.D. 1517 and A.D. 1800.

The Description of Jesus

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write this: 'He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, says this: I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.'"

What do the Believers of Sardis think about themselves? How do their deeds differ from the deeds of the Believers in Ephesus?

Christ tells the Ephesians that He knows about their deeds, toil, perseverance, and intolerance of evil men, but they have put all these good works before their personal relationship with Him (and He wants them). In the Church of Sardis, Jesus tells them that the deeds He sees them doing do not match up with the loftiness of their own self-commendation, which is, that they think they are alive. He however, regards them as dead, a dead church. If the world doesn't like your church, you are probably on the right

⁴⁷ John Klein, Adam Spears, Michael Christopher, *Lost in Translation*, Volume 2, (Covenant Research Institute, 2009), pp. 112, 113.

track. On the other hand, if the world finds no fault with your church, you need to look inwardly and find out what it is that is appealing to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

In the description of Jesus for the Church in Sardis, Jesus once again describes Himself as the One who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. To some degree, we looked at the Holy Spirit as the seven Spirits of God before we started in on the seven letters to the seven churches, but today we are going to look deeper into just “Who” is the Holy Spirit? What is His Purpose? Is the Holy Spirit God? How does He differ from the other two members of the Godhead? We are going to “start at the very beginning. We will start in **Genesis 1:1-2**. “In the beginning *Elohim* created heaven and earth. The Earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep water. The *Ruach Elohim* was hovering over the water”⁴⁸

The Hebrew word for “spirit” is *Ruach*. The *Ruach Qodesh* is the Holy Spirit. *Ruach El* is God’s Spirit, *Ruach YHWH* is the Lord’s Spirit, and the Spirit of God is *Ruach Elohim*. *Ruach Elohim*, the Spirit of God is used in the **Genesis 1:1-2** passage. *Ruach Elohim* is used twice in the OT, once in **Genesis 2:1** and once in **Genesis 41:38**. *Ruach* can be translated as “wind,” breath, or “mind.” Please don’t forget to write these names of the Holy Spirit down in your Appendix D, the Hebrew Names of God.

In the NT, in the Gospel of **John 3:8**, Jesus says this about the Holy Spirit to Nicodemus, “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Some of you (older saints) will remember when the Holy Spirit was referred to as Holy Wind. My husband wrote a song called “Holy Wind,” meaning the “Holy Spirit,” back in the 1977-78 timeframe. In recent days, I have not really heard or seen the term “wind” used for the Holy Spirit.

When you think of yourself, do you have a corporal body? Do you have a mind? Is your mind (soul) separate from your corporal body? You also have a spirit, don’t you? That spirit in you is what gives life to you. Why should we be so surprised that the Godhead is One and yet the Godhead has three persons? Are you not one here on this earth, body, soul, and spirit? Write **Genesis 1:26** in the space below:

What are the pronouns used in **Genesis 1:26**? Are they singular or plural?

And write **Genesis 1:27**

I know that when we looked at the Hebrew names of God in class, after lesson 2 had been completed, I said that *Elohim*, with the “im” ending didn’t necessarily imply

⁴⁸ Ann Spangler, General Editor, *The Names of God Bible, God’s Word Translation*, (Baker Publishing Group, 2011), p.5.

plurality in the Godhead, hence the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Hebrew. And yet, when we get to **Genesis 1:27**, the name for God, *Elohim*, implies that there are more than one in the Godhead speaking to each other, “Let Us.” What is going through your mind right now? Please jot it down here, so you can come back to it later?

Another good place to look in the Bible is in **Psalm 2**. As an exercise, see if you can determine who is talking to whom in this Psalm. Record your answers below:

Now, write **Genesis 2:7** in the space provided below.

Look up the Hebrew word for “breath” in your Strong’s Concordance and write below what you find out below:

In Hebrew “breath” is the word “naphach.” In Strong’s, the primary root of this word is “to puff.” In various applications, naphach can mean “to inflate,” “to blow *hard*,” to “scatter,” to “kindle” or to “expire.”⁴⁹

What did Jesus do in **John 20:21-22**?

