

**Sardis – The Church Of The Living Dead
Zombie Religion
Revelation 3:1 – 6**

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We now come to the fifth church to be addressed by Jesus. This is the church at Sardis. What does Sardis mean?

Sardis (sar'-dis) = Remnant; builders rule; escaping ones; those who come out; (idea of restoration). Red ones(?). (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 210)

A bit about the city of Sardis.



(Bolen 2012, Used with Permission)

SARDIS was one of the great cities of primitive history: in the Greek view it was long the greatest of all cities. At the beginning of record it stands forth prominently as the capital of a powerful empire. Its situation marks it out as a ruling city, according to the methods of early warfare and early kings; it was however more like a robber's stronghold than an abode of civilised men; and in a peaceful and civilised age its position was found inconvenient. In the Roman period it was almost like a city of the past, a relic of the period of barbaric warfare, which lived rather on its ancient prestige than on its suitability to present conditions. (Ramsay 1904, 354)

In other words, Sardis had a reputation. The operative word is "had." Its day was past.

One of the most famous early kings was Gyges in the seventh century b.c. He established the city's wealth and power and was known to the Assyrians as "Gugu"; some even say he was the prototype of "Gog" in Ezek. 38–39 (so Hemer 1986: 131). At any rate the city was a military power that rarely lost a battle and was feared by all. The city also attained great wealth through commerce and trade. Legend stated that Midas left his gold in the springs of Pactolus that ran through the city, and that legend may have come from the presence of gold dust in the springs that added to their wealth (Hemer 1986: 130–31). Sardis was the first to mint gold and silver coins. (Osborne 2002, 171)

In its early history, the King of Sardis, who also ruled the Lydian Empire, was located at the top of the acropolis. Since there was only one approach to the city, it was felt to be impregnable, until Cyrus the Persian showed up.



(Bolen, Sardis acropolis 2012, Used with Permission)

The usual view is that Cyrus entered Sardis by the isthmus or neck on the south. That was the natural and necessary path in ordinary use; the only road and gateway were there; and inevitably the defence of the city was based on a careful guard and strong fortification at the solitary approach. The enemy was expected to attack there; but the point of the tale is that the ascent was made on a side where no guard was ever stationed, because that side was believed to be inaccessible. (Ramsay 1904, 361)

Herodotus

This is how Sardis was taken. When Croesus had been besieged for fourteen days, Cyrus sent horsemen around in his army to promise to reward whoever first mounted the wall. [2] After this the army made an assault, but with no success. Then, when all the others were stopped, a certain Mardian called Hyroeades attempted to mount by a part of the acropolis where no guard had been set, since no one feared that it could be taken by an attack made here. [3] For here the height on which the acropolis stood is sheer and unlikely to be assaulted; this was the only place where Meles the former king of Sardis had not carried the lion which his concubine had borne him, the Telmessians having declared that if this lion were carried around the walls, Sardis could never be taken. Meles then carried the lion around the rest of the wall of the acropolis where it could be assaulted, but neglected this place, because the height was sheer and defied attack. It is on the side of the city which faces towards Tmolus. [4] The day before, then, Hyroeades, this Mardian, had seen one of the Lydians come down by this part of the acropolis after a helmet that had fallen down, and fetch it; he took note of this and considered it. [5] And now he climbed up himself, and other Persians after him. Many ascended, and thus Sardis was taken and all the city sacked. (Herodotus and Godley trans. 1920)

The manner in which Cyrus conquered the city and took the Lydian Empire needs to be remembered, as he attacked like a thief in the night coming in via a way not guarded or anticipated. This is not the first time the city, prior to building a lower section, fell.

History repeated itself. The same thing happened about 320 years later, when Antiochus the Great captured Sardis through the exploit of Lagoras (who had learned surefootedness on the precipitous mountains of his native Crete). Once more the garrison in careless confidence were content to guard the one known approach, and left the rest of the circuit unguarded, under the belief that it could not be scaled. (Ramsay 1904, 362)

Twice, in the history of Sardis, the city was overly confident in its perceived strategic position and felt that nothing could touch it. Yet in both cases, an army, acting much like a thief, would scale up the cliff and enter via a path not expected, guarded, or anticipated. As the city grew, and due to the constant erosion taking place on the acropolis, it expanded onto the lower plain.

