

The book of Revelation

3:1-6

Welcome to the weekly verse-by-verse bible study in the book of Revelation.
Make sure you pray before you start this, or any bible study.

Over the last several weeks we have been studying in the book of Revelation and the letters to the seven churches. This week we read the fifth letter to the church in Sardis.

✉ **Rev 3:1-6** ¹ *"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,*

"These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."² "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. ³ "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. ⁴ "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. ⁶ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." "

Reading the letters to the churches causes us to look at our own lives, and think or wonder, which church does my life represent, or how can I apply what Jesus says to these churches to my own life and walk with Jesus?

Reading this letter to the church in Sardis, we find that we do not want to be a part of, or even like this church. But is there a little of Sardis in us? I suppose we will have to see as we study this letter.

✉ *And to the angel of the church in Sardis write*

Sardis was the chief city of Lydia and was known for arts and crafts, and it was the first center to mint gold and silver coinage. The king of Lydia became a legend for riches. Yet in 17 A.D., the great earthquake ruined Sardis physically as well as financially. Even though the Romans contributed 10,000,000 sesterces in relief, the city never recovered.

What is a sesterces? *A silver or bronze coin of ancient Rome equivalent to one fourth of a denarius.* A solidus would make around 900 – 1200 sesterces a year.
Think of it as you making \$900.00 - \$1200.00 a year, verses \$10,000,000.00 (Ten million) of relief that was sent.

So reading this you could imagine that the people, as well as the government, were probably very well off, hence what Jesus said: ***“I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”***

Jesus goes on to say:

✠ These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars

We read about the seven Spirits of God in chapters 1, 4 & 5 of Revelation.

✠ Rev 1:4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

✠ Rev 4:5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

✠ Rev 5:6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

A few commentaries I read attribute these seven Spirits of God as the Holy Spirit or the fullness of the power of God. I know when I get to heaven; it's something I look forward to seeing, because there are a lot of things that we just don't fully understand because we haven't seen them, such as these seven Spirits of God. John tried to explain them in Rev 5:6 ***having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*** But as hard as John tried to explain it, we won't fully understand it until we get to heaven.

It's like in the book of John, with the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. In this conversation about being born again, Nicodemus just couldn't understand it, and Jesus said to him.

✠ John 3:12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Yet, how many people think they know more than God or better how to handle things than God? Before you question God, and what He does, then you should read the last few chapters in the book of Job.

***✠ Job 38:1-11 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:
"Who is this who darkens counsel
By words without knowledge?
Now prepare yourself like a man;***

*I will question you, and you shall answer Me.
"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have understanding.
Who determined its measurements?
Surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?
To what were its foundations fastened?
Or who laid its cornerstone,
When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
"Or who shut in the sea with doors,
When it burst forth and issued from the womb;
When I made the clouds its garment,
And thick darkness its swaddling band;
When I fixed My limit for it,
And set bars and doors;
When I said,
'This far you may come, but no farther,
And here your proud waves must stop!'*

So just because we may not understand about the seven Spirits of God, doesn't mean you are not saved or that you are stupid. It just means that you are just like the rest of us, wanting to know, but will not fully know until we get to heaven.

In regards to the seven stars, we read about them in chapter one.

† **Rev 1:20** *"The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches."*

The word angel could also be interpreted as Messenger:

† **Hag 1:13** *Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, spoke the LORD's message to the people, saying, "I am with you, says the LORD. "*

Which would represent a human messenger and not an angelic one; Therefore these seven stars could be the actual pastors of the churches.

☩ *I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.*

Namedroppers (*that you have a name*), you know the type, those who will throw out names of so-called important people that they know or have met. We are so big on names and use names to represent greatness of things done by that person. Whether it be a movie star, a politician, a musical performer, a teacher or pastor, or just someone well known in the community, we are quick to let others know that we know him or her or have at least shook their hand.

