

THE CHURCH AT SARDIS

Rev 3:1-6

INTRODUCTION:

- A. 30 mi. South of Thyatira on East - West crossroads of the Ludian empire. One of oldest and most important cities in Asia. Built on northern slope of a Mt. whose acropolis occupied a spur of mountain, about 1500 feet high, with sheer walls on 3 sides. Easily defendable & virtually impregnable, but fell twice because there was no watchman on the wall. 549 BC Persians took the city. 218 BC Antiochus III took city. Invaded like a "thief in night." (see map)
- B. Sardis was also a wealthy city: was a city of commerce; fertile farm land; also produced textiles and jewelry. Gold was mined here, and money was first minted here.
- C. City located on earthquake fault. In 17 A.D. devastated by an earthquake. Rebuilt by Tiberius, but never regained its former economic significance.
- D. During this time the mystery cults of the ancient East had wealthy practitioners -- some claimed power to raise the dead. A temple of Cybele (ancient Phrygian Mother of the Gods, a primal nature goddess worshipped with orgiastic rites) here. Worship resembled that of Diana of the Ephesians.
- E. Christianity grew and Sardis became center of Christianity in Asia Minor.
- F. Notice the spiritual conditions of the church in this city

DISCUSSION:

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKER

- A. Has the seven Spirits of God
 - 1. Number 7 = completeness, often used in Rev.
 - 2. Jesus possessed Spirit without measure Jhn 3:34
- B. Has seven stars - seven angels Rev 1:20 - under authority of Christ

II. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CHURCH

- A. Possibly some significance that Christ criticizes before he commends - only one of seven that this is done.
- B. Had a name to live - but were dead
 - 1. Good appearance - enjoyed reputation of being alive - can think we are alive when dead spiritually
 - 2. They were dead - many reasons - no proper food, no proper exercise, no proper care
- C. Works not perfect or complete before God
 - 1. Must abound in work of the Lord 1Cor 15:58
 - 2. Scripture furnish completely to every good work 2Tim 3:16,17

III. WHAT IS RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH

- A. Few names - not defiled their garments
 - 1. "Few" - true in most places (we have a "few")
 - 2. "Few" find the narrow way Matt 7:13,14
 - 3. "Few" meant only 8 in Noah's time
- B. They are worthy (suitable)
 - 1. Could not be said of all
 - 2. Few had remained faithful and were thus suitable to walk with Christ.

IV. ADMONITIONS GIVEN TO THIS CHURCH

- A. Be watchful Mk 13:35
 - 1. Need to always be ready (city fell twice because no watchman)
 - 2. Know not the hour Christ is coming Matt 24:42
- B. Strengthen things which remain
 - 1. Sometimes convert people and forget them or try to make new converts and forget those already converted
 - 2. We have a responsibility to the weak Rom 15:1,2
- C. Remember how you received and heard 1Thess 2:13
 - 1. Remember your past state
 - 2. Think of the zeal you once had
- D. Hold fast 1Cor 15:58
- E. Repent
 - 1. Unless willing to repent - perish Lk 13:3
 - 2. All commanded to repent Acts 17:30

V. WARNING (THREAT) GIVEN

- A. All things won't continue as were 2Pet 3:3,4
- B. If you don't watch - come as a thief in the night, when we least expect it 2Pet 3:10; 1Thess 5:2-4

CONCLUSION:

- A. Reward promised to those who had not defiled garments
 - 1. Walk with me in white
 - 2. They are worthy (suitable)
- B. He that overcometh
 - 1. Clothed in white raiment
 - 2. Not blot out his name
 - 3. Confess his name Matt 10:32,33
- C. He that hath an ear let him hear: Hear what? What the Spirit saith unto the churches (we have ears to hear)
 - 1. Admonition - be watchful, strengthen
 - 2. Recognize what is right and wrong in the congregation
 - 3. Hear who is speaking - has the Spirit of God without measure - messengers under his authority.