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THE SEVEN CHURCHES – LESSON 6

SARDIS

Sardis, the fifth church of the seven, lay inland of the Roman province of Asia (Southeastern Turkey today) near the junction of the roads to Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum. In the 6th century B.C. under King Croesus, it was known as the Kingdom of Lydia and was one of the wealthiest cities known. It was the first to mint gold and silver coinage and was famous for its arts and crafts. Its ruler, Croesus, became a legend by name for riches.

Sardis was ruined both physically and financially in 17 A.D. by a great earthquake from which it never recovered.

Jesus speaks to Sardis in Revelation 3:1-6 where he condemns the church as a group. He said in verse 1 that they are alive physically but dead spiritually. Their works were not good. He tells them to remember and hold on to that which they had originally received and had been taught. They must repent of their backslidden condition or else they would be suddenly destroyed.

However, Jesus said there were a few out of the many that remained that were pure. These few (verse 4) ***“shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy”*** and in verse 5, ***“shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out (their) name out of the book of life...”***

White raiment indicates the purity of the glorified body. We also see “white raiment” in Revelation for all heaven’s citizens (3:18), where the 24 elders surround the throne (4:4), the martyrs (6:1), the redeemed multitudes (7:9), and robes made white by the blood of the lamb (7:14). Jesus will also come on a white horse (19:11) with his heavenly armies riding on white horses (19:14) and clothed in white.

Jesus said that the few in verse 4 that are pure will not have their names blotted out of the book of life (v. 5). This gives an indication that the “dead ones” (non-believers or perhaps backslidden believers) will be blotted out of the book of life. Those not found in the book of life will be eternally condemned.

There are many in today’s churches who profess to be Christians but are spiritually dead. They have never been born again. If they wish to wear the robe of white hereafter, they must repent from dead faith (which is not faith) and dead works (living) and receive the gospel of the kingdom of heaven and its Christ.

Do not be like the typical “Christian” found in Sardis. Be like the overcoming ones who had not defiled their garments and were found worthy through the blood and righteousness of Christ