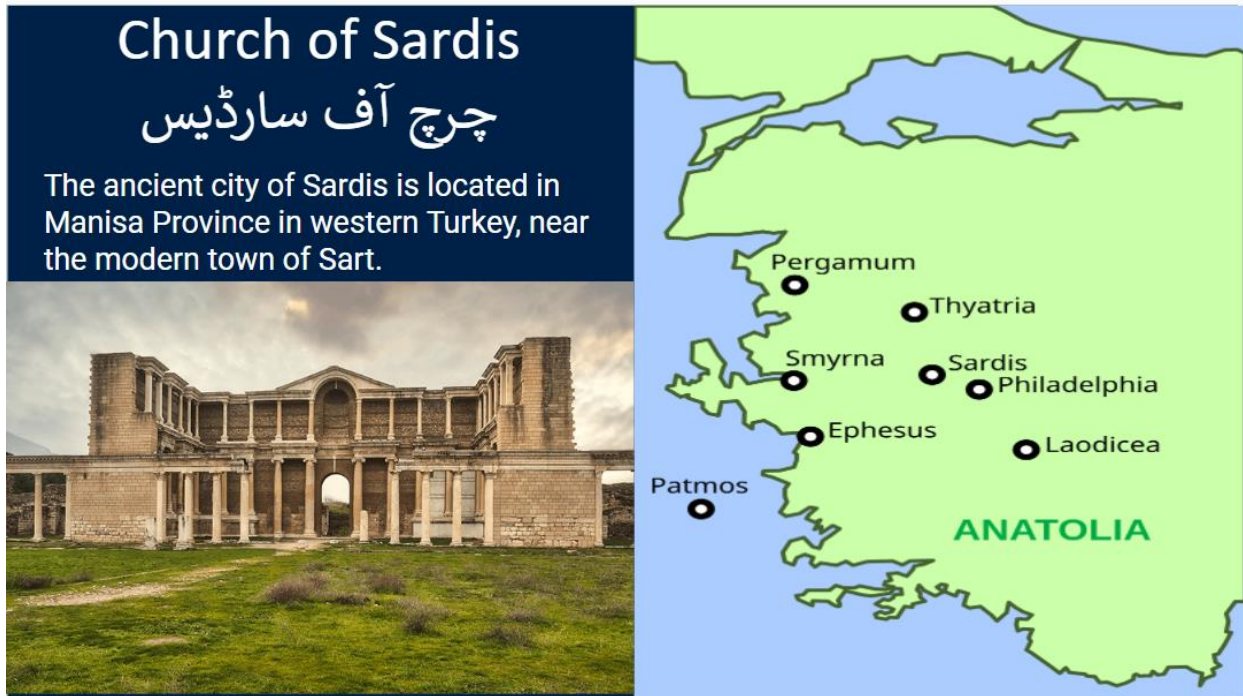


Church of Sardis

Revelation.3:1 "To the angel of the church".

Angel of church vs angel of God?

Rev.1:20 "As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches."



Jesus holds these overseers of the churches in His right hand and gives special protection. Let us give high regard to these Angels of church! These are the Angels who are real people who stand between Christ and church, and the overseers are accountable to everything that is going on within the church. The overseers bring down the message of God to you and they take your burdens to The Lord through prayers! Yes you can communicate straight to Jesus through your own prayers. But the message for the church comes through these overseers. There must be elders above deacons, and there must be an overseeing Angel or Messenger must be above the Elders. No one is above this overseer other than Jesus Christ! Every church is independent and is accountable to Christ!

I. **Rev. 3:1** "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

By the way, the seven Spirits interpretation is a mystery! Many conclude that 7 the wholesome number represents the Holy Spirit!

Now let us come to this shocking statement!

1. "You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead!"

Our Lord Jesus was very blunt! How would you feel if all your friends and family members say that you are such a fine Christian because you feed the poor, you go to church and participate very actively, and put out many fine community programs to draw the crowd in to the church, but Jesus yet tells you straight on your face, you are dead as a doornail! How can that be? Jesus could tell Acts 2:42 Church also the very same thing! We could be very vibrant in producing great programs like VBS, we can lead worship like in heaven, we can preach up the storm, and make everyone happy with a flawless administration, and yet we could very well be dead according to Jesus' measurement! Why?