In the Zondervan Concordance, the Hebrew word translated “breath,” is “neshamah.” Here it is used in the Scripture twice as “blast,” 15 times as “breath,” one time as “breathes,” one time as “life,” one time as “persons alive,” two times as “spirit” and three times as “who breathed.”⁵⁰

I do see there is a different Hebrew word used for “breath,” in Strong’s Concordance than in the Zonderman’s Concordance, but I don’t have any idea why these two Hebrew words would be different from each other. I learned early on in my Christianity that the word used for breath was, “naphach.”

Those same early-on-in-my-faith Christian mentors who taught me the word used for the Holy Spirit, also taught me about the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence inside my person and that He had purpose for my life.

⁴⁹ James Strong, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*, 5301 (Hendrickson Publishers), p. 79.

⁵⁰ Reuben A. Olson, Peter P. Ahn, Robert L. Thomas, W. Don Wilkins, *Zondervan’s NASB Exhaustive Concordance Hebrew Dictionary*, 5397 (Zondervan, 1998), p.1438.

First off, the Holy Spirit will use me and guide me into all things of God, if I stay close to Him. What this means is this: when I do sin, the Holy Spirit will convict me of that sin and I must confess that sin and agree with Him that it is sin, and then repent, and turn away from that sin. Read 1 John 1:9 and write it down below.

He certainly, has given us some big clues along the way on how to live godly lives in Christ Jesus. Please read and write **Galatians 5:22** below.

Is your life able to muster up the Fruit of the Spirit all on your own?

How is it that we can display love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?

Well, it certainly is not my nature to do these things listed above. I have some pretty fleshy stuff going on. So how do I (we) get to the place where the Spirit uses me (us)? See the above in **1 John 1:9** and also **Galatians 5:16**. Write the latter verse below.

Well, what the heck does that mean? Read Galatians 5:13ff. Write your thoughts below. Massive hint when walking in the Spirit, you must not carry out the desires of your flesh.”

In the New Testament, the Greek word used for “spirit” is “pneuma” and it refers to God giving life to the Body. Read John 6:63 and write it below.

You know, we often say of someone who has just passed away, they “have expired (the wind has gone out of them)” or they “have given up the ghost (the essence).” We all do understand that we do have a spirit. Something happens at death. We stop breathing. The heart stops pumping blood through our circulatory system. The shell of our body that houses our minds and our spirits during our lifetime, no longer has “breath, naphach, or pneuma,” and the body must release our Spirit.

“Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Naphach!

I have a friend who came out here to Colorado from Indiana with his wife and his two kids shortly before my husband and I came out with our two kids in 1988. George was a great guy. He had been very successful in his field of Human Resources. George travelled every day from his house in Parker to his work site in Colorado Springs. He

either drove Highway 83 to Colorado Springs or Interstate 25. God kept George safe for all those trips. I used to make that drive two days a week to my employment. Sometimes I would start complaining to God and let Him know all my fears of driving those two corridors, never mind the time it takes me to get to and from my employer. Well, I was thinking of George one day as I was driving I-25, and I knew I hadn't seen him for a long time. His family's Christmas card had come back undeliverable the last time we sent out Christmas cards, so I knew he and his wife probably had moved. So, I "googled" George. And much to my horror, I found his obituary from the previous year. George sang at Jeff's and my wedding 43 years ago, so you understand the shock this piece of news carried with it. Jeff and I thought about it, and we determined the last time we saw George was at the end of the summer 2014 at Safeway in Parker. George told us then that he had had stage-4 colon cancer and had just received a clean bill of health. He had made it all the way through the cancer treatments and his colon cancer was gone. One evening a week later George told his wife that he felt really strange. She packed him up and took him to the ER and George had a massive heart attack and died. "What do you mean God? He beat colon cancer and you took him out with a heart attack? Why did You bother keeping him alive through all of those treatments?"

I learned from all of this that God is in control of my every breath. And God was with George through every breath he took, through every trip he drove on 83 and I-25, through every airplane ride back to the Midwest, through every Christmas, through every snowstorm, until He called George home. George was only 62. I now know God holds me in His hand for every breath I take and for every trip I make in my car, anywhere I travel, not just to Colorado Springs. I've been all over the world and I have come back safe and alive. I will continue to breathe, continue to live, until He calls me home. God is trustworthy. I do not have to live in constant fear.

