① INTRO / SELF-IDENTIFICATION

v.1 And to the angel of Sardis,
- The church in Sardis was not doing well... at all
- Some argue this was the worst church of the 7
- Jesus even called it "DEAD"
- There are some interesting parallels between the city itself and the church
- Sardis used to be something special... it had a good name
- way back in 6th cent. B.C., it was one of the most powerful cities in the world
- It was situated 1,500 feet above a valley, which made a natural citadel (strong tower)
- Their Greek God, Cybele, was said to bring the dead to life
★ surprisingly, it was attacked and defeated twice by people climbing up the 1,580 ft cliff.
★ The city was not "watchful" and eventually a dead city (relic)
- Just as the Thyatira letter was very similar to Pergamos
- The letter to Sardis is very similar to the letter to Ephesus
- The identification of Jesus (from the Son of Man vision - ch.1) is almost identical to Sardis as it was to Ephesus

v.1 write, "These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars...
- Ephesus was told their letter was from, "He who holds the seven stars in His right hand and who walks in the midst of the seven golden Lampstands" - Rev. 2:1
- The seven stars are the seven churches... that is explained well in Rev. 1:20 "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches"
- As we studied in Rev. 1:4, the 7 spirits can be somewhat enigmatic
★ The "seven spirits" must likely are a metaphor for the full presence and Divine power for the 7 churches
- In the next vision (4-7) we read "The seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God" 4:5
- Also in that vision... The Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the Seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth" Rev. 5:6
- This is all the times "The seven Spirits of God" are mentioned in Rev. (1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6)
★ Isaiah does mention that the Messiah will have a seven fold duse of the Spirit (Is. 11)
★ It seems the Spirit gives life & power and Sardis was dead and weak

② COMMENDATIONS... OR NOT?

v.1 I know your works...
- Some argue that Sardis has no commendations at all
- They might have a point
"I know your works" is simply a statement of fact
★ There is no praise for this church
- That is why some argue, this is the worst church of the 7.
- no mention of laboring, or love, or patience, or holding fast, or not denying Jesus' name, or service, or faith... Nothing!
★ Just that they are "DEAD"

③ CONDEMNATIONS / REBUKES

v.1 You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead
- although they have a reputation of a name for themselves of being alive,
★ In God's eyes... they are DEAD
- They were physically alive and met - but they were spiritually dead
- they were "Christian" in name only
- Their confessions and creeds were in contradiction to their way of life

v.2 Be watchful and strengthen the things that are ready to die
- Jesus says to be "watchful"
γρηγορεω: wake-up pay attention BE ALERT
- To strengthen what isn't dead yet
- This shows the Christians in Sardis were lethargic, sleepy, careless
- Being "Watchful" is the 1st of 5 admonitions to the church
- Be watchful } v.2
- strengthen
- Remember } 3
- Hold fast
- Repent
- These are some saved things "which remain" but they're on life support
★ Something has clearly happened which has caused this death
- As in history, so is life... Sardis/The church is NOT as Great as it used to Be (Good in "name" only)
- considering oneself to be "secure" - typically leads to not "remaining alert" - which often leads to fall/disaster
- although the church at Sardis (like Sardis) is pronounced "DEAD"... it still has the potential of a restored Life
★ But this will only come from the One who has "The seven Spirits"
- the fullness (7) of the Breath (spirit) of Life πνευμα
★ They are to look at this part of the vision
v.2 for I have not found your works perfect/complete in the sight of God ἐργον
- To the citizens of Sardis... it "looked" as if the church was doing the "work" they should be doing and even had a good "name"
★ However, in God's eyes... their work was incomplete / NOT done
v.3 Remember, therefore, what you received and heard
- Christ calls on them to remember what they have been taught
- Remember their spiritual vitality/life
★ Begin to act like that again!!
- Remember, this letter is similar to the letter to Ephesus
★ Likewise, Paul (like John) had to remind the Ephesians to "wake up!"
"Awake, you who sleep, arise from the Dead, and Christ will give you the light" Eph 5:14 (Is. 26:19, 60:1)
v.3 hold fast (keep it) and repent
τηρεω: guard, watch, protect
- This command to "hold fast" is a repeated warning to Christians
"you are saved, if you hold fast..." 1 Cor 15:2
"TEST all things. Hold fast to what is good" 1 Thes. 5:21
"we are part of God's house, if we hold fast..." Hebrews 3:6
"Hold fast and do not waver..." Heb 10:23
"Hold fast to My name and do not deny the faith..." Rev. 2:13
"Hold fast till I come" Rev. 2:25
"Hold fast and repent" Rev. 3:3
"Hold fast that no one may take your crown" Rev. 3:11
- we are to repeatedly warned to hold fast/stay on guard...
OR there will be severe consequence
★ Repentance is the cure
μετανοεω: repent, change one's mind... typically after the fact
- Christians must constantly be willing to re-orient our mind to be in accordance w/ GOD!!

