




T H R E A D I N G T H E P E A R L S . o r g



# Threading the Pearls of the Book of Revelation

An Expository Study

Session 7: Seven Letters to Seven Churches, part 5

Sardis — the 'named'

REVELATION 3:1 — 3:6

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

[REV 3:1]



## REVELATION 3

**1 And to the angel of the church of Sardis, write: These things saith he, that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast the name of being alive: and thou art dead.**

**To the angel of the church**

MATH 18:15-17, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup>"But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' <sup>17</sup>"And if he refuses to hear them, *tell it to the church*. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

**Sardis – "name"**

DEUT 18:18-22, 'I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. <sup>19</sup>'And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him. <sup>20</sup>'But *the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.* <sup>21</sup>"And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' <sup>22</sup>when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

**These are the words of him**

MATH 12:36-37, I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, *they will give account of it* in the day of judgment. <sup>37</sup>"For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned".

**Seven spirits of God**

ISA 11:2, the *spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him*, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

**Seven stars**

REV 1:20, The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The *seven stars are the angels* of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches;  
ACTS 6:3, brethren, seek out from among you *seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit* and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

**I know your deeds**

2JON 1:9-11, Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. <sup>10</sup>If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; <sup>11</sup>for *he who greets him shares in his evil deeds*;

GAL 5:13-15, you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup>For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>15</sup>But *if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!*

## CONSIDER THIS —

The third commandment has less to do with foul language than it does of ambassadorship.

EXO 20:7, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,  
for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

If we take up the name of Christ-ian, we represent Him to all the people in our path, all who hear our words, or any who observe our actions. We MUST NOT take up His Name for nothing (in vain)!

**You have a reputation\***

LUKE 6:26, *Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets;*  
 3JON 1:9-10, I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, *who loves to have the preeminence among them,* does not receive us.  
<sup>10</sup>Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church;  
 1TIM 6:1-5, Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that *the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.* <sup>2</sup>And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things. <sup>3</sup>If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, <sup>4</sup>he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, <sup>5</sup>useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

\* NOTE: "Name" in many other translations;  
 ὄνομα = Onoma, on'-om-ah, Strong#3686: 1. name: univ. of proper names; 2. the name is used for everything which the name covers, everything the thought or feeling of which is aroused in the mind by mentioning, hearing, remembering, the name, i.e. for one's rank, authority, interests, pleasure, command, excellences, deeds etc.; 3. persons reckoned up by name; 4. the cause or reason named: on this account, because he suffers as a Christian, for this reason.

**Being alive**

GAL 2:20, I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and *the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God,* who loved me and gave Himself for me;  
 JAM 1:14-15, each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. <sup>15</sup>Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and *sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*

**You are dead**

GAL 5:4-6, *You have become estranged from Christ,* you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. <sup>5</sup>For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. <sup>6</sup>For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love;  
 PRO 25:14, As clouds and wind without rain, So is *he who boasts of gifts deceptively.*





## REVELATION 3

**2 Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die. For I find not thy works full before my God.**

**Be watchful\***

\* NOTE: "Wake up!" in the NIV and other translations;  
2JON 1:8-9, Watch yourselves, that *we don't lose the things which we have accomplished*, but that we receive a full reward. <sup>9</sup>Whoever transgresses and doesn't remain in the teaching of Christ, doesn't have God. He who remains in the teaching, the same has both the Father and the Son.

**Strengthen what remains**

ZECH 10:12, So *I will strengthen them in the Lord*, And they shall walk up and down in His name," Says the Lord;  
2TIM 2:1-2, You therefore, my son, *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. <sup>2</sup>And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

**About to die**

PRO 15:10, Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way, *And he who hates correction will die*;  
MATH 23:27-28, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but *inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness*. <sup>28</sup>"Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

**Your deeds**

GAL 4:9, now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, *how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements*, to which you desire again to be in bondage?  
JAM 4:1-3, Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? <sup>2</sup>You lust and do not have. You murder and

covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup>*You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss*, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

**[Deeds] not... Complete**

JER 26:13, *amend your ways and your doings*, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; then the Lord will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you;  
JAM 4:5-12, do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? <sup>6</sup>But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." <sup>7</sup>Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you*. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. <sup>11</sup>Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. <sup>12</sup>There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

**In the sight of my God**

GAL 3:10-11, as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." <sup>11</sup>But that *no one is justified by the law in the sight of God* is evident, for "the just shall live by faith";  
PRO 30:12, There is a generation that is *pure in its own eyes*, Yet is not washed from its filthiness.

