

The Church in Sardis
Series, "The 7 Churches of Revelation"
Revelation 3:1-6

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Allison shares

History of Sardis and its church

Important city and they seemed to kind of know it – story about Texas folks

Was taken over a handful of times before and after Jesus was born

Lots of money, opportunity, freedoms, power

It was kind of like Helm's Deep for our Lord of the Rings fans

Built on this plateau with good high walls, a bottle neck of an entrance. Very easily fortified and guarded, considered an impenetrable fortress. Yet, they got conquered a lot. Why?

Powerful and plentiful city. Plateau- 6,500 feet, then walls 1,500 But in 549 BC, the Persian king Cyrus defeated the city, and he did it right under the Sardinians' noses (92). He sent someone to climb up a crevice that he found in the wall.

If the watchmen of the city had been paying any attention, they would have seen the climber coming and could have easily defeated him. But they weren't paying any attention, and so he climbed up all 1,500 feet of the wall, entered the city, and opened the front gates and let the Persian army in.

Because Sardis failed to remain watchful, the Persians didn't even need to overcome the wall. They marched straight through the front gate and defeated the city.

And you'd think after that Sardinians would have learned their lesson. But the same thing happened again in 216 BC (93). They got lazy, they got overconfident, they felt too big to fail

Trajectory is up and down: conquered a few times, earthquake in 17 AD. Never quite recovered, but wouldn't believe it and continued to pretend it was what it once was. Its reputation was really important to it, too much.

Why is all this important
As the city went, the church seemed to go as well.

Set up to them listening to the letter being read.

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: The words of Him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of My God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Revelation 3:1-6)

The Sardinian Believers had effectively built a winning brand for themselves in their community. By all appearances, the church in Sardis was a vibrant, effective powerhouse, but inside they were lifeless.

No mention of heresy in the church, or persecution from outside the church

George Eldon Ladd defined the Sardis church as “a picture of nominal Christianity, outwardly prosperous, busy with the externals of religious activity, but devoid of spiritual life and power.”

They were probably so excited when this started, but it goes south quick.

Wake up - vs. 2

Early morning drive from OWU, hit dog or whatever. Afterwards, I was awake.

Strengthen what remains - vs. 2

Interesting, He doesn't say get to it and produce more stuff, He says give attention to what is still here, but is on its way out.

Hold tight to what we learned at first - vs. 3

Repent and turn- vs. 3

Now things are getting threatening. Will Sardis, will we, recognize where we have gone wrong and humble ourselves enough to repent.

Up until now, it's a little easier to swallow.

Remind - doubled down

The warning - you will miss me

But there are some, in a church that's dead even if it looks good on the outside, who are faithful.

Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. (Revelation 3:4)

This is a remnant.

The problem is, everyone thinks they're the remnant.

But there is hope.

The One Who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Revelation 3:5-6)