Because we tend to do everything for our own personal glory, and ambition and ego rather than for the glory of The Lord! This Sardis church might have done everything to impress people! Their great singing and preaching may be to impress people rather than God! Or The overseer might have done it all to fill his pocket and to gain name for himself.

Sardis did not have Nicolaitans, Jezebel's, nor Balaams, but yet it died! How? They were so worldly, and the world was so comfortably living within them! (as we see in many of our modern churches, bowling alleys, shopping malls, Starbucks, McDonalds!!). Also in the absence of enemies or persecution, the church tends to decline!

What we think as a live congregation may be dead before The Lord! What we think of as dead may be really alive! Let us not judge a church by its cover! We'll be in for a rude surprise!

2. Wake up and get to work!

Rev.3:2,3 "Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

Wake up! We are sleep walking in the world! When we set our eyes in the world, our spiritual body dies! But if we set our spiritual eyes on The Lord, everything will be alive in The Lord! Wake up!

Sardis people were so much into the world, and they are ready to die spiritually! Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. Sardis separated itself. It is high time that it comes back again to The Lord! The branch is hanging down, withering, and ready to come down!

"Remember what you have received, and keep it, and repent!"

What has this church received from The Lord! The very gift of Jesus Christ who died and rose again for our justification! The Church received the gift of the Holy Spirit! But it had been systematically quenching it!

"Stir the gift that is within you!" Says Paul to Timothy!

This is the path we are heading into! We are cutting off the Spirit, cutting off the fellowship of the saints and trying to be very smart in the world! We may be well spoken of in the world, but we are almost dead in The Lord!

Wake Up! Remember your first love, Keep it, and Repent! Warn those people who are staying away from the churches that they are drying out! Ask them, who are they trying to impress? The Lord or the worldly people?

We dry up when we walk away from The Lord and His church, the bride!
We dry up when we quench the Spirit by soaking ourselves in the worldly desires and passions!

We dry up when we seek to exalt ourselves rather than Jesus Christ, our Lord!

3. Repent, or else.....

This word repent is told to 5 churches out of 7! This is the message we must be preaching to all the churches: Repent! We are all moving toward the world just like sheep that go astray!

The Lord will come like a thief, in other words when we least expect!
The broken branch may come down with a thud because of wind, or The Lord Himself will break that branch and prune the church!

4. But this church was not totally dead yet.

Rev. 3:4,5 "But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

There are some still abiding in the Spirit! There will always be few people who will keep God first in their lives.

1) Such people will receive the purity of white bride's dress!

2) Their names will not be erased out of the book of life.

Some people interpret this as a symbol of physical life and death. But this one will not fly in the face of Rev.20:15!

Rev. 20:15 "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Here it clearly tells us that the Book of life goes beyond physical Life and death.

If Jesus says "I will not erase his name from the book of life", the rest of the people whose names were written could very well be scratched out if they do not repent!

Luke 10:20 "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

Judas was one of them too! But there is a good possibility that his name is scratched off!

Acts 1:25 "Judas turned aside to go to his own place....." His own place may not be the place for those who are in book of life!

Jesus is the one that can write our names, and He could remove it too! The bottom line is, God is the ultimate Sovereign God who makes these decisions! He is the potter and we are His clay. He has every right to throw away those pots that cannot be molded well according to His plan and purpose!

There is one work we must all do!

Believe in The Lord Jesus Christ and remain in Him! Or else we will start withering and dying slowly!

History tells us that the Church of Sardis had a happy ending! Melito, Bishop of Sardis, was a very powerful man in the second century! I am sure, he and his predecessors would have woken up the church from its slumber! Let us not go into that sleeping mode!

Conclusion

How can we become alive and healthy?

Crucify your worldly fleshly desires and offer yourself as a living sacrifice!

Don't pursue anything for your personal glory, but instead do everything for God's glory!

Remain in the Spirit always!

If we live to ourselves, we will die spiritually! But if we die to ourselves we will live spiritually!

Let us be alive in Christ and die to ourselves!

Very basic lesson we learn when we start our journey with our baptism of commitment, but we forget too easily! Beware!

Daniel Israel

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