

## Revelation 3:1-6 - Church at Sardis

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COURSE COMMENTARY



### 3:1 - Sardis - introduction

#### Temple of Artemis (Cybele) at Sardis



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- 1) Ancient capital of Lydia.
- 2) A mountain fortress, but fell twice due to lack of watchfulness ([Rev. 3:2-3](#)).
- 3) Large temple dedicated to Greek Artemis (Asiatic goddess Cybele).
- 4) Modern Turkish village of Sart.

### 3:1 - Sardis - title

- **seven Spirits of God**

Christ emphasizes that He is the source of the seven Spirits of God ([John 15:26](#); [16:7](#)) because this church is **dead**. As Adam was animated by the *breath of God* ([Gen. 2:7](#)) so too is the *body of Christ* animated by the *Holy Spirit* ([1Cor. 12:12-13](#)). This fellowship was led by men, not by the Spirit.

- **seven stars**

The stars are the angels ([Rev. 1:20](#)). If elders, they are to be men "full of the spirit" ([Acts 6:3-5](#);

11:24).

### 3:1 - Sardis - criticism

- **you have a name that you are alive**  
The church *appears* alive to men, but not to God. Lacking the Spirit, the Sardian church could not see themselves as God saw them. Their *name* represented their fame or reputation before men. They were walking in the sin of Babel ([Gen. 11:4](#)).
- **but you are dead**  
The church had an outward form, but its heart was far from Christ. Their *activity* was mistaken for *spiritual productivity*. This "active fellowship" was made up mostly of the "living dead" ([Mat. 8:22](#); [Luke 9:60](#); [1Ti. 5:6](#)).

### 3:2 - Sardis - exhortation

- **be watchful**  
A present tense imperative: (*you*) *be continually watching!* The Sardian church was weighed down with the cares of this life ([Luke 21:34-36](#)). If they would not watch, He would come upon them as a thief ([Rev. 3:3](#)).
- **strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die**  
The church had a name before men, but was actually almost devoid of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their midst.
- **not found your works perfect before God**  
"Works" is *peplerome'na*, indicating works previously appointed, but **unfulfilled** ([Eph. 2:10](#)). Their works were impressive to *men*, but counted for nothing *before God*. The branches were disconnected from the vine ([John 15:5](#)).
- **remember... how you have received... hold fast... repent**  
Inattention had played a significant part in their drift away from life toward death ([Heb. 2:1](#)). "Hold fast" is *te'rei*, a present tense imperative: "continually hold fast!" "Repent" is *metanoia*. See previous lesson which discussed [Revelation 2:5](#).
- **if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief**  
His coming *as a thief* describes how He comes in **judgment**, in the Day of the Lord, upon a sleeping world ([Mat. 24:37-44](#); [1Th. 5:2-10](#); [2Pe. 3:10](#)).
- **you will not know the hour**  
Only those in darkness will be overtaken by the thief ([1Th. 5:2-6](#)).

### 3:4 - Sardis - promises

- **they shall walk with me in white**  
They are presently walking with Him as guided by the Holy Spirit ([Gen. 5:22](#); [Gal. 5:16](#)). In the future, they will have full fellowship with God as did Adam in the Garden ([Gen. 3:8](#); [Rev. 21:3](#); [22:3-4](#)).

## 3:5 - Sardis - overcomer

- **He who overcomes**  
(See previous lesson covering [Revelation 2:7](#) where we discussed the identity of the [overcomer](#).)
- **clothed in white garments**  
Clothed so that their nakedness would not be revealed ([Rev. 3:18](#)). *Atonement* means "to be covered over."
- **I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life**  
The promise emphasizes that believers will *never be* blotted out! The Book of Life:
  - 1) Contains the names of all persons ever born (with exception below) ([Ex. 32:32-33](#); [Ps. 69:28](#)).
  - 2) Upon death, unredeemed are blotted out having never accepted Christ ([Rev. 3:5](#)).
  - 3) Beast worshipers are *never* written in the book ([Rev. 13:8](#); [17:8](#)).
- **but I will confess his name before My Father**  
Christ taught this same truth in the gospels ([Mat. 10:32](#); [Luke 12:8](#)). He will confess that the overcomer's name *is* written in the Book of Life.

## 3:6 - Sardis - let him hear

- **he who has an ear, let him hear**  
See previous lesson which discussed [Revelation 2:7](#).

For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).