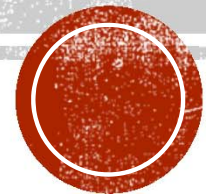


REVELATION 3

Letter to the churches – Sardis



By Richard Osei

REVELATION “THE UNVEILING”

- The consummation of all things
- The only book promising a special blessing to the reader
- 404 verses containing over 800 allusions from the Old Testament
- It present the climax of God’s Plan for you and me



THE SEVEN CHURCHES

- Why these seven?
- One phrase that echo's through out the letters (He that heath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches)
- Levels of Application
 1. Local – Sir William Ramsay conducted an intensive archeological investigation (Had local problems that the letter address)
 2. Admonitory to all churches (all the seven letters were sent to all the seven churches, with one specifically to that church)
 3. Homiletic (Personal)
 4. Prophetic



SEVEN DESIGN ELEMENTS

- In each of the Letters to Seven Churches
 1. Name of the Church
 2. Title of Christ Chosen
 3. Commendation (2 letter - nothing good to say about them)
 4. Concerns (2 letter - nothing bad to say about them)
 5. Exhortation
 6. Promise to the Overcomer
 7. Close: "He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches."



EPHESUS

- Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.
- They are too busy on the business of the King, to have any time for the King (Example: Luke 10:38-40)

1. Name of the Church → Ephesus
2. Title of Christ Chosen → Rev. 2:1
3. Commendation → Rev. 2:2-3
4. Concerns → Rev. 2:4
5. Exhortation → Rev. 2:5-6
6. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”
→ Rev. 2:7
7. Promise to the Overcomer → Rev. 2:7



SMYRNA

¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

1. Name of the Church - Smyrna
2. Title of Christ Chosen – Rev. 2:8
3. Commendation - Rev. 2:9
4. Concerns – no concerns
5. Exhortation - Rev. 2:10
6. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.” - Rev. 2:11
7. Promise to the Overcomer - Rev. 2:11



PERGAMOS

But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. ¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

1. Name of the Church - Pergamos
2. Title of Christ Chosen – Rev. 2:12
3. Commendation - Rev. 2:13
4. Concerns – Rev. 2:14
5. Exhortation - Rev. 2:15
6. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.” - Rev. 2:17
7. Promise to the Overcomer - Rev. 2:17



THYATIRA

Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow^[c] that woman^[d] Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce^[e] My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. ²¹ And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.^[f] ²² Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their^[g] deeds.

1. Name of the Church – Thyatira
2. Title of Christ Chosen – Rev. 2:18
3. Commendation - Rev. 2:19
4. Concerns – Rev. 2:20-23
5. Exhortation - Rev. 2:24-25
6. Promise to the Overcomer - Rev. 2:26-28
7. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.” - Rev. 2:29



SARDIS



SARDIS

- < 2000 BC:
 - Aeschylus Thucydides and other Greek writer mention it as a city of renown
- 9th & 8th Centuries BC:
 - The Phrygian the dominant Anatolian power.
 - Their king, Midas, was credited by Greeks with the power to change anything he touched into gold
- About 700 BC the Phrygian kingdom was overrun and destroyed by the Cimmerians, a nomadic people who settled along the northern shore of the Black Sea
 - The Cimmerians driven from their homes in the 8th century BC by the Scythians, overran Asia Minor, plundered Sardis and destroyed Magnesia
- In the 7th century BC the Lydians also appeared near the Aegean Coast, where they founded the kingdom, the capital of which was Sardis
- During this same period the Greeks founded Miletus, Ephesus, and number of other cities in Ionia, and area along the Aegean coast.



