

Revelation Chapter 3— Verse by Verse

Revelation 3:1-6

- **Vs 1** – The next church to receive a message is Sardis. The reference of the 7 spirits should recall to memory **Rev 1:4** and the reference of the 7 stars should remind us of **Rev 1:16 and 20**
 - Jesus Christ introduces Himself as God again here by equating the one that “hath the seven stars” is the same as the one that “hath the seven spirits of God”
 - Jesus was the vision John saw as holding the seven stars in **Rev 1:16, and 20**
 - He who sits on the throne has the seven spirits before him in **Rev 1:4**
 - First thing noted again is works, but the angel/messenger of Sardis has a negative comment immediately
 - God’s witness of this messenger is that he has a name that he is alive, but is not
 - This messenger would be our equivalent of a social gospel preacher or some such, where the church is full of people because they love what they hear. The problem is that even with those words they here, many are not coming to the knowledge of the truth. As a result, the people are led astray and missing out on the riches of Christ, only having their ears tickled
 - I think of **Ezekiel 8-10** where God seals those within Jerusalem and Israel that are faithful and abhor the idolatry going on in the leaders and city and God brings His judgment upon the disobedient without pity. Jesus Christ is warning the angel of this church in Sardis that judgment is coming and his works are not right
 - I also think **Matt 15:8** is a good cross reference to describe the angel/messenger of this church in Sardis
- **Vs 2** – What are the things that remain that are ready to die? Jesus exhorts this messenger in Sardis to strengthen these things that remain that are ready to die
 - Think of the timeframe here. Israel is at the tail-end of the Old Covenant as God made with their fathers on Mount Sinai (**Ex 19:1-6**). They are on the brink of the times of refreshing into the New Covenant *after* this 7-year period (**Jer 31:31-14, Eze 36:22-32** [**John 1:17** goes with this passage as we see this is by the grace of God Israel will have this New Covenant, not because they earned it], **Dan 9:24-27, Acts 3:18-26**)
 - The things that remain which are ready to die must be referring to works done in the flesh according to the Law, because of the immediate context of Jesus saying “I know thy works” before and “I have not found thy works perfect before God” after.
 - By this we can safely conclude that these are works under the Old Covenant that are about to give way to the works of the New Covenant, as God says that His Spirit will cause Israel to walk in His ways in the Jeremiah and Ezekiel passage mentioned above
 - This messenger of Sardis was not keeping God’s judgments and statutes properly, so he is being exhorted to do so that he may enter into the promised kingdom of Israel as that was Israel’s end of the covenant to keep
- **Vs 3** – What had this messenger of Sardis received and heard?
 - The message of the gospel that the kingdom is coming to Israel
 - The message that he is acting in name only and has a heart issue with the works of the Law
 - Now he is being instructed to “hold fast” and “repent” as his works were not right

which we find in [Rev 20:1-6](#), hence all the phrases from Jesus' earthly ministry and the epistles from James, Peter, and John that say they must "endure to the end" to be saved. Their salvation occurs after the Tribulation period.

