

## REVELATION CHAPTER THREE

### The Sardisean Age 1520-1750

The seven Spirits of this first verse are the seven spiritual angels that are seen in Revelation 1:4. The seven stars are the seven earthly messengers to the seven church ages. Please notice this as we read verse one.

Verse 1: *“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”*

When this says, *“unto the angel”* it means that the fifth spiritual angel was responsible for getting the revelation to the saints of that age, not only to the man (earthly messenger), but the spiritual angel overshadowed the age itself. So verse one is both to the spiritual angel and to the man.

The name “Sardis” means *escaped ones*. Martin Luther was the earthly messenger to this age of escaped ones. Luther had a big revival. The power of God was in the Church, God gave a great deliverance, and they escaped.

From about the twelfth century on, men began to try and escape out from under the Roman Catholic Church. They couldn’t do it; for the Roman Catholic Church would send armies and slay them by the thousands, but when God’s time came for the Reformation, nothing could stop it.

A monk named Martin Luther, who had studied and knew the catechism, but could never find peace with God, was reading the Bible where it said that *“The just shall live by faith.”* Those words just seemed to rise up off the page. He began to preach that you didn’t have to live by what the pope said, but that you should live by what Jesus said.

Luther wrote the Ninety-five Thesis against the Roman Catholic Church and tacked it on the church (castle) door on October 31, 1517. This told what he had against Roman Catholicism. The more he preached the Word of God, the more people rallied to the Word. Pretty soon Germany was burning with a revival. As Germany was burning with this revival, more people lined up and believed what Luther said.

Luther succeeded in bringing the people out, but the sad thing about this age is that the revival fire died down quickly and they only lived on the reputation of what they were at the beginning of the age. Jesus said, *“Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”* But the life of God stayed in this age long enough to serve God’s purpose. Then the life of God moved on in the Word.

Verse 2: *“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.”*

This was for the local church in the city of Sardis, which had a condition that would correspond with the Sardisean Age in the fifteenth century.

**The Sardisean Age didn’t have much, just repentance. These people began**

**to pull away, but that denominational spirit began to come out, too. That mother whose began to have daughters.** She committed fornication and had children. They were not born by the Word of God.

Verse 3: *“Remember therefore how thou hast 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.”*

Jesus told this church to remember what they had received and heard. What you hear means a lot. God knew that it would mean something in this age, too. So God sent this angel with a message, and Luther began to preach it in this church age. He told them to “hold fast and repent.” They were to hold fast to the truth of the Word of God for that day. They were to repent of their wrong deeds and of their shortcomings. God wants the Church to do that today.

The remainder of verse 3 says, *“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.”* This is a solemn warning. **God came at the end of this church age with more of the truth, and they were caught naked. They couldn’t go on with God. God had to light another candle and blow that one out.** Those candles were lit, but they only burned for their season.

God told that Ephesian Age that if they didn’t repent that He would come and move the candlestick, meaning the “light” was moved to the next age. In Revelation, chapter four, all seven candles are burning before the throne; showing that a candle was lit in each one of the seven church ages, and is now over. (Revelation 2:5) The candlestick was moved as each age came to an end. God lit the John Wesleyan candle around 1750, and He blew the Lutheran candle out; and it’s been out ever since. God does not go back to that church age candle again. He simply moves on to the next age, until the seventh age, and then it is all over for the church ages.

Verse 4: *“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.”*

Remember that these are the escaped ones. They escaped, but they really didn’t go into what God wanted, which was to move with the gospel light into the next age or move of God. There were some, however, that were worthy to walk with God.

God told this Sardisean Age to walk worthy. Someone said that it doesn’t matter whether we live right or not; we’re predestinated. If you don’t live right that shows you are not predestinated. The Bible says that we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. (Romans 8:29) If your life is not conformed to be in the image of His Son, how are you going to prove your predestination? When you conform to the image of Jesus Christ, then you can say you’re predestinated.

Verse 5: *““He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels.”*

There were overcomers in every age. This age went back to the world just like every age, but that seed went on, as the tares went back into their ways, which was to make a denomination.

The last part of verse 5 says, *"I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels."* This is consolation and blessed assurance.

