

# THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

## Chapters 2-3 – Church History – Seven Letters to Seven Churches

### THE SARDIS LETTER – REVELATION 3:1-6

Today's study reveals the \_\_\_\_\_ letter written to the seven churches in Asia Minor by the apostle John—the letter to the church at Sardis. Doctrinally its time frame is in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the *Dark Ages* (1000 AD – 1500 AD) with the most horrific acts of martyrdom, savagery, carnage, massacre and \_\_\_\_\_ ever perpetrated upon mankind. This is the age of the Spanish Inquisitions and Crusades that ravished the known world's population. Dissenters of Roman Catholicism die by the millions. While Bible-believers are scarcely found out in the public eye there are a *few* well-known men during the time period—John Wycliffe, John Huss, and Girolamo Savonarola. These men prove that even in the hardest of times God has a remnant that will \_\_\_\_\_ the devil's work.

**The name Sardis means:** \_\_\_\_\_ ones

- The saints in Sardis during the first century, and during this period in church history, are not referred to as “Red Ones” for nothing. This place and age is typified by bloodshed and martyrdom. The name supernaturally represents the characteristics of this church in 90 AD and its representative time in church history.

**There is a positive commendation given:**

1. There was a faithful remnant – Rev. 3:4
  - a. In the Old Testament, no matter how apostate the Nation of Israel became, God always had a remnant of true followers. In Sardis at the time of John's writing and throughout church history no matter how dark it got, no matter how ruthless the State Church became, God always had a \_\_\_\_\_ of faithful followers who would not defile themselves with the Harlot church known as Jezebel.
  - b. In the city of Sardis there were those faithful saints who were never part of the Devil's false religious system—people who stood for the truths found in God's word.
2. They received a comforting promise – Rev. 3:5
  - Public recognition by Jesus Christ before God the Father and his angels, with white clothes and their name forever written in the \_\_\_\_\_ of life.

### There are negative condemnations given:

1. It was a delusional church ... – Rev. 3:1-2
  - a. The Seven Stars are his angel's and the Seven Spirits are his heavenly eyes – Rev. 1:4, 20; 4:5; 5:6; Zech. 3:9; 4:10; 2 Chron. 16:9
  - b. God sees what is going on, and he has not missed anything. While much of the world is fooled by their \_\_\_\_\_ (testimony), the Lord is not. He sees the self-deception of those that *appear* to be working for God, that *appear* as though they are living, but are \_\_\_\_\_.
2. They receive a warning of impending judgment – Rev. 3:3
  - a. If they do not *watch* what they are doing, God is going to come upon them when they least expect it.
  - b. Local Churches are a living *organism* (the body of Christ – 1 Cor. 12:12-27), not a dead State-Church *organization*. The church in Sardis has the testimony (name) of being a living, breathing body, but in reality, it is nothing more than a dead corpse.

### Three basic applications of the Sardis letter:

1. Historically – 90 AD – 96 AD
  - a. Sardis was the Capitol of the great kingdom of Lydia
    - The city was the center for the textile and carpet industry for the Roman Empire.

It was one of the oldest and most important cities in Asia Minor due to its constant growing commerce. Some of the richest men in the empire lived in Sardis; its last Prince Croesus was the wealthiest man in the world at that time.

It was the first city to mint coins. Many coins of that era and later carried the inscription of the mother goddess, the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
    - The city was located on an elevated plateau with three sides of smooth, sheer rock face. It was absolutely unscalable.

The pagans of the area built a temple to the mother goddess Cybele – who was worshipped in Ephesus as Diana. She was the goddess of the moon. It was the home of many other cults and pagan religious circles.

- Sardis, along with other cities of that era, listed the names of its citizens in a publicly displayed record. When an individual would die or relocate their name was blotted out from the log.

Archeological excavations have unearthed inscriptions that barred pagan temple worshippers from entering with soiled clothes lest the particular deity be offended.

Because of this dynamic, the church in Sardis was polluted with unbelievers who made false professions of faith (receiving Christ along with all the other pagan deities of the area). It was a church that thought it was godly, but in reality was devilish. Sources of spiritual authority rested upon the traditions and doctrines of men rather than the written word of God. Those who stood on the scriptures as their final authority were persecuted and killed.

The “few” faithful believers present who were genuinely saved were constantly at odds with the unfaithful and unbelieving church goers, for hazard of death they boldly challenged them to repent.