## CONSIDER THIS —

Since we have taken up the name of Christ-ian—

JAM 4:10-12, Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. <sup>11</sup>Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. <sup>12</sup>There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?



## REVELATION 3

**3 Have in mind therefore in what manner thou hast received and heard: and observe, and do penance. If then thou shalt not watch, I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come to thee.**

**Remember**

1TIM 5:24-25, Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. <sup>25</sup>Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and *those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.*

**Received and heard**

GAL 3:2-5, Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or *by the hearing of faith?* <sup>3</sup>Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? <sup>4</sup>Have you suffered so many things in vain-if indeed it was in vain? <sup>5</sup>Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

2TIM 3:14-17, you must *continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of*, knowing from whom you have learned them, <sup>15</sup>and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Obey [what you received and heard]**

GAL 6:4-5, let *each one examine his own work*, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. <sup>5</sup>For each one shall bear his own load;

1JON 3:18-24, little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth... <sup>23</sup>And this is His commandment: that *we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another*, as He gave us commandment. <sup>24</sup>Now he who keeps His commandments

abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

**Repent**

1KING 4:48-50, when they *return to You with all their heart and with all their soul* in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: <sup>49</sup>then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, <sup>50</sup>and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You; and grant them compassion before those who took them captive, that they may have compassion on them.

**If you do not**

MATH 7:21-23, Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup>Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup>And then *I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

## CONSIDER THIS —

1TIM 5:24-25, Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. <sup>25</sup>Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and *those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.*

This is for us to remember: God sees all good works  
– None will be hidden... even those which brought us to Christ

**Watch\***

\* NOTE: "Wake up" in the NIV and other translations;  
 LUKE 21:25-31, there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; <sup>26</sup>"men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>"Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup>"Now when these things begin to happen, *look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*"...

**I will come like a thief**

2PET 3:10, *the day of the Lord will come like a thief.* The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare;  
 LUKE 21:34, take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and *that Day come on you unexpectedly.*

**You will not know**

ACTS 1:7, *It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority;*  
 MATH 24:42-46, Watch therefore, for *you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.* <sup>43</sup>"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. <sup>44</sup>"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect...

**What time I will come to you**

EXO 19:10-11, the Lord said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. <sup>11</sup>"And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day *the Lord will come* down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people;  
 LUKE 12:45-46, if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, <sup>46</sup>*the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful.*





## REVELATION 3

**4 But thou hast a few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments: and they shall walk with me in white, because they are worthy.**

**You have a few people in Sardis**

2TIM 1:12-14, *I know whom I have believed* and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. <sup>13</sup>Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

<sup>14</sup>That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us;

GAL 2:16, a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even *we have believed in Christ Jesus*, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

**Not soiled your clothes**

GAL 3:26-27, You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, <sup>27</sup>for all of you who were baptized into Christ have *clothed yourselves with Christ*;

JUDE 1:21-24, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. <sup>22</sup>And on some have compassion, making a distinction; <sup>23</sup>but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, *hating even the garment defiled by the flesh*. <sup>24</sup>Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

**Walk with me**

GAL 5:16-18, *Walk in the Spirit*, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. <sup>17</sup>For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. <sup>18</sup>But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law;

LUKE 21:36, Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to

pass, and *to stand before the Son of Man*;

GAL 5:24-25, those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>If we live in the Spirit, *let us also walk in the Spirit*.

**Dressed in white**

JOHN 13:6-8, He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." <sup>8</sup>Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "*If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me*";

DAN 12:10, "*Many shall be purified, made white, and refined*, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

**They are worthy**

2TIM 1:8-9, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, <sup>9</sup>who has saved us and *called us with a holy calling*, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began;

3JON 1:5-7, Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, <sup>6</sup>who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, <sup>7</sup>because *they went forth for His name's sake*, taking nothing from the Gentiles.

