

Prayer:

In Revelation 19:10, it says that “**the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**” This means that the ultimate focal point of prophecy is centered in Jesus. The book of Revelation begins with the words, “**The Revelation of Jesus Christ.**” The book of Revelation is at once a book from Jesus and about Jesus.

The book of Revelation, in an orderly fashion, takes all the prophetic truth of Scripture and brings it all to a glorious culmination as centered in the Person of Christ. It’s all about Jesus. This is the emphasis of Revelation 1, emphasizing WHO He is. Then it’s all about what Jesus is doing in the world right NOW – the present, which is what Revelation 2-3 is all about. He is presently building His church. And then Revelation 4-22 is all about what follows the Church Age.

Slide # 1

Revelation 1:19 – Inspired Outline

Revelation 1:19 (NKJV)

19 “Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

- “have seen” – Past (Vision of Christ) – **Ch. 1**
- “**which are**” – **Present (Church Age)** – Ch. 2-3
- “after this” – Future (Post-Church Age) – Ch. 4-22
- - Scene in heaven – Ch. 4-5
- - Tribulation – Ch. 6-18
- - Second Coming – Ch. 19
- - Kingdom – Ch. 20
- - Eternal State – Ch. 21-22

Christ’s last message is to the churches as seen in the book of Revelation. He doesn’t so much address individuals as He does churches. It is expected that true believers will be involved in local churches. And so, 7 representative local churches are addressed. What Christ has to say to these 7 local churches has application to all local churches throughout the entire church age. This is where we live.

Slide # 2***Christ's Message to the Churches***

Rev. 2:1-7 – Ephesus: Loveless Orthodoxy

Rev. 2:8-11 – Smyrna: Persecution & Purity

Rev. 2:12-17 – Pergamos: Tolerating Sin in the Fellowship

Rev. 2:18-29 – Thyatira: Tolerating Idolatry in the Fellowship

Rev. 3:1-6 – ***Sardis: A Dead Church With a Reputation for Life***

Rev. 3:7-13 - Philadelphia: The Church With An Open Door

Rev. 3:14-22 – Laodicea: The Apostate Church

Today we are studying Christ's address to the church at Sardis.

Slide # 3

Sardis was an old city, going back in history to at least 1200 years before the time of Christ. It was built at the foot of a mountain with a natural fortress of steep rocky cliffs ranging from 800 to 1500 feet on 3 sides. These cliffs were virtually unscalable. Therefore, this city was a great fortress and prided itself on being impregnable. However, twice it was overcome because of a lack of watchfulness; once in 549 B.C. by Cyrus of Persia and again in 218 B.C. by Antiochus the Great. And both times it happened because of negligence in which the guards failed to be **WATCHFUL!**

The town was also known for a **great temple** to its patron goddess Artemis (the goddess of fertility), which eventually came to have a Christian Church built right across from it. It was known for a number of mystery cults – secret religious societies related to various pagan gods. About 2 miles outside of town were **hot springs**, which the locals considered to be visible manifestations of the god from below. This god supposedly had the power to restore life.

Sardis also had an elaborate cemetery which could be seen from 7 miles away, which also tied into the worship of Artemis that involved belief in death and rebirth. They also practiced emperor worship, etc.

The city had previously been **very wealthy**. It had been a great commercial and industrial city at the junction of 5 trade routes. It had been the ancient capital of Lydia. In the 6th century B.C., under the famed king Croesus (Kresus – called Midas by the Greeks), it was known as one of the GREATEST cities in the world. Croesus was exceedingly wealthy. A saying yet used today is” Rich as Croesus”. Sardis was known to be the first place to mint silver and gold coins. One commentator says, “Sardis was the place where modern money was born.” (Barclay) Sardis was well-to-do but also decadent. The famed author **Aesop (Esop)** of Aesop’s Fables was from here. The city was also known for **industries related to woolen garments, dye**, and jewelry.

In AD 17 it suffered a great earthquake from which it never totally recovered. At the time of John’s writing, the glory days of this city were in the past, but they still gloried in the reputation of yesteryear. Today, only a little town remains, which is called Sart.

