

## **The Lord's Word to His Church: Sardis**

### **Revelation 3:1–6**

**Revelation Chapter 3:1-6 “To the angel – ” or the messenger, the messenger who’ll take this letter back to the church in Sardis, “ – write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.**

**Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed – ” or fulfilled “ – in the sight of My God. So, remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent.**

**Therefore, if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will 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. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’” His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”**

**The church, by definition, is to be alive. It is a place where God lives, where Christ lives, where the Holy Spirit lives, where believers are alive. They’ve been given life. A church is to be the fellowship of those who possess eternal life.**

**Not this church. This church of Sardis is dead, and the emphasis there is speaking about spiritual death. Ref: Matthew 21:19 **Matthew 21:19**, our Lord's sort of depiction of Israel – **leaves, but no fruit.** .**

**You could say that the congregation in Sardis was the very reverse of the congregation in Smyrna. Smyrna was being put to death and yet lived. Sardis appeared to be alive; it was dead. A dead church, living a fake life.**

**He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.'**

**So, the author here identifies Himself, the Lord, as the one who possesses the fullness of the Spirit, and who possess as well the ministers, the pastors, the leaders of the church. The author is the one who gives the Holy Spirit to the church and sovereignly leads through pastors who are pastors who are faithful.**

**Now, why does He identify Himself in this way? Because it seems as if that's exactly what's missing. Here is a church without the Holy Spirit, generally speaking. Here is a church, obviously, with pastors who are not faithful, who do not belong to the Lord.**

**There's really no judgment here as such because this is a dead church to start with. They have forfeited the Holy Spirit and faithful leadership.**

The spiritual history of Sardis church paralleled the political history of that city, a steady decline into nothing. The church had a name, church in Sardis, but it had no life.

**verse 1: “I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive. You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.” . verse 2: “I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.”** Another way to say it would be: satisfactory, fulfilling, acceptable. “I know your deeds; you’re dead. Your deeds are not acceptable.”

This church is the world. This church is so defiled it is dead. It is decayed on the inside.

**Dead in trespasses and sins,” Ephesians 2:1.** That’s where that death is defined: dead in trespasses and sins.

**Colossians 2:13, “Dead in transgression and the uncircumcision of your flesh.”** When it says dead, it means spiritually dead. This is a church full of unconverted people, unconverted people. We’re used to that.

Any church is in danger of dying when it gets caught up in the world, tolerates sins, abandons its first love – there’s a progression here.

What kills a church? Sin kills a church. Error kills the church. Compromise kills the church, and its sin in the members, sin in the leaders: sins of commission, sins of omission.

**Sardis went through the motions: .Maybe they provided some service to the community. “Their deeds were not sufficient in the sight of My God.”**

**The true church and the world are enemies. The world hates the true church. But the sinful worldly church is never attacked by the world; it has become the world.**

**There is, in verse 4, in verse 4, one little hope. **But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.”** .**

**There are a few who have not soiled their garments. They will walk with Me in white, for they’re worthy,” a few, *oligos*, slight, small.**

**There were a few believers among the unbelievers, genuine among the hypocrites, humble among the proud, spiritual among the carnal, separated among the worldly: true Christians, leading pure, wholesome, Christ-like lives in the midst of corruption. They have not defiled their garments.**

**The word “defile” is used with reference to dyeing coloring something. They haven’t stained their garments. They haven’t polluted their garments. It could even be translated “smeared their garments.”**

**Garments have reference to character.**

**True believers are so identified later in the book of Revelation.**

**19th chapter, verse 7: “Let us rejoice and be glad and give glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready, and it was given to her to clothe herself in the fine linen, bright and clean.” Fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**

**Revelation, Chapter 7: 14: “He said to me, ‘These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’”**

**We’re talking here about believers who’ve made their garments white in the blood of the Lamb, who are covered by the righteousness of Christ, imputed to them as if fine linen was their garment.**

**Verses 2 and 3: “Wake up.” . . What does that mean? Assess your condition; look around you. Wake up. Be alert; watch.**

**Verse 3, “If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief and you will not know what hour I will come to you.”**

**Whenever the Lord talks about coming like a thief, it’s in judgment.**

**1 Thessalonians Chapter 5:2- “You, yourself know full well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. And while they are saying, “Peace and safety!” destruction will come on them.”**

**Coming as a thief in the night is coming at an unknown moment for the purpose of doing harm, of destruction. Thieves comes to do harm.**

**“Destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief.”**

Christ is coming, not as a thief to the believer. We welcome His coming. We open the doors for Him to come. We say with John, “Even so, come Lord Jesus.” He’s coming to us as a welcome Lord, and we want Him to come – the sooner, the better.

The second word is “strengthen.” **“Strengthen the things that remain which were about to die.”** This would be to the believers. **“Rescue what remains. Rescue what is left. There’s still some hope.”**

And then in **Verse 3: “Remember. Remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent.”**

**Strengthen what is still alive, even if it’s barely alive. Remember what you received and heard from the apostles, of course, from the Lord. Hold it and repent, wherever repentance is near, wherever it’s available. Wherever it’s possible: repent, turn. And if you don’t do these things, I will come to destroy you.”**

To the dead: “Watch, repent.” To the sleeping: “Remember, repent.” To the faithful: “Strengthen, hold on to the truth.” This is amazingly, amazingly precise careful counsel to people who are believers in a dead church, and the dead people as well.

**Verse 5 . “He who overcomes.”**

**1 John 5:5. “Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”** When he picks up the term “overcomer,” He’s referring to someone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

**To those of you who overcome the world, you will thus be clothed in white garments, you will thus be clothed in white garments.”**

And what He means by that is the garments of righteousness that we mentioned earlier, and ultimately, Revelation, chapter 19, “the garments of glory.” White is the brilliance of glory.

**Revelation 19. “If you will repent and remember, and strengthen and hold fast, if you will overcome by your faith in Christ, you will be clothed in white garments, the faithful garments of eternity: eternal life.”**

**And I will not erase his name from the Book of Life.”** That’s a very important promise.

God will never erase the name of His own out of the Book of Life. Be an overcomer; put your trust in Christ. Believe in Christ Jesus as the Son of God and you will be eternally clothed in white garments; and even when you die, your name will never be erased from the Book of Life.

**Revelation 20:12, “I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life, and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.”**

The dead, unconverted, are judged by books that keep a record of their sin. But our names are in the Book of Life.

One final hopeful comment at the end of **verse 5**: **“And I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. If you will repent – wake up, repent – remember, put your trust in.**

In **Matthew 10:32**, Jesus said this: **“Whoever confesses Me before men, I’ll confess before My Father who is in heaven.”** Genuine faith in Christ means that we receive all these promises: eternal life, never to be removed, and to be confessed as Christ’s own before His Father, before the holy angels.

**Verse 6: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”**

