

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

A REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

REVELATION CHAPTER 3:1-6

MEDIA REFERENCE NUMBER SMX 509 NOVEMBER 16, 2003

THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

“WHAT KIND OF CHURCH ARE YOU?”

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

Jesus Christ, Prophecy, Revelation, End Times

INTRODUCTION

to the text

Revelation 3:1-6

If you decide to head east from here, and if you decide to travel America's most famous highway, then you'll find yourself on route 66!

Glamourized because of its great vistas and

“Unique” for its one-of-a-kind view of a wide open America – Route 66 is a part of American history. – For many, a forgotten part of American History and cultures...

I Mean, When was the Last Time -

“You Got your Kicks on Route 66?”

Unless you're into nostalgia - Route 66 is Dead !

TIME HAS A WAY OF CHANGING THINGS, AND PEOPLE.

IT CERTAINLY HAS A WAY OF AFFECTING A CHURCH !

Why does a Church Die?, How does that Happen?

700 Years Before Jesus Christ wrote this Letter to the Church in Sardis, This city was the desired tourist stop among those of the ancient world. It was beautiful, located in the Hermus Valley, east of Smyrna on the Mediterranean, and due south of Thyatira

Sardis was the most famous in the Lydian regions of the Roman Empire. - - if you saw the movie “GLADIATOR” you would have seen the most authentic re-creation of the Roman Empire at about the time of the writing of the book of revelation. ... in fact the historian Eusebius tells of a letter from Melito, Bishop of Sardis which he wrote to the emperor Marcus Aurelius, and his son Com-mo-dus, counseling them to enact a decree to the magistrates of Asia Minor to stop all persecutions against the Christian churches and to take no further evil actions against Christians...

Sardis was a Comfortable Church – Easy Place to Live in

The Sardians (sar-dee-ans) Boasted

Welcome to the City of Sardis

It was considered the greatest city of its day, at an elevation 1,500ft above the Hermus valley, with a 360 degree view, it was considered to be impregnable from invading powers. It was well fed by a river named "Pack-talus"

However - Sardis was conquered. The King of Lydia was a man by the name Creesus, an extremely wealthy, powerful, man who resided atop that perfect, elevated city of Sardis, He believed that he had been called of his god (Delphi) to rule the world...

And so rumors of war began to spread

So the king of Persia sent spies to survey the region and city of Sardis. One night history records how a Persian spy watched as a Sar-dee-an soldier accidently dropped his helmet over the side. He traversed a secret path, picked up his helmet and went on his way. It was that little observation by that Persian spy that enabled the Persian forces to sneak into the city that night undetected and took the city.

Later, Antiochus III brought his army to Sardis, and guess what? Captured it the exact same way that the Persians did earlier...

Sardis means the ones who have escaped
Escaped its spiritual carnality / or escaped it's invading forces?

Revelation 3:1-6

"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. :2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. :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. :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. :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. :6 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." "

WHAT KIND OF A CHURCH ARE YOU?

I.) When Jesus Christ is no longer the counselor? vv. 1a

When Jesus Christ is no longer consulted

1st I (we) will run the risk of complacency v.1

"And to the angel (pastor) of the church in Sardis write,

And Again, as with each of these Letters, we are arrested by that fact that God is holding a man accountable for the condition of Jesus' Church

Jesus is Saying

“I Have a Memo for You from Corporate”

“the risk of complacency”

runs high when a church begins to grow old.

- It's one thing to be a church that endures
- It's one thing to be a church that survives
- But it is Wholly another Thing When a Church Dies of Old Age

The Kind of “Old Age” Like:

“We're Doing it This Way Cuz This is How we've Always Done it!”

The Kind of “Old Age” Like:

The Pastors Messages Begin to Sound the Same

The Kind of “Old Age” Like:

We'll leave that to the next generation of Christians.

Brother, at your rate, there won't be another generation of Christians. You'll either run em' off with a stick or kill em' with boredom.

It was easy to be a Christian in Sardis and that was the danger.