It is plain that the greatness of Sardis under the Roman rule was rooted in past history, not in present conditions. The acropolis ceased during that period to be the true city; it was inconvenient and useless;

and it was doubtless regarded as a historical and archæological monument, rather than a really important part of the living city. (Ramsay 1904, 367)

It was located some fifty miles east of Ephesus on a northern spur of Mt. Tmolus overlooking the broad and fertile plain of the Hermus. The acropolis, with its nearly perpendicular rock walls rising 1,500 feet above the lower valley (on all but the south side), was essentially inaccessible and provided a natural citadel. As Sardis grew, it became necessary to develop a lower city to the north and west of the acropolis on the banks of the Pactolus, a southern tributary of the Hermus. (Mounce 1997, 91-92)

In A.D. 17 Sardis suffered a catastrophic earthquake, but it was rebuilt with considerable help from the emperor Tiberius (10,000,000 sesterces—about a million dollars—and five years of tax remission. (Mounce 1997, 92)

An inscription found inside the temple itself bears witness to the banking functions of temples in the Graeco-Roman world. Temples, of course, had immense treasuries that were protected by the taboos against sacrilege. Stealing from a temple was not like stealing from somebody's house. If you stole from a temple, you defiled the holy place and brought upon your head the curses of the gods, which were, of course, also more locally reinforced by the legal systems in place throughout the Graeco-Roman world. (deSilva 2018, Sardis)

One can also find evidence in Sardis of the city's residents enjoying the same benefits of a system of running water as had other cities in Asia Minor. A good deal of clay piping has been uncovered just beneath the surface, showing the steady distribution of water from some central node through the many public and private areas of the city. (deSilva 2018, Sardis)



(Bolen, Sardis latrines near gymnasium 2012, Used with Permission)

The people of Sardis had a special interest in death and immortality, and much of their religious life was nature worship focusing on the fertility cycle and bringing life out of death. A sacred hot springs two miles from the city seems to have been connected with the god of the underworld and these same themes. (Osborne 2002, 172)



(Bolen, Sardis Temple of Artemis 2012, Used with Permission)

It was dedicated to a local Asiatic goddess usually referred to as Cybele, who was identified with the Greek Artemis. This patron deity was believed to possess the special power of restoring the dead to life. (Garland 2006, Re 3:1)

The principal attractions at the site of Sardis are a large gymnasium complex and a synagogue, both of which date from the mid-to-later Roman period. The gymnasium itself was constructed in the mid-second century AD, although there is evidence of improvements into the third century AD. The large grassy expanse in this picture was originally the palaestra of the gymnasium—the main exercise courtyard where a variety of athletic games would be played and where individuals could exercise or wrestle or practice boxing or any other of a wide variety of sports. The palaestra was about 65 × 65 meters [71 × 71 yards], and it was surrounded on all sides by a columned portico. Only a handful of columns remain from the southeastern corner of the palaestra. (deSilva 2018, Sardis)



(Bolen, Sardis gymnasium palaestra 2012, Used with Permission)

The people of Sardis were into sports big time.

Josephus

KING ANTIOCHUS TO ZEUXIS, HIS FATHER, SENDETH GREETING.

“If you are in health, it is well. I also am in health. Having been informed that a sedition is arisen in Lydia and Phrygia, I thought that matter required great care; and upon advising with my friends what was fit to be done, it hath been thought proper to remove two thousand families of Jews, with their effects, out of Mesopotamia and Babylon, unto the castles and places that lie most convenient; for I am persuaded that they will be well disposed guardians of our possessions, because of their piety towards God, and because I know that my predecessors have borne witness to them that they are faithful, and with alacrity do what they are desired to do. I will, therefore, though it be a laborious work, that thou remove these

Jews; under a promise, that they shall be permitted to use their own laws; and when thou shalt give every one of their families a place for building their houses, and a portion of land for their husbandry, and for the plantation of their vines; and thou shalt discharge them from paying taxes of the fruits of the earth for ten years; and let them have a proper quantity of wheat for the maintenance of their servants, until they receive bread-corn out of the earth; also let a sufficient share be given to such as minister to them in the necessaries of life, that by enjoying the effects of our humanity, they may show themselves the more willing and ready about our affairs. Take care likewise of that nation, as far as thou art able, that they may not have any disturbance given them by anyone.” Now these testimonials, which I have produced, are sufficient to declare the friendship that Antiochus the Great bare to the Jews. (Josephus and Whiston 1987, 317-318)

One of the largest synagogues ever excavated was built there in the second century A.D. Since it is part of a gymnasium complex, it seems Jewish and Hellenistic life had a remarkable confluence there, and Hemer (1986: 137) thinks this may demonstrate a Jewish and Christian accommodation to pagan surroundings, a syncretism with the local culture. While Christian syncretism cannot be known from outside sources, there are some indications in this letter that would support such a conclusion. (Osborne 2002, 172)



(Bolen, Sardis synagogue aerial 2012, Used with Permission)

Toward the center of the great hall was a table for reading from the Torah. A particularly interesting feature of this synagogue is the reuse of pagan sculpture in the construction of the internal furnishings of the synagogue. It may indeed be the only example of such a practice from antiquity. A pair of lions, perhaps originally taken from a Cybele shrine such as the one that had been operative in Sardis prior to the Christianization of the empire, once flanked this table. (deSilva 2018, Sardis)



(Bolen, Sardis synagogue 2012, Used with Permission)

The table itself was supported by stone blocks that sported carvings of the eagle. These eagles were probably originally carved as symbols of Zeus, as they appear to be bearing thunderbolts. Although another interpretation of what the eagles are holding in their talons would suggest that these eagles were symbols of Rome carrying the lictors' rods, the rods that were the symbol of an important office in Roman administration. (deSilva 2018, Sardis)

Christianity continued to grow in Sardis. The congregation that was addressed by John in Rev 3 did in some sense become watchful, and they did strengthen what was on the verge of dying. Melito is known in the second century, particularly for his homily on the passion of Christ. Melito was also the bishop over the church or churches in Sardis in the second century. (deSilva 2018, Sardis)

One can also find the remains of a fourth-century church built into the side of the temple of Artemis.

Revelation 3:1–6

“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’” (NASB95)

There is something missing in this letter that all the previous letters had, a commendation. Jesus has nothing good to say about this church. Whatever is going there, none of it is worthy of commendation from Jesus.

Jesus holds, He has control of the seven Spirits of God.

Isaiah 11:2

“The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.” (NASB95)

John 14:16–21

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My

commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.” (NASB95)

By Jesus intentionally starting the letter off this way, He is reminding them that it is His completed work on the cross that results in the Holy Spirit coming to indwell each believer. If the church is unfamiliar with Jesus, then they are unfamiliar with the work of the Holy Spirit and they are in deep trouble.

Revelation 3:1

To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: “I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.” (NASB95)

Jesus also has the seven stars – these are the angels who are assigned to each church for oversight. Jesus goes back to the original vision of John in Revelation 1. This church has a need to know they are dealing with the resurrected Christ.

Note that Jesus controls and has sent both the Spirit and a guardian angel to every church, including modern-day churches. The question is whether the Sardis church will listen and follow the risen Lord’s instructions. That will determine whether it has a future. So far it has refused to do so, and as a result it is in danger of losing its place in God’s community. If Jesus is in control, the church will answer to him and to him alone. There must be an end to listening to the world and following its terrible path. (Osborne, Revelation: Verse by Verse, Osborne New Testament Commentaries 2016, 84)

They have a name. The word used is ὄνομα - proper name of an entity, name. (Arndt, et al. 2000, 711) Stop and think like a 1st Century Jew for a moment. For a Jew, rather the pronounce the name of YAHWEH, they would instead say “the name.” This church does not have “the name” but they have “a name” and in the world of Greek philosophers, that could mean they have a reputation, but not “the name.”

“Name” in the sense of “repute,” Hom. Od., 24, 93 f.; synon. with κλέος. Thuc., II, 64, 3: ὄνομα μέγιστον ἔχειν, Strabo, IX, 1, 23: ἐν ὀνόματι εἶναι “to have a name,” “to be known.” (Bietenhard 1964-, 244)

Revelation 3:1

To the angel of the church in Sardis write the following: This is the solemn pronouncement of the one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your deeds, that you have a reputation that you are alive, but in reality you are dead.” (NET)

Jesus knows the deeds of this church, they have a reputation for being a church, but it is false reputation. They have a name of church, but when you really get down to it, they are not a church. They have the same type of problem that another group of people had that Jesus dealt with in Israel. That group was all about outward appearances and a good reputation with no inner reality.

Matthew 23:13–28

“But woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You keep locking people out of the kingdom of heaven! For you neither enter nor permit those trying to enter to go in. Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You cross land and sea to make one convert, and when you get one, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves! Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple is bound by nothing. But whoever swears by the gold of the temple is bound by the oath.’ Blind fools! Which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold sacred? And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing. But if anyone swears by the gift on it he is bound by the oath.’ You are blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and the one who dwells in it. And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and the one who sits on it. Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You give a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, yet you neglect what is more important in the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness! You should have done these things without neglecting the others. Blind guides! You strain out a gnat yet swallow a camel! Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of

the cup and the dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside may become clean too! “Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs that look beautiful on the outside but inside are full of the bones of the dead and of everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you look righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” (NET)

The “name” or reputation of this church is to the effect that they live, i.e., they have spiritual life. Ζῆς (“you live”) is from the verb ζάω (zaō, “I live”), which needs to be distinguished from the word-group of βίος (bios, “life”). The former refers to inner life, the latter to external. In John’s writings zaō is life that belongs primarily and essentially to God and Christ (cf. 1:18). This is the word’s connotation here. The recipients of the message had a semblance of possessing eternal life. Herein lies the deception, however. “And [yet] you are dead” reflects the superficiality of their Christianity. (Thomas 1992, 247)

They claim the Christian name “Life,” but actually retain the pagan name “Death.” Their past deeds and wealth have given them a good reputation for being alive for Christ, but in reality their present deeds prove they are spiritually dead, part of the world. (Osborne, Revelation: Verse by Verse, Osborne New Testament Commentaries 2016, 84-85)

This church is not dead from the perspective that there is no one involved in the church, but when you look at the close relationship the Jewish synagogue had with the world around it in Sardis, it appears the church may have taken the same approach. To look at it in terms we understand today, this large church had multiple campuses throughout the city. There was always something going on with a different function to go to each night of the week. Busy, busy, busy. They were doing church, they had a large choir, big buildings, they looked like they were really booming. Inside was a different story.

To use some of the metrics I hear bantered about in church speak today, they had lots of baptisms going on; good growth, good tithing, lots of folks coming, good attendance, and good market appeal with a sound recognizable brand, television, radio, podcasts, books...it was going on. But none of it is about Jesus or making disciples.

The church in Sardis, or modeled on it, is not your 1st Church of Geriatrics with a Pastor fixing to resign or retire.

But this church had a huge problem per Jesus – they were dead. He saw inside the church, not the building, but the people, and saw it for what it really was.

This indicates no struggle, no fight, no persecution. It wasn’t that the church at Sardis was losing the battle. A dead body has lost the battle, and the fight seems over. In this letter Jesus didn’t encourage the Christians in Sardis to stand strong against persecution or false doctrine, probably because there simply wasn’t a significant danger of these things in Sardis. Being dead, the church in Sardis presented no significant threat to Satan’s domain, so it wasn’t worth attacking. (Guzik 2013, Re 3:1d)

Jesus is calling it what it is, this is the 1st Zombie church, the church of the living dead. This is the Church of Unguarded Hen Houses. They had a great press release, their pastor was invited to pray everywhere and attend the Caesar prayer breakfasts, just don’t bother to look close enough to see that they are really dead. I have seen churches like this, dead and they do not know it. While in Bible School, we used to joke about this kind of church, we called them the Ichabod Church. We were scared for any church that might be headed that way. You wanted to stand up in the pew and scream stop to a room full of people who were really nice people, but nothing was going on spiritually at all. One was the church I grew up in. It no longer even exists.

1 Samuel 4:21–22

And she called the boy Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel,” because the ark of God was taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband. She said, “The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God was taken.” (NASB95)

Dead, dead, dead. Let's take a look at how we are doing here tonight. Tonight, is Wednesday, and those of you who are here show that there is a hunger for the Word but...

In this church presently there are over 1500 families who call this their church home. How many of them attend worship each week? Right now, less than half. We teach the Bible expositively. We are spirit led and spirit filled but the danger exists.

For the most part, even in our most orthodox churches, I see nothing but deadness. The meetings for worship are poorly attended. The people, it is obvious, seldom read, much less study, the Scriptures. Prayer appears, usually, to be the stating of words (accurate enough), but not the pleading of burdened hearts. The worship of Christ, for the vast majority of those who profess faith in him, is a convenience, not a necessity. (Fortner 2002, 135)

As we have seen with the previous four churches, there is a church age that seems to approximate the church being described, we also see that this is an actual church in existence at the time of John, and we also see an example of each church today, We see quite a few like this one. Whole national churches.

This is another church, just like the one in Thyatira, that will still be around at the end of the age. There are references to the rapture for this church just like we saw with Thyatira. If you were looking through church history for this church, it would approximate the church of the reformation.

