

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
Volume 2, Number 2, May 1991

The Seven Churches of Revelation
Rewards of Victory
Overview of Church History
Genesis 2:2
From a Reader

BEAUTIES OF THE TRUTH is published as a service to the brethren to stimulate their consideration and appreciation of the boundless riches of God's Word. It is published free of charge. Subscriptions will be entered for all who request it. Address all correspondence to: Beauties of the Truth, 10034 SW 52nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97219. Editorial Board: Bros. Jerry Leslie (Editor in Chief), David Doran, Carl Hagensick, Michael Nekora, David Rice, David Stein.

The Seven Churches of Revelation

The seven churches of Revelation, as described in chapters two and three of that Book, have intrigued Bible expositors down through the age. Were the messages to these churches intended mainly for the congregations to which they were sent during the apostolic period? Were they intended to be instructive in a general way to the church worldwide in every period of its development? Or were they actually prophetic of Seven Historical Ages of the church, with each successive stage reflecting the conditions and characteristics ascribed to the original churches?

Most believers have concluded that truth is found in all these possibilities: that the messages were designed for the original congregations, as well as generally throughout the age, and chronologically through seven major periods of church history. Nevertheless, the latter view seems to receive particular emphasis from the widely held belief that the Book of Revelation is a forecast of unfolding church history, both good and bad, of the false church as well as the true, from the apostle's day all the way to the end of the age. This conception views the Book as a panorama of colorful pictures portraying the successive development of the church through struggles in a hostile world, near extinction by the rise of apostate elements, gradual recovery to an active role, and a final triumph after tumultuous end time experiences.

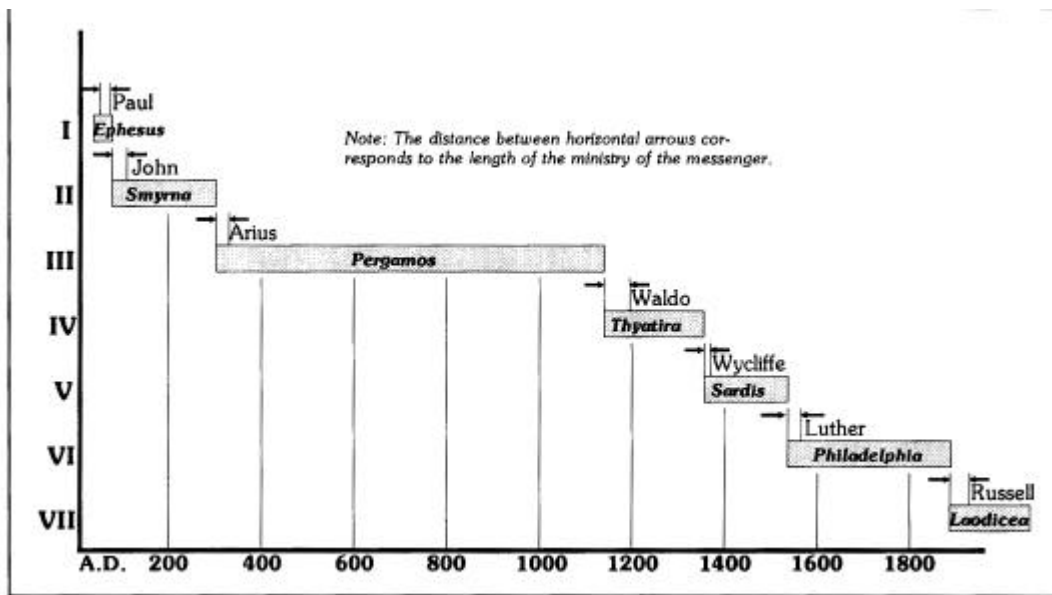
From a careful study of the events of the long period of the history of the Christian church, it does indeed appear to be plausible to view its development as seven distinct stages that parallel the messages to the seven churches of Revelation. Many prophetic expositors of the past have drawn this conclusion, and this continues to be the main current of present Bible Student thinking. Some observers have felt it was not possible always to draw fine lines of separation between the periods

and believed that the seven “angels” or messengers represented a class of leaders throughout the age, rather than individuals assigned those responsibilities. Yet others have felt strongly that close students of history and the Book of Revelation can identify both the periods and the particular individuals serving as messengers to a reasonable degree of accuracy.

Certainly for 200 years there has been virtual concurrence on the first four stages: **Ephesus**, that of the apostolic church, when truths were held in basic purity; **Smyrna**, the early persecutions of pagan Rome and beginnings of doctrinal corruption; **Pergamos**, the rise of papacy and compromise with the world; and **Thyatira**, the reign of the apostate church, the counterfeit to the true Kingdom of God, which brought on the dark ages of the civilized world and the near extinction of the saints. For the next two periods, **Sardis** and **Philadelphia**, some differences of view were evident. But in the past century, a consensus has emerged which appears reasonable and might be termed the traditional or common view of the Bible Students, though there are some notable exceptions. The majority identify **Philadelphia** with the Reformation movement and **Sardis** as the brief interval just prior to it. **Laodicea** is then almost always taken as the lukewarm end-time church, identified with the harvest message, “Come out of her, my people.”