Walk Thru the Bible Series, pages 912-913 – by J. Vernon McGee; IVP Bible Background Commentary – by Craig S. Keener; Unger’s Bible Handbook

- Sardis was the home of a \_\_\_\_\_ State-Church that had no record of propagating the true gospel of salvation through Christ alone, or sending out Bible preaching missionaries.

- Believers in Sardis were in such great peril that they had no choice but to run and hide from their persecutors in order to survive.

## 2. Doctrinally – 1000 AD – 1500 AD (Church History)

- The Sardis period of church history begins in the middle of the \_\_\_\_\_ and continues until the time period often referred to as the “\_\_\_\_\_.” The Sardis period starts during a time referred to by some historians as *“The Midnight of the Dark Ages.”*

- It is a time when we are introduced to the invasions of Saladin and Genghis Khan. An influx of Asiatic culture, Hinduism, and Moslem philosophy begin to creep into Europe motivating all types of humanistic psychology, by way of the Crusades. We also see the start of the Renaissance period sweeping through Europe at this time. The Bubonic Plague reaches epic proportions and takes the lives of millions.

- b. This time was horrific and gruesome as Bible believers were \_\_\_\_\_ and murdered by the millions under the direction of Roman Catholic Popes and Priests during the Crusades and Inquisitions. The Roman religion of this period is at its peak. During the Sardis period of church history, the counterfeit church is in the *“Golden Age of Papal Power.”*
- “We shall give an ample description of the severe torments occasioned by the torture, from the account of one who suffered it three respective times, but happily survived the cruelties he underwent:”

At the first time of torturing, six executioners entered, stripped him naked to his drawers, and laid him upon his back on a kind of stand, elevated a few feet from the floor. The operation commenced by putting an iron collar round his neck, and a ring to each foot, which fastened him to the stand. His limbs being thus stretched out, they wound two ropes round each thigh, which ropes being passed under the scaffold, through holes made for that purpose, were all drawn tight at the same instant of time, by four of the men, on a given signal.

It is easy to conceive that the pains which immediately succeeded were intolerable; the ropes, which were of a small size, cut through the prisoner’s flesh to the bone, making the blood to gush out at eight different places thus bound at a time. As the prisoner persisted in not making any confession of what the inquisitors required, the ropes were drawn in this manner four times successively.

Two months after the second torture, the prisoner being a little recovered, was again ordered to the torture room, and there for the last time, made to undergo another kind of punishment, which was inflicted twice without any intermission. The executioners fastened a thick iron chain round his body, which crossed at the breast, and terminated at the wrists. Then they placed him with his back against a thick board, at each extremity whereof was a pulley, which there ran a rope that caught the end of the chain at his wrists. The executioner then, stretching the end of his rope by means of a roller, placed at a distance behind him, pressed or bruised his stomach in proportion as the ends of the chains were drawn tighter. They tortured him in this manner to such a degree that his wrists, as well as his shoulders, were quite dislocated. They were, however, soon set by the surgeons; but the barbarians, not yet satisfied with this species of cruelty, made him immediately undergo the like torture a second time, which he sustained (though, if possible, attended with keener pains,) with equal constancy and resolution. After this, he was again remanded to the dungeon, attended by the surgeon to dress his bruises and adjust the part dislocated, and here he continued until their *auto di fe*, or jail delivery, when he was discharged, crippled and diseased for life.

Miles L. Stanford, *Fox’s Book of Martyrs* (Zondervan, 1967), 63, 64

### c. The Crusades

- Throughout the Crusades \_\_\_\_\_ of Bible believers along with Muslims and non-conformists, lost their lives from the heavy hand of Rome. Roman Catholic Crusaders were also killed as a result of fighting other armed peoples. These were bloody ruthless times, all perpetrated in the name of God...

There were basically \_\_\_\_\_ Crusades designed to take the Holy land from Muslims:

First Crusade	-	1095-1099 AD - <i>Captured Jerusalem</i>
Second Crusade	-	1147-1149 AD - <i>Postponed the fall of Jerusalem</i>
Third Crusade	-	1189-1191 AD - <i>Army failed to reach Jerusalem</i>
Fourth Crusade	-	1201-1204 AD - <i>Captured and plundered Constantinople</i>
Fifth Crusade	-	1228-1229 AD - <i>Took Jerusalem, but soon lost it</i>
Sixth Crusade	-	1248-1254 AD - <i>A complete failure</i>
Seventh Crusade	-	1270 -1272 AD- <i>Came to naught</i>

Rome claimed to have three basic reasons for the Crusades:

- 1-To conquer and assume the Holy Land
- 2-To stop the spread of the Islamic religion
- 3-To unite the East and West branches of Catholicism

However, from a scriptural standpoint the purpose of the crusades were for Satan to gain control of \_\_\_\_\_, all the while wiping out any adversaries under the guise of his counterfeit religious system, in an effort to establish a \_\_\_\_\_ for his false Christ (*antichrist*).