Some of the remains of the ancient city of Sardis still remain intact.

Slide # 4



Revelation 3:1–6 (NKJV)

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.

The word “angel” literally means “messenger,” and here most commentators believe it is in reference to the key messenger of the church, which is commonly called the lead pastor or pastor-teacher. Note that this messenger in Christ’s address is representative of what the church stands for.

Slide # 5**Revelation 3:1 (NKJV)**

1 “And to **the angel** [singular] of the church in Sardis write, ‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know **your** [singular] works, that **you** [singular] have a name that **you** [singular] are alive, but **you** [singular] are dead.

It’s as though Christ is addressing this messenger as representative of the church. This messenger sets the tone for the entire church and is responsible for what defines the church. What an awesome responsibility!

The introductory words, “***These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars***” tie in with the vision of Christ in chapter 1:4, 16, 20. The language of “seven Spirits” or “seven Spirits of God” is mentioned four times in the book (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).

Christ’s introduction to each church relates to an **emphasis** He wants to make in connection with the character of that specific church. Here Christ immediately emphasizes “***the seven Spirits of God***,” which we believe is a designation for the Holy Spirit, going back to the OT references of Isaiah 11:2-5 and Zech. 4:2-6.

The procession of the Spirit is from Christ as He sent the Spirit (Jn. 15:26). Christ is operative in the Church through the Spirit. So identified is Christ with the Spirit and His work that Romans 8:9 says, “Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his.” Again, in Colossians 1:27, it says, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Indeed, the Spirit and Christ are distinct, and yet there is an intimate, interrelated working relationship. The Spirit gives life to the Church, and this Church was largely DEAD.

Therefore, Christ emphasizes His relationship to the Spirit, which underscores the importance of His ministry. Our representative in heaven is Christ. His representative in the church is the Holy Spirit – unless of course those claiming to be the church are DEAD. As Paul said to the Corinthians, “Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified.” (2 Cor. 13:5)

The answer to the deadness in the church lie in the life-giving Spirit. The Spirit is the life-giver. A dead Church does not have the Spirit. Just as the body without the spirit is dead – a local church without the spirit is DEAD.

Slide # 6**Zechariah 4:2 (NKJV)**

2 And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand **seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps.**

Zechariah 4:5–6 (NKJV)

5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."

6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, **but by My Spirit,**' Says the LORD of hosts.

Seven, in some combination, is clearly used here in reference to symbolically representing the Holy Spirit. Seven is the number of perfection or completion. This emphasizes the all-sufficiency of the Spirit at work in connection with Christ in relation to the church.

Christ is shown to have the Spirit in connection with the seven stars, which are shown to be the seven messengers of the seven churches as seen in 1:20. Christ works through the Spirit Who in turn works through His messengers. This is similar to the emphasis in Rev. 22:17 where it says, "the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!'" emphasizing the combination of the Spirit's work in conjunction with that of Christ's people.

In 1:16 and 20, these seven stars are found to be in Christ's right hand. This emphasizes Christ's sovereign authority and control over these KEY leaders/messengers in the church. Leaders are uniquely accountable to the Lordship authority of Christ (cf. James 3:1).

Slide # 7**James 3:1 (NKJV)**

1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that **we shall receive a stricter judgment.**

I remember a young man who complained that the little church over which he presided was so small. He said, "I cannot do much good. I have not above two hundred hearers." An older man replied, "Two hundred hearers are a great many to have to give an account of at the last great day." As I came in at yonder door this evening, and looked into these thousands of faces, I could not help trembling. –

Charles Spurgeon in his sermon "*The Unkept Vineyard; or, Personal Work Neglected*" – Sept. 19, 1886

Christ to the messenger – representing the church says, “***I know your works***”. To each of the churches, Christ begins by saying, “***I know***”. This speaks to His omniscience – He is all-knowing. He knew what they were doing – all their activities. And in this case, what He knew was not good. He knew they were going through the motions – making it look good, but it was not good. In fact, Jesus has nothing good to say to the church at large – only that there is a faithful remnant. The censure of this church is surpassed only by that of Laodicea – the completely apostate church. Jesus says that He knows they “***have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.***”

