Revelation 3:1-6 - Church at Sardis

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COURSE & COMMENTARY &

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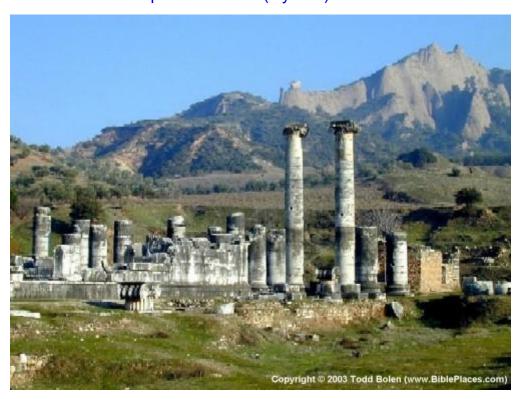






3:1 - Sardis - introduction

Temple of Artemis (Cybele) at Sardis



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- 1) Ancient capital of Lydia.
- 2) A mountain fortress, but fell twice due to lack of watchfulness (Rev. 3:2-3).
- 3) Large temple dedicated to Greek Artemis (Asiatic goddess Cybele).
- 4) Modern Turkish village of Sart.

3:1 - Sardis - title

seven Spirits of God

Christ emphasizes that He is the source of the seven Spirits of God (John 15:26; 16:7) because this church is dead. As Adam was animated by the *breath of God* (Gen. 2:7) so too is the *body of Christ* animated by the *Holy Spirit* (1Cor. 12:12-13). This fellowship was led by men, not by the Spirit.

seven stars

The stars are the angels (Rev. 1:20). If elders, they are to be men "full of the spirit" (Acts 6:3-5;

11:24).

3:1 - Sardis - criticism

you have a name that you are alive

The church *appears* alive to men, but not to God. Lacking the Spirit, the Sardian church could not see themselves as God saw them. Their *name* represented their fame or reputation before men. They were walking in the sin of Babel (Gen. 11:4).

but you are dead

The church had an outward form, but its heart was far from Christ. Their *activity* was mistaken for *spiritual productivity*. *This* "active fellowship" was made up mostly of the "living dead" (Mat. 8:22; Luke 9:60; 1Ti. 5:6).

3:2 - Sardis - exhortation

be watchful

A present tense imperative: (you) be continually watching! The Sardian church was weighed down with the cares of this life (Luke 21:34-36). If they would not watch, He would come upon them as a thief (Rev. 3:3).

- strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die
 The church had a name before men, but was actually almost devoid of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their midst.
- not found your works perfect before God

"Works" is *peplerome'na*, indicating works previously appointed, but <u>unfulfilled</u> (Eph. 2:10). Their works were impressive to *men*, but counted for nothing *before God*. The branches were disconnected from the vine (John 15:5).

- remember... how you have received... hold fast... repent
 Inattention had played a significant part in their drift away from life toward death (Heb. 2:1). "Hold
 fast" is te'rei, a present tense imperative: "continually hold fast!" "Repent" is metanoia. See
 previous lesson which discussed Revelation 2:5.
- if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief
 His coming as a thief describes how He comes in judgment, in the Day of the Lord, upon a sleeping world (Mat. 24:37-44; 1Th. 5:2-10; 2Pe. 3:10).
- you will not know the hour
 Only those in darkness will be overtaken by the thief (1Th. 5:2-6).

3:4 - Sardis - promises

they shall walk with me in white

They are presently walking with Him as guided by the Holy Spirit (Gen. 5:22; Gal. 5:16). In the future, they will have full fellowship with God as did Adam in the Garden (Gen. 3:8; Rev. 21:3; 22:3-4).

3:5 - Sardis - overcomer

- He who overcomes
 (See previous lesson covering Revelation 2:7 where we discussed the identity of the overcomer.)
- clothed in white garments
 Clothed so that their nakedness would not be revealed (Rev. 3:18). Atonement means "to be covered over."
- · I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life

The promise emphasizes that believers will *never be* blotted out! The Book of Life:

- 1) Contains the names of all persons ever born (with exception below) (Ex. 32:32-33; Ps. 69:28).
- 2) Upon death, unredeemed are blotted out having never accepted Christ (Rev. 3:5).
- 3) Beast worshipers are *never* written in the book (Rev. 13:8; 17:8).
- but I will confess his name before My Father
 Christ taught this same truth in the gospels (Mat. 10:32; Luke 12:8). He will confess that the overcomer's name is written in the Book of Life.

3:6 - Sardis - let him hear

he who has an ear, let him hear
 See previous lesson which discussed Revelation 2:7.

For additional information on this topic, see the commentary.