

## THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

Message 15

Words: 6234

Scripture: Revelation 3:1-6

INTRO: Our study this morning is the city of Sardis. Sardis, city of degradation, so some writers describe this city. There is no word of persecution. My wife and I listened to a converted Muslim, and he said this: The reason you persecute someone is because you are afraid of the truth that they carry. May I ask you, do you unload enough truth to be persecuted? But there was no reason to persecute the Christians of Sardis. As Guy Dowd would say, they were undercover agents. Undercover agents need to remain hidden. That was said facetiously.

Have you wondered why people react so strongly to teaching against divorce and remarriage? But what gets the strongest reaction is when you practice what the Bible says about separating oneself from Christians who live in such sins. When one takes such stands, it is most important that it is done in humility for the sake of the Lord. Though one will be accused of a *holier than thou* attitude, that should never be the truth.

I was thinking through Jesus' first extended discourse in Matthew 5-7 the other day. In 5:13-14 Jesus said: 13 *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.* 14 *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.*

Who is the salt of the earth? Well, I think the salt is described in verses 1-12 in this same chapter. As I see it, the salt of the earth is those who were lost and who became poor in spirit. They were humbled by the Gospel to realize their awful, sinful condition and who then came under conviction of sin, and mourned over their lost condition. And this brought about meekness. Pride was routed and meekness set in as they realized that they were nothing without God and how sinful their hearts were. And when they became meek they began to hunger and thirst for righteousness and they were filled and became merciful and pure in heart.

And when they came to this point in their lives, they began to be persecuted for righteousness' sake. These are the ones who are the salt of the earth. Sardis was not salt. If their salt

had been applied to the open sores of the lost in Sardis, they would have entered the blessed state of persecution. But they weren't salty enough to sting anybody.

It was not that Sardis did not have that which would not sting if salt was applied to it. The people of the world there worshipped all kinds of false gods. Apply salt, or a biblical life-style to that, and it will sting. But, it seems the Christians of Sardis did not arouse opposition. That happens when you keep your mouth shut. They should have at least been persecuted by their own people, who were dead Christians. There is no word of advance with the Gospel in any way in Sardis. Just death and degradation until there were only a few left.

That was our look at the counselee, the people of Sardis. We looked at the Counselor who was described as the One who has the seven Spirits of God, and who holds the seven stars. And since there was no commendation, we then moved to the criticism. The Lord said, "I know that you have a name and that you live but you are dead." What a sad story. Then came the fivefold counsel: Wake up! Strengthen the things that remain. Remember how you received and heard and hold fast and repent!

#### 5) The comfort (3:4-5)

We come now then to the comfort, such as it is. We begin in verse 4. It says, "You have a few names even in Sardis, who have not defiled their garments". Consider first, "You have a few names..." What does that mean? Simply this, in your entire congregation there are only a few who are truly Christians. And what does that tell us? It tells us there were a good number more in that church who claimed to be Christians but they were not. And what further does this teach us? It is possible to have a church with a lot of people and only a few of them are truly Christians.

And it appears, as we will yet see, that at one time they too, not only claimed to be, but were Christians. Now they were left with a few names. That is a description that would fit many North American churches. There are a few names left in some churches, that is a few names among many professing Christians.

Now this city is the city of Sardis. It is a little difficult to determine the meaning of this name. Sardis is a plural word because part of the city was up on the high hill, and part of it down in the valley below. LaHaye says the name Sardis means, 'Escaping ones' or 'those who come out'. J.B. Smith suggests that this name comes from the Hebrew *sarid*, meaning 'the rest' or 'a remnant'. This would fit well with the fact that in this whole church there are only a few true believers, or a remnant. There was a remnant of believers left even at this time.

Let me just put in a note of caution on 'remnant' thinking. Turn to Romans 9. What do we mean by remnant? I think Paul Washer is correct when he says there is no remnant in the true Church. In Israel there was a remnant. One might be Jewish by blood or by birth, but not be a true Jew by the new birth. In Israel, they were all Jews, but they were not all true believers. Paul speaks here of Israel. He says in verses 6-8:

*6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:*

*7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.*

*8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

So one might be Jewish but not be saved by faith. That means they were of Israel, but they were not the true Israel. The true Israel were those who were saved by grace through faith.