That was stunning! Human evaluation had it all wrong! This church had a great REPUTATION – A NAME for being a live church. They prided themselves on what a great church they were! They may have prided themselves on their social work and their respect in the community. They were known as a really good church full of life, but in reality, Christ says they are DEAD. This was a lifeless church, but they were going through all the outward motions. They undoubtedly had the programs. They had activities. They were social. They were busy. But they were DEAD!

In effect, this church had “***Igabod***” (the glory has departed) written all over it. Christ tells them they are a DEAD Church. What could be worse than that?

Frankly, this is **scary!** A church can look like it is alive, have a reputation for being alive, have lots of people, convince others it is a great church, and yet before Christ be DEAD!

I believe that dead churches after the rapture will carry on like nothing happened. It is possible for churches to do “church” without life, without the Holy Spirit. It is possible for them to have a semblance of life, claiming to be spiritually healthy and yet be essentially DEAD. That is **scary**. This is a church that had a reputation. This would have been a church that would have been highly recommended. And yet Christ says I know your reputation for being an alive church, but in fact I KNOW you are DEAD!

This church was full of NOMINAL Christianity – people who were Christian in name only. They were going through the motions, but with no real SPIRITUAL POWER, no supernatural activity from the empowering of the Spirit. The church was full of mere PROFESSORS who weren’t really possessors.

This church is not addressed in terms of heresy. Neither do we see any persecution in relation to this church. This church was just complacent – not watchful – just doing its “churchy” thing while being stained and compromised by the culture around it.

“The church was at peace – the peace of the dead.” – **Charles Ryrie**

“When the Great Physician felt their pulse, He pronounced them dead.” - **Leman Strauss**

Like the Pharisees, their outer appearance was a facade hiding their lack of life (cf. Matt. 23:27–28).

– **The Bible Knowledge Commentary**

“Protestantism today, as a whole, has a name that it lives, but it is dead. Many Protestant Churches today are just going through the form. They are building all the time, and people are coming, especially on Sunday mornings... This is a frightful condemnation and is a picture of Protestantism today.” – **J Vernon McGee**

Its inclusion [the church at Sardis] in the seven can best be attributed to the fact that many local churches are similar to it, and it best typifies the churches that start out well but lose their spiritual fervency after a generation or two and begin to live on their past laurels.

– **Tim LaHaye**

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

“Be watchful” is also translated as “wake up”. Be alert, shake yourself out of complacency. Many believe this language is building on the history of the city, which twice fell because they failed to be WATCHFUL!

In some ways, the history of the church seems to parallel that of the city. They had seen the glory days and are now were still living on the reputation of yesteryear. The city had fallen because it failed to be watchful, and now this same reality has application to the church.

There were some things that remained, but they were weak and needed to be strengthened. This was a DEAD church, and where it wasn’t dead, it was on LIFE SUPPORT! Even the little bit they had going for them was about to die off. This church needed REVIVAL!

Jesus says, “***I have not found your works perfect before God.***”

Perfect is the idea of complete, fulfilled, or acceptable. They had a great start but didn't finish what God had purposed for them. They were sprinters in a marathon race. They got off to a great start but sputtered out and are ready to die before the finish line. Not finishing is the worst!

Note the emphasis on “***before God.***” Before, people they looked pretty good and impressive, having a great reputation. However, before God, they were dead, sleepy, weak, ready to die, and incomplete in their works.

Application is often made to the post-Reformation church. Some great things were started in the Reformation. Sola Scriptura was the cry of the Reformation – Scripture Alone! But in various areas, the reformers didn't go far enough, and it resulted in a largely dead church as Protestantism went along. And that's where we are today! The protestant church, in general, is largely DEAD! They are no longer protesting anything!

