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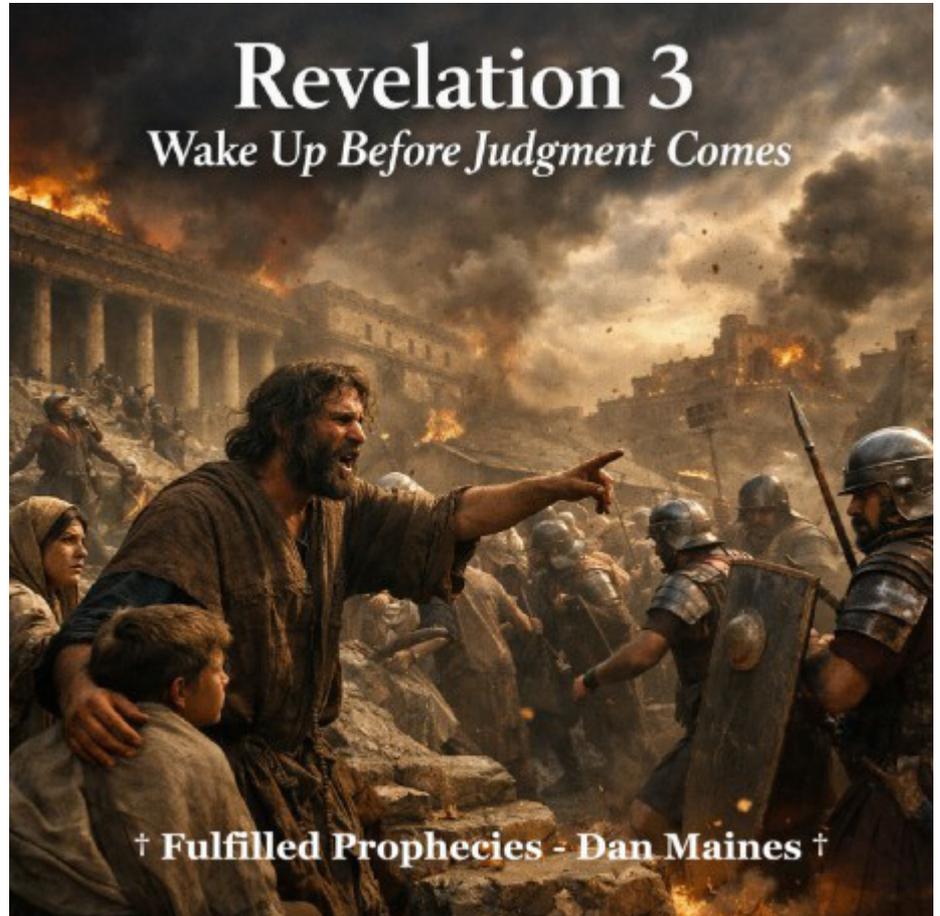
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## Revelation 3 Wake Up Before Judgment Comes



By Dan Maines

## Revelation 3 Wake Up Before Judgment Comes

### Introduction

† Revelation 3 continues Christ's direct messages to the churches of Asia. These were real congregations living in the first century, facing real spiritual dangers during the final years of the Old Covenant age. Christ wasn't speaking about events thousands of years away. He was warning His own people in their generation.

† These churches lived in the shadow of the coming covenant judgment that Jesus predicted in Matthew 24:34. Their faithfulness mattered because the old order was about to pass away and the kingdom of Christ was being fully established.

† Each message shows the difference between outward religion and true faith. Christ wasn't impressed with reputation, wealth, or status. He was looking for living faith, perseverance, and loyalty to His name.

† The warnings and promises in this chapter prove that the book of Revelation was addressing first century believers who were about to face testing, persecution, and the collapse of the old covenant world centered in Jerusalem.

† The churches addressed in Revelation were literal congregations in Asia Minor, and Christ's words were immediately relevant to their spiritual condition and the events that were about to unfold around them (Revelation 1:1, 3).