But in the true Church, there are only true believers. There are no half believers or half saved people. There is no remnant in the true Church. However, in the professing church, there

is a remnant. Many profess to be believers but they are not be true believers. So it is that in many churches there are a lot of people who claim to be believers, but they are not. It is these people who are twice as lost as those who do not profess to be believers.

Now one might feel one is a part of the remnant of professing believers because of one's stance on some particular doctrine, like the premillennial, pre-tribulational view of end times. But I have no question that there are those who do not hold to that position but they are truly born again. So one must be careful that one does not feel himself to be part of the true remnant because of some particular doctrine if that doctrine is not essential to salvation.

In Sardis there was a remnant among professing believers. So in light of what I have said, let me mention Jan Markell of Olive Tree Ministries. She wrote in a January 9, 2018 article the following:

*You have heard of the word "remnant." Some people are called "remnant believers." There are "remnant churches." Perhaps you know of some or attend one. I often say that I do "radio for the remnant."*

*I began to pay more attention to the term when I got some e-mails. Here is a sample from Benjamin:*

*"Jan, I feel the remnant is getting smaller every day as the time approaches for the Lord's return. The world seems to be getting darker and more evil. I know I am not alone as a member of the Body of Christ but at times it is easy to feel isolated."*

*Then Patrice wrote: "I just read your print newsletter and want to thank you for your article on the remnant church. You hit the nail on the head and everything you write about that church I*

am experiencing. I feel so alone and no one wants to discuss events of the day and certainly not Bible prophecy. If I mention these things they shudder.

"My husband and I are visiting churches and have not found one that addresses these issues. Some in these churches have gotten angry and asked that I not come back. I feel like crying when I leave. I try to sit there but wonder why they never talk about what is going on, what's happening in Israel, or the intensifying birth pangs."

Then Carolyn wrote: "My church has no excitement about prophetic fulfillment applicable for today. When I bring up what I learn on your broadcast, I am put down. I am so lonely for like-minded believers."

Based on a lot of interactions including people at my annual conference, I have concluded this about "the remnant."

- It is made up of people longing for a solid church and a pulpit that will address issues of the day as well as the nearness of the Lord's return. The remnant wants a church that will not fear offending with the truth and that will confront apostasy.
- Remnant believers have offended friends and family simply by telling them the truth of our times or for sharing information that is relevant to our times. This will often bring on mocking and scoffing. At the least, it results in irritated indifference. This doesn't daunt a remnant believer and such a tragic response doesn't keep them quiet!
- Enthusiastic remnant believers will travel across town or across the country to attend events that present information about which the church is silent.

- *Remnant believers often feel isolated and misunderstood even though they have the truth and the naysayers are clueless!*
- *Members of the remnant church see our times darkening but remain enthusiastic that this is but a herald of His coming -- not signs of doom and gloom.*
- *When a remnant believer finds someone who is a kindred spirit it is like discovering a gold mine!*
- *Such believers often had a very solid church but in many cases in (it) went haywire. A little leaven came in and ruined the whole loaf. They then begin a long journey of searching for a new church which can take years.*
- *Very often these believers approached their church leadership to talk to them about these things but they are most often shut out. End quote.*

So let me say that when I speak of the remnant, I am speaking of the remnant of all those who profess to be Christians. So with a bit of warning about remnant feeling, nevertheless, in evangelicalism, among those who profess to be believers, there is a true remnant. But that remnant, in reality, is the true Church. Those who profess to be believers but are not, or have left the faith, these are not part of the true Church. When the catching up of the Church happens, they will be staying here.

And so with that we consider now the remnant of professing believers in Sardis. What was outstanding about them? We find it in verse 4. They had not soiled their garments. William Barclay says, "In the heathen world no worshipper was allowed to approach a temple of the gods with soiled and unclean clothes. A white robe was the necessity of approach to God" (153). So let me ask, what do white garments stand for? Well, it stands for cleanness of soul and spirit.

We have recently had a baptism. We spoke of the reason for the white garments that are sometimes used for baptism. So we ask, what do white garments speak of in our text? Well, they speak

of righteous character. James 1:27 says, *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.* Jude 22-23 says: 22 *And on some have compassion, making a distinction; 23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.* Let me ask, how hard is it to keep one's garments white when one has the internet? Or internet games? Or Netflix? Etc...

Now what would Sardis have known of garments and soiled garments? Well, most of this city, according to Walvoord, practiced pagan worship and they had to come before their deities dressed in clean clothes. Barclay says sometimes they were not allowed to enter if their clothing was not clean. The temple to Artemis still exists there, though it is now in ruins. Furthermore, much of their wealth came from their textile manufacturing and dye industry. So the language used here would be very meaningful to them. The Christians of Sardis would have known what this meant.

Now note this. Wim Malgo says it does not say some of their clothing was not as defiled as that of others. It says their clothing was undefiled! There were some who were undefiled. What is it like when a true believer is in a church where most of the professing believers have a defiled character? The undefiled feel out of place. Here is what such believers question: how can I be right if all of these are Christians? It is also a very hard task to maintain a godly witness in a church like that.

But we note in the comfort given to those who have not defiled their character on earth. It says they 'will' future tense, walk with Him in white garments. This is in the future in heaven. Now the word garments, is *himation*. The *himation* was the clothing that covers the body, but what is noted in particular is that it is white

clothing. *Himation* is not a specific description of the clothing, but the color given is specific. I expect the Lord wants to stress the purity of character of these believers.

Turn to Revelation 6:11. Here we find the specific description of a particular piece of clothing given to believers in heaven. The people described in this verse have just been martyred on earth during the tribulation time. And they have just arrived in heaven. So look at verse 11: *Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

Of this piece of clothing we are told specifically what kind it is. It is called a *stolee*. No doubt we get our word *stole* from this word. Funk and Wagnall's College dictionary says of a *stole*, it is, "A long narrow band, usually decorated silk or linen, worn about the shoulders by priests and bishops..." So this is not the *himation*. It is a special piece of clothing worn over the *himation* as decoration. The Online Bible says it is a loose outer garment for men extending to the feet, worn by kings, priests, and persons of rank. It is special clothing.

Today, I understand, it is usually used to describe a formal or evening shawl, made of an elegant fabric, often not as wide as a shawl, but long enough to drape around the body. It is the kind of clothing the scribes and priests wore in pride. It is the kind of clothing the angels wore in true humility. The true believer will not only wear a white garment, but a white stole overtop.

In Revelation 6 we are not only given what specific piece of clothing this is, we are given the specific color as well. It too is white. Now let me point out one other thing. There is a reason why the true Christian who enters heaven will wear white garments. Listen to verse 4



again: *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. Why will they walk in white in heaven? They have not defiled their garments. They are worthy!*

Listen to these verses regarding the word *worthy*:

*Ephesians 4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,*

*Colossians 1:10 that you may walk **worthy** of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

*1 Thessalonians 2:12 that you would walk **worthy** of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

Now listen to these words that Jesus spoke:

*Matthew 10:37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not **worthy** of Me.*

*Matthew 10:38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not **worthy** of Me.*

So what of all the rest of this church in Sardis who have defiled their garments? The implication is very clear. They will not be there, nor will they walk with Him in white. Why not? They are not worthy.

Turn to Matthew 22. The Lord Jesus used a parable that would be fitting here. It speaks of a special piece of clothing. Verse 1:

*1 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said:*

*2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,*

3 "and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.

4 "Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding."' "

5 "But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.

6 "And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.

7 "But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8 "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.

9 'Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.'

10 "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.

12 "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.

13 "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14 *"For many are called, but few are chosen."*

Here is what I said some years ago when I went through these parables:

*Now consider what kind of a wedding this is. It is a royal wedding. The invitation is extended by a king. Who would turn down a royal wedding invitation? This is unthinkable! What would a king think, whose invitation to his son's wedding was snubbed by his subjects? But that is precisely what happened. John the Baptist had now sent an invitation saying, "All things are now ready." All through the OT they had been told Messiah was coming. And now John said, "He is here. The banquet is ready."*

*And now I ask you, why would anyone turn down a royal wedding invitation? Well, as I see it, this invitation was to the Jewish people to come to Christ, the Messiah at first advent. And just why would the Jews not come to Him? Here is the long expected Messiah. They had waited and waited, and now He is here and all is ready for them to come to Him. Why in the world would they not come? This is unthinkable! Can you imagine something like this?*

*Well, we must learn something about this kind of wedding before we go on. Skip ahead for a moment and look at verse 11 in our text. It says: "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment." When this final invitation was given, as I understand it, it was accompanied by a wedding garment. I expect it was something put on over the other clothes and all who were at the wedding were dressed the same. That is appropriate for a royal wedding. Now, if they accepted the invitation, they would take the gown because it was their ticket into the banquet hall. No gown, no banquet.*

*Now I ask, in our parable, what does this wedding garment represent? I have no doubt it represents righteousness. It was also righteousness the*

*vineyard owner sought from the vinedressers. And what did those do who accepted John's invitation to come to the Messiah? Well, they repented and confessed their sins, and accepted Christ as their Messiah. John had invited them to this very special banquet. That is clear from the Gospels. And so, at this first invitation, why did the people not accept the invitation to this royal wedding? To receive the invitation meant to receive the garment of righteousness. And to accept this garment meant repentance and confession. And to be dressed in righteousness for this very special occasion was absolutely essential since the host is God Himself,*  
end quote.

Now anyone who enters glory must be clean before the Lord. And when this believer enters glory he gets to walk in white. So look at verse 5 in Revelation 3: *"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments... Who is it that walks in white? The one who overcomes! How is an overcomer identified? By their character! And how do you get to see their character? By their actions. So look at this verse a little further: "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life..."* Now what is the implication of one who is a true believer but he or she does not overcome? Well, their names will be blotted out of the book of life!

Now consider this. If we are right about divorce and remarriage, that it is a state of adultery, can such persons be called overcomers? But, according to this passage, if they would overcome that great temptation to remarry, their names would not be blotted out of the book of life.

I have had numerous very good friends who held to the doctrine known as once saved always saved. I have asked a number of them where this view came into being. I like a lot of David Clouds' material. But when I wrote him, and asked him where this doctrine began, and he did not really answer and when I asked in another way, I did not get a nice answer back. He kind of snubbed me. He

did not, and I think could not, give me any indication that this doctrine has ever been taught in church history until possibly the last 150 years. If that is so, it calls this doctrine into very serious question.

But further, how can one answer the implications of this verse and leave that doctrine intact? If I say, "Water turns into ice when you make it cold enough", the unmistakable implication is it won't turn to ice unless you make it cold enough. So when it says, "*He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life...*" the unmistakable implication is that if a Christian does not overcome his name will be taken out of the book of the life.

So how is this verse explained by those who hold to the view that one cannot be lost once one is saved? I think probably the most common explanation I have heard is that this book of life is the book of the living. So if you are a Christian and you insist on living in sin, then God will take your life. You go to heaven, but your life is snuffed out because of your sin.

Here is what John McArthur says. He is both a Calvinist and strong on the once saved always saved view. He writes by explaining this from history:

*First of all, rulers of cities had census; they had the name of all the citizens. They kept records of the citizens even as people do today. Your name could be erased, and it would be erased two ways basically. One: if you died, your name would be erased. Two: if you committed some crime against the state, you would lose your citizenship. Your name would be erased. But God will never erase the name of His own out of the Book of Life. Be an overcomer; put your trust in Christ. Believe in Christ Jesus as the Son of God and you will be eternally clothed in white garments; and even when you die, your name will never be erased from the Book of Life", end quote.*

Now would you say that is a good argument? He says, "God will never erase the name of His own out of the book of life." Then without giving any explanation he goes right on and says, "*Be an overcomer; put your trust in Christ. Believe in Christ Jesus as the Son of God and you will be eternally clothed in white garments; and even when you die, your name will never be erased from the Book of Life.*" Now that is 100% true. If you are an overcomer, if you put your trust in Christ and believe your name will never be erased. That is a wonderful comfort. But the question is, what if one is not an overcomer? He does not mention that problem at all. So what if you deny Christ, as many have done over the course of history?

John F. Walvoord mentions the difficulty of this verse in light of this doctrine. But his struggles to answer this verse end very weakly. The simple truth is if this verse does not teach that it is possible to have one's name taken out of the book of the life, there is no good answer as to what it does mean.

Let me add that the Bible never mentions the book of the living that I know of. It does mention the book of the life numerous times just in the book of Revelation alone. The book mentioned here is not only the book of life, it is **the** book of **the** life. There is only one life like that. Just like the crown we mentioned in an earlier message is **the** crown of **the** life. Seven times the book of life is mentioned in Revelation. Look at the last one in Revelation 22:19, *and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of (in the original, the) Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* The clear implication is that if one's name is written in the book of the life, and one tampers with the Word of God by adding to it or taking away from it, God will remove that name from this book and from the holy city which is described in earlier chapters.

But now, what of the one who overcomes and walks worthy of the Lord? What of the one who overcomes all sins, even divorce and remarriage? Listen to the rest of our verse, *I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels*. Here is the comfort. Here is the consolation. What a moment it will be for such Christians when the Lord professes their name before God and His angels. You see, if you are one of those, He will confess your name before God. What will it be like for those of whom the Lord will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord."

Well, that concludes our look at the historical meaning of this text. We now want to consider what kind of church Sardis typifies.

#### B. Typically

Probably the words that best describe what kind of church Sardis typifies is found in the words, "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead." We have learned that it is possible to have a church full of activity and even full of people and yet be dead. From shortly after the Church age began until now there have always been churches like this. I am sometimes told, "Well, there are true Christians in the Catholic church too, you know." And I say, "That could be, but if they are true Christians, they are not true Catholics." You cannot believe what the Catholic church believes and be a Christian as well. And still, there may be a few true believers there.

In the 1,500's, what we refer to as the 'Protestant' church, began. As I see it, Protestant churches, almost right from the beginning had churches that only had a few true believers in them. Today in North America we have thousands upon thousands of churches, and very many of those are adding a lot of members, but in many the number of true believers is going down.

The seeker friendly movement and now the emergent church is taking many churches by storm. Many who were once, in my opinion, strong believers, either have or are nigh unto rejecting the faith. They fill themselves with books like the Shack and their theology is very minimal. Many, many others divorce and remarry and live in adultery.

What is it like for true believers in a church like that? Many sit back, they don't dare say what they actually believe. They know if they stand for some of the things they once held, they will hardly have a church to attend. And so they succumb to going along with that which they once knew was wrong. It is a hard time for many older people. Other older people bend and change what they once believed, and now they can once more freely fellowship. It is a difficult day in the Church. Many churches have a name, they are alive but they are dead.

### C. Prophetically

What does this church picture prophetically? I have mentioned in a previous message that most see the time period represented by the church of Sardis as the time of the reformation. Willmington gives the time from 1517-1700. Here is what Tim LaHaye says, and I quote, "Sardis means 'escaping ones' or those who 'come out.'" This name together with our Lord's condemnation of this church, provided a perfect description of the Reformation churches. The Protestant Reformation developed as the result of the continued emphasis by the Church of Rome on pagan doctrines...rather than adherence to scriptural principles. The basic emphasis of the Reformation churches originally was Martin Luther's watchword, taken from Scripture, 'But the just shall live by faith' (Rom. 1:17). They had recoiled from trying to make salvation the result of works and sparked a resurgence of interest in studying the Scriptures" (72-73).