Various areas of doctrine could be mentioned, such as prophecy and a proper theology of Israel and the Church, but in particular, in terms of application, I want to mention three areas that Protestantism has been INCOMPLETE IN.

1. ***The Sacraments***: Although they rejected 5 out of the 7 sacraments of Roman Catholicism, yet Calvin and Luther continued to hold on to baptism and Communion as sacraments (that is, as a means of grace), and this became a deadening thing in the church.
2. ***Infant Baptism***: This was a carryover from the Catholic Church. Wherever there is infant baptism, there tends to be baptismal regeneration that follows. That is a killer (spiritually speaking).
3. ***The separation of Church and state***. Union of Church and state always results in the deadening of the Church.

I do appreciate many of the things the Reformers stood for, but in my view, these 3 issues were grossly incomplete and were especially critical in the development of a DEAD Protestant Church, which continues on to this very day. I really identify with the solid branch of the radical reformers who rejected infant baptism and believed in the separation of church and state.

The metaphor has changed from death to sleep. You cannot appeal to a dead man to wake up! But some church members were sleepy rather than dead, and the risen Jesus calls them to rouse themselves from their heavy slumbers and to be watchful. – ***John Stott***

Actually, it seems there were three categories of people attached to this church in Sardis.

Slide # 8

The **DEAD** (unsaved majority) – v. 1

The **SLEEPY** (a compromised minority) – vv. 2-3 (Questionable ones)

The **FEW** (remnant of faithful) – vv. 4-5

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.

I believe this is a general statement to the church at large, reflecting that it was a mixed bag of unbelievers and true believers. This statement, therefore, has broad application to varied constituents of the church.

He calls the church back to what they were founded on. “**Remember how you have received and heard.**” Churches don’t become dead overnight. It involves a process. We don’t know for sure, but many surmise this church may have been founded on Paul’s third missionary journey (52-57 AD) when Paul spent 3 years in Ephesus and from there the Word of the Lord sounded out throughout Asia – in other words, throughout this whole area (cf. Acts 19:10).

If that is the case, it would mean this church was now about 40 years old. When people first get saved, there is typically what Christ calls the “first love” (Rev. 2:4).

Slide # 9

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

13 For this reason, we also thank God without ceasing, because when you **received the word of God** which you heard from us, you **welcomed it** not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also **effectively works in you who believe.**

This undoubtedly defined the early days of the church. They were all in! They were excited about the gospel. But now a deadening effect has been taking place in the church. Many of the second-generation people in the church were not saved. And some who were saved were spiritually sleepy and lethargic.

By the time John wrote the Revelation, the local church that had been started on the gospel was spiritually “dead.” This clearly indicates that John wrote this message long after this church was founded, an important consideration in dating the book of Revelation.

– **Tim LaHaye**

The challenge is for them to get back to basics – to get back to the Bible, to get back to the basic gospel truth in keeping with what they had first heard and received as a church family. They, as a church, needed to get back to the main thing. ***“The main thing is that the main thing always remains the main thing!”*** Paul told the Corinthians, ***“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*** (1 Cor. 3:11) Christ is here calling the church back to foundational realities and that they should hold fast to them. This is the mark of genuine Christianity!

Remember how Paul challenged the Corinthians...

Slide # 10

1 Corinthians 15:1–2 (NKJV)

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you **received** and in which you stand,
2 by which also you are saved, **if you hold fast** that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

The challenge to the sleepy ones is to remember and hold fast to the truth of the gospel. This calls for repentance with application for both the dead and the sleepy. The dead needed to repent and believe the gospel – the sleepy need to prove their genuineness by responding to their lethargy with repentance.

To be repentant is to be watchful. In verse 2 Christ says, “Be watchful” and in verse 3 He warns, ***“if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon on you.”***

I think the expectation here is that those who truly know the Lord will respond with the repentance of “watchfulness,” which in general defines those who are true believers.

Slide # 11

Hebrews 9:28 (NKJV)

28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who **eagerly wait for Him** He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

One of the marks of true faith is that we are waiting for Christ to return (cf. 2 Tim. 2:18). Of course, even true believers can get negligent, and that is why we are warned to be watching and waiting (cf. 1 Thess. 5:10).

