

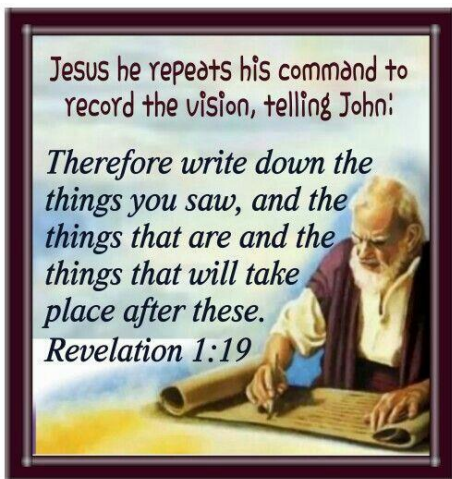
## 06. Seven Letters to the Churches Rev. ch 3:1- Sardis part 1

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### The Letter to the Church at Sardis

#### Revelation 3:1-6



#### The Remnant

A reminder of the command of Jesus to John to write down the prophetic order of events in the end times. The end times started with the birth of the Church but John was not being asked to write about the life of Jesus and his life as a disciple as he had already done that in the gospel of John. He was being asked to write down the contents of the Vision on Patmos. So limiting it to the vision we can see the overview of the vision.

Starting with the wonderful vision of the glorified Jesus, (what you have seen) John then takes us through the 7 churches - a fore view of the Church Age.

#### The Divine Overview

Revelation 1:19

*Write the things which thou hast seen,*

Vision of Christ on Patmos

Chapter 1

*and the things which are,*

The Seven Churches

Chapters 2 & 3

*and the things which shall be hereafter;*

That which follows after

Chapters 4-22

Then he takes us through the things that shall be after (Meta Tauta ) the Church Age. Namely the Tribulation and The Kingdom Age.

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7 Local churches at the time

7 Ages that the Church developed through

The whole Book of Revelation was sent to all the churches at the time and there were things for each church to take on board for themselves at that time. They all read all the letters

followed by the things that came next. It is a Prophetic vision that Jesus gave to John for **all of us**. So the whole body of Christ down through the subsequent years **would all** be able to benefit from this book.

The whole book is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It's not plural it is one complete Revelation. Jesus unveils what has previously been hidden regarding the end times. It's all one Revelation.

So we have Jesus Himself standing before John and telling him what to write.

Hebrews 1:1-3

There is an **Admonition** - that is, a firm warning or reprimand

**a Personal application** - It's written to me so how am I walking with Christ in the light of this

**a Prophetic application** - Jesus literally outlines the next 2,000 years of Church history before it's happened. He knows the beginning from the end.

Now 2,000 years have gone by we can see how accurate Jesus was.

1. **Ephesus** - was admonished to return to its first love.
2. **Smyrna** - was persecuted and were encouraged to be faithful to the death.
3. **Pergamos** - The church got married to the world and Paganism comes into the Church. The great infiltration begins in earnest. Constantine ....
4. **Thyatira** - Now that the church has been infiltrated it began to tolerate sin and false doctrine so it was like Pergamos but greatly heightened because the teaching was open and up front. Teaching that promoted sexual sin and idol worship and this from **the leadership**.
5. **Sardis** - which taking history in its rightful order now comes to the Denominational Dead Church 1520 - 1758. This is covering the Reformation period. In the letter to Sardis we can see what Jesus thinks of this period of time as He sees into the future.

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### Rev 3:1-6

The name, the message and subsequent history of this church (locally and prophetically) indicates it had a good start but a bad finish. There was a change for the worse.

### Background to Sardis

[Sardius = "Red stone"?] 'odem; i.e., the red stone (with a yellow shade); **Ex 28:17; 39:10; Ezek 28:13**. 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 first stone in the first row of the high priest's breastplate, *in Ant. 3:7, section 5*,

He on the heavenly throne "was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine" (**Rev 4:3**). As the jasper (or else diamond) represents the divine brightness or holiness, and the red sardine (our cornelian) His fiery wrath; Holiness and wrath combined. **Ezek 1:4; 8:2; Dan 7:9**. Named from Sardis in Lydia, where it was first found.

Sardius (*Grk: sardion*): **in Rev 4:3; 21:20**: the 6th foundation of the New Jerusalem.

So was Sardis likened to a precious stone? We are as precious stones to God. We are also living stones, built together.

