

THE SEVEN PROPHETIC  
PERIODS OF CHURCH HISTORY  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

**“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”**

Matthew 16:18

Jesus told Peter that He was building the Church, and that it would not be defeated. The promise is that the continuing existence of the Church is God’s responsibility. The true Church is made up of true believers, all of whom have some part and function. It is also evident according to Jesus’ words that the Church should be built, which means that it is to become greater in quantity and quality, and to come to a position of world-reaching impact.

**“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”**

Matthew 24:14

There is, therefore, a link and continuation in the Church all the way from Peter to the last days Church that would be reach the world before the coming of Christ to gather to Him the Church.

The Holy Ghost has been given for the very purpose of empowering the Church, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8).

The true New Testament Church has gone through various periods or dispensations in its history, and these are prophesied of in Revelation chapters two and three. These chapters speak of seven churches, which were seven literal churches in seven cities of Asia Minor. However, these churches are also interpreted to mean seven different periods in the history of the Church.

The prophecy of the seven periods of Church history spans from the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost in 30A.D. all the way to the future coming of Christ for the saints. Through its history, the Church has come through all types of events and circumstances, and has not failed. The providence of God should be evident to us today, because as the Lord has not failed in saving His people (see Isaiah 50:2), so can we be confident that today He establishes us in righteousness (see Isaiah 54:14).

We can be confident in the Word of God, and know that it is accurate, and correct in its prophecies. “Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isaiah 46:9, 10). God, of course, knows all of history and the future, and He has revealed many things in the Scripture. The pages of the Bible are filled with prophecies of historical events. Many Bible prophecies have already come to pass, but there are some which are yet to be fulfilled.

“One of the strong objective evidences of biblical inspiration is the phenomenon of fulfilled prophecy. The Bible is essentially unique among the religious books of mankind in this respect.”<sup>1</sup>

If God speaks of some future event which has not yet come to pass, then we should be wise, and believe the Bible, trusting that we shall see this come to pass. “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter” (Revelation 1:19). Once God has spoken, He by nature performs His Word, and nothing can change His plans or stop it. “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11).

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<sup>1</sup> Morris, H. M., 1996, *Many Infallible Proofs*, second edition, Master Books, Green Forest, Arizona, USA, page 189.

God's work in history is to fulfil His promises. He has promised that the Church must be ready for the return of Christ. Everything that is happening in history is actually leading toward what God has said aforetime (see Romans 15:4).

**“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”**

Ephesians 5:27

History is not random, but is the outworking of God's purposes. The truth is that Satan and evil are not in control. Through time, the truth is having the victory. The believers must believe this, and not give in to fear. The Bible says, “Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand.” (Revelation 1:3). There is a time of great blessing ahead for the Church.

Today, believers should see that God has preserved a remnant of the Church from falsehoods. One great command which is coming to Christians today is the warning to separate from all false Christianity, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (Revelation 18:4b). This is a step which the true Church Remnant must make, so that they may be blessed, and that the world may hear the Gospel.

## **2. WHAT IS THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION?**

Many are very perplexed by the book of Revelation. This is because the Bible is a sealed book, “And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it *is* sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.” (Isaiah 29:11, 12). With spiritual keys, it is possible to get a good understanding of the seven churches prophecy in Revelation.

1. We have to accept the Word as it is, and interpret the Word consistently with the rest of the Bible by comparing Scripture with Scripture. This means relying solely on the King James Bible, and not trying to twist or wrest Scripture by going to the Greek or the wisdom of men.

2. We must be open to the Holy Ghost. The Spirit does not contradict the Word, but gives us knowledge. “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” (John 16:13).

3. We must come to godly authorities. This is by fellowshiping at a true church, by listening to godly ministers and by absorbing godly materials. There have been many wrong teachings on prophecy, and so believers must be discerning and give ear to the truth.

4. We must understand Bible prophecies consistently use symbols. Every thing in a prophecy has some significance, whether a number, an attribute or even a colour. Even Bible stories may foreshadow other similar events or people in the future.

5. We should understand that prophetic Scriptures have more than one application and sense. In the case of the book of Revelation, it can be interpreted to deal with history in conjunction with the New Testament Church, or alternatively, it can be interpreted to mainly apply to a future time after the Church has left the Earth. Both interpretations are legitimate, and actually require each other for a full and complete understanding. For example, the Antichrists of history relate and link to the Antichrist at the end. Without accepting a proper understanding of both views we will be in ignorance or even get into error.

The second and third chapters of the book of Revelation speak of the seven Churches, and these can be interpreted several ways. The Apostle John wrote to seven letters in 80 A.D. addressed specifically to seven literal churches in Asia Minor. Every person and event that is described in them is real. John names the seven churches he was

writing his seven messages to in seven cities in Asia Minor. Jesus appeared to Him, “Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.” (Revelation 1:11).

There is another way the messages to the seven churches of Revelation chapters two and three can be interpreted. They can be taken to apply to the whole of Church history, and the prophecies match precisely the history of the New Testament Church. This is based on the instructions that Jesus gives: “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” (Revelation 1:19, 20). Jesus spoke both of the present (“the things which are”) and of the future (“the things which shall be hereafter”).

The messages to the seven churches can be taken to be signs and symbols which have a special meaning for the Church. By this, believers are able to understand that these prophecies have been provided to help and instruct them. Christians should see that the Church must not fail, and that there are certain things that they are to do.

### **3. WHAT IS THE EPHEBUS PERIOD?**

**1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;**  
**2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:**  
**3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.**

**4 Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.**

**5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**

**6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

**7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.**

(Revelation 2:1–7).

The first New Testament Church period, the church of Ephesus, started with Pentecost in 30 A.D., and went to the death of the Apostle John in 80 A.D. It is described as the apostolic period because it was the time when the original apostles were alive and ministering.

The first letter was written to the “church of Ephesus” rather than the “church at Ephesus”, because the city of Ephesus had been completely converted to Christianity. This was a sign of the heights which Christianity reached from 30 A.D. to 80 A.D.

### **4. WHAT WERE THE WORKS, LABOUR AND PATIENCE?**

On the day of Pentecost, the followers of Christ were praying, and were filled with the Holy Ghost. When Peter, full of the Holy Ghost, preached to the crowd at Jerusalem, it was not tongues or signs which converted the people. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:41). The Word had a massive effect, and 3000 were converted in one day. “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” (1 Peter 1:23). The Holy Ghost came to make the believers good speakers of the Word.

The Church grew powerfully, and was in a great unity of doctrine, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.” (Acts 2:42, 43). In fact, the number of the disciples was being multiplied, because the Word was top priority. “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:7). Jerusalem was fast becoming a Christian city.

A great persecution occurred that scattered the believers, greatly aiding the spread of Christianity. One of the chief persecutors, Saul of Tarsus, was struck down on the road to Damascus, and was converted. He became the Apostle Paul, and was instrumental in converting the Gentile world. Paul said, “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it” (Galatians 1:13). Paul now had a new commission, “But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” (Acts 26:16–18).

Paul went through many hardships and perils to bring the Gospel to the Roman world. The Roman Emperor Nero especially hated the Christians, and persecuted and martyred many believers. Despite this, the Gospel reached further and further.

## 5. WHAT ABOUT THE FALSE APOSTLES AND DOCTRINES?

The Whore of Babylon (see Revelation chapter seventeen) or false “church” was already appearing in the time of the apostles. The true believers discerned it and rejected it. One aspect of this was the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which put a priesthood between the ordinary people and God’s Word. This was manifest in later centuries in Roman Catholicism. If the fathers of the false “church” were to be found anywhere, it would have been in the Jewish religious council in Jerusalem, where they were trying to destroy the Christian faith. Nevertheless, one of the Pharisees stood up and prophetically told them that if Christianity was the work of God, they would not be able to stop it.

As the preaching to the Gentiles began, the first doctrinal problem was manifested when certain false brethren from Judæa went to Antioch and told the Gentiles that they must keep the law of Moses. This is not to say that the Gentile Christians did not obey the Word of God, but that the heretics wanted them to follow the rabbis’ interpretations. Judaism had been developed into a heathen doctrine which did not reflect the Old Testament. Thus, the attempt to force Christians to follow “Moses” was, in fact, to bring them under the doctrines and teachings of the rabbis, which are full of superstitions and arbitrary rules. The Christians were not, on the other hand, to live lawlessly. The apostles taught the doctrine of Christian perfection, which the Christians at that time believed, whether at Jerusalem, Syria, Asia Minor or Rome. This stated that by Christ, it was possible to keep the law, and therefore, it was expected that a believer should not to sin. “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. ... He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3:5, 8).

This period was blessed with Scripture given by the Holy Ghost to form the New Testament. “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). However, during this period there was a problem, as Peter wrote, “And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” (2 Peter 3:15, 16). There were people twisting the Scriptures, and worse, there were even false books being written.

False sects also appeared at this time, but did not undermine the true unity of the multitude of the Christian churches across the Roman Empire. “For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews” (1 Thessalonians 2:14). These churches were instructed to separate themselves from heretics. “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” (2 Thessalonians 3:6). John agreed: “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed” (2 John v10). On the other hand, false leaders appeared, attempting to draw people after them, “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church.” (3 John v9, 10).

The Corinthians had people who held to carnal doctrines among them. The Galatians had been swayed into a works-based salvation. The Colossians had got caught up in mystery teachings. The Thessalonians had been convinced by false prophets that the day of salvation had passed, and that it was now too late. Titus had to rebuke false prophets in Crete who were preaching a racist doctrine.

Paul said to the Ephesians, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20:29, 30). Yet, despite the rise of false doctrines, the true Church and the Word prevailed.

## 6. WHAT WAS THE LOVE PROBLEM?

Some in the early Church forsook their first love. Ananias and Sapphira made a fatal decision to lie about the money they were donating to the Church, and they suffered instant death for it. When John received his revelation on the isle of Patmos, he was living in a time when great signs had been done, and when the Gospel had gone as far as Britain. The Cæsars had become the great persecutors of the Church, though this did not stop the Gospel. Thousands of Christians were crucified or killed in arenas. Yet, in this time, there was a “love” problem. The Apostle Paul once wrote, “And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:3). The people were becoming good labourers and good martyrs, but without full love, their works were in danger. Jesus warned them, through John’s letter to Ephesus, to keep themselves in the true love. “Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.” (Jeremiah 5:14). Therefore, Christ commanded them to repent and do the proper works. He even threatened them with removal if they did not repent. This threat was very serious, but historically, these people recovered their position. The book of Jude addressed this problem, which was a clear wakeup call as well as a promise of preservation and blamelessness. It is clear that God upheld the church through this period.