The chart is a graphical portrayal of the composite view. Drawn to scale, it allows the lengths of the periods to be compared visually, along with the ministries of each of the messengers. Two points become startlingly clear from the chart: First, that several of the church stages cover long periods of time, with Pergamos the most outstanding in this regard. Thus Arius is credited as its messenger for over 800 years, as the light of truth grew dimmer and dimmer. Strange as it may seem, a search of history reveals no other champion of truth of his stature throughout this period until Waldo appears on the scene. And second, it is typical of the ministries of the messengers that these are relatively short as compared to the overall lengths of the various stages of the church which they are credited with guiding and that they appear at the beginning of these respective periods. Thus the fact that we are yet benefiting from the ministry of the seventh messenger long after his death should not seem inappropriate; such was simply the pattern throughout the Gospel Age.

Why do we believe the traditional view is correct and deserves our support? First, pertaining to the periods: **Ephesus**, from the Pentecostal blessing to about 70 A.D. The latter date, marking the fall of Jerusalem, seems a significant transition from the early period of Jewish influence dominated by Paul's ministry to the phase of rapid expansion into the Gentile world. **Smyrna**, from 70 A.D. to 313 and the Edict of Milan, again seems well marked, with the ending point accepted almost universally, since it brought to a close the bitter afflictions that characterized the period. **Pergamos** runs from 313 to 1157, the time of the early beginning of the Waldensian movement. This synchronizes exactly with the 360-year “space” to repent given to Jezebel (Rev. 2:20,21), extending from 1157 to 1517 (Thyatira through Sardis), the very year that Luther nailed his theses on the church doors at Wittenberg. Any attempt to shorten Pergamos, for example to 800 A.D., the year of Charlemagne's crowning by the pope and the start of the “papal millennium,” runs into a double snag: there is no champion of truth to replace Arius prior to Waldo; and if Waldo is selected as the messenger to Thyatira, he would not appear on the scene (1157) for hundreds of years after the start of the stage of the church which he is credited with overseeing, a premise that seems most unreasonable.



Thyatira, from 1157 to 1367, then seems substantiated by the latter date's opening of the 150-year (five months) stinging of the locusts (Rev. 9:5, under the sounding of the fifth trumpet which parallels the fifth stage of the church), which so markedly characterized Wycliffe's tormenting attacks upon the papal system, extending to the very beginning of the Reformation movement (1517). **Sardis**, from 1367 to 1517, is thus clearly delineated by this 150-year period. **Laodicea**, the end-time church beginning with our Lord's presence and knocking at the door (Rev. 3:20), would extend from 1874 to the full end of the harvest period. Philadelphia, the church of the Reformation and subsequent Protestant expansion, would then be cradled between 1517 and 1874.

The Philadelphia period brings into focus a couple of interesting points which should be addressed. The "open door" of Rev. 3:8 seems to be a strong key unlocking the main activity that characterized this stage. Prior to this time the forces of darkness had prevailed to the point where the light bearers had been worn out and almost totally suppressed, so that true witnessing work was virtually at a standstill. Then came Luther's daring proclamations that set all Europe aflame and brought about a sweeping change in conditions that opened the floodgate of truth and began a process that has continued ever since. We are strongly persuaded that the descriptive picture of the "open door" is best seen as beginning in the Reformation movement.

How did the Church of Philadelphia live up to the meaning of its name, "brotherly love"? It was hardly to be expected that all believers could at once catch the spirit of their newfound Bible truths and suppress all bitterness toward the corrupt church that had kept them in bondage so long. Yet in coming to a fuller understanding of the great appreciation of one another as fellow believers in Christ would also grow. Such a growing realization of the fellowship and close ties of all believers and their privileged standing before God, as contrasted with the dictatorial and hierarchical structure of the established church, would surely have kindled the spirit of brotherly love for each other in their hearts.

Next, some comments pertaining to the messengers: **Paul's** ministry in the early church was so outstanding as to make him the almost universal choice as the first "angel." Highlights are his special commission by God, authoring most of the New Testament books, providing the doctrinal foundation for the Christian faith, extensive missionary efforts and care of all the early churches. The Apostle **John** seems logical as the overseer for the second church, having received the visions of Revelation, authoring four additional books of the New Testament, and offering by way of

teaching and example great encouragement to the believers during the period of intense persecution by pagan Rome.

