

# Revelation

Given to Christ by God the Father to Show His Servants the Things that Must Take Place

## I. The Author and Time of Writing

- A. 96 A.D.
- B. Apostle John (Revelation 1:2).
  - 1. John was a disciple of John the Baptizer (John 1:35).
  - 2. John followed Christ after John the Baptizer declared He was the Lamb of God (John 1:36).
  - 3. Christ called him to follow Him (Matthew 4:18–22).
  - 4. John and His brother James were partners with Peter (Luke 5:10).
  - 5. In the gospel, the Apostle wrote, he refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23).
  - 6. Jesus informs Peter that John will live to an old age (John 21:21–23).
  - 7. John was the last of the Apostles to die (98-100 A.D.).

## II. The Purpose of the Revelation

- A. The Revelation was given to Christ by the Father to show to His servants (Revelation 1:1).
  - 1. To show what makes take place.
  - 2. It was signified by His messenger to John.
- B. John bore witness of the word of God (Revelation 1:2).
- C. Happy are those who read (Revelation 1:3).
  - 1. Christians are not to fear the things in the book of Revelation.
  - 2. The Church is not appointed unto any quality of wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

## III. John Received the Message on the Island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9)

- A. He was exiled because of his testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:9).
- B. Likely during the reign of Domitian (AD 81–96).
  - 1. Titus Flavius Domitianus (AD 51–96).
  - 2. Eusebius describes Domitian as the second emperor after Nero.
  - 3. He was the last ruler of the Flavian dynasty.
  - 4. He persecuted the Christians because of their refusal to honor him as lord and god.
  - 5. He was assassinated in a palace conspiracy.
- C. Eusebius records John's release and return to Ephesus following Domitian's death in AD 96.

## IV. A Revelation from Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:1–3)

- A. Christ received the revelation from God the Father.
- B. The revelation is for the servants of Christ.
- C. The revelation indicates the things that must take place.
  - 1. The term “Shortly” may indicate time or speed.
  - 2. These things are necessary to come to be (Revelation 1:1).

3. The message was given to John (Revelation 1:1–2).
  - a) John bore witness of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.
  - b) John wrote down the things he saw.
- D. Happy are those who read and guard what is in the revelation.
  1. The Church is not appointed to this time (1 Thessalonians 5:9).
  2. The words of the prophecy bring a sense of contentment to the reader who guards them.
- V. **Written to the Seven Churches (Revelation 1:4–5)**
  - A. God—The One who was, Who is, and Who is to come (Revelation 1:4).
    1. God is referring to God the Son
    2. Christ existed as God before His incarnation (John 1:1).
    3. Christ is alive today, having been resurrected from the dead (Hebrews 7:25).
    4. Christ will return (Acts 1:11).
  - B. The Seven Spirits Before the Throne (Revelation 1:4).
    1. Represent the seven ministries of the Holy Spirit
    2. Christ possesses the seven Spirits (Revelation 3:1).
    3. The seven Spirits are the seven lamps burning before the throne (Revelation 4:5).
    4. The eyes on the Lamb that was slain are the seven Spirits (Revelation 5:6).
    5. The Seven Spirits' relationship to Christ and the Church indicates it is referring to the Holy Spirit.
    6. Grace and Peace never come from angels (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:2; Philemon 3; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2).
    7. The Seven Spirits are included in the salutation with God.
    8. The Seven Titles of the Holy Spirit Related to His Ministries to the Church (Revelation 1:4).
      - a) The Spirit of Holiness (Romans 1:4).
      - b) The Spirit of the Life (Romans 8:2).
      - c) The Holy Spirit of the Promise (Ephesians 1:13).
      - d) The Spirit of the Truth (1 John 4:6; John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13).
      - e) The Spirit of the Grace (Hebrews 10:29).
      - f) The Spirit of the Glory (1 Peter 4:14)
      - g) The Spirit of the Prophecy (Revelation 19:10).
  - C. From Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:5).
    1. The faithful witness (Hebrews 2:17; 3:5)
    2. Firstborn from the dead
      - a) Christ is the first of those resurrected from the dead (Colossians 1:18).
      - b) Firstborn relates to position, not creation (Hebrews 1:6).
      - c) The Church is the assembly of the firstborn (Hebrews 12:23).
      - d) Christ is the firstborn of many brethren (Romans 8:29).
    3. The ruler of the kings of the earth
      - a) The Father placed Christ above the principalities and authorities (Ephesians 1:21;

- Colossians 2:10).
- b) In Christ's resurrection, the principalities and authorities were disarmed (Colossians 2:15).
- c) He is King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16).
- 4. Jesus loved us and washed us from our sins with His own blood (Revelation 1:5).
  - a) The one who is washed (John 13:10).
  - b) He washed the Church (Ephesians 5:26).
  - c) The washing of regeneration by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).
  - d) Those who have washed their robes (Revelation 7:14).
  - e) Textual Variance:
    - (1) Washed or Loosed.
    - (2) Loosed is not used in Scripture related to sin.
    - (3) Washed directly relates to sin in Scripture.
- D. We are made kingdom of priest (Revelation 1:6).
  - 1. The Church is a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9).
  - 2. The Church is being built up as a holy (set apart) priesthood (1 Peter 2:5).
  - 3. Our priesthood relates to spiritual things, not physical things (1 Peter 2:5).
    - a) Presenting Your Body as a Living Sacrifice, which is our reasonable religious service, Romans 12:1–2).
    - b) Praise—the fruit of our lips confessing his name, Hebrews 13:15
    - c) Doing Good, Hebrews 13:16
    - d) Fellowshiping with other saints, Hebrews 13:16
    - e) Giving financial support to the ministry, Philippians 4:18 (2 Corinthians 9:7)
    - f) Faith – taking God at His Word, Philippians 2:17 (Hebrews 11:1)
  - 4. In heaven, the church will be directly involved in priestly service (Revelation 5:8).
- E. Christ is coming with clouds of saints (Revelation 1:7).
  - 1. Enoch testified of this event (Jude 14).
  - 2. When Christ returns, the resurrected Church will be with Him.
  - 3. These are not water clouds, but clouds of people (Hebrews 12:1).
- F. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:8).
  - 1. He knows the beginning from the ending (Isaiah 46:10).
  - 2. All things are brought together in Christ (Ephesians 1:10).