## 7. HOW WAS THE CITY OF EPHEBUS LINKED WITH THE EARLY CHURCH?

Both Paul and Apollos had visited the port city of Ephesus, in Asia Minor, on their missionary journeys. Initially, they had not established any discernable foothold there. Paul returned and found

twelve disciples of John the Baptist. He immediately brought them into the Pentecostal experience (which was not limited to the apostles, nor to Jerusalem). He preached to the Jews in the city for three months. The nineteenth chapter of Acts goes on to describe how Paul preached and disputed for two years in Ephesus. The Word of God prevailed, and many signs and wonders were done. "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 19:10). The whole province heard the message which began from Ephesus. This was the magnitude of the revival taking place, eventually, the whole of the city of Ephesus was converted to Christ. This was consistent with God's plan: Jerusalem and Antioch were heavily Christianised, and now Ephesus became another Christian centre. The purpose of these cities was strategic. The apostles used them as bases for their missionary campaigns.

Ephesus was a Gentile city, and by becoming fully converted, it showed that God was moving graciously to save not only the Jews, but the Gentiles. Although the Gospel first came to the Jews, it was not restricted to them. In fact, if there had not been a revival at Jerusalem from the time of Pentecost, there is no way there could have been the great spiritual work in Ephesus and Asia. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16).

## **8. WHAT IS THE SMYRNA PERIOD?**

**8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;**

**9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.**

**10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.**

**11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.**

(Revelation 2:8–11).

The second Church period, the church in Smyrna, started with the death of the Apostle John in 80 A.D., and went to the enactment of Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. It is described as the early patristic period because the Church Fathers are divided between those who came before Constantine's great Church council at Nicæa and those who came afterwards.

## **9. WHAT WERE THE WORKS, TRIBULATION AND POVERTY?**

The period began at the city of Smyrna itself. The bishop of Smyrna, named Polycarp, was a man who had been a disciple of the Apostle John. The entire Bible was complete, so Polycarp was able to use Paul's writings as Scripture. However, for all the works that were done in this period of time, things generally and steadily declined. Nevertheless, God preserved things, and had his own people through this period.

In this time, the Christian leaders would combat one or other heresy, but would also give credence to Rome. While the bishops of Rome at this time may generally have been godly men, it is evident that their bishopric was already being elevated to great things. Polycarp, for example, travelled to Rome to argue his case against the Roman date for Easter, as opposed to the Eastern date, which was the traditional date. Rome's interest in tradition was not the true tradition of the apostles, but of pagan tradition. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (2 Thessalonians 3:6). The churches of Asia Minor and Rome could not come to an agreement on this issue.

One of the heresies at the time was those who denied Christ's physical presence on Earth. There were also those who were giving heed to the erroneous doctrine that suffering and martyrdom would lead one to understand the sufferings of Christ. These represented the first real steps toward Roman Catholicism, a doctrine which was a corruption of true Christianity.

#### **10. WHO WERE THE FALSE JEWS AND BLASPHEMERS?**

At that time the Christians were being persecuted, arrested and martyred. At the very same time, the Gnostic heresy arose into prominence, which took Judaism and other heathen ideas and mixed them with Christianity. The Bible calls true Christians the "Jews", "We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles" (Galatians 2:15). Therefore, the Jews being referred to in Revelation 2:9 were false brethren and heretics, who were promoting heathen ideas.

There were also some who claimed there was no Trinity, while others followed false prophets. Another problem was the attack on the Bible by the corruption of Bible manuscripts. These corruptions survive and are presented in modern versions of the Bible.

#### **11. WHAT WERE THE TEN DAYS OF TRIBULATION?**

As far as the ordinary Christian was concerned, he was prepared to die for his faith. In the time of the Roman emperor Diocletian, there was a vicious ten year persecution of Christians from 303 to 313 A.D., prophetically spoken of as "ten days" in Revelation 2:10. Heretical ideas had taken root everywhere, even where the Christians were hiding in the catacombs of Rome. Christ did not rebuke the Christians in this period, but took care to preserve His Church. All over the Roman world, true Christians were being persecuted, even as far away as Britain.

#### **12. WHAT IS THE PERGAMOS PERIOD?**

**12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;**  
**13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.**  
**14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.**  
**15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**  
**16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.**  
**17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.**  
(Revelation 2:12–17).

The third Church period, the church in Pergamos, started with the enactment of Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313 A.D., and went to Justinian's defeat of the Goths at Rome in 538 A.D. It is described as the latter patristic period because it was a time of the latter Church Fathers and barbarian invasions, the beginning of the Dark Ages.

#### **13. WHERE WAS SATAN'S SEAT?**

When Constantine was declared emperor in York, Britain in 306 A.D., Christianity was already divided between the old and new systems. The new was based around Rome, mixed with paganism and heresies such as idolatry, celibacy and clericalism. Constantine claimed to have been converted to Christianity in 312 A.D. in France, where he also forced his soldiers to convert. Constantine's conversion was not a conversion to Christianity, but was to a pagan

religion using Christian appearances. Constantine's army won a victory in Italy, and then became the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, ruling from Constantinople. Constantine, using the imperial authority, made his brand of "Christianity", that is, Roman Catholicism, the state religion in the East. His aim was to unite all Christians into this one Roman state religion. By this, being part of the Roman Empire and being "Christian" became the same, and would war against true Christianity. The state of ease, toleration and compromise drew many people away from the Biblical view into these new doctrines.

