

REVELATION (GOD'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH)  
PROGRAM 13 (#911248)  
WEEK 3 (911350)  
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**SERIES: Revelation (God's Message To The Church)**

**TITLE: Program 13 – The Living Dead**

**WEDNESDAY**

**OPEN**

Are you among the living dead; I mean people that look like they are alive but really are dead? I know of a man who couldn't bear to be without his wife and so he had her embalmed and he just sat her up in the house. I mean he lived among what looked like a woman that was living, but was really dead. And that today is the state of many churches, the living dead. We'll talk about it.

**PART ONE**

Today we're going to look at the message to the church at Sardis, a church that Jesus says: I know that you have a reputation that you're alive, but you are dead. It was a living dead church. You say what are those? Well we're going to look at it. But before we do I want us to go back and finish looking at the very end of the message to the church at Thyatira. And I want to go back there because I want you to understand something. When you cannot

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rule yourself, when you cannot allow the Holy Spirit to take control of you and lead you in paths of righteousness, and you refuse the Holy Spirit and you refuse to repent, even as that woman Jezebel refused to repent, you will never rule. Right now Christians seem like the underdog, but I'm telling you there is a day coming when we are going to sit with Jesus on His throne. And I want us to go back and look at the Word at the promise to the overcomers, the promise that is given to the church at Thyatira just before He speaks to the church at Sardis. So I want us to go back to verse 26 of Revelation, chapter 2. He says, "... and he who overcomes, and keeps My deeds, he who overcomes and keeps my deeds ...," Now what are Christ's deeds? They're deeds of righteousness. They're deeds of love. He says, "... he who overcomes and he who keeps my deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations." I want you to see the importance of perseverance. Now He talks to the church at Ephesus and He commends them for their perseverance. He talks to the church at Pergamum and commends them for their perseverance. But He says that perseverance is a key to understanding that you truly belong to Him. And I wanna take you to Matthew 24, verse 13. Now you know where I'm turning if you know anything about prophesy because this is a very important prophetic passage. And it's a passage about what is going to happen at the end, when is the end coming. What is going to be the sign of Your coming? And remember in Revelation, chapter 1 it says, "Behold He is coming with the clouds ..." All right it's the coming of Jesus Christ that is the purifying hope and John understood that because John writes in 1 John, chapter 3 that, "... we who have this hope of seeing Jesus and being like He is, purify ourselves even as He is pure." All right now, Matthew, chapter 24, and its verse 13. Well let me go back. And He says in verse 9, "They will deliver you to tribulation; will kill you. You will be hated by all nations on account of My name. And at the time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the

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one who endures till the end, he shall be saved.” Now listen, you’re not saved by enduring: but if you are truly saved you will endure. You’re not save by endurance. You’re saved only one way. And any time in history, from Genesis on, and that is by believing in the promise of Messiah, because that promise was given to Adam and Eve on the day that they sinned, on the day that they sinned and hid themselves from God, God, who is compassionate, God, who is longsuffering, God, who is slow to anger, God, who wants us to repent, gave Adam and Eve the promise of Messiah. So we’re only saved one way and that’s by believing in Jesus Christ. But those who are saved will endure. They will endure. So He says, “... the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.” All right now, let’s go back to Revelation, chapter 2. And it says, “... and he who overcomes and keeps My deeds until the end ...,” It says, “... to him, the one who endures, the one who overcomes, to him I will give authority over the nations.” Do you realize what He’s saying? He’s saying that you and I, who are faithful, who are true Christians, true believers, true overcomers, who keep God’s deeds, we will have authority over the nations. Now you’re going to see the connection between keeping the deeds and deeds when we look at the message to the church at Sardis. But I want us to go back to Psalm 2 because it’s a very, very critical Psalm. And I believe that we need to hear these truths now because times are going to get more and more difficult. Christians are going to be more and more hated. The world does not want to hear us. The world does not want to see us. The world wants to get rid of us because we are a restrainer of sin. We’re a restrainer of sin because we call sin sin, because we don’t participate in sin and because we say sin must be judged. And so therefore the world doesn’t want us because the world wants to do its own thing. So when you read Psalm 2, in verse 1 he says, “Why are nations in an uproar and the people devising a vain and empty thing? The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers take counsel against the Lord and against His anointed, against God the Father and against His Son. And they say ‘Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from

