

## Faithful Few (v.4)

### VERSE 4 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their

**garments** (ἀλλὰ ἔχεις ὀλίγα ὀνόματα ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἃ οὐκ ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν [*conj alla + pres.act.ind.2s. echo have + adj.acc.nt.p. oligos few + noun acc.nt.p. onoma name; “people” + prep en w/noun dat.f.p. Zardeis*]); **and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy** [καὶ περιπατήσουσιν μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς, ὅτι ἄξιοί εἰσιν [*conj kai + fut.act.ind.3p. peripateo walk + prep meta w/pro.gen.1s. ego + prep en w/adj.dat.nt.p. leukos white + conj hoti for (this reason) + adj.nom.m.p. axios worthy + preps.act.ind.3p. eimi*]].

### ANALYSIS: VERSE 4

1. The strong adversative *alla* (“but”) contrasts the general character of the church with those few members who had not slid into religious reversionism.
2. The church had a reputation of being alive (v.1) but only a very few of its membership lived up to that reputation.
3. The noun *onomata* (“names”) takes the same sense it has in Acts 1:15 and Rev.11:13, that of “persons,” a meaning common in Koine usage.
4. The frequent use of this noun is one of the unusual features of this message (cf. 3:1,5 [twice]).
5. These faithful few had not soiled their garments,
6. The verb *moluno* means to stain or dirty something.
7. It occurs 3x in the NT: 1Cor.8:7 (of the conscience), Rev.3:4 (violation of doctrinal integrity) and Rev.14:4 (sexual immorality).
8. The backdrop to the metaphor is probably the custom of pagan worship that insisted that the worshipper dishonored the god if he approached the deity in soiled garments.
9. The general word for clothing is used here (*himatia*).
10. Here the reference is not to involvement with the sexual immorality sponsored by paganism.
11. There is as complete absence of any reference in this letter to heathen impurities as found in other letters.
12. The specific form of defilement was the church’s abandonment of its once doctrinal integrity.
13. By not forsaking the teaching that brings into play the adjustments to God these few believers did not defile the good conscience (cf. Acts 23:1; 1Tim.1:5, 19; Heb.13:18; 1Pet.3:16).
14. These few had refused to abandon that which they had “received and heard” (cf. v.3) while the rest of the congregation had abandoned their confidence in favor of a form of godliness that denies the power of sound doctrine (2Tim.3:5).
15. The majority had fallen into a pseudo-spirituality that denies the dynamic of the Rebound technique.
16. That is why they were “dead.”
17. This characterizes conservative Protestantism over the centuries (modern fundamentalism).
18. The source of the contamination leading to polluted garments is to be found in v.3.
19. What the majority were enjoined to repent of these few stayed true to their spiritual roots.
20. Their fidelity to the faith is an amazing testimony to positive volition under extreme duress.
21. These few never left the church during the years of spiritual decline.

22. It doesn't take very long to wind up in this condition.
23. The promise to the uncompromised, undefiled minority is that they will walk with Christ, "dressed in white."
24. Being dressed in white is a way of describing those who are justified by faith as seen in v.5.
25. White garments are characteristic of the dress code for phase 3 (cf. Rev.4:4; 6:11; 7:9,13; 19:14).
26. So what is the special distinction that believers like these at Sardis have over believers who were unfaithful?
27. The answer is found in the term access.
28. Their access to Christ as signified by the words "they shall walk with Me in white" suggests access and fellowship.
29. This is a part of SG3.
30. These believers have two things going for them: (a) they get into the eternal kingdom because they possess +R and EL; (b) they enjoy special access to the Lord because they refused to conform to the standards of the corrupt majority.
31. Their garments and their association with the Lord signify that they were worthy.
32. White linen clothing signify two things: (a) salvation adjustment and (b) Ph 2 sanctification (cf. Rev.19:8).

#### Promise to Overcomers (v.5)

**VERSE 5 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments** (ὁ νικῶν οὕτως περιβαλεῖται ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς [*art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.s. nikao be victorious, overcome + adv houtos in this manner [w.ref. to what precedes] + fut.mid.ind.3s. periballo clothe oneself + prep en w/noun loc.nt.p. himation garment [outer] + adj.loc.nt.p. leukos white*]; **and I will not erase his name from the book of life** [καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐξαλείψω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τῆς ζωῆς [*conj kai + double neg ou me + fut.act.ind.1c.s. exaleipho erase + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. onoma name + pro.gen.m.3s. autos his + prep ek w/art/w/noun abl.f.s. biblos book + art.w/noun gen.f.s. zoe life*], **and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels** [καὶ ὁμολογήσω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρὸς μου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ [*conj kai + fut.act.ind.1s. homologeo confess + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. onoma name + pro.gen.3m.s. autos his + prep enopion before + art.w/noun gen.m.s. pater father + pro.gen.1s. ego + conj kai + prep enopion before + art.w/gen.m.p. angelos angel + pro.gen.1s. ego*]).