SARDIS

- Sardis is of special interest to the student of Herodotus and Xenophon
 - (Herodotus – know as father of all history)
 - - Artaphemes the brother of Darius, lived here
 - - From here Xerxes invaded Greece
 - - Cyrus marched against his brother Artaxerxes
- It was moreover one of the oldest and most important cities of Asia Minor, and until 549 BC, the capital of the kingdom of Lydia



SARDIS

- Strategic location between Pergamos, Smyrna, Ephesus, Philadelphia and Phrygia
 - Favorable commerce, became a very wealthy city
 - Gold which was found in the sand of the river Pactolus
 - Gold and Silver “Lydian Starters” were the 1st coins
 - At its zenith, Croesus, its king, (and also its river, Pactolus) became proverbial for riches
- Its patron deity was the goddess Cybele, whose son, Midas, was the wealthy King of Phrygia



MIDAS MYTHOLOGY

- Greek mythology: king of Phrygia in Asia Minor
- For his hospitality the satyr Silenus, Dionysus, god of wine, offered to grant Midas anything he wished.
 - The king requested that everything he touched be turned to gold, but he soon regretted his choice because even his food and water were changed to gold
 - To free himself from the enchantment, Midas was instructed by Dionysus to bathe in the Pactolus River. It was said that afterward the sand of the river contained gold



OSTENSIBLY IMPREGNABLE

- Sardis was situated on the northern slope of Mt. Tmolus on a hill 950 feet above the broad valley of the Hermus
 - At the base flowed the river Pactolus which served as a moat, rendering the city practically impregnable
 - However, the sheer precipitous cliff was clay, which suffered continual erosion and the untrustworthy mud left occasional cracks which could be exploited by enemies
- An Example #1: 549 BC when besieged by the Persians, Croesus, then king of Lydia, left unguarded the precipitous cliffs on three sides of the city
- After a 14-day siege, Cyrus offered a reward to any man who could find a way of scaling the ostensibly unscalable cliffs
 - One of his soldiers, Hyeroeades, noticed a Lydian soldier accidentally drop his helmet over the battlements and noted his path to retrieve it, thus revealing an unguarded oversight.
 - In the darkness of the following night, Hyeroeades and a Persian party climbed the cliff and clambered over the unguarded battlements to take the city
- Historians say, the city was taken like a thief in the night



OSTENSIBLY IMPREGNABLE

- Example #2:
- But the Sardians did not learn their lesson:
 - - 214 BC: The formidable cliffs again proved susceptible to a harzardous climb when Lagorias repeated the exploit of Hyeroeades and the city was similarly taken by Antoochus for the Seleucid Empire
- We learn from history that man can never learn anything from history.' - Hegel (1770-1831) German philosopher



DISMAL HISTORY

- 549 BC Fell to the Persians
 - 501 BC Burned by the Ionians
 - 334 BC Surrendered to Alexander the Great
 - 322 BC Taken by Antigonos
 - 214 BC Fell to the Seleucids
-
- Sir William Ramsay – (Letters to the Seven Churches)



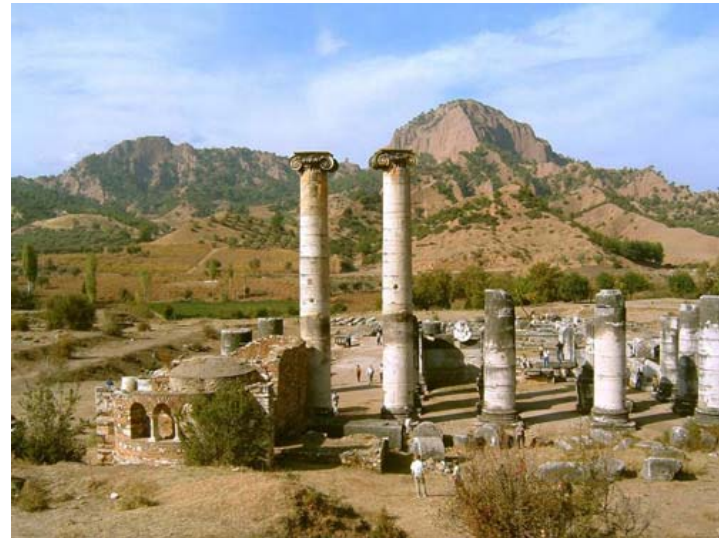
A CITY OF FAILURE

- Name became synonymous with
 - Pretensions unjustified
 - Promise without performance
 - Appearance without reality
 - False confidence that heralded ruin
 - Betrayed themselves by lack of watchfulness and diligence



SARDIS

- By the New Testament time, most of Sardis earlier dignity and splendor had disappeared
- An severe earthquake in 17 AD caused major damage
- The town was destroyed by the Turkic conqueror Tamerlane in 1402
- Archaeological excavations were begun at the site in 1910, but the city itself was not uncovered until 1958
- Today the little town of Sart has only fragments of it proud history



SARDIS

- Precious stone (red) – it became common and lost its value
- No one is sure what Sardis stone is
- It has a name but no significance (that is what their letter is about)

- Aaron's breastplate (sardius)- Exodus 28:15-21



SARDIS - CHRIST TITLE AND COMMENDATION

- “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.

