

**Sardis, 5<sup>th</sup> Church**  
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**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." ' (NKJ)*

**Sardis:** ("escaping ones, those who come out") the capital of Lydia, about 40 kilometers southwest of Thyatira. It was built on a 1500 foot high plateau with steep cliffs on three sides and a narrow road leading to the city on the fourth side. This made Sardis virtually impenetrable to attack and in their mind, safe from attack. They did not keep their guard up. The city was twice conquered without resistance (by Cyrus and Antiochus) and in A.D. 17 was destroyed by earthquake – never to return to former glory.

Their most famous king was Croesus. "As rich as Croesus" came from here. Coins were first minted in Sardis along with wool clothing and carpets. Had pagan temples, a large Jewish community, and a Christian Community.

*'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: '*

- Seven Spirits of God: the seven-fold manifestation of the Holy Spirit. 1. Spirit of Truth 2. Spirit of Adoption 3. Spirit of conviction 4. Reveals things to come. 5. Comforter 6. Eyes to see all Zech 4:10 7. Drawer of all men to God.
- Seven Stars: seven pastors

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

- Have a name: A reputation....that you are alive, but you are dead
- Light travels more than 6 trillion miles in a year. If a star 30 l.yrs. away exploded and died five years ago, we wouldn't know it for 25 more years.
- Roots can die long before the leaves at the top of the tree ever find out that their life source is gone.

After Sardis was leveled by an earthquake in AD 17, it was later rebuilt by Tiberius Caesar and was noted for its worship of the goddess Cybele. Cybele had the special characteristic of restoring life to the dead. The greatness of the city was entirely due to its past reputation and Sardis never fully recovered. When this epistle was written the city was rapidly waning in prestige and glory, but its inhabitants were still boastful of the past. The Sardians refused to recognize the fate of the city and continued to live on its ancient glory. The city had a name only. It was rapidly dying.

In the Sardis of AD 170 the Christian Church was poor in relationship to the strong Jewish community and had acquired a reputation for lax moral standards.

**In the church age, this takes us from the Reformation through the Renaissance period.** This period has been fittingly described as "**the age of dead orthodoxy.**" Instead of the Reformation continuing its work of restoration, it committed the great error of submitting the Church to the protection and support of the civil authorities. While separating from Rome (Catholicism), she became subject to the state.

- the Reformation led the almost extinguished Christianity out of the Dark Ages and lit a fire of passion once again for a life lived in devotion to Christ and His Word.
- Because of a lack of unity, factions developed, splintering them according to their own "pet" creed. Fervor and fire was replaced by complacency and formalism.
- In its time of glory and fervor, men and women willingly gave their lives...but became acceptable to the community and state in its conforming to culture.

### **The Church was given this warning:**

"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember, therefore, how thou has received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Revelation 3:2-3).

Doctrine determines a church. The most important attribute of a church is what is said from the pulpit because the pulpit is the rudder that decides the course of the church and congregation.

- "Be watchful": stay aware, don't let down your guard.
- "Strengthen the things which remain" – what have you NOT compromised? Strengthen that and build back from there or else even that will be lost.
- "works not perfect before God" – Great Commission – go into all the world and preach...
- "Remember" – take inventory
- "how you have received and heard" – What got you from a to b will get you to c and d, e and f
- "hold fast" – no one will do it for you!!!
- "repent" – confession of wrong is not repentance. Repentance turns 180 and makes restitution
- "If you don't watch, I will come like a thief..." -

*"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 few names...who have not defiled their garment..." – defilement occurs because we do not hate sinning. *"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me" (Psalm 101:3). "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is Good" (Romans 12:9).*

5 *"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments,*

- white garments are the covering for those continually washed in His Blood who cleanse their garments....

*"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." ' (NKJ)*

**Rev 13:8** And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in **the book of life** of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world

**Rev 17:8** The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in **the book of life** from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

**Exodus 32:32** Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, **blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.** 32:33 And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

**Psalms 69:27** Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. 69:28 **Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.**

**Revelation 22:19** And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part **out of the book of life**, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

*In chapter 1, Jesus is not only revealed as our great High Priest, but as God Himself. John uses an epanados (a repetition of sentences, in this case quotes, in inverse order) to identify Jesus Christ as the great I AM. John quotes the Old Testament prophets in this sequence to bring to light a salient feature—the divinity of Christ—and in this way to give the highest stamp of authority to that which is to be revealed.*

**The epanados is as follows:**

*Revelation 1:5 Witness (Isaiah 55:4)*

*Revelation 1:7 Coming with the Clouds (Daniel 7:13)*

*Revelation 1:7 Pierced (Zechariah 12:10)*

*Revelation 1:8 I AM, Alpha and the Omega (Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12)*

*Revelation 1:11 I AM, Alpha and the Omega (Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12)*

*Revelation 1:12 Golden Lampstands Zechariah (Zechariah 4:2)*

*Revelation 1:13-15 Heavenly High Priest Daniel (Daniel 10:5-6)*

*Revelation 1:16 Mouth like a Sword (Isaiah 49:2)*

*The first and the last quotes are from Isaiah, the second and second last from Daniel, the third and third last from Zechariah, and the double quote in the middle is from Isaiah. This is the feature highlighted and thus repeated. Christ is the great I AM. Sadly, some modern translations leave out the second "I AM" quote in Revelation 1:11, thus nullifying the epanados.*

**Christ, the great I AM, is thus the central theme of the book of Revelation.**