

1. **Introduction:** Continuing with the letters from Jesus to the seven churches.
2. **Sardis:** Sardis was located about 35 miles southeast of Thyatira and a bit over 50 miles inland from Ephesus and Smyrna. It was the capitol of the Lydian Kingdom (6th and 7th century BC) and one of the richest and most powerful cities of the ancient world.
 - It was conquered by the Persians, then by the Greeks under Alexander the Great, and then by Rome. In 17 AD there was a devastating earthquake. Rome financed its reconstruction.
 - Artemis (associated with reproductive power) was the mother Goddess of Sardis and construction on a large Temple to her was started but never completed.
 - Sardis had a thriving Jewish community with strong connections to the surrounding society. The message from Jesus to the Sardis church is the most negative of the seven.
3. **Revelation 3:1-3:** *And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. ³ Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.*
 - Jesus rebuked the Sardis church for its compromises with the world that are producing spiritual death. He says, *“I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.”*
 - The situation is dire unless bad things cease and good things replace them. They need to wake up and realize what they are doing that is causing their faith to die.
 - *“Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.” Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.*
 - This is a warning. If they pay no attention, Jesus will come against them like a thief.
4. **Revelation 3:4-6:** *Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*
 - A few faithful people remain who have done nothing wrong and steadfastly stand with Jesus.
 - Those who stay on the path of righteousness to the end will never have their name blotted out of the book of life. Jesus will confess their names before the Father and His angels.
 - Everyone needs to hear and pay attention to what the Spirit is saying to all the churches.

5.Philadelphia: The city was located on a major Roman road leading from Troas in the west through Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, and then to Philadelphia in the east. Philadelphia is named for the “brotherly love” that characterized two brothers who were instrumental in the founding of the city. The area was subject to earthquakes.

- In AD 17, there was a major earthquake that nearly destroyed several cities including Philadelphia, Smyrna, and Hierapolis. Rome rebuilt the cities but it required years. The principal pagan cult in the Philadelphia was the worship of Dionysus, the god of wine.

6.Revelation 3:7: *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: “The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.”*

- This is the sixth message from Jesus to one of the seven churches of the Roman province of Asia. The Philadelphia congregation church though it was weak in some respects (“little strength”) has successfully endured trials and opposition.
- Describing Christ as having the attributes of “the holy one, the true one” signifies the deity of Christ. “The Holy One” is used frequently in the OT to describe Yahweh. Referring to Jesus as the “true one” signifies His authenticity and faithfulness.
- Jesus holds the “key of David,” an image taken from Isaiah 22:22, where Eliakim is given the keys to the home of David. Jesus, not the local synagogue rulers, has sovereign control over entrance into God’s kingdom and its eternal city, the new Jerusalem.
- For believers in Philadelphia who have been expelled from their local synagogue, knowing that Christ alone holds the power to grant entrance into God’s kingdom is very reassuring.

7.Revelation 3:8: *“I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.”*

- The open door is into the kingdom. As Jesus said in 3:7, Only He can open that door (3:7). No one - not synagogue rulers nor the Roman emperor – can close the door keeping them out.

8.Revelation 3:9: *Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.*

- Jesus says there will be future vindication for their persecuted church. Those who now persecute the Philadelphia congregation claim to be God’s holy people but in fact they are liars. Those who have rejected Jesus and His followers will be forced to acknowledge Christ’s love for His followers who come from both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds.