In various areas, older traditional groups held out against the Romanisation. In North Africa, there were certain who claiming to hold to the doctrine of the martyrs, who resisted the idea that the Roman emperor should be the patron of the Church. The Roman "Christianity" was not tolerant, but would execute people who did not agree with it. In Britain, the Celtic Church, which predated Constantine, was doctrinally linked with the traditional Eastern Christianity, not Romanism. One doctrine which was also held by some, especially in Britain, was the teaching which promoted that people had the ability not to sin if they chose. In the northern part of Italy there survived a group of people representing the Old Latin Church. In the East, especially because of Constantine's patronage there, the amount of error began to grow. The doctrines of celibacy, monasteries, prayers to icons and other such blasphemies appeared even among the non-Romanised Christians. The Arian heresy, which stated that Christ was created, was rejected by both Rome and the East, but was strong among some barbarian nations.

#### **14. WHAT DID ANTIPAS SIGNIFY?**

The name "Antipas" in Revelation 2:13 is a type of those who were slain for their anti-Roman stand. "Antipas" meant "anti-papal", because the true believers could not accept the Popes. The patriarchs of Rome made themselves Popes and exerted their rule over the Eastern Patriarchs. Christians were now being martyred by the Roman Catholic institution, for the Church in Rome was no longer a Church, but now had been corrupted by spiritual poison.

#### **15. WHAT WERE THE FALSE DOCTRINES?**

This period saw the widespread rise of the use of relics, the veneration of Mary and numerous other Roman Catholic doctrines were being used to attempt to convert the Germanic tribes. Rather than condemn such things, Augustine of Hippo (354–430 A.D.) praised them. He was the patron of the idea that Roman Catholicism should rule the world, and control governments.

Germanic tribes overran the Roman Empire, beginning what was called the Dark Ages. Some of the barbarians held the Arian heresy, that said that Christ was created. Others were converted to Romanism. Romanists sent missionaries to places as far as way Britain, to convert them, not merely from heathenism, but from heresy and from the remnants of true Christianity. Many of the vestiges of true Christianity were corrupted by the Roman influence.

Revelation 2:14 and 15 detail some of the specific doctrines which were rising at this time, such as the use of idols, merchandising, venerating of saints, clerical celibacy and the elevation of the priesthood. The Lord warned these people to repent. The result for Rome was the fall of its capital and the fall of its Empire to the Germanic tribes; nevertheless, the Roman Empire recovered in a new form, the Papacy.

#### **16. WHAT WAS THE SHARP SWORD?**

The Word of God is described as a sword — "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17b). The Word of God was preserved through this period, not only in the Greek texts of the East, but also through certain readings of the Latin texts. There were two witnesses for this, the first being the Old Latin or Italic, which was preserved by those Christians living in northern Italy called the Waldenses, the other being Jerome's Latin Bible. Jerome (347–420 A.D.) did his service for Rome when he complained about the many bad translations and copies of the Bible, and made a standard Latin translation, called the Vulgate. This new translation, while it maintained the Word to some extent, also contained corruptions and

additions. It differed slightly from the old Latin texts and the body of Greek texts, which formed the Traditional Text. The Traditional Text can be identified from all early copies, versions, lexicons, quotations and writings. This text was developed into the Textus Receptus, which was used as the basis of the Reformation Bibles and the King James Bible.

## **17. WHAT IS THE THYATIRA PERIOD?**

**18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass;**

**19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.**

**20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.**

**21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.**

**22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.**

**23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.**

**24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.**

**25 But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come.**

**26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:**

**27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.**

**28 And I will give him the morning star.**

**29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

(Revelation 2:18–29).

The fourth Church period, the church in Thyatira, started with Justinian's defeat of the Goths at Rome in 538 A.D., and went to the Reformation in 1517 A.D. and is described as the wilderness period, because during this time, the true Church was under the suppression of Romanism.

## **18. WHAT WAS JEZEBEL?**

True Christianity seemed all but extinct at the time when Italy was being ruled by the Ostrogoths, and Rome was completely filled with the corrupt doctrine of Roman Catholicism. When Justinian, the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire came and defeated the Goths at Rome in 538 A.D., he allowed Pope Vigilius to retain power. The Popes already had properties around Rome called the Patrimony of St Peter. After this time, the Popes increased their temporal holdings, which were called the Papal States. These increased into the Middle Ages, which was the height of Roman Catholic rule in Europe, and the darkest time for the true Christian Church, which was being preserved by God.

Daniel prophesied of the end of the pagan Roman Empire (a great beast) at the hands of the ten Germanic nations, which would (in the historicist sense) finally succumb to the Papacy, the "little horn" or Antichrist. "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn *were* eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." (Daniel 7:7, 8). The Ostrogoths were one of the three horns which were destroyed.