④ CONSEQUENCES TO NOT REPENTING

v.3 Therefore, if you will NOT watch, I will come upon you like a thief and you will not know what hour I will come upon you
- notice this is the conditional result of "NOT watching"
- Those who "watch" will NOT be caught off guard by His - Spiritual Coming of Judgment (Typically called: The DAY OF THE LORD)
★ The coming judgment to a nation has tell-tale signs - christians should see it coming (Thes. 5:1-6... should NOT be as a thief to you)
★ Also, in the 5th vision of Rev.:
"Behold, I am coming quickly (clearly an imminent message to the Northern Jews) as a thief. Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame" Rev. 16:15
- It is possible to see the Day coming and NOT be caught w/ your pants down...
★ Garments can cover shame/nakedness (Adam & Eve reference?)
★ The physical return of Christ has no indications and could be at any moment
- Christians need to always be ready
"Watch therefore, for you do not know when the Master of the house is coming... I say to you all: Watch!" Mark 13:35

⑤ PROMISES TO THE OVERCOMER/CONQUERER

- There are basically three promises to the overcomer/conqueror:
① walk w/ Jesus clothed in white garments
② NOT have their name blotted out of the BOOK of Life
③ have their name confessed by Jesus to God and His angels

v.4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments
- Despite the majority of the christians being spiritually dead
- There was a minority who were alive, watchful, & pure
- This might be the only compliment in this letter
- These "few names" actually hold fast to the name of Christ
- These few christians are described as not "defiling their garments."
★ This is an important metaphor to understand as its often repeated
μολυνω: stain, soil, defile (molyno) make impure
- Defiling will be a metaphor to describe spiritual impurity
ἱματιον: outer garments, clothing, cloak (himation)
- The Garment will be a metaphor to describe the person's actions/deeds and even their character/♡
The overcomers "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:14 2nd vision
"They were clean and bright, for their fine linen were the righteous acts of the saints" Rev. 19:8 6th vision
v.4 and they shall walk w/ Me in white, for they are worthy
- christians who stay faithful and pure (NOT stain their garments)
- are "worthy" to walk w/ Jesus
- This condition to walk w/ Jesus in white garments will be repeated in v.5
- The idea of walking w/ Jesus is a metaphor of a close relationship
★ It is probably a reference to:
"Enoch who walked w/ God" Gen. 5:22 AND
"many of Jesus' disciples who went back and walked w/ Him no more" John 6:66
- majority in Sardis "walked" w/ Jesus no more
- The minority "walked w/ Him in white", which speaks of: purity, victory, triumph
★ In Rev. 7 a great multitude wearing white robes walk w/ Jesus to springs of living water... Rev. 7:9-10, 17

v.5 He who overcomes/conquers shall be clothed in white garments
- Again, this is the first promise of three
- and is a continuation from v.4
★ "white garments" are mentioned seven times in Revelation (3:5, 3:18, 4:4, 6:11, 7:9, 13, 19:14)
- martyrs, 24 Elders, great multitude, armies of heaven w/ Messiah
v.5 and I will NOT BLOT out his name from the BOOK of Life
- The "BOOK of Life" is mentioned throughout the Scriptures (Gen - Rev.)
- The BOOK of Life is a metaphor to symbolize all overcomers/conquerers
★ Citizens in Jerusalem would have their "name" recorded in a BOOK
"and it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy - everyone who is recorded among those living in Jerusalem." Is. 4:3
- like the old days of a phone BOOK, listing residents
★ Citizens who commit iniquity, become defiled, or apostate have their erased from the recorded citizenship (like people who moved out of the city & their name removed from the phone BOOK)
"Add iniquity to their iniquity and let them not come into Your righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living and not be written with the righteous" Ps. 69:27-28
★ Now, the New Jerusalem/Zion is a spiritual Nation (1 Pt. 2, Rev. 21)
- and many of the truths of the physical Nation now apply spiritually (nation, Kingdom, weapons, enemies, sacrifices, citizenship, the mark, etc)
- Those who are in the New Spiritual Zion need to "hold fast" or be blotted out/erased from citizenship
- Moses prayed he would be blotted out opposed to all who made and worshipped the Golden Calf (specifically, his brother Aaron)
"Yet now, if you will forgive their sin, but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written. And the LORD said to Moses, Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book." Ex. 32:32-33
One needed to stay faithful and in good standing to remain registered OR recorded in the BOOK
"My hand is against those who envision futility and divine lies. They shall NOT be in the assembly of My people, NOR be written in the record of the house of Israel" (church) Ez. 13:9
★ This recorded citizenship is also →

...taught in the New Testament
"to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven..." (church) Heb. 12:23
★ The idea of National registry still continues, but spiritually
★ And the threat of being erased/blotted out still continues
"Overcome... and you will NOT be blotted out/erased..." 3:5
ἐξαλειφω: erased, blotted out, wiped away, (exalcipho) concealed, eliminated
- This BOOK of Life will be used 5 more times in Revelation
- God knows how the Book ends...
- Some can be in it to the end
- Some can be in it, then blotted out
- Some will never even make it in it

v.5 I will confess his name before My Father and His angels
- NO Doubt, this is in reference to Matt 10:32
"IF you confess Me before men, I will confess you before My Father who is in Heaven"
- IF we stay faithful & overcome/conquer our Temptations...
★ Jesus will confess OUR Genuiness!
v.6 Those who have a (spiritual) ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches!
- humble ♡ = Listening ears Is. 6