

TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA

PERGAMUM

THYATIRA

SMYRNA

SARDIS

EPHESUS

THE
SARDIS
LETTER

Christ's Portrait

He Who Has the Seven Spirits of God

- Representative of the Holy Spirit — 1:4; 4:5
- John 15:26; 16:13-14 — to send Holy Spirit for revelation.
- 7 — indicating perfection, completeness, fullness — He can supply what Sardis lacks (v. 2).

He Who Has the Seven Stars

- Angels of the churches — 1:20; 2:1, 7 — true character versus the intended function (lampstand) of the church.
- They have a reputation, but Christ knows their true state (v. 1).

Christ's Protest

They Have a Name They are Alive, but They are Dead

- *"You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead"* (ESV)
- *"I know your works"* — works like Ephesus (2:2-3, 5), Pergamum (2:13), and Thyatira (2:19), but while they are sick, Sardis is dead.

Christ's Protest

Their Works are Not Complete in the Sight of God

- *“you have a name that you are alive”* (v. 1) — before men.
- *“before God”* (v. 2) — you are dead.
- *“not found your works complete in the sight of my God”* (ESV)
 - Perfect/complete — *plēroō* – ““to fulfill, to complete, carry out to the full” (as well as to fill),” ““to make full, to fill to the full”; in the passive voice, “to be filled, made full” (VINE)
 - Their works are a shell of their former selves - devoid of true substance.

Christ's Protest

Their Works are Not Complete in the Sight of God

- *plēroō* (v) (filled) — *plērōma* (n) (fullness)
- **Ephesians 1:22-23** — church is the “fullness” (*plērōma*) of Christ who “fills” (*plēroō*) all. (**3:19; 4:13** — fullness of God/Christ)
- Fullness (*plērōma*) in Christ — **Colossians 1:19-20; 2:9**
 - Fullness (*plērōma*) of Divine glory — **John 1:14, 16-18**
 - Complete (*plēroō*) in Him — **Colossians 2:10**
 - Him in you — **Colossians 1:27-28; Galatians 2:20**

Christ's Protest

Their Works are Not Complete in the Sight of God

- *“not found your works complete in the sight of my God”* (ESV)
- Empty works, devoid of substance and meaning — works for the sake of works.
- Works devoid of relationship/fellowship with God. Work only finds spiritual significance through the spiritual substance of fellowship. (cf. **Galatians 2:20; Matthew 10:40-42**)

Christ's Protest

Their Garments are Defiled

- Implied from **verse 4**.
- Their garments are their deeds — **19:8**
- *“But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.”* (**Isaiah 64:6**)
 - Works tainted with sin — **Isaiah 64:6-7**
- Not only are their works not complete, but they are stained by immorality. (**cf. Zechariah 3:3-4, 6-7**)

Christ's Prescription

Be Watchful (vv. 2-3) (2 Peter 3:10-12)

Strengthen the Things Which Remain

- What remains of a dead church? Their incomplete, unfilled/fufilled works.
- He does not say abandon them, but strengthen them! Fill them!
- How do we strengthen the empty shell of what remains? — **John 15:5; (v. 1), Ephesians 3:16; 6:10-11**

Christ's Prescription

Remember How You Have Received and Heard

- “How” — *pōs* – “how, in what way” (THAYER) (1 Thess. 1:5-6, 9; 2:13; John 1:16)
- Remember the substance of it — Ephesians 3:14-19

Hold Fast and Repent

Christ's Praise

They Have a Few Who Have Not Defiled Their Garments

- His praise is not for the church, but for a remnant.
- God knows who they are, and will acknowledge their faithfulness — (v. 4); 1 John 3:2; Matthew 6:3-6; 2 Timothy 2:19

Christ's Promise

He Who Overcomes Will be Clothed in White Garments

- He who overcomes — by doing what Christ prescribed.
- One who abandons the love of reputation among men for the glory of God will be rewarded.

**He Will Confess the Name of He Who Overcomes
Before His Father (Matthew 10:32-33)**

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