

## Revelation 3

**How did Jesus introduce Himself to Sardis (v. 1)?** .....*Him who holds the seven spirits of God* (the Holy Spirit of v. 4) *and the seven stars* (the angels of v. 20). Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus controls each of the angels and their churches.

**What problems existed at Sardis (v. 1)?** They looked healthy; they had a *reputation*.....of life and vitality.....but they were a spiritually dead church. It is easy to drift in sleepy apathy toward spiritual death, especially when you have a good reputation. They had become Christians in name only. **What persecution was this church encountering?** None. Churches can get lazy without persecution.

**What did He command them to do about their problems (vv. 2-3)?** Wake up. Shore up the faith that remains. Complete the works you have started. Remember where you have come from and your rich spiritual heritage. Recall the Word of God you have heard—obey it and repent. The key to the Christian life begins in the mind.

**What would happen if they did not repent (v. 3)?** He would surprise them and come in judgment. **What was meant by coming as a thief (v. 3)?** When not expected, unannounced. Thieves do not make appointments.

**Was everyone at Sardis guilty (v. 4)?** No, there was a remnant of faithful believers. **What promise was given to the faithful?** The certainty of eternal life. Jesus painted a picture of close fellowship and friendship with Himself. It is important for us to accept Jesus. But it is far more important to know if Jesus accepts us.

**What was promised to overcomers (v. 5)?** They would be dressed in heavenly garments and have the promise of eternal life. Jesus held out blessings for the faithful few in the congregation in order to stimulate the rest to repent.

**What is the Book of Life (v. 5)?** A heavenly register containing the names of all the faithful believers (Malachi 3:16-18; Philippians 4:3).

**What is the meaning of being blotted out (v. 5)?** It does not mean that some believers will lose their salvation (John 5:24; 6:35-37, 39; 10:28-29). The purpose of the promise was to provide certainty and assurance to the remnant of faithful believers (v. 4), not to address what will happen to those who do not overcome.<sup>1</sup> The focus was *assuring* the believers; we should not think that Jesus sits in heaven with an active eraser.

**How did Jesus describe Himself to Philadelphia (v. 7)?** *Him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David.*

**What was Jesus' point about the key of David?** As prophesied in Isaiah 22:22, Jesus is the One with "the key of David" who can open and shut doors. He has been given all authority to grant entrance into heaven and the New Jerusalem (Revelation 1:18; 3:12, 21-22). He has the master key! He possesses all of heaven's resources and authority. He can unlock all the doors in your life.

**What had Jesus placed before the church of Philadelphia (v. 8)?** They had received an "open door" of God-given opportunity to preach Christ to all who will hear. Or it could mean the open door to the Kingdom of heaven.

**In what way did He commend them (v. 8)?** They had faithfully kept His word and had not denied His name.

**Who were the members of the synagogue of Satan (v. 9)?** Unbelieving, lying Jews. They had rejected Jesus as their Messiah and aggressively persecuted the church in their city. **What will Jesus make them do?** Fall at the feet of the Philadelphians and admit they were wrong—an act of submission and contrition. They will be forced to admit that these despised Christians were actually the chosen flock. They will know defeat and humiliation.

**What command had they kept (v. 10)?** To endure patiently. **What would the result be?** He would keep them from the hour of trial coming on the whole earth, i.e. the Tribulation.

**What criticism did Jesus have of them?** None. Jesus was *completely* pleased with this church. This is a reminder that present tribulation should be no obstacle to faithfulness.

**What should they do to be ready for His coming (v. 11)?** The believers should hold fast to the hope and expectation of His coming or they would end up living carelessly, indifferent to their calling and purpose as believers. If that happened they would lose their crowns, i.e. rewards for faithful service (2 John 8).

**What reward was promised overcomers (v. 12)?** Being a pillar in the (heavenly) temple. **What was the significance of being a pillar in the temple?** It was a sign of special reward; a permanent and prominent position of honor and responsibility. The overcomer has a permanent eternal place of honor in the sanctuary of God.

**What would be written on them (v. 12)?** The name of God, the city of God (the New Jerusalem), and Christ's new name. Writing one's "name" on something was an indication of ownership—the believer belongs to all three.

**How did Jesus describe Himself to Laodicea (v. 14)?** *The faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.* This was a contrast to the Laodiceans, who will be shown to be neither faithful nor true.

**What problem did Laodicea have (vv. 15-16)?** They were neither hot nor cold. In this spiritual sense, lukewarmness was a picture of *indifference* and *compromise*. In trying to please both the world and Jesus they ended up being nothing. The Laodicean church was a church that had lost its impact on the world because it had become preoccupied with the world and had left Christ standing outside the church.

We might even say that lukewarmness is the natural tendency of our fallen natures. Charles Spurgeon: "Cold makes us shiver, and great heat causes us pain, but a tepid bath is comfort itself. Such a temperature suits human nature."

**What conclusion did Jesus reach regarding this problem (v. 16)?** He would spit them out of His mouth because of His intense disgust for their lack of spiritual contrition. Jesus had nothing good to say about this church.

**What was the Laodiceans' opinion of themselves (v. 17)?** They were monetarily rich and didn't really need anything. Persecution has never been fatal to Christianity but prosperity can present unique challenges. **What was Jesus' opinion of them?** They were self-deluded. And they were *blind* to their wretched, pitiful condition of spiritual poverty and were instead prideful and complacent.

**What did Jesus instruct them to do (v. 18)?** Invest wisely. Buy from Jesus' market, gold (my riches), white clothes (the pure, righteous covering He gives) and salve for their eyes (for the healing of their spiritual blindness).

**Why did Jesus speak as He did to them (v. 19)?** Because He loved them, He was rebuking them. **What must they do to correct their problems?** Repent in earnest. Note that Jesus' great love was expressed *in* His rebuke. His message was: "Even though I rebuke you and chasten you, I am still your friend. I love you deeply as My friend."

**Explain the illustration of Jesus at the door (v. 20).** Sadly, Jesus stood on the outside, knocking to get in. This verse was addressed to believers. It pictures the Lord Jesus seeking entrance into His own church for the purpose of renewed fellowship. The idea of Jesus at the door applies to us in the same way. Jesus wants to come in to us, and dine with us, in the sense of having a deep, meaningful relationship.

**Why did Jesus stand outside the door? Why did He knock? Why did He wait until someone opened the door?** He had every right to break down the door, or enter some other way on His own accord, but He didn't. The sovereign, omnipotent Jesus lowered Himself to wooing the cooperation of the human heart. The occupant must open the door. That is, he must repent of his pride and self-sufficiency, his human wisdom, and his cowardly neutrality. The key to opening the door is to first hear His voice. **Are we listening?**

This verse expresses a truth taught elsewhere in Scripture, namely, that Jesus Christ desires intimate fellowship with all people. Consequently, it is appropriate to use this verse in evangelism, even though it may be out of context. It expresses God's universal desire very graphically, by way of application, not interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

**What blessing is offered to overcomers (v. 21)?** The right to sit with me on my throne. *...if we endure, we will also reign with him (2 Timothy 2:12).*

**How does the Laodicean church compare to the church as it exists in the western world today?**

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Revelation, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 49

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 58