God never called the true Church “Jezebel”, nor did he consider “Jezebel” to be part of the true Church. “Jezebel” was a wicked and manipulating queen in the Old Testament who was responsible for the slaughter of the prophets. She also set up Baal-worship as the state religion in Israel. Clearly, this woman was a type of the Roman Catholic institution, which usurped the position of the true Church. The Bible symbolically shows the difference between the false and true Church: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: ... And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and *to* his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.” (Revelation 12:1, 5, 6). The true Church was in the wilderness from 538 A.D., and were told to remain faithful. The wilderness included locations within the Catholic Roman Empire.

## 19. HOW DID THE WORKS OF THE CHURCH INCREASE?

The Eastern Orthodox retained traditions and teachings which had been altered in Rome. The East finally fully sundered from Rome in 1054, by which time it had been significantly corrupted, though it still retained pure doctrines, manuscripts and traditions. The pretext of the split was on the doctrine that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father, not from the Son, as the Romanists claimed. The truth was that Christ was an intermediary in the dispensation of the Holy Ghost to the Church.

The Crusades could not stop the spread of the Muslims, and the East began to lose its power. Constantinople finally fell in 1453, and much of those things which they had preserved became available to the West in time for the Protestant Reformation.

The Albigenses in the south of France were anti-Roman Catholic. They arose to the attention of Rome in the twelfth century, and were destroyed by a crusade and the inquisition. Related with them was the

equally old movement in the north of Italy known as the Waldenses. This movement existed for many years, but came to prominence under the leadership of Waldo in the 1170s.

The Celtic Church was partially destroyed by the Romanists themselves, and ended when the Vikings destroyed their centres in Ireland and Scotland. In England, John Wycliffe (1330–1384) started the Lollards, which preached that the bread and wine did not become the very body of Christ, that the Pope was not the head of the Church, that ecclesiastical laws were nothing compared to the Gospel, that people ought to be able to read the Bible in their own language, and that Church leaders did not have the power to imprison people.

Others, such as John Huss (1370–1415), also tried to reform Roman Catholicism from the inside, not taking the necessary steps to completely remove themselves. Christ rebuked the true Church for allowing the Popes to continue, in the use of superstition and false authority. Christ considered Romanism an enemy, and not only commanded them to repent, but foretold their demise. This already became evident in the relocating of the Papacy in France, and then, in the dual sets of Popes of their great schism. And there were great conflicts between the various Catholic orders.

Through time, there was more and more opposition against Rome, internally, externally and by true Christians. There were Christian movements which had retained or restored something of the apostolic doctrines, but these did not come to a breaking point until the time of the complete Reformation of the Christian Church.

## 20. WHAT IS THE SARDIS PERIOD?

**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.**

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

**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.**

**4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.**

**5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.**

**6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

(Revelation 3:1–6).

The fifth Church period, the church in Sardis, started with the Reformation in 1517 A.D., and went to the end of the Papal Roman Empire in 1798 A.D. and is described as the Protestant period, because by the end of this period, Protestantism had taken over whole countries.

## **21. WHAT WAS RECEIVED AND HEARD?**

Martin Luther (1483–1586) had already discovered the correct doctrine, that salvation was received by faith, not works. He became a leader in the Augustinians, and preached to and administered several congregations. He adjusted the whole program of the University at Wittenberg to reflect Biblical rather than philosophical teachings. In 1517, there was a grand relic display at the Wittenberg, which was designed as a Roman Catholic money raising enterprise. Luther used this time as an opportunity to post his chief objections against Romanism in public. The reaction was like lightning. His Ninety-Five Theses were quickly copied down, printed, and sent all over Saxony. The effect of Luther's teaching and message was not merely to justify a German revolt against the Papacy, it was actually an evangelical revival. Northern Germany and Scandinavia were fully converted within a few years.

The French Protestants were called Huguenots, of whom John Calvin (1509–1564) was the most famous. Calvin fled to Geneva, and Calvinism became predominant in the Netherlands and Switzerland. Erasmus (1469–1536) had provided the Reformers with the vital key, he had edited and corrected the Bible, using manuscripts from the East. Luther used Erasmus' text to translate the Bible into German. The Calvinists in Geneva had contact with the Waldenses, who were converted to Calvinism. Newly edited versions of the Greek and the Waldensian manuscripts were used to make Bibles at Geneva, including the English Version named after that city.

The result of the Reformation was that entire nations were freed from the tyranny of Rome, and that true Christianity could be established, often with national backing. The Reformation was a great wound to the Romanists, "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." (Revelation 13:3). Nevertheless, Romanism worked to recover themselves. There were great inquisitions in Spain and France. Protestants were martyred in Ireland, England, Holland, France, Spain and Italy. Everywhere, Rome was working to destroy Protestants, killing millions.

## **22. WHAT WAS THE IMPERFECTION?**

There was, however, a great problem in the Protestant camp. Many retained, to some degree, Roman Catholic doctrines or rituals. Jesus revealed that their position was quite precarious. There were doctrinal differences and arguments, and overall, an acceptance of the weakness and fallibility of man.

## **23. WHO WERE WEARING THE WHITE GARMENTS?**

By the providence of God, Protestantism grew greater and greater, and nowhere was this so apparent, than in England. It was no coincidence that the Reformation occurred just when England was beginning on its journey of becoming a great world power. With this would come the English Protestant religion and the Holy Bible in English. This would be the main vehicle which God would use to

bring forward true Christianity to the last days. It was as though Christianity had been wasted until the Reformation, but there was no place on Earth where a true remnant was raised up, than in England.

