

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly in Sardis

By: Dan Jenkins

We continue our look at the seven churches of Asia which received John's message from the island of Patmos. There were far more congregations than these seven for Paul's work resulted in the spread of the gospel throughout all of Asia (Acts 19:10). God specifically chose these seven churches to help all other individuals and churches to profit from these messages (Rev. 3:6)

The city of Sardis. It was located on the western boundary of the Roman province of Asia and played an important role in the commerce of that area. These two truths enabled it to become a wealthy "frontier" city. Think of the history of America and the vice often connected with such cities as our nation spread to the west. The wealth caused many to focus on material matters rather than on matters of far more importance.

The church in Sardis as it appeared to others. Jesus does not look at outward appearances at the truth. He said to the church in Sardis, "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive" (Rev. 3:1). He then adds these words showing He is not concerned with reputation with character, "But you are dead." The view of this church in the eyes of men is far different from the way Jesus saw the "great" church at Sardis.

The church at Sardis as it appeared to Jesus. Having said that he said, "You are ready

to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God" (v. 2). While the English word perfect is used to indicate being totally complete and flawless, the Greek word is far different. As a child, I read the words of Jesus that we should be perfect as God is perfect and knew I could never do this for I could never be sinless. When God speaks of perfection, He uses this Greek word to indicate maturity and growth. We look at our newborn and see them as being perfect, even though they cannot walk or feed themselves. Babies in Christ can be viewed in the same way, and God wants us to keep growing into the fullness being like Jesus (Eph. 4:13).

The absence of the "good" and the "bad" in Sardis. There was still hope for the church, but it was fading. Jesus said that if they did not repent His judgment was coming (v. 3). Their future was "ugly." There was hope for some in that church, and the Lord told them to continue in faithful service. If they did, they would walk with Him clothed in white garments.

Some names in Sardis to remain in the book of life. There is a difference between having a name in a church directory and a name in the book of life. That book contains the names of those whose names are recorded in heaven and, if they remain faithful, their names will not be blotted out. Is your name still in that book?

It's Talking About Christians, Not Non-Christians

By: Selected

It is amazing how often a passage is misunderstood and misused, and yet equally amazing how simple that same passage really is. Such is the case with 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. These verses are often used to teach that Jesus will return and the church will be “caught up” (or “raptured”) to Him, and then either 1,000 years later or 1,007 years later, the unrighteous will be raised from the dead. Is that what this passage (or any Bible passage) is teaching? The simple answer is, “No.”

To use 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 to teach the manmade doctrine of premillennialism and the manmade concept of the rapture is to teach something that these verses do not teach or even vaguely imply. In fact, one can read these verses over and over in multiple translations and never even find the resurrection of the unrighteous being discussed.

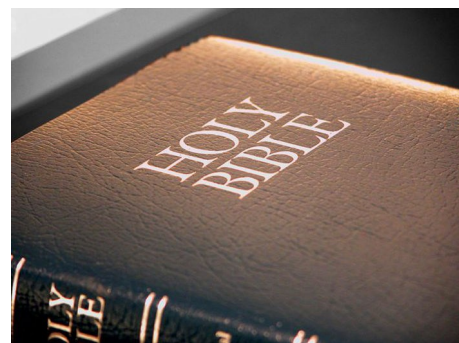
Paul is writing to Christians—to “brethren” (4:13). He is writing to allay their concerns about brethren “who have fallen asleep” (4:13). The only time that the unrighteous even appear in the text is at the end of verse 13, where they are described as those “who have no hope.” Paul wanted these Christians to understand the hope that they can confidently have for fellow Christians who have “fallen asleep in Jesus” (4:14). Though their fellow Christians had died, they were not without hope.

Paul writes in these verses about two groups. He writes about what will happen to one group “first” and “then” to the other group. But, the two groups are NOT the righteous and the unrighteous. Again, the

unrighteous do not appear in this text. The two groups to which Paul addresses his inspired attention are (1) the dead in Christ and (2) the living in Christ.

