

## **SARDIS, THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING DEAD**

**Rev. 3: 1 – 6**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

**1. Thirty miles southeast of Thyatira lay Sardis, one of the oldest cities in Asia Minor.**

**2. It was a wealthy trading center on the routes between the Aegean Sea and the interior of Asia Minor.**

**3. Sardis had been the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Lydia.**

**4. Sardis was the place where modern money was born.**

**5. Sardis was built on top of a mountain, and from its position it was regarded as well-nigh impregnable.**

**(1) It was a position which seemed to defy assault.**

**6. Cyrus, the king of Persia, captured Sardis in 546 B.C.**

**7. The story of how he captured Sardis:**

**(1) A special reward for any man who worked out a method whereby this unscalable cliff could be scaled.**

**(2) One of the soldiers in the Persian army saw one of the Lydian soldiers on the battlement accidentally drop his helmet over the battlement, down the cliff.**

**(3) He watched the Lydian soldier pick his way down the cliff, and get his helmet and climb back.**

**(4) He marked the path in his memory, and that night he led a picked band of troops up the cliffs and took Sardis.**

**(5) The same thing happened about two hundred years later.**

**8. The key word in this letter is WATCH. Rev. 3: 2 – 3**

**9. These people could know from history that disaster comes many times when we think we are secure.**

**10. Sardis was a great commercial center, and extremely wealthy.**

11. Sardis was a great center of the woolen industry.
12. The people of Sardis notoriously lived loosely.
13. The people had grown flabby and had sunk into easy, loose living.
14. The fate of the church at Sardis was the same.
15. The church at Sardis was at peace, but it was the peace of the dead.

## **I. DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKER – verse 1**

### **1. *“Hath the seven spirits of God”...***

(1) He possessed the Spirit without measure. John 3: 34

### **2. *“Hath the seven stars”...***

(1) The stars are the angels. Rev. 1:20

(2) They are under His authority.

## **II. A CHURCH WITH A REPUTATION –verse 1**

### **1. *“Thou hast a name that thou livest”...***

(1) We learn from this that what men think of a church is not necessarily what the Lord thinks of it.

(2) We learn from this that congregations, like men, have reputations.

### **2. Things which probably gave Sardis this reputation:**

(1) A large membership.

(2) Material wealth.

(3) Prominent people in its membership.

(4) Sound in doctrine.

## **III. SARDIS WAS A DEAD CHURCH IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD – verse 1**

### **1. There are several causes of spiritual death.**

(1) A church is dead when it worships its own past – when it lives on its memories instead of finding a challenge in its hopes for the future.

**(2) A church is dead when it is more concerned with material than with spiritual things.**

**(3) A church is dead when love for one another is gone.**

**(4) Works not perfect (v. 2) “They never finished a single thing they started.”**

**A. We must be watchful when we are at our strongest point.**

**B. This is where the city of Sardis failed twice. I Cor. 10:12**

#### **IV. ADMONITION TO SARDIS**

##### **1. “*Be watchful*”...3:2**

**(1) We have seen the history of Sardis; how it was captured twice because it failed to watch.**

**(2) There are two points at which every man must watch.**

**A. We must be watchful at our weak points.**

**a. Illustration: The stone breaker hunts the weak point in a stone, then the stone breaks to pieces.**

**B. We must be watchful at our strongest point. I Cor. 10:12**

**a. This is where the city of Sardis failed twice.**

##### **2. “*Strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die*”...3:2**

**(1) Some were very weak and sickly, ready to die. I Cor. 11:30**

**(2) Strong members have a responsibility to the weak members. Gal. 6:1**

##### **3. “*Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard*”... 3:3**

**(1) Remember your past state and get back to it. Rev. 2:5**

##### **4. “*Hold fast*”... 3:3**

**(1) A condition of success in every field.**

**(2) Paul told Timothy to “*hold fast the form of sound words*”...II Tim. 1:13**

##### **5. “*Repent*” Luke 13:3**

## V. A CHURCH WITH A REMNANT

1. *A few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments”... 3:4*

(1) Few – true in too many places.

(2) The faithful FEW keep the church going.

(3) Only the few had been able to keep themselves unspotted. James 1:27

2. *“They shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy”... 3:4*

## VI. A CHURCH WITH A POSSIBILITY

1. Rev. 3: 5 – 6

2. Thought dead, Sardis was not hopelessly dead.

3. It was possible for the members to wrench themselves from the death grip.

4. The one who overcame was promised:

(1) To *“be clothed in white raiment”...verse 5*

(2) *“I will not blot out his name out of the book of life”... verse 5*

(3) *“I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels”... v. 5;*  
Matt. 10: 32 – 33

## VII. THE WARNING GIVEN TO THE CHURCH

1. Rev. 3:3 *“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”...*

2. Sudden judgment to come on them if they did not “hold fast” and “Repent”.  
Rev. 3:3