LaHaye then gives two major reasons why he sees the reformation church as representing the dead church. First, they became state churches. Lutheranism became the state church of Germany. My own great grandfather



was a Lutheran from Austria. LaHaye then says the danger was that this church included an entire population as Christians without the need for the new birth.

Secondly he says they did not sufficiently change many customs and teachings of the Church of Rome. Infant baptism, baptism by sprinkling, ritualism and some elements of the sacraments were kept (73).

What LaHaye does not give any credit to is that there was a group of Christians who grounded their faith on Scripture alone. These men studied under Ulrich Zwingli. The earliest were George Blaurock, Balthaser Hubmeier and Felix Manz. But as they studied they became discontent with the teaching of Zwingli. He would not go far enough with Scripture. In my words they said to Luther and Calvin and Zwingli, "Why do you only go half-way? Why, while you're in the business of reforming a very, very corrupt system, why don't you go all the way? This group of believers were persecuted by the Catholics, and by the Protestants.

These men began to band together and were referred to as the radicals. They were bound and determined to go all the way with Scripture. Later, a Catholic priest converted, and he became both the leader of this group and the one who wrote down the beliefs of these people. His name was Menno Simons. It is interesting that his name indicates that he was probably Jewish.

I have found tracing Baptist history a bit difficult. One of the timelines on the internet traces the Baptists to some of those earliest Mennonites. There are many similarities between Mennonites and Baptists, but Mennonites were much more Arminian in doctrine, whereas, it seems to me, that Baptists were heavily influenced by Calvinism, and this, it seems to me, later turned into the once saved always saved position. However there are still numerous Arminian Baptist churches.

But all of that to say this. It seems to me that the Church of Sardis takes us from 1054-1517. From this time period came the escaping ones, those who came

out, the remnant. From my little knowledge of church history, those who became known as the Mennonites were the forerunners of the true Church, and following right after them were the Baptists. The Baptists have had a tremendously positive Christian effect on the whole world. In my estimation, they have exceeded the Mennonites considerably. The Wikipedia says, "Historians trace the earliest church labeled 'Baptist' back to 1609 in Amsterdam, Dutch Republic with English Separatist John Smith as its pastor."

If I am right about the time period, some of the doctrines that developed in the Catholic Church in this time period are:

1079 - *celibacy of the priesthood*  
1090 - *prayer beads*  
1184 - *the inquisition*  
1190 - *sale of indulgences*  
1215 - *transubstantiation*  
1220 - *adoration of the wafer*  
1229 - *Bible forbidden to laymen*  
1414 - *cup forbidden to laypeople at communion*  
1439 - *doctrine of purgatory*  
1439 - *doctrine of seven sacraments confirmed*  
1508 - *The Ave Maria*

The Ave Maria is a prayer to Mary. It goes like this:  
*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the  
fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners, now, and in the hour of our  
death.*

However, during the time period of this church, if I am close in the dates it represents, some of the few great men of God who arose, and no doubt prepared the way for the reformation were: *John Wycliffe (1320-1384); William Tyndale (1484-1536); John Huss (1369-1415)*. There were a few. There was a remnant.

#### D. Personally

So how does this message to the church of Sardis apply to each of us personally. Well, the applications can

be many. The Lord can speak to each one of us out of many things in different ways, but the key here, as I see it, is to watch, and keep your garments clean.

CONCL: So in conclusion, in Sardis we see first that it is possible for a church to be filled with many people who will not go to heaven. He writes, "You have a few names..." And in the comfort to this church we are told that the overcomer will be clothed in white and that the Lord will not blot out the overcomer's name out of the book of life. The promises given in this church alone are worth every price that comes with being a true Christian. Let me ask you, what do you bear? I know that most of you bear burdens for taking biblical stands.

May the words of comfort to this church be a comfort to you: "...they have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white for they are worthy."