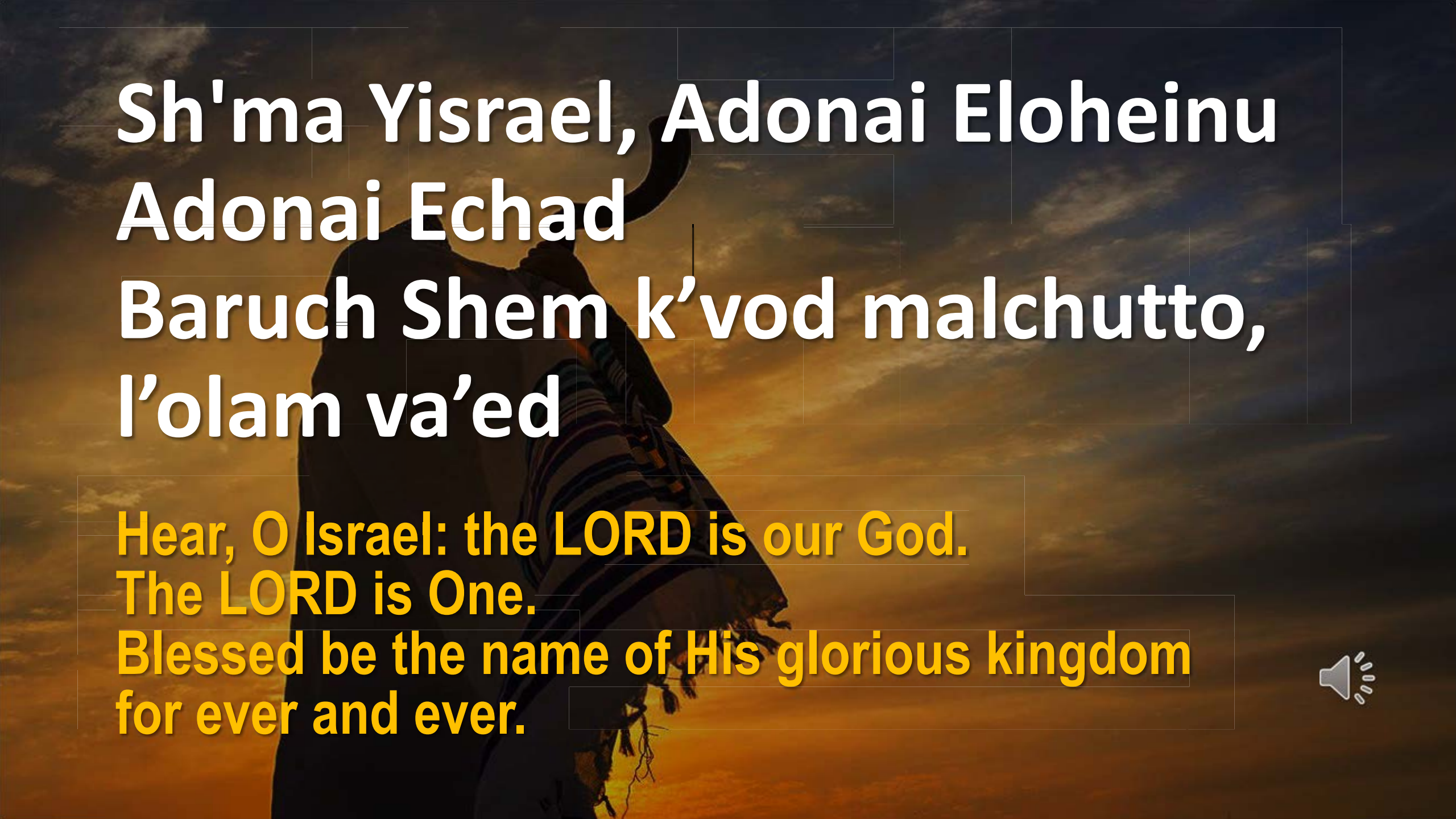


**He who overcomes shall be clothed in
white garments, and I will not blot
out his name from the Book of Life;
but I will confess his name before My
Father and before His angels.**

Revelation 3:5



**Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu
Adonai Echad
Baruch Shem k'vod malchutto,
l'olam va'ed**

**Hear, O Israel: the LORD is our God.
The LORD is One.
Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom
for ever and ever.**



A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing on a scroll with a quill pen. The scene is dimly lit, with a single candle in a holder providing the primary light source, creating a warm, historical atmosphere. The scroll is unrolled, showing several lines of handwritten text in a cursive script. The person's hands are weathered, suggesting an older individual. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the act of writing.

Letters to the 7 Churches

Ancient letters with an urgent
message for today...

LETTER 5: SARDIS

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

¹ *“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,
‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God
and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a
name that you are alive, but you are dead. ² Be watchful,
and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready
to die, for I have not found your works perfect before
God. ³ Remember therefore how you have received and
heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not
watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not
know what hour I will come upon you.*

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

⁴ You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but 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.” ’



Sardis



MACEDONIA

ASIA
MINOR

ACHAIA

GREECE

Smyrna

Pergamos

Thyatira

Sardis

Philadelphia

Laodicea

Ephesus

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

BACKGROUND ON SARDIS

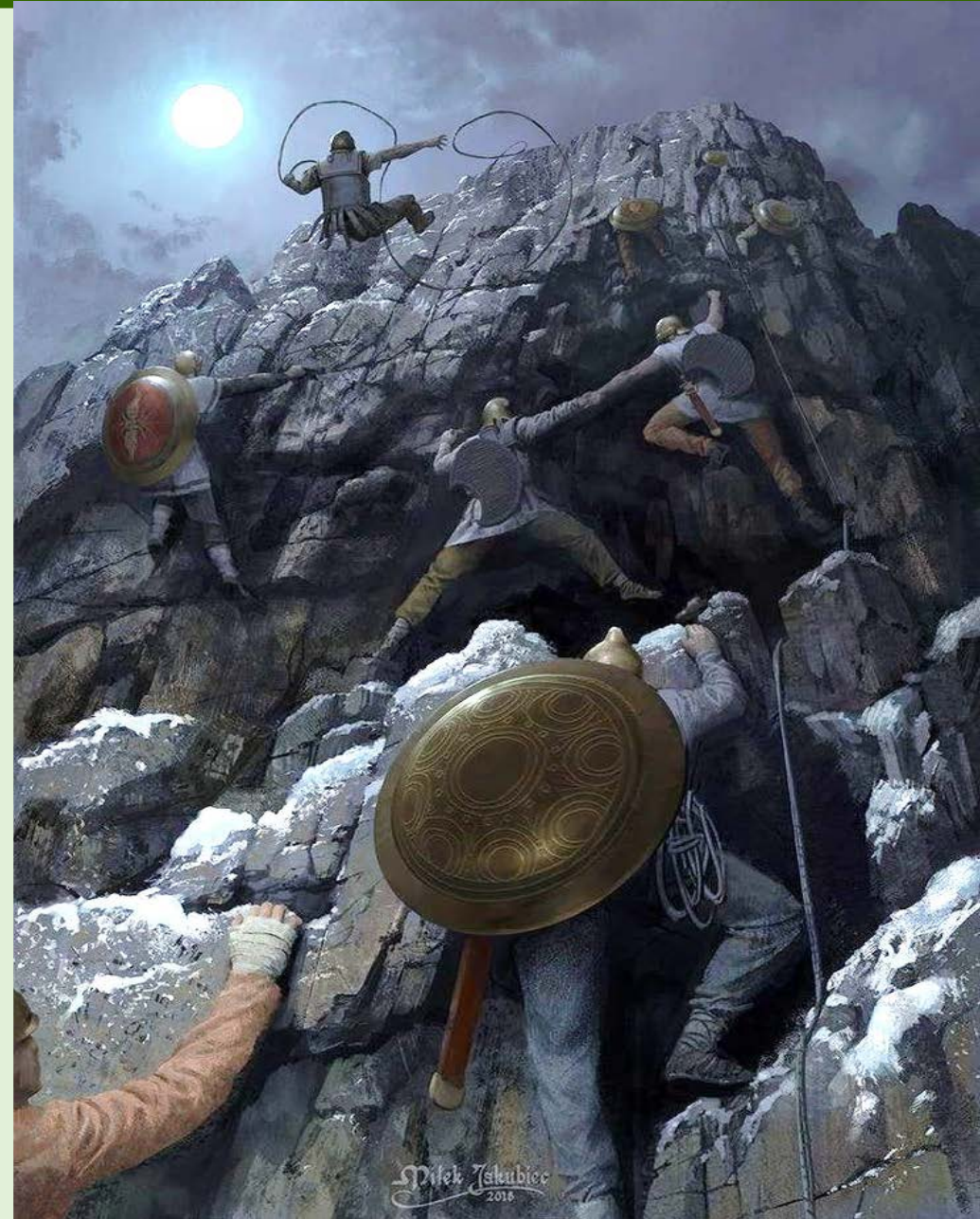
- Very well-established city, considered among oldest in world. 60 miles inland from Ephesus.
- “Heyday” 6th century BC, **capital of kingdom of Lydia**. Glorious city, mentioned in *many Greek writings*.
- Built on mountain top, extremely well fortified on hill 1000 feet above valley.
- Seemed to defy any kind of military assault, appeared impregnable.

