

“THE MONUMENTS MEN”

REVELATION 3:1-6

I. FOUR QUESTIONS ALL PEOPLE ASK

- A. WHAT SHOULD I DO? (WHAT IS MY DUTY?)
- B. WHO SHOULD I BE? (HOW CAN I BECOME THE PERSON WHO DOES RIGHT?)
- C. WHERE SHOULD I GO? (TO WHAT SHOULD I DEVOTE MY ENERGY?)
- D. HOW CAN I DISTINGUISH TRUTH FROM ERROR? (BE DISCERNING?)

II. SARDIS: THE “DUTY-FREE” CHURCH

“MANY CHURCHES BEGIN WITH A MAN, REACH OUT WITH A MISSION, BECOME A MOVEMENT, AND EVENTUALLY END UP A MONUMENT.”



- A. JUST SOUTH OF LYDIAN CAPITAL OF THYATIRA.
PERCHED 1500 FEET ABOVE HERMUS VALLEY; A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY.
ACROPOLIS TEMPLE DEDICATED TO GODDESS ARTEMIS; A NATURE CULT.
SITUATED AT THE JUNCTION OF FIVE MAJOR TRADE ROUTES; EXTREMELY WEALTHY.
WEALTH FOUND IN JEWELRY, WOOL, AND TEXTILE INDUSTRY.

III. JESUS' WORDS TO A DEAD CHURCH

- A. “THE SEVEN SPIRITS” = SEVENFOLD FULLNESS AND PERFECTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT RESTED UPON CHRIST (REV. 1:4; 5:6; ISAIAH 11:2-5).
- B. “THE SEVEN STARS” = SPIRITUAL LEADERS OF THE CHURCHES; ELDERS; PASTORS; THEY ARE IN HIS HAND, AND EACH WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO HIM FOR HIS CHURCH’S SPIRITUAL LIFE; **SPIRITUAL LIFE OR DEADNESS WITHIN A CHURCH IS OFTEN GOVERNED BY THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF ITS LEADERSHIP.**

C. "WE MUST NOT CONCLUDE TOO UNFAVORABLY WHERE THINGS LOOK ILL. **THE STARS ARE NOT ALL GONE BECAUSE THE SKY IS OVERCAST.** IT IS WRONG TO ASSUME THERE IS NOTHING IN CHRISTIANITY, OR THAT RELIGION IS A SHAM, BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY FAITHLESS PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH; SO MUCH CLOAKED AND GILDED UNGODLINESS; SO MUCH BOASTFULNESS OF LIFE WHERE THERE IS SO MUCH DEATH. SAD AS THE FACTS MAY BE, GOD HAS NOT LEFT HIMSELF WITHOUT WITNESSES. IT IS VERY SELDOM THAT A CHURCH BECOMES SO CORRUPT AS TO HAVE NO GENUINE CHRISTIANS IN IT. AS THERE IS NO VISIBLE CHURCH IN CHRISTENDOM IN WHICH ALL THE MEMBERS CAN BE COUNTED AS SAINTS, SO THERE IS SCARCELY A CONFESSED CHURCH WHICH HAS NO GOOD AND FAITHFUL CHILDREN OF GOD IN IT. SO IN THE MIDST OF DEADNESS OF THE CHURCH IN SARDIS, THERE WERE SOME HAPPY EXCEPTIONS, SOME SCATTERED LIGHTS AMID THE DARKNESS." JOSEPH A. SEISS

D. "THERE WAS AN ENOCH AND A NOAH IN THE MIDST OF THE DREADFUL APOSTASY WHICH BROUGHT ON THE FLOOD, A JOB AMONG THE EMIRS OF ARABIA, AN ABRAHAM AMONG THE IDOLATROUS POPULATION OF UR, A LOT EVEN IN SODOM. AMID THE DREARY SNOWS AND ICE-RIVERS OF THE ALPS AND THE APENNINES THERE STILL MAY BE FOUND HERE AND THERE A SOLITARY FLOWER." SEISS

E. JESUS GAVE THIS CHURCH NO _____, ONLY _____.

1. "I KNOW YOUR DEEDS, YOU HAVE A NAME THAT YOU ARE ALIVE, AND YOU ARE DEAD." **SARDIS HAD THE LOOK OF LIFE AND A REPUTATION FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY, BUT IT LACKED EVIDENCE OF TRUE SPIRITUAL LIFE.** (*REVELATION: HEARING THE LAST WORD*; D. LEVY) MANY MODERN-DAY CHURCHES LIVE ON THE SPIRITUAL REPUTATION OF THEIR PAST, BUT HAVE BEEN SPIRITUALLY DEAD FOR YEARS.

2. CHRIST SAID TO THIS CHURCH:

"WAKE UP!" – TO YOUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION; RECALL YOUR ORIGINAL COMMITMENT; RADICAL REVERSE YOUR COURSE OF CURRENT CONDUCT.

