

Lesson 7

The Letter to the Church of Sardis: Wake Up!

Revelation 3:1-6

Invite the Holy Spirit to teach and speak to you through the Word of God as you meditate on Revelation 3:1-6 every day this week.

As you read through the verses presented this week, look for a special verse to make your memory verse for the week. We will share our verses at the end of our discussion time.

1. What was a new or interesting thought from last week's lesson?

“He who overcomes shall 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.”

Revelation 3:6

Sardis was a very wealthy city that was located on a high bluff and was considered to be impregnable because of its strategic position. This sense of security could have led to a sense of complacency. Notice that there is no commendation for the church at Sardis. The only other church not to receive affirmation is the church of Laodicea.

In the history of worldwide Christendom, the letter to the church of Sardis relates to about 1517-1750 AD, the time of the Reformation. A time noted for great doctrinal correction.

2. Read Acts 19 and 20 about the huge revival that started in Ephesus and influenced all of Asia (Minor) some 40 years before John wrote the book of Revelation. Discuss what this revival would have been like for believers in that day and place.
3. Look back over the previous letters of Jesus to the churches in Revelation 2. To whom else does He picture Himself as having the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars?

4. Why do you think it was vital for the Church at Sardis to receive the empowering of the Holy Spirit? See Isaiah 11:2 and John 14:26 and I Corinthians 2:10 and discuss why we also need the Holy Spirit.
5. What difference does it make to know that Jesus holds the life of a believer in His hand? See also John 10: 27-29.
6. What is the diagnosis of Jesus about the condition of the church at Sardis according to Revelation 3:1?
7. What does “you have a name“ (“reputation” in NIV) refer to in Revelation 3:1? Can we “fake it” where Jesus is concerned?

“But you are dead” does not refer to whether or not they have received salvation. This refers to daily lives not being fueled and empowered by the Holy Spirit. One can be saved and eternally secure, but lack the fire and joy of being connected to the Lord in a vital relationship, hence “dead.”

8. What do you think Jesus is requiring when He asks that our works be perfect in Revelation 3:2? See also Matthew 5:48, Colossians 1:28 and James 1:4 and discuss.
9. What positive things does Jesus instruct the church at Sardis to do in Revelation 3: 2-3?
10. Look up the verb watch in the dictionary and discuss the meaning.
11. What warning did Paul give in Romans 13:11-14? What is the remedy?

12. Read the following verses and discuss the concept of watchfulness: Matthew 24:42-43, 25:13, 26:38, Mark 13:33-38, Luke 21:36, Acts 20:31, I Corinthians 16:12 and I Thessalonians 5:2-4, 6.

13. What are some practical ways that we can “strengthen the things that remain” (Revelation 3:2) as this phrase refers to our spiritual lives?

14. If you are in a “dry” period with the Lord, take some time to remember what it was like when you were passionate about Him. Write down what you remember and what you need to do to rekindle that love. Take some time this week to implement what you “remember.”

15. Consider the term “hold fast” (“obey it” in NIV) in Revelation 3:3. Do you think this will require effort on our part or will this happen automatically? Discuss.

16. Is the Lord calling you to repent in any specific area of your life, maybe just the drifting into complacency in your relationship with Him?

Jesus is not a thief, see John 10:10, but He says He will come “like a thief in the night.” This implies that He will come when we least expect it and are not prepared. However, if we watch and are ready, we will not suffer loss.

17. What three promises does the Lord give to those who overcome in Revelation 3:4-6?

18. The white garments of Revelation 3 are not the garments of salvation that are promised as a free gift to all who believe. How do we receive salvation according to Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:4-7?

19. The Scripture teaches that in eternity believers will be rewarded according to how we lived our lives. What does I Corinthians 3:13-15 say about this? Will we all have the same rewards? Will the Lord be fair in His judgment of us?

20. Our garments will reflect our rewards. What do I Corinthians 15:40-42 and Revelation 19:8 teach?

21. What are some righteous acts we can do today according to Romans 12:9-21, Ephesians 4:22-32, Galatians 2:10 and James 4:10?

In the ancient world, much like today, public records were kept of the lives of the citizens of a community. Items that were noted were things like property ownership, military records, valiant deeds and criminal records. Scripture clearly teaches that we cannot lose our salvation so if our names are written in the Lamb's book of life, they cannot be blotted out. But apparently our righteous deeds can be "forgotten" by God if we do not continue in them.

22. With this in mind, discuss the teaching of Ezekiel 3:20, 18:24 and 33:13-20 and II John 1:8.

23. Can you think of examples from contemporary life where someone had a life of "good deeds" but these were eclipsed because they did not continue in them?

24. What is in the Lord's Book of Remembrance according to Malachi 3:16?

25. What do you think Jesus is talking about when he says in Revelation 3:5, "I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels"?

26. Turn to the chart Section IV. Complete the portion that relates to the Church of Sardis.

27. Share the memory verse that you found through this week's study and why you chose it.

28. From your meditation this week on Revelation 3:1-6, what do you want to remember?

Lecture Notes: