

Verse 28

"The morning star" is probably Christ. (See Rev. 22:16 - Christ says *ho astēr ho lampros ho prōinos* - the bright morning star.)

Verse 29

The conclusion to this letter is the same as the others.

Review Questions

1. What new title for Christ appears in vs. 18? What does it mean or imply about the person of Jesus?
2. Would most contemporary N.T. congregations feel satisfied with the commendations given to Thyatira by our Lord - vs. 19?
3. Was the doctrine of this congregation orthodox or right teaching - vs. 20?
4. What does Paul tell us about eating idol sacrifices in I Cor. 8:1ff? What does it say about the condition of the Church in Thyatira?
5. Name and discuss the two acts of the Lord's judgment mentioned in vs. 22?
6. What will the basis of judgment be - according to vs. 23?
7. What does Christ promise the faithful Christian - vs. 26?
8. Who is the morning star - vs. 28?

Special Study

The Word of God and Death!

Hebrews 9:27 (Greek Text) - "And as it is reserved (or appointed) to men once to die and after this judgment" - (there is no verb *cometh* in the text.)

What is the Hebrew view of man? How does Hebrew anthropology relate to the Old Testament view of death?

The Old Testament view of a "wholistic man" antedates the contemporary views of man by over 3000 years. Faculty Psychology has fallen; and the dynamic view of man has prevailed since Freud. There is an inrefutable interaction between body and spirit. H. Wheeler Robinson's essay on Hebrew Psychology (see *The People and The Book*, ed. A. S. Peake, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1925) clearly states the Old Testament case

for a dynamic view of man as interpretation of body and spirit. (See for an exhaustive study of Hebrew Psychology J. Pedersen's *Israel, Its Life and Culture*, Oxford, 1946-47, 2 volumes - These are indispensable volumes.)

The Old Testament doctrine of "corporate personality" is an essential aspect of biblical anthropology. The Old Testament view of the relation of sin (Adams and the individuals) to death is crystal clear. This view stands in irreconcilable contradiction with the naturalistic notion of death as a natural phenomenon. The scholarly works of R. H. Charles (*A Critical History of The Doctrine of A Future Life*, 2nd edition, 1913) (not the 1899 edition); L. B. Paton (*Spiritism and the Cult of the Dead in Antiquity*, MacMillan, 1921); Edmund F. Sutcliffe, (*The Old Testament and Future Life* - London, Burns Oates and Washbourne, LTD, 1946); Robert Mortin-Achard (*De la Mort, A la resurrection de' apres l'Ancien Testament* - Neuchatel et Paris Delachaux et Niestle, 1956) all agree in their critical evaluation of the available Old Testament materials. The classic work of Charles, and the work of the Catholic scholar Sutcliffe, and the protestant scholar Nortin-Achard concur in a negative critical attitude to the biblical literature. Those of us who believe that the Scriptures are the Word of God can readily learn the biblical view of death by a *perusal* of its pages.

The Hebrew term *nephesh* and its derivatives communicate the spiritual aspects of man. Another vital term which speaks of man's spiritual life is *ruach*. Ezekiel's valley of dry bones was inanimate until the four winds (*ruachoth*) brought *ruach* and life returned. *Ruach* and *nephesh* overlap in speaking of the volitional and emotional range of human existence. *Neshamah* (Gen. 2:7) is the God breathed factor of human life. There is no mind/body dualism in the Hebrew view of man. Other Hebrew terms which would require examination, if our study was to be thorough, are *dam* (blood), *basar* (flesh), *geviyyah* which is the basic term for body, living or dead, occurs only fourteen times in the Old Testament.

Greek influence is apparent in the doctrine of man in *Apocrypha* and *Pseudepigrapha*. In this extra biblical literature the soul becomes mortal and it is pre-existent. This is strict Platonism! Rabbinic Judaism perpetrates the two views mentioned above in the *Apocrypha* and *Pseudepigrapha*. The major difference between the above two bodies of Literature is found in the Rabbinic emphasis upon the heart as the battle ground between good and evil.

The New Testament view of death stands firm upon its Old Testament foundation. The New Testament doctrine of man and the resurrection includes the biblical teaching concerning the use of *psuche* (soul), *pneuma* (spirit), *sarks* (flesh), *soma* (body), *suniodesis* (conscience), *nous* (mind), *esu anthropos* (the inward man). Dr. S. D. F. Salmond's *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality* is still the best single source for study. Dr. Wilbur M. Smith's article on "resurrection," found in *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, 1960, pp. 448-456 is an excellent survey of the issues regarding the biblical doctrine of the resurrection. The New Testament teaching about man and the resurrection of the dead through the work of Jesus Christ is a unique phenomenon in the world of the apostolic church.

The Hebrew word for death - *maweth* and the Greek *Thanatos* both expresses observable, physical death.

From Genesis to Jesus the "wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23). Paul declares (I Cor. 3:21-22) that death is a human possession. This is one possession that men would gladly surrender! Paul asserts that unbelievers are "dead" because of sin (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13). Jesus declared that the Prodigal "was dead," but is alive forevermore (Lk. 15:24,32). John saw Jesus open the fourth seal (Rev. 6:8) and he saw Death on a pale horse and he had authority over one quarter of the earth. Sin is inseparably related to the biblical doctrine of death. Christian hope is grounded on the atonement of Christ and His victory over death the reigning monarch. Death has been dethroned by the work of Christ. Paul makes this apparent in Rom. 6:9, "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him."

The biblical teaching is grounded in the resurrection of Christ which assures every Christian of the resurrection of the dead. The New Testament does not teach the immortality of the soul, in the Platonic sense, but rather the resurrection of the body.

Death be not Proud - for Thou art overcome! All the forged fetters of darkness could not hold its prey! The power of death has been dissipated; its strength has been spent. Paul says - "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." (II Tim. 1:10)

Contemporary Man is pre-occupied with death, and a repudiation of the Christian view of man, hope, death, resurrection. The Postman of Patmos was pre-occupied with declaring that because of Christ - "death shall be no more" (Rev. 21:4)!

SECTION 8

Text 3:1-6

And to 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 livest, and thou art dead. 2 Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4 But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Initial Questions 3:1-6

1. Is it possible to be a very active and successful congregation and yet be spiritually dead?
2. What can you tell about a congregation who starts many worthy projects and finishes none of them - vs. 2?
3. Where in the Gospel records can we find the same warning as given here in vs. 3 - in the earthly ministry of Christ?
4. What do the "white garments of vs. 5 signify?
5. What is the "Book of Life" - vs. 5?

The Church in Sardis

Chp. 3:1-6

The Church in Sardis received the most complete condemnation from her Lord, of the seven Churches. They are in a very serious spiritual condition, and they are consequently in grave danger of the Lord's judgment. He might come to judge Sardis as a "thief in the night" (Thess. 5:2) unexpectedly. There is only a small remnant at Sardis who shall share in Christ's triumph.

Sardis was the capitol of ancient Lydia until 549 B.C. The ruins of her great temple to the goddess Cybele is still observable. A small village exists today near the site of ancient