"STRENGTHEN WHAT REMAINS, WHAT IS ABOUT TO DIE" – GET BACK TO THE BASICS OF SOUND TEACHING AND PRAYER; GET RID OF USELESS RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY; GET RID OF ALL UNBIBLICAL THINKING AND TEACHING.

"REMEMBER WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED AND HEARD, AND KEEP IT, AND REPENT" – **A CALL TO REPENTANCE FROM SPIRITUAL EMPTINESS**; RETURN TO THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SOUND BIBLICAL DOCTRINE AND DEVOTED PRAYER.

"I WILL COME LIKE A THIEF AND YOU WILL NOT KNOW THE HOUR I COME" – NOT A REFERENCE TO THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST; OFTEN THE LORD WILL REMOVE OR SHUT DOWN A SPIRITUALLY DEAD CHURCH RATHER THAN LET IT CONTINUE TO INFECT OTHERS WITH ITS SINFUL DECADENCE.

F. JESUS' COMMENDATION TO A FEW

1. "A FEW HAVE NOT SOILED THEIR GARMENTS" – AN APT STATEMENT IN LIGHT OF THE WOOL AND TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN SARDIS; GARMENTS ARE WHAT WE DRESS OURSELVES IN AND IN WHICH WE MOVE ABOUT TO CONDUCT OUR LIVES; AND SO THERE IS ANOTHER SORT OF GARMENT BEING REFERRED TO HERE: _____. "TO SOIL" MEANS "TO POLLUTE, OR TO STAIN." WE MUST LIVE IN THIS WORLD AND WE

CANNOT HELP BUT BE EXPOSED TO UNCLEANNESS, TO TEMPTATIONS TO UNGODLY CHARACTER AND UNRIGHTEOUS PURSUITS. SECLUSION, SOLITUDE, ASCETICISM, MONKERY, AND CLOISTERED LIVING, SEVERED FROM ALL CONNECTIONS WITH THE ORDINARY WORLD IS NOT THE ANSWER. WE MUST "WEAR OUR GARMENTS" IN THIS WORLD, AND THEY CAN HAVE A SPIRITUAL VALUE AND AIM IF RIGHTLY MANAGED. OUR BUSINESS AS CHRISTIANS IS NOT TO CAST OFF OUR GARMENTS, BUT TO WEAR THEM, LIVING LIFE IN THEM, BUT KEEPING THEM WITHOUT "STAIN OR BLEMISH."

JAMES 5:2, "YOUR WEALTH HAS ROTTED, AND MOTHS HAVE EATEN YOUR CLOTHES." "IT THEREFORE BELONGS TO CHRISTIANITY NOT TO TRY TO GET AWAY FROM ORDINARY LIFE, BUT TO LIVE AND ACT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO KEEP OUR GARMENTS (OUR CHARACTER) _____." SEISS, *LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES*

WE CANNOT TRAVEL WITHOUT DUST. THE RUST WILL SETTLE ON THE PUREST METAL. BUT WE DO NOT HAVE TO KEEP THE DUST OR ALLOW THE RUST TO EAT UP THE METAL. THESE FEW IN SARDIS MANAGED TO HAVE CLEAN GARMENTS, THOUGH IN CONTACT WITH VERY GREAT CORRUPTION AND DECAY. THEY MAINTAINED THEMSELVES IN LIVING FAITH AND PURITY WHERE EVERYTHING WAS FULL OF DEFILEMENT AND DEADNESS.

2. "THEY WILL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE, FOR THEY ARE WORTHY"

HOLINESS AND PURITY BELONG TO THE REDEEMED; WASHED AND MADE WHITE IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, JESUS CHRIST. ABSOLUTE PURITY IS NOT POSSIBLE IN THIS LIFE, BUT IS OURS IN THE MERIT AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST (REVELATION 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:8, 14).

WHITE ROBES ARE RESERVED FOR _____, (MATTHEW 17:2; MARK 9:3), HOLY _____ (MATTHEW 28:3; MARK 16:5), AND GLORIFIED _____ SAINTS (REVELATION 19:8, 14).

THOUGH MOST IN THE SARDIS CHURCH WERE CONTENT TO LIVE AS CHRISTIANS IN NAME ONLY, THESE FEW COULD NOT. THEY WERE ALIVE TO THE TRUTH AND TO THEIR CHRISTIAN CALLING, AND CONTINUED STEADFAST IN IT. THEY HAD NOT "DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS" IN THE WORLD.

STOP AND REFLECT

WHAT DOES GOD WANT YOU TO THINK?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT YOU TO DO?