### d. The Inquisitions

- The Inquisitions of the Roman Catholic Church are perhaps the most horrific and \_\_\_\_\_ events in the history of mankind...

No one was free from her grasp:

The Story of Galileo

The most eminent men of science and philosophy of the day did not escape the watchful eye of this cruel despotism. Galileo, the chief astronomer and mathematician of his age, was the first who used the telescope successfully in solving the movements of the heavenly bodies. He discovered that the sun is the center of motion around which the earth and various planets revolve. For making this great discovery Galileo was brought before the Inquisition, and for a while was in great danger of being put to death.

After a long and bitter review of Galileo's writings, in which many of his most important discoveries were condemned as errors, the charge of the inquisitors went on to declare, *"That you, Galileo, have upon account of those things which you have written and confessed, subjected yourself to a strong suspicion of heresy in this Holy Office, by believing, and holding to be true, a doctrine which is false, and contrary to the sacred and divine Scripture--viz., that the sun is the center of the orb of the earth, and does not move from the east to the west; and that the earth moves, and is not the center of the world."*

In order to save his life, Galileo admitted that he was wrong in thinking that the earth revolved around the sun, and swore that--*"For the future, I will never more say, or assert, either by word or writing, anything that shall give occasion for a like suspicion."* But immediately after taking this forced oath he is said to have whispered to a friend standing near, *"the earth moves, for all that."*

Miles L. Stanford, *Fox's Book of Martyrs* (Zondervan, 1967), 85, 86

#### A Summary of the Inquisition:

Such was the Inquisition, declared by the Spirit of God to be at once the offspring and the *image* of the popedom. To feel the force of the parentage, we must look to the time. In the thirteenth century, the popedom was at the summit of mortal dominion; it was independent of all kingdoms; it ruled with a rank of influence never before or since possessed by a human scepter; it was the acknowledged sovereign of body and soul; to all earthly intents its power was immeasurable for good or evil. It might have spread literature, peace, freedom, and Christianity to the ends of Europe, or the world. But its nature was hostile; its fuller triumph only disclosed its fuller evil; and, to the shame of human reason, and the terror and suffering of human virtue, Rome, in the hour of its consummate grandeur, teemed with the monstrous and horrid birth of the Inquisition!

Miles L. Stanford, *Fox's Book of Martyrs* (Zondervan, 1967), 87

- During the Sardis period there were those faithful saints who were never part of the Roman religious system—people who stood for the truth of God's preserved word, who were against Rome \_\_\_\_\_ the reformers came along. As a matter of fact, it was the street preachers of this period that motivated much of the reformation. These preachers did not try to reform Rome, they preached its destruction and urged Catholics to repent and get saved!
- The "*few*" who believed during the Sardis period were called: Albigenses, Bulgarians, Waldenses, Cathari, Petrobusians, Arnoldists, Hussites, Henricians, New Manichaeans, Lollards, and Anabaptists. These groups were branded as " \_\_\_\_\_," by the Roman Catholic Church. (*See Fox's Book of Martyr's or Martyr's Mirror*).

- Some of the more famous preachers of this time who stood against Rome were: John Wycliffe, John Huss, Peter Waldo, Tyndale, John Tauler, John Colet, Vincent Ferrer, Andrew of Perugia, Conradt, and Girolamo Savonarola to name a few. These men were despised \_\_\_\_\_ of Rome and \_\_\_\_\_ by the official Roman Church.

### 3. Devotionally – 2025

- The believers who were not defiled by the satanic superstitious doctrines propagated by the Roman State Church had many major points of theology in common. Some are:

The Bible alone was the final authority for all matters of faith and practice

Baptism was not connected with salvation and was by immersion for believers only

Separation of Church and State

Never prayed to or for any person that was dead and did not give any credence to a mythological place called purgatory

Complete rejection of the Roman Catholic Mass and anything connected to it such as transubstantiation, a myriad of Baalite repetitious rituals, and any form of idolatry

The Popes are some of the *many antichrists* described in the scriptures





# THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

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## 7 WAYS POPE FRANCIS RADICALLY CHANGED CATHOLICISM – Sunday, April 27, 2025

### 1- Focus on social work of the church

Francis has moved the gradual predominance that pastoral care of mercy, the church's social work, above the faith itself — the primacy of doctrinal truths. The pope made major changes here with the synod on the family, carried out in two stages in 2014 and 2015. In this synodal assembly, the indissolubility of the marriage bond and the prohibition of access to Communion for the divorced and remarried began to be discussed in direct contradiction to doctrine.

