

Revelation: The Time is Near

Faithful Until Death

Revelation 2:8-11

A lot of people tend to be afraid of this book we read earlier...there's a blessing

If we read, hear/understand, keep

Revelation speaks of the judgment of the end. The judgments on the inhabitants of the Earth, the final judgment for believers, the condemnation of the Enemy and the fallen angels, and the similar demise of those who follow them.

God desires no one go to hell. Hell was created for Satan and the fallen angels. If you go to hell, it's because you chose it by following anything other than Jesus.

After all, it isn't Revelation...it is The Revelation of Jesus Christ. WHO HE IS IN FULL
Not just the lamb, but the lion.
Not just the savior, but the righteous judge.

There will be hard things in this book

Both to understand and to accept

- About God
- About the Church
- About the World
- About the Time we live in
- About the End
- About Heaven
- About What's Next
- About Christianity
- About Your Own Responsibility and Destiny

John's vision: Jesus amongst the seven lampstands, the seven stars

Specific churches in that day, specific church ages throughout history, and seven types of congregations

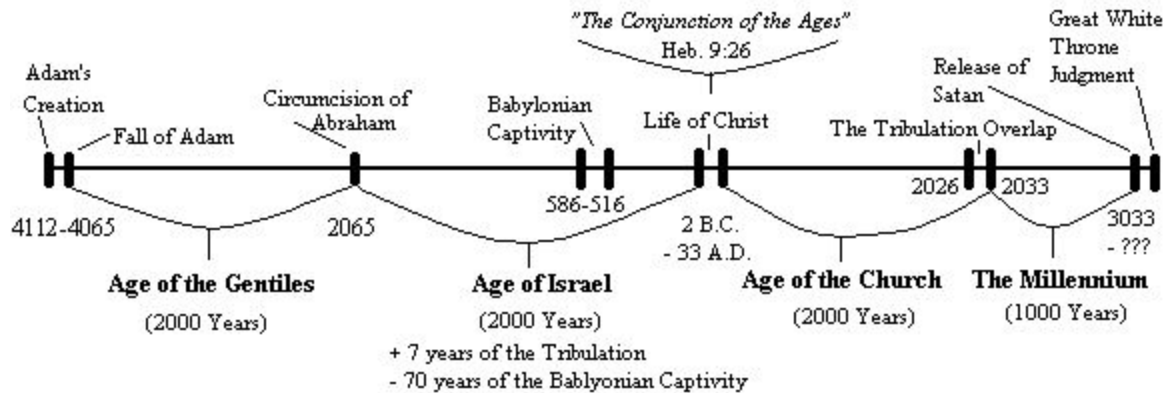
Seven stars - seven leaders of the churches then, seven perhaps types of leadership throughout the ages, perhaps seven types of leadership even today

Lampstands have no guarantee of permanence or place

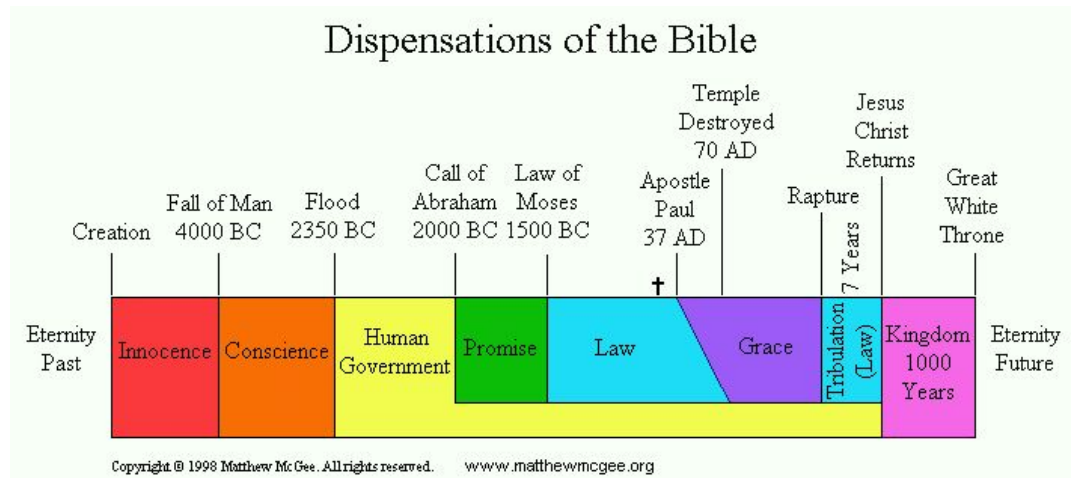
The seven church ages, some overlap, some end, some continue to the end

Back up and look at the ages of history

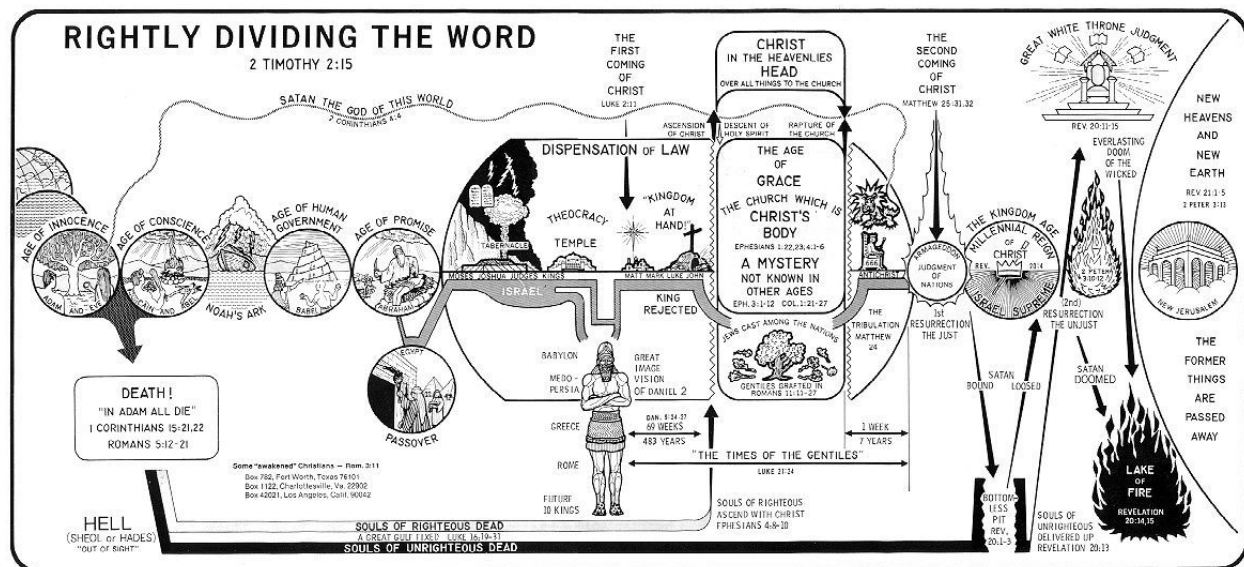
(future dates here are subjective to this author's interpretation)



The "Seven Days" of Human History

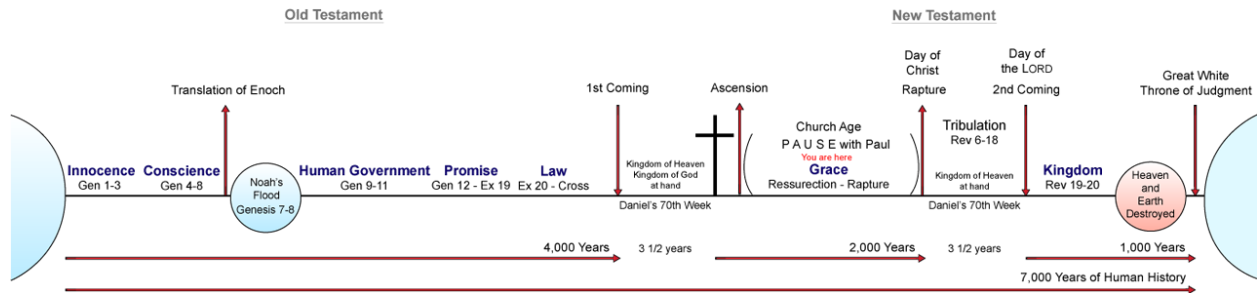


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Dispensations of the Holy Scriptures

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
2 Timothy 2:15



Scofield

Age of the law, age of grace

Churches - different flavors of the same meal

Churches in John's day, church ages throughout history, specific types of churches today, perhaps even description of believers themselves...since believers ARE the church. Fluctuate. I wouldn't take that too seriously as individuals are more akin to the four soils, but there is a correlation there I believe.