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- **False sense of security** here, people believed they were safe when they were not (*so did this church!*).
- Stories of how **King Cyrus of Persia** eventually took Sardis, well known in this city.
- Commander of Cyrus' army told his soldiers there was **great reward for anyone who could figure out** how to successfully attack this great mountain stronghold. Appeared impossible.

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- However, one soldier watching Sardis guards on top of mountain saw one accidentally drop his helmet over side, watched as soldier picked his way down the mountain and back up again to retrieve his helmet.
- Continual erosion of cliffs had left **large cracks which could be maneuvered**, now exposed by soldier watching.



REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Persian soldier told his commander. That night Persian army climbed so-called "unassaultable" mountain same way soldier had seen guard do it.
- When they got to the top, no one there! **No guards.**
- Guards assumed no one could climb their way to the top. They didn't think they needed to guard it.
- **Did not think they even needed to watch for the enemy.**

WRONG!

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Sardis taken, not just this time, but several times after as well. Sardis fell on multiple occasions with surprise attacks same way.
- Didn't learn from own history. **"WATCH!" = key word for Sardis.** World knew of her mistakes.
- When letter written to Sardis, **everyone aware** of this, understood letter's command about being watchful.



WATCH!!

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Great trading center, like Thyatira, center for woolen goods, dyeing industry (*also like Laodicea*).



- Sardis had river very rich in gold deposits. **Modern money, minted gold and silver coins, born in Sardis.**

- Roman "assize" town, where justice was dispensed, plenty of Roman pomp and circumstance.
- Would liked to have been center for Caesar worship, but lost bid to Smyrna.

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Very involved worship of Cybele (*son was fabled Midas, the one who had "gold" touch*) with frenzied rites involving sexual immorality and mutilation.
- Because no Caesar worship, Sardis was **not a particularly dangerous place for Christians**, at least not *physically* dangerous.

A far greater problem here
for the “Church...”

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- 17 AD huge earthquake hit area, devastated Sardis.
- Romans poured lots of manpower/money into rebuilding this ancient city, but former glory was gone.
- Now Sardis known as a center for moral decadence.
- Even rest of pagan world considered **Sardis notorious for loose living**, pleasure seeking, and luxury loving (*sound familiar?*)
- Life far too easy here. Incredible wealth, no persecution.

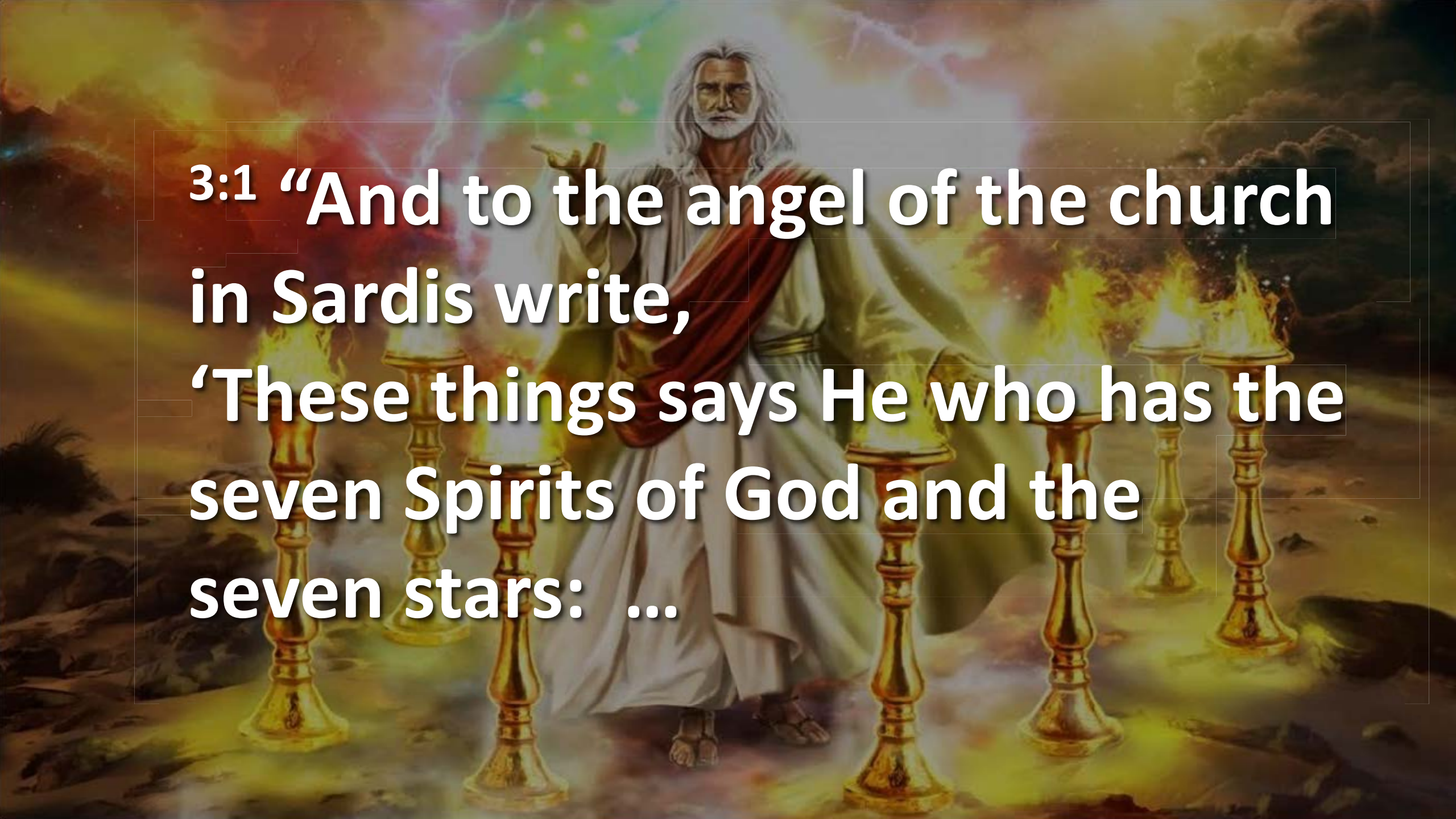
REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Spiritually deadly condition - **COMPLACENCY**. One commentator said this: "*The Church at Sardis was at peace, but it was the peace of the dead.*"
- ***Sardis*** can literally mean "that which remains" or "remnant."
- After earthquake devastated region, city of Sardis remained, but merely a remnant of its former self.

