

Weekly Study Guide | 11/17/24

Message to the Church in Sardis

Read [Revelation 3:1-6](#)

1 “To the messenger of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. 3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

4 Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. 5 The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. 6 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Supporting Verses: [Revelation 4:5](#); [Exodus 28:17-20, 39:10](#); [Revelation 4:3](#); [Isaiah 11:2](#); [Matthew 25:1-13](#); [Matthew 24:36, 42-44](#); [Ephesians 4:1](#); [Colossians 1:10](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:12](#); [2 Peter 1:10-11](#)

Questions:

1. What themes and topics do you find in the verses above regarding the church in Sardis? What are some things that stand out to you? How would you summarize the main message with a word or a short sentence?
2. What encouragement and challenge did they receive? In what way was the church in Sardis commended? How was the church corrected? How was it exhorted?
3. What is the context of this passage? What was the history of Sardis? How does this relate to the message to the church?
4. What are the sevenfold or seven spirits of God? What does the number seven indicate? How does this relate to the message to the church?
5. How can you be assured that your name will not be blotted out of the Book of Life? What are some specific things mentioned in the verses above?
6. What is the Spirit saying to the Church today? Is there a specific message for the church in America? How might this apply to us today?

7. Share a few takeaways from this lesson. What is a practical way you can apply this to your life? How can it help strengthen your relationship with God? What difference will this make to your daily walk with Christ?

For later: Please take time to prayerfully reflect on how this lesson relates to you. What did you learn? What are some personal takeaways and insights you gained? What is a practical way you can apply this to your life? How will this help strengthen your relationship with God? What difference will this make in your life? Is there anything you need to change in light of this lesson?

Summary: The church in Sardis is often referred to as the dead church. As such it received no commendation from the Lord. Spiritually, the church in Sardis was asleep. Christ saw them as dead, so he commanded them to wake up and strengthen what remained. A better translation is to be alert and watchful. The Lord is coming like a thief at an unexpected hour. This is reminiscent of Sardis which boasted of being the strongest citadel in the world but had failed to keep its inhabitants safe on several occasions. In one instance its king, Achaeus was taken by enemy forces and killed while the people of the city believed him to be alive and safe inside. In the same way, the church had a name or reputation of being alive but was not. Their deeds were found unfinished or incomplete. They were missing the life that comes from the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is the oil for the lamp of the church (Matthew 25:1-13). Seven is a sign of completion. The “seven spirits of God” in the book of Revelation are thus a reference to the Holy Spirit in the perfection of His manifold ministry. Those who overcome are ready for Christ’s return. They have oil in their lamps and the life of the Spirit breathes in them. These are the ones who walk with God, are clothed in white, and are found worthy. Their names will never be blotted out of the Book of Life.