Meaning of the Church Names

Ephesus: The Desired One

Smyrna: Myrrh; Death

Pergamos: Mixed Marriage

Thyatira: Semiramis (connection with Babylon, Dagon, fish God, Ishtar, even roots of Catholicism)

Sardis: Remnant

Philadelphia: Brotherly Love

Laodicea: People Rule

<https://www.khouse.org/articles/1993/32/>

Life cycle of churches (Chuck Missler)

- People-oriented pastor
- Pulpit-oriented pastor
- Property-oriented pastorate
- Power-oriented pastorate (return of the Nicolaitans)
- Politically driven decay (looking for political power)

Debate over the end times

Arguments on both sides, different views, more than one

THERE'S A LOT OF GARBAGE OUT THERE. Be careful where you do your digging. Consider the messenger and the end and fruit of their message.

Prophecy tells us of a certain future. The future.

However, because it was describing events thousands of years in the future for the writer, things can be a bit murky.

Although the scenarios are clear, it's unclear who the actors are and technology used.

[pray]

Revelation 2:8-11

The Church in Smyrna:

Smyrna (/ˈsmɜːrnə/ SMUR-nə; Ancient Greek: Σμύρνη, romanized: Smýrnē, or Ancient Greek: Σμύρνα, romanized: Smýrna) was a Greek city founded in antiquity located at a central and strategic point on the Aegean coast of Anatolia. Since 1930, the modern city located there has been known in English as İzmir, in Turkey, the Turkish rendering of the same name. Due to its advantageous port conditions, its ease of defense and its good inland connections, Smyrna rose to prominence. - Wikipedia

- Smyrna: This was a large, beautiful, and proud city. It was a center of learning and culture, and was proud of its standing as a city. "Smyrna was an outstandingly beautiful city. It claimed to be the 'Glory of Asia.' " (Barclay)
- Smyrna: This was a rich city.
- a city deeply committed to idolatry and the worship of the Roman Emperor. the worship of those pagan gods was dying out. The real focus was on the worship of the Roman Emperor.
- In 196 b.c. Smyrna built the first temple to Dea Roma – the goddess of Rome, the spiritual symbol of the Roman Empire. Once the "spirit" of Rome was worshipped, it wasn't much of a step to worship the dead Emperors of Rome. Then it was only another small step to worship the living Emperors, and then to demand such worship as a evidence of political allegiance and civic pride.

Is this not a precursor to what we'll see the world does with the antichrist?

***This church and the Philadelphians church have NO CRITICISM
Sardis and Laodicea have no COMMENDATION***

“Who was dead and came to life” the identity of the resurrection

There is only one and it is He whom we identify with as believers

Death- myrhh

Works - same as words to Ephesus - that which one undertakes to do, enterprise, undertaking

Tribulation - thlipsis - a pressing, pressing together, pressure metaph. oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits

[Mat 24:9-10 NKJV] 9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

[Act 7:11 NKJV] 11 "Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance.

[Rom 8:35 NKJV] 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [Shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

[Jas 1:27 NKJV] 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, [and] to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

[Heb 10:32-33 NKJV] 32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated;

Poverty - beggary “abject poverty”

(but you are rich)

To be successful in a wicked world can mean compromising your faith. They weren't rich like those around them. But their physical poverty was not their real wealth.

The Christians of Smyrna knew poverty because they were robbed and fired from jobs in persecution for the gospel.

Look at what's happening in this past decade and more in America...business lost, publicly “tarred and feathered” for not baking a cake, photographing a “wedding,” Chic-Fil-A coming under fire and STOPPING to give to organizations because of certain groups of people being upset that those organizations call sin *sin*.

Contrast with Jesus' words to Laodicean church:

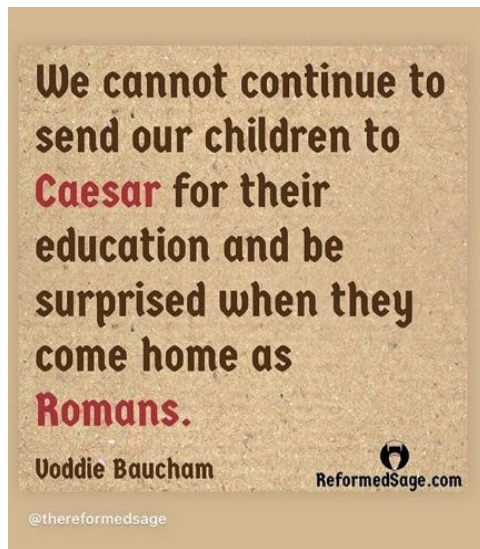
[Rev 3:17-18 NKJV] 17 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- 18 "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, [that] the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

