

## Revelation 3v1-6: Letter to the Church at Sardis

### V1: The Recipient Church (Sardis) is Identified

Sardis = the 3<sup>rd</sup> church in the trio of worsening conditions after Pergamos and Thyatira.

In Sardis, there are only "**a few names**" (ch3v4) remaining worthy & undefiled.

Sardis means '*escaped*' or '*those escaping out from*', prophetically representing the period of Church history commencing with the Protestant Reformation, with the recovery of basic Bible & gospel truth such as the doctrine of justification by faith, but which has degenerated into the lifeless formal systems of 'Protestantism' today.

### V1: The Lord is Introduced (links with ch1v16)

He is the One in possession of fullness of life & fullness of light.

He has "**the seven Spirits of God**", the 1 Spirit of God in fullness of manifestation & power; the Spirit's leading & unhindered movements is the only answer for any church which is about to die.

The fullness of the Spirit of God dwells within Him; He only is able to determine accurately what is truly spiritual & heavenly in character.

He has "**the seven stars**" held securely in His right hand (ch1v16); He controls with sovereignty His messengers of light for the churches, that there might be a ministry of recovery & strengthening, to restore fruitful testimony for God.

### V1: The Condition is Observed - No Specific Commendation is Given

Sardis was a lifeless church which lacked the vitality of spiritual life, possibly there was much false profession among the company and the Lord knows that their works were essentially dead works.

There is the awful possibility of being taken up with a mere formal & lifeless profession of Christianity, but lacking true reality & vitality.

### V2-3: The Counsel is Imparted

The need for watchfulness; historically, Sardis had on 2 previous occasions fallen to enemy attacks because its occupants had failed to watch and properly guard the city.

The need for strengthening; through steadfastness & faithfulness to God's Word.

'Protestantism' has not completed what God commenced at the time of the Reformation.

The need to remember truth previously received, hold fast & repent of present failure.

### **V3: The Warning is Given**

Christ would visit them in judgment **“as a thief”**, with no immediate prior warning. The coming of the Lord **“as a thief”** is usually connected with the day of the Lord and His appearing as the Son of man in judgment upon an ungodly & sleeping world that lies in darkness (see Matt 24v43, 1<sup>st</sup> Thess 5v2, 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3v10, Rev 16v15), when His coming will be both unexpected & unpleasant for unbelieving humanity.

It should not be so when He comes for His Church at the rapture; **“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief”** (1<sup>st</sup> Thess 5v4).

But for the many false professing ones of Christendom, the only aspect of the Lord’s coming they will know of will be His unexpected appearing in judgment **“as a thief”**.

For believers who are not watching for His coming, who are worldly in their outlook, the Lord’s coming at the rapture will have that same unexpected character.

### **V4-5: Promises for a Faithful Overcoming Remnant**

At Sardis, **“a few names”**, a minority remnant of the company who were **“worthy”**.

These few had not become defiled by the moral corruption of this world, they had kept themselves **“unspotted from the world”** (James 1v27). They proved the reality of their cleansing at salvation by staying clean.

Once we lose our distinctiveness from the world around us, and become defiled by it, we are no longer fit to bear public testimony for God & Christ, we can no longer be **“a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use”** (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2v21).

These faithful & undefiled & worthy ones **“shall walk with Me in white”**, i.e. they will walk in purity with the glorified Lord, enjoying intimate communion with Him.

The spiritual overcomers **“shall be clothed in white raiment”**, openly displaying the righteous character they had wrought out on the earth (see Rev 19v8).

Every believer has their individual name written indelibly & inscribed eternally in **“the book of life”**, never to be blotted out, i.e. assurance of the believer’s eternal security.

The Lord said **“rejoice, because your names are written in heaven”** (Luke 10v20).

The Lord **“will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels”**, (see also Matt 10v32-33); believers will always be acknowledged, unbelievers will be disowned.

**V6: The Challenge is Made** - To the remnant only, the appeal is made to continue to have an open ear, to hear the voice of the Spirit.