### 2- Acceptance of homosexuality as normal for church faithful

Starting with his famous statement pronounced at the beginning of his pontificate: "Who am I to judge?" Francis' successive defenses of the condition were a radical departure from teachings that emanate directly from sacred scriptures and the ecclesial magisterium. Francis' decision to embrace *Fiducia Supplicans* (2023), authorizing the blessing for homosexual couples, put the faithful into confusion while causing the unanimous rejection of almost the entire episcopate of the African continent. Pope Francis accepted this collective refusal "because of the cultural idiosyncrasy" of the African population and clergy.

### 3- The church's embrace of globalist agendas

History may record that Francis was the first woke pope, easily and without complaint accepting the agendas of the United Nations (Agenda 2030), the World Economic Forum (The Great Reset), the Paris Summit (climate change), and Big Pharma's take on COVID-19 — including many clearly anti-Christian concepts that remain totally alien to the ecclesial magisterium.

### 4- Bergoglio offered unequivocal adherence and alliances to groups and personalities aligned with progressivism.

He did not find it problematic they advocated an anti-Christian and anti-humanist agenda. At its root, the progressive conception of a human being is conditioned and dominated by one's subordination and submission to the state and the state's derivatives, including cybernetics, that is, a human being symbiotized with the technologies inserted in the human organism.

### 5- The pope radically diminished the church's fight for life and opposition to abortion.

Except for brief and sporadic expressions, Francis' papacy stands out strikingly with the absence of serious condemnation genocide of abortion, which annually eliminates around 70 million unborn children, according to data from the United Nations. Moreover, during his pontificate, Francis has appointed to various positions in the Vatican dicasteries people who fervently support abortion as either a judicious choice for women or as a legal right. These pro-abortion appointees included the Italian-American economist Mariana Mazzucato and the Argentine jurist Eugenio Raúl Zaffaroni.

The pope also maintained a friendly relationship with aggressive and Catholic promoters of global abortion such as former President Joe Biden, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., former Chilean socialist president Michelle Bachelet, Bolivian political leader Evo Morales, and Brazilian president "Lula" Luiz Ignacio da Silva, among many others.

#### **6- The most revolutionary institutional change has the transformation of the Catholic faith as a "synodal church."**

This has meant the church is steered by an ecclesiastic and lay leadership handpicked by the pope himself while diluting the church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic (as defined by the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in 381 A.D. and the catechism of the Catholic Church.)

The synod church offers a horizontal structure whose members walk together — that is, they define criteria and courses of action by consensus, in what appears to be a democratic manner — at all levels. But like communist organizations, these assemblies are not truly representative but are stacked by a higher committee or individual.

A deliberative assembly has been created in which the church hierarchy moves to a second level, in which everything is decided by "discernment in the Spirit."

#### **7- The end of the church as the exclusive agent of salvation.**

This is perhaps the most radical departure from traditional teachings that reach back to Holy Scripture.

**Neither Christ nor the church is the critical element of salvation. Francis moved to reduce the faith to the same level as all other beliefs, since "all religions lead to God."** Francis has also effectively condemned evangelization that leads to conversion — a mission that Jesus Christ gave as his prime directive to his adherents, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19). Francis saw such evangelization as simple proselytizing to incorporate new members into the institution. It is important to emphasize that these seven radical changes have not been based on a new doctrinal conception of faith and dogmas but on a different institutional framework. Indeed, Francis set aside the sources of Revelation — Sacred Scripture, living tradition and the ecclesial magisterium. Francis did so to give primacy to the personal criteria of the pope himself. In this light, when one reads the apostolic documents and encyclicals issued by the pontiff, one can see that more than 50% of the citations that support his new positions use the writings of the pope himself instead of relying on the 2,000-year-old doctrinal teaching of the Catholic Church.

This Bergoglian praxis has led to an extraordinary development in the church: the absence of the presence of Jesus Christ in the "synodal" church and of its centrality in institutional life.

Will the Church of Christ once again be one, holy, catholic and apostolic, or will it remain a synodal church governed by an untethered pope working through synodal front? Francis' radical changes offer Catholics around the world — and the next pontiff a challenge — can they rediscover the centrality of a risen Christ in their faith and works? This question will be answered soon.

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