Erasmus had studied in England and affected the scholars there. When William Tyndale (1494–1536) went to university, he knew he must translate the Bible into English. He had to do so in Europe, and was eventually caught and martyred. His prayer was for the king, “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” (1 Timothy 2:1, 2). King Henry the Eighth was already suppressing monasteries, before Protestants were put into key leadership positions. When King Henry wanted to get rid of Catherine of Aragon he used the same opportunity to get rid of papal power over the land.

Under Queen Elizabeth the First the Puritans or Precisionists wanted to go further in reforms. Some of these were influenced by Calvin’s republicanism, which Elizabeth wisely disallowed. The division remained, and it was not until the time of King James, when the moderate Puritans were able to do much to aid the establishment of truth over empty ritual. King James ordered that a new translation of the Bible be made, which was the Authorized King James Version. This version was the seventh English version in succession, based on the pure line of manuscripts, and fulfilling the Scripture, “The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” (Psalm 12:6, 7).

“But then it speedily becomes evident that, at the bottom of all this, there existed in the minds of the Revisionists of 1611 a profound (shall we not rather say a *prophetic*?) consciousness, that the fate of the English Language itself was bound up with the fate of their Translation.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Burgon, J. W., 1883, *The Revision Revised*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, page 188.

The Church enjoyed extraordinary success in England because of the King James Bible. The Puritans won the civil war, and were able to propagate the Gospel at home and abroad. Later, a new revival began with John Wesley (1703–1791), who had a desire for holiness, preaching, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” (1 John 3:9).

It seemed that the Gospel was being preached everywhere in English, as the British discovered and colonised new lands across the sea, including Australia. In the meantime, in France, there was a horrible revolution, and a French army took the Pope prisoner, ending the Rome’s power for a season.

## 24. WHAT IS THE PHILADELPHIA PERIOD?

**7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;**

**8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.**

**9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.**

**10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.**

**11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.**

**12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.**

**13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

(Revelation 3:7–13).

The sixth Church period, the church in Philadelphia, started with the end of the Papal Roman Empire in 1798 A.D., and went to the Second Vatican Council which was accepted by Protestants in 1968 A.D. and is described as the missionary period, and was a time when the Bible went all over the world.

**25. WHAT WAS THE OPEN DOOR?**

Paul experienced a time where he had massive impact. “For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries.” (1 Corinthians 16:9). This is exactly what happened in the 1790s onwards, where British Protestants began to evangelise the world in earnest. The door opened, the Catholic institution was on its knees, the Church came out of the wilderness, and began to print King James Bible, and evangelise the nations.

**26. WHO WERE THE FALSE JEWS?**

Since the rise of the Papal power, the two witnesses, the Old and New Testament had been preserved by God. They had been the powerful witnesses in the Earth.

And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. (Revelation 11:3, 7–9).

At the end of the 1260 days, which prophetically equalled the 1260 years of the Papacy’s temporal power from the time of Justinian to the fall of Rome to the French in 1798, there would be a time of death. This death was to last for three and a half days. Many people have interpreted this to mean the three and a half years in which Roman Catholicism did not have any official power, which ended in 1801.

“As it was obvious that the French Revolution itself had to be carried to some more permanent settlement, so it was recognized on all sides that a more stable arrangement of church-state relations was essential. This was achieved by Napoleon Bonaparte in a concordat concluded with Pope Pius VII on July 15/16, 1801. It recognised that Roman Catholicism was the faith of most Frenchmen and granted freedom of worship. ... Many historians maintain that the Concordat of 1801 was as decisive for modern church history as the conversion of Constantine had been for ancient church history. As Constantine had first recognised and then established Christianity in the Roman Empire, so a series of concordats and other less formal agreements created the *modus vivendi* between the church and modern secular culture.”<sup>3</sup> Roman Catholicism, of course, is not a “Church”.

The two witnesses, interpreted as the Word of God, died in 1798, and were viewed by the nations, from 1798. It was after this that the Antichrist worked to destroy the King James Bible, and place a false “word” in the Church. “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The war was no longer a direct one with Rome, but now an information and education war against the true Word, being an attack on the King James Bible.

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<sup>3</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica 2001 Standard Edition CD-ROM, *Roman Catholicism, history of; Napoleon I — exportation of the Revolution*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., Chicago, Illinois, USA.

## 27. HOW DID THE FALSE THINGS HAVE TO BOW?

A false “Word” was raised up in the Church; nevertheless, God raised up John William Burgon to counter this. In 1882, Burgon wrote an article criticising the Revision of the King James Bible, saying, “Whatever may be urged in favour of Biblical Revision, it is at least undeniable that the undertaking involves a tremendous risk. Our Authorized Version is the one religious link which at present binds together ninety millions of English-speaking men scattered over the earth’s surface. Is it reasonable that so unutterably precious, so sacred a bond should be endangered, for the sake of representing certain words more accurately, — here and there translating a sense with greater precision, — getting rid of a few archaisms? It may be confidently assumed that no ‘Revision’ of our Authorized Version, however judiciously executed, will ever occupy the place in public esteem which is actually enjoyed by the work of the Translators of 1611, — the noblest literary work in the Anglo-Saxon language. We shall in fact never have *another* ‘Authorized Version.’ ... As something *intended to supersede* our present English Bible, we are thoroughly convinced that the project of a rival Translation is not to be entertained for a moment. For ourselves, we deprecate it entirely.”<sup>4</sup> This effectively stopped the Revised Version from being adopted by true believers. From that time more modern versions appeared, but true Christians were able to use the correct King James Bible texts as being printed by Cambridge University Press.

