

Revelation Ch. 3

Sardis

V: 1 *"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."*

V: 1a *"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write;..."*

- Dear Sardis.... representing the Protestant reformation from 1520 to / through the tribulation.

BACKGROUND:

- Sardis was the ancient capital of the kingdom of Lydia, a very wealthy city.
- Noted for its luxury clothing trade, and carpets. The garment industry was vital to their economy.
- Its last prince was Croesus, the richest man of his time, who was captured by Cyrus (Medo-Persian). The city was then ruled by the Persians, later conquered and ruled by Alexander the Great / Greeks, then Antiochus the Great, then the Romans.
- It was finally destroyed by an earthquake during the reign of Tiberius in 17 A.D.
- Sardis was the first city to mint gold and silver coinage.
- Sardis had various pagan temples to Cybele / Diana, and Apollo, typical of most large cities.
- Sardis was at the crossroads for central Asia, between Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum. (look at maps)



- Sardis means "remnant".

- Sardis represents the "Protestant" church from 1517-1800, the reformation era to the missionary era.

NOTE: There is no commendation for Sardis.

V: 1b *"... These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars;..."*

- He that has the 7 Spirits & 7 stars, He that is in control... or should be...

Galatians 1:6 "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."

Galatians 3:3 "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?"

- He is in their midst, picture Matthew 18:20, examining them / us in their / our walk.

Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

- He is the one that sent the Holy Spirit into this world and is possibly reminding them now of how badly they need the Holy Spirit in their lives and church.

John 16:17 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

V: 1c *"I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead."*

- Said faith vs: living faith...
- I know your works: The reformation did re-establish the doctrine of justification by faith, which then produced good "works".

Romans 5:1 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ephesians 2:8-9 "8For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9not of works, lest any man should boast."

James 2:17-18 "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone, Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

James 2:23 "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God."

- Sardis has a reputation for being alive, but they are dead according to Jesus.
- Europe is currently in a post Christian era, the reformation is basically dead there.
- Sardis is alive in name only.
- Sardis is dead due to sin, relying upon their own righteousness.

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Isaiah 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Matthew 23:27 "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

- Outward appearances don't count! Many Protestant churches today are just going through the motions.
- While the reformation recovered the doctrine of salvation by faith, the prophecies contained in the Word of God didn't seem to have been taken literally until recent times.
- Growing apostasy...
- Many "Protestant" churches today and their ministers don't believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, His atoning death, the inspiration and infallibility of His Word, in Heaven or Hell. So many churches are just a social club - alive on the outside to the world, but dead on the inside to Christ.
- Sardis / reformation churches have become cold and formal, having bureaucratic organizations. They were free from the Catholic hierarchy but replaced it with their own, and they have a prideful disdain for the "fanatical" born again Christians.
- Sardis' works were not / are not of the Holy Spirit, a stark contrast to the church of Acts, they're going through the motions. They are more religion than relationship.
- The remedy is in His title, the 7 Spirits are the Holy Spirit of God, they must be Spirit filled and Spirit led.

V: 2 *"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God."*

V: 2a *"Be watchful,..."*

- This had particular meaning for the people of Sardis, they had twice been conquered because the guards to the city had fallen asleep and were not watching when they should have been.
- They were conquered by the Medes in 549 BC, then again by Antiochus the Great in 218 BC
- Be alert, vigilant, watchful, prepared.

1 Peter 5:8 *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."*

- In general Protestants aren't looking for Christ's return, they have built up systems, or conditions that must be met before he can come. The only problem is that God may not be on our schedule, and He's not waiting for our permission!!

(Pre-trib. Rapture vs: mid and post tribulation rapture.)

Matthew 24:42 *"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."*

Titus 2:13 *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."*

Matthew 25:1-13 Parable of 10 virgins, 5 were prepared with "oil" in their lamps, 5 were not, having no "oil" at all. The "oil" represents the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit working in your life you will not truly know Jesus. And without knowing Jesus you would miss the wedding feast.

- Same wording as **Matthew 7:22-23**

Matthew 7:22-23 *"²²Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."*

- Anyone can be prepared for a pre-determined time, but we must always be prepared for an unexpected hour.

V:2b *"... and strengthen the things which remain,..."*

- Strengthening comes through the Word of God.

1 Peter 2:2 "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"

Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Matthew 4:4 "... it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

Psalm 119:11 **Psalm 1:1-3** **John 6:48**

- God is our strength.

Psalm 28:7 "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him."

Psalm 18:2 "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

V: 2c *"... that are ready to die:..."*

- Things are looking bleak, almost dead as in time is short.

James 1:15 "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death."

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

V: 2d *"... for I have not found thy works perfect before God."*

- Each of the 4 previous churches had been commended for certain good works in the eyes of the Lord. Here in Sardis there is no commendation.
- Even Jezebel infested Thyatira did something right, but not so with Sardis. Neither their works nor their doctrine was what God wanted.
- Abraham was commanded by God...

Genesis 17:1 "... I Am the almighty God; walk before me, and be though perfect."

- There are 5 basic ways to look at our walk with Jesus:
 1. Walking after God, is as a servant, serving God.
 2. Walking with God, like Enoch and Noah, having fellowship with God. James 2:23

3. Walking in Him signifies complete "one-ness" and union with Him, Christ in me, the hope of glory through Jesus Christ.
 4. Walking before God means walking in His presence, aware that God is watching and observing us.
 5. Walking away from God, or apart from Him. The wrong direction.
- God has set the criteria: *"Be though perfect."*, and none of us qualify!
 - Doctrine of original sin, depravity of man, sin nature.