Title of Christ: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars

Commendation: No Commendation



SARDIS — CONCERN:

- I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
- You have a label but you are dead



EXHORTATION:

- 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.
- Watchful – pay attention - do your homework
- To strengthen what you have, because it is eroding away
- Remember / hold fast / repent
- If you do Remember | Hold Fast | Repent – you will not be caught by surprise



“BE WATCHFUL”

- Be vigilant 10 Virgins of Matt. 25
- Watchfulness Rom. 13:11, 1 Cor. 16:13
- We watchful of
 - The wiles of the devil 1 Peter 5:8
 - Temptation Matt. 26:41
 - His Coming Matt. 24:42-43, Mark 13:37, 1 Thess. 5:6
 - False Teachers Acts 20:29-31 (Ephesus was watchful)



“STRENGTHEN THINGS WHICH REMAIN”

- Great truths are being lost:
 - The justification by faith alone
 - The inerrant Word of God
 - The depravity of man
 - Redemption by His blood



“... WORKS NOT COMPLETE”

- Our love
- Our fear Our Devotional Live
 - You will learn about Him in the scriptures, but you get know Him in your devotion.
- Our loyalty Our Ambassadorship
- Our Service
 - Without Him, we can't
 - Without us, He won't



I NEVER KNEW YOU

- ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’
- Matthew 7:21-23



EXHORTATION:

- ⁴ You^[b] 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.
- Few names
- Are you part of those who are worthy?



PROMISE TO THE OVERCOMER:

- 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.



CLOSING

- ⁶ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
- To the church of Sardis
- To the Your church
- To you individual as a body of the church



ADMONITORY (TO ALL CHURCHES)

- Application to All Churches
 - Ephesus → Devotion, not just doctrine
 - Smyrna → Endure Persecution
 - Pergamos → Purify Ambassadorship
 - Thyatra → Pagan Practice (Sunday, Easter, ...)
 - Sardis → Watchfulness, Diligence
 - Philadelphia
 - Laodicia



PERSONAL (HOMILETICS)

- Personal Application
 - Ephesus → Neglected Priorities
 - Smyrna → Satanic Opposition
 - Pergamos → Spiritual Compromise
 - Thyatra → Pagan Practice (Sunday, Easter, ...)
 - Sardis → Watchfulness, Diligence
 - Philadelphia
 - Laodicia



PROMISES TO THE OVERCOMER

- Application to All Churches/Person
 - Ephesus → Eat of Tree of Life
 - Smyrna → Not hurt of 2nd death
 - Pergamos → Manna, Stone, Name
 - Thyatra → Power over nations
 - Sardis → Walk with Him in white, Name not blotted out
 - Philadelphia
 - Laodicia



WHO IS THE “OVERCOMER”

- ⁴For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our^[a] faith. ⁵Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4-5)
- Overcomer promises are to the people of faith



PROPHETIC PROFILE?

- Ephesus - Apostolic Church? (**The Loveless Church**)
 - Knew the word, and on a mission but left their first love
 - Being too busy on the business of the King rather than for the King Himself
- Smyrna - Persecuted Church? (**The Persecuted Church**)
 - that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation
 - They ambassadorship was tested

Pergamos – The Marriage Church (**The Compromising Church**)
you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith
Compromising with the world

Thyatira – The Medieval Church? (**The Corrupt Church**)

- I know your works, love, service, faith, ^[b] and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first
- Allowing what is evil (immorality) in the church



PROPHETIC PROFILE?

- Sardis – Has a name but of no significance (**The Dead Church**)
 - “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
 - Be Watchful, Strengthen



NEXT READ CHAPTER 2 & 3

- Outline the Letter to Philadelphia
 1. Name of the Church
 2. Title of Christ Chosen
 3. Commendation
 4. Concerns
 5. Exhortation
 6. Promise to the Overcomer
 7. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”



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