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Also true for church here.
- Sardis known as the **unwatchful, "sleeping" church in which only a remnant of true believers remained.**
- **Then...and NOW.**





**3:1 “And to the angel of the church
in Sardis write,
‘These things says He who has the
seven Spirits of God and the
seven stars: ...**

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- “Seven Spirits” may refer to Isaiah 11:2 (CJB)

The Spirit of *ADONAI* will rest on him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and power,
the Spirit of knowledge and fearing *ADONAI* —

- However, some disagree. “Seven” = symbolic for perfectly complete. Wholeness and fullness of Holy Spirit with this Speaker. Fully God.
- **Seven Spirits of God** = idiom for Holy Spirit. Speaker is “fully God,” in their midst, knows everything about them.

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

Will see reference to Seven Spirits a bit later too...

And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. (4:5)

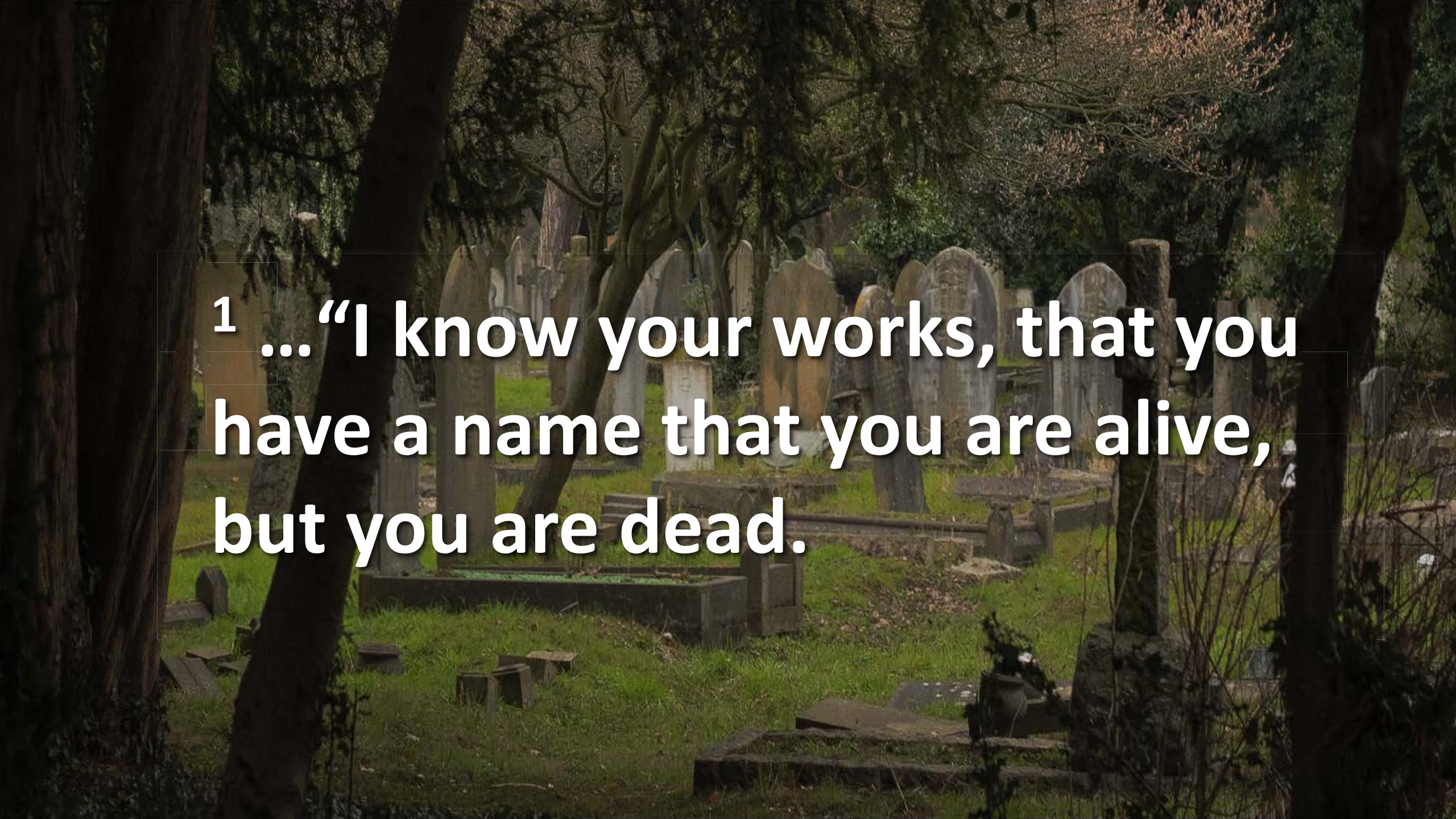
And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (5:6)

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS



“...the seven stars...”

- Explained in 1:20: *“The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.”*
- **“Angel”** (Greek) literally **messenger**. May be human messengers (*pastors, “shepherds” of flocks*) or heavenly messengers assigned to churches.

A photograph of a cemetery with numerous tombstones of various shapes and sizes, some standing upright and others lying flat on the ground. The scene is filled with trees, some with green leaves and others with bare branches, suggesting a late autumn or winter setting. The lighting is somewhat dim, creating a somber atmosphere.

1 ...“I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

CRITICISM (*What they didn't do well*)

“...that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”

- “Name” = *onoma* used several times here. Means having a **certain reputation**, being called something that describes you.
- Reputation of being “alive” but **spiritually dead inside**.
- Church at Sardis, and entire city, had **reputation for immorality and loose living**. Wore a label “Christian” and were called by that name, but apparently *were not living their faith*.

SOUND FAMILIAR??

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

COMMENDATION

(What they did well)