Sardis a rich city full of industry, dealing in jewellery, dye and textiles. A great historical city in Asia Minor dating right back to 2,000BC !!! It was the residence of the Greek royal dynasty of the Mermnades. Sardis was ruled by King Croesus of Lydia who was the most wealthy man of the times. Gold and silver "Lydian Staters" were the first coins in the world—in about the sixth century B.C. Gold was so plentiful it was washed down from the surrounding mountains into the river that ran through Sardis and was deposited onto the bottom of the river and along the banks of the river. Gold was everywhere.

Croesus privately funded the huge temple to Cybele/Artemis/Diana.

It's about 30 miles SE of Thyatira

One of the largest ancient synagogues has been excavated there and its location in the centre tells us of the strength and wealth of the Jewish community in the city.

Generally speaking, this city was a centre of pagan worship to Artemis with a huge temple in his honour. Apollo and Diana (Greek version of Cybele) were also worshipped, all with roots to the Semiramis gods. It was largely an immoral city given to the worship of the nature goddess Cybele (we mentioned her last week as one of the gods with the keys and a goddess of fertility.)

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500 years before John wrote this letter Sardis stood as one of the richest and most powerful cities of the world. *It became ethically complacent, and morally degenerate, but to all appearances it had every reason to be proud and boastful.*

**Ostensibly Impregnable** It was built on the side of Mount Timolus and it was built on a 1,500 feet high plateau with steep cliffs on three sides. It could only be entered through a very narrow road leading to the city on the fourth side. The inhabitants thought they were impregnable to invasion and this gave them their confidence.

However, the sheer precipitous cliff was clay, which suffered continual erosion and 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. An example: When 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** the Persian, 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. Croesus was then captured and taken away as a slave.

In the darkness of the following night, Hyeroeades and a Persian party climbed the cliff and clambered over the unguarded battlements to take the city. The people of Sardis were so confident that no-one could reach them from the cliffs they didn't even bother to guard the way. Consequently Sardis fell with hardly a struggle.

But the Sardians did not learn their lesson: in 214 B.C. the formidable cliffs again proved susceptible to a hazardous climb when Lagoras repeated the exploit and the city was similarly taken by Antiochus the Great of Greece.

Each time, due to an over confident attitude Sardis fell to its enemies.

**So the people of Sardis were guilty of not being watchful.**

Hegel said "History teaches that man learns nothing from history." The Sardians were not watchful.

This part of the history of Sardis is really important if we want to understand how this Church relates to the age we are now looking at. The Church at Sardis has so many parallels to the church of the time we are looking at but also to today as well - as do all these churches.

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As we have looked at before, when studying prophecy there is often a fulfilment that would come soon and a fulfilment for the far future.

So here we have Sardis, a city full of its own success. Wealth and ease of life made them think they were unconquerable no matter who the enemy was. They had become too complacent, too much at ease thinking that nothing was wrong.

### A City of Failure

The name Sardis became synonymous with: pretensions unjustified; promise without performance; appearance without reality; and, false confidence that heralded ruin. They betrayed themselves by lack of watchfulness and diligence; *Cf. W. M. Ramsay, Letters to Seven Churches.*

By the New Testament time, most of Sardis's earlier dignity and splendour had disappeared. A severe earthquake in 17 A.D. caused major damage and it never fully recovered. It was only partially rebuilt.

The town was destroyed by the Turkic conqueror Tamerlane in 1402. Archaeological excavations were begun at the site in 1910, but the city itself was not uncovered until 1958. Today the little town of Sart has only fragments of its proud history.

When Jesus gave this message to Sardis the earthquake had already happened and its former glory had not been recovered. The city was already rapidly losing its glory and wealth but its inhabitants were still boastful of the past. It was rapidly dying. It had its name only and not much else. Easy to see why Jesus chose this church as a picture of what was to come.

In 170AD the Christian Church in Sardis was poor in relationship to the strong Jewish community and the church had quite a reputation for lax moral standards.

**Rev ch 3:1** *And to the angel of the church in Sardis write...*

The Name Sardis - The escaping ones. The Remnant. This is a great name and it's a reference to when the Reformation took place. This was a time when many escaped out of the clutches of the old religion and started their own Denomination.