## VI. John Receives the Revelation from the Lord (Revelation 1:9–20)

- A. John was on the island of Patmos when he received the revelation (Revelation 1:9).
  - 1. Patmos is a small volcanic island in the Aegean Sea.
  - 2. Patmos is approximately 37 miles from Miletus (Present day Turkey).
  - 3. Patmos is not specifically names as a penal colony in extra Biblical material.
  - 4. The rugged terrain and isolation made it an ideal place for imposing banishment that did not include lose of citizenship or property).
  - 5. John was on the island because of his testimony of Jesus Christ
- B. John was in spirit on the Lord's day (Revelation 1:10).

1. "In spirit" refers to his human spirit, not the Holy Spirit.
  2. It indicates he was deep in rational thought.
  3. We worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:23–24).
  4. The Jew who is circumcised in the heart, in spirit (Romans 2:29).
  5. The restoration of a brother while being in a spirit of objectivity (Galatians 6:1).
  6. The Lord's day is Sunday: the first day of the week (Luke 24:1).
- C. John is instructed to write what he sees (Revelation 1:10–19).
1. He hears aloud voice declaring Himself as God.
  2. John is instructed to write to the seven churches (Revelation 1:11).
    - a) The seven assemblies represent the seven periods of the Church on earth.
    - b) The seven golden lampstands represent each assembly (Revelation 1:12).
    - c) John describes the One speaking to Him (Revelation 1:13–15).
    - d) The One speaking to John is holding seven stars: the seven pastors of the seven assemblies (Revelation 1:16).
    - e) John falls before the One speaking to him (Revelation 1:17).
    - f) The One speaking to John is Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:18).
      - (1) Jesus now possesses the keys of Hades and death.
      - (2) Through Jesus' death, Satan's authority over death was stripped from him (Hebrews 2:14).
      - (3) Saints sleep through Jesus; He determined with a person dies (1 Thessalonians 4:14).
    - g) John is instructed to write (Revelation 1:19).
  3. The Mystery of the Seven stars and the seven lampstands (Revelation 1:20).
    - a) The seven stars are the messengers of the seven assemblies.
    - b) The seven lampstands are the seven assemblies.

## VII. **The Seven Periods of the Church on Earth (Revelation 2:1–3:22).**

- A. Each of these assemblies represents the predominate condition of the Church on earth at different periods of its existence.
1. All of the assemblies already exist.
  2. The only assembly that no longer exists today is the Ephesus assembly (Revelation 2:5).
  3. The history of the Church reveals that these assemblies are referring to seven periods.
  4. These time periods begin shortly after the Apostolic period.
- B. The Ephesus Assembly (Revelation 2:1–7)
1. The Churches belong to God (Revelation 2:1).
  2. Paul taught the saints in Ephesus the entire counsel of God (Acts 20:27).
  3. Paul warned the assembly what would happen when he was gone (Acts 20:28).
  4. John writes to the pastor of the assembly (Revelation 2:1).
  5. Christ knows their works, labor, and patience (Revelation 2:2).
  6. This assembly does not tolerate wrong (Revelation 2:2).
  7. After the twelve apostles, many false ones came. This assembly exposed them for being liars (Revelation 2:2).

- a) Their testing was to cause these false apostles to fail (Revelation 2:2).
- b) The requirements for an Apostle.
  - (1) Chosen by Christ, Himself (John 15:16).
  - (2) Had to have seen Christ while He was on earth (Acts 1:21–22).
  - (3) Had to have witnessed the resurrection; seen Christ after His resurrection (Acts 1:22; 1 Corinthians 15:8).
  - (4) There are only twelve Apostles for the lamb (Revelation 21:14).
  - (5) Paul is the twelfth (1 Corinthians 15:8–9).
- 8. They tolerated and had patience, laboring because of Christ's name (Revelation 2:3).
- 9. They lost their first love (Revelation 2:4).
  - a) This is the love of fellow saints (John 13:34; 1 John 4:21).
  - b) Their focus was on dealing with false apostles, not loving the brethren.
  - c) This lost of love is manifested in an indifference for fellow saints (1 John 4:20).
- 10. They are instructed to return from where they have fallen (Revelation 2:5).
  - a) Their first work is to love the brethren.
  - b) Without love, there is no value to their works (1 Corinthians 13:1–3).
  - c) If they do not change their mind, Christ will remove their lamp stand from it place (Revelation 2:5).
    - (1) This is the only assembly that is removed.
    - (2) Due to their failure to change their mind, this assembly is no longer present on the earth.
- 11. They were indifferent to the works of the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:6).
  - a) The Nicolaitans are those who seek victory over the people.
  - b) The doctrine of the Nicolaitans is the separation of the clergy from the assembly.
- 12. The reward for those in the assembly who are overcomers (Revelation 2:7).
  - a) The overcomer is the one who believes the gospel for salvation (1 Corinthians 15:3–4; 1 John 5:4–5).
  - b) They will partake of the fruit of the tree of life in the paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).
    - (1) Paradise is at the edge of the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2–4).
    - (2) The Church saints who have passed away reside in the third heaven in the presence of God (2 Corinthians 5:8).
    - (3) These saints will have access to the tree of life to sustain their physical bodies.
    - (4) They do not possess a resurrected body or save soul
      - (a) All church saints will be resurrected at the same time (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17).
      - (b) The soul is last part to be saved (1 Peter 1:9).
      - (c) When we see Christ, we will be like Him (1 John 3:2).
- 13. This assembly represents the predominate condition of the Church from AD 96 to 170.
  - a) The Church as a whole was being impacted by false apostles.
  - b) Even during the Apostolic Period many false apostles were present (2 Corinthians 11:5–they called themselves the eminent apostles).

