

A LETTER FROM JESUS 5

The Church at Sardis (The Emptiness of Reputation Rev 3 vs. 1-6)

1. What reputation does the church at Sardis have in the sight of other people?
2. How does the church look “in the sight of my God” (vs. 1-2)?

The city of Sardis was surrounded on three sides by cliffs so the residents felt their city was impregnable. It seems the church suffered from the same complacency. They enjoyed a good reputation, but Jesus offers a very different assessment.

Paul talks about living in the sight of God in 2 Corinthians. People he calls ‘super apostles’ were threatening God’s work among the Corinthians (12 v 11). They appeared flashy and impressive. But Paul says the Corinthians “are looking only on the surface of things” (10 v 7).

Read 2 Cor 2 v 17 & 4 v 2 & 8 vs. 19-21 & 12 v 19.

What does it mean to live “in the sight of God”?

What behaviour does it lead to?

Read 2 Corinthians 10 vs. 12-18 & 11 v 30.

How does Paul say we should assess Christian ministry?

3. The few people in Sardis who are commended by Jesus are commended because they “have not soiled their clothes” (v 4). What does this suggest about the rest of the church?
4. What does the risen Christ tell the church at Sardis to do?
5. This message comes from “him who holds the seven spirits of God”. Seven = completeness, so the ‘seven spirits’ = the complete ministry of the Holy Spirit. Why should this description be encouraging to us?
6. What will happen if the church does not repent?
7. What promise does Jesus give to those who do not compromise? What do they mean?
8. What practical steps can we take to make sure that we remain spiritually alive and spiritually awake?
9. Should we try to get a good reputation? Why?