There were some that overcame in every age, and they are going to come up in that first resurrection, and we are going to meet them. Then we will get together and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

Some overcame in this Sardisean Age and they didn't know anything but *"the just shall live by faith."* **That was the Holy Ghost for that age.**

Verse 6: *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."*

God isn't talking about a natural ear. He is talking about those that can hear revelation and understand it. The only way you can understand is if it was given you before the foundation of the world to understand.

### The Philadelphian Age 1750-1906

Verse 7: *"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;"*

This age was the Philadelphian Age. It lasted from 1750 to 1906. John Wesley was the messenger for this age. "Philadelphia" means *brotherly love*," so this was the age of brotherly love. This was the greatest missionary age that we've ever had.

*"These things saith He that is holy."* This was the age that brought in holiness and sanctification. If you have fellowship with God, you have got to be holy. If you live a holy life, believe God's Word, and live for God, then you are sanctified. You are sanctified when He that is holy comes within you and the works of the flesh leave. Now this holiness can not be your righteousness. It has to be the righteousness of Christ, as His Spirit comes into you.

The rest of verse seven says, *"He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."* One of the main attributes of David was that he was a warrior. When he went into battle, he won. Now, God has given that key of David to the Church. When He's got a job to do or a battle to win, He just gives you the key of David.

When you get in a hard battle and it looks like you can't win, just reach and get the key of David and use it. It can't fail.

I want to show you the open door this verse talks about. **The Catholic Church controlled Western Europe. She had that door closed and dared anyone to try to open it, but John Wesley, or the angel, took the key of David and opened that door. The Roman Catholic Church was defeated and the pope was**

**dethroned in 1798.** They were about to do away with the papacy altogether, but they let a younger one get on the throne. It continued in a wounded condition, until it began its healing in the early 1900's, when it began to be healed as world leaders began to recognize the pope of Rome. Around the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church had absolutely no power over the people. Why? God took the key, opened the door, and told the people to evangelize the world. They did it. God opened a door for the Gospel. The Gospel went around the world, more missionary work was done and the Gospel was published more in this age than in any other age.

However, God said that one day the door would be closed. God has given an age of evangelism and He is going to close the door and it won't be opened anymore, except for the 144,000, as is shown in chapter 14 of this book.

The door has been closed in many places, unless God has got something for the Bride to get in there with the message of Revelation, chapter 10:8-11. The Church has still got the key and we can open the door, as God wills it, but the great evangelistic age is over! God is now perfecting the saints. He gave a parable in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew where the net was pulled in and they sat down, showing this age is over.

Verse 8: *"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name."*

God set before every predestinated seed an open door, and that open door is the Word for the hour. You can walk into it and the devil can't stop you.

The last part of this verse talks about them having a little strength and keeping the Word. If we've got a little strength, God will open the door, and no man can shut it. The Bible says that God dealt to every man the measure of faith. He opened the door and gave you a little strength, and He wants you to keep His Word. Keeping God's Word is important. **If you'll keep the Word, the door will stay open for you.**

This Philadelphian Church in Asia in John's day had the name of the Lord, for it says, *"thou hast not denied My name."* All seven of the churches in Asia baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They kept the Word. This church in Philadelphia had a struggle, but God was with them and He kept the door open for them. This church kept the Word, didn't deny the name, and they prevailed.

However in the age from 1750 to 1906, the name of the Lord was not really revealed in a wide sense of the word. In the Reformation Age they were still baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There were scattered incidents where people were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but when we speak of the local church in the city of Philadelphia, they had the name of the Lord.

Also, what He said to this church He is saying to all. He wants all to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Verse 9: *"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews,*

*and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."*

A synagogue is a Jewish temple. When John wrote this it fit perfectly, for there were many synagogues in Asia, because the Jews were scattered throughout all Asia Minor; but when we bring it up to our day, a synagogue of satan is a church that doesn't respect the Word for this day.

In the early Church, Christians appreciated the Jews, because through the Jews was produced the Messiah according to the flesh. He was of the seed of David. This is explained in the twelfth chapter of this book.

In this city of Philadelphia, there were some who claimed to be Jews who really were not, but in this present age it is those who claim to be Christians and are not.

