

THE SEVEN CHURCHES – SARDIS AND PHILADELPHIA

1. What special period was covered by the church of Thyatira? — The days of papal supremacy.
2. What great event prepared the way for a new era in the church? — The Reformation. Note 1.
3. By what church of Asia was the next, or fifth, period of the history represented? Rev. 3:1 (first part). Note 2.
4. How is this church addressed? Verse 1.
5. Would the Lord have His people rest satisfied in partial reformation? Verse 2.
6. What is the exhortation and warning? Verse 3. Note 3.
7. To what sad state had trust in high profession brought the church of Sardis? Verse 4.
8. Toward what event does the promise to the overcomer point in the Sardis stage of the church? Verse 5. Note 4.

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9. What is still the call? Verse 6.

10. What name expresses the special characteristic of the next, or sixth, stage of the church? Verse 7. Note 5.

11. How is the speaker here described? Verse 7.
Note 6.

12. What had He done for the church? Verse 8. Note 7.

13. What assurance is given the advent believers?
Verse 10.

14. What is the hope held forth and the exhortation?
Verse 11.

15. What is the ever-ringing call to every man?
Verse 13.

16. What influence has the genuine advent hope upon the life? 1John 3:3.

NOTES

1. The full prophetic period in which the Papacy was to wear out the saints reached to 1798. But for the elect's sake, those days were shortened. Matt. 24:22.

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The Reformation partially broke the power of the Papacy and brought the reign of wholesale persecution to an end. By successive reform movements, the Protestant churches of Europe and America were developed. Thus, as we approach 1798, a new era, the fifth, develops in the history of the church — the era of the Protestant reformed churches.

2. "Sardis" means "song of joy," or "that which remains." "I will put upon you none other burden," was the promise made at the close of the preceding period of the church. Rev. 2:24. For nearly eighteen centuries the church had felt the hand of persecution laid heavily upon her, and many millions had fallen in death. At the close of the Thyatira church she was never again to pass through like scenes. This is truly cause for rejoicing.

3. Those who have started in reform and ceased to grow must take fresh hold of principles already learned and go on unto fuller knowledge and experience in the truth. The fatal weakness in the reformed churches was the tendency to stand still where the first reformers left them. Growth is the law of spiritual life. See Prov. 4:18; John 12:35.

4. We are now in our study approaching the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary — the final blotting out

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of sins — beginning in 1844. Hence the promise to the overcomer directs attention to the final work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, the opening of the judgment hour. The proclamation of this grand event, in the years just preceding 1844, constituted the world-wide Advent movement which was to mark the next stage in the development of the church.

5. "Philadelphia" means "brotherly love." All the story of the early Advent movement leading up to the autumn of 1844, at which time the Advent people expected to meet their Lord, shows that believers were bound together in ties of fellowship and love like to that which reigns in heaven, which they expected soon to enter. Coming out from various churches and the world, they were made one by the "blessed hope."

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

Now, with the ministry in the heavenly sanctuary almost finished and the coming of the Lord at the very door, all hearts must again let in the love of heaven, which will make the true believers one, and fit them to live with the angels. See the last rounds in Peter's ladder. 2Peter 1:7-11.

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6. The time approaches for Christ to take the throne and kingdom as son of David. Luke 1:32, 33. He gives assurance that none may frustrate His final work for us in the heavenly sanctuary.

7. The specific Philadelphia period of the church brings us to the autumn of 1844, when the long period of the 2,300 days ended, and the work of judgment was opened in the most holy of the heavenly sanctuary. "I was shown that . . . the time for the commandments of God to shine out with all their importance, and for God's people to be tried on the Sabbath truth, was when the door was opened in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary, where the ark is, in which is contained the Ten Commandments. This door was not opened until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the holy place of the sanctuary in 1844. Then Jesus rose up and shut the door of the holy place, and opened the door into the most holy, and passed within the second veil, where He now stands by the ark, and where the faith of Israel now reaches. I saw that Jesus had shut the door of the holy place, and no man can open it; and that He had opened the door into the most holy, and no man can shut it (Rev. 3:7, 8); and that since Jesus has opened the door into the most holy place, which contains the ark, the commandments have been shining out to God's people, and they are being tested on the Sabbath question." — *Early Writings 42.1-2.*