

# REVELATION

The Church at Sardis:

Wake up!

Isaiah 44:28:

Who says of Cyrus, “He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose”; saying of Jerusalem, “She shall be built,” and of the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”

## Isaiah 45:1

Thus says the Lord to his anointed,  
to Cyrus, whose right hand I have  
grasped, to subdue nations before  
him and to loose the belts of kings,  
to open doors before him that gates  
may not be closed.

- ❖ 539 B.C.-the Medes and Persians conquer Babylon
- ❖ 538 B.C.-Cyrus issues edict allowing the Jews to return home (2 Chronicles 36; Ezra 1)
- ❖ About 10 years before, King Croesus of Lydia attacked Persia while Cyrus ruled
- ❖ Croesus retreated to a city in the hills between the Hermus Plain and Mt. Tmolus.







# 1. Christ addressed a message concerning their failure and struggle.

❖ Revelation 3:1-2: And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works. **You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains** and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.



# 1. Christ addressed a message concerning their failure and struggle.

A. Christ mentioned no external threat or trouble.

- ❖ No worship of Caesar
- ❖ No worship of local trade guild gods
- ❖ No pressure from Jews
- ❖ No false teachers
- ❖ No encouragement to sacrifice morality to fit into culture

# 1. Christ addressed a message concerning their failure and struggle.

B. Sardis faced the problem of spiritual deadness.

- ❖ They were in a bad place, but they were comfortable where they were.
- ❖ Likely a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation church
- ❖ They had a reputation before others, but Christ knew the truth.

# 1. Christ addressed a message concerning their failure and struggle.

B. Sardis faced the problem of spiritual deadness.

- ❖ 1 Samuel 16:6-7: When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

# 1. Christ addressed a message concerning their failure and struggle.

C. The church faced the same problem that the city did.

- ❖ Croesus thought he knew where the attack would come, so he didn't bother watching.
- ❖ The church did not face attacks from typical places, so they were not watching.
- ❖ They had the truth and claimed to believe the truth, but had drifted from the truth.
- ❖ D.A. Carson: "We do not drift toward holiness."

# 1. Christ addressed a message concerning their failure and struggle.

D. We must take heed to this warning.

❖ We can get comfortable with spiritual things without letting God's Word change us.

1. We can miss our own need for salvation.

2. Christians can slip into spiritual lethargy.

❖ We can drift from right living, good spiritual disciplines, Christian fellowship.

❖ 1 Thessalonians: Good Job! Keep Going!

## 2. Even for the one in spiritual lethargy, Christ gives hope.

- ❖ They claimed life while being spiritually dead.
- ❖ If they do not receive this hope, things will not end well.
  - ❖ Revelation 3:3b: If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

## 2. Even for the one in spiritual lethargy, Christ gives hope.

A. They need to wake up.



## 2. Even for the one in spiritual lethargy, Christ gives hope.

A. They need to wake up.

- ❖ Instead of being content where they are, they need to realize things are not as good as they think they are.
- ❖ Christ often exhorts us to watch for His coming.



## 2. Even for the one in spiritual lethargy, Christ gives hope.

A. They need to wake up.

❖ Matthew 24:42-44: Therefore, **stay awake**, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.

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

## 2. Even for the one in spiritual lethargy, Christ gives hope.

A. They need to wake up.

- ❖ Are we watching and waiting for Christ?
- ❖ If we truly believe the Rapture is imminent, then what should change in our lives?
- ❖ NT references to Christ's return aren't typically given to satisfy our curiosity. They are given to motivate us to live a certain way today.

## 2. Even for the one in spiritual lethargy, Christ gives hope.

B. Christ also said to strengthen what is left.

❖ Revelation 3:2-3: **Wake up**, and **strengthen what remains** and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. **Remember**, then, what you received and heard. **Keep** it, and **repent**. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

## 2. Even for the one in spiritual lethargy, Christ gives hope.

B. Christ also said to strengthen what is left.

1. Being strengthened starts with remembering the truth they already have.
  - ❖ Often we don't need to learn new truth; we need to be reminded of truth we already heard.
2. They need to keep the truth they have.
  - ❖ Keeping begins with accepting the Gospel, then living as God says as a Christian.
3. They need to repent.

### 3. Christ promises a reward for the faithful.

- ❖ Revelation 3:4-5: Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

### 3. Christ promises a reward for the faithful.

A. These few have been faithful to Christ.

- ❖ Revelation 19:7-8: Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.
- ❖ These few in Sardis were not stained by the loose and sinful culture around them.
- ❖ Joseph and Daniel lived rightly in pagan culture.

### 3. Christ promises a reward for the faithful.

B. Christ gave them an encouraging promise.

- ❖ Christ guaranteed salvation for the overcomer.
- ❖ Absolutely nothing can take that salvation away (cf. Romans 8:35-39)
  - They *will* walk with Him in white.
  - Their names *will not* be blotted out.
  - Christ will *confess* their name before the Father and the angels.
- ❖ He guarantees salvation, so we should be faithful and watching.

# **Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?**

- Christ called the church dead, but also gave them hope.
- How did they respond to this message of hope?



# **Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?**

- God remembers the faithful.
- We must be watchful!
- We must never grow content and complacent in the Christian life.

NEXT TIME:  
REVELATION 3:7-13

- The Church at Philadelphia