- c) Paul taught for two years at the school of Tyrannus in Ephesus (Acts 19:8–9).
  - d) Paul remained in Ephesus for three years (Acts 20:31).
  - e) Timothy was sent by Paul to oversee the assembly to charge them concerning those who were bringing in different teachings (1 Timothy 1:3).
  - f) Church history indicates John resided in Ephesus after his return from Patmos.
  - g) By AD 614 the Christian community was no longer present in the city.
  - h) Under Onesimus they began to dimension.
    - (1) Ignatius of Antioch wrote about the assembly under Onesimus.
    - (2) Under Onesimus, the assembly focused on orderly conduct, truthfulness, and freedom from heresy.
  - i) By the early second century under Polycrates, the assembly was completely lost.
    - (1) He was known for defending the tradition of observing the Passover on the fourteenth day of Nisan; rather than on the following Sunday.
    - (2) He resisted the western influence of Rome on the Church.
- C. The Smyrna Assembly (Revelation 2:8–11).
1. Christ is the one who is first and last; having died, he now lives (Revelation 2:8).
  2. They are financially poor, but wealthy in doctrine (Revelation 2:9).
  3. The synagogue of Satan (Revelation 2:9).
    - a) Satan is mimicking Christianity (2 Corinthians 11:15).
    - b) The synagogue of Satan are those who claim to take the place of the Jews.
  4. This assembly faces ten periods of severe persecution (Revelation 2:10).
    - a) Nero AD 64–68.
      - (1) Persecution on the Church was triggered by a great fire in Rome.
      - (2) It is recorded that he used Christians to light his garden.
      - (3) Peter and Paul were killed during Nero's reign.
      - (4) The Roman historian Tacitus provides the political context and the clear motive (scapegoating).
      - (5) The historian Suetonius provides corroboration of the state's hostile policy.
      - (6) Clement of Rome's writing in AD 95–96 provides the internal, eyewitness-adjacent verification of the suffering endured by the Christian community in Rome.
    - b) Domitian (duh-MISH-un) AD 81–96.
      - (1) The Church was persecuted because of their rejection of Domitian's claim of deity.
      - (2) Domitian's enforcement was centralized and aimed at consolidating absolute autocratic control.
    - c) Trajan (TRAY-jun) AD 112–117.
      - (1) Trajan provided a legal framework for the treatment of Christians, moving localized violence towards a formalized administrative stance.
      - (2) The persecution of Christian became a legal matter. Thus, explicit charges had to be stated, rejecting the commonly used anonymous accusations previously accepted.

- (3) To demonstrate their rejection of Christianity, the accused had to make a sacrifice to the Roman gods.
- (4) It was the refusal of Christians to submit to the traditional way of the ancestors in public ritual of state worship that constituted a crime worthy of death in the eyes of the Roman law.
- (5) Trajan institutionalized the reality that being a Christian in the Roman Empire was an act of civil disobedience.
- (6) Trajan began legal warfare against the Church.
- d) Marcus Aurelius AD 161—180.
  - (1) During Marcus' reign, the Roman empire faced many catastrophes, which the local magistrates used to increase persecution on the Christians in an attempt to please their gods.
  - (2) The most noted instance of state-sanctioned bloodshed during the reign of Marcus occurred in Gaul.
    - (a) Local authorities explicitly encouraged popular violence, torturing and executing the Christian community.
    - (b) The Emperor's response to the governor of Gaul seeking guidance was effectively a death warrant for Christians.
    - (c) He ordered that those who confessed to being Christians should be executed, while those who recanted should be released.
    - (d) This legalized the mob type of action against Christians and ensured that the "confession" itself was a capital offense.
  - (3) Marcus Aurelius's actions did not necessarily stem from an obsessive personal crusade against a specific theological sect, but rather from a cold, pragmatic commitment to the integrity of the Roman state.
    - (a) Marcus Aurelius viewed Christianity as a destabilizing force that threatened the fragile cohesion of an empire already on the brink of collapse.
    - (b) Marcus Aurelius set a dangerous precedent concerning when the state feels its existence is threatened.
- e) Septimius Severus (sep-TIM-ee-us seh-VEER-us) AD 202–210.
  - (1) Septimius Severus persecuted the Church out of hatred.
  - (2) Septimius Severus issued a decree that specifically forbade conversion to either Judaism or Christianity.
  - (3) Since the Christian faith refused to intermingle with the Roman polytheistic system, the state aimed to isolate the Church to stop its growth.
  - (4) Under Septimius Severus, the state moved from simply executing "obstinate" individuals to implementing proactive policies designed to stop the organizational expansion of the Church.
  - (5) The state's attempt to criminalize instruction and conversion only served to strengthen the internal resolve and theology of the Church.
  - (6) Under Septimius Severus the states persecution of the Church turned from legal to