- In short, the key of David is all the authority and substance of God's chosen nation Israel, and Christ holds it
- [Vs 8](#) – as always, works are in focus. We see God has opened a door for this church as Philadelphia. They are also weak in some way, but has kept God's word and proclaimed Him. We will find out about this door in the coming verses and what that is
- [Vs 9](#) – There is a promise that the false Jews will acknowledge that the true Jews at Philadelphia had it right with their faith and works. The false Jews will get their reward according to their works ([Isa 59:18](#), [Matt 16:27](#), [Rom 2:6](#), [2 Cor 11:15](#), [Rev 20:12-13](#))
 - Jesus said there would arise false prophets, but the true Jew would not be deceived [Matt 24:24-25](#)
 - There would be false Jews among the true Jews [Matt 25:24-30](#)
 - [Eze 20:27-38](#) describes the purging of Israel to weed out the false Jews before the inauguration of the promised kingdom
- [Vs 10-11](#) – Jesus describes that the believing Jews at Philadelphia will be "kept from the hour of temptation" because they are "enduring to the end". They are being "delivered from the evil one" ([Matt 6:13](#)). Jesus warns them to "hold fast" so that no one takes away this "crown". "Crown" here is the Greek *sfefanos* and can be considered a prize, like the winner of a race receives. They need to endure to go through this open door.
 - As these Jews would faithfully carry out God's covenant, their reward was to be "kept from the hour of temptation" that would "come upon the whole world." It's no stretch to understand this to be the pouring out of God's wrath and the Tribulation period that is about to ensue. There will be a remnant of Israel that will be supernaturally protected as in these scriptures: [Matt 24:15-21](#) (remnant to exit Jerusalem for the second half of the Tribulation), [Rev 12:1-6](#), [13-14](#) (Remnant symbolically shown to go to the wilderness where they will be supernaturally cared for by God for 3 ½ years, meaning the second half of the Tribulation).
- [Vs 12-13](#) – "He that overcometh" will be he that endures to the end, or in this context, that holds fast which he has that no man takes his crown. Those that have faith and keep the good works will be rewarded by being a "pillar in the temple", meaning one of strength, most likely meaning an authority. There will be positions or offices awarded for the Millennial kingdom, indicated in [Eze 20:33-38](#) and [Matt 25:14-30](#). These pillars "shall go no more out" for he will be in the presence of God. Jesus will write upon him the name of God and the name of the city, which He says is "New Jerusalem". New Jerusalem is currently in Heaven, but will come down, as in [Rev 21:2](#). All these names indicate to me a placement, that these believers belong to God and His Christ, and they will live eternally in New Jerusalem ([John 17:12](#)). These verses also remind me of [Heb 3](#) as the writer of Hebrews pleads to his Jewish audience to "harden not your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness ([Heb 3:8](#)), and that God's response was "they do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, 'They shall not enter into my rest.'" [Heb 3:10b-11](#). In contrast to the unbelievers in the wilderness that did not enter into God's rest, these Jewish believers have the opportunity, the open door, to be kept from the hour of temptation.

- Again note the same closure in each letter, that there is the final warning to have ears to hear, seemingly stemming from [Isa 6:9-10](#)

Revelation 3:14-22

- [Vs 14](#) – This church being addressed here is not to be confused with the church Paul writes of in [Col 2:1-2, 4:16](#). In Colossians, Paul is writing to Gentile believers under the dispensation of grace, which ends with the catching away of the Body of Christ ([Rom 11:13, 15:15-16, 16:25, Gal 1:11-12, Eph 3:1-11, Phil 3:20-21, Col 1:1-2, 1 Thess 4:13-5:11](#)). It is evident that the apostle John is writing to the Circumcision under the dispensation of Law here in the book of Revelation, and that must mean that the Body of Christ has already been snatched away. Therefore, God is no longer offering “grace and peace” to the world as Paul begins each of his epistles, but now is the time of judgment and war. This church in [Rev 3:14-22](#) is a group of Jewish people in the future Tribulation period who must again “endure to the end” or as [Heb 3:6](#) puts it, “hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope *firm unto the end*”. Believers in God and that Jesus is Messiah, the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world, will suffer intense persecution after the Body of Christ is snatched away, which we have already read about in the letters to the 6 other churches thus far, but the language is clear that they must keep the good works until the end. God is once more dealing with his chosen nation Israel.
 - The introduction again reminds us of chapter 1, where we read similar language in [Rev 1:5](#)
 - Faithful and true witness – we know God is perfectly faithful ([2 Tim 2:11-13, Eph 2:8-9, Gal 3:22](#) faith OF Christ)
 - “the beginning of the creation of God” – it may appear that Jesus is said to be a created being in this verse, but that isn’t what it is saying. “Beginning” here is the Greek *arche*, which has this meaning: from the beginning (temporal sense), i.e. "the initial (starting) point"; (figuratively) what comes first and therefore is chief (foremost), i.e. has the priority because ahead of the rest ("preeminent"). When we compare this description of Jesus Christ with what the rest of the bible says about Him, we know that the intention of this verse is that Jesus is the preeminent and before all creation in excellence (compare [John 1:1-3, Phil 2:5-11, Col 1:12-18, Heb 1:1-4](#))
- [Vs 15](#) – Verbiage indicates this church is going through the motions with no heart in it. God desires that they would just take a stance, but apparently they haven’t. Even so, they aren’t like Sardis where they are a church in name only ([Rev 3:1](#)). Still, they aren’t far from it either. The difference being that Sardis made their stance and that it was the wrong one. The church at Laodicea I simply indecisive.
- [Vs 16](#) – This church will be rewarded according to their works. They will not decide to confess the name of Jesus before men nor become “hot”, so Jesus will “spue them out of [His] mouth” ([Matt 10:32-33, 16:24-27, 23:1-39, Rom 2:5-6, 2 Cor 11:13-15](#))
- [Vs 17](#) – The Laodicean church of the future tribulation will think they are rich because they have earthly things. Their testimony, which God knows is in their heart, is that they “have need of nothing”. Now this is a stark contrast to the church of Jerusalem in Acts 2 and 4 where believers “sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” This was in obedience To Jesus as He indicated they wouldn’t need “stuff” nor to worry about it as God would provide their needs ([Matt 6:19-21, 25-34, 10:5-10, 19:16-30](#)).
 - Worldly riches would be unnecessary during the Tribulation period, but rather a hindrance ([Matt 24:15-22, Dan 9:24-27, 12:9-13](#))
 - Contrast this attitude with that of Smyrna in [Rev 2:8-9](#)

