

Back to the Future

Revelation 3:1-6

I. The City (3:1)

- Sardis is located 3 miles southeast of Thyatira. (Present city Sart)
- Sardis was the “Denver” of Asia Minor.
- It was a city built on a steep mountain. It could only be entered from the front (very steep grade), and its back set on the edge of a tall cliff.
- Sardis was known as the “**city of death**”.



I. The City (3:1)

- The citizens of Sardis felt very safe and lived in luxury.
- Sardis minted the first gold coins and discovered how to dye wool.
- Sardis worshipped the god “Cybele”, the goddess able to raise the dead.
- **Twice** this city was defeated when the watchman fell asleep on his post, and the enemies came up from its obscure cave network beneath.



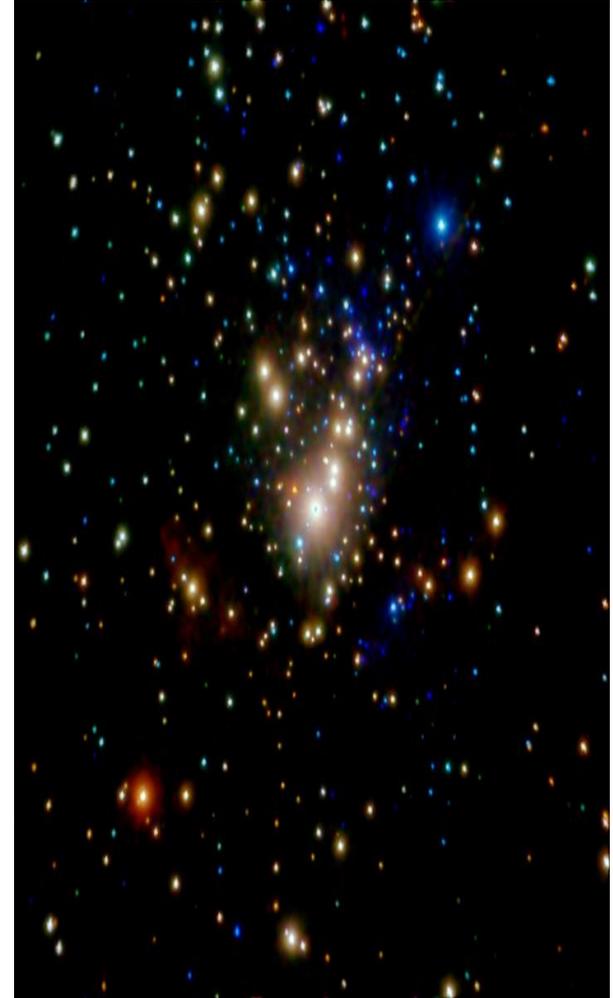
II. The Commendation (3:4)

- A. A few members have not participated in the church's sin. Again, the sin is sexual immorality and idolatry.
- Clean clothes refer to the righteous acts of the saints.
 - This city loved to color their clothing, but what really counts is white, purity.
 - The faithful few in the church are being persecuted both outside and inside the church.



III. The Condemnation (3:1c-2b)

- A. You say you are alive but they are **DEAD**.
- This church was living on its past reputation and were unwilling to do anything about the present and future.



III. The Condemnation (3:1c-2b)

- B. This church's works were not complete in God's sight. They had nothing collectively to be praised for.
- This church bore no fruit!



IV. The Command (3:2a-3)

- A. “Wake up” or be watchful!
 - B. “Strengthen those who remain!” Strengthen your witness, love, ministry, prayer, doctrine...
 - C. “Remember what you have heard and were taught!”
 - D. “Keep it” – live out God’s Word, live out doctrine
 - E. “Repent” – of your spiritual deadness
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- **If Sardis does not repent, then “the city of death” will be the inscription of this church. Jesus will conquer a church that thinks it is invincible.**
 - **Don’t be careless or over confident!**

V. The Comfort (3:5-6)

- A. Call to hear and obey is given again (3:3)
- B. Over-comers will receive:
 1. White garments
 2. Eternal Security (**What does erase mean?**)
 3. Acknowledgement from Jesus before the Father. (Matt. 10:32)



I. The City (3:7) Philadelphia

- Philadelphia was built in 2nd century BC by Eumenes 2 in honor of his brother Attalus Philadelphia.
- Philadelphia was completely destroyed by an earthquake twice yet rebuilt. Most of the population lived outside the walls.
- It was a city not founded for its military value, but rather a city to reculture people who had been captured in battle. Philadelphia was known as the **city of the “open door.”**



I. The City (3:7)

- Philadelphia's economy was depended on it's grape production. This all came crashing down in AD 92 under the reign of Domitian.
- This city had many names throughout it's existence; a history that saw the city change names often.
(mostly spoke of conquest)



II. The Commendation (3:8-10)

A. This church has been faithful to **God's Word** and to His **Name**.

- “open door” speaks of preaching the gospel
- “little power” means that they are few in number.