A few more points to ponder about the Holy Spirit and then we will move on until the next time we encounter the Spirit of God. He is the third person of the Trinity, you know. He is God. Do you remember in the introduction to this course when I suggested to you that the Holy Spirit loves you? Let's take a peek at several Scriptures that give us more of an idea who this Holy Spirit really is:

John 14:26

Write this verse below and then comment on it in the space below the verse.

When you study the written Word of God and you are surrendered to Him, the incarnate Word of God, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, takes up residence in your person to teach you all things that He wants you to know. How many things? ALL things!!!

Ephesians 4:30

What does it mean that God the Holy Spirit has put His seal on you? What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit?

1 Thessalonians 5:19

What does it mean to quench the Holy Spirit? To quench is to put out the fire. Do we quench the work of the Spirit of God when there is a miraculous healing that goes on with someone in our congregation in the church sanctuary? Do we shun those people participating in the Holy Spirit's healing? I know I have been guilty of this. Primarily, it scares me because I don't understand it. I'm so dumbfounded by it. I have even been guilty of attributing the healing to a demon and not to God. Ooh! Ouch!

Isaiah 58:8

What were the physical manifestations of God evident to the Israelites while they wandered in the desert for those long 38 years? Remember looking at the God of Glory when we went through the Hebrew names of God? We saw the *Shekinah Glory*, (the **God of Glory**, the *El Ha-Kavod*,) the **Everlasting Light**, the *Or Olam*, (**Majestic in Glory**, the *Naddir Kavod*,) the **Great and Awesome** God is *El Gadol Ve-Nora*, (the **God of My Praise is Elohey Tehillati**).

Ezekiel 36:25-27

Who among us could have ever thought that we would have the Holy Spirit of God living in us? If someone had told me at 18 years of age that I could have One of the Trinity, the Holy Godhead, living in me, walking and breathing with me, I would have dissed them and the thought, and gone on. But at 19 years of age, I was ready for God to sprinkle clean water on me. I was ready for forgiveness. He had proven to me that I was a sinner or rather I had proven to myself that I was a sinner and I definitely needed a Savior.

Joel 2:28-29 (30-32)

“And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit (My Ruach) on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. (And I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered; for on Mt. Zion

and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls).” NASB

Dr. Fructenbaum believes this pouring out of the Spirit, when old men will dream dreams, and when young men will see visions, will happen only to the Jewish men and only during the Tribulation. Dr. Furctenbaum, I know that you are the expert here in all things Jewish, but on this one I disagree with you for the following reasons and facts. Do you realize what is going on in those countries today that we have not been able to reach with the Gospel message? Old men in these countries are dreaming dreams and young men in these countries are seeing visions. People are converting to Christianity in their dreams or in their dreams, they are told to go to a certain location where someone is waiting to give them the Gospel message. These are **2001** data from Joel Rosenberg’s book titled Inside the Revolution: Jefferson, Jihad, and Jesus: every day 16,000 Muslims convert to Christianity. Six million convert per year. In one hour, 667 convert to Christianity. Particularly, in Iran, the people are really disturbed with “revealed Islam.” They want something else. There are estimates of 1-7 million converts in Iran, which means 1 out of every 10 people in Iran is a convert to Christianity. It has been 24 years since these statistics were made. What must it be today? God’s Spirit is accomplishing what we cannot. Remember Turkey? Today, Turkey is 99% Muslim. We should be praying that the LORD would pour out His Spirit on the Turks. This seems like it is the only way to get the message to Turkey.

Days 3-4 Commendation/Reproof/ Promise to the Overcomer

Jesus tells both churches, Ephesus and Sardis that He knows their deeds, but in the case of the Ephesians, He commends them for their good deeds. In the case of the Church of Sardis, their deeds have not been completed. (Rev. 3:2). They’ve been lulled into thinking they are so alive, but they are really dead. He tells them to wake up and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die.

Doesn’t Jesus know that when giving a review or a report card to His workers/followers, He needs to start with the positive stuff first? Oh, but there’s apparently no positive stuff for Him with which to work.