- military.
- f) Maximinus the Thracian (mak-si-MY-nus the THRAY-shun) AD 235–238.
    - (1) His actions against the Church were designed to consolidate power.
    - (2) Maximinus Thrax was a soldier-emperor who rose through the ranks of the military.
      - (a) His reign was characterized by brutal purges of the Roman elite and a desperate need to secure the loyalty of the traditional Roman priesthods.
      - (b) His policy against the Church was not a codified, empire-wide law like the later edicts of Decius or Valerian, but rather a direct order to persecute the leaders of the Christian movement.
    - (3) Maximinus Thrax primarily focused on the clergy, systematically attempting to execute or exile the heads of the major Christian centers, aiming to cause a collapse of leadership and, consequently, the disintegration of the local congregations..
  - g) Decius (DEE-shus) AD 250–251.
    - (1) Decius instituted the first empire-wide systematic attempt to eradicate the Church through forced apostasy.
    - (2) In early 250 AD, Decius issued an edict mandating that all Roman citizens perform a public sacrifice to the gods in the presence of a commission of local officials to receive a certificate (libellus) as proof of loyalty.
    - (3) Decius aimed to break the Church’s internal cohesion and coerce them back into the Roman religious fold by forcing Christians to perform public acts of idolatry.
    - (4) The libellus turned every citizen into a potential agent of state enforcement.
      - (a) The Covid era of 2021 mimicked this type of citizen enforcement.
      - (b) Adherence to the government was forced by certification of immunization that was in contrast to religious beliefs and government laws.
      - (c) There was a strong attempt by the state to eradicate religious exemption and medical freedom.
      - (d) The Covid era is not similar in persecution, only in the method of control.
    - (5) The leadership of the Church was targeted in an attempt to disintegrate the assemblies.
    - (6) When the threat of death did not yield compliance, the state employed sophisticated, rhythmic torture meant to break the resolve of the individual without immediately killing them, hoping to secure a public renunciation of Christ.
    - (7) Decius further moved the state from a legal persecution of Christians for local civil disobedience to an issue of war for the foundational identify of the empire itself.
  - h) Valerian (vuh-LEER-ee-un) AD 257–259.
    - (1) Valerian (reigned 253–260 AD) accelerated the transition of the Roman state from an engine of sporadic legal harassment into a systematic program of state-sponsored dismantling of the Church as an institution.
    - (2) Following the shock of the Decian (DEE-shun) persecution, Valerian initially

appeared tolerant, but his policy shifted drastically in 257–258 AD due to mounting pressure from the Persian threat and internal economic crises.

- (3) The Edict of 257 AD was intended to decapitate the Church's organization by attacking the leadership.
  - (a) Bishops, priests, and deacons were forced to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods or face exile.
  - (b) Christian assemblies were forbidden, and the use of cemeteries for gatherings was prohibited.
- (4) The Edict of 258 AD brought total war on the Church.
  - (a) Bishops, priests, and deacons were to be executed immediately upon refusing the sacrifice.
  - (b) Christians of high social rank were stripped of their honors and property, even facing execution if they persisted in their faith.
  - (c) High-ranking women were to be stripped of their property and sent into exile.
- (5) Valerian's policy was uniquely focused on the Church as a property-owning, organized entity.
  - (a) He understood that to kill the Church, one had to strike at its hierarchy and its holdings.
  - (b) By confiscating the property of the nobility and the burial grounds, the Roman state attempted to render Christianity homeless and impoverished.
- i) Aurelian (aw-REE-lee-un) AD 270–275.
  - (1) Aurelian's primary religious objective was to establish the cult of Sol Invictus (the Unconquered Sun) as the supreme state religion.
  - (2) Aurelian was not interested in reviving the traditional, fractured pagan pantheon, which he saw as insufficient for imperial unity.
  - (3) Aurelian sought to create a state-sponsored "solar" monotheism.
  - (4) Since the Church also presented a coherent, universal, and "monotheistic" structure, Aurelian's state cult was effectively competing for the same ideological space that Christianity occupied.
  - (5) Initially, Aurelian was relatively indifferent to the Church, maintaining the status quo of the "Little Peace" that followed the collapse of Valerian's persecutions.
  - (6) Aurelian's attitude toward Christianity changed toward the end of his reign when he directly intervened in the politics of the Church.
    - (a) The pivotal moment for Aurelian's involvement in church affairs was a result of Paul of Samosata, the Bishop of Antioch, who had been deposed by a synod of bishops for heresy.
    - (b) Paul refused to vacate the church building, appealing to Aurelian to decide between the two factions.
    - (c) Aurelian deferred the decision to the bishops in communion with the See of Rome, which socked the Roman Administration.
    - (d) By involving himself in the case of Paul of Samosata, he established a precedent

where the Roman state could act as an enforcer of Church discipline.