B. Their faithfulness will be rewarded by God's love.

- Their enemies will be forced to bow at their feet
- They will be elevated over those who think they belong to God.



III. No Condemnation

IV. The Command (3:11)

- A. *“Hold fast that no one takes your crown!”*
- Crowns speaks of reward, as well as a reference to salvation
 - 2 John 8
- B. *“I am coming quickly!”*
- Words of encouragement to a church going through great persecution.



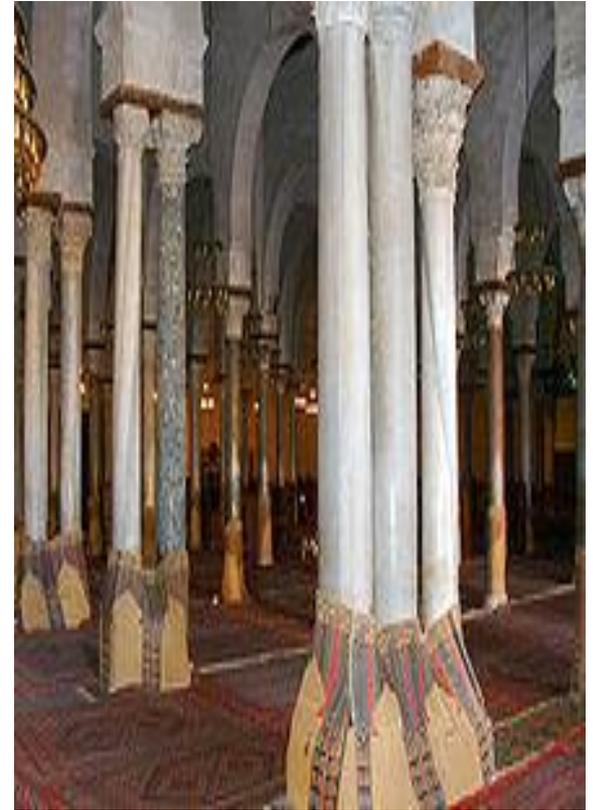
V. The Comfort (3:10,12)

A. The Overcomers will be delivered from the “hour of testing.”

- First clear idea of a great, final tribulation period.
- Note it is in the future, it has a definite limited, period of time, it is a test for the whole world, and it will be directed to those on earth.
- **Is the church delivered from or delivered in the tribulation?**

V. The Comfort (3:10,12)

- B. The Overcomers will be honored in heaven.
- The pillar speaks of stability and honor.
 - A pillar was a place the names of all the heroes would be engraved
- C. The Overcomers will have a home that is permanent and stable.
- D. The Overcomers will be God's possession forever. Their identity is found in God.



I. The City (3:14) Laodicea

- Laodicea was rebuilt in 261 BC by Antiochus II of Syria, and renamed Laodicea after his wife Laodice.
- Laodicea was located 45 miles southeast of Philadelphia and 100 east of Ephesus.
- Laodicea was the richest of all the cities in Asia Minor. In fact, when the city was destroyed in 70 AD, they refused financial aid from Rome, and rebuilt themselves.



I. The City (3:7)

➤ Laodicea had 3 main industries:

1. **Eye Salve:** a paste made from zinc (in the soil) and the chalky water was known to cure eye problems.

2. **Black Wool:** Very expensive garments came from a special breed of sheep that produced natural black wool.

3. **Banks:** This city had advanced, extensive banking operations.



I. The City (3:7)

- Laodicea was part of a tri-city: Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea. Their **weakness was their water supply**. Colossae had cold water, Hierapolis had hot water. By the time the aqueducts brought the water into the city the water was lukewarm! **It even made the people sick to drink it.**



II. No Commendation

III. Condemnation (3:15-17)

A. *“I know your deeds.”* (sickening)

- Hot speaks of being saved
- Cold speaks of being lost
- *“lukewarm”* means that people in the church are playing church, and yet lost in their sins.

B. *“You say you have no needs.”*

- The Faithful Witness says that this church is spiritually blind, naked, and poor.
- This church is filled with pride and self deceit.

V. The Comfort (3:21-22)

- A. The Over-comers will sit down with Christ on His throne.
- Reigning with Christ speaks of being joint-heirs with Him, not equal to Him.
- B. Letter ends with the promise of blessing for those who hear and obey.

"Some churches make God cry, others make God angry, some make God sick!"

IV. The Command (3:18-20)

- A. **“Invest in Christ!”** God’s gold, white garments, and spiritual eye salve all speaks of true redemption.
- B. **“Repent!”** The call to all churches that have a condemning word from Christ.
- C. **“Open the door of the church to Christ.”** This call is for the church to accept Christ into her midst; an invitation for revival and intimate fellowship.