How does this differ from the commendation of Christ to the Church of Smyrna?
For what was the city of Smyrna known?

The Church of Smyrna had a commendation, whereas the Church of Sardis did not. The Church of Smyrna thought they were poor, but Jesus told them that they were really rich. The city where the Church of Sardis met was known for their wealth and those in the church probably came from that wealthy sector. They probably felt like they could still rely on that wealth instead of relying on God alone. Remember, the richest man in the world in the day, lived in Sardis. His name was Croesus. Everything the goddess Cybele’s son, Midas, touched turned to gold, even the river. A lot of these questions are repeats from earlier in this lesson, but go with me here. I am doing this for emphasis on the prophecy made on the supposed Protestant Church.

We are going to switch here for a purpose. We are talking about the Church of Thyatira here. If the Church of Thyatira was historically the Catholic Church, then what came next on the Church timeline?

What was the commendation for the church of Thyatira (supposedly the Catholic Church) concerning their deeds? See Rev. 2:19

What is the condemnation for the church of Thyatira for those who would not repent, like Jezebel, for those who commit adultery with her in Rev. 2:22?

So, what was the condemnation for the church of Sardis (supposedly the Protestant Church) concerning their deeds? See Rev 3:1-3.

Promise to the Overcomer

Of those in the Church of Thyatira who do not hold to the teachings of Jezebel, who do not know the deep things of Satan, who do overcome, what is their destination and what is their reward? See **Rev. 2:26-28**.

What about the Church of Sardis? In this passage concerning Sardis, is there any reason to believe that the Church of Sardis might go through the great tribulation, along with the Church of Thyatira? Or at least some of the Church of Sardis will go through the great tribulation?

Now the Church of Thyatira had the commendation from Jesus that their current works were better than their initial works. However, Jesus found the works incomplete for those of the Church at Sardis (supposedly the Protestant Church of the Reformation). How many of you have had at least some of your formative years in Christianity in one or another of the mainstream Protestant denominations? This is kind of disturbing, isn't it?

Martin Luther

We are going to go down another bunny trail today. I want to talk about Martin Luther. Remember that in studying the 7 letters to the 7 churches, there are four different meanings or ways that we can look at these churches. The first way is of course is local. These were all literal churches in John's day, located in Turkey, with real problems. Secondly, all the letters to the different churches were meant to go to all the other churches, as well. In each of the letters, we are told, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (plural)." The messages to these seven churches are meant for all church bodies for all time, past, present, and future: "he who has an ear, let

him hear.” We had determined earlier that most of us have ears that hear. So, we are also among those to whom these messages are addressed. This is the third way of looking at the message to the churches or the homiletic way. It is meant for us personally. Fourthly, most Biblical scholars, see the order of the churches in Revelation 2 and 3 as prophetic of church history. If these churches were in any other order, then this would not ring true. We talked of how the church of Smyrna (the second church in the order) was the suffering church and how they went through the 10 most ruthless rulers in Rome. Many Christians willingly gave up their lives for the sake of the Gospel message. When we looked at the Church of Thyatira, it appears to fit the Papacy of the Catholic Church. Presently, we are looking at the time frame of A.D. 1500 onward when Protestantism began to take a foothold on European soil. During this time period, Church history gets really bloody as the Catholic Church unleashes the Jesuit priests on those who taught salvation by faith, not by works.