- (7) The persecution of the Church transitions from military might to administrative oversight and influence.
- j) Diocletian (dye-oh-KLEE-shun) and Galerius (guh-LEER-ee-us) AD 303–324.
  - (1) The persecution under Diocletian and his Caesar, Galerius, known as the “Great Persecution” (303–311 AD), was the final, largest, and most systemic attempt by the Roman Empire to eradicate Christianity.
  - (2) It was a concerted effort by the Tetrarchy (TET-rar-kee. Rule by four) to re-establish the absolute, divine authority of the Roman state by purging the “Christian infection” from its ranks, military, and institutions.
  - (3) In the First Edict, Churches were to be demolished, and all Christian scriptures and liturgical books were to be surrendered and burned.
  - (4) In the Second Edict, all Christian clergy were to be arrested and imprisoned.
  - (5) In the Third Edict a general amnesty was offered to clergy who were willing to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods, but those who refused faced brutal torture.
  - (6) The Fourth Edict was the most radical step.
    - (a) It mandated that every citizen in the empire, regardless of sex or social status, must publicly offer sacrifice to the Roman gods.
    - (b) Failure to perform a sacrifice resulted in execution, forced labor in mines, or mutilation.
5. This was the predominate condition of the Church from AD 170 to 312.
  - a) The majority of the Church was killed by persecution.
  - b) Persecution also brought strength in doctrinal matters.
  - c) Those who are believers will receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).
    - (1) Only the Church receive the victor’s wreaths
    - (2) The overcomer is the one who believes in Jesus (1 John 5:5).
    - (3) The victor’s wreaths of the grace believer
      - (a) Incorruptible Crown – for exercising self-control in all things (1 Corinthians 9:25).
      - (b) Crown of Life – for enduring a temptation (James 1:12).
      - (c) Crown of Righteousness – for those who love His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8).
      - (d) Crown of Boasting – for Preaching the Gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:19).
      - (e) Crown for the Evangelists (Philippians 4:1)
      - (f) Crown of Glory—for pastors who serve well (1 Peter 5:4).
  - d) The second death will not hurt them (Revelation 2:11).
    - (1) The second death is for all the unsaved (Revelation 20:14).
    - (2) The second death has no power over those who are resurrected in the first resurrection (Revelation 20:6).
    - (3) The second death is total separation from God (Revelation 21:8).
- D. The Assembly in Pergamos (Revelation 2:12–17).
  1. The one who speaks to them has a tongue that is sharper than any two edge sword.

- a) The word of God has the ability to divide soul and spirit (Hebrews 4:12).
  - b) Christ knows truth from fiction; he knows what the assemblies are doing (Revelation 1:16).
2. They dwell where the throne of Satan resides (Revelation 2:13).
- a) Satan is the prince of the air and governs the world system (Ephesians 2:2).
  - b) Christianity become the state religion.
  - c) Constantine set the stage for the state to effectively govern the Church.
    - (1) The Edict of Milan in 313 AD ended the state-sponsored persecution of the Church.
    - (2) Through providing the Church with imperial patronage, tax exemptions, and resources to build, he integrated the Church into the Roman political order.
    - (3) This favorable influence made the Church susceptible to state influence and the lure of political corruption.
    - (4) The Council of Nicaea in 325 AD display this influence due to Constantine's involvement in arbitrating ecclesiastical disputes.
  - d) The way of Balaam enters the Church.
    - (1) The merchandizing of saints for political prestige and wealth.
    - (2) Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness (2 Peter 2:15).
    - (3) The way of Balaam is the way of false teachers, cf. 2 Peter 2:1.
    - (4) The way of Balaam is to greedily seek after money; using the saints as a treasury (Jude 11).
  - e) The doctrine of the Nicolaitans further impacted the Church (Revelation 2:15).
3. Due to their failure to repent, the sword was brought against them (Revelation 2:16).
- a) The Byzantine–Sasanian War (602–628 AD).
  - b) This was a prolonged conflict between the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire—predominantly Christian—and the Zoroastrian Sasanian (Persian) Empire.
  - c) It devastated Christian populations, churches, and holy sites in the Levant, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and beyond.
  - d) It was one of the most destructive wars of late antiquity.
  - e) This war, although not directly aimed at the Church, exhausted both empires, making them vulnerable to the rapid Islamic conquests starting in the 630s.
4. The Overcomer (Revelation 2:17).
- a) The overcomer is the one who has Christ (1 John 4:4).
  - b) They will be sustained in Heaven while waiting for the resurrection—hidden manna (2 Corinthians 12:4—knowledge for the saint that resides in Heaven).
  - c) Each saint has a specific name given by Jesus—a white stone will be given with the name that no one else knows.
    - (1) The white stone is a small, worn smooth, pebble.
    - (2) These types of stones were used for casting votes (Acts 26:10).
    - (3) This stone carries a judicial weight—the stone is the token of vindication of the grace believer.

5. This was the predominate condition of the Church from AD 312–606.
    - a) In AD 313, Constantine legalizes Christianity.
    - b) In 380 AD, Christianity becomes of official religion of the Roman empire.
    - c) In 590 AD Pope Gregory I consolidates papal and political powers, creating the Papal States.
- E. The Thyatira Assembly (Revelation 2:18–29).
1. The One who has eyes like fire and feet like fine brass.
    - a) Judgment and refinement
    - b) Those of the Church are child-trained when they are judged (1 Corinthians 11:32).
  2. Catholicism becomes the predominate methodology in the Church
  3. The good works of the assembly increased (Revelation 2:19).
    - a) Prestigious Educational Institutes.
      - (1) The university system as it exists today is a direct descendant of the Church.
      - (2) The development of Western science of law owes a debt to Canon Law.
    - b) Hospitals and Orphanages.
      - (1) Monasteries and religious orders served as the primary, and often sole, providers of healthcare, hospices, and care for orphans and the poor for centuries.
      - (2) The concept of systematic, institutionalized charity and hospitals originated from the monastic model.
    - c) Scientific philosophy and methodology has its beginnings in the Church.
  4. The rise of the harlot Jezebel (Revelation 2:20).
    - a) The Church begins to mix with pagan religions
      - (1) Christmas—winter solstice. Adaptation of the yule tree.
      - (2) Easter—Adaptation of the Germanic goddess of spring.
    - b) Spiritual fornication is rapid in this assembly.
      - (1) The worship of Mary.
      - (2) The worship of saints.
    - c) Time was given to change the mind (Revelation 2:21).
    - d) Her and her daughters will be cast into the great tribulation (Revelation 2:22–23).
      - (1) The Eastern Orthodox Church—rejects the absolute authority of the Pope, the Immaculate Conception of Mary (as defined by Rome), and Purgatory.
      - (2) Lutheranism—Emerging from the work of Martin Luther. It retains much of the traditional liturgy while reforming the theology of justification.
      - (3) Anglicanism—maintains an episcopal structure inherited from the Catholic Church but incorporates Reformational theology.
      - (4) Reformed (Calvinist) Traditions—Presbyterians and the Dutch Reformed, pushed for a more radical restructuring of church government and a focus on the sovereignty of God, often departing significantly from the sacramental life of the Catholic tradition.
    - e) The art of Exorcism is developed—knowing the deep things of Satan (Revelation 2:24).
  5. To those who have not followed the harlot, no other burden will be put on them

