

Revelation 3 Part 1

This is Richard Oliver, and we're dealing with part nine of our study into the book of Revelation, we're on to chapter three. The previous lesson was about the Thyatira church, which is an age running from roundabout 606AD through to 1520AD, which brings us up to the time of Martin Luther.

Chapter three of Revelation verse one, *'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.'*

This, of course, refers to Martin Luther. He was the angel for the church of Sardis, or the Sardis period.

Now, the Dark Ages in the previous church age, Thyatira church age, don't actually finish bang on any particular time. And there was, for some time, in England, in France, in Germany and elsewhere, some rumblings against the leadership of the Roman church, and the Roman interpretation and the control of scriptures. The Latin bible had been translated into English, as indeed some scholars were going back to the original Greek. There was suddenly a new understanding of what the bible actually said.

One of the key things at this particular time, in the 1500s, was the sale of indulges. The Roman church believed that it could sell the right to get out of purgatory early, or to cover specific sins, provided money was paid to a proper priest. This was a very strong push by the church in the early 1500s, and Martin Luther wasn't particularly happy about it, he didn't feel it was right.

He was also a monk who was very, very concerned about his own salvation. And he studied the scriptures, he prayed, he went through all the self-inflicted penances that he could think of, but nothing seemed to calm his soul. And one day he was reading in Romans, and the scripture said 'The just shall live by faith'.

Now the just is, of course, people who are totally innocent. If I stole from you you could forgive me. But if you accuse me of stealing and I hadn't done it then I was just. That's the meaning of the word being 'just'. And it says here the just shall live by faith. In other words, anyone who believes that Jesus Christ paid the price for all their sin on the cross, that everything is covered, if they have faith in that and are willing to face God on that alone then they are just.

This, of course, went entirely against the Roman Catholic teachings of the time. It also meant that people who just by believing could go straight to heaven. This undermined the need for mass. It ruled out the need for a priest, or even a bishop, or a pope. It brought a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a belief in His Word.

But not all was okay in this Sardis church age.

Verse two, *'Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.'*

In other words, that original Lutheran movement, that Protestant movement, for this was the beginning of the Protestant church movement, was not perfect. It still relied on men leading men.

'Remember', verse three, '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.'

So what God is saying here, of course, is the little you have, hold it. You have learnt and heard in a certain way, remember that, and hold it true.

Verse four, *'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.'*

Garments are, of course, the covering, they are the religion. They are the covering of sin. Just as Adam and Eve made aprons when they were in the garden. So the people had to have coverings of white, purity.

Verse five, *'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,'*

Interesting. Even if your name is in the Book of Life it can be blotted out.

'But', continue that verse, 'I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.'

Once again we need spiritual ears to catch what God is saying to us in our time.

The end of the age for Luther was around the 1750AD, somewhere about there.

And we move on to the next church age.