James 2:10, Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:8, Jeremiah 17:9

- The solution to our lack of "perfection" is the same as it was for Abraham:

James 2:23 "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." Genesis 15:6

- God has shown us the way to be perfect through His Word.

Psalms 19:7-11 ⁷The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. ¹¹Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."

Romans 12:2 "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may know what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

- The only way to be perfect and acceptable is through the blood of Jesus Christ, through the blood of the lamb, in a personal relationship with Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:3, Romans 5:1, Romans 5:8, Hebrews 9:22, 26, 1 Peter 1:18-19

- They had a reputation for being alive / saved, but Jesus knew they were dead / not saved. They had a "said faith" vs: a "living faith".
- The reformation was a partial recovery, not a complete return to the apostolic church or the Church of Acts.
- They still had many pagan attributes and customs; infant baptism, pagan symbols, and pagan holidays such as Christmas, Easter, and Lent to name a few. (See 2 Babylon's)

V: 3 *"Remember 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."*

V: 3a *"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent."*

Psalm 119:11 "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee."

- Remember what you've been told, hold fast to what you have, because it's slipping away.
- The great truths recovered during the reformation are being lost - we need to cling to them for dear life!
 1. The authority of the Word of God.
 2. Justification by faith.
 3. The total depravity of man.
- Many churches are glossing over these issues, covering them up, or simply ignoring them altogether.
- **He's also saying repent!**

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Luke 13:3 "I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Acts 3:19 "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of the refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

V: 3b *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."*

- We are all accountable to God for what we have heard, and what we've been given.

Matthew 25:14-30 Buried talents.

Matthew 24:42 "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

- If you don't watch, I'll surprise you.
- The test wasn't the "profit", the test was about faithfulness.

- The Lord is saying "Don't go to sleep, wake up and watch out!"
We are warned ahead of time.

1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4 "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." - "but ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that day should overtake you as a thief."

1 Peter 5:8 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"

- One of the worst things to imagine would be to get caught in the act of sinning when the Lord does come, or of not being prepared when He arrives.

1 John 2:28 "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

Ephesians 5:8 "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."

- Satan would just as soon have us sleeping as dead when our Lord comes.

2 Peter 3:3-4 "Knowing this first that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

V: 4 *"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."*

- There is always a faithful remnant in every church, and they will be blessed.
- *"Few names"* / remnant means a small group.

Zechariah 8:12 "For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things."

Jeremiah 23:3 "And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase."

* Speaking of Diaspora & to gentile church...

Luke 12:32 "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

- Our righteousness, our fine, clean raiment is from Jesus!

Isaiah 61:10 "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,..."

Revelation 19:8 "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

V: 4-5 white raiment / garments of salvation:

- White clothing speaks of being clothed in light as were Adam and Eve prior to sin entering their lives.
- Having glorified bodies, through the righteousness of Christ.
- This is spoken of several other times in Revelation as something that believers shall possess:

Revelation 3:18 "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed..."

Revelation 4:4 "... I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold."

Revelation 6:11 Re: Souls of them that were slain for the word of God, "And white robes were given unto every one of them;"

Revelation 7:9 "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred's, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;"

Revelation 7:14 "... These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Revelation 19:8 re: the bride. "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Revelation 19:14 "And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

V: 5 *"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, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels."*

V: 5a *"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment;..."*

- "He that overcometh" means those that still have their names written in the book of life, those not cast into the lake of fire - those who are victorious through the blood of Jesus.
- He that overcomes does so because of Jesus, not in our own strength or abilities.

1 John 5:5 "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

- Clothed in white raiment, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus.

Job 29:14 "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was a robe and a diadem."

Isaiah 61:10 "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,..."

Revelation 19:7-8 "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

- As opposed to our own righteousness.....

Isaiah 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;"

V: 5b *"...and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life,..."*

- Speaks of the ancient practice of cities keeping a log or census of it's citizens, and of erasing or blotting out their names when they died.
- Christ died for our sins, all sins, regardless of whether we accept Him and our names were written in the book of life. Those who don't accept Him are blotted out and not found therein.

Exodus 32:32-33 "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin - and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."

Philippians 4:3 "... my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life."

- And where exactly is this book?

Luke 10:20 "... rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

V: 5b *"...and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life,..."*

Psalms 69:16-28 Describing unbelievers and scoffers, and their treatment of Jesus our Savior, the Son of God - leading up to verse 28.

"Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."

Revelation 20:15 "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

- Does this contradict John 10:28-29 or Romans 8:35-39? Both of which speak to eternal security?

ANSWER: No. Anyone genuinely saved is eternally saved. Also speaks to infants and children who die prior to the age of accountability.

- The book of life contains the names of all the people for whom Christ died. Some however reject Christ and are blotted out, but all have the opportunity to accept Him.
- Regarding the book of life: God keeps records.

Those who are in it:

Daniel 12:1 "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: And at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book."

Malachi 3:16 "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name."

Revelation 21:27 "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: But they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

- And those who are not....

[Speaking of Satan in verses 8-9](#)

Revelation 13:1-9 "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" - "If any man have an ear, let him hear."

Revelation 20:15 "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

V: 5c *"...but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels."*

Matthew 10:32 "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my father which is in heaven."

Luke 12:8 "Also I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God:"

V: 6 *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."*

- Those that follow Jesus will hear his voice

John 10:27 "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

Romans 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

- All 7 churches got all seven letters.

John 5:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."