## 28. WHAT WAS THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION?

Compromise was threatening the Church. At the same time, Romanism was losing its power to secularism and modernism. It was certainly a temptation for Christians to join with Rome at that time, but they did not. Burgon spoke of the temptation of the English Church in 1882, “It would ill become such an one as myself to pretend to skill in forecasting the future. But of *this* at least I feel

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<sup>4</sup> Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pages 113, 114.

certain: — that if, in an evil hour [that is, from 1882], (quod absit!), the Church of England shall ever be induced to commit herself to the adoption of the present Revision, she will by so doing expose herself to the ridicule of the rest of Christendom, as well as incur irreparable harm and loss. And such a proceeding on her part will be inexcusable, for she has been at least faithfully forewarned. Moreover, in the end, she will most certainly have to retrace her steps with sorrow and confusion.”<sup>5</sup>

## 29. HOW WAS IT THAT THE BELIEVERS HAD SO LITTLE STRENGTH?

The Pentecostal Revival coincided with the Pure Cambridge Edition of the King James Bible. In the same period, Pentecostalism was first established in Australia, especially by Smith Wigglesworth’s visits in 1922 and 1929.

Although Pentecostals were still preaching the plain Gospel message with the King James Bible in the 1950s, this was to be almost completely discarded within a few short years. Around the world there was the coming together of false doctrines. Israel was re-established as a nation. Social revolution gripped the western nations, and the Roman Catholics called a great council to change the face of their institution. Christians everywhere were compromising, and it appeared as if Christ’s return was imminent.

## 30. WHAT IS THE PERIOD OF THE LAODICEANS?

**14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;**

**15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.**

**16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.**

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<sup>5</sup> Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, page 508.

**17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:**

**18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.**

**19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.**

**20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.**

**21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.**

**22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

(Revelation 3:14–22).

The seventh Church period, the church of the Laodiceans, started with the Second Vatican Council which was accepted by Protestants in 1968 A.D., and shall terminate at the future translation of the saints. It is described as the lukewarm or apostate period, but really it should be known as the period of Church Restitution.

### **31. WHY IS THIS PERIOD MADE UP OF PEOPLE AND NOT A GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION?**

Unlike the other six churches, the church of the Laodiceans is not called the church of Laodicea. There is a great significance in this. It means that not all of those at Laodicea, that is to say, called “the Church” were really the Church at all. Since 1968, it has been customary for people to group together all “Christians” including Catholics, and to consider Catholicism as the true or most visible Church.

### **32. WHAT IS THE LUKEWARMNESS?**

The Roman Catholic’s Second Vatican Council declared that all Protestants and Catholics were really the same. The problem was that many Protestants were ready to believe this. Everywhere the old fundamentalists were scorned; nevertheless, God was preserving two important areas. One was true Pentecostalism, especially for a time by the American Faith Movement, the other was the King James Bible, especially for a time by the American King James Bible-Only groups.

The Laodicean period is one of much worldliness and attack on the Gospel: “And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.” (Mark 4:18, 19). It has seemed as though Christians have no influence, and those with influence seem to have done more harm than good.

### **33. WHO IS SPEWED OUT OF THE LORD’S MOUTH?**

The Church is the body of Christ. “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.” (Colossians 1:18). Christ cannot abide error and falsehood in his own body. The Bible indicates that there is a split between those who are on the trend of growing hotter, and those who are on the trend of growing colder.

The trend of the Laodicean period is different to most other Church history periods, in that it begins with the Church being subject to the Roman Babylon. From 1968 it was as if all Christians were gathered into Babylon, so that the command could be acted on, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you” (2 Corinthians 6:17), “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (Revelation 18:4).

Christians must sunder from Rome and Romanist thinking. There must be a true body of Christians in the world who come together in complete Bible-oriented unity, and reject the false unity based on Rome and diverse doctrines. On the other side, those who are not of Christ's Church must be expelled from the Church altogether. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (1 John 2:18, 19). The spewing out by Christ is the same as the manifest going out into heresies and perdition of false brethren. Thus, those who are lukewarm need to repent or go out. In the end, it is only going to be true believers who triumph.

#### **34. WHAT DOES THE BLINDNESS, POORNESS AND NAKEDNESS RELATE TO?**

There has never been so much compromise, so many diverse doctrines, so few genuine Christians, and so many false brethren, as the time since 1968. Christ himself warned of great deception in the last days, "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you." (Matthew 24:4). There are many warnings about false prophets and false brethren throughout the entire Bible. In fact, most of Pentecostalism is subject to error, because it has now become Romanised. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:1, 2).

These so-called "Christians" proclaim that they have affluent lives, yet they confess that they have great problems. They speak of stress, sickness, depression and the ineffectiveness of the Church. They can hardly keep the converts they make, and tend to be growing weaker and weaker. They say that man's knowledge is increased and they are all the time blaming secularism and spiritual opposition. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the

end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." (Daniel 12:4). The blame for their problems must be put onto their own sins since they have accepted false doctrines, false prophets and false Bibles. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*." (Amos 8:11, 12).