However, the expectation is that God's people will characteristically be eagerly waiting. In Phil. 3:20 Paul says, "Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul expects that the true believer is waiting.

The Thessalonians when they were saved were waiting for the Son from heaven (cf. 1 Thess. 1:10). Paul said even the Corinthians were "eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:7). Believers are looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (cf. Titus 2:13). Paul speaks of the reward that is coming "to all who have loved His appearing" (cf. 2 Tim. 4:8). (Also see Rom. 8:19, 23, 25)

The close connection between the coming of the Lord and present watchfulness indicates that the sin at Sardis included a failure to watch for the Lord's return. The simile of coming as a thief is elsewhere used exclusively to refer to Christ's second advent (cf. Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:39; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 16:15).

– **Robert Thomas**

Christ warns, "***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.***" Thus, repentance is here closely linked to watchfulness.

The language here is reflective of Christ's warning in Matthew 24.

Slide # 12

Matthew 24:43–44 (NKJV)

43 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.

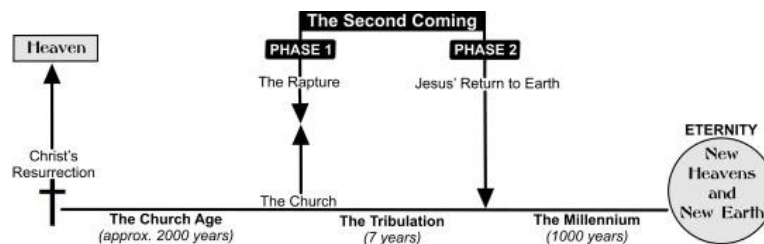
44 Therefore you also **be ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Christ was the very first one to introduce the language of coming as a thief, and it is in reference to the rapture.

I contend that the first aspect of His second coming (the rapture) is when He comes as a thief, not at the conclusion of the Tribulation Period. There will be all manner of signs and indications regarding that second aspect of His coming.

The rapture and the Day of the Lord, which follows on its heels, will both come as a thief in the night, catching the world totally off guard (1 Thess. 5:2).

Slide # 13



This language of coming “as a thief” everywhere else in the NT, including Revelation 16:15, is used in reference to the coming of Christ (cf. Mt. 24:43-44; Lk. 12:39-40; 1 Thess. 5:2-4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 16:15).

Christ does not come upon His waiting Bride as a thief, but in such a manner He will come upon all apostates and the unregenerated.

– **Lemann Strauss**

Mark you, the Lord does not come to believers as a thief, but to professors only. – **Charles Feinberg**

The picture of Jesus coming like a thief always carries the idea of imminent judgment (Matt. 24:43; Lk. 12:39; 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 16:15). – **John MacArthur**

Slide # 14**1 Thessalonians 5:2–4 (NKJV)**

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

3 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.

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

Thus, this serves as a general warning to all in the church to BE READY! As Christ said in Matthew 24:44, “***Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.***” Be ready! Live ready! This is the warning that Christ gave to this largely dead church.

In each address to the last 4 churches, there is a warning of Christ’s imminent return and thus the call to BE READY – to LIVE READY!

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.

These are the affirmed genuine! They were a remnant! They were the “few” and the “faithful”. They had not defiled their garments. Garments of believers in the NT characteristically refers to their character and service – that with which they clothe their life (so to speak) – (cf. Col 3:8-14; also see Isa. 64:6; Jude 23). This speaks to some level of holiness represented in their lives, which defines all true believers.

Slide # 15**Hebrews 12:14 (NKJV)**

14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

Those “few” who have genuinely lived for the Lord are promised that they shall walk with Christ in white. This is the promise of future intimate fellowship with Christ in holy glory. We will share in His holiness. 1 John 3:2 says, when we see Him we shall be like Him and then verse 3 goes on to say:

1 John 3:3 (NKJV)

3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

White signifies purity!