### **Revelation 3:1**

To the angel of the church in Sardis write: The One who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, and yet you are dead.

† Sardis had a reputation for life, but Christ said the truth was the opposite. Outward activity doesn't equal spiritual life. A church can look successful and still be spiritually dead (James 2:17).

† The phrase seven Spirits of God represents the fullness of the Holy Spirit's presence and authority working through Christ. He sees the true condition of every congregation (Revelation 1:4).

† Sardis itself had a similar history. The city once had great wealth and influence, but by the first century it had declined greatly. Strabo described it as a city that once had glory but later faded into weakness.

### **Revelation 3:2-3**

Be constantly alert, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Then if you are not alert, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

† Christ calls them to wake up. Spiritual complacency was killing them. Their works were unfinished because they had stopped living faithfully.

† The warning that He would come like a thief directly echoes His Olivet Discourse teaching (Matthew 24:42-43).

† This language refers to the coming covenant judgment upon Jerusalem and the end of the Old Covenant system (Luke 21:20-22).

† The call to remember what they had received shows that their problem was not ignorance but neglect. They had already heard the truth but were failing to live it.

### **Revelation 3:4-5**

But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. The one who overcomes will be clothed the same way in white garments, and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before

His angels.

† Even in a spiritually dead church, Christ preserves a faithful remnant. God has always worked through a remnant throughout biblical history (Romans 11:5).

† White garments symbolize purity and victory in Revelation, representing those who remain faithful during persecution (Revelation 7:14).

† Christ promises to confess the faithful before the Father, echoing His earlier promise during His earthly ministry (Matthew 10:32).

### **Revelation 3:6**

The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

† This repeated phrase shows that the message wasn't only for Sardis. Every church must listen carefully to Christ's warning.

† The Spirit was speaking through the prophetic message of Revelation to prepare believers for what was about to unfold in their lifetime (Revelation 1:1).

† Hearing in this sense means responding with obedience. Christ expected the churches to act on what they were hearing.

### **Revelation 3:7-8**

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have little power, and yet

you have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

† Philadelphia was weak in worldly power but strong in faithfulness. Christ values loyalty more than influence.

† The key of David comes from Isaiah 22:22 and represents the authority of the Messiah over God's kingdom.

† The open door represents opportunity for gospel work that no earthly authority could stop (1 Corinthians 16:9).

† Christ commended them not for strength but for faithfulness, showing that obedience matters more than power.

### **Revelation 3:9**

Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.

† These opponents were unbelieving Jews who rejected Jesus and persecuted Christians.

† Christ exposed them as a synagogue of Satan because they opposed God's true covenant people.

† The promise that they would bow down echoes Isaiah 60:14 where the enemies of God's people acknowledge God's favor on the faithful.

### **Revelation 3:10-11**

Because you have kept My word of perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of the testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who live on the earth. I am coming quickly; hold firmly to what you have, so that

no one will take your crown.

† The hour of testing was about to come. That language places the prophecy in the near future for the first century audience.

† The phrase whole world refers to the Roman world where the gospel had spread (Luke 2:1).

† Christ's words I am coming quickly confirm the nearness of the events described (Revelation 22:12).

† This testing would expose the faithfulness of believers during the turbulent years leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem.

### **Revelation 3:12**

The one who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; 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 out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

† Becoming a pillar symbolizes permanent belonging in God's temple.

† The true temple is God's people, not the physical temple in Jerusalem (Ephesians 2:19-22).

† The New Jerusalem represents the new covenant community where God dwells with His people.

### **Revelation 3:13**

The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

† Christ repeats the call again because spiritual hearing requires humility and obedience.

† These warnings were meant to prepare believers to remain faithful through the coming covenant transition.

### **Revelation 3:14-15**

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

† Laodicea's greatest problem was spiritual indifference.

† The city was known for its lukewarm water supply piped in from distant hot springs. By the time it reached the city it became unpleasant and tepid.

† Strabo described this condition, which Christ used as a powerful illustration of their spiritual state.

