

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION 22

### *The Church at Sardis*

I. (Rev. 3:1-6 NKJV) <sup>1</sup>"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. <sup>2</sup>Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

A. In Rev. 3:1, 2 Jesus gives His assessment of the church at Sardis. '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. <sup>2</sup>Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

B. They had a reputation for being a living vibrant church, but in reality, they were dead.

C. The things that remained that were still alive were at the point of death.

D. Their works were not perfect or complete with God.

E. They must have been a thriving church at one time or they would not have had a reputation of being alive.

F. This begs the question, how did this once living, thriving, vibrant church become a dead church?

G. The answer is "not overnight", but through a gradual process.

1. It began when they **lost their first love** like the church in Ephesus. (Rev. 2:4 NKJV) <sup>4</sup>Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

2. Then they began to **tolerate false doctrines and sin** in their fellowship like the church in Thyatira. (Rev. 2:19, 20 NKJV) <sup>19</sup>"I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. <sup>20</sup>Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman

*Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.*

3. Then they eventually became lukewarm towards Jesus like the church in Laodecia. (Rev. 3:15, 16 NKJV) <sup>15</sup>"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. <sup>16</sup>So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

4. Until they lost their good works and became a church in name only. (Rev. 3:2 NKJV) <sup>2</sup>Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

5. Folks, this tendency to gradually backslide over time is why revival anointing is so essential for us and the church at large.

**II. Jesus gave the remedy for their condition. (Rev. 2:2, 3 NKJV). <sup>2</sup>Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. <sup>3</sup>Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent...**

A. **Jesus gave them 5 things to do.**

B. Be watchful, strengthen, remember. hold fast, and repent.

C. Let's deal with the first one: **Be watchful.**

1. The Greek word translated be watchful here literally means keep awake or to watch 1127.

2. This speaks of individual and corporate prayer.

3. The word is used frequently in connection with praying.

4. (Matt. 26:41 NKJV) <sup>41</sup>Watch (1127) and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

5. (Col 4:2 KJV) Continue in prayer, and watch<sup>1127</sup> in the same with thanksgiving.

D. **Strengthen** the things that are at the point of death.

1. Is your love and service at the point of death? Your prayer life? Your reading of the Word? Your witnessing? Your church attendance? Your giving?

E. **Remember** how you have received and heard.

1. Go back to the foundation you heard and received in the beginning.

2. Some of you in this church are just now hearing and receiving that foundation.

F. **Hold fast** the Gospel you received.

1. Learn to hold fast your confession of faith in Jesus and the Gospel.

2. (Heb. 10:23 NKJV) <sup>23</sup>*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

G. **Repent** (Heb. 12:1 NKJV) <sup>1</sup>*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*

**III. Jesus warned them of judgment if they would not wake up and repent.** (Rev. 3:3 NKJV) <sup>3</sup>*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.*

A. Coming as a thief is a reference to the Second coming of Jesus. (1 Thess. 5:1-4 NKJV) <sup>1</sup>*But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. <sup>4</sup>But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. <sup>5</sup>You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*

B. The Day of the Lord is always a reference to the Second Coming of Christ.

C. Coming as a thief is always a reference to that Day coming upon the world of unbelievers...suddenly, and unexpectedly.

D. The Day of the Lord will not overtake believers as a thief. <sup>4</sup>*But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*

E. Therefore, Jesus is warning the church in Sardis that unless they recover themselves they will suffer the fate of unbelievers

**IV. Jesus makes a statement about those who had remained faithful in verse 4.** <sup>4</sup>*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.*

A. The white garments symbolize the righteousness of the saints. (Rev. 19:7, 8 KJV) *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

B. To defile the garments means to soil or defile their righteousness by going back to life in a lifestyle of unbelief and sin.

V. Jesus makes a promise for overcomers in verse 5. *<sup>5</sup>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.*

A. Overcomers will be clothed in white garments.

B. Only those who overcome will be clothed in white garments.

C. Only those who do not forsake Christ and return to a lifestyle of unbelief and sin will be considered righteous.

D. Jesus will not blot out their names from the book of Life.

1. There is a Book of Life. (Rev. 20:11-15 NKJV) *<sup>11</sup>Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup>The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup>Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup>And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

2. Our names are written in the Book of Life when we are born again and become members of Christ's body, the church.

3. Your name must be written in the Book of Life before it can be blotted out. You cannot blot out something that isn't there.

4. If it were not possible to have your name blotted out of the Book of Life by going back into a lifestyle of unbelief and sin then this would be a vain threat.

E. Jesus will confess the names of overcomers before His Father and His angels.

1. This implies that overcomers are those who maintain their confession of Jesus Christ before men.

2. (Matt. 10:32, 33 NKJV) *<sup>32</sup>"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. <sup>33</sup>But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*