3. "FOR THEY ARE WORTHY"

JESUS COMMENDS THESE FEW. **JESUS SEES AND NOTES THE HUMBLEST AND MOST _____ OF HIS SAINTS; HE DOES NOT OVERLOOK THEM.** EVEN IN THE MOST DECADENT AND DECAYED CONGREGATION, HE CREDITS THEM IN HIS MEMORY AND AFFECTION. TO BE NUMBERED SO FEW AMONG SO MANY, WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WERE THEY? WHAT WAS THEIR LIFE LIKE? AND YET, JESUS VINDICATES THEM, CALLS THEM "WORTHY." WORTHY OF WHAT? WORTHY TO "WALK WITH HIM." **THE MOST NEGLECTED AND DESPISED ON _____ ARE OFTEN THE MOST ESTEEMED IN _____.**

"IT MATTERS NOT FOR THE STANDING OF MEN IN THE EYES OF THIS WORLD OR IN THE EYES OF A DEAD AND DYING CHRISTENDOM, PROVIDED THEY HAVE THE LIFE OF SAINTS AS WELL AS THE NAME – THE POWER OF GODLINESS AS WELL AS ITS FORM. THEY ARE NOT UNKNOWN TO JESUS. HIS FAVOR IS ON THEM IN ALL THEIR TRIALS. THEY HAVE STATUS IN HEAVEN WHICH THE HIGHEST IN THIS WORLD'S ESTEEM MIGHT WELL COVET. AND THEY HAVE AN ADVOCATE AND A BLESSED RECORD ON HIGH." SEISS

JESUS WOULD NOT SUFFER THESE FEW FAITHFUL SAINTS TO ENDURE THEIR LOT IN AN IMPURE, HATEFUL CULTURE AS IF THEY WERE _____ BY HIM, OR ALLOW THEM TO BE INCLUDED IN HIS CONDEMNATION OF THEIR CHURCH. JESUS DOES NOT INCLUDE THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED IN A COMMON BLAME. OUR LORD IS GRACIOUS AND RECOGNIZES AND SETS HIS SEAL OF APPROVAL ON THE GOOD OF HIS PEOPLE, ANYWHERE HE FINDS IT.

THOUGH WE MAY BE EXCLUDED FROM THE FRIENDSHIP AND SOCIETY OF THE PROUD AND CONSEQUENTIAL ON THE EARTH, IF WE KEEP OUR GARMENTS UNSTAINED, WE WILL HAVE THE COMPANIONSHIP OF JESUS AND BE GIVEN THE SPOTLESS ROBES OF DIGNITY AND HONOR IN HEAVEN. (JAMES 4:4)

4. "HE WHO OVERCOMES WILL BE CLOTHED IN WHITE GARMENTS"

AN OVERCOMER IS A TRUE CHRISTIAN (REVELATION 2:7).

JEWISH SCRIBES WERE AMBITIOUS TO WALK IN LONG ROBES.

ROMAN PATRICIANS WERE AMBITIOUS TO WALK IN WHITE ROBES.

THEIR ROBES SIGNALLED THEIR RANK AND IMPORTANCE.

IF A PROSPECTIVE PRIEST WAS FOUND TO BE IMPERFECT IN HIS GENEALOGY, HE WAS VEILED IN BLACK AND SENT AWAY, BUT IF ALL WAS RIGHT, HE WAS CLOTHED IN WHITE AND CAME INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE MOST HIGH FOR PRIESTLY SERVICE.

TRUE BELIEVERS WILL SPEND ETERNITY IN SERVICE OF THE KING.

5. "AND I WILL NOT ERASE HIS NAME FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE"

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR TRUE BELIEVERS TO LOSE THEIR SALVATION; IT IS SECURE; THEREFORE WE CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH IN THIS LIFE. (REVELATION 3:8; 17:8; LUKE 10:20; PHILIPPIANS 4:3). THIS IS THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION.

PERSEVERANCE IS NOT THAT I HOLD ONTO JESUS, BUT THAT HE HOLDS ONTO ME!

6. "I WILL CONFESS HIS NAME BEFORE MY FATHER AND BEFORE HIS ANGELS"

MATTHEW 10:32-33; 13:20; MARK 8:34-38; LUKE 12:9; 2 TIMOTHY 2:10-13; 1 JOHN 2:19

A TRUE DISCIPLE OF JESUS PUBLICLY OWNS THE NAME OF JESUS FOR HIMSELF IN THE MIDST OF A DOUBTING AND HATEFUL WORLD. HE IS NOT ASHAMED OF JESUS.

"AND GREAT WILL BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE NAMES WHICH JESUS WILL CONFESS IN HEAVEN AND THOSE WHICH FIGURE SO LARGELY IN THE HEARING AND ANNALS OF MEN IN THIS WORLD." SEISS

STOP AND REFLECT

WHAT DOES GOD WANT YOU TO THINK?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT YOU TO DO?

"THE STRIFE FAITHFULLY MAINTAINED WILL HAVE A GLORIOUS ENDING. WE HAVE ONLY TO HEAR AND HEED AND PRESS COURAGEOUSLY ON, AND WE NEED NOT FEAR FOR THE RESULT."