

THE CHURCH IN SARDIS

REV 3:1-6

Text:

Introduction:

Sardis was the capital city of Lydia.

It was founded about 1,200 BC.

The original city sat on the top of a 1,500 foot high plateau. There was one narrow road leading into the city. The other sides of the plateau were just steep cliffs. This made the city very safe and nearly impenetrable by invading armies.

Gold and silver coins were first minted here.

The city of Sardis was famous for the industries that operated there. Carpet, wool and dyed cloth were their primary products. It is said that the art of dyeing was invented at Sardis.

The fall of Sardis began when the people of the city became complacent in their wealth, their power and their city's apparent invincibility.

The city was proud of its past; it was proud of its reputation. But, its reputation was all it had left. For all

intents and purposes, the city of Sardis was dead, even while it lived.

The church in Sardis had adopted the atmosphere of the city. The church had become a thermometer that registered the temperature of the city instead of a thermostat that changed the temperature of the city.

It's to this church that had become lazy, apathetic and complacent that the Lord speaks. Just as surely as the city of Sardis was dying, so was the church in that city.

Jesus has no words of commendation for them, but He does have some words of condemnation and counsel.

What are some signs that a church is dying or dead?

A dying church rests on its past accomplishments and is satisfied with its present state.

A dying church is more concerned about their rituals and their formalities than they are about spirituality.

A dying church is more concerned about social change than they are about seeing people changed by the power of God.

A dying church is more concerned with material growth than it is with spiritual growth.

A dying church is more concerned with pleasing men than it is with pleasing God.

A dying church clings more tightly to its creeds and confessions that it does to the Word of God.

A dying church is one that loses its conviction that the Bible is the Word of God.

I would like for us to look at our Lord's words to this dying church. There is a word of warning for us in these verses as well.

1. CONDITION

Revelation 3:1 (KJV)

¹ And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

- A. The Reputation
- B. The Reality
- C. The Reason

2. CURE

Revelation 3:2-3 (KJV)

² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. ³ Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

A. Ready or Alert

B. Reinforce

C. Remember

3. CHRISTIANS

Revelation 3:4-6 (KJV)

⁴Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. ⁵He that overcometh, 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. ⁶He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

A. The faithful few

Colossians 3:5-10 (KJV)

⁵Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: ⁶For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: ⁷In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. ⁸But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. ⁹Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; ¹⁰And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: