

# The Church of Sardis

As a result of this lesson, I want my students:

To Know-Although the church in Sardis had a great past reputation, both historically and spiritually, Jesus rebuked them for their dead condition and told them to wake up and start obeying what they had received and heard, because if they didn't, they would suffer complete loss.

BT-Although one may have a great past reputation, if they are truly dead on the inside, they must repent and start immediately obeying what they have heard, because not doing so could result in complete loss.

To Realize- Although my students may have a great spiritual reputation, if they are truly dead on the inside they must repent and start immediately obeying what they have heard, because not doing so could result in complete loss.

To Respond-by taking honest appraisal of their spiritual condition and start obeying what they have learned.

Approach:

Think of three people in the church who are fairly well-known. Think of two people in our class. Put your name on the bottom of the list. List words that would describe their reputation. How does a person get a reputation?

Now I want to put down Sardis at the very bottom. Sardis had a reputation. I want to tell you the brief history of Sardis and you describe the reputation.

## I. Sardis Has a Great Reputation

### A. Historically

- geography
1. Warrior city because of
  2. Conquered by Cyrus
  3. Great Warrior City again
  4. Conquered by Antiochus
  5. No great importance for Rome

Draw sketch of approach to Sardis.

Capital of the ancient city of Lydia. Greatest of the foreign powers encountered by the Greeks. The original city was almost an impregnable fortress citadel, nearly surrounded by precipitous cliffs of treacherously loose rocks.

In 546, Cyrus besieged the city and took it.

Why would Cyrus value a city like Sardis?

For over 300 years Sardis served its position as a key and pivotal city.

In 214 BC, Antiochus the Great captured it.

Guess how he captured it? Same way Cyrus had. How was he able to do it? They weren't guarding or watching the back. They thought they were safe.

What is Sardis' historical reputation?

Rome came to power and gained control of Sardis. But Rome didn't need the city of Sardis to be used in that way. You might call Sardis a base closing over time. In AD 26, Rome was going to build an imperial temple. Two main cities applied for the industry to take place in their city: Smyrna and Sardis. You know who won the bid. What had happened to Sardis?

### B. Spiritually

1. Started off great: received/heard
2. Had a good reputation

Then Paul goes through this whole area about 30 years later. The people of Sardis heard and started following Jesus.

A church was born. Sardis had a good reputation as a church. How do you get a reputation?

II. Jesus Rebukes Sardis

A. True condition=dead

Jesus sends them a letter.

Read letter to Sardis.

What was Sardis' Present condition?

B. Still some hope

What do you do with someone who's dead?

What do you do with someone who's MOSTLY dead?

III. Jesus Tells Sardis to Obey Immediately

A. Wake up!

This was Sardis:

Show picture of mask.

Show picture of man having CPR.

Show plant that's almost dead.

B. Strengthen what is about to die

C. Remember what you received and heard

How do you think the believers got this way?

How would you help them out of it?

D. OBEY it!

James 1:22

IV. Jesus Tells Sardis He will come like a thief

A. Not interested in past

What was Jesus referring to in their history.

B. Not interested in how they manage to keep up image

C. Knows right now where they are and what condition is

Conclusion:

Sardis was in a dangerous position and not one bit of past reputation was going to help them.

Look at what you wrote down for your reputation on your paper. Evaluate. Not what reputation you have, but what does Jesus know you to be?

Respond in heart.