

# ENDGAME

## A Study On Revelation (Week #19)

Pastor Jason Goss

**Revelation 3:1** "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: (NASB)

**Revelation 3:1** "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, (NKJ)

**Revelation 3:1** "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis. (NLT)

### Scriptural Background

- Possibly mentioned in Obadiah? Obadiah 1:20 "Sepharad"
- Revelation 1:11; 3:1, 3:4

### Letter To Sardis

- "Sardis": Greek plural of uncertain derivation; lost through antiquity?
- Different languages didn't have the same names for semi-precious stones
- Sardius = "\_\_\_\_\_ stone"?
  - Hebrew: odem; the red stone (with a yellow shade)
  - Exodus 28:17; 39:10; Ezekiel 28:13
  - Used by the ancients for seals, as being tough yet easily worked
  - Beautiful, and susceptible of high polish
  - The best stone for engraving
  - Josephus (the best authority, being a priest, therefore having often seen the high priest's breastplate) calls it the sardonyx, the 1st stone, 1st row in the highpriest's breastplate
  - Both sardine and sardonyx are varieties of agate
- He on the heavenly throne "was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine" (Revelation 4:3)
  - The jasper (or else diamond) represents the divine brightness or holiness
  - The red sardine (our cornelian) His fiery wrath
  - The same union as in Ezekiel 1:4; 8:2; Daniel 7:9
  - Named from Sardis in Lydia, where it was first found
  - The Hebrews got their high priest's sardines in Arabia, and from Egypt (Exodus 12:35)
- Sardion (Greek: sardion): in Revelation 4:3; 21:20
  - 6th foundation of the New Jerusalem
  - Vulgate (Jerome's Latin Bible, 390-405 A.D.) translates sardius
  - KJV translates "sardine" (stone) (Revelation 4:3)
  - KJV translates "sardius" (Revelation 21:20)
  - Revised Version (British and American) translates "sardius."

- The sarda of Pliny's time was much used by the seal engravers
  - There were three Indian varieties
  - All of them transparent, one of them red in color
  - There was then no precious stone in more common use
  - Those of honey-color were less valued
  - It probably included both the sard and the carnelian of the present day (cryptocrystalline silica)
- Was a precious stone, that became very common
- Has a name, no \_\_\_\_\_
  - Alludes to the letter, you have a name, but it's empty

## **SARDIS: LOCAL APPLICATION**

### **Background / History**

- One of the \_\_\_\_\_ cities on earth <2000 B.C.
  - Mentioned by Aeschylus, Thucydides, and other Greek writers
  - Mentioned it as a city of distinction
  - Residence of the royal dynasty of the Mermnades
- 9th & 8th centuries B.C. (Between 900 B.C.-800 B.C.)
  - Phrygians the dominant Anatolian power (modern day Turkey)
  - Their king, \_\_\_\_\_, credited to turn anything he touched into gold
  - During this time Greeks founded Miletus, Ephesus
  - Other cities in Ionia, along the Aegean coast
- 8th century B.C. (Between 800 B.C.-700 B.C.)
  - About 700 B.C. Phrygian kingdom is overrun and destroyed
  - Cimmerians, nomadic people settled long northern shore of Black Sea
  - They were driven from their homes by the Scythians in 8th Century B.C.
  - Overran Asia Minor, plundered Sardis, destroyed Magnesia
  - Scythians (Biblical "Magog") dominated from Ukraine to China
- 7th century B.C. (Between 700 B.C.-600 B.C.)
  - Lydians appear near the Aegean coast
  - Founded kingdom, capital is Sardis
- Sardis is of special interest to the student of Herodotus and Xenophon
  - Herodotus (Father of all history)
  - Artaphemes, the brother of Darius (Persian Empire) lived here
  - From here Xerxes invaded Greece (Esther)
  - Cyrus marched against his brother Artaxerxes
- Oldest / Most important cities in Asia Minor
  - Until 549 B.C. the capital of kingdom of Lydia

### MAP - LOCATION

- Strategic location between the other cities letters were written
  - Favorable commerce; became very wealthy city
  - Gold found in the river Pactolus
  - Gold and silver "Lydian Staters" are considered \_\_\_\_\_ coins in world (about the 6th century B.C.)
  - At its peak, Croesus, its king, (and also its river, Pactolus) became proverbial for riches.
  - Patron deity was the goddess Cybele, (known as Diana in Ephesus)
  - Son, Midas, was the wealthy but effeminate king of Phrygia.