9.Revelation 3:10-11: *Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.*

- As God asked them to do, the Philadelphia congregation has patiently persevered in the face of persecution they received because of their commitment to Jesus.
- For that reason, Jesus promises spiritual protection to those who persevered.
- This is like John 17:15 where Jesus says as He prays to the Father, *“I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them (protect them) from the evil one.”*
- **Coming Soon:** Here in 3:11, Jesus says, ***“I am coming soon.”*** We have seen a variation of that same phrase before in 2:16.
- We will also see similar phrases 3 times in chapter 22 in verses 22:7, 22:12, and 22:20.
- Two verses near the beginning: **Revelation 2:16:** ***Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.*** **Revelation 3:11:** ***“I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.”***
- Three verses near the end: Verse 22:7, Jesus says, ***“Behold, I am coming soon.”*** In verse 22:12, He says, ***“Behold, I am coming soon!”*** In verse 22:20, He says, ***“Surely I am coming soon.”***
- Rather than attempting to identify the specific date and time to which ***“I am coming soon”*** refers, it is more fruitful to ask, “of what significance is the phrase to me?”
- The Greek words translated imply Jesus will arrive abruptly and unpredictably. We assume this is about the “second advent or coming of Jesus.” We have Jesus’ own words that His coming is unpredictable or unknowable
- Jesus said, no one except the Father knows the day and time of His second coming. That means the day and time of His abrupt coming will be a surprise (or shock) to everyone on earth. One second all is as usual, the next second Jesus has come again and everything has changed. No one can know “when” that change will occur.
- So, if His coming is “unpredictable,” what is the significance to us as individuals of “coming soon”? The significance is that “now” is our time of preparation for Jesus’ second coming. We are to prepare as though He might come within the hour or even within the moment.
- We must be constantly prepared for Jesus to arrive. The old boy-scout motto is in force. “Always be prepared!” The test of all tests may happen any moment. We mustn’t fail – failure is disaster.
- The actual date and hour of Jesus’ coming is thus unimportant in making our decisions.
- There will be no new warning of His coming. Adequate preparation means entering eternal life. Inadequate preparation means entering eternal punishment.
- Therefore, we must constantly be prepared. The old scout-motto is right.
- The significance to us of Jesus “coming soon” does not require knowing the date and time. We are simply to “always be prepared.” The proper preparation for His coming is believing in Him and constantly demonstrating that belief by obedience to His commands, living a life that pleases Him.

- Don't worry about knowing what date and time "coming soon" precisely means.
- To each of us, "coming soon," is a warning that means "always be prepared."
- Be "in Christ." Be obedient and willing to follow His leading. Then, whether He comes in 5 minutes or 5000 years or 5 milliseconds is of no concern.
- We will be safe "in Christ" and live with Him now and forever.
- Jesus says a period of trial is coming for the whole world, a time He calls the "hour of trial."
- Jesus says, believers will be kept from that "***hour of trial.***" Thinking back to John 17:15 where Jesus says, as He prays to the Father, "***I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them*** (protect them) ***from the evil one.***"
- It appears believers will be present on earth during the trial and may experience physical persecution (even death) from non-believers (6:9-11). God's judgment often involves allowing evil to run its course. Jesus promises believers will be protected from the evil one during the trial.

10. Revelation 3:12: *The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.*

- On the new earth, there is no physical temple. The "***temple of my God***" is God Himself. He is intimately, eternally present in the new heaven and new earth and believers are "in Him" like physical temples had pillars as permanent fixtures. God and the Lamb are the new Temple (21:22). A new name signifies believer's eternal security in God (22:4).
- This is vital uplifting information to the Philadelphians who have been forced out of the local synagogue and at times forced out of their homes by earthquakes. They will have permanent citizenship and a permanent home in God's consummated kingdom. They will be free from risk of earthquakes and other natural disasters.
- Believers will receive 3 new names written "on them." The names will be (1.) the new name of God, (2.) the new name of the city of God, and (3.) the new name of Jesus.
- The new names separately and collectively signify they belong eternally to and have a special relationship with the Triune God including assurance of eternal life in His presence (Isa 62:2; Eze 48:35).
- While believers receive the name of God written on them (7:3; 14:1; 22:4), unbelievers receive the name of the beast (13:17; 14:11).

11. Revelation 3:13: *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

- Once again, we are reminded that God gave us ears to hear, and we should listen carefully striving for understanding, to what the Spirit says to all the churches.