- (Revelation 2:24).
- (1) They reject the idolatry from the harlot Jezebel.
  - (2) They reject knowing the deep things of Satan.
    - (a) Christians cannot be possessed by demons (1 John 5:18).
    - (b) Christians are not given authority to rebuke demons (Ephesians 6:13; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9).
6. The Overcomer will be given authority over the nations (Revelation 2:26–27).
- a) The Church will judge in the Millennial Kingdom.
  - b) The overcomer will be given the morning star.
    - (1) A part in the first resurrection: they are included with Christ the firstfruits of those out from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:23).
    - (2) Jesus is the morning star (Revelation 22:16).
    - (3) The morning star rising in the heart (2 Peter 1:19).
  - c) The one who overcomes is the one who believes the gospel for salvation (1 Corinthians 15:1–4; 1 John 5:4).
7. This was the predominate condition of the Church from AD 606–1520.
- F. The Sardis Assembly (Revelation 3:1–6)
1. Reformed Theology (Calvinism) becomes the predominate teaching of the Church (Revelation 3:1).
    - a) They are dead; many are unbelievers—do not teach the gospel for salvation (1 Corinthians 15:3–4).
    - b) They have a name that is alive (some are saved).
  2. They are to strengthen the things about to die—proper doctrine.
    - a) Their works have not been found to be mature.
    - b) They rejected the teaching of the harlot brought in by Catholicism.
    - c) Reformed Theology rejects the doctrine received from the Apostles.
      - (1) Reformed Theology presents a concept of Pre-election that is not compatible with Scripture (God has already chosen those who will be saved).
      - (2) Reformed Theology understands the Bible through the framework of Covenant Theology.
        - (a) Covenant of Works (with Adam): perfect obedience for life.
        - (b) Covenant of Grace (with Christ): salvation by grace through faith for all believers across history.
  3. The Overcomer
    - a) Will be clothed with white garments (Revelation 3:5).
      - (1) Represents a person who is righteous (Revelation 19:14).
      - (2) A whiteness that is beyond human ability (Mark 9:3).
    - b) His name will not be blotted out from the book of life (Revelation 3:5).
      - (1) The book of life contains all the names of the saved in all generations.
      - (2) Once your name is in the book, it will not be blotted out.
      - (3) Those names not written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire

(Revelation 20:15).

4. This was the predominate teaching of the Church from 1520 to 1730 AD.
  - a) The Reformation period (1520–1521 AD).
  - b) The Council of Trent (1545–1563).
    - (1) Roman Catholic Church codified its doctrine in response to the Protestant Reformation.
    - (2) Trent rejected Sola Scriptura, asserting that the Bible and the unwritten traditions of the Church possess equal authority.
    - (3) It condemned the doctrine of faith alone for salvation.
    - (4) It established the sacramental life of the Church to create a barrier against protestant views—Transubstantiation, Mass. etc.
  - c) The Rise of Protestant Scholasticism and Pietism (Mid 1600s to early 1700s).
    - (1) To guard against Catholicism, Protestantism became rigid and heavily ideological, prioritizing precise, propositional orthodoxies (Scholasticism).
    - (2) The Scholastic method forces theologians to deal with contradictions in Scripture.
    - (3) This era of Protestant Scholasticism resulted in the dense, systematic Confessions, such as the Westminster Confession of Faith. Their intent was to define theology with an unprecedented level of logical precision (1647 AD).
    - (4) Pietism prioritized the heart of religion over the rigid, intellectual, and institutionalized focus of the post-Reformed Church.
      - (a) The Lutheran Priest were the founders of Pietism.
      - (b) Church of the Brethren—founded in 1708 in Germany. Heavy focus on baptism and strict obedience to the law of Christ. Migrated to Pennsylvania.
      - (c) Reformed priest such as the Puritans.
      - (d) Rise to Wesleyanism—Methodist used the fundamental Pietist tenants, small groups, emphasis on new birth, and active social engagement.
- G. The Philadelphia Assembly (Revelation 3:7–13)
  1. The Lord has opened a door for this assembly that cannot be shut (Revelation 3:7).
  2. It is an assembly that is small in number, but strong in doctrine (Revelation 3:8).
  3. Those of the synagogue of Satan oppose them (Revelation 3:9).
    - a) The synagogue of Satan are those who claim to be Jews who are not.
    - b) This is a predominate teaching of Covenant Theology.
  4. This assembly will not go through the tribulation period (Revelation 3:10).
    - a) The majority of this assembly is saved.
    - b) This assembly will not remain after the rapture.
    - c) The unbelievers, who claim to be Christian, in the other assemblies will go into the tribulation.
  5. The Overcomer (Revelation 3:11–13).
    - a) Instructed to hold fast (Revelation 3:11).
    - b) Will be made a pillar in the Temple of God (Revelation 3:12).
    - c) The Name of God will be written on him (Revelation 3:12).

