

Revelation Lesson 4

Reading: Revelation 3

Memory Verse: Revelation 3:15-16

Definitions:

Dead – spiritually inactive.

Raptured – taken to meet Christ in the air when He returns.

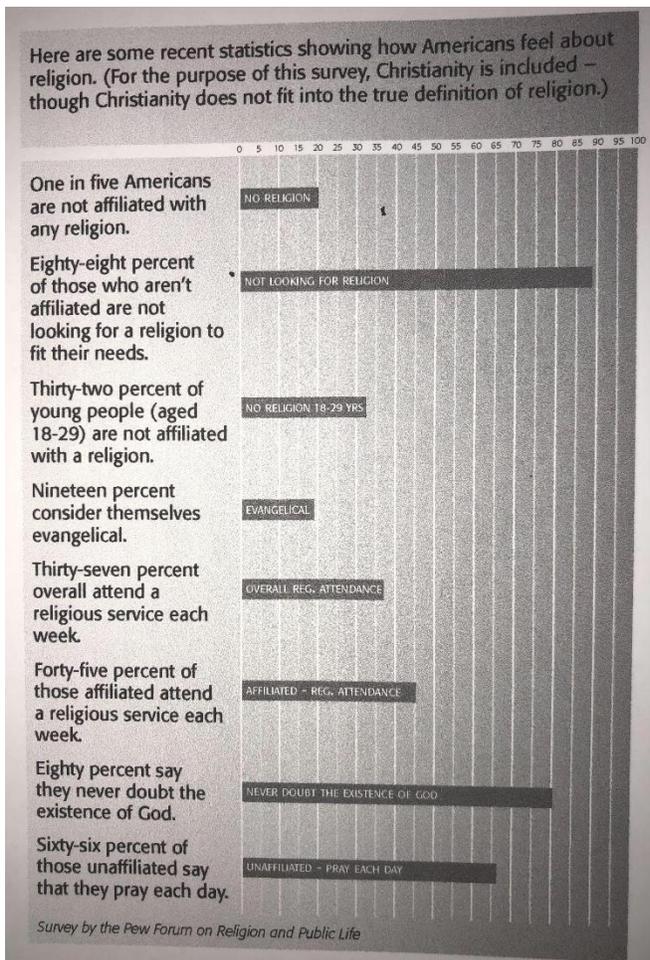
After reading the lesson, answer the questions using the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdR0w->

[AG46WzjvYs3oSiaJL2GnNtimWnThhYbFTJRErfCW2A/viewform?usp=sf_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdR0w-AG46WzjvYs3oSiaJL2GnNtimWnThhYbFTJRErfCW2A/viewform?usp=sf_link)

More mail

Think of the teenagers in your neighborhood. How many of them believe the Bible is true? How many of them pray often? How many of them attend church regularly? A poll was taken recently to ask teenagers these questions and several others. You might be surprised at the results. (All of these graphs show teens who either strongly or somewhat agree with the statement.)



Do you believe these statistics? Or do you think the teenagers who were asked these questions responded the way they thought they should? How would you have responded? Is there a difference between the way you think you *should* feel about church and prayer and the way you actually feel?

If you have problems turning your beliefs into actions, you are not alone. Christ was speaking about this very thing when he evaluated these churches.

Sardis (3:1-6) City

Sardis what is the capital of Lydia and an important trade city of Asia. The people thought they were safe within the city's walls, because Sardis was built on top of a cliff. But twice it was invaded and taken because the guards fell asleep.

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Description of Christ (v. 1a)

Christ described Himself as the one with the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. Throughout the Bible, the number seven indicates completeness. Christ has the fullness of the Spirit and is Lord over the church.

Commendation (vs. 4)

Christ had little good to say about this church, except to acknowledge that a few lived righteously.

Condemnation (vs. 1b-2)

In contrast, most of these church members were dead. They had a reputation for living for the Lord, but no longer demonstrated genuine Christianity. They had backslidden.

Counsel (vs. 2-3)

So Christ told them to *wake up! Strengthen what remains*. He warned the dead to wake up before it was too late. Furthermore, he advised them to remember the truth they knew and repent of their sin. Otherwise, they would experience unexpected judgment because He would come unannounced like a thief.

Promise (vs. 5-6)

But to those who overcome by demonstrating true faith in Christ, he promised white clothing, signifying purity, and a guarantee of eternal life.

Philadelphia (3:7-13)

City

The word Philadelphia means “brotherly love.” In a strategic location on the way from Rome to the East, Philadelphia was known as the gateway to central Asia. It was also known for farming, pottery-making and frequent earthquakes.

Description of Christ (v. 7)

To this church, Christ described himself as *holy and true, who holds the key of David* and the one who opens and shuts the doors. The reference to the key of David establishes Jesus as the promised Messiah as well as the holy, true God. As the one in charge of “doors,” he provides opportunities for ministry.

Commendation (vs. 8-10)

In spite of opposition from nonbelieving Jews (synagogue of Satan), the members of the Philadelphia church kept God’s word, did not deny him and stayed faithful to him.

Condemnation

Like the church at Smyrna, Christ did not condemn this one for anything.

Counsel (v. 11)

Yet he warned them to hold onto what they had so they would not lose their rewards in the future.

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Promise (vs. 10, 12-13)

Christ promised to keep them from *the hour of trial*. This probably refers to the tribulation, indicating the church is ruptured before that period. To those who overcame, He also promised positions of honor, permanent residency in heaven and new names.

Laodicea (3:14-22)

City

Laodicea was a prosperous city, known for its textile industry, medical school, eye powder and banking industry.

Description of Christ (v. 14)

To these believers, Christ presented himself as *the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Ruler of God's creation*. The Hebrew word *amen* is sometimes translated "truth," a title for God (Isaiah 65:16). He is the dispenser of truth as well as the Creator of all things.

Commendation

Unlike the other churches, Christ had nothing good to say about this one.

Condemnation (vs. 15-18)

Instead, he had a lot to say against them. First, Christ condemned their lukewarmness, or complacency. Second, he condemned their self-sufficiency. They did not even know they had needs that God wanted to provide.

Counsel (vs. 16-19)

So Christ warned them that he would spit them out of His mouth, or reject them, because they were apathetic. Since He loved them, He would rebuke and discipline them if they did not repent.

Promise (vs. 20-22)

Christ promised to have fellowship with the believers who invited Him into their everyday lives. To those who overcame, He also promised they would be with Him and rule with Him in his coming kingdom.

Fast Fact

Laodicea got its water from two sources several miles from the city – cold streams and hot springs. But the waters were lukewarm by the time they reached the city. Plus, the chemicals in the water gave a putrid, nauseating taste.

This water situation vividly pictures three spiritual conditions true of believers today as well as in the first century:

Cold -

Uncaring, with no interest in God

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Hot -

Genuinely excited about God and his Word

Lukewarm -

Half-hearted interest in God and his Word, with no desire to learn more; knowing the truth, but not accepting it

What temperature are you?