

Wednesday in the Word

Digging Deeper

May 25, 2022

Sardis

Revelation 3:1-6 KJVS

[1] And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. [2] Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. [3] Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. [4] Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. [5] He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. [6] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

We open tonight's lesson with Jesus dictating to John His status as being equal with God and in control of His representative churches. In His statement claiming possession of God's sevenfold Spirit He looks back to Isaiah 11:1-4 describing the Messiah of God in His deity which then unfolds through all 16 verses of that chapter in a very famous passage detailing the Messianic Millennial Kingdom. His right to govern the seven churches is proven by His holding their stars in His Hand. While these stars are most commonly understood to identify as the Pastors or shepherds of the churches it is worth noting that the term may also imply individual angelic messengers or even human envoys who visited John on Patmos to receive and deliver his letters directly to the circuit churches. Jesus confirms that this church was working for Him and that they even maintain a faithful name under Christ yet His strong words declare them to be a dead church. We must ask ourselves this. Is our church fully alive in worshipping and serving Jesus Christ? If not then we are dead. Works and titles do not prove life. Life is proven through Love and Light. 1 John 4:7-8, John 8:12. Verse 2 brings stern warning. Jesus calls for repentance and commitment before it's too late. His reference to imperfect works uses a fishing term. A perfect net was one crammed full of fish. He implied a half hearted effort by the church. They were doing what they should but not to the extent that pleased God. Work is good but hard work and best effort is acceptable. Colossians 3:23, Proverbs 14:23, Ecclesiastes 9:10. With thy might! What is Jesus threatening in verse 3? He's telling His people to remember, wake up and repent! He then urges them to keep watch or to be vigilant lest He come upon them as a thief at an unknown hour. This is reminiscent of His declaration to the earlier churches concerning the Day of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and 2 Peter 3:10 and to His disciples in Matthew 24:43 and Luke 12:39. What can Jesus mean here in Revelation speaking as an obvious warning against those in Sardis? Could it be similar to his threat to those in Ephesus in Revelation 2:5? While we are promised safety in the rapture and escape from the Day of His Wrath the message here is an odious one that no church wants to hear! Can we be guilty of feeling falsely secure or perhaps taking our faith for granted in what has been called easy believism? These letters to the churches ought to be telling us that the Lord Christ is no gentle King or weakling God. Quite to the contrary He is very serious in what He expects from us. Uncompromising faith. Unyielding obedience. Steadfast commitment. Especially now that the

days grow darker. 2 Timothy 2:24-3:1, 2 Peter 3:1-7. Verse 4. How few? Are there so few who live according to the love of Christ, who have abstained from the filth of the world? Ephesians 5:2-8. These few, said Jesus, are worthy to walk with him in white. While none are worthy of earning eternal life some through their integrity assume the honor of being acceptable to Christ. Can we raise our personal standards? Yes we can. These overcomers in verse 5 who are victorious over sin will indeed share in the white raiment of our Beloved Savior. Confer Revelation 3:18, 7:9, 19:8. Finally, let's understand this Book of Life. The following is excerpted from an article on gotquestions.org

Revelation 20:15 declares, "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." The Book of Life, in this context, is the set of names of those who will live with God forever in heaven. It is the roll of those who are saved. This Book of Life is also mentioned in Revelation 3:5; 20:12; and Philippians 4:3. The same book is also called the Lamb's Book of Life because it contains the names of those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus (Revelation 13:8; 21:27). How can you be sure your name is written in the Book of Life? Be sure you're saved. Repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5). Once your name is written in the Book of Life, it is never erased (Revelation 3:5; Romans 8:37-39). No true believer should doubt his eternal security in Christ (John 10:28-30). The Great White Throne Judgment described in Revelation 20:11-15 is a judgment for unbelievers. That passage makes it clear that no one at that judgment has his name in the Book of Life (Revelation 20:12-14). The fate of the ungodly is sealed; their names are not in the Book of Life; their punishment is sure. Some people point to Revelation 3:5 as "proof" that a person can lose his salvation. However, the promise of Revelation 3:5 is clearly that the Lord will not erase a name: "He who overcomes . . . I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life." An overcomer is one who is victorious over the temptations, trials, and evils of this world—in other words, one who is redeemed. The saved are written in God's registry and have the promise of eternal security. Another passage over which confusion sometimes arises is Psalm 69:28: "Let them [David's enemies] be blotted out of the book of the living." This "book of the living" should not be confused with the Lamb's Book of Life. David is referring to earthly, physical life, not eternal life in heaven. The same is true of the "book" mentioned in Exodus 32:32-33. God keeps good records. He knows His own, and He has set the names of His children permanently in His book.

We are told Biblically that the names of the saved are written before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4, Revelation 13:8, 17:8. God saw down through time who would accept His salvation in Christ and so wrote us down from the beginning. Since we can't sneak in and look at His desk or His book we are still as always faced with a choice. Say yes to Jesus today!