- d) The name of the New Jerusalem will be written on him (Revelation 3:12).
  - e) Jesus' New Name will be written on him (Revelation 3:12).
6. The predominate condition of the Church from 1750 to 1906 AD.
- a) The Enlightenment's Institution rose against the Church's role in the state.
    - (1) The systematic dismantling of the Church as the foundational authority of the nation-state.
    - (2) The French Revolution (1789)
      - (a) Confiscation of Church Property
      - (b) Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790)
    - (3) The university, once the stronghold of theological study, was repurposed to promote rationalism, secular law, and empirical science.
    - (4) The rise of the modern, centralized bureaucracy meant that civil life became governed by secular statutes rather than Christian morality.
  - b) The Rise of Higher Criticism from German Academia.
    - (1) Higher Criticism sought to strip the Bible of its supernatural authority by subjecting it to the same secular scrutiny applied to any other ancient relic.
    - (2) The driving force behind Higher Criticism was the Enlightenment assumption that the supernatural is impossible.
    - (3) By 1900, Higher Criticism had successfully colonized major Protestant seminaries in Europe and America.
    - (4) The Rise of Textual Criticism.
      - (a) Before the 18th century, textual scholars generally operated under the assumption that the "Received Text" (Textus Receptus) was essentially stable and reliable.
      - (b) The most significant institutional shift in Textual Criticism occurred with the 1881 publication of the Greek New Testament by Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton Hort.
  - c) The Second Great Awakening in the West.
    - (1) Revitalized religious practices.
    - (2) 1790s–early 1800s (Frontier phase): Revivals erupted in Kentucky and Tennessee among Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists.
    - (3) It fundamentally reconfiguration of American religious life, marking the transition of the United States from a nation of inherited, formalistic, and often static parish-based Christianity into a, voluntary religious culture where individual decision-making and engagement became the primary energy behind faith.
    - (4) The destruction of the barrier between the clergy and the laity for a democratic methodology.
    - (5) Birthed Social Activism within the Church.
      - (a) The American Bible Society—a non-profit organization founded in 1816 in New York City for the purpose to make the Holy Scriptures available to every person in the United States.

- (b) The American Tract Society—it was established in the early 19th-century by Protestant leaders to promote the distribution of Christian literature to individuals who were otherwise unreached.
- (c) Temperance Movement—a social and political movement led by Protestant denominations to mitigate the catastrophic effects of alcohol consumption on the American family and nation.
- (d) Social Activism turned the Church into a massive engine for social reform.
- d) The Great Protestant Missionary Movement.
  - (1) By 1900, tens of thousands of missionaries primarily from Britain, US, and Europe were active worldwide
  - (2) Expansion of translations of the Bible, founding of churches, schools, and hospitals all resulted from missionary work.
  - (3) Social reforms are often linked to evangelical Christianity.
    - (a) Abolishment of slavery.
    - (b) Women's education.
    - (c) Sunday school.
- H. The Laodicean Assembly (Revelation 3:14–22).
  1. The Amen, faithful and true witness, and beginning of creation speaks to this assembly (Revelation 3:14).
  2. The rise of progressive christianity.
  3. Its works are lukewarm, making them putrid (Revelation 3:14).
  4. They will be spewed out of Christ's mouth into the tribulation (Revelation 3:14).
  5. It is a wealthy assembly in worldly goods (Revelation 3:15).
    - a) It is poor in doctrine (Revelation 3:16–17).
    - b) It is counseled to buy refined gold from Christ so that may have white garments (Revelation 3:18).
      - (1) Going after proper doctrine.
      - (2) Obtaining salvation through the truth.
  6. Those whom the Lord loves he child-trains (Revelation 3:19).
    - a) God does not permit His children to be condemned with the world (1 Corinthians 11:32).
    - b) The Lord child-trains everyone He receives (Hebrews 12:5–6).
    - c) Child-training produces the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:11).
    - d) Those who are not child-trained do not belong to God (Hebrews 12:8).
  7. This assembly has left Christ outside the door (Revelation 3:20).
    - a) This is the door of the Church, not the heart of man.
    - b) Some in this assembly will be saved.
    - c) The majority are not saved.
  8. The Overcomer (Revelation 3:22)
    - a) Will be granted to sit on the throne with Christ.
    - b) They will reign with Christ.

9. The present predominate condition of the Church since the early 1900s.
  - a) The Pentecostal Movement.
    - (1) Focus on feelings over facts.
    - (2) Emerging from the remnants of the American Holiness movement, Pentecostalism shifted the focus of the faith from liturgy and theological orthodoxy toward subjective, ecstatic experience.
    - (3) The core theological innovation of the Pentecostal movement.
      - (a) The claim that the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
      - (b) Evidenced by glossolalia (speaking in tongues).
      - (c) Speaking in tongues is a requirement for the modern believer.
    - (4) Pentecostalism prioritizes the “fresh touch” of the Spirit over traditional systematic theology.
    - (5) Pentecostalism is intensely individualistic in its ideology.
  - b) The Rise of the Mega-Church.
    - (1) Beginning in the 1970s and accelerating through the 1990s, church leadership began to import techniques from secular corporate management.
    - (2) The pastor shifted from a shepherd of souls to a CEO, tasked with marketing the “product” of the church experience to a broader demographic.
    - (3) Megachurches often scrub denominational identity in favor of generic, upbeat, and non-threatening branding.
    - (4) Services were re-engineered. High-production music, professional staging, and abbreviated, therapeutic messages replaced rigorous biblical exposition.
    - (5) The goal is to provide a “user-friendly” experience that prevents members from feeling confronted by the difficult realities of sin, national duty, or historical Christian truth.
  - c) The Rise of Theological Liberalism and Modernism
    - (1) Coming out from the Hight Criticism movement, the infallibility of Scripture is replaced with major denominational teachings.
    - (2) Propositional Christianity—the Church is defined by abstract ideas and ideology rather than truth.
- I. The Seven Churches Describe the Seven Periods of the Church on Earth.
  1. The only assembly not present today is the Ephesus assembly because it lost its fist love—the love for the brethren.
  2. We are currently in the Laodicean period; the last period of the Church on earth.
    - a) An assembly that seeks worldly wealth over doctrine (Revelation 3:15–17).
    - b) Progressive Christianity is the focus.
      - (1) It is the secularization of the Church by its own internal leadership.
      - (2) It is a strategy of survival that involves stripping away every element of the faith that offends the modern world.
      - (3) It is the functional equivalent of a social club or a political advocacy group that retains the terminology of the Church only to gain legitimacy while preaching a

