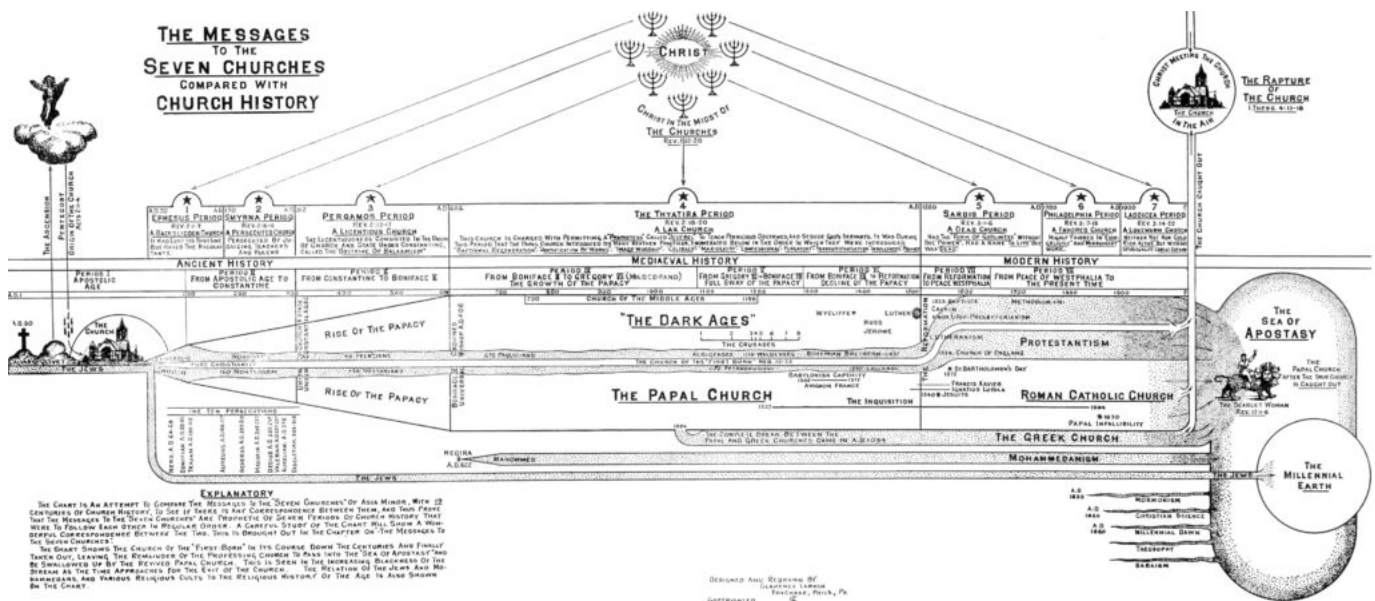


An Overview of the Historic Seven Church Periods

12/10/2024

Our last discussion considered an overview of the course-changing forces effecting each Church age represented in Larkin's chart '[The Messages to the Seven Churches Compared with Church History](#)'.



Beginning at Pentecost in Jerusalem following Jesus' Ascent, the Church of Christ grew and spread outward to surrounding areas. Even in the Apostles' Acts 2 Church movement, by Chapter 6, growth and organization issues had to be addressed resulting in the selection of seven men to provide for those of the Church in need.

Jesus is clearly addressing the seven distinct Churches in Rev 2:1 - 3:22. Additionally, our study is considering a comparative and possibly prophetic parallel to the Church Ages as well. Larkin proposes the seven Churches, as presented in order, also correlate to the nature of the Church Militant through history. Jesus addressed each Church with various Salutations, Commendations and Promises, while each might receive a Complaint, Counsel, Warning or Praise. These messages to each Church seem to show a high correlation to their respective historic periods. Larkin observes that each successive age retains the errors of the previous, the Church accumulating further degradation until arriving at an ineffective centrist

state in that of Laodicea which fails to truly offend or to rescue as does the real Gospel.

Ephesus - (The Backslidden Church, AD 70-170, Apostolic Age) Pressures on the young Church to retain religious works from Her Jewish roots, such as circumcision, ceremony and law.

Smyrna - (Persecuted, 170-312, Judaizers) Infiltration of Jewish false teachings, Jewish priestly hierarchy, extreme pressure to recant Christ or die through the 10 Roman persecutions.

Pergamos (Greek)/Pergamum (Latin) - (Licentious, 312-606, Constantine) The voluntary loss of independence of the Church as She donned the yoke of the State under Constantine through greed and bribery; The melding of pagan beliefs into the doctrines and traditions of the Church; Adoption of a Satanic priesthood rooted in Babylon's worship, including the inherited title of 'Pontifex Maximus' beginning with Nimrod, given to the Caesars, and ultimately passed to the head of the Roman Catholic Church who is still known today as 'Pontiff'. Perhaps the beginning of the most severe departure point of the Church from Christ's teachings and intent, the loss of the Church's independence to Man's and the World's System bringing terrible consequences. This cemented the creation and embrace of Post-Millennial and Amillennial doctrines promoting God's abandonment of His Covenants with the Jews and their replacement by the Church.

Thyatira - (Lax, 606-1050?, Boniface III, 1050-1280?, Gregory VII, 1280-1520, Boniface VIII) The majority of the practicing Roman Catholic Church during the Dark Ages. As Pergamos was a horrible genesis of a Man/State/Satan Church, the practices and doctrines that followed were breathtaking, including: Baptismal Regeneration, Justification by Works, Image Worship, Celibacy, Mariolatry (the worship of Mary), Confessionals, Purgatory, Transubstantiation (of the Lord's

Supper), Indulgences and Penance.

Sardis - (Dead, 1520-1750, Reformation & Westphalia) Between the decline of Roman Catholic Papacy and the rise of the Reformation movement, the preparatory actions of men such as Wycliffe, Huss and Luther led to the deadly and dark Thirty Years' War, leading to the Peace of Westphalia. The protestants of the Catholic Church would emerge with a Gospel, though not perfect, sufficient to ignite the spread of Christianity across the rest of the world. Also see [When Jesus Freed His Church of the Pope: The Evolution of the Church \(1450-1648\) - Gutenberg's Press, Luther's 95 Theses, The Reformation, The Peace at Augsburg, The Thirty Years' War, and The Peace of Westphalia](#)

Philadelphia - (Favored, 1750-1900, Evangelistic & Missionary) Perhaps another golden Age of the Church, the Gospel was loosed and the World evangelized. However, difficulty also arose with competing doctrines and leaders. Patently false Churches also emerged in the vacuum such as Mormonism (1830) and Christian Science (1866), promoting a gospel contrary and wicked. Baptist, Calvinist/Reformed, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran and Anglican were the primary denominations, with evangelists like John and Charles Wesley, George Whitfield, Charles Spurgeon, D.L. Moody, even Billy Graham driving the movement.

Laodicea - (Lukewarm, 1900 to Present, Wretched and Pitiabale) Prosperity and success often threaten focus and devotion, and the Church is not exempt. Jesus tells this Church She is lukewarm, deceived - "...you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and pitiable and poor and blind and naked. (**Rev 3:17**) This Church type has settled into a comfortable centrist posture, preaching a Gospel that doesn't offend yet doesn't rescue.

Through all of this, as well as through the Age before the Church, Jesus maintains His Remnant. Despite all of the offsetting pressures a faithful outlier always exists, seeking to shed any teachings that detract from His Faith. A horrifying prospect, how many will be counted as the foolish virgins (**Matt 25:1-13**) or those pleading “Lord, Lord!” (**Matt 7:21-23**)?

Though Man and the Enemy work to pollute the Truth and misdirect the Church, Jesus, the Author and Protector of our faith, continues to Save those sheep given to Him by Father, promising no one will snatch them out of His Hand - If we would only hear, believe and obey.

“²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish—ever; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one.”
John 10:27-30