I believe before this Church leaves the earth that God is going to vindicate it, so that every true Christian will know what God is doing. He will even let the false church see and know that God loves the true Church. Because this says, *"I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."* God is going to let the false church know that He loves those that are His, especially the Gentile Bride that has been called out of denominations.

Verse 10: *"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."*

God wants people that will be patient, trust Him, walk with Him, and take what He says and live by it.

When the fire began to die down of modern day Pentecostalism and they went back to the world, it showed that they only had a sensation. If you've got the Word, it will hold you whether you feel anything or not.

There's a revelation that you can receive the Holy Ghost without sensation, without speaking in tongues, etc. **God wants you to be patient and keep His Word.**

This verse says, *"I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."* This prophecy spreads out into the tribulation period. God is speaking, not only to the local church in Asia, or just to this age, but He is speaking to the whole scope of the Church, because tribulation comes at the end, after the Rapture.

Verse 11: *"Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."*

We want to hold the ground that God has given to us. Has God given you some ground in Him? Has He given you a crown? Has He given you a place in the body? Then hold fast to it.

Verse 12: *"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him My new name."*

Once you become a Christian to the extent that God can lay some responsibility upon your shoulders, then you're not in and out. He said that you'll go no more out. Then what is the temple of God? It's His church (a spiritual temple) that is being addressed here. In the eleventh chapter of Revelation, the temple that's to be rebuilt is the natural temple of God

Nowadays, we see people in and out so much that they'll never be a pillar. They won't even be a stone in the temple if they don't stay in. He put you in the temple as a lively stone and you are to stay there. **God doesn't want those in His temple that are in and out and up and down. Denominational churches want them in theirs, because all they are after is a crowd anyway.** God isn't concerned about numbers. He knew every one that would be there before the foundation of the world.

Verse 13: *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."*

### The Laodicean Age 1906-Until?

Verse 14: *"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;"*

Now we get into the Laodicean Age. I won't have to tell you much about this age, for you are living in it and can see what is going on. This age started in 1906. "Laodicea" has a meaning like *people's rights*. Everybody wants their rights. You've got the Word of God, which are the rights that God gives you, and they are wonderful.

Paul said that you've got liberty, only use not that liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Galatians 5:13) The Word says that you are not your own, but you are bought with a price. (I Corinthians 6:20) You don't even own yourself. Paul said in Galatians 2:20--*"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."*

Now, where are the people's rights? They are laid out in God's Word. God set a ministry in the Church and they teach the true Bride the rights the Word of God gives them. He said He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints and for the working of the ministry. (Ephesians 4:11-12) The working of the ministry means all five offices, not just one. God has got a five-fold ministry that will lead the Bride to the perfection that God promised, and they are working together for this purpose.

Verse 14 says, *"These things saith the Amen."* This shows the deity of Christ. This verse means that the revelation of who God is, in this last day will come back to the Church again. We will know that Jesus is not the second person. He is the *only* person in the Godhead; He's the only one. That's why in this age, the spiritual angel (the seventh angel) came down and brought this revelation. **Then, Brother William Branham, the earthly messenger for this age, the**

**prophet of Malachi 4, came and preached the deity of Jesus Christ.** He took that knowledge around the world seven times, with a message showing that Jesus Christ is The Great Amen and The Faithful and True Witness of verse 14.

Verse 15: *"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot."*

This is one of the sins of this age; they are neither cold nor hot. In other words, if you just halfway serve God, half in and half out, then Jesus would rather you get in or out and not be a stumbling block. If you see someone praising God, shouting the victory, and speaking in tongues today, and tomorrow they are out in the beer joint, they're a stumbling block to the cause of God.

Verse 16: *"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."*

This age is getting spewed out of the mouth of God because they are neither cold nor hot. God says that they make Him sick at His stomach. God is sick of this church age. **He is going to vomit it out and go back to Israel.** I'm not talking about the Bride. In every age there is a true vine and a false vine. The false vine gets spewed out of His mouth, while the true vine comes into the fullness of Christ for the age.

