

The plague of Sardis by Jeremiah

Today, I would like to look at the plague of Sardis. Sardis is one of the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation. Many interpreters have believed that this church signifies the Protestant church. I believe so as well.

Understanding that the Sardis=Protestants, let us look at the prophecy about the Protestants during the apocalypse through examining the verses in Revelation. Let us look at the verses.

Revelation 3:1 “And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” (King James Version)

<Sardis is the red one, the profane one>

The name of the church, Sardis, has a hidden meaning. The original meaning of the word is “the red one”. Also listed in the verse below, the word “sardine” is “sardinos” in Greek, and has a similar pronunciation as Sardis.

Revelation 4:3 “And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” (King James Version)

Therefore, Sardis in Greek has the meaning of “red”. Revelation is a book with many mysteries, and there are many hidden meanings in words and examples used. The fact that Sardis=red can also be seen as a hidden example. In the bible, there are verses that give clues of what the color red represents.

Genesis 25:30 “And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.”

25:31 “And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.”

25:32 “And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?”

25:33 “And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.”

25:34 “Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.” (King James Version)

Here, Jacob (Israel), who is the ancestor of the 12 tribes of Israel, appears with his older brother Esau. Esau sells his birthright to Jacob in exchange for some red pottage. Because of this incident, Esau became known as Edom which means “the red one”. That's right, here also, Sardis, “the red one” appears.

Here, Esau (Edom), the red one, sells his birthright in exchange for a bowl of pottage. This looks like it is a personal act taken between the two brothers, but actually, this is a prophecy made about something that will happen in the future. In the book of Hebrews in the New Testament, there is a warning that a profane person like Esau will appear again in the future.

Hebrews 12:16 “Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.”

12:17 “For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” (King James Version)

What can we imagine from these words? In relation to the day of the apocalypse, the Lord did not speak about people such as the faithfully brave Gideon or Joshua who led the Israelites to the promised land, but instead spoke about Sardis, Edom, and Esau who sold his birthright. Let us look at this warning correctly.

What the words Sardis, Edom, and Esau, which all mean “the red one” suggest towards the church is obviously a warning that on the day of the apocalypse, this church will become something profane.

The Protestants may be offended by this, but unfortunately, it matches the present condition of them. Not only in America, but in other places as well, there are homosexual priests in the Protestant churches. This shows the profanity that is actually going on.

<The meaning of selling one's birthright>

What exactly does it mean to sell one's birthright, which even became the origin of the name Edom, the red one? In the King James Version, it says that it is an act to sell one's right that is given at birth. This is an example of a Christian's right gained through being born again through Christ, and can be understood as a foreshadowing of profane Christians who would sell such right.

It is a different story whether Christians today value such given rights, but a born again Christian is given a very big privilege from God. In other words, this is the right to inherit the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life. However, on the day of the apocalypse, a fall will occur towards profane Christians such as Esau, Sardis, or the red one.

And as a result of this, the Protestant church as a whole will sell their birthright. This would mean that they would lose their Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life. Predicting such acts, the bible has named this church Sardis as a way to suggest what will happen.

Through this point of view, when we think about Christians who cannot inherit the Heavenly Kingdom, there is a deep meaning in the verse written in Hebrew, “For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” In the Bible, it is also written about those who were expelled from God's Kingdom in the verse below.

Luke 13:28 “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.” (King James Version).

Those who were not able to enter God's kingdom will cry and yell just like Esau did. The reason Esau cried can be connected to this as well.

<You appear to be alive but really you are dead>

“I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”

About Sardis, the Protestants, the Lord said that they have a name that they are alive, but through God's eyes and the Christ's eyes, they are dead. What does this mean? Let us think about this. There are verses in the bible written about death.

Ephesians 2:1 “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;”

2:2 “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:”

2:5 “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)”

Here, it is written about death and life. Also, the death mentioned here is not about the death of one's body, but more about sinners who were dead in the midst of the sins they committed. We sinners who were dead can become alive through Christ.

That is, we were dead because of our sins, but now, we are forgiven by Christ and became alive. That is how a Christian should be.

However, when Christ has spoken for Sardis about what a true Christian is, his words were sharp, and he has spoken about the real situation of the church. Those were the words, “thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”

According to the book of Ephesians, Christians were “dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.” However, Sardis, or the Protestants, were dead in the midst of their sins, and even now, they remain to be dead in their sins, and even though in their name they became alive through Christ, they are still dead before God.