Blasphemy of false Jews who really are in a Synagogue of Satan

Historically, we are told there was a large and hostile community of Jews in Smyrna, but this tells us that a true Jew is one who trusts God and believes in Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:3). Others may be Jews ethnically – which still has its place before God – but they are not Jews spiritually before God. - DG C

How hard is it even today to say that you are a Christian. There are many that go by that “name” but in lifestyle, in deed, in beliefs, in morals they are clearly not.

Not trying to make an explicit case for homeschooling, but I think in light of what we just spoke about:



Can we as Christians, find ourselves being spiritually/morally/ethically educated by the world and expect to be in fact, Christians?
Are we little Christs or little Caesars?

“Do not fear what you are about to suffer”

What they would be suffering would make people fear

*ISIS shoots, beheads 11 Christians in Nigeria in revenge for death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi
The video showed men in black masks lining up behind blindfolded captives, then shooting one and beheading the rest*

<https://vancouversun.com/news/world/islamic-state-says-it-killed-11-christians-in-nigeria/wcm/ceb7d84-a0d8-480e-baaf-721bc3de6bf7>

The West doesn't really care.

Jesus reveals who really is the one doing the persecution

Who is at the root...the devil himself.

He is real. He is really at work in the world. And he hates children. He hates Christians. He hates the truth.

And look at everything going on in our world

What children are taught

What parents are doing to their little boys and girls with psychological influence, medication, even surgery

Abortion

Persecution

Blurring of truth so that there is no right or wrong in the modern world. "Your own truth."

We are close. Things have never been so dark.

What's the point? Tested. Put on trial before those who are persecuting you.

It is for others to see what we're made of in a sense...

Paul and other apostles in prison to bring guards to faith.

Corey Ten Boom and the Nazi guard who beat her and her sister

Being thrown into prison was severe persecution. In that day, prison was never used to rehabilitate someone, and rarely used to punish someone. Normally, you were thrown into prison as you awaited trial and execution

Christian pastor released in muslim country after being in prison for a few years...for having a bible and a book about Jesus

"For a man to become a Christian anywhere was to become an outlaw. In Smyrna above all places, for a man to enter the Christian Church was literally to take his life in his hands. In Smyrna the church was a place for heroes." (Barclay)

iv. "This 'tribulation' does not mean the common trials to which all flesh is heir. Some dear souls think they are bearing their cross every time they have a headache. The tribulation mentioned here is trouble they would not have had if they had not been Christians." (Havner)

Ten days, different opinions on it

- Ten years, prophetic “days’ meaning years”
- Ten emperors
- Still others take strange and confusing approaches: “Others observe, that in ten days are two hundred and forty hours, which make up the number of years from 85, when the second persecution began, (under which John at this time was) to 325, when all the persecutions ceased.” (Poole)
- Others say that ten days is simply an expression of speech: “The expression ten days is not to be taken literally; it is the normal Greek expression for a short time.” (Barclay)
- However, there is no compelling reason to believe it means anything other than ten days of severe persecution, with an emphasis on the idea that it is a limited time.

Persecution, even if short, feels like a long time. And this is an encouragement that it will not be forever. To hang on.

Soldiers taught how to withstand torture. Soldier in vietnam told to speak a message, spells out “torture” with blinking in morse code

He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death

The first death is going to hurt for the persecuted church. It wouldn’t be a death going quietly in their sleep. But killed for their faith.

[Mat 10:28 NKJV] 28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

We aren’t guaranteed an easy life, in fact we can be assured it’ll be anything but

We aren’t guaranteed to be protected from death

[Dan 3:17-18 NKJV] 17 "If that [is the case], our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver [us] from your hand, O king. 18 "But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Our salvation is for eternity. Protection from the second death, to come. Eternal death. Hell.

I’m not sure how much of the American church would remain if subjected to the things Smyrna faces.

There are many churches today that are being persecuted like Smyrna. Churches in Africa, **Asia, the Middle East. However, it may not be long until we’re tasked with “not being afraid of the things we’re about to suffer.”**