Martin Luther was the son of a poor coal miner. Not wanting to be poor like his father, Martin decided on becoming a lawyer. One day while walking across the campus where he went to law school, he came upon a very unusual storm with lightning hitting the ground all around him. He was so scared for his life he called on the patron saint of the coal miners, St. Anne, to save him. He promised that if he were saved, then he would become a monk. Well, his life was spared and being a man of his word, he did enter the priesthood. Martin Luther obtained a doctorate degree in theology in a few short years. However, the more he studied the Scripture, the more troubled he became. While sick and in the care of some monks on one of Luther’s browbeating rituals, one of the monks wisely told Luther to read the book of Habakkuk. In the book of Habakkuk, he met someone very similar to himself. One verse of Habakkuk stuck out to him. It is Habakkuk 2:4, “the just shall live by faith” or in the NASB, “the righteous will live by his faith.” He disputed the claim of the Roman Catholic Church that freedom from God’s punishment for sin could be purchased with money for indulgences. The 95 theses he nailed to the Wittenberg door was an academic discussion of the indulgences of the Catholic Church. By the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and Pope Leo X in 1521, Luther was given 60 days to recant his statements. He refused to recant his writings and he was excommunicated by the Pope and branded an outlaw by the Holy Roman Emperor. The Jesuit priests were given the authority and responsibility to slaughter tens of thousands of those who sided with Luther. Bringing all of this around to the Church of Sardis, remember that Christ had nothing good to report on them. For the Church of Thyatira, He started out telling them that their works were better than they were at first, but for the Church of Sardis, He did not see their works as completed. Isn’t it interesting that He would say this about this time in Church history when doctrine was righted once again and belief, not works was rightly declared? What do you think this means for the Protestant Reformation? Write your thoughts below:

Martin Luther and those who followed him started the great revolution that has led to the biggest schism ever in the church between Protestants and Catholics. Could it be that we have so focused ourselves on salvation by faith that we have forgotten to do or complete the works that Christ has given us to do?

What works have not been completed by the Protestant Church as a whole? I really want you to think on this, pray about this, act on what He reveals to you. This is for you, for me! Most of us have gotten “saved,” and spent considerable time in a mainline Protestant Church. Please read James 1:22-25 to get some clues. Is He saying to us “salvation is not of faith, alone?”

Now read James 2:14-26. This is one of those sets of verses that flies in our face and irritates us greatly.

Now, I would like you to go back and read Ezekiel 36:25-27. What do these verses tell you of the connection between faith and works?

Day 5 **Repentance and those in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes**

Instructions and Warnings, Remembrance, Repentance

What does the Church of Sardis need to do?

For what does the Church of Sardis need to repent?

For one thing, we Protestants need to wake up. He says he will come as a thief if we do not wake-up. Those from Sardis thought they were impregnable...they could not be overtaken by a foreign army because their city was on a high plateau and no one could get to them on three sides. This false confidence led to their demise more than once. The Persians besieged Sardis in 549 BC. One of the Persian soldiers watched a Lydian accidently drop his helmet over the side of the cliff 1000-feet to the level below the plateau. He took note of the pathway the Lydian guard used and the Persians took the city the following night. Those from Sardis did not learn their lesson, for the Syrian General, Antiochus, again besieged the city in 214 BC.

Do we as Protestants have a false confidence in ourselves?

Do we appear as something we are not?

Do we promise and then not act on those promises?

Do we have an outward appearance of strength?

Are we diligent about our faith?

Have we forgotten to be watchful?

Those of the Faithful in Sardis

Sardis actually means “remnant.” To whom is this statement meant? Who is the remnant here?

Who will walk with Jesus in white?

What makes them worthy to walk in white?

Who are those who have not soiled their clothes? What will they be wearing?
For what are the white garments symbolic?

Do we have righteousness on our own? What is our righteousness compared to in Isaiah 64:6?

What does Jesus imply about the **book of life** when He says the **names** of those who overcome and are wearing white **will not be erased**?

Read again Revelation 1:17-18. What or who is the answer for being known as a dead church?

This church in history is representative of the Protestant churches. Most of us who are doing this study would consider ourselves Protestants. We are of those who in the past rejected salvation by works and embraced salvation by faith through grace given to us by God. How can we interpret these warnings for the present? We have to really think about this.

Before we continue on to the Church of Philadelphia, I would like you to research the word, “book,” just in the Book of Revelation. Record everything you can glean about “the book,” from the verses below:

Revelation 1:11

Revelation 3:5

Revelation 5:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9d

Revelation 10:2, 8, 9, 10

Revelation 13:8

Revelation 17:8

Revelation 20:12, 15

Revelation 21: 27 Concerning the Temple

Revelation 22:7, 9, 19

Can you tell me how many different books there are in the book of Revelation and for what do each of the books stand?

If we are those who identify that we are members of the Church of Sardis, what must we do?