Arius is universally selected as the shining light for Pergamos on the basis of his leading role in defending the early church's view of Jesus as the created Son of God and resisting mounting efforts to equate him with the Father. **Waldo** seems a strong choice as the guide for Thyatira, considering his translation of the Bible into the common tongue and his effective ministry for the truth in a very dark period of the church's history. **Wycliffe** likewise stands out as the messenger to Sardis and seems fully deserving of the wide acclaim given to him for his relentless opposition to Papacy, outstanding work as an early reformer, and first translation of the complete Bible into English.

Luther, though one of many leaders of the Reformation movement, clearly was its moving force and rightly should be recognized as the overseer to the Philadelphia church. His accomplishments were truly extraordinary: powerful sermons and writings that shook all Europe, shattered the claims of Rome and initiated the founding of widespread protest movements; translation of the Bible into the vernacular and restoring it to its rightful place of authority among men; and steadfast opposition to the fundamental errors and abuses of the papal system in the face of personal threats and overwhelming odds.

Finally, **C. T. Russell** is seen to emerge as the messenger to Laodicea and the harvest church. His unique contributions have given rise to unanimous recognition and acclaim by Bible Students for such a position: a Bible-centered ministry that stressed Christ's ransom sacrifice, revealed the Divine Plan of the Ages for blessing all mankind, discarded errors of the past, clarified the High Calling, opened an awareness of the end times and the parousia of Christ, and especially called attention to the imminent establishment of God's Kingdom on earth.

We are impressed by the foreknowledge of our great God as displayed in the progressive unfolding of the prophetic messages to the seven churches of Revelation. We see His majestic hand in the outworking of the affairs of the church, both true and nominal, while recognizing also that there has been no interference in the exercise of man's free moral agency. The drama that has unfolded has been an exciting one, though saddened with the accounts of suffering, persecution, and privation for the faithful few.

With the events of the harvest and end times fully upon us, we realize that the course of the saints is rapidly nearing its completion this side of the veil. Let those who remain of the overcomer class rejoice greatly that their faithfulness is soon to be rewarded in complete victory with Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, leaving all apostate elements exposed and destroyed forever. And may this realization stir the Lord's people to yet further zeal in His service, doing with their might what their hands find to do. Let us work while it is called day; for "the night cometh when no man can work." - John 9:4

- *Charles F Redeker*

This article is condensed from an extensive treatise on this subject contained in a book published by the author. The book lists chronologically the key events of church history over the past 2000 years and enables the reader to match these events with the seven stages of the church. It also summarizes the conclusions of Bible Student expositors of past and present in this regard. Single copies of the book are available free of charge by writing the author at 5554 Pal Mal Avenue, Temple City, CA 91780.

Rewards of Victory

Ephesus. Those who labored and did not faint, were promised nourishment from “the tree of life ... in the midst of the paradise of God.”

Smyrna. Those who suffered the pains of martyrdom were assured by him “which was dead, and is alive,” that they would not be hurt of the second death.

Pergamos. Those who held fast “my name” while being disowned as Christian for opposing the church hierarchy (thus earning the name “Antipas”) were promised a “white stone” of endorsement, inscribed with “a new name” of honor.

Thyatira. Those traduced by Jezebel, and crushed by her paramour (Ahab), were promised “power over the nations.”

Sardis. Those who kept their garments undefiled will be confessed “before my Father, and before his angels,” in white raiment.”

Philadelphia. Those who suffered rebuke from “them of the synagogue of Satan” are promised to become “a pillar in the temple of God.”

Laodicea. Those who recognize their true abasement, humbly receive chastening, and respond to the “knock” of our day, are promised a share in the Lord's throne.

- Summarized from Rev. 2 & 3

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”

Overview of Church History

This article and accompanying timeline present an overview of the history of the church which claims the name of Christ.

Neither the article nor the timeline are intended to be comprehensive. They simply highlight individuals, events, and objects. The timeline covers two millennia while this article primarily presents an overview of the early years of Christianity through the 5th century.

THE CHURCH FOUNDED

From the early disciples' perspective, one could easily have the view that the church founded by Christ would soon be fully victorious. It was founded upon the powerful truth that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus even stated, "...the powers of hades would not prevail against it [the church]." (Mt. 16:16-18) Jesus preached salvation from sin and exhibited mercy, compassion and hope. He worked miracles of healing both physical and spiritual. Though he often spoke in parables, the people embraced him and would have made him a king had he permitted it.

Jesus' full mission remained veiled even from his closest disciples. Though he spoke of his death, it conflicted with their understanding of his purpose, and they were shocked when they witnessed his humiliation and death. In fear and despair they were scattered. Peter's pain of denial was unbearable until three days later word came of an empty tomb. Their hopes revived as they witnessed a resurrection power which confirmed beyond any doubt that death had no power over him, and that his life even transcended the human. Perhaps they now saw Jesus as empowered and ready to lead them in completing his mission-the restoration of Israel. (Acts 1:6)

THE CHURCH COMMISSIONED

Immediate victory was not on the horizon. Instead Jesus prepared his disciples for his departure to the Father. They were to remain behind as his representatives until his return. He commissioned them to make disciples from the nations through a baptism like unto his. He promised them that they would not be alone. A comforter would come that would lead them into all truth and empower them.

