



The Church at Sardis

A Bit of History



Sardis (also spelled *Sardes*), was an ancient city of Asia Minor (today Turkey), in the 7th century B.C. the capital city of the Kingdom of Lydia. Sardis was known for its crafts and artistry, and as the first city where silver and gold coins were minted.

Sardis was taken by the Persians about 546 B.C. and then later in turn by the Athenians. When the Romans took it in 133 B.C., it became the capital of the Roman province of Lydia. The city was severely damaged by an earthquake in 17 A.D., and although the Romans reportedly spent 10,000,000 sesterces for damage repair, the city never fully recovered its former glory.

Sardis was located in the Hermus Valley, near the major road system that linked it with Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

The Fifth Message to The Church at Sardis

The Church of the Reformation Period

(Revelation 3:1-6)

The Dead Church under the Roman Catholic Church– A.D. 1514 to A.D. 1798

The church that became cold and dead, the church of the reformation period.

The Condemnation: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”

The Counsel: “Be watchful, and strengthen the things, which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.”

The Warning: “If therefore you will not watch, I will come on you as a thief, and you shall not know what hour I will come upon you.”

The Promise: “You have a few names even in Sardis that have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.”

A Closer Look at Sardis



The Church at Sardis was called a Dead Church though it had a name to live. That is, it was a Formalistic Church, a church given over the “formal” or “ritualistic” worship. It had the “Form of Godliness without the Power.” The meaning of the word “Sardis” is the “escaping one,” or those who “come out” and so it is an excellent type of the Church of the Reformation Period.

This Period began when the condition of affairs in the realm dominated by the Papal Church became intolerable. A crisis soon developed when Martin Luther, on October 31, 1517 A.D., nailed his 95 Theses onto the church door at Wittenberg, Germany. From that date the Reformation set in.

By the Reformation we mean that period in history of the Christian Church when Martin Luther and a number of other reformers protested against the false teaching, tyranny and claims of the Papal Church. Soon the numbers of protesters that had joined Luther had grown to such numbers that they became known as the Protestants and a new movement was born which we now call the **PROTESTANT REFORMATION**.

This reformation had the advantage of encouraging and aiding the circulation of the Holy Scriptures that until then had been a sealed Book. The reformation also gave a voice to the revival of the doctrine of **JUSTIFICATION by FAITH**, and a reversion to more simple modes of worship. The multiplication of sects, called “**DENOMINATIONS**,” only led to bitter controversy. While the various denominations threw much light on the Word of God, they interfered greatly with the spiritual state of the Church overall, until it could truthfully be said, “*That she had a name to live and was dead.*”