gospel of man-centered political change.

(4) It is fundamentally incompatible with the historic Christian faith.

3. The overcome is the one who is saved
  - a) Will eat from the tree of life in the garden of God (Revelation 2:7).
  - b) The second death will not harm (Revelation 2:11).
  - c) Will eat from the hidden manna (Revelation 2:17).
  - d) Is given a stone of vindication (Revelation 2:17).
  - e) Will receive a specific name from God (Revelation 2:17).
  - f) Given authority over the nations (Revelation 2:26).
  - g) Clothed with white garments (Revelation 3:4).
  - h) The overcomer's name will not be blotted out from the book of life (Revelation 3:4).
  - i) Made a pillar in the Temple of God (Revelation 3:12).
  - j) The name of God, the new Jerusalem, and Jesus' new name will be writing upon the overcomer (Revelation 3:12).
  - k) Sit with Christ on His throne (Revelation 3:21).

#### VIII. The Rapture and the Time before the Tribulation Begins

- A. The next prophetic event to happen.
- B. No other events will happen, or point to the coming of the man of lawlessness and the tribulation before the Tribulation period.
- C. The Dispensation of Grace will end (2 Thessalonians 2:3).
  1. The Church is removed from the earth is the rapture of the Church (2 Thessalonians 2:3).
  2. The rapture, based on the concept of our happy hope, is when all Church saints are resurrected (Titus 2:13).
    - a) There will be a generation of grace believers alive when this happens (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
      - (1) These men and women will not taste death.
      - (2) Death is generally appointed unto all men (Hebrews 9:27).
    - b) The Church will depart from the earth to meet Christ in the air (2 Thessalonians 2:3).
  3. The Events of the Rapture.
    - a) The Lord will descend with a shout from the archangel (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
      - (1) The demons are instructed by Michael, the archangel, to move out of the way.
      - (2) Spirit beings do not challenge those in authority (Jude 8–10).
    - b) The trumpet of God will sound—calling those who belong to Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
      - (1) The trumpet is a call to the Church saints.
      - (2) Unbelievers will not understand the sound (1 Corinthians 14:8).
    - c) The dead in Christ will rise (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
    - d) Those who are alive will be snatched up together with all the saints of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
    - e) This will all happen within the twinkling of an eye; a period of time that cannot be divided (1 Corinthians 15:52).

4. The rapture must happen before the man of lawlessness is revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).
  - a) Those who have not accepted the truth will be deceived by the man of lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:9–10).
  - b) The ten nations rise after the Church leaves the earth (Revelation 17:12).
  - c) Babylon the Harlot will rise and reside in Rome after the restrainer is gone (Revelation 17:5).
- D. The Rapture does not start the Tribulation Period. It is the signing of the seven year peace agreement with the man of lawlessness that begins the Tribulation period (Daniel 9:27).
- E. After the Rapture of the Church
  1. The Rise of Babylon the Harlot.
    - a) She is a mystery: not revealed today (Revelation 17:5).
    - b) The harlot will rule over nations (Revelation 17:15).
    - c) The harlot is directly involved in bringing the man of lawlessness into power (Revelation 17:3).
      - (1) Scarlet is the color of religion.
      - (2) The beast will rise as a religious man.
    - d) She will be an ecumenical system based upon the world religions.
      - (1) The unsaved in the assemblies of Thyatira (Catholicism), Sardis (Reformed), and Laodicea will be involved with the Harlot.
      - (2) Other world religions will also be integrated.
      - (3) The Church, all the believers of the dispensation of grace, are not present. Therefore Christianity will not be part of this religion, but Christendom will be.
        - (a) Christianity describes those who belong to the Church. They are the saved in the dispensation of grace.
        - (b) Christendom is Satan’s mimic of Christianity (2 Corinthians 11:15; Ephesians 2:2; Matthew 13:36–43).
  2. Rise of the ten kings; revived the Roman Empire (Revelation 17:12).
    - a) The ten kings are given power for one hour.
      - (1) The ten kings are not present before they are given power.
      - (2) The ten kings cannot rise until the Holy Spirit no longer restrains (2 Thessalonians 2:6–7).
    - b) The purpose of the rise of the ten kings is to bring the man of lawlessness into power (Revelation 17:13).
  3. The Man of Lawlessness comes into Power
    - a) The beast will not regard the god of his father, nor any gods (Daniel 11:37).
    - b) Women will not play a role in his ecumenical or governmental system—he has no delight in women (Daniel 11:37).
    - c) The revived Roman Empire (Revelation 17:9).
    - d) His power starts in Rome (Revelation 13:1).
    - e) He makes a seven year peace treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27).

(1) Israel's enemies who surround her are destroyed (Psalm 83).

(2) The man of lawlessness protects Israel (Matthew 24:6).

IX. The Resurrected Bride of Christ in Heaven (Revelation 4).