During his ministry the disciples never understood his full mission. Now they had a promise of a leading into "all" truth and a promise of power. On the Day of Pentecost, wind and fire imbued these disciples with a power beyond human ability. Miraculous gifts, the preaching of salvation, and 3000 converts suggested that the church could now be victorious as these first believers would carry this message to their homelands.

However, the joy of this first victory was soon tempered when the fledgling church met resistance as they experienced the Master's words, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you." (John 15:18) They saw Peter and John thrown into prison, and Stephen stoned to death. Their Jewish brothers rejected the good news of salvation. Saul of Tarsus pursued and imprisoned

those of the Way until his own miraculous conversion made him Christ's special servant unto the Gentiles.

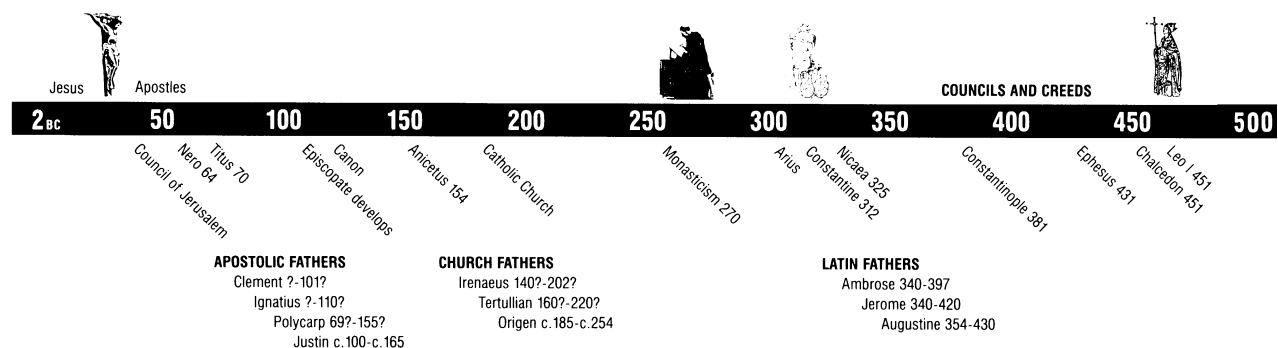
THE CHURCH FORGED

The church's message is one of truth and beauty. Yet the human heart is often cold and hard as it denies its need for repentance and reliance upon a Creator. As the church spread, resistance always met it. The initial Jewish persecution broadened to include persecutions from Herod, pagan peoples, and even the Roman government. Rather than destroy the church, these persecutions forged and spread the church. It deepened the resolve and commitment of the true while keeping out the curious.

Persecutions were generally isolated and of short term; yet there were determined efforts to destroy the church. Some of these persecutions used hideous tortures. The persecution instigated by Nero may have claimed the lives of both Peter and Paul. In the early 4th century, the Roman emperors Diocletian and Galerius directed the severest persecutions. Then it abruptly ceased. Co-emperor Constantine, a sun-worshiper, saw a vision and attributed a subsequent decisive victory to the Christian God. He became emperor of the western empire and in 313 granted Christians an equal standing among other religions.

Satan used various attacks upon the church. Persecution was an attempt to destroy the church from the outside. When outside persecution ceased, a far worse persecution was already growing from within the confines of the church. As the church grew, heresy and false teachings threatened the church internally. These differences often caused division and abuse of power. Retaliation often came from both sides of the issues. This spirit would continue to grow until centuries later the practices of the Inquisition used torture and death in the name of Christ. The Inquisition existed well into the 19th century.

The Reformation did not remove this evil. Michael Servetus was burned at the stake for his views on the trinity, baptism, and soul-death. Some of the church consistories became milder reflections of the Inquisition. This persecution was the antithesis of Jesus' new commandment to love one another. It violated his message to pray for our enemies and to leave vengeance to God. Such was never perpetrated or condoned by true believers. How did such a corrupt force enter the church?



APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY CHALLENGED

Doctrinal differences in the early centuries were often labeled heresy (belief against established doctrine). These issues presented significant challenges to the church. As these issues were debated, it's obvious that the victors were often the most powerful rather than the most correct. One of the greatest battles of the early church was against false teachers, for even the Apostles' authority was challenged in their day. (Acts 20:26-31, 2 Cor. 11:12-15, 2 Tim. 4:14-16, 3 John 9-10, Jude 3-4, 2 Peter 2:1-3)

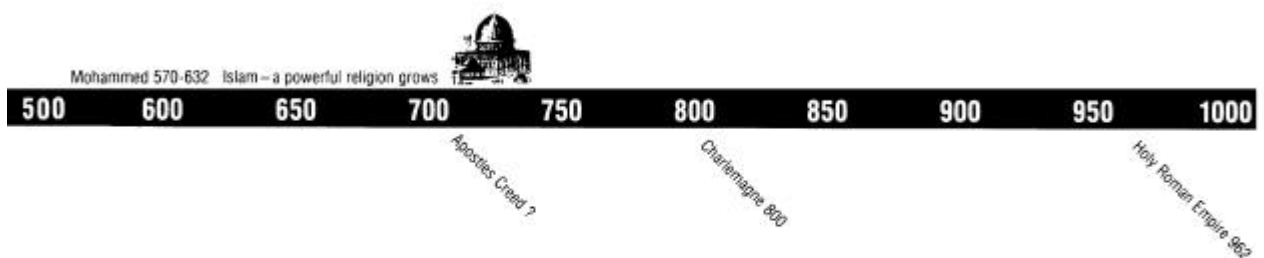
If the Apostles were challenged, can we imagine the challenge that came upon that 2nd century church after the Apostles' direct influence was gone? (Matt. 13:25)

The Apostle's exhortations had been to defend the faith and to keep the message that they had delivered. Defense was to be done within the spirit and framework of God's will. The church proceeds in the power of God. Its weapons are never carnal but spiritual. Yet the adversary used every conceivable weapon to destroy the church. As a result many well-meaning individuals retaliated with carnal weapons rather than the spiritual powers of love, prayer, and submission to the will of God. The roots of power and control began to grow. The great apostasy was in progress. (2 Thess. 2:7; 1 John 4:3)

Problems came upon the church in many variations. The Corinthian church was a prime example of problems: divisions, immorality, misuse of gifts, the Lord's supper misapplied, and law suits among the brethren. The early church also contended against Jewish and Greek influences, pagan rituals and Rome's dominance. Heresy presented another danger from the earliest days. In Paul's day, some taught that the resurrection was past and upset the faith of some.

After the Apostles died, the oversight of the church was transferred to others, or perhaps was assumed by others. During the- 2nd century divergent teachings abounded. Gnosticism and Montanism became serious threats. These and other lines of thought generated much debate which developed threads of dogma from which creeds were later woven. Salvation was evolving beyond a faith commitment in Christ to something that hinged upon a belief structure founded in dogma and reliance in an authoritarian hierarchy.

A major controversy centered around the person of Christ and his relationship to the Father. Though they viewed Christ as Savior, it is evident that these debaters had lost sight of that foundation truth expressed by Peter. Many attempted to define Christ within the confines of Greek philosophy rather than Jewish heritage. This was the basis of the incarnate logos reasoning.



Another reasoning (Sabellius 215) taught that God manifests himself in various personalities. God the Father came to earth as God the Son. At Pentecost, he came as God the Holy Spirit. This is called modalism or oneness as God manifests himself in many modes-one mode at a time. God is not limited to a trinity, but God is able to extend himself as he continues to manifest himself differently as one God. Servetus and Swedenborg held similar views. This teaching is called Oneness by some modern day Pentecostal groups.

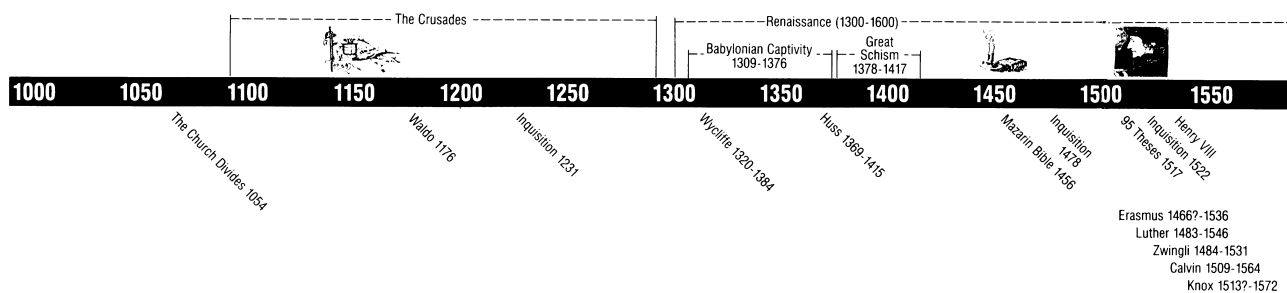
Arius presented another common view at Nicaea. Among his teachings are: 1) God alone is unbegotten and eternal; 2) God created an independent being, a son; 3) this son resolved to do good and eventually acquired divine qualities; 4) through this son all other creation was made; 5) below the son is the holy spirit - a being created by the son.

Some viewed these teachings as fundamental doctrines upon which salvation was based. Yet one wonders, if such were so essential for salvation, why did not God explain this clearly from the beginning through his Son and the Apostles?

CREEDS

Constantine was instrumental in changing the course of the church. Beyond making Christianity an acceptable religion, he did much to enhance its position and reputation through gifts, money and buildings. He saw himself as a chosen servant of the “highest divinity.” Some suspect that he used Christianity for political purposes. It is known that he delayed baptism until his death to guarantee salvation.

Constantine convened and presided over the Council of Nicaea in 325. Of 1800 bishops, only 318 were present to decide the issues. The major issue of this council was the person of Christ. Though the bishops debated the issue, it was Constantine who decided the matter. Directed by a Spanish bishop, he formally worded the crucial formula expressing the relationship of Christ to God. Christ is “true God from true God.” Awed by the emperor, many bishops signed the creed against their inclinations. The teachings of Arius were denounced. It is ironic that Constantine would later be baptised at death by Eusebius, an Arian.



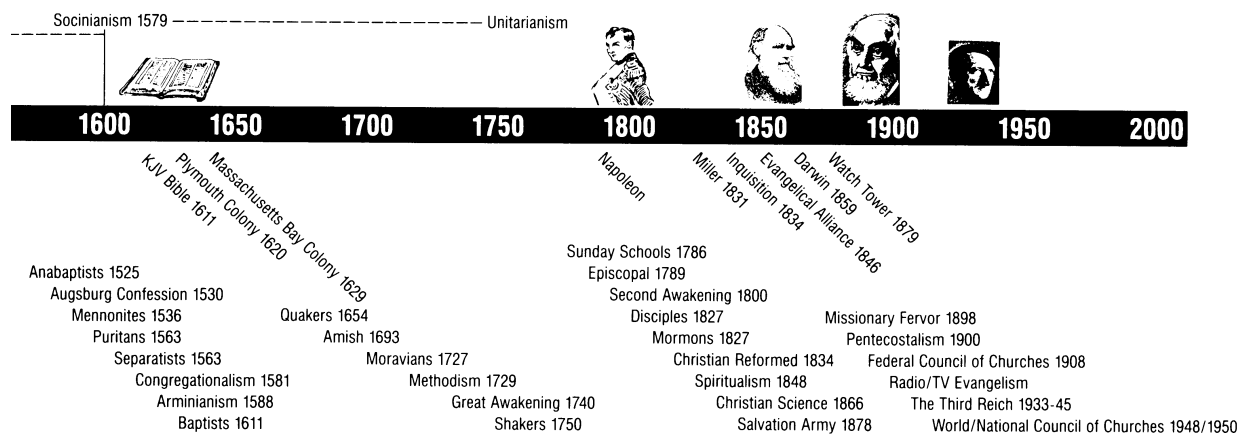
In the years following, debate would continue to define the person of the Holy Spirit. Finally, at the Council of Constantinople (381), the Holy Spirit was declared to be God and the trinity became doctrine. Further refinement of the trinity continues to this day. This type of reasoning also raised Mary to a point of reverence as Mother of God, and she was declared such during the Council of Ephesus (431). At the Council of Chalcedon (451), Jesus was declared to be eternally human as well as divine. The creed was modified to reflect this.

The best known creed is the 'Apostles' Creed It is claimed to be the oldest creed, but little evidence exists that it predates the 8th century. It is strictly a western creed and not recognized by the Orthodox church. Some consider it to be an evolution from baptismal statements after the manner of Mt 28:19. Yet this same scripture is widely recognized to be in question. The oldest known baptismal creed is that of Marcellus (340). All scholars agree that the Apostles did not compose this creed.

Beside the creeds, which are precise statements of faith, other doctrines were being formulated and practiced. By the end of the fifth century, the following were well entrenched in the church: exorcism, prayers for the dead, eternal torture, belief in purgatory, infant and deathbed baptism, penances, the Lord's Supper as a new sacrifice, veneration of martyrs, adoration of Mary, a ritualistic and ceremonial priesthood, and a positioned papal system. The creeds and false doctrines were Satan's attempt to confuse the truth and to destroy Christianity. For example, the new views of baptism hid the purpose of the call of God and the meaning of baptism into Christ's death.

EPISCOPATE DEVELOPS

After the Apostles died, another problem arose regarding authority in the church. At first, the church officers were the elders and deacons. All elders were of the same rank. Then this organization began to change. Stronger or more resourceful elders became known as bishops (episcopos), and the elders and deacons became subordinate to a bishop. These bishops were called monarchical as they had all authority for a specific church. Ignatius, a bishop, wrote "Do ye all follow your bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father. Do nothing without the bishop" " Later bishops were of other levels such as diocesan, metropolitan, patriarchal and eventually papal. The episcopate system developed rapidly in the 2nd century.