Those who have a measure of holiness and purity now will be given perfect holiness and purity in the future. – **John MacArthur**

They are worthy is a relative statement. No one is perfectly worthy. No one is worthy based on their own merits, but this is Christ's way of saying they are pleasing to Him. They reflect true repentance and changed lives. When we live for the Lord, we walk in a worthy manner that is fitting for a child of God in keeping with true conversion (cf. LK. 20:35; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:5). Unchanged lives are not worthy – but rather worthless!

Slide # 16

Colossians 1:10 (NKJV)

10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

1 Thessalonians 2:12 (NKJV)

12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Certainly, there are degrees of faithfulness – and thus degrees of “worthiness”. But all these “worthy” ones are in contrast to the spiritually DEAD who are unworthy.

Slide # 17

Revelation 17:14 (NKJV)

14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”

“But what shall be done with such persons as live in the church, but are not of it, having a name to live, but are dead? What shall be done with mere professors who are not possessors? What shall become of those who are only outwardly religious but inwardly are in the gall of bitterness? We answer, They shall walk in black – the blackness of God’s destruction. They shall walk in black – the blackness of hopeless despair. They shall walk in black – the blackness of incomparable anguish. They shall walk in black – the blackness of damnation. They shall walk in black for ever, because they were found unworthy.” - **Charles Spurgeon**

But I do want to underscore that all our worthiness is based on the GRACE of God. God in grace makes the believer worthy! We are His workmanship (Eph. 2:10) and the glory belongs to Him alone. As Paul would say, “But by the grace of God I am what I am...” (1 Cor. 15:10).

Walking with Christ in white here in verse 4 refers to the future clothing of believers, evidently referring to their clothing in eternity, which relates to their eternal reward. It relates to their righteous acts – called the righteous acts of the saints (cf. Rev. 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:8, 14).

Slide # 18

Revelation 19:8 (NKJV)

8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

This is the incentive held out in this letter to those who are overcomers, which is affirmed again in verse 5. Really, this amounts to a double affirmation for emphasis's sake.

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.

Three things are here promised to overcomers. As noted before, in 1st John 5:4-5, overcomers are those who have their faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

Again, they are promised that they will be clothed in white garments. White is the color of heaven, denoting holiness. Their full and complete identity at that point will be with holiness – not only positionally, but in practice.

And then Christ promises, “***I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life***”. There has been no end of discussion on how to take this. But we should note that on the face of it – this is plainly a statement of assurance. They are promised an enduring place in the Book of Life, and that will never change. This is eternal security from the mouth of Jesus!

In the Greek, there is a double negative here (ou me), which could be translated as “***I will never never blot his name from the Book of Life***.” Thus, this a dogmatic statement of security!

Some have suggested that this implies that one could potentially have their name blotted out, meaning they could lose their salvation. But that flies in the face of the whole Scripture which promises believers “everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). We are not promised temporary life, or probationary life, but rather eternal life (cf. Jn. 3:16; 5:24; 10:27-29).

When Jesus died for our sins, He died for all our sins. Hebrews 10:14 says, “by one offering [the cross] He has perfected forever”. You can’t get any better than perfected, and you can’t get any longer than forever. Perfected forever – that is the status of every true believer, and that will never change.

Historically, almost every city of that day maintained a register of all its citizens. At birth, a record was made of the name of every child born in the city. If one of these citizens proved guilty of treachery, disloyalty, or bringing shame on the city, his name was expunged from the register. At death, the name of the person was normally removed from the register as he was no longer deemed a citizen. If, on the other hand, a citizen had performed some outstanding service or honorable deed, a special honor was bestowed on them in the form of having their name permanently recorded and overlaid with gold in the city records. These realities would undoubtedly have been in the minds of these church people.

The Bible in both testaments makes reference to a book which at the end contains a record of all of God’s people (cf. Ex. 32:32-33; Ps. 69:28; Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1; Mal. 3:16; Lk. 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 20:15, 21, 27). **Six times** the book of Revelation refers to the “**Book of Life**” (cf. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27).

