

Revelation 3:1-6

I. The Church At Sardis (3:1-6)

A. The Splendid City of Sardis (3:1a)

1. The city of Sardis was the capital city of **Lydia**.
2. It was a strong commercial center
 - a. It was known as an immensely **wealthy** city
 - b. Dr. McGee says that it was the first city to **mint coins**.
 - c. It was the center of the **carpet** industry.
3. The city was destroyed by the **Greek** army in **3rd** century B.C.
4. The city was rebuilt and destroyed by an earthquake in **17** A.D.
5. Emperor Tiberius rebuilt the city after the earthquake, but it was finally destroyed in 1402 A.D.
6. The city sported several temples to false gods and goddesses.

B. The Spiritual Condition of Sardis

1. Due to the worship of false gods, the people were **immoral** in their living.
2. Due to their deep feeling of indebtedness to Tiberius, there were involved in **emperor worship**.

C. The Supernatural Church of Sardis

1. The origin of the church is **unknown**.
2. The city is only mentioned three times in scripture with all three being in the Revelation.
3. Evidently, the church seemed **alive** but in reality it was dead and orthodox.
4. The Sardis church represents the period of time from 1517 A.D. to 1800 A.D.
 - a. This is the era from the **Reformation** to the **Great Missionary Movement** of the church.
 - b. It started with the nailing of the **Ninety - Five Thesis** to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany by Martin Luther.

- D. The Sovereign Counselor of the Church of Sardis (3:1b): Jesus says He “hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars;”
1. Jesus says He has the seven Spirits of God.
 - a. Dr. Cohen says that He possesses “the all-seeing, all-present Holy Spirit.” (Seven being a picture of the perfect Holy Spirit)
 - b. Jesus reminds the church that their **true condition** was not hidden by their **outward appearance**. God, the Holy Spirit, sees the **Hearts** !!
 2. Jesus says that He holds the seven stars.
 - a. This is a reference back to chapter 1
 - b. He reminds the Sardis Church that He is in control of the **Churches**.
- E. The Superb Commendation of the Church of Sardis – (3:4)
 “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.”
1. Jesus said there were a “few” who had remained faithful and had not **defiled** their testimonies (23)
 2. Defiled means to **stain, contaminate, or pollute**.
 3. **Faithfulness** in this **earthly** life brings reward in the **kingdom** life.
- F. The Stinging Chastening of the Church of Sardis (3:1c)
 “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. ”
1. They had a **lively** testimony, but their labor was **lifeless**.
 2. They were seemingly **vibrant** but, in reality, they were critically **ill**.
- G. The Stern Counsel to the Church of Sardis (3:2-3)
1. Their condition did not have to be terminal. The antidote was found in their obedience to the **command** of verse 2: **Watch** and **Strengthen**.
 2. Remember what you have been taught to do and DO IT!
 3. Jesus promised destruction which was literally fulfilled by the Turkish army in **1402**.
- H. The Solemn Challenge to the Church of Sardis (2:5-6): Jesus promises all overcomers “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.”
1. The overcomer is the one who is victorious by **faith** in the **blood** of **Christ**.
- (Rev 12:11) And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

(Rom 4:5) But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

2. That person shall be clothed in a robe of white - a **wedding garment**.

(Mat 22:11-13) And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: {12} And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. {13} Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

3. Note that upon acceptance of Christ, confession is made to the Father and **angels**

(Luke 12:8-9) Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: {9} But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

4. Dr. Woolvard's explanation of this passage:

Some have indicated that there is not explicit statement here that anybody will have his name blotted out, but rather the promise that his name will not be blotted out because of faith in Christ. The implication, however, is that such is a possibility. On the basis of this, some have considered the book of life not as the roll of those who are saved, but a list of those for whom Christ died, that is, all humanity who have possessed physical life. As they come to maturity and are faced with the responsibility of accepting or rejecting Christ, their names are blotted out if they fail to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour; whereas those who do accept Christ as Saviour are confirmed in their position in the book of life, and their names are confessed before the Father and the heavenly angels.