The episcopate structure continues today in the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Episcopal, Methodist, and Orthodox Churches. A derivative of the episcopate was the development of a clergy that made a sharp division among members of the church. The clergy became permanent officers ordained by the laying on of hands (Holy Orders), while the laity were ordinary members. This type of structure tends to make one a ruler rather than a servant of the flock.

WORLDLINESS

Another danger which threatened the church from the earliest days was worldliness. Christians witnessed and shared their faith, and the new converts exhibited various levels of commitment. Some became Christians for selfish reasons. (Acts 5:1-11, 8:18-24) The Apostles recognized this spirit readily and addressed it with authority.

As the church grew, Satan saw another opportunity to attack the church from within by weakening it with the principles and cares of the world. Often converts did not completely divest themselves of their pagan customs and moralities. This was manageable when Christianity was persecuted and converts were few. Then in 313, Constantine issued the Edict of Milan which made Christianity an acceptable religion, and the heathen world began to flood into the church. The small church was overwhelmed by a worldly influence.

During the first three centuries the church was extended in peaceful ways. Now it began to extend itself through numbers and force rather than truth and love. Quantity rather than quality prevailed. Many rejected this new spirit, and the existing monastic groups may have benefited. Yet the quiet monastic life is the other extreme. Though monks did many good works, this lifestyle did not guarantee Christlikeness. Some orders, such as the Dominicans, became intimately involved with the Inquisition.

CANON DEVELOPED

As the church spread through the Roman Empire, Paul revisited the churches. However, travel was long and difficult, and it was not always feasible to address church problems in a personal manner. Thus the Apostles wrote letters of encouragement and direction to stand firm in the original teachings. These letters were often shared among the churches. In turn other brethren began to write letters. Clement addressed the church at Corinth. Paul mentions Clement in Philippians 4:3. Polycarp, a disciple of John, Ignatius, Justin and others wrote many letters and essays relative to their faith. These writings accumulated and later became references for those who considered the various doctrinal issues.

One of the most prolific Christian writers was Origen. His influence was eastern and much of his thought spiritualized doctrines such as the second coming, the millennium and the kingdom. The many authors and writings often caused more confusion than clarification upon subjects. They were often referenced posthumously to prove points never intended by the author. Writings of Tertullian and Origen were later used to support the trinity and an incarnate logos concept. Yet both viewed Christ as subordinate to the Father. Tertullian became a strong Montanist which was heretical. Today, churchianity would reject much of their other thinking.

Attempts were made to establish a canon (standard) from the early writings. Perhaps the first great attempt was done by Marcion, who was also considered a heretic. Irenaeus, who quoted often from the Apostles' writings, was the first to state that there were only four valid gospel accounts from the many used in his day. New Testament canon was finalized through the efforts of many, particularly Athanasius around 367. The accepted Jewish writings (Greek Septuagint) were included as the Old Testament.

Though compiled, it was not available to anyone except the scholars or the high ranking clergy. It was in Greek, and then partially translated into other languages such as Coptic, Gothic, and several Latin versions, until Jerome made a standard Latin version called the Vulgate. It would be centuries before the complete Bible would be written in the vernacular and made accessible to the people. Today's Bibles are translations from manuscripts and fragments dated not earlier than the 2nd century, or revisions of the King James. No original writings are known to exist.

SUMMARY

The invisible church has suffered the attacks of Satan, but Jesus' words ring true that the “gates of hades will not prevail against it.” The church is Christ's body, and it shares in his experiences while being transformed into his image. He will continue to nourish his body.

The visible church system that bears the name of Christ has had a very sad history. Many evils have been said and done in the name of Christ. Jesus said it would be so. (Mt. 7:15-23; 2 Tim. 2:14-19) We desire to be called Christians. We should claim the name of Christ with boldness, while appreciating the unique privilege and the responsibility that comes with it. John 4:24
- *Ken Osterman*

References: The Church in History - B. If. Kuiper
The Oneness of God - David K. Bernard
Outlines of the History of Dogma - Adolph Harnack
The Ante-Nicene Fathers - Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson
Bible Student Monthly - - V6 6
N4 (1980), A) Analysis of Mt 28:19 Eusebius - Isaac Boyle
Encyclopedia Britannica
Funk and Wagnall's Encyclopedia

Genesis 2.2

Probably many Bible students have been puzzled by the wording of Genesis 2:2. The KJ reads: “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.” Most translations are very similar, although some have “finished” instead of “ended * “ As this reads, it is contradictory and confusing. This has led some to believe and teach that Eve was created on the seventh day. Bro. Russell does so, in several places.



