

## Lesson 8

### Church at Sardis

#### **Sardis Background**

Sardis was an ancient city at the location of modern *Sart* . Sardis was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, one of the important cities of the Persian Empire, the seat of a proconsul under the Roman Empire, and the metropolis of the province Lydia in later Roman times. As one of the Seven churches of Asia, it was addressed by John, the author of the Book of Revelation in the Bible, in terms which seem to imply that its population was notoriously soft and fainthearted. Its importance was due first to its military strength, secondly to its situation on an important highway leading from the interior to the Aegean coast, and thirdly to its commanding the wide and fertile plain of the Hermus.

Although the city was deeply committed to its prestigious form of pagan belief, it welcomed its large, monotheistic Jewish community. Local Jews later secured some of the most valued land in the city to build one of the largest synagogues in antiquity, roughly the length of a football field. Apparently Christians too were tolerated here.

Sardis Synagogue Ruins



Greek Temple of Artemis Ruins



#### **STUDY OF SARDIS Rev 3:1-6**

3 “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.

**Question 1: What is the significance of the number 7 in the scriptures?**

“I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

*The church is being judged by the Greeks, the Jews, and probably the witness of other Christians.*

**Question 2: How can a church have a reputation of being alive and still be dead?**

<sup>2</sup> 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.

*There were some works that were started with the proper attitude and motivation.*

Question 3: What might cause the slow death of good works that are being performed? (i.e. What symptoms should a church be observing to assure completion?)

<sup>3</sup> Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent.

Question 4: What had the church heard and received?

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.

Question 5: What are the consequences for Christians who refuse to exam their works?

<sup>4</sup> 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.

Question 6: Explain the phrase “have not soiled their garments”.

Question 7: What is the significance of walking with the Lord?

Question 8: What does the color “white” represent?

<sup>5</sup> 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.

*People like to hear their name said out loud. Your name will be known not only to the Father but to the myriad of angels in heaven. “Celebrity status”.*

Question 9: How does that make you feel?

<sup>6</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

*The church is told to wake up and see what is going on.*

Question10: How can we as Valley View Church evaluate the progress of our works?