### **Midas Mythology**

- In Greek mythology, Midas was king of Phrygia in Asia Minor (Real or Fable?)
- For his hospitality to the satyr, Silenus, Dionysus, god of wine, offered to grant Midas anything he wished
  - The king requested that everything he touched be turned to gold
  - He soon regretted his choice because even his food and water were changed to gold
- To free himself from the enchantment, Midas was instructed by Dionysus to bathe in the Pactolus River
  - It was said that afterward the sands of the river contained gold

### **Geography**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Impregnable
- Sardis was situated on a hill 1000 feet above the broad valley of the Hermus
  - Mt. Tmolus, It appeared to be impregnable
  - Base flowed river Pactolus, served as a moat
- However, the sheer precipitous cliff was clay
  - which suffered continual erosion
  - The untrustworthy mud left occasional cracks which could be exploited
- This false confidence was reflected in the character of the inhabitants
  - false confidence, appearance without reality, promise without performance
  - outward appearance of strength betrayed by want of watchfulness and diligence

### **Later History**

- Besieged by the Persians in 549 B.C.
  - Croesus, then king of Lydia, left unguarded the precipitous cliffs on three sides of the city
  - After a 14-day siege, Cyrus offered a reward to any man who could find a way of scaling the apparently unscalable cliffs

- One of his soldiers, Hyeroeades, noticed a Lydian soldier accidentally drop his helmet over the battlements and noted his path to retrieve it, thus revealing an unguarded oversight
- In darkness the following night, Hyeroeades and a Persian party climbed the cliff and clambered over the unguarded battlements to take the city
- The city was taken, as the historians say, "Like a \_\_\_\_\_ in the night." This becomes a proverb of Sardis
- But the Sardians did not learn their lesson
- 214 B.C. the formidable cliffs again proved susceptible
  - Hazardous climb when Lagoras repeated the exploit of Hyeroeades and the city was similarly taken by Antiochus for the Seleucid Empire
  - Hegel said "History teaches that man learns nothing from history." The Sardians were not watchful
  - George Santayana, "Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

### **Sardis \_\_\_\_\_**

- Think you are secure, but you are not
- Herodotus wrote about the Scythians, their society was on horseback
  - You couldn't attack them, they would just retreat
  - As they retreated you overextended in pursuit and they would destroy you
- Greeks wanted to learn about their tactics
- If Napoleon read Herodotus, he would have learned this tactic (1812)
  - Russian general Count Rostopchin adopts Scythian tactic
  - Retreats, burns Moscow, leaves it behind
- Napoleon pursues Russian army
  - pushes to hard, to fast, Russian winter, low supplies, skirmishes
  - Starts with about three-quarters of a million troops, leaves with 10,000
- Hitler makes the same mistake
- Sardis beware, Like a thief in the night

### **Sardis' Dismal History**

- 549 B.C. Fell to the Persians
- 501 B.C. Burned by the Ionians
- 334 B.C. Surrendered to Alexander the Great
- 322 B.C. Taken by Antigonus
- 214 B.C. Fell to the Seleucids

## A City Of \_\_\_\_\_

- The name Sardis became synonymous with:
  - Pretensions unjustified
  - Promise without performance
  - Appearance without reality
  - False confidence that heralded ruin
  - They betrayed themselves by lack of watchfulness and diligence

*W. M. Ramsay, Letters to Seven Churches*
- By the New Testament time
  - Most of Sardis' earlier dignity and splendor had disappeared
  - A severe earthquake in 17 A.D. caused major damage
- The town was destroyed by the Turkic conqueror Tamerlane in 1402 A.D.
- Archaeological excavations were begun at the site in 1910 A.D.
- The city itself was not uncovered until 1958 A.D.
- Today the little town of Sart has only fragments of its proud history

## Architecture

- The Temple of Artemis at Sardis, the fourth largest Ionic temple in the world
  - Gigantic structure was still unfinished by the end of the fourth century AD
  - Abandoned with the coming of Christianity
  - A small church was erected at the southeast corner
- All of its structures are destroyed

## MAP - BUILDINGS

**Revelation 3:1** ...He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this:  
(NASB)

**Revelation 3:1** ...'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: (NKJ)

**Revelation 3:1** This is the message from the one who has the sevenfold Spirit of God and the seven stars: (NLT)

## Title of Christ

- "Seven Spirits of God"
  - The Old Testament \_\_\_\_\_ for the Holy Spirit
- Why does Jesus use this title with this particular church?
  - Most denominations today are very uncomfortable with the Holy Spirit—it's one major cause of division within the church

**Revelation 3:1** ...'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. **2** 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. **3** 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. (NASB)

**Revelation 3:1** ..."I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. **2** Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. **3** Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. (NKJ)

**Revelation 3:1** ..."I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead. **2** Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God. **3** Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again. If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief. (NLT)

### Concern

- I know thy works
  - Jesus knows what is happening
- You have a name that you are alive, but you are \_\_\_\_\_
  - They are not ill, not weak, not struggling
  - They are dead
- Greek: ονομα (onoma) = name, label ("you have a label")
  - being covered by a name
  - This word appears three times in six verses in this letter

### Commendation

- Note: What's missing?
- There is no "Commendation" in this letter!?