

Sardis

City of the Dead Church



- Modern city of Saliki in Turkey.
- Location:
 - Chief city of Lydia.
 - Located near the junction of roads leading to central Asia Minor, Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos.
 - Some 50 miles inland from the Aegean Sea.
 - Built on the banks of the Pectolos river in the Hermus river basis, the most fertile plain in Asia.
- Description:
 - The name Sardis (“Sardeis” in Greek) is plural as there were actually two cities:
 - One on the plateau.
 - One in the valley.
 - Built on a hill surrounded on three side by precipitous almost inaccessible cliffs.
 - The summit on which the original walled city was built was some 1,500 feet high.
 - Ramsay wrote that the city was “more like a robber’s stronghold than an abode of civilized men.
 - About two miles from the city were hot springs believed to have healing powers. The hot springs are still in use today.
- Brief history:
 - Founded about 1200 B.C.
 - Sardis became the capital of Lydia under Croesus in 560 B.C.
 - Became the headquarters of Xerxes in his campaign against Greece.
 - According to Herodotus, the Persian conqueror Cyrus captured the city in 546 B.C.

- It was at Sardis that Cyrus assembled an army of revolt against his brother, Artaxerxes, in 410 B.C.
- A band of Cyrus' soldiers climbed a cliff they had seen a Lydian soldier scale to retrieve a helmet and took the city by night.
- The Greek king Antiochus repeated the feat two hundred years later, once again scaling the cliffs and taking the city by night.
- Sardis was willed to Rome by Attalus II in 133 B.C.
- In 17 A.D., during the reign of Tiberias (12-37 A.D.), the city was destroyed by an earthquake.
 - The quake damaged 12 important cities of Asia Minor.
 - Sardis suffered the most damage.
 - Though the city was rebuilt by Tiberias, it never regained its former glory.
- Became the center of Roman judicial authority.
- Political status in New Testament times:
 - Sardis remained under Roman rule through the time that the Revelation letter was written.
- Commerce:
 - It is believed that Sardis was the first city in history to mint coins of gold and silver. In 1968 excavators found nearly 300 crucibles for refining gold and silver.
 - Sardis is credited with being the birthplace of the art of wool dying. According to the writings of Josephus, Sardis had a strong and privileged Jewish population.
 - Free to live according to their law.
 - Free to meet for worship on their holy days and worship as they chose.
 - Free to send money to Jerusalem.
 - Held jobs as goldsmiths, shopkeepers, etc.
 - Nine Jews were listed as members of the city's council.
 - In modern times the city is famous for its tobacco, grapes, and cotton.
- Architecture:
 - Theater that seated some 20,000 people.
 - Stadium
 - Gymnasium
 - Temple of Artemis (never completed).
 - Built by Croesus.
 - Fourth largest Ionic-style temple.
 - 300ft. x 160ft.
 - Two of its 78 columns (each column stood 58 feet high) still stand.
 - The largest synagogue ever found has been found at Sardis.

- The building was renovated and expanded in the fourth century A.D.
- The main hall was extended to 197 ft. x 59 ft.
- The porch extended 131 feet.

■ Religion:

- The main deities at Sardis were Cybele and Artemis.
- Zeus was also worshipped in Sardis.

■ The Church at Sardis:

- Mentioned only in:
 - **Revelation 1:11**
 - **Revelation 3:1-6**

■ **The Letter to the Church at Sardis — Revelation 3:1-6**

1 “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, ‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "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.

4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

6 ‘ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