Verse 17: *"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:"*

That's the shape this church age is in spiritually. I'm not talking about the revealed Bride. I'm talking about this Laodicean Age. What started under Luther, Wesley, and even in this age is all here and it's just a lukewarm mess to get spewed out of the mouth of God. They say they are rich and have need of nothing, but in the eyes of God they are poor, blind, and naked and don't know it. Yes, this age is rich in materialism, with their big churches or a better word here is, **"religious lodges."** **It is satan's eden.** God rejects this whole religious mess; it's good for nothing but to be burned in the tribulation.

Verse 18: *"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."*

Peter said that the trying of your faith is more precious than gold tried in the fire. (I Peter 1:7) That's faith that has come through all of these ages. Even through fiery trials faith in God's Word has stood. God will give you the real genuine faith in the Word of God, faith in Jesus Christ, faith in the power of God, and faith in the ministry if you will accept it. He will give you that gold that is tried in the fire.

God is saying in this verse that He counsels of you to get something of Him that's genuine. **There is a genuine baptism of the Holy Ghost. It's not so much speaking in tongues, but it is believing the Lord Jesus Christ is in you, revealing the Word of God to you. That's what Jesus wants to give you. People don't want that; they want some kind of sensation.**

God is telling this age that He has something real and that they don't have to have a counterfeit or a put-on. He has something real for the Church. Why would anyone want a counterfeit when the sky is full of the genuine? That's exactly what God is telling the Church.

Who did He send this gold of verse 18 by in this Laodicean Age? None other than the messenger for this age, William Branham. He came with a real Holy Ghost Gospel. He preached the Word of God, and God honored it around the world. That man brought true revelation to the Church. He brought the Word that's been tried through the ages. People have turned it down and frowned on it, but God has honored it.

Verse 19: *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."*

This is what God is going to do to you if you're a child of God and walking out of line. If God has to rebuke and chasten you, don't fight back with God. It's His love that compels Him to correct you, so in all things, give praises unto Him.

Verse 20: *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."*

Now what I want you to see here, is that there comes a time at the end of the age where Christ is no longer in the church ages. This is a little time where He deals mightily with the Bride. He stands on the outside of organizations and He is knocking on the hearts of people asking to be let into their lives so He can become one with them.

In the first chapter of Revelation, He is identified as a High Priest walking among the candlesticks. (Revelation 1:13) Regardless of what happened during those ages, He always walked among those candlesticks. He stayed in the Church in a portion of His Spirit.

**Now at the end of the age that Mighty Angel in Revelation 10:6 raised His hand to heaven and swore that time is no more. That means that time is no more for the harlot daughters, time is no more for the church ages, and time is no more for the old mother whore.** Now, Jesus makes Himself real to a special group of people, and that is His Bride, those that are true to the Word.

Verse 21: *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."*

Notice, Revelation 3:21 says, *"To him that overcometh."* Overcometh what? One of the attributes of this age is lukewarmness, and He said, *"because thou art lukewarm I will spue thee out of My mouth."* (Revelation 3:16) He wants us to be either hot or cold. This says, *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne."* Hold on to that because we get that in chapter 4, where it actually shows Jesus sitting in the position of the Father or on God's throne.

This doesn't mean that the overcomers will go up to Jesus and tell Him to move over so they can sit down with Him. It means that the overcomers will share in the authority of Jesus Christ. The rest of verse 21 says, *"even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."* Jesus Christ Himself had to be an overcomer. What would Jesus have to overcome? If you will study the life of

Jesus, you will find out that He had to overcome many things. In Hebrews 4:15 it says that He *“was in all points tempted like as we are.”* Also, Hebrews 2:14 says, *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had power of death, that is, the devil.”* He became a man and laid aside the deity (Philippians 2:7-8) and became a bond-servant, a human being, and lived thirty-three years and had to overcome. Therefore, we have got to be overcomers in this hour.

In the fourth chapter you will see Him as an overcomer and how He sits with the Father in His throne, and you will see the promise to the overcomers.

Verse 22: *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”*

In this last church age, as in all the other ages, it takes a spiritual revelation to hear what Christ is saying to His Church.

**More and more it takes a revelation to see the Word of God,** as you will see in the other chapters of this Book of Revelation. But, *“He that that an ear”* will understand this book as it unfolds right before your wondering eyes. Amen