2 Timothy 3:2-7

"For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (NASB95)

In keeping with the prophetic foreshadowing of the church age as seen in the other churches, some have held that the church at Sardis is a picture of the church in the time of the Protestant Reformation when a great mass of Christendom was dead even though it had a name that it lived. During those years only a small believing portion took their stand for true biblical revelation and trusted in Christ as Saviour. The characteristics of the church in Sardis remarkably parallel those of the church in the period of the Protestant Reformation. This fact seems to confirm the judgment that the message delivered to this first century church was prophetic of the future of the church at large during this period. (Walvoord 2008, 83)

During the period of the Protestant Reformation the Protestant church had a reputation for being sound, but really it was quite dead. The reformers affected a return to the doctrines of salvation by grace and the priesthood of all believers, but they and their disciples could not agree on many other doctrines. This resulted in denominationalism that has fragmented the church ever since destroying its unity and marring its testimony. The faithful few of this period were those who held to the truths of Scripture that the Reformation discovered anew but did not agree with the errors of its leaders. (Constable 2003, Re 3:4)

Christ owned in word, ignored in deed; creeds correct, conduct respectable, life departed. How does it please the Lord, who is looking for love from the Church, that it should have sound doctrine or outward propriety, if the affections are not only waning, but gone, His name held, His word read, His truth owned, Himself forgotten? Such was the state of the assembly at Sardis. It had become just a part of the world, as barren and lifeless towards God as any other portion. (Baines 2005, 44-45)

A breach with Rome, a restoration of the Word of God, a fresh revival of truth, ending, however, in a system or systems characterized by a fatal defect of spiritual power, and churches with an unconverted membership, God's saints being scattered through the mass,—living themselves, but unable to vitalize it: such are the characteristics, easily to be read, of the national churches which sprang out of the Protestant Reformation. (Grant 2005, 164)

Sardis represents the proud mainline denominational churches who have lost their mooring in the Spirit of Christ. It is the beautiful but dead church, one that looks lovely on the outside but has no life on the inside. (Missler 2017, Kindle Locations 1082-1084)

One leader describing how his denomination came to abandon the gospel explained how our first generation preached the gospel and then worked out the social implications of the gospel. The second generation assumed the gospel, neglected it, and continued with the social implications. The third generation totally ignored and even rejected the gospel but continues with the social implications. (Lutzer 2018, 201)

1 Peter 5:8

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 11:14

“No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” (NASB95)

The church at Sardis looked really good, but they were really dead. Just like what we are seeing in the church today.

A slowly declining minority of adults attend Sunday worship services, where the average sermon length has dropped by more than 30 percent since 1980. Barely one out of ten adults attends a Sunday school class these days. Most churches have eliminated their Sunday or Wednesday evening services— and many have scratched both. In many churches, those events have been replaced by “small groups” that meet in people’s homes, but attendance at those gatherings has also dropped from 23 percent to just 10 percent in the past decade. Further, Christians across the nation indicate that the emphasis in these meetings is more on developing a sense of community than providing insightful biblical instruction. (Barna 2016, Kindle Locations 566-571)

2 Timothy 4:1–4

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.” (NASB95)

We have arrived at an example of the present-day church. Remember, the last four churches in this section of Revelation are churches that clearly will be around at the end of the age, there are explicit references to each of these churches reflecting that embedded in the letter from Jesus to them. I believe the issue we see with the last four churches is also reflective of the pressures we will see in the last days – a pressure to compromise, look good doing so and revel in the financial freedom they have.

We are so concerned to have the numbers of people in the house in order to maintain the budget and make the payments on the debt. A debt that many times exceeds what used to be the budget for entire missionary organizations. Don’t get me wrong, there are churches out there who are spirit filled and spirit led; they are making disciples and working hard to achieve the great commission in our lifetime. Some of them are really big churches too. But this small group is under pressure. There is pressure to compromise on the word of God, to skip those things which address the culture full on. To not teach the full counsel of God as found in His entire word. The pressure to compromise is very real.

The ultimate end of a heightened investment in practical biblical instruction must be clearly understood. It would be the widespread embrace of a biblical worldview, wherein Christians possess sufficient scriptural knowledge and comprehension to make intelligent and biblically sound choices. With less than 10 percent of the adult born-again population currently possessing a biblical worldview, there is plenty of room for growth! (Barna 2016, Kindle Locations 641-644)

2 Chronicles 7:13–15

"If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place." (NASB95)

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