Revelation is a book that extensively builds on the OT. Of the 404 verses in Revelation, 278 of them allude to the OT Scriptures. This text here in 3:5 appears to be no different. It is thought that Revelation 3:5 builds on the OT texts of both Exodus 32:32-33 and Psalm 69:28. Robert Thomas writes:

In both the Exodus passage and in Ps. 69:28, blotting out...from God’s book (of life) is explicitly entertained as a possibility. No valid reason exists to deny the possibility here also. The rest of the OT allusions to having one’s name recorded in heaven or in the book (of life) have connotations of blessing to people because their names remain written there (Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1; Mal. 3:16). ... Because it is the wicked whose names blotted out from the book in Ex. 32:33 and

Ps. 69:28, a relevant question is, When or how did their names come to be written in the book of life in the first place? ... The most obvious answer lies in the universal impact of the Lamb's slaying. In Rev. 5:9-10 the Lamb's worthiness is tied to His death and consequent redemption provided thereby. ... If the book of life contains the names of all those for whom Christ died, Christ must in some sense have died for all men because at the beginning the names of all men were in the book. In the words of Johannine theology outside the Apocalypse, He died for "the world," no one excluded (cf. John 1:29; 3:16; 4:42; 1 John 2:2; 4:14). This provision of eternal life for everyone is only potential, however. It becomes actual only when appropriated by each person. If a person experiences physical death, never having trusted Christ for forgiveness, his name is erased from the book of life.

It is only those who receive Christ by faith that have their place in the book confirmed. ... Through their faithfulness, they had shown their relationship to Christ to be real, so the appearance of their names in the book of life was not only potential, it was actual. Such names Christ promises in 3:5 will never be wiped from the book.

– **Dr. Robert Thomas**

Note these facts about the Book of Life.

Slide # 19

1. It will be opened and referenced at the Great White Throne Judgment of all the lost (Rev. 20:12).
2. In the end, whether one's name is in the book or not determines if one goes to heaven or hell (Rev. 20:15).
3. There are five different references in both the OT and NT to people's names being blotted out of the book (cf. Ex. 32:32, 33; Ps. 69:28; Rev. 3:5; 22:19).
4. God promises overcomers that their names will NEVER EVER be blotted out of the book of life (Rev. 3:5).
5. In the Book of Revelation, the Book of Life becomes known as the "Lamb's Book of Life" (Rev. 21:27).

Finally, Christ promises the overcomer that He "**will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.**" Thus Christ promises to openly identify with these overcomers. They are His and He will openly acknowledge it before the whole of heaven!

The word "**confess**" is a strong word used in the courts for a solemn confession or acknowledgement.

Apparently, most of the church in Sardis had been ashamed of the name of Christ in situations of pressure created by their culture and had failed to confess Him. – **Robert Thomas**

Slide # 20

Matthew 10:32–33 (NKJV)

32 “Therefore, whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

6 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

Hear what the Spirit says: In the professing Church, there are the dead and the sleepy. Those who are genuine characteristically repent and HOLD FAST to the basic gospel truth of Christ as Lord and Savior. Those who are genuine demonstrate that in watchful holiness. However, those who refuse to repent and be watchful are warned that Christ will one day come upon them as a thief and find them unprepared and not ready!

True overcomers continue to hold fast to the gospel and live separated lives unto the Lord. These are assured that they will be clothed in white, not have their name blotted out of the book of Life, and that Christ will openly confess them before the Father and His holy angels.

In 1912, after the Titanic sank, two large boards were posted outside the Liverpool office in England to inform waiting relatives and friends of the passengers' fate. There were only two lists: On one board, printed in large letters, were the words, "Known to be saved;" on the other, "Known to be lost."

In the end, you are either going to be in God's "Book of Life" recorded as "Known to be saved" or you are going to be found among the eternally spiritually DEAD who are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life. In the end, there are only TWO categories – saved or lost! And where you end up all depends on what you do with Jesus in the here and now.

1 John 5:12 (NKJV)

12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

Be ready! Live ready!