When Jesus Christ is no longer consulted

2nd I (we) forget that Jesus Christ is the Proprietor v.1

*“These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars:
He is Owner / Operator of His Church*

1 Corinthians 6:19

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? :20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Revelation 1:20

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the ministers, angels, or pastors of the seven churches...

There is Here a Very Awesome Truth of God

That regardless of a churches condition, progress or failure,
The Holy Spirit of God is watching !!!

And God, He is patient -
giving men time and opportunity to repent or to strengthen up in spiritual matters.

Have you ever thought about
just how you're doing with your relationship to Jesus Christ?

*Jesus has the **seven Spirits** of God = watching
and the **seven stars**: = the men who answer to God for the Direction of that Church...
That Truth Causes Me to Tremble to My Core*

Pastor Jesus is saying.
In The End – These Men will Answer to Me alone

When Jesus Christ is no longer consulted

3rd) That's all folks

v.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**:*

Matthew 10:14

And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, **shake off**
the dust of your feet.

It's True and Jesus Said It...

Matthew 16:18

...I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
The Church of Jesus Christ in the Earth - Will Prevail.

But Haven't You Seen a Local Church in Your Home Town Ever
Dry Up and Blow Away ?

DIDN'T JESUS WARN THE EPHESIANS...

Revelation 2:5

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you
quickly and **remove your lampstand** from its place—unless you repent.

*Listen, When Jesus Christ is no longer consulted,
CHURCHES DIE FROM THE INSIDE OUT*

That's the End of the Good Stuff

WHAT KIND OF A CHURCH ARE YOU?

II.) When the Spirit is no longer the source of power vv. 1b-2

*...‘I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
:2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die,
for I have not found your works perfect before God.*

Like a Passionate Surgeon

Here, Doctor Jesus Cuts into the Body at Sardis and Looks Inside and He's Sickened...

He stops and just begins to stitch her back up
and says... "You're as Good as Dead"

"There's Nothing I Can Do Here"

**INSTEAD OF MARCHING FORWARD,
IT HAD BECOME EASIER TO BOAST OF THE EARLY VICTORIES**

'Christianity has no grandchildren;
and a church alive for Jesus Christ - will never turn into a coffin'

Sardis was Resting on its Reputation,
And for this Jesus denounces it as a dead church!

When the Spirit is no longer the churches source for power

1st The church begins to die

v.1

*... 'I know your works,
that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead
Jesus Had Seen This Type of Cancer Before!*

Matthew 11:20-24

:20 Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: **:21** "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. **:22** But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. **:23** And you, Woe Capernaum, you who are exalted to heaven, you will be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty works which were done in you would had been done in Sodom, it would have remained as a city until this day. **:24** But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of the final judgment than for you."

Why? - Because They Knew Everything About God, But Never Knew God.

'What You're Doing Now as a Church is
Worse, than when you Never Believed
in Me at All.'

"There's Nothing Good Said"

unto the church in Ephesus, He said... great things + correction
and unto the church in Smyrna He said... encouraging things + instruction

and unto the church in Pergamos He said... hopeful things + rebuke
and unto the church in Thyatira He said... commendable things + challenge
" The Church in Sardis - as a Whole
- had lost its power "

3:1a

...I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive

THERE ARE FOUR (4) SCATHING DIAGNOSES HERE

#1 - "You"

You're More Concerned About What You Think about You,
Than What I Think About You

#2 - "You Have a Name"

You Have a Reputation as a Church and You Think it's a Good One,

#3 - that you are alive

this Name and Reputation is that You're Really a Great Church -
a New Testament Model of What a Church should be like,
"You're the One Saying - You're Alive"

#4 - but you are dead

I Have looked inside of you and I have seen that you're not for real.
You may be a church because some of my people are there, but as a whole,
You're a Morgue.

If you attended that church do you think you'd know it?
I'm Not Sure What Someone Might Think

Who, in Their Right Mind, Would Want to Attend a Dead Church?

How do You Do That?

"I don't want worship songs - unless they're sung to me"

"I don't want to carry a Bible - it's just an old book of stories"

"I don't want a message that makes me have to think - just let me pew"

"I don't want to be known at church - I just want to slip in and slip out."