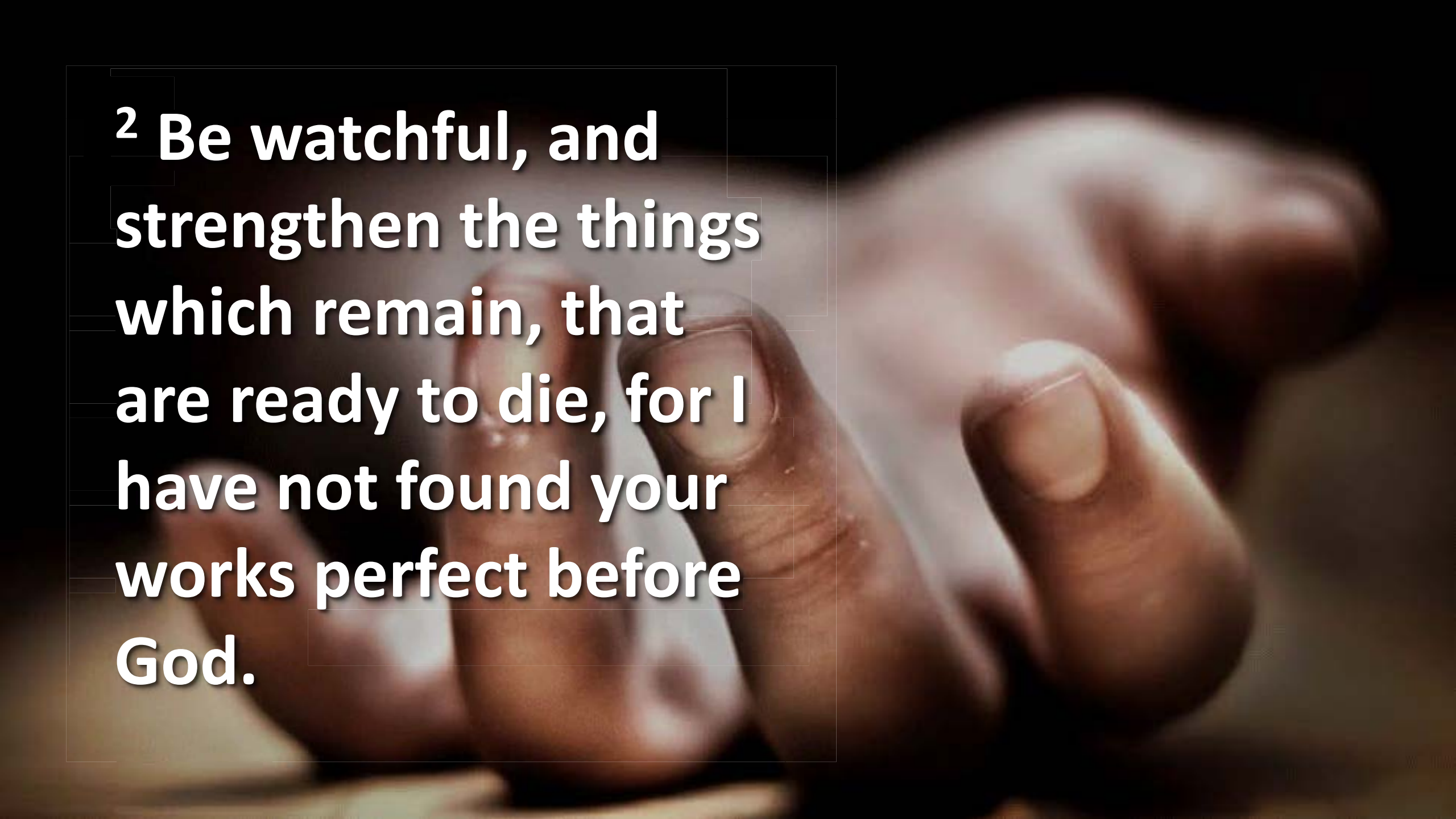
“I know your works...”

(but none are listed!)

NONE!

- This church in **serious trouble**.
One of two letters with no
commendation.





² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

EXHORTATION (*What they NEED to do*)

(1) *"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain,"*

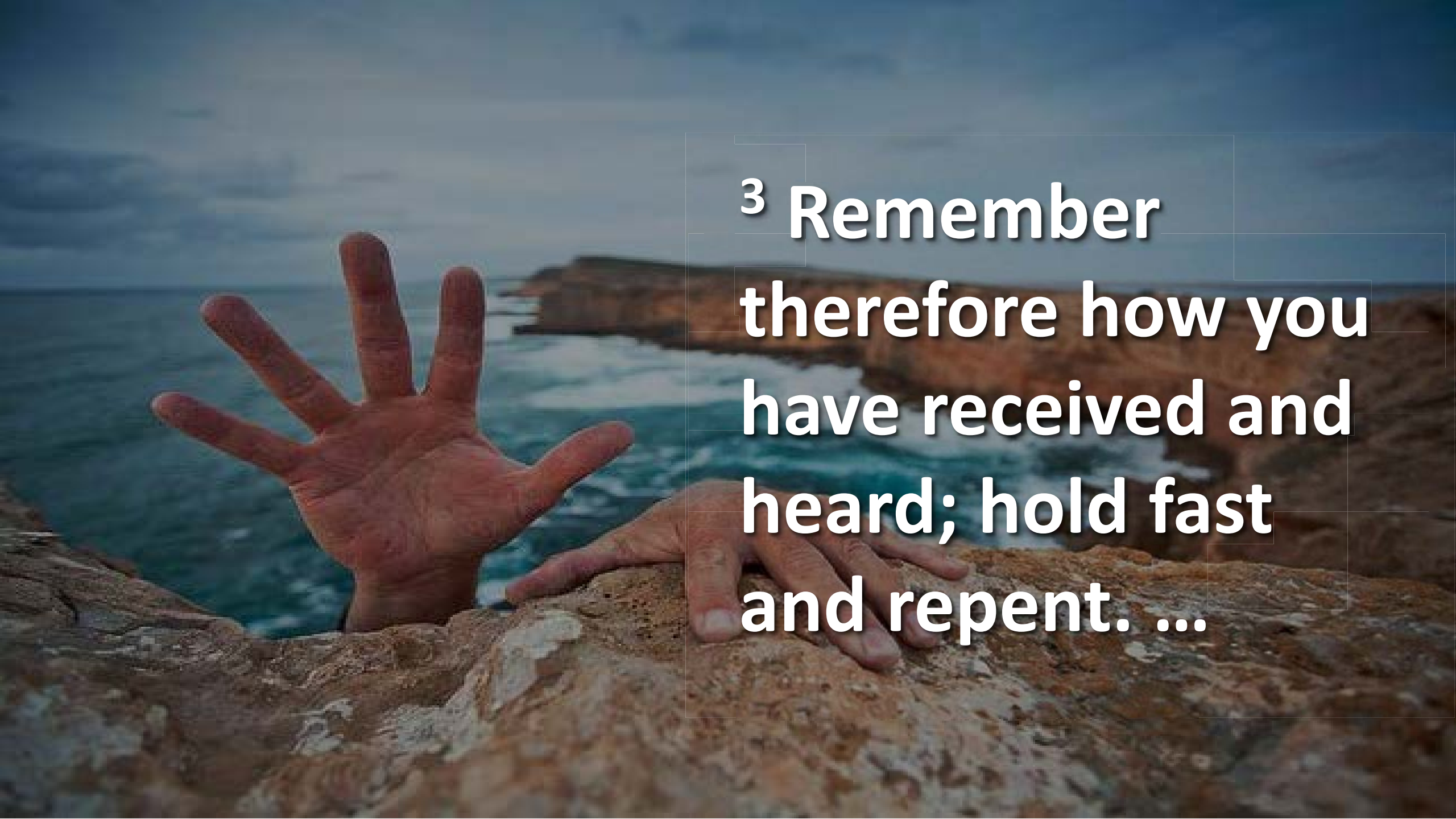
- Slap in the face for complacent Christians in Sardis. Were being lulled to "sleep." **Christians in name only.** Very thin ice here.
- Like Persian soldier watching and waiting for way to attack, enemy also watching and waiting to attack. Already had. **Almost lost faith.**

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- “Works” inadequate. Doesn’t mean they didn't do enough good works.

Their lives were not living testaments of their faith (*book of James*).

- If they didn't wake up, work on what remained (*the grace of God, their flickering faith, some attempts to live to please God*), **it would die forever.**
- ***"the things which remain"*** = deliberate pun on meaning of ***Sardis*** = "that which remains" or "remnant."

