

The One Who Conquers (*Part 1*)

Revelation 3:4-6

Thought for the Day: Those who put their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation: 1) Will be absolutely perfect before God; 2) Will be eternally secure in Heaven; and 3) Will be proudly acknowledged by God as His precious children.

The church in Sardis had a reputation for being alive, but according to the Lord's evaluation, it was a dead church, desperately in need of spiritual revival. But, within the church, there was a small remnant of believers who were not compromising and conforming to the culture around them. To these believers, Jesus gave three promises to encourage them, and us, to not give in to the temptations to compromise; to persevere and remain faithful until Jesus comes.

V. The Promise (3:4-6)

4 Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments...

- In contrast to the unfaithful majority in the church, characterized by carelessness, complacency and compromise, a small, faithful remnant had not defiled themselves by compromising with the pagan society around them.

A. The Promise of Absolute Perfection

...and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. 5 The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments...

- White garments are mentioned several times in Revelation (e.g., 4:4; 6:11; 7:9; 19:14). They are a symbol of purity and righteousness.
- They represent the cleansing from sin that is received by faith in Jesus Christ. (Rev. 7:9-17)
- They also represent the purity and righteousness that is manifested in the lives of the saints by means of good works. (Rev. 19:6-8)
- Our position in Christ should manifest and reveal itself in our practice in daily life.
- The promise of being clothed in white garments is a promise of eternal life and of eternal reward for a life of righteousness.

B. The Promise of Eternal Security

...and I will never blot his name out of the book of life.

- Here is the doctrine of Eternal Security writ large!
- "If a person is clothed with eternal righteousness, make no mistake—he or she has an eternally secure future. Obviously, God has no need of a literal book to remind Him of our standing before Him. The Book of Life is a symbol of permanent security. Our future blessings are certain, as if God had written our names in a great registry of the citizens of heaven." (*Swindoll, Revelation, p. 68*)
- The book of life is mentioned six times in Revelation (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27).

- When you study these passages, they present three significant truths:
 - 1) Revelation 21:27 – Only those whose names are written in the book will be allowed to enter the city of God, the New Jerusalem (Heaven).
 - 2) Revelation 20:15 – Those whose names are not written in the book will be cast into the Lake of Fire (eternal Hell).
 - 3) Revelation 17:8 – The book of life was written from the creation of the world. If your name is recorded in that book, it is because God chose you for Himself before you even existed!

In other words, we are saved by God’s grace and mercy apart from any works that we have done. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Does verse five imply or suggest that a person’s name can be blotted out of the book of life?

- “I’ve been surprised by the number of people who have asked me if Revelation 3:5 teaches that a true believer can lose his or her salvation. How does this verse square with what other passages say about the eternal security of the believer?
 “In Revelation 3:5, Jesus was speaking to the church at Sardis. He said, ‘He who overcomes will thus be clothed 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.’ The Lord promises these believers that He will never blot their names from the book of life. Yet, as John Walvoord noted, ‘To some this verse seems to indicate that a believer’s name *could* be blotted out, which is contrary to the Bible’s clear teaching of the believer’s eternal security. To make the continuance of our salvation depend upon works is a gross failure to comprehend that salvation is by grace alone. If it depended upon the believer’s perseverance, the name would not have been written there in the first place.’
 “This verse, rather than being a threat that a believer’s name can be erased, is an ironclad assurance that it will never be blotted out. The original Greek text in 3:5 is emphatic. There is a double negative (*ou me*) that could be translated, ‘I will never, ever under any circumstance erase his name from the book of life.’ John MacArthur states, ‘Incredibly, although the text says just the opposite, some people assume that this verse teaches that a person’s name can be erased from the book of life. They thus foolishly turn a promise into a threat.’ Even the believers at Sardis, who were far from ideal, were promised the hope of eternal life that will never fail. Every true believer can rest in this same promise (see also Philippians 1:6).” (*Hitchcock, 101 Answers, pp. 88-89*)
- “The promise that names will not be blotted out of the book does not necessitate a belief that some names will be blotted out, though many argue that possibility. This promise is a simple yet powerful statement of assurance to all who place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior—you cannot have your name removed from the Book of Life! No true believer can ever lose his salvation.” (*Hocking, World Leader, p. 85*)

C. The Promise of Complete Acceptance