The reason why there is so much weakness, deception and troubles for so-called "Christians" is because they are not Church at all, but the Whore of Babylon. "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ... And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." (Revelation 17:3, 5). Most so-called "Christians" and much of what is called "the Church" — including most so-called "Spirit-filled" places — are actually being resisted by God, and are the free range for Satan. It is God's Spirit, not some mysterious devilish power that is bringing the troubles to most of what is called "Christianity" in the world today.

#### **35. WHO IS CHRIST REBUKING?**

God loves the world, but God does not put up with sin. In fact, the visible lukewarm Christianity is going to be destroyed by God's wrath. These are the continuation of the false Jews, that is to say, false Christians, of Church history.

"For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17). Most so-called "Christians" are not ready to hate sin and love God. If rebuked, they would rather run to a "pastor" who uses psychiatry than to humble themselves before the Lord. But for those who do repent, there is also blessing now in this time. Jesus said, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the

fire, that thou mayest be rich” (Revelation 3:18a), and “But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.” (Mark 10:30).

### 36. WHO SUPS WITH THE LORD JESUS?

There must be a true Church in the last days who shall enter into the eternal blessing. This means that the Church must at least survive to the return of Christ. On the other hand, there are many who speak of a coming world revival. Most of this idea has been entirely consistent, not with the good prophecies of the Bible, but the coming Antichrist. The “Christ” that most “Christians” are waiting for, and the associated “feeling” revival, is none other than the work of Antichrist. The trend since 1968 has been to set up the final Antichrist, but this is not the trend of the true Church. This is because God has a remnant. Yet, the remnant is not supposed to stay in Rome, nor under poverty, weakness, blindness and deception.

The return of Christ for the true Church — the translation of the saints — is not to rescue them from impending and imminent subjection to the Antichrist. It seems that since 1968 there has been almost no true Church on the Earth — a meagre remnant at best. But this was to fulfil the prophecies about the last days apostasy, “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” (Matthew 24:12–14). There actually must be a turnaround of the true Church before the coming of Christ!

The Church is to prevail whilst on Earth, and this must happen in the Laodicean period, when Satan and evildoers are in the world, “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.” (Psalm 23:5).

Christ’s promise to build His Church would not be fulfilled at present, since the Church remnant of today is so far from being

“built”, that it is like some rubble. It is in the Laodicean times that the Church must walk in all the promises of God: this must occur before the Antichrist’s final apostasy. “That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Ephesians 5:27).

The true Church of Christ is supposed to be doing works greater than Christ: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” (John 14:12). The Church must actually become overcomers: “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.” (Hebrews 2:8). This specifically means that the Church must bring Satan underneath it: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, *ye heavens*, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” (Revelation 12:7–12). Satan only would have a short time if God was in control, and the Church was triumphing and responsible for putting Satan on the ground under their feet! This is why Satan has great wrath, but it is not a wrath which can touch the Church, and then, it will be only the saints in the tribulation which are being killed.

Christ is coming for a triumphant Church which is walking in great riches, blessing and power. In fact, the Church must be walking in perfection and great power. It must be preaching the pure Word and be filled with the true Spirit.

### **37. IS JESUS STANDING AT THE DOOR?**

Peter said, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19–21). The great restitution must come before the return of Christ! This is consistent with many other Scriptures. The fact that there are times of restitution shows that the blessing of the Church is not limited to being in heaven during the great tribulation and the Millennium, when Christ with the Church rules the Earth for a thousand years.

There is an enormous responsibility on true Christians today. This is why true Christians should be in preparation, because of the coming worldwide Christian revival. The remnant of true believers who are to be moving towards Church Restitution must have correct doctrine and believe:

1. The true Gospel, not in an emotional Gospel. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” (Matthew 24:14).
2. The Word of God is found in the King James Bible, not in modern versions. “The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” (Psalm 12:6, 7).
3. The complete freedom from sin is mandatory. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” (1 John 3:9).

4. The Pentecostal power and tongues are present reality. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8).

5. The complete and utter blessing, including healing and prosperity. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13).

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## HOW TO KNOW THE PURE CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE

It is important to have the correct, perfect and final text of the King James Bible, since there are correctors (e.g. publishers) who have changed some aspects of King James Bible texts. The final form of the King James Bible is the Pure Cambridge Edition (circa 1900), which conforms to the following:

1. “or Sheba” not “and Sheba” in Joshua 19:2
  2. “sin” not “sins” in 2 Chronicles 33:19
  3. “Spirit of God” not “spirit of God” in Job 33:4
  4. “whom ye” not “whom he” in Jeremiah 34:16
  5. “Spirit of God” not “spirit of God” in Ezekiel 11:24
  6. “flieth” not “fleeth” in Nahum 3:16
  7. “Spirit” not “spirit” in Matthew 4:1
  8. “further” not “farther” in Matthew 26:39
  9. “bewrayeth” not “betrayeth” in Matthew 26:73
  10. “Spirit” not “spirit” in Mark 1:12
  11. “spirit” not “Spirit” in Acts 11:28
  12. “spirit” not “Spirit” in 1 John 5:8
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