Riches and names mean nothing to God, yet so many people think that they do, including Christians, be it famous pastors or worship teams, or great evangelists. Isn't it time we stop putting so much emphasis on them! Even the world has its way of doing it as well by making a big deal about so and so getting Covid, or dying, or this actor/musician said such and such so we need to listen. My response always is, "What part of actor do you not understand?" just because someone famous says something, it does not mean everyone has to stop and listen. Yet everyone does and so many in the world count what they say as gospel. But start quoting the bible and how many people ignore it (the true Gospel) and walk away. They would rather listen to a hypocrite (actor) than the truth (the bible).

But how often do we leave out the most important name?

† ***Acts 4:9-12 "If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."***

How often do we give man the glory and not God or Jesus?

How often do we get to be a namedropper and plug in the name of Jesus, yet we choose not to?

Read these words of Jesus again and think about what it is saying.

✎ ***I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.***

Most people that come to this website know me simply as Steve, the guy who teaches here. But Steve will not save you from your sins.

Steve's words do not give life.

Steve does not heal the hurting.

Steve is just a normal person just like you.

Forget the name of Steve and ALWAYS remember the name of JESUS ***for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.***

Who have you been telling others about lately?

Is this person able to save them from their sins?

Does this person have the power to heal others?

Does this person have a bunch of money?

Maybe they do, but can they say:

† ***Psalms 50:10 For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills.***

Are they alive in Jesus Christ or are they dead in their sins?

If dead in their sins, then why would you want to tell others about such a person, no matter how much they have done?

Can this person help you or others just like, or better than Jesus can?

When you are brought before others and you are asked, ***“And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, “By what power or by what name have you done this?” Acts 4:7b***

Whose name will you use?

✠ **Colossians 3:17 (KJV) *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.***

If not the name of Jesus, then who is your hope in?

The church in Sardis was known for the wealthy people in the city, and no matter whose name was given, it meant nothing to Jesus. When you are before the throne of God, the only name God is interested in is the name of His Son Jesus, and what you did with His name.

Did you use it for God’s glory or as a curse word? So many of us used to use the name of Jesus as part of our vocabulary as a curse word, but God has changed our hearts that we now only use the name of Jesus as the name of our God and Savior, and when we speak it out, it’s to bring Him glory and praise!

Did you have the opportunity to tell others about Him, yet instead you told them about someone else?

Jesus goes on to tell them (and us)

✧ ***“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.”***

You can work and work until you are blue in the face, but unless you are doing it by the power of the Holy Spirit, your work is in vain, and you will not have any fruit from your labor.

Remember the church in Ephesus who did so much, yet left their first love? This church had its first love, Jesus, yet they gave more glory to man than Jesus. It was time for this church to stop thinking on earthly terms and stop giving glory to man, ***“for I have not found your works perfect before God”***, and return to the first works of serving the Lord and giving Him the glory ***“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.”*** If not them what little they had left in them would soon die.

In this next verse, we have a simple formula here we can call the three “R’s”:

“Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent.”
(underlined for emphasis)

Remember: We so quickly seem to forget why we are saved and Who saved us.

† Eph 2:13 (NLT) *But now you belong to Christ Jesus. Though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought near to him because of the blood of Christ.*

Received: We received salvation through Jesus Christ because someone told us about Jesus. Are we doing it for others as well?

† Psalms 96:2 *Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.*

† Isaiah 52:7 *How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who proclaims peace,
Who brings glad tidings of good things,
Who proclaims salvation,
Who says to Zion,
"Your God reigns!"*

Repent: The one word which most people cringe when they hear it, but it simply means to turn from the wrong way that you are going.

† Job 42:6 *Therefore I abhor myself,
And repent in dust and ashes."*

† Ezek 14:6 *"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:
"Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations.*

† Mark 1:14-15 *Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee,
preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled,
and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

For those of you who have walked away from the Lord, it's time for you to **Remember** what you have **Received** and **Repent** of your sins?

Jesus has a warning to those who don't in this letter to Sardis and to us.

✠ *Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.*

Jesus tells us about such a time when He was here walking among us.

† Matt 24:42-44 *"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be*

broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

What if I told you that Jesus would return tomorrow at exactly 10:07AM, what would you do?

The thing is that we do not know when Jesus is returning to take His bride (the church/us as believers) home. So shouldn't we always be prepared for His return? You may answer yes, but the question is, are you ready?