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*Sardis ("escaping") - Three meanings have been proposed: "prince of joy," "that which remains," and "those escaping." This is from Dr. Fruchtenbaum's scholarship which supports "escaping."*

### Title of Christ

#### Concern

**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."*

"Seven Spirits of God": The Old Testament idiom for the Holy Spirit. Is 11:1-2

Why does Jesus use this title with this particular church? Many denominations today are very uncomfortable with the Holy Spirit—it's one major cause of division within the church. A church that is alive is a church filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is allowed to move and lead.

*onoma* = label; being covered by a **name**. This word appears three times in six verses in this letter. Sardis has a name [or label] **but** you are dead! No life. Where is the Holy Spirit? The church has gone through a period of change and not all to the good because though it may have started well it has gradually died. This is also true of the church of the Reformation. It started so well. People escaped from the clutches and chains of the Roman Catholic church with all its pagan rites and rituals. They were freed from trying to earn their way into heaven through the Pope. They found salvation through Christ alone and His atoning work on the cross. Many flocked to Christ during the Reformation.

So this church, Sardis, represents a period of time when change was happening. The Reformation took place between 1520-1758.

**From 1513-1521AD** Pope Louis 10<sup>th</sup> was the Pope during Martin Luther's Reformation. He became Pope at 8 years old. He became a Cardinal at 13 and at that age he appointed 27 church officers and appointed cardinals who were 7 years old. He maintained the most luxurious and licentious court in Europe, he reaffirmed the doctrine that every person must be subject to the Roman Pontiff for salvation (so salvation only came through the Pope not

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Jesus) he issued indulgences for stipulated fees, (if you want to get your mum out of Hell pay me and I'll do it. Pardons for murder, polygamy, witchcraft could all be bought) he declared the burning of heretics as a divine appointment. He enjoyed burning anyone who disagreed with him!!! At a large banquet of dignitaries he made a terrible and damaging statement about Christianity quote "how well we know what a profitable superstition this fable of Christ has been for us and our predecessors."

He loved bawdy jokes and obscene comedies which were often performed in the Vatican by cardinals as actors. By this time the Roman church was at the height of corruption. And thus God intervened.

So we move on from Thyatira and the heights of Roman Catholicism with all the paganism that had been accepted into Christianity and are now moving into a time of Reformation.

### **The Reformation: A Review**

As early as the 13th century the papacy had become vulnerable to attack because of the greed, immorality, and ignorance of many of its officials in all ranks of the hierarchy. Vast tax-free church possessions, constituting as much as 1/5 to 1/3 of the lands of Europe, incited the envy and resentment of the land-poor peasantry

### **14th Century**

English reformer John Wycliffe boldly attacked the papacy striking at the sale of indulgences, the excessive veneration of saints and the moral and intellectual standards of ordained priests. To reach the common people, he translated the Bible into English rather than Latin.,

### **15th Century**

Wycliffe's teachings spread to Bohemia, where they found a powerful advocate in Jan Hus (John Huss). His execution in 1415 led directly to the Hussite Wars, a violent expression of Bohemian nationalism, suppressed with difficulty by the combined forces of the Holy Roman emperor and the pope. The wars were a precursor of religious civil war in Germany in Luther's time

### **Martin Luther's Conversion**

He was a devout Catholic and began earnestly seeking God.

**The son of a coal miner** born in 1483-1546 AD. In 1505 he was caught in a violent thunderstorm with lightning falling all around him. He was a Catholic so he began to pray to the patron of the coalminers, St Ann. He said if you save me I'll become a monk. The storm

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stopped so he spent 3 years in an Augustinian Monastery where he received a doctorate in Theology. But the more he studied, the more troubled he became. He was obsessed with

how to really find God and was very conscious of his own sin and the total depravity of sin. He would fast for 10-15 days at a time and when the temperatures were below zero he would sleep outside without a blanket. Catholic theology teaches that the way to heaven was not through Christ but through suffering. Therefore he thinks that by putting himself through a great deal of suffering he might get there. Between his studies he would beat his own body black and blue, (self-flagellation) and some still do this to this day. In 1510-1511 he decided to make a pilgrimage to Rome in the hope he would find the peace he was searching for. He crossed the Alps on foot and almost died at a monastery with a high fever. While being nursed to health a wise monk told him to read the Book of Habakkuk. When he got to **Habakkuk 2:4** ...the just shall live by faith he could not take his eyes off it. It blew his mind as he realised that it wasn't the Roman Catholic Church that could get him into Heaven. It was by trust in God through Christ. That verse changed his life.

When he recovered he resumed his journey to Rome, with that verse held firmly in his heart. While there he was appalled by the corruption he found in Rome. Money was greatly needed at the time for the rebuilding of St Peters Cathedral, and there were Papal emissaries everywhere raising funds by the selling of indulgencies.

When he returned home, he began to preach the doctrine of salvation by faith rather than by works. No-one had heard a message like that in the major denomination of the world since Paul's day. From this time the title Sola Scriptura was birthed, meaning, only scripture. While preaching this message in Germany, salvation by faith alone, there's another monk there called Johann Tetzel. He was raising money for the Pope by selling indulgencies and he wrote this famous saying at that time. "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul at once heaven springs." So in other words, as soon as I get your money I will release your loved one who has died and is now in Purgatory, so they can now get into heaven.

So Johann Tetzel had been commissioned by the Pope to raise money in Germany to send to Rome to rebuild the Basilica.

He would also absolve living people from their sins for money. Here is what he said over them.



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"By the authority of all the saints, and in mercy towards you, I absolve you from all sins and misdeeds and remit all punishments for ten days."

So for 10 days you could go away and do just whatever you liked because it had already been paid for. !!!

This is what Christianity had become through Roman Catholicism. And purgatory is still part of their doctrine. No pope has ever renounced it.

Martin Luther responds to Johann Tetzel's selling of indulgences and on Oct 31<sup>st</sup> 1521 he drew up a list of 95 theses

Basically 95 including reasons why indulgences were wrong.

Number 5 actually denies the Pope's authority to forgive sins. Martin Luther said that the Pope had no right to forgive anyone their sins and in a lecture he said that "if the pope can forgive anyone's sins then why doesn't he just do it out of love and release all of us now."

Martin proceeded to nail the 95 theses to his church door at Wittenburg and this event started one of the most important events in human history. The Reformation.

The Popes response to Martin Luther's stand was to issue 41 theses of why Luther was wrong. When Martin Luther received it he burned it in front of a large gathering of citizens in Wittenburg and as a result he was excommunicated.

Charles 5<sup>th</sup>, the holy Roman Emperor convened the *Diet at Worms in 1521* (a Diet is a Trial and Worms is the city) during which they brought in Luther who was given 60 days to recant and retract his teachings. His life would be taken if he didn't do this. Luther refused to relent and to quote from his trial "Unless I am convinced by the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures or evident reason, I am neither able or willing to recant, God help me. Amen" An order was issued for the destruction of all his books. On his return from Worms he was taken captive by Frederick of Saxony, a great friend of Luther who pulled off a phoney kidnapping in order to protect Luther who was rushed to Fredericks Castle for protection. So he was spared death and while there he wrote a translation of the scriptures into German. No-one had had a bible in their own language for centuries and it was held by the Roman Catholic church and was in Latin.

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Rome's second response to Luther and his Reformation, was the Jesuits and the inquisition. It gets really bad here.

This bit of history is important to our understanding of the rest of this period of time.

In 1216 AD Pope Innocent 3<sup>rd</sup> ordered a priest by the name of Dominic in Spain, to form a special group to destroy all heretics. This special group becomes known as the Dominican Order. The Inquisition turned up the heat after Luthers resistance and this starts several centuries of wars between those loyal to Rome and those opposed. This is not taught much in history any more. The purpose of these wars was to destroy all Protestants (Protesters)

**The Centuries of Wars began:** the war on the German Protestants (1566- 1609); war on Protestants of Netherlands (1566-1609); Huguenot Wars in France (1572 1598); Philip's attempt against England (1588); and the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). **During the thirty years war** 900,000 Waldensian Christians were butchered. They were the ones that hid in the hills rather than follow the Catholic faith. They were eventually wiped out.

**In Bohemia by 1600 AD** in a population of 4,000,000 80% were protestant. When the Hapsburgs and the Jesuits had done their work only 800,000 were left, all Catholics and half the population of Austria and Hungary were also slaughtered. (*Halley's Bible Handbook*)

In 1572 The Jesuits secretly engineered the massacre of St Bartholomew and used Roman Catholic troops And Dominican monks for the job. Without warning they slaughtered Bible Believers in Paris. (French Huguenots.) The blood ran for a week and the Protestant movement in France was destroyed. In celebration the Pope ordered the Rosary said in every Catholic church thanking the Virgin Mary for their victory. They killed 100,000 Huguenots (French Protestants, in one day, in France) France has still never recovered spiritually from this destruction.