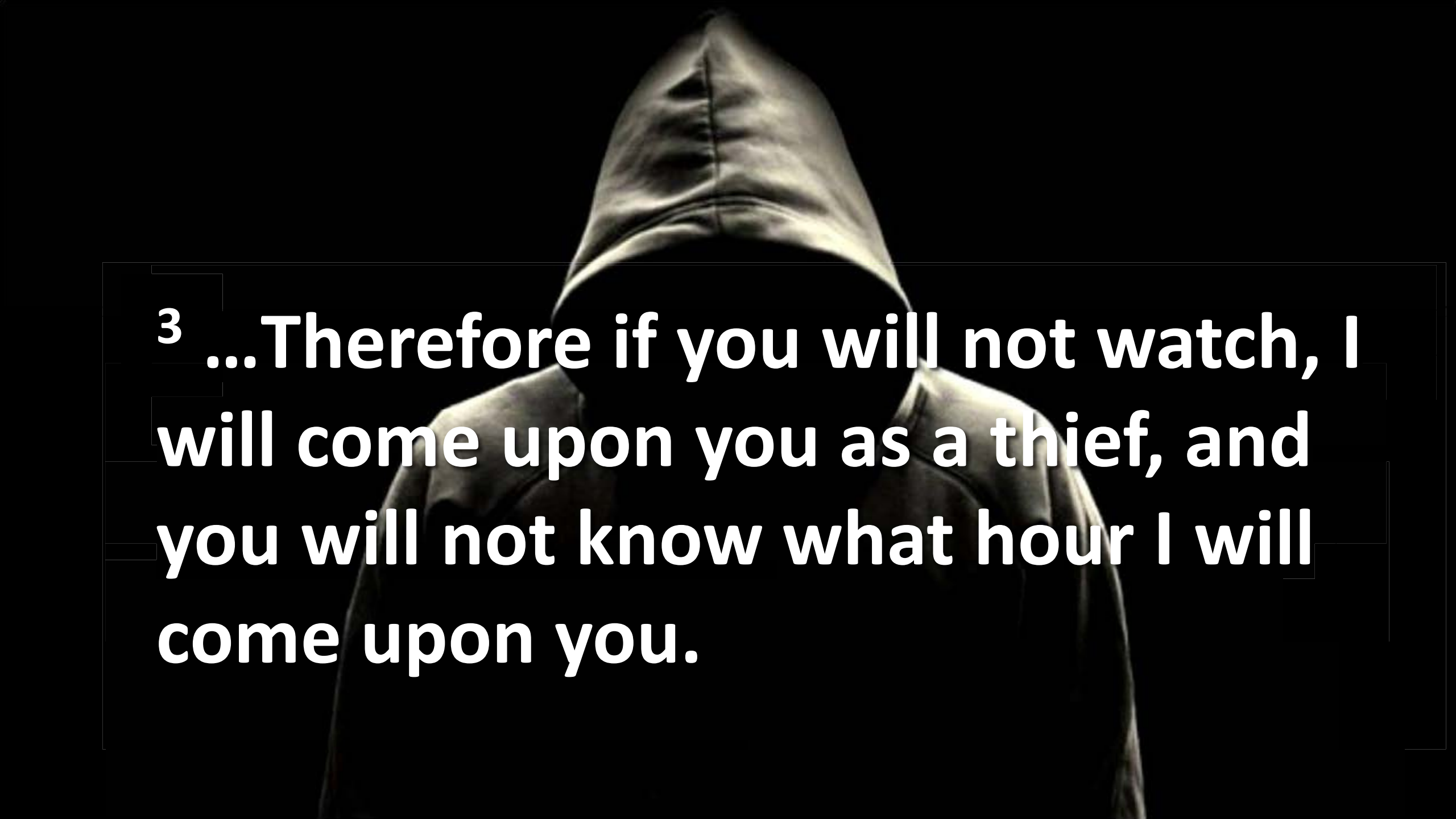
A photograph of a person's hands on a rocky cliff overlooking the ocean at dusk. The left hand is raised with fingers spread, while the right hand rests on the rock. The background shows a blue sky and a dark sea with white waves crashing against the rocks.

**3 Remember
therefore how you
have received and
heard; hold fast
and repent. ...**

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

EXHORTATION *(What they NEED to do)*

- (2) Just like Ephesus, reminded to **remember first love**, think back to when they first believed, **hold fast**.
- Holding fast here = continuous action. Don't let go for a minute, keep holding.
- AND, repent of **spiritual stupor**, become watchful and alive again.
- Unlike church at Ephesus, this church apparently had no redeeming qualities. **Sank into worldly ways of this city.**



3 ...Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Using city's reputation of being *unwatchful*, Yeshua warns if they don't wake up and watch for His coming, they just might miss it.
- Once more in this book Jesus references **coming as a thief**: Revelation 16:15 – “*Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.*” **KILL COMPLACENCY!!**
- Thief generally unexpected, results in unpleasant surprise. *Will be most unpleasant of all surprises if we are not watchful and ready.*

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Concept of **Jesus' coming as a thief** reinforced multiple times in NT:

Matthew 24:33 *But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*

Luke 12:39 *But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*

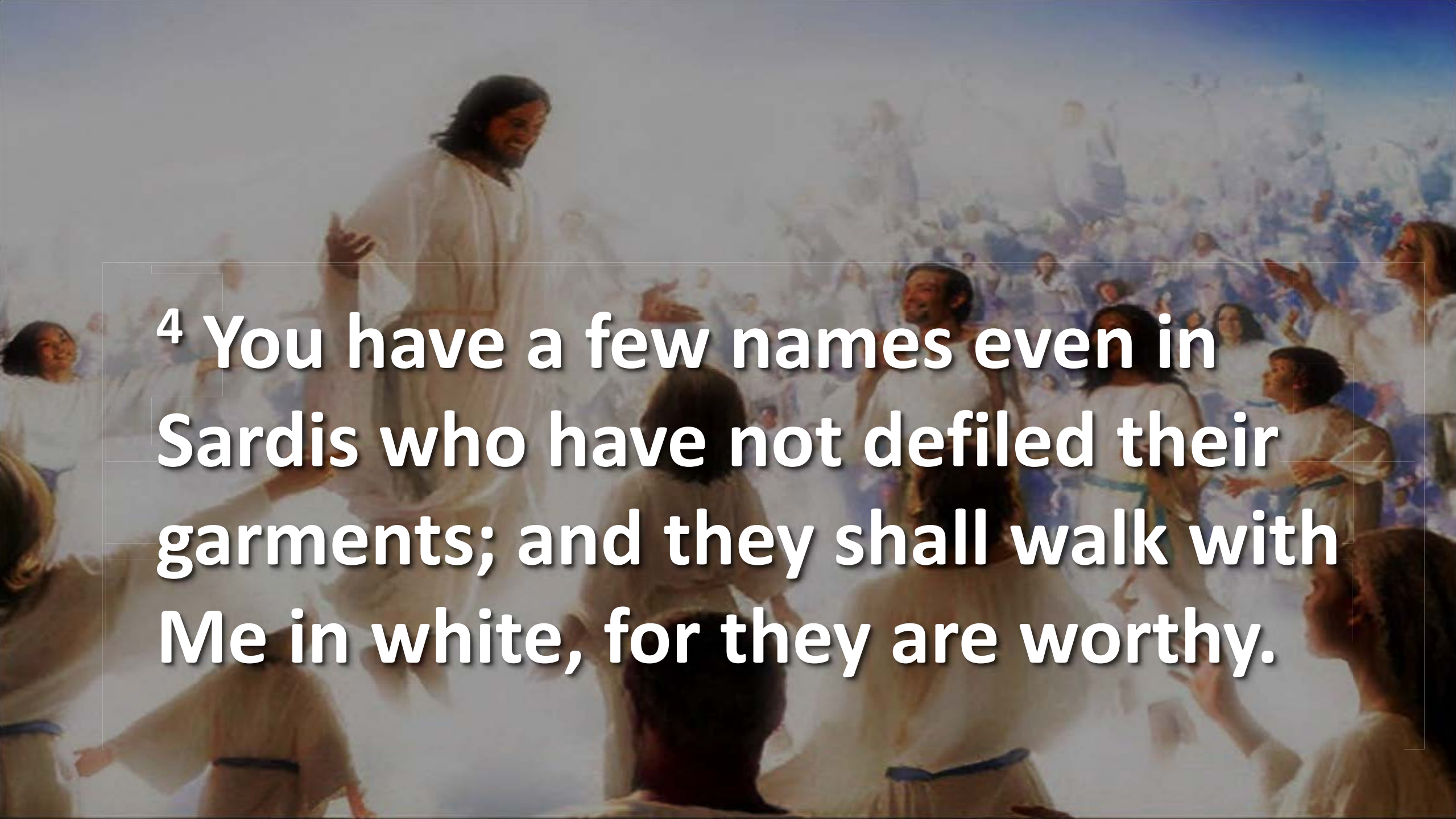
1 Thessalonians 5:2 *For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