## CONSIDER THIS —

Jesus warned us to: take heed to ourselves, lest our hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life (see LUKE 21:34).

If this describes us: then, that Day come on us *unexpectedly*.

– What Day is that?



## REVELATION 3

**5 He that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.**

**He who overcomes**

JOHN 8:31-32, Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup>"And you shall know the truth, and *the truth shall make you free*"; JOHN 8:34-36, Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup>"And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. <sup>36</sup>"Therefore *if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

**Dressed in white**

MARK 9:3, and *his garments became glittering, white exceedingly, as snow*, so as a fuller upon the earth is not able to whiten;  
REV 7:14, These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have *washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

**Never blot out his name**

In contrast to —  
PSM 69:26-28, they persecute the ones You have struck, And talk of the grief of those You have wounded. <sup>27</sup>Add iniquity to their iniquity, And let them not come into Your righteousness. <sup>28</sup>*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living*, And not be written with the righteous.

**Book of life**

DAN 12:1, there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone *whose name shall be found written in the book*;  
REV 20:15, if anyone's *name was not found written in the book of life*, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

**Acknowledge his name**

HEB 13:15-16, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, *giving thanks to His name*. <sup>16</sup>But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

**Before my Father and his angels**

LUKE 12:8, I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, *the Son of Man also will acknowledge* before the angels of God.

## CONSIDER THIS —

Although the church of Sardis overall is not given any commendations from Jesus, there is a remnant mentioned here:

2TIM 1:12-14, [Who] know whom they have believed and are persuaded that He is able to keep what they have committed to Him *until that Day*;

– What Day is that?





## REVELATION 3

**6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.**

**He who has an ear**

MATH 13:37-43, He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup>"The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. <sup>39</sup>"The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. <sup>40</sup>"Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. <sup>41</sup>"The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, <sup>42</sup>"and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup>"Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. *He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

**Let him hear**

GAL 5:22-23, *the fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

**Spirit**

GAL 6:1-3, Brothers, even if a man is caught in some fault, you who are spiritual must *restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness*; looking to yourself so that you also aren't tempted. <sup>2</sup>Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup>For if a man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

**Churches**

TIT 2:11-14, the grace of God that brings *salvation has appeared to all men*, <sup>12</sup>teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup>looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup>who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

## CONSIDER THIS —

Sardis – the church with a name: though, not the right name!  
A church with nothing good said about them.  
They have a reputation of being alive – but are dead.  
Let us remember that it is not about us – our name, our reputation.  
God will take care of us, if we do everything we do for Him, for His NAME!



## GROUP DISCUSSION

REV 3:1, ...I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

- ⊕ **1a. What is the meaning of the phrase, ‘you have a name that you are alive’?**

- ⊕ **1b. Jesus describes the church of Sardis as being dead; How might a ‘dead’ church appear to its participants? What might non-believers perceive of this church?**

REV 3:2, Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die...

- ⊕ **2. How might this church begin to accomplish Jesus’ command?**

(see also LUKE 6:26-38)

REV 3:2, [DRA] ...I find not thy works *full* before my God. The verb ‘full’ is also translated as: perfect, complete, or fulfilled.

- ⊕ **3. List some ways that ‘works’ are not full, perfect, complete, or fulfilled.**

REV 3:3, ...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.

- ⊕ **4a. Jesus says ‘I will come upon you as a thief’ if you will not watch; How can we learn from this warning?**

1THES 5:1-2, 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.

- ⊕ **4b. How might the idiom of ‘a thief in the night’ be used to describe the *same* event: Jesus’ return and the Day of the Lord?**

(see also 2PET 3:10)

1THES 5:4-5, 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.

- ⊕ **4c. Compare and contrast Paul’s encouragement to the church in Thessalonica with the warning of Jesus to the church of Sardis (REV 3:3).**

NEXT SESSION —