Mark 8:38

For whosoever are you are that's ashamed of Me and My words living in this adulterous and sinful generation,
You the Son of God the Son will be ashamed when He returns in the glory of His Father - coming with His
holy angels."

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes,
They Were "Called" Christians But they had no Christ.

They Went by the Name "Christian" But they had no life.

When the Spirit is no longer the churches source for power

2nd The church begins to err

v.2

Be **watchful**, and **strengthen** the things which remain, (things) that are ready to die,

A COURSE CORRECTION IS IN ORDER Here's What Jesus is Saying

“There are things worth saving in your ministry but you're not focusing on those things anymore – “

The Holy Spirit Loves Ministry
He Loves People, and He Loves to Empower us to Love People

Be watchful !!!

Greek *Be Watchful* grhgoreu/w **gregoreuo**, gray-gor-yoo´-o; from 1453; your eyes and to be on guard, to watch, to be vigilant against an intruder.

to open

Matthew 24:42

Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

According to Jesus A Church Alive is a Church Watchful for His Return

Matthew 26:41

Watch and **pray**, lest you enter into temptation.

Matthew 24:44

Therefore you also **be ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **:11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. **:13** Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **:14** Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness...
...15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **16** above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. **:17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; **:18** praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end

and strengthen the things which remain,

Greek **strengthen** sthri ÷ zw **sterizo**, stay-rid´-zo; from a presumed vative of ἵστημι (G2476) (like στερεός (G4731)) to make a turn in a new direction, or to set a broken bone back in place. To create an opportunity to heal or rehabilitate.

Psalm 138:7

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me;

When the Holy Spirit is no longer the power

3rd The church begins its final hours

v.2

strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die,

Spiritually, Jesus With His Eyes as a Flame of Fire
Saw Them as They Really Were - - They were gaunt, and an eerie grey, sickly, but they covered it up with
white robes of religious hypocrisy

2 Timothy 3:5

having a **form** of godliness but **denying its power.**

Isaiah 29:13

Thus saith the Lord "These people draw near to me with their mouths and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of man-made rules and regulations taught by men.

Matthew 23:27

"Woe to you, teachers and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear clean on the outside, but inside they are full of dead *men's* bones and all rotteness.

There's a Remedy for Spiritual Sickness
It's Crying out to Jesus in Prayer to Him!

Jack - It's Personal Here so Be Careful !

Ya Know What's Great about Jesus?
You Never See Him in a Graveyard Unless He's
Going to Do Something About It

MY DEAR - DYING - DEAD CHRISTIAN BROTHER

Romans 13:11-12

knowing the time, that it is now high time to awake out of our sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. :12 The night is far spent, the daylight is coming. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness,

Jack - It's Personal Here so Be Careful !

strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die,
**I am Honored and I am blessed to be not only the
founding pastor of this church, but to have been
with you all these years and to have seen great
things of God done...**

Jack - It's Personal Here so Be Careful !

I Have No Other Voice and I Have Nothing Else to Say to Any Other Church,
But What I Say to This Church, I Say to Myself...

Be Careful, God has Given You Tremendous Favor
He has Allowed You to Reach the World
He has Given You Things Beyond what You Asked
He has Located us in the Heart of the City
And Many Thousands if not tens of Thousands of People have driven by this Place every day on their
way to work or shopping or dining or banking or to the airport...

It won't be songs that draw them in
It won't be some quiet sermonette that draws them in
It won't be the comfort of these seats
Or these beautiful 20 ft palm trees inside the sanctuary - no
It will be the Holy Spirit, Speaking to People's Minds and Hearts,
To Turn in Here and park, to come on in, so that they Can Learn About Jesus, and Experience a real
true love that flows from your hearts to them...

Be careful church to give them Jesus, because you already have Him.

A CHRISTIAN AND A CHURCH IS READY TO DIE WHEN:
He sees His past experiences more exciting and dynamic than his present ones

A CHRISTIAN AND A CHURCH IS READY TO DIE WHEN:
His financial investment in the church dwindles, your trust has shifted

A CHRISTIAN AND A CHURCH IS READY TO DIE WHEN:
Prayer meetings cease to be offered and cease to exist

for I have not found your works perfect (complete) before God