1 Thessalonians 5:4 *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*

2 Peter 3:10 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

COMMENTARY: *Winston Churchill said to Britain in the early days of World War II: "I must drop one word of caution, for next to cowardice and treachery, overconfidence leading to neglect and slothfulness, is the worst of wartime crimes." (We are in a war for our souls!)*

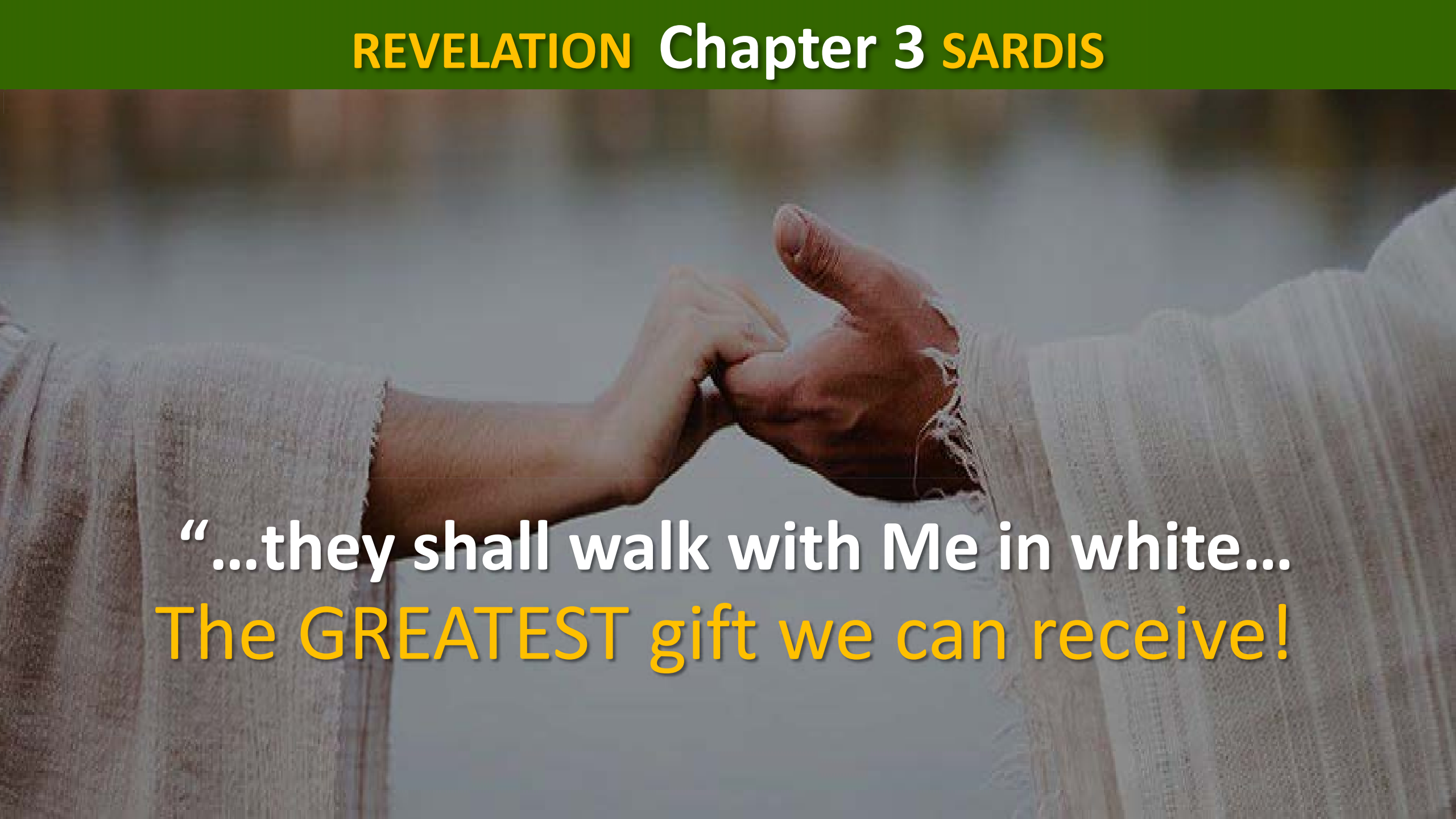
A large group of people, including men, women, and children, are depicted in a bright, heavenly setting. They are all wearing white robes and appear to be celebrating or dancing joyfully. The background is filled with many more people in white, creating a sense of a vast, joyful assembly. The overall atmosphere is one of pure happiness and divine light.

4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

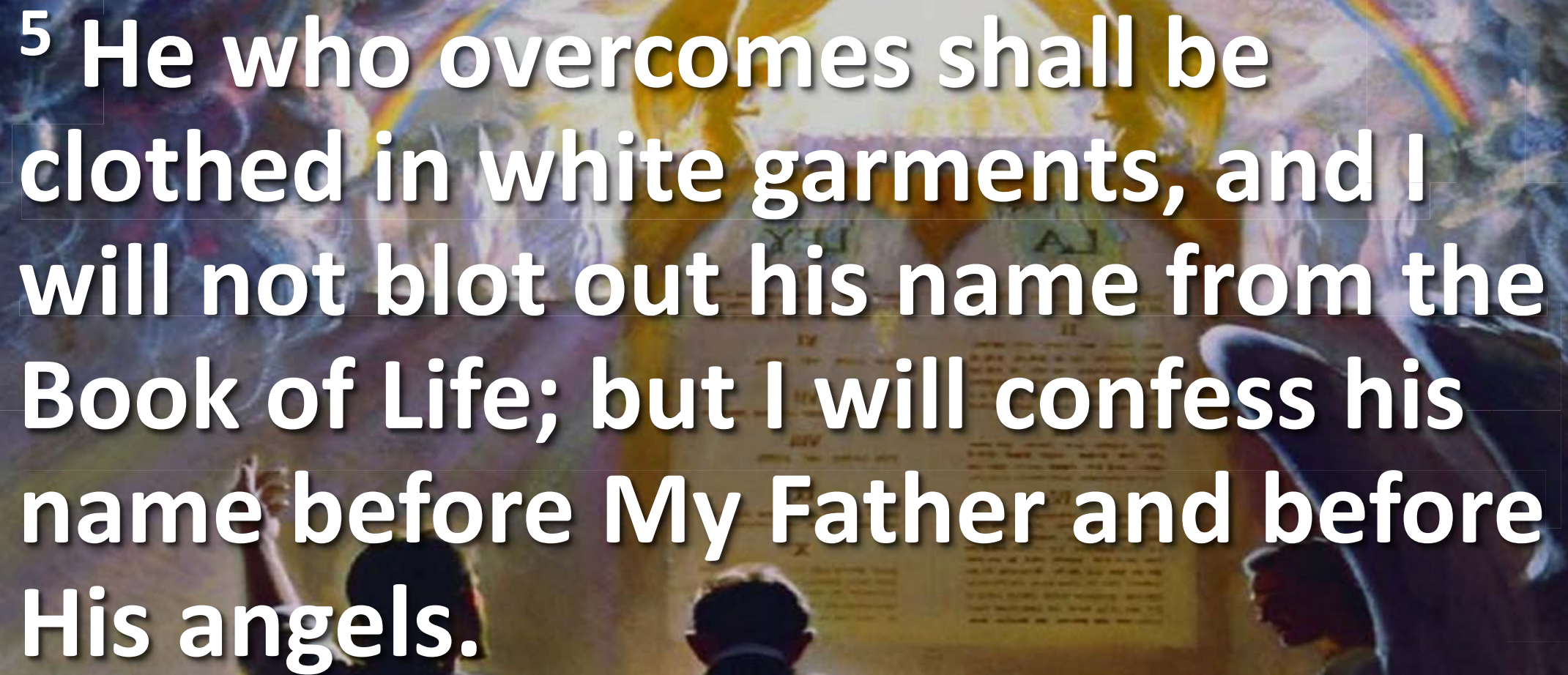
REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Apparently “a few” (*sorry state!*) in Sardis who had not “soiled” their garments. Indicates faithfulness, holy living.
- Don't misunderstand ***“they are worthy.”*** **None of us worthy in our own strength.**
- Only way these people could become “worthy” = by continuing daily walk with Jesus, relying on power of Holy Spirit. They had maintained their relationship with Him. Others had not.
- ***“Even in Sardis...”*** indicates Jesus knows corrupt conditions in Sardis and despite this, *some have held fast.*