The irregular and uncharted arrival of Huguenots, onto English shores started at this time. Such a flood of these new immigrants was washed onto British shores in the 1680s that a new word came into the English language at the time to describe them: 'rés ' or refugees. Forty or fifty thousand crossed the Channel while Louis XIV sat on the French throne (1660-1714). Others had come in the time of the Tudors, especially during the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth. More continued to arrive during periods of persecution in the eighteenth century, for conditions in France could lead Protestants there to martyrdom for the sake of their beliefs as late as the 1760s.

The great majority lived in towns; they were artisans, especially weavers, Those who came to Britain included many skilled craftsmen, silversmiths, watchmakers and. the like, and

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professional people - clergy, doctors, merchants soldiers, teachers, There was a small sprinkling of the lesser nobility.

Both their Protestantism and their skills are relevant in explaining why so many Huguenots crossed the Channel. England was second in popularity as a place of refuge only to the Dutch Republic, more popular than Germany or Switzerland or places further afield like America or the Cape of Good Hope. As a leading Protestant nation, Britain was an obvious possibility for those fleeing Catholic persecution in France

The other attraction lay in the prospects for employment that were to be found in English towns and cities, especially London.

The fleeing Huguenots were greeted kindly by the British and the small amount of resentment was drowned beneath a welter of economic arguments and a flood of emotional support.

The emotional support for the refugees - translated into practical terms through a generous response to public collections to help them. Anti-Popery was at a peak. Disgust at what was being done to Protestants abroad was paralleled by fears about what might be done by the Catholic James II in England.

In 1588 King Philip 2<sup>nd</sup> of Spain sent a Spanish Armada to lead an invasion against England. Why? To return England to Catholicism. England had been going back and forth depending on whether the King was Protestant or Catholic.

He lost the war and God spared England.

**The Thirty Year War 1619-1648** begins when the holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand set out to exterminate the Protestants. Many countries in central Europe lost half their population in that 30 years as a result. Rome wanted dominance at all costs and the indiscriminate killing of all Protestants was to them the right answer. They thought they were doing God a favour. This inquisition was run eventually by the Jesuits and reinforced by the Catholic Kings.

They wanted to get rid of these people who believed that salvation is by Jesus alone, who can read the Bible in their own language and who worshipped in their own groups wherever they could. These people were the remnant compared with the huge numbers of Catholics. They tried to escape persecution and some made it to our country, England.

The Jesuits were founded in 1539 by Ignatius solely to stamp out Protestantism. He was the first Jesuit General. He created an organisation called the Alumbrados (Spanish for

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Illuminate, Illuminist or Illuminati). A Satanic organisation to control the minds of European Leaders through witchcraft, hypnotism and control.

We all know about the Illuminati, but here we have the history of who started it (again it's a Catholic thing) And we know that today the Jesuits are a Catholic order run by the Pope.

There is a statue of Ignatius outside St Peters Basilica showing him stamping underfoot a Protestant Christian holding a Bible.

In order to become a Jesuit you have to be recruited. When you become a Jesuit you have to take an oath. It's pages long but here is a part of it:-

"I.....now in the presence of Almighty God, the blessed Virgin Mary, the blessed Michael, the archangel, the blessed St John the Baptist, the Holy Apostles, St Peter and St Paul, and all the saints and sacred host of Heaven....I furthermore promise and declare that I will, when opportunity presents, make and wage relentless war, secretly or openly, against all heretics, Protestants, and liberals, as I am directed to do....to extirpate and exterminate them from the face of the whole earth; and that I will spare neither age or sex or condition and that I will hang, burn, waste, boil, flay, strangle and bury alive these infamous heretics, rip up the stomachs and wombs of their women and crush their infants heads against the walls, in order to annihilate forever their execrable race. That when the same cannot be done openly, I will secretly use the poisoned cup, the strangulating cord, the steel of the poniard, or the leaden bullet, regardless of the honour, rank, dignity or authority of the person or persons, whatever may be their condition in life either public or private, as I at any time may be directed so to do by any agent of the Pope or superior of the brotherhood of the Holy faith of the society of Jesus."