Paul speaks about that second group as those “who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord.” He speaks about the first group as those “who sleep in Jesus...who are asleep...the dead in Christ” (4:14, 15, 16). The living in Christ “will by no means precede” the dead in Christ (4:15). In fact, when the Lord returns, “the dead in Christ will rise first” (4:16). Paul does NOT say that the second to be raised will be the unrighteous, as they are not under discussion at all. Instead, Paul says that after the dead in Christ are raised, the still living who are in Christ “shall be caught up together with” the dead in Christ “in the air” (4:17). What a glorious, exciting and yet simple way to explain it.

Jesus clearly taught that “those who have done good” and “those who have done evil” would be raised in the same “hour” (John 5:28-29), and not 1,000 years apart. When we let the Bible explain things in simple terms, how much we learn!



Upcoming Events

TODAY: We will have a guest speaker from Home of Recovery and Restoration, Aaron Anderson. We will also have our monthly potluck luncheon after morning service with a 12:45pm service to follow. Please bring a dish/dessert to share with visitors.

Sunday, Aug. 9: Youth devo after evening services here at the building. Boys bring drinks, girls bring desserts.

Sun. Aug. 16: Trey Jenkins will teach the Bible class and Sunday AM sermon. Trey is a student we support at SWSBS.

Area events:

Area events/details are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway. Please check them out.

Prayer List

Prayer Requests:

Robert Ontiveros, a co-worker of Veronica Serenil, who had a heart stint procedure last week.

Willie Williams, Genesis’ father, who will be having some tests run.

Randy and Mandi D’Herde’s daughter, Anne, who is having complications during her pregnancy/delivery.

Summer Series Wednesday Night Classes

Every Wednesday night during the Summer session, the Adults will be learning about “Questions Jesus Asked” and the Children will be learning about “Biomimicry: God invented it First”. Please join us at 7pm.

Service Roster

Week of August 2, 2026

Sunday Morning
Scripture Reading..... Will Burleson
Song Leader Kevin Sheeran

Opening Prayer.....Barry Lehtinen
Closing Prayer.....Ken Dorries

Lord’s Supper & Offering
Bread..... Randy D’Herde
Cup..... Cody McCoy
Offering..... Ron White
Assist..... Caleb Lehtinen
Assist..... Blake Jacobs
Assist..... Clifton Rutherford

Sunday Evening
Song Leader Barry Lehtinen

Opening Prayer..... Mark FitzSimmons
Closing Prayer..... Clifton Rutherford

Lord’s Supper & Offering.....James Cammock/
Willie Fossati

Wednesday Evening
Adult ClassKirk FitzSimmons
Song LeaderKirk FitzSimmons
Devotional Kirk FitzSimmons

Other
Prepare Communion for Aug.....A. Sneeringer

Congregational News This Week

Birthdays
Linda Flonnory-Bell.....Aug. 1
Ken Dorries.....Aug. 2
Mark FitzSimmons.....Aug. 2
Mako Garcia.....Aug. 4
Thomas Cammock.....Aug. 5

If you have any prayer requests, upcoming events to be announced, or updates/corrections please contact our secretary, Nina Siegel, at (361) 573-0030 or email office.midtownchurch@gmail.com

Our Elders

Mark FitzSimmons
Ron White

Our Deacons

James Cammock—Evangelism
Lupe Escojido— Benevolence
Doug Jobes—Safety, Men's Encouragement &
Winter Youth Retreat
Kevin Sheeran—Worship Organization and
Communication
Bryant Siegel—Education and Finance

Our Minister

Cody McCoy

Weekly Reading

And God will wipe away every tear from their
eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow,
nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the
former things have passed away.
Revelation 21:4 NKJV

Service Times

Sunday Morning Bible Class.....9:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship.....5:00 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Class.....7:00 P.M.

Attendance Records

Week of July 26, 2026

A.M. Bible Class.....63
A.M. Worship.....96
P.M. Worship.....55
Wednesday Worship.....74

*Financial information is located on the bulletin
board in the hallway.*

Supported Works

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