



**Revelation 3:1-6**  
**Week 5 - March 3, 2024**

# Welcome!

Welcome to the Winter 2024 Life Group Series! In this session, we will be learning about the Seven Churches of Revelation.

First CRC of Hanford is in the midst of transition, and has been through quite a lot over the last few years. We've weathered political discontent, a pandemic, the loss of our Senior Pastor who'd served twenty years in the role, watched, prayed, and cried as we've lost beloved members of our church family.

All churches have struggles, and according to the book of Revelation, they always have. Join us in this seven week study as we examine ancient churches in their strengths and struggles.



## Map of the Ancient Churches



## Tips for Reading the Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation, written by the Apostle John, is one of the most misunderstood books of the Bible. It's full of strange imagery that's unfamiliar to modern readers. However, the careful reader will discover patterns in the text that help us interpret it.

Our texts roughly have the following pattern.

1. Setting - the church under discussion.
  2. Title - a title of Jesus.
  3. Commendation - what the church is doing right.
- Complaint - what the church is doing wrong.  
Correction - what the church needs to do to get back on track.

# Before You Come to Life Group

1. If you're bringing a new person to the study, we recommend getting them study materials ahead of time so they can feel prepared.
2. Pray that the LORD will open your eyes and heart to receive the lessons he has to teach you in the study.
3. Read the scripture focus for the study.
4. Go through the questions and think about how you might answer them. We've provided space in the study for you to write down your answers if you'd like.

## Catechism Corner

### Q & A 88

Q. What is involved in genuine repentance or conversion?

A. Two things: the dying-away of the old self, and the rising-to-life of the new.<sup>1</sup>

### Q & A 89

Q. What is the dying-away of the old self?

A. To be genuinely sorry for sin and more and more to hate and run away from it.<sup>2</sup>

### Q & A 90

Q. What is the rising-to-life of the new self?

A. Wholehearted joy in God through Christ<sup>3</sup> and a love and delight to live according to the will of God by doing every kind of good work.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 6:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-10

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 51:3-4, 17; Joel 2:12-13; Rom. 8:12-13; 2 Cor. 7:10

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 51:8, 12; Isa. 57:15; Rom. 5:1; 14:17

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 6:10-11; Gal. 2:20

# What We Believe

1. Read Revelation 3:1-6. What title does Jesus have in our text? What does the title mean?

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2. Jesus has no commendation for the church in Sardis. Is this church lost because it has no redeeming qualities? Why or why not?

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3. What complaint does Jesus have for the church in Sardis? Do you think Jesus has a similar complaint against the First CRC of Hanford?

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4. What correction does Jesus give to the church in Sardis? What's the outcome if they correct themselves? What's the outcome if they don't correct themselves?

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# Sardis Facts

Rome annexed Sardis in 133 BC. Sardis was incorporated into the Roman province of Asia, and the residents of Sardis became citizens of the Roman Empire. The Jewish population of the city must have been very influential during this period, since Julius Caesar and Augustus granted them special rights, including the rights to take collections for the Jews of Jerusalem, have a synagogue or other gathering place, keep the Sabbath, and eat kosher foods (called "ancestral" in ancient documents). Jews also were excused from compulsory worship of idols and the imperial cult (Wilson, Turkey, 307).

The Lexham Bible Dictionary. Lexham Press.

# God Speaks to Us

1. The Lord says that the church in Sardis is dead. Obviously, it's not literal. If it were, nobody could read John's words. If it's not literal, what does it mean?

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2. How do you know you're not dead like the members of the church of Sardis?

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Niche for Torah scrolls in Sardis synagogue

## Cross References

See how our text fits into the story of the Bible by referencing itself!

**Rev. 3:1** - 1 Ti. 5-6

**Rev. 3:2** - Mt. 26:40-41

**Rev. 3:3** - Mt. 24:42-43

**Rev. 3:4** - Re. 6:11

**Rev. 3:5** - Re. 20:12

**Rev. 3:6** - Lk. 8:8



“Since the fall, every human being born into this world as a natural son of Adam arrives “DOA.” He is “dead on arrival” in a spiritual sense when he is born. But this spiritual death is not the same as biological death, though biological death is also the inevitable destiny of every sinning person. So, though we arrive “DOA” in a spiritual sense, we nevertheless arrive biologically alive. We live out our days on this planet on death row, living under the burden of the death sentence that is imposed on us for sin.”

- RC Sproul

## God Speaks to Our Families

1. The Lord tells the church in Sardis to “Wake up!” because they’re unaware of the dangers around them. How do we wake up our family to the spiritual dangers around them? What are some of the spiritual dangers our families are encountering today?

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2. James says that faith without works is dead. How would you counsel a family member whose works do not reflect saving faith? How would you try to wake them up?

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# God Speaks in Worship

1. What elements of worship wake you up to the spiritual dangers around you?

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2. What are the dying parts of First CRC that need to wake up? Is our worship addressing those dying parts? Should it? Why or why not?

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# The Gospel Call

1. We often talk about evangelism as if it's solely something the church does for the world - going out and preaching the gospel to our unbelieving neighbors. Yet, our text calls the church in Sardis to wake up! Should we be evangelizing others in the church? Why or why not?

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2. Can a church like Sardis do effective evangelism to the world outside the church if it's dying from the inside?

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“The filthiness of sin will then appear and be laid open before the world to his eternal shame. Death to the true Christian is an entrance into eternal pleasures and unspeakable joys, but the death of a sinner is his entrance into never-ending miseries. This world is all the hell that ever a true Christian is to endure, and it is all the heaven that unbelievers shall ever enjoy.”

- Jonathan Edwards

