

Sardis 2

1. “If you do not wake up, I will come as a thief and you will now know what sort of hour I will come upon you.”
 - a. Look at how many times this “thief” metaphor is used in the NT in this context. Paul has similar exhortation in 1 Thessalonians 5, Jesus in Matthew 24, Peter in 2 Peter 3:10. All three passages, (the Peter passage specifically) reference the OT theme of “The day of the LORD”. See the handout on that.
 - b. Here is the issue with this passage. When is God going to “come upon them” in judgment? Is that intended to be in the context of the “Day of the LORD”?
 - c. Another way is to see it in the light of the OT theme of “visitation”. See the handout on visitation.
 - d. It is very hard to start putting time lines together with many of these texts. The problems are just going to multiply as we get into the book of Revelation. Remember that Daniel 7 is resonating throughout this book, and in fact throughout the imaginations of the people of that time. It seems that “visitations” come, just as the tradition in the OT represented, for blessing and for judgment and that these visitations would be multiple. None of the preliminary visitations, however, undermine the final visitation, yet there is a deep thematic connection between all of them in that they communicate the same reality, the presence of God amidst his people to rescue them (judgment) and to bless them.

2. “But there are a few names in Sardis that have not dirtied their garments, and they will walk with me in white for they are worthy.”
 - a. Notice people are called “names” here. This will be developed in the next verse. If you remember in 2:17 the “victors” are given a new “name”. What is the significance of naming? What does it mean to not have a name? What does having a “name” and knowing a name signify?
 - b. Notice there is a “coming to walk with” here as well. What does this remind you of?
 - c. More on the white garments below.
 - d. Those who are “worthy” (in the positive sense) in the book of Revelation are almost qualified by suffering.

3. “Thus the victors that will be dressed in white garments and not I will not blot out their name from the book of life and I will profess/declare/acknowledge their name before my father and before his angels?”
 - a. Throughout Revelation the white robes and garments (4:4) belong to those who have been purified through suffering. Daniel 11:36 and 12:10 have those of God “made white” by their sufferings. How can that change the experience of suffering?
 - b. Book of Life comes up 5 times in the book of revelation: 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 15, 21:27. Also Phil 4:3, Luke 10:20, Heb 12:23. It’s clear that this is not a Johannine convention. This stands in contrast with “the books” that records history and that is opened at the final judgment.
 - c. A treatment of the “erasure” requires a longer explanation. See the handout.