You may be thinking, "*Yea, I've heard this a thousand times, but still Jesus hasn't returned, so I still have time.*" For those, Jesus says to you.

† **Luke 12:45-46** ***"But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."***

† **Mark 13:37** ***"And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"***

Very simply, stop making up excuses for the life you are living and **Watch** for the return of Jesus, because:

† **1 Cor 15:51-52** ***Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.***

When the time comes, will you be lifted up, or left behind?

Yet not all in Sardis were like this, and Jesus says to them (and us who are not):

✠ ***"You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy."***

Even though the church in Sardis was one of the seven main churches, there were not many who were actually following Jesus Christ. They had turned church into a club, or a meeting place to find out the latest gossip about someone, or just a place to meet with their friends. You could almost say that it became the thing to do.

So the question we should be asking ourselves is: Has church become a club to me, or do I just go because I have to or think it's the right thing to do?

The purpose of going to church is to

- ☺ Learn: ***Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. 2 Thess 2:15***
- ☺ Minister and the building up of others (not yourself): ***for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ Eph 4:12***
- ☺ and worshipping the Lord together. ***Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. Psalms 34:3***

Even in home groups, we can spend so much time visiting that we soon seem to forget why we are there in the first place, and it's not to be a part of a club.

☺ ***"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."***

White garments represent purity, and we are pure because of what Jesus did.

✠ ***Rev 7:14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.***

Before Jesus came into our lives, we were like dirty filthy clothes and no matter how hard we tried to clean them, the stains of our sins seemed to never go away. Usually when a garment is so stained, its good for nothing other than a rag or to just be thrown away. Yet, even though the world wanted nothing to do with us because we were so bad, Jesus choose to cleanse us from our sins and make us white as snow, cleaner than clean, newer than new.

So, now comes the big question that a lot of people wonder and ask when they read Jesus words of, ***"and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life"***

And that question is, "Can you loose your salvation?"

I will give you a straightforward answer, You can loose your car keys, your cell phone, but not your salvation!

"Yea, but this verse says that you can." You may be thinking.

If you are saved then Jesus says:

✠ ***John 10:28-30 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."***

So the question really is, not can you lose your salvation, but rather, were you ever saved? Just because you mimicked a prayer spoken by the pastor on a Sunday morning or during an Easter service does not mean that you are saved, because it's more than just saying words that someone told you to say.

✠ **Romans 10:9** *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

You also must *believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead*, not just your head, which means that you must believe with your heart and not just repeat what you are told to say. If I tell you to repeat these words after me, "I am the king of England" and you do, does that make you the king of England?

Jesus also said: *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."* **Mark 1:15**

Just because you speak the words, did you really want to turn (or repent) from your sins, or were you just looking for fire insurance, thinking, "I said the prayer, so I'm now saved" yet you continue to live like hell. If you did, then that just tells me that you only repeated what someone told you to, but those words were not from your heart, and you really didn't mean them.

By turning to Jesus, you must believe that Jesus is God, and walked this earth. That Jesus died for all your sins, and rose from the dead on the third day, and is alive in heaven right now. Along with believing these things you must also choose to turn from your sinful life and want a new life in Jesus Christ, that also includes, no more parties, drunkenness, drugs, sex outside of marriage and so on. If you still want these things, then you don't want Jesus, you just want fire insurance (The fires of hell) but Jesus is not selling fire insurance. So, you can still have all those things, but not them and Jesus together.

Jesus said that *"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."* **Luke 16:13**

You may not like to hear these things, and you want to continue on with that relationship with that guy or girl that has you in sexual sin, or something that would take you away from your popularity at parties. But whether you like it or not, it's what the bible says, and if you choose to live your life for Jesus, you are choosing what the bible says, not what the world or your friends say.

Finally Jesus says to us all, *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

Has the Lord spoken to you today?

Have you heard what He is saying to you, as well as this church in Sardis?

So, what are you going to do with what the Lord has shown you?

Well, that's it for this week. I know it was a tough one for some of you, but seek the Lord and He will help you through whatever you may be going through. Next week the letter to the church in Philadelphia, the church we all desire to be like.

May the Lord richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy, and may you choose to Remember, Receive and Repent, all for the glory of God!