### **Revelation 3:16-17**

So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have no need of anything, and you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

† Laodicea was extremely wealthy after rebuilding from an earthquake without Roman aid.

† Their wealth created a false sense of independence and spiritual blindness.

† Material prosperity can hide spiritual poverty (Luke 12:15).

### **Revelation 3:18-19**

I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to apply to your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

† Christ offered true riches, purity, and spiritual sight.

† Laodicea was famous for producing eye salve through its medical school, which makes Christ's words especially powerful.

† God's rebuke shows His love, because discipline is meant to restore His people (Hebrews 12:6).

### **Revelation 3:20**

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

† Christ invites restored fellowship with those who repent.

† This language reflects covenant fellowship and acceptance.

† The invitation shows Christ's patience and mercy toward a compromised church.

### **Revelation 3:21-22**

The one who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His

throne. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

† Overcomers share in Christ's reign.

† Christ had already taken His throne through His resurrection and ascension (Acts 2:30-33).

† Believers share in His kingdom authority as members of His covenant people (Revelation 1:6).

## **Historical References**

† Irenaeus wrote that Christ's letters to the churches revealed how He examines the hearts and faithfulness of believers.

† Clement of Alexandria taught that believers must remain vigilant because spiritual complacency slowly destroys faith.

† Eusebius recorded that early Christians saw these warnings as urgent calls to remain faithful during persecution.

† Tertullian wrote that Christ evaluates the faithfulness of His churches and calls them to repentance when they drift into compromise.

## **How it applies to us today**

† Reputation means nothing if faith isn't alive.

† Christ still calls His people to wake up and remain faithful.

† Wealth and comfort can blind believers to their spiritual condition.

† Christ opens doors for faithful believers that no one can shut.

† True victory belongs to those who overcome through faith.

† A church can have activity, programs, and reputation and still be spiritually asleep if it abandons faithful obedience to Christ.

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q** Was Christ speaking about events thousands of years later?

**A** No. Revelation states that the events would happen soon and were near in time (Revelation 1:1, 3).

**Q** What is the hour of testing?

**A** It refers to the coming judgment and turmoil surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Luke 21:20-22).

**Q** What does it mean to overcome?

**A** Overcoming means remaining faithful to Christ despite persecution and pressure from the surrounding world (1 John 5:4).

**Q** Why does Christ say I am coming quickly?

**A** Because the warnings were given to first century churches and the events were approaching in their lifetime (Revelation 22:6-7, 12).

**Q** Does the phrase synagogue of Satan mean all Jews?

**A** No. The phrase refers specifically to those Jews in the first century who rejected Jesus as the Messiah and persecuted believers. Paul explains that true Jewish identity is defined by faith, not ancestry (Romans 2:28-29). Those who opposed Christ were rejecting the very covenant they claimed to defend.

**Q** What does it mean that Christ will not erase a name from the book of life?

**A** The book of life represents belonging to God's covenant people and receiving the life that comes through Christ. The promise assures faithful believers that Christ will openly acknowledge them before the Father (Matthew 10:32). The focus is assurance to overcomers, not a threat to the faithful.

**Q** Why does Revelation emphasize overcoming so often?

**A** The early Christians were facing persecution, social pressure, and the approaching turmoil of the Jewish-Roman war. Christ repeatedly called them to overcome so they would remain faithful during those trials (Revelation 2:10). Faithfulness during testing demonstrated genuine allegiance to Christ.

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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## **Source Index**

† Revelation 3:1-22, Matthew 24:34, 42-43, Luke 21:20-22, Isaiah 22:22, Romans 11:5, Acts 2:30-33, Ephesians 2:19-22, Luke 12:15, Hebrews 12:6, 1 Corinthians 16:9, Revelation 1:1, 3, Revelation 22:6-7, 12, 1 John 5:4

† Strabo, Geography 13.4.5; Strabo, Geography 12.8.18; Irenaeus, Against Heresies; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History; Tertullian, Apology

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