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS



“...they shall walk with Me in white...
The GREATEST gift we can receive!

A religious painting depicting a scene with a rainbow, a large book, and figures in the foreground. The background features a rainbow arching over a large, open book with text. In the foreground, several figures are visible: one on the left with arms raised, one in the center with back to viewer, and one on the right holding a book. The overall scene is set against a dramatic, cloudy sky.

⁵ He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

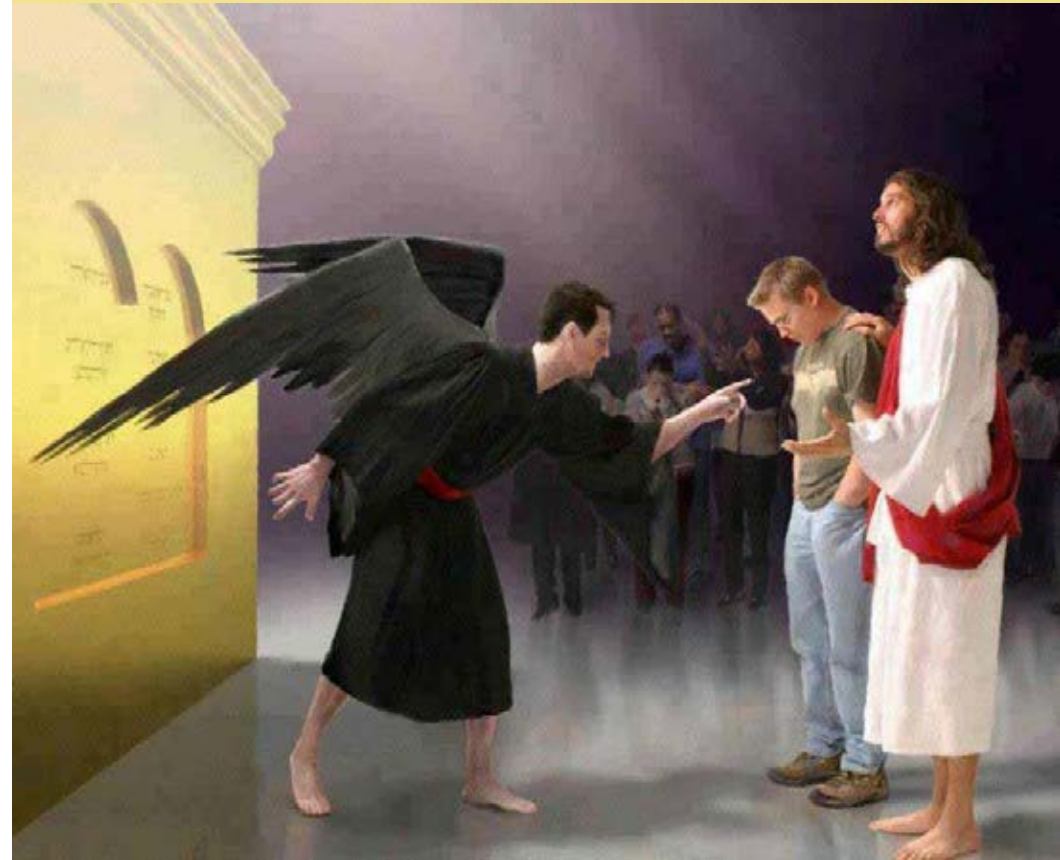
PROMISE

- Mention again of white garments, symbol of righteousness (redeemed), given us by Jesus. *Living like rest of world will defile and soil our robes.*
- Here overcomer promised white garment, one not soiled. We (and they) receive incorruption of Jesus.
- Also reference to pagan worship. Considered sacrilege to approach "the gods" in stained/soiled clothing. **Sardis Christians in danger of approaching the One True God in soiled robes.** *Rich lesson = read Zechariah 3*

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of YHVH, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. ² And YHVH said to Satan, “YHVH rebuke you, Satan! YHVH who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?”

³ Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel.



REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us.

(Revelation 1:5)



⁴ Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, “Take away the filthy garments from him.” And to him He said, “See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.”

⁵ And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of YHVH stood by.

He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

(Revelation 1:6)



ZECHARIAH 3:1-5



REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- **Book of Life:** All cities in that day kept registers of its citizens. When they died, names "blotted out."
(More on Book of Life later in Revelation. Guess how many references there are in Revelation to the Book of Life?)
- Book of Life is **God's registry of heaven**. God writes every name here, but some will be blotted out (*"second death," separation from God*).
- ***"I will confess his name..."*** Roll call of truly alive in Jesus (*not like almost-dead in Sardis!*) called by Jesus Himself before the Father.

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Our “genealogy” either the family of Adam, *which is to death*, or the family of Jesus (the **Lamb's Book of Life**) *which is one of eternal life*. (Subset of Book of Life)
- Only way to keep from being blotted out is to live in **Yeshua** our Messiah.





**6 “He who has
an ear, let him
hear what the
Spirit says to the
churches.”**

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Again, mandate to “hear” what Spirit says to churches comes after promise to believer.
- Thought: starting with age of church at **Thyatira (dark ages)**, perhaps perverted mixed organized church of Christianity + paganism = **beyond point of repentance.**
(Organized church, for the most part, has not returned to pure Word. Religion vs Relationship. Like unrepentant Jezebel)
- But **never too late** for individuals to repent and return.