These are the Vatican's assassins. The fake media will try to water it down but Jesuits are in the Vatican and they still use this oath. And where Catholicism is strong those countries live in fear of an ongoing inquisition that still takes place today. We don't hear about it because we are strongly Protestant in our country.

The Vatican under the Jesuits and Catholic Kings killed more people than all of the Pagan and Roman Empires combined.

Book by John B Wilder 'The Shadow of Rome' states that 'records of historians and martyrologists show that it may be reasonable to estimate that from fifty to sixty eight million of human beings died, suffered torture, lost their possessions or were otherwise devoured by the Roman Catholic Church during the awful years of the Inquisition....'

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When the Mayflower set sail for America it was full of those who wanted to flee persecution because they wanted to worship God in freedom and not be killed for reading their Bibles. Even the C of E had retained too much Catholicism they wanted to go back to the simplicity of the early church.

John Knox 1514-1572 is known for starting the Presbyterian Church

Queen Mary (Known as Bloody Mary) reigned from 1553-1558 and she was responsible for burning 300 protestants at the stake. But she said that she feared the prayers of John Knox more than an army of 10,000 men. Because he was preaching the true gospel and it was going into every part of Europe and the world setting people free from the bondage of Catholicism.

So now we can understand that from the Reformation all these Denominations sprang. They were started by folk who were escaping (remnant) from Catholicism and forming their own groups where they could worship in freedom.

There are now hundreds of denominations, but in the early days it was simply groups of people who had broken of their ties with Rome and who wanted to meet in fellowship in a simple way.

One of the most significant events that occurred in the last five centuries according to many theologians took place from 1994 to 2000. Pope John the 2<sup>nd</sup> began to do an apology tour. What's interesting about these apology tours is its admittance to all the atrocities that had taken place in the past. The violence that they did. In March 29<sup>th</sup> 1994 there was a joint declaration called Evangelicals and Catholics together - The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium. There were leaders of the protestants and of the Catholics got together with the Pope and they decided they weren't going to evangelise each other anymore. Basically the Protestants weren't going to try and get Catholics out of Catholicism and the Catholics weren't going to try and make Protestants become Catholics. So the Catholics were saying 'sorry' for all that went on, lets all be together and ignore all the deaths that we are responsible for.

On May 21<sup>st</sup> 1995 Pope John 2<sup>nd</sup> asked an audience of 100,000 in the Czech republic Quote " today, I the Pope of the church of Rome, in the name of all Catholics, ask forgiveness for the wrongs inflicted on non-Catholics during the turbulent history of these peoples." So he's acknowledging the millions of people that were slaughtered and says sorry. Then on March 13<sup>th</sup> 2000 Pope John again asks for pardon for past violence "We are asking pardon for the divisions among Christians for the use of violence that some have committed in the service

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of truth, and for attitudes of mistrust and hostility assumed toward followers of other religions.

But is this heartfelt or is there another agenda here.?

They still call themselves the Mother Church. The Mother of all churches. In Revelation 16:5 we read of Mystery Babylon, The great, The Mother of Harlots and of the abominations of the earth.

The evidence shows us that the Catholic Church is already encouraging a unity of all faiths, a joining together of all into one. With the Pope being at the top.

Pope Francis is quite controversial and this is because he is the first **Jesuit** elected to that office on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013. Many Catholic theologians believe he is the fulfilment of the Malachy prophecy which states that there would only be one more Pope after Benedict and during his reign comes the end of the world. Pope Benedict 16<sup>th</sup> 2005-2013 was the first Pope to resign.

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

### The Denominational Church

- "Soft" hermeneutical traditions
- Denial of the Millennial Reign
- Denial of Israel's prophetic destiny
- Absence of Biblical devotional life
- De-emphasis of the Gospel of Christ
- Ordination of homosexuals

The Reformation was a heroic period in church history. "Salvation by faith, not works." But its failures persist to this day. The allegorisation of Scripture (especially those concerning Christ's rule in the Millennium) is at the top of the list. The Reformation did not go far enough.