- **Vs 18** – Gold tried in the fire, meaning the purest gold – what is most precious and valuable. Note that it only comes from Christ, who said “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (**John 14:6**). Jesus can provide something of far more value than believers may be rich with true riches. Jesus came to give life more abundantly (**John 10:10**). Receiving God’s word and knowing the truth will give them riches and freedom earthly goods never could (**John 8:31-32**)
 - A result of “buying” of this “gold” from Jesus is to be clothed in white raiment., which will take away the shame of their nakedness. White raiment is pictured to be the righteousness of the saints (**Rev 19:8**).
 - They are also admonished that they don’t see clearly yet as they are “neither cold nor hot.” Once more, this may be a reference to **Isa 6:9-10**
- **Vs 19** – God does chasten those He loves as we read in **Heb 12:4-8** and **Deut 8:5**. Since God is chastening this church in Laodicea, they should get the message, be zealous, and repent. Repent of what? Of being neither hot nor cold. They need to be hot and endure to the end if they want salvation. **Rom 12:2** is something similar that is applicable to the Body of Christ today.
- **Vs 20** – This verse is constantly taken out of context. Jesus does say He stands at the door and knocks, but it’s not to share the gospel of grace. He is coming to judge and make war in the Tribulation period. Reference **James 5:1-9**. Now there is still time for them to repent and be saved, but when Jesus comes back, it’s judgment. This is not the door to the sinner’s heart, but a final warning to show judgment is imminent.
- **Vs 21** – Again there is a reward “to him that overcometh”. Here it is to sit with Christ in His throne, meaning they would be “in Christ.” Don’t forget that the Jew could be “in Christ” outside of the Body of Christ and dispensation of grace as found in the epistles of Paul (**Rom 16:7, 1 Pet 5:14, 1 John 5:20**). Both true Israel and the Body of Christ are positionally “in Christ” and no longer “in Adam” (**1 Cor 15:22**). Those of the Circumcision await a future place of authority in the Millennial Kingdom after the Tribulation period, and must endure or overcome to the end to enjoy this (**Matt 19:27-30**). Contrast that with the Body of Christ and that we have salvation and justification and a heavenly position NOW (**1 Cor 6:11, 2 Cor 5:17, Eph 1:1-14, 2:4-6, Phil 3:20-21, Col 2:8-15**)
- **Vs 22** – The final letter also includes this last plea to the believer to heed the words written to them.