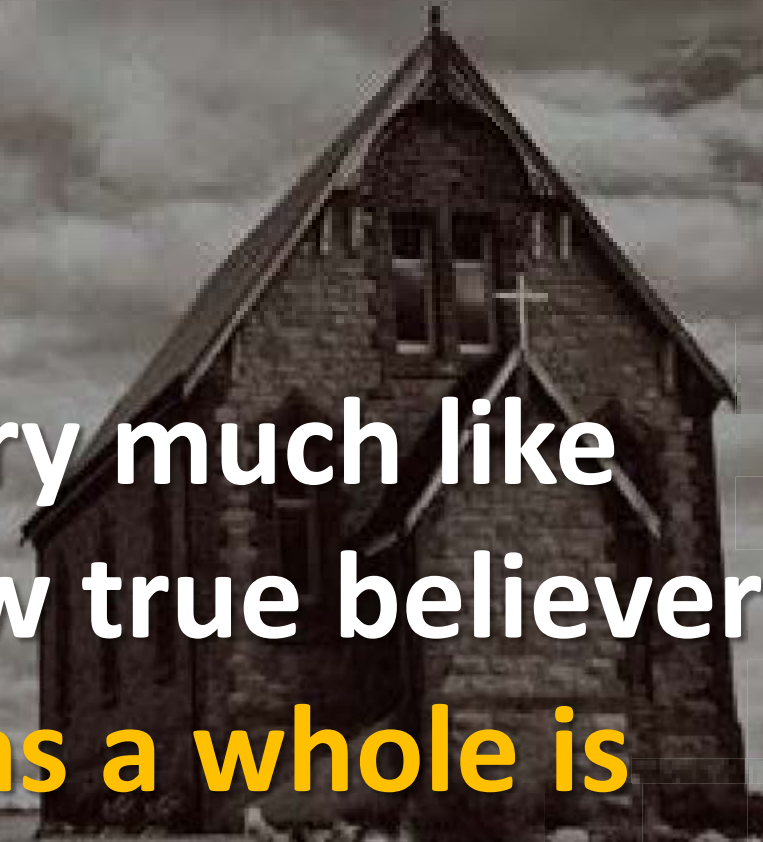
REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Church at Sardis thought to **prophetically represent the Reformation and start of the protestant denominational church, 1600-1750 AD** in an historical timeline.
- Church at beginning of this era **woke up out its spiritual sleep** and reminded Christians of original great truths (*justification by faith alone, inerrancy of the Word of God, depravity of man, etc.*) of the Word of God.
- **However, with denominationalism, those truths were once again in danger of being lost.**

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

DEATH OF THE CHURCH

Sadly, church at Sardis very much like liberal church today. A few true believers, a remnant, but “church” as a whole is sleeping, and many are spiritually dead.



REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

Symbolic Age	Reformation Era (Protestant Denominations) 1600 -1750 AD
Speaker	<i>“He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.”</i>
Praise	NONE! (some had not “soiled their clothes” and they would walk with Him in white)
Problem	<u>Reputation</u> for being alive, but they were dead. “Works” not complete or perfect before God.
Counsel Or Warning	<u>Be watchful, strengthen what remains</u> (is about to die!) Remember what you heard, hold fast to it, repent OR ELSE I will come as a thief (suddenly) to take away what remains.
Promise	White garments, will not blot name from Book of Life, will confess name before Father and angels. (covered/righteousness of Jesus, remain in Book of Life, right to be with God)
Nutshell	Complacency, spiritually dead, more interested in material riches

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- Church at Sardis thought to prophetically represent the Reformation and start of the protestant denominational church, 1600-1750 AD

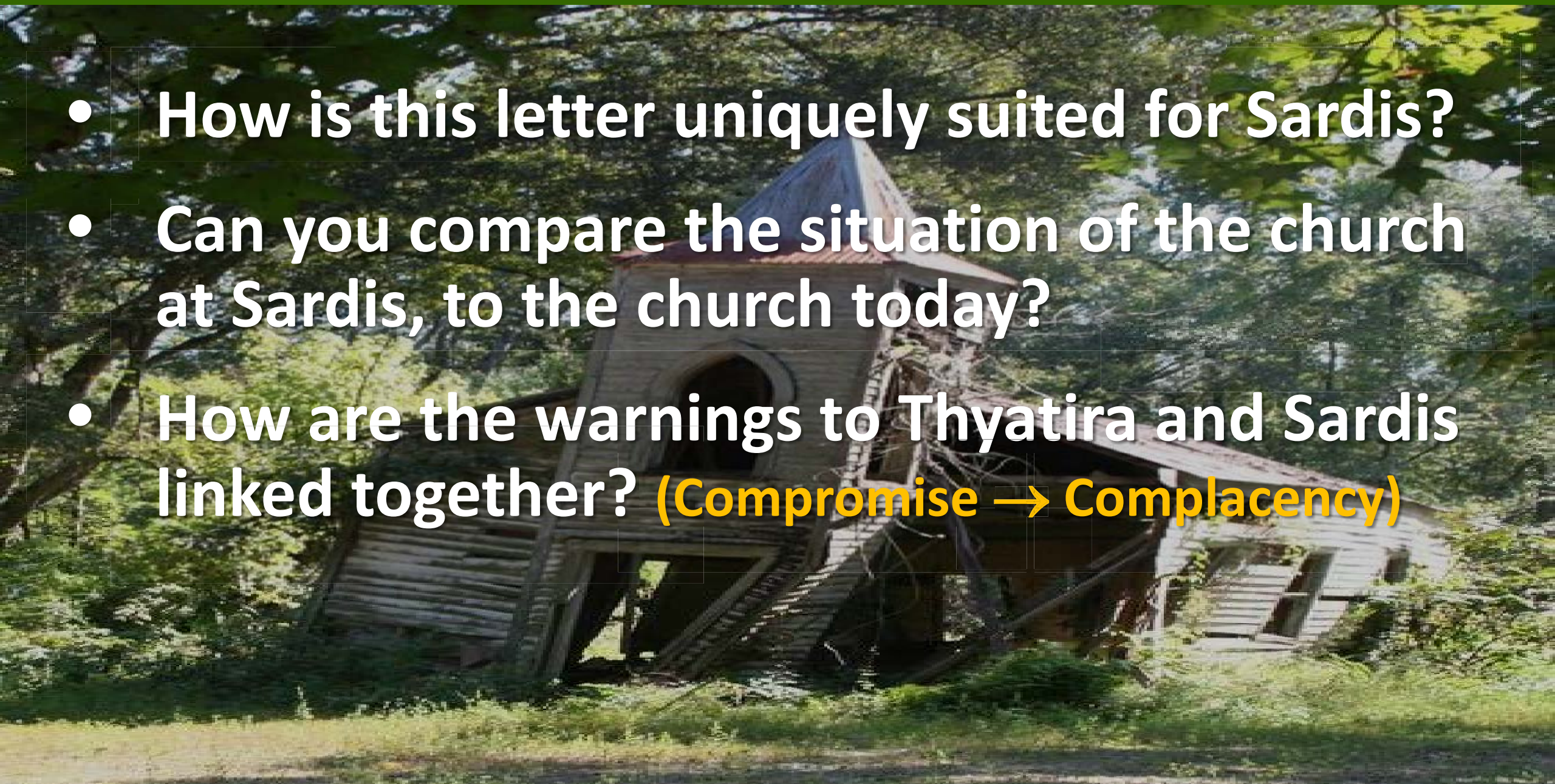
EPHESUS	SMYRNA	PERGAMOS	THAYATIRA	SARDIS	PHILADELPHIA	LAODICEA
30-100 AD	100-312 AD	313 – 590 AD	590–1600 AD	1600–1750 AD		
APOSTOLIC CHURCH (age of Apostles)	PERSECUTED CHURCH (age of Martyrs)	STATE CHURCH (Constantine to 1 st Pope)	ESTABLISHED CHURCH (1 st pope to Reformation)	REFORMATION (+ start of Protestant denominations)		

PASSION

APOSTACY

REVELATION Chapter 3 SARDIS

- How is this letter uniquely suited for Sardis?
- Can you compare the situation of the church at Sardis, to the church today?
- How are the warnings to Thyatira and Sardis linked together? **(Compromise → Complacency)**



Yevarekh-kha Adonai veyishmerekha

May the LORD bless you and keep you

Ya'er Adonai panav elekha vihunneka

May the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you

***Yissa Adonai panav elekha viyase
lekha shalom.***

May the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