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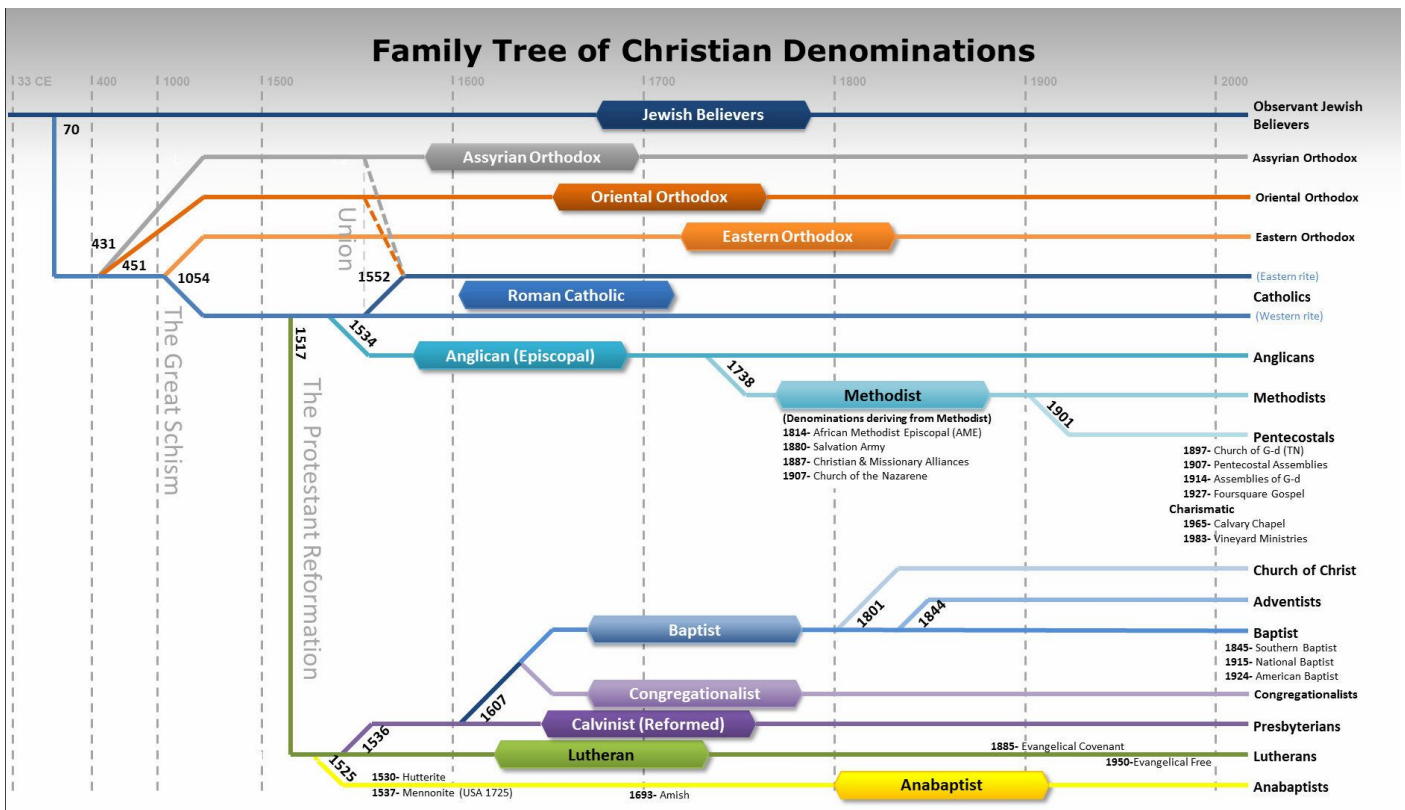
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The Millennium and the Rapture of the Church are not accepted literally in most mainline denominational churches today.