However, there is good evidence, we think, that Eve was created on the sixth day. It was the disobedience of Adam that caused God to withdraw from active participation in man's affairs, and start his day of rest, or seventh day. Genesis 3:8 shows that up to that time, God sent his messenger to talk to Adam and Eve -he had not withdrawn from them. Eve had a part in the disobedience of

Adam, so she was created before the seventh day began. The date 1874, the end of the sixth Millennium and the beginning of the times of restitution, corroborates this point -it counts from Adam's fall, not from his creation. In other words, the fall of Adam brought on the need for restitution, and exactly 6,000 years after, the times of restitution began. A few quotes supporting this thought:

C128: "The six thousand years in which God has permitted sin to dominate the world, prior to the beginning of the great seventh or sabbatic thousand, or times of restitution, dates from the entrance of sin into the world."

R1731c2p1 "God's rest day, instead of being a 24 hour day, is a day 7000 years long. It began as soon as sin brought God's curse upon Adam."

R5697p1: "God entered into his rest when his creative works were finished in the earth."

Here is the question: is Genesis 2:2 correct as rendered in most versions? Let's first look at the context. The two verses before, and the one after, read thus:

Gen. 1:31; 2:1,3: "And God saw everything that he had made [1:27 includes "male and female"], and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made...

Also, Exodus 20:11 affirms: "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, ... and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day."

These verses do not prove, but they do indicate strongly, that Genesis 2:2 should read: "On the sixth day, God finished his work, and on the seventh day he rested." Do we have any support for this? Yes.

Gen. 2:2, NIV- "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work."

Gen. 2:2, NW: "And by the seventh day God came to the completion of his work that he had made, and he proceeded to rest on the seventh day from all his work that he had made"

Gen. 2:2, Ferrar Fenton: "And God rested at the seventh age from all the works which he had made."

Gen. 2:2, Rotherham (1976): "Thus God finished, on the seventh [sixth] day, his work which he had made, and rested on the seventh day, from all his work which he had made." (A footnote for the first "seventh" states: A correction, "sixth." From Ginsberg's revised Hebrew notes; based on the Samaritan's Pentateuch and the Septuagint.)

This change makes this Scripture harmonious and reasonable.

- *Marion Schrock*

FROM A READER

I appreciated [the article of last issue] concerning Leviticus 9 and 16, especially the mention of the Elders in Lev. 9:1 as I had found no other reference to that. Could you please expound on that. All I can ascertain as to their purpose, aside from being witness to those events, is from verse 5: "So they brought that which Moses had commanded" (Rotherham), of 16:5: "And from the assembly of the sons of Israel shall he receive two he-goats." Although not stated, I am assuming that "they" in 9:5 refers to the Elders. Antotypically, if the Elders refer to the Ancient Worthies, it is reasonable to suppose that they bring the antitypical animals forth through their deeds, actions and faith. As we know, Jesus studied the scriptures and quoted the deeds and faith of the ancient worthies. What is your thought on this?

Another question. In Tabernacle Shadows page 92 and in Tabernacle Shadows Helping Hand page 157 Q44 #3 it states, "And again whenever an Israelite offered a sin-offering unto the priests ... the priests all ate it in the Most Holy." (Refer to Numbers 18:10 in KJ, Amplified, Masoretic, and other translations.) Our Pastor's explanation of this is very reasonable. However, I wonder if the passage is perhaps translated incorrectly. In Rotherham and New English Bible, MOST HOLY refers to the sacrifice rather than the location. This seems most reasonable; see verse 9 especially. Compare also Exodus 29:32, "And Aaron and his sons shall eat ... at the opening of the tent of meeting" (Roth), and Leviticus 6:26, "The Priest ... shall eat it, in a holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tent of meeting" (Though Compare Numbers 18:11). What is your thought on this matter?

- D.C., Colorado

Author's reply: In Lev. 9:1, I do agree with your assumption that the elders were the "they" of vs. 5. So they not only were witnesses, they represented the nation. This seems to be supported by the Septuagint rendering: "On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the senate of Israel ... [vs. 3] and speak to the senate of Israel saying, Take ye a kid of the goats ... [vs. 5] And when they had brought them." I have no better explanation of how antotypically they provided these animals than what you suggested.

About Num. 18:10 ("In the most holy place shalt thou eat it [meat offering, sin offering, trespass offering]; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee.") I have a difficult time believing that the high priest and his sons gathered in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle and there ate anything. Going into the Most Holy itself was a very solemn, serious, and rare event. We know about the once-a-year entrance on the Atonement day, and when something was serious enough to ask the Lord to answer with Urim and Thummim. I don't know of any other time. The fact that Lev. 6:16 [meat offering], 6:26 [sin offering], and 7:6 [trespass offering] all describe the same thing and in 6:16 and 6:26 define "holy place" as "court of the tabernacle" (implied in 7:6) makes far better sense. Where the animal was killed was where I would expect it to be eaten. It had, after all, to be cooked since they were absolutely prohibited from eating blood-raw meat.

Rotherham's translation making "most holy" refer to the sacrifices themselves is, I think, correct. As you noted, the preceding verse (Num. 18:9) uses "most holy" as referring to the sacrifices even in the King James Bible.