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us; but He who sits in the heavens laughs; that's God. The Lord scoffs at him. Then He will say to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury. But as for Me, God says, I have installed My King upon My holy mountain, upon Zion ...," And it says, "... I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me ...,'" Father's saying to the Son, "... ask of Me and I will surely give the nations as Thy inheritance and the very ends of the earth at Thy possession. Thou shall break them with a rod of iron and Thou shall shatter them like earthenware.'" Now let's go back in the light of that and finish reading His word to the overcomers, to those who keep His deeds until the end. It says, "... to him I will give authority over the nations and he, the one who overcomes ...," that's you and me, "... he shall rule them with a rod of iron as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as also I have received authority from My Father and I will give him the Morning Star. In Revelation, chapter 22, verse 16 and I mentioned it in our last lesson, but we didn't look at it and I want you to look at it. I want you to know where we're going, Revelation 22:16. And it says, "And I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things." Now remember this is the revelation that was given to Jesus by God, the Father; Jesus, in turn, gave it to His angel; His angel, in turn, gave it to John; John, in turn, wrote in a book and sent it to the seven churches. So He says, "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, the bright Morning Star." So He's going to give us the bright morning star in all of its fullness. And then He says, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches." You know up until now what we have is the message to the overcomer after His saying and he who has an ear, let him hear. We have he who has an ear, let him hear and then the message to the overcomer comes. But when you come to the church at Thyatira he says, "He that overcomes, I will do this ...," and then the last word is this and I think that this is significant: "... He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches and to the angel of the church in Sardis write."

Now remember all seven churches got all seven letters. So he closes now. He puts the he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches, at the end after the message to the overcomers because of what I believe He's going to say to the church at Sardis. "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God, now let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." And then as Jesus introduces Himself to the church at Sardis, He introduces them by saying, "... he who has the seven Spirits of God." Now think with me. Romans 8 says, "If any man does not have the Spirit of Christ inside of him, he is none of His. You are not His." What makes us a child of God is delineated for us, and the process is delineated for us in Ephesians, chapter 1. In Ephesians, chapter 1 it says, "We hear with our ears; we believe with our heart and then God gives us the Holy Spirit. He seals us with the Holy Spirit until the day of our redemption." The Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of the fact that this body will be, this purchased possession that He purchased with His blood, will put on immortality, that this purchased possession will become an eternal being with God. So the process is you hear, you believe and you're sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise until the day of your redemption, until you get your brand new body.

## **PART TWO**

This church at Sardis, their heart certainly needs stirring. They have ears, but they haven't heard. They have hearts, but they really have not believed because He's talking to a church among the living dead. You know of all the messages to the churches this is the very shortest message. And it's short because most of them do not know Jesus Christ. Now when you look at Sardis, Sardis was 30 miles south of Thyatira. Sardis was a city B.C. that knew a lot of luxury and a lot of grandeur. But Sardis was a city that had lost all of that. About A.D. 26 they petitioned Rome and Rome was going to put up a temple to Caesar and so they wanted to have that temple in their town.