#### ANALYSIS: VERSE 5

1. To the overcomer (individual bel) a threefold promise is given: (a) he will be dressed in white; (b) he will not have his name blotted from the book of life; (c) Christ will acknowledge him before God and His angels.
2. All believers will be dressed in white (Rev.19:14).
3. White signifies God's perfect righteousness.
4. The 2<sup>nd</sup> promise focuses on the EL aspect of our salvation.

5. The idea of a divine ledger is first mentioned in Ex.32:32-33, where Moses prays that if God will not forgive the sin of His people, He himself wants to be blotted out “of the book you have written” (cf. Ps.69:28; Dan.12:1).
6. This book is a registry of the names of all members of the human race.
7. These are all the people Christ died for on the cross.
8. When an individual dies without believing in Christ that name is blotted out of the book of life.
9. This idea is reflected in the ancient civic realm as well.
10. “When a criminal’s name was removed from the civic register of an Asiatic town, he lost his citizenship” (Kiddle, 47; cf. Hemer, *Local Setting*, 148-9).
11. There appears to be another registry that has only the names of those who believe (cf. Rev.13:8; cp. 17:8).
12. This registry is called the book of life of the Lamb.
13. Finally, to the overcomer Christ promises that he will acknowledge his name before His father and His angels.
14. This is a clear reflection of Matt.10:32 (cf. Lk.12:8; Mk.8:38//Lk.9:26).
15. In this 3<sup>rd</sup> promise there is degrees of divine approbation.
16. Those who believe in Christ will be acknowledged (cf. Heb.2:11 “For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,”; and Heb.11:16 “But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.”).
17. Those who finish their course will enjoy special approbation.

**VERSE 6 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches** (ὁ

ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις [*art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + noun acc.nt.s. ous ear + aor.act.imper.3s. akouo hear + pro.acc.nt.s. tis what + art.w/noun nom.nt.s. pneuma spirit + pres.act.ind.3s. lego say + art/w/noun dat.f.p. ekklesia church*]).'

**ANALYSIS: VERSE 6**

1. The local church is the duly designated classroom of Christianity.
2. God the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher of the oracles of God.
3. He is the One sent to led positive volition into all truth.
4. God the HS only reveals what is given to Him.
5. What is good for one church is equally good for all churches.
6. That which is for the local church is found in the 66 books of the Bible.
7. The individual is responsible to hear this body of information.

**Overview of the Sardian Era**

1. This trend within the present dispensation commences with the Protestant Reformation (1606-1750 AD).
2. The previous trend, manifest by the RCC, continues to manifest itself throughout the Church age.
3. Those individuals who separated from the RCC (versus those who sought to reform it from within) are called the reformers.

4. Men like John Hus (c. 1373-1414 AD) and John Wycliffe (c. 1328-1384) predated the actual historical time frame of the Reformation.
5. They and their followers rejected all the teachings and practices of the RCC that could not be documented by Scripture.
6. Around 1500 the foundations of medieval society were broken up by what is called the Renaissance (1350-1650 AD).
7. This was the climate that made the actual Reformation itself succeed according to historians.
8. The Reformation was largely a movement to reclaim the apostolic faith that had languished under the oppression and corruption of the RCC.
9. Among the early reformers was Zwingli who was in Switzerland (c. 1484-1531 AD) and Marin Bucer in Germany (1491-1551 AD) and one Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560 AD), who is credited with being the theologian of the Reformation.
10. Perhaps the most notable voice of the Reformation was Martin Luther who posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the Castle Church in Wittenburg in Germany on October 31, 1517 AD in defiance of the abuses of the indulgence system of the RCC.
11. Soon after Luther was affirming that the sole authority in matters of faith was the Bible and not the church or the pope.
12. He came to promote the doctrine of justification by faith and faith alone.
13. The efforts of Luther and others sparked a revolt against the Catholic prohibition against reading the Bible by the average person.
14. Then there was John Calvin who developed his theological system in Geneva Switzerland.
15. The reputation of the Reformation is seen in the fact that multitudes in Europe, the British Isles and the United States affiliated themselves with one or the other of the various Protestant denominations that came to be.
16. Presbyterianism is the name of the denomination the system of church government that Calvin developed.
17. A major shortcoming of the Reformation in its early days was that its founders engaged in the same evil of state sponsored churches as had the RCC before them.
18. For instance, Lutheranism became the state religion of Germany, and later, the Anglicism became the state sponsored faith of England (as it is to this day).
19. Reformers continued to practice infant baptism and ritualism and in this respect did not make a complete break from Catholicism.
20. Doctrinal failings of the reformers include failure to understand the CWL, continuation of certain Catholic practices, an almost total inability to formulate Biblical prophecy into a clear and coherent system, in favor of one that is allegorical (e.g., amillennialism).
21. So they were similar to the Sardinian believers in that they had a reputation but were dead.
22. Incomplete doctrine coupled with a kind of spiritual malaise, which was the products of denominational rigidity, casts itself over all the denominations to the present day.
23. As a reaction to this many have fallen into emotionally charged forms of worship and programism.
24. In America we have the Presbyterians, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Pentecostals, etc.
25. Most of these have spawned sub groups.
26. Denominationalism is a detriment to reclaiming the apostolic faith.
27. Those believers over the centuries that had tied their spiritual lives to these groups will face loss and shame at His appearing.