This seems to be very strict, but they are words spoken by Christ himself, so we must accept this sincerely and look at our own selves as well.

Through atonement, we gain eternal life, and living in our sins will give us eternal death. Also, Christ has spoken about Sardis that “thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” In other words, the eternal life of this church is in danger. This is something we should think about seriously.

Revelation 3:2 “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.” (King James Version)

A phrase meaning to be watchful, or open ones eyes appears in the verse below as well.

Ephesians 5:14 “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

Here, “arise from the dead” is spoken to those who are still in their sins and living as dead people. Therefore, he is saying this for the church of Sardis, so that they can “arise from the dead.”

“And strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.”

This church is a dead church, and the other people are about to die, that is, they are sinking deeper into their sins. The situation of the church is becoming worse and worse towards the apocalypse. Unfortunately, according to these words, the Protestants will not get any better. Rather the apostasy will increase.

“I have not found thy works perfect before God.”

Here, the problem of Sardis or the Protestants is said to be their acts. The words meaning “thy works perfect”, in other words “fulfilling” is used in the verse below as well.

Romans 8:4 “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (King James Version).

Here, it is written that “the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled.” With the same implication, it is written that “I have not found thy works perfect before God” towards Sardis. This means that their acts are not enough to fulfill what God seeks. For example, if it were a test, they did not do enough to pass it. Simply said, Sardis has not reached the level that God seeks, and they will not be able to gain eternal life. Some people may be allergic to the word “acts” or “works”, but before God's judgment, one must remember that we will be looked upon what we do. In the book of Revelation, is written as below:

Revelation 20:12 “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

20:13 “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.” (King James Version)

Even though the Protestants speak about their faith, they do not mention anything about their acts. However, in the verse above, it is written about the dead being judged by their acts, and not their faith. Like Jacob says in the verse below, people cannot be saved just by faith with no action.

James 2:14 “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” (King James Version)

<The church of Sardis>

With all of this said, we must understand that Sardis or the Protestants have not fulfilled their works before God, and have not reached the level He seeks, and as a result, they are a church that is in danger of entering the Heavenly kingdom. The fact that the works of the Protestants are not enough is unfortunately true. Many Christians today have become secularized, and acts such as criticizing others and not forgiving others is becoming normal. They are no longer practicing God's words.

Revelation 3:3 “Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.” (King James Version)

To the church of Sardis, the Lord has said “Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard.” What does this imply? This means to go back to the days of the very first inauguration

of the Protestant church of understanding the bible. The Protestants today have become far from where they have started. The teachings concerning the second advent have become deflected, and teachings such as the idea of Christ's Second Coming, which not one person accepted during the Lutheran age, is accepted by people today. Also, ignoring the mistakes of the Catholics which Luther pointed out, people are trying to unite the Catholic and Ecumenical movement. Ironically, the most active in this movement are the Lutherans, which is a shameful fact.

“Hold fast and repent.”

When we think about why God speaks of holding His words fast, it is because the Protestant's actions have already become far from His words. The reason He speaks of “repent” is because if the actions of the Protestants continue, they will not be able to cope with the Second Coming of the Lord, and they will not be able to gain eternal life.

With such reasons, we Protestants must look at our church through the Lord's eyes with correct understanding rather than looking it through our own eyes to make us feel safer. The Lord has obviously spoken about how far we have become from the beginning of our church, and also how we must repent this fact.

He has definitely not praised us that we can enter Heaven with what we are doing right now. Rather, he is giving us a warning.

“If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

If we do not open our eyes to our sinful behavior, the Second Coming of the Lord will become one like that of a thief, and we will not be able to realize that the Second Advent has come.

At the time of the Lord's first advent, the many people who did not realize his coming were destroyed. The Pharisees and the Rabbis knew about the coming of the Messiah through the bible. However, because of their hypocrisy, they did not realize that Jesus was the Messiah, and ended up killing him on the cross. Because of this, they were destroyed by God on the day of destruction of Jerusalem. On the other hand, disciples such as Peter who understood that Jesus was the Messiah were able to enter the Kingdom. The same thing will occur on the day of the Second Coming. Sardis, or the Protestants are implied that they will not know about the Second Coming because of their hypocrisy and sins, and that they will be plagued like the Pharisees and Rabbis. We must correct our actions with fear. I will write more about this next time. Let us follow God's words of the apocalypse.