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It's kind of like the Olympics. Where are the Olympics going to be held? What city of the world are they going to be held? Well, the vote was not cast for Sardis. But the vote was cast for Smyrna. So that's where the official temple to Caesar went up. But his was a city that had a lot, that in a sense, indulged themselves and never really, really recovered from their losses. And yet it was like a complacency. This was a church that you know, that just opened their doors that didn't have any standards, didn't have any, in a sense convictions. Although there were some there who knew the Lord. Let me read it to you because it's important that we see it and see it in its context. He says, "I know your deeds, that you have a name that your are alive, but you are dead." Now what is He doing? Right away, He is saying I know your deeds. Because, remember, I have the seven stars of God in My right hand. I have the seven messengers; I know what's going on. And He says and I have the seven Spirits of God. He says, "I know what's happening and I know your deeds and I know that you have a reputation that you are alive, that you are a real genuine church, but you are dead." And He says, "... wake up." Wake up; realize that you're dead. Remember that man that I told you that propped his wife up there, embalmed and propped his wife up there in the house, just so that he could see her body, so that he could pretend that she was there. I mean he could have slapped her silly, but she never would have wakened up. He could have done all sorts of things to her, but she never would have moved on her own, breathed on her own, or talked on her own. She was dead. And He's saying to this church, "... wake up and strengthen the things that remain ...." I mean it's gone. And see when you think of Sardis, their fame was gone. Their glory was gone. It was all gone. Sardis was a has been city with a has been church. In other words the gospel got there and it just kind of went in one ear and out of the other and they said O, well that's nice. We'll have a church. But nothing ever really happened inside. He says, "... wake up and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die. For I have not found your deeds ...," and remember this is a key word that we're marking, "... completed in the sight of the Lord."

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Now He says you've started, but that's it. You're just sitting there it's not being finished. It's not going on. It's not completed. And if it's not completed it ain't real. It's not going to do you any good. Remember what we saw. We saw in His message to the church at Thyatira it says, "O, he who overcomes and he who keeps My deeds until the end ...." It's got to keep going on. And so He says, "... remember therefore, what you have received and heard; and keep it, keep it, and repent." What was wrong with this church? It's like many, many churches today; they don't believe the Word of God. They don't believe that the Word of God is the Word of God. They believe that they can pick and they can choose what they want to believe. O yes, this sounds nice. It talks about love. O, no, God would never judge. He wouldn't do something like that. That was just added. That's not the Word of God. Listen, if you're in a church that does not believe that this Book is the Word of God, you either need to get out or you need to see yourself as a missionary there, a missionary there as salt and light. Because He says, "... remember therefore what you have received and heard; and keep it..." You've got to keep it. You've got to do it. He says, "... repent, repent, have a change of mind." He says, "If therefore you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you." Now if you've studied 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, you know that when He's saying I'm coming like a thief, then He's talking to people that are lost unless they wake up, unless they get saved. Because 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, He's writing to this church in verse 2. And He says, "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. And while they're saying peace and safety, then destruction will come upon them suddenly, like birth pangs upon a woman and they shall not escape. And you, brethren, are not in darkness that the day should overtake you like a thief. You are sons of light; you are sons of day; you are not of night or darkness." What a contrast with the church at Sardis. Now it's not all bad. He says verse 4, "But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments..." In other words they aren't tainted by

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the world as James says. "... and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." Now when you go through and you look at these white garments you see that these white garments belong to the righteous. You see that these white garments are the righteous deeds; the righteous acts of the saints. You see that they have clothed themselves in white and you see it especially in Revelation, chapter 19 when you look at the church and you see them robed in white and then you see them coming dressed in robes of righteousness and white robes on their horses following Jesus as they come to rule and reign on the face of this earth. He says, "... they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." And it says, "He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments and I will not erase his name from the book of life and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." Remember Jesus said this: "If you confess Me before men, I'll confess you before the Father. If you deny Me before men, I will deny you before the Father." So He's saying look, you're dead, but you can live. You can live if you'll take the truth that you heard and you'll embrace it and you'll live like it and you'll keep My deeds and you will walk with Me in white. "I will put white garments on My overcomers." That means I've covered your soiled garments. I've covered your filthy rags of righteousness; your self-righteousness and I've clothed you in garments that are as white as snow. And He says, "I will not erase his name from the book of life." In other words, you who are dead can now live and keep on living. In the cities in those days they wrote down the names of the citizens in a book until they died. And when they died, they crossed 'em off or they erased 'em. And what He's saying is that you who are dead can live if you will believe in Me. That's His message to you today.