## Evangelicals & Catholics Together

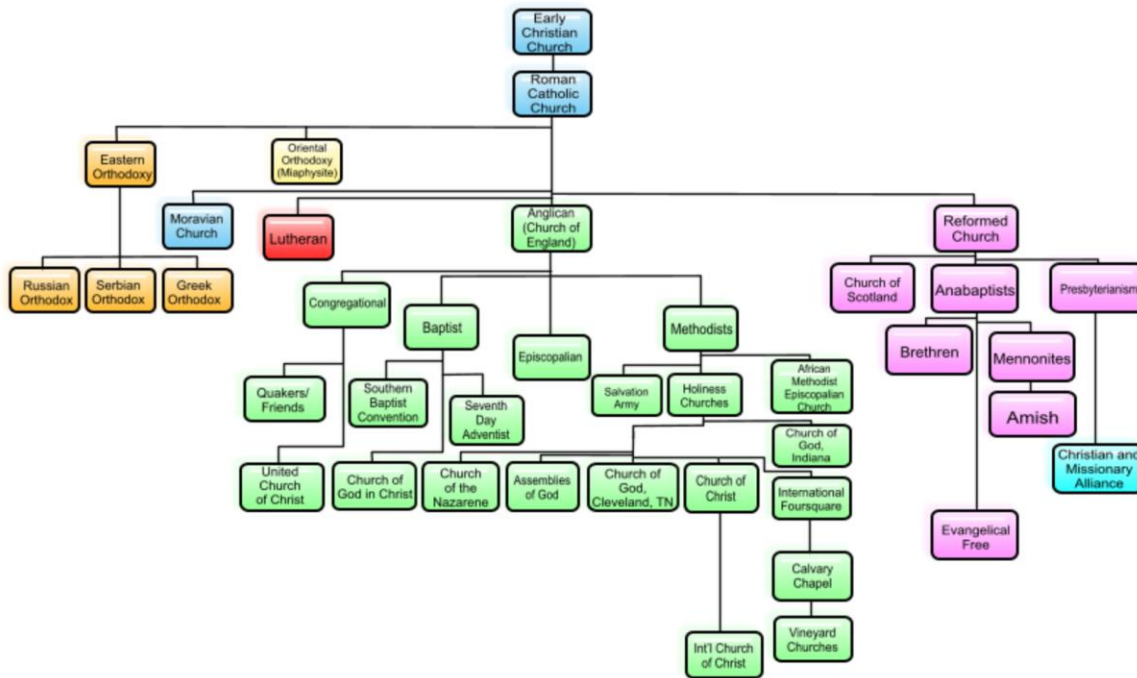
March 29, 1994: A joint declaration was signed, called "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium."

The compromise of the Gospel lies at the heart of the agreement. But the Gospel hasn't changed. This could be the most significant event in 500 years of church history.



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So Sardis is a picture of the time when the Protestant Church was eventually accepted.

The Catholics stopped their persecution and there was a period of peace amongst the denominational Churches. The Denominational Churches grew and spread and were at their height. And they all sprung up with their different emphasis on doctrines.

Many kept the bits of doctrine they liked so for instance, the Church of England kept infant Baptism because the people got a sense of security from that. Because infant baptism meant eternal security. You were made a Christian no matter how you lived when you grew up.

### Admonition

**2** *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.*

Each church needs to be watchful and be strengthened spiritually. Not getting complacent. In the early Church, The Church meant 'believers' and it didn't have a mixture of Christians and non Christians. The Church was there for believers to meet and grow. Don't get distracted. Be vigilant. We are living in critical times

- The Darkness of the hour
- Temptation all around
- fear - losing jobs - loss of hope
- spiritual beliefs being challenged .



## 06. Seven Letters to the Churches Rev. ch 3:1- Sardis part 1

Student copy

We are still victorious, Jesus says **do not lose heart** because this is what we have been told to be ready for - hard times - rejoice - be watchful  
According to Jesus, if a church is not watchful it begins to die. (10 virgins parable)  
Count your blessings, remember His Faithfulness. Praise Him

Repent of anything that might be holding you back

Examine yourselves **2 Cor 13:5**

Make every effort.... **2 Peter 1:10-11**

- Strengthen our Bible reading
- Strengthen our prayer time
- Strengthen our walk with the Lord

Sardis had become:-

- A Comfortable Church and
- A Compromising Church

At the start of the reformation the Catholics were responsible for killing millions of good Christian believers who simply wanted to follow Christ.

So how many churches today are responsible for killing millions of people by allowing them to sit in services that tickle their ears and entertain them. The result being for them to fall asleep in their comfortable state in church until they slip into Hell.

The historian Tacitus wrote of an earthquake that happened in 17AD where 12 cities in Asia were destroyed suddenly in the middle of the night. Everyone was asleep so there was no chance to escape. It was sudden destruction. Jesus will come suddenly and unexpectedly. Let us not be asleep spiritually. A church that is dying becomes self centred.

Be watchful, be diligent.

The message from this for us is to **watch and pray**. Hold fast to Jesus - Hold fast to that which is good - and be strong in the Lord. **1 Thess 5:21; 2 Tim 1:13**

End of audio file 06 part 2 is on audio file 07