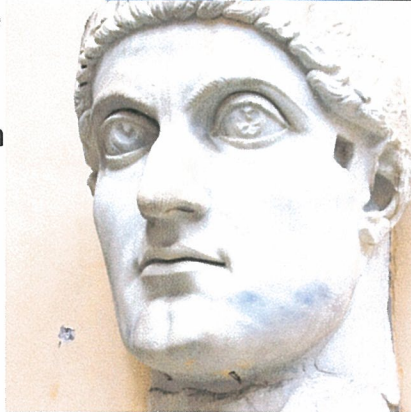


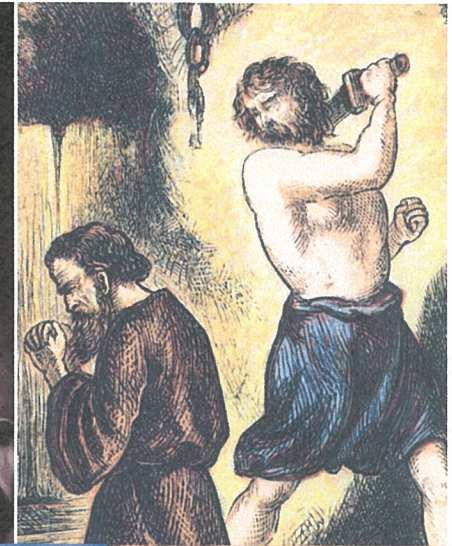
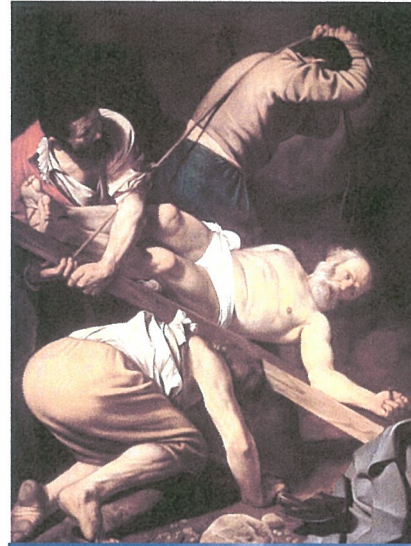
Historic Preview of Gospel Age

Matthew 24:4-14

4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. 5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. 6 "And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. 8 "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. 9 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. 10 "And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. 11 "And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. 12 "And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 "But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. 14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come. NAS



From down: Emperors Diocletian, Constantine, and Theodosius I
Bottom: Ambrose, Bishop of Milan



Crucifixion of Peter, Beheading of Paul, John at Patmos, Arius of Alexandria, Christians at Rome's Colosseum

Early Reformers

Peter Waldo (1140 - 1217) was a once-wealthy merchant who lived in Lyon, France. After hearing a song about God, he asked a clergyman the best way to God. After the clergyman recited Matthew 19:21 about selling all you have etc., he did just that and lived a life of poverty and service. His followers became known as Waldensians. They held that the Bible was the only source of authority and rejected the organization and much of Catholic Church dogma. They were persecuted for centuries for their "unorthodox" beliefs by Rome and its supporters. He was the 4th Messenger.



Jan Hus (1374-1415) was ordained priest in 1401 and spent much of his teaching career at Charles University in Prague. Strongly influenced by Wycliffe, he stressed the role of Scripture as an authority in the church. Although he defended the traditional authority of ordained clergy, he taught that only God was able to forgive sin. His views were not popular with the Church and in 1415 he attended the Council of Constance to defend his beliefs. He was tried and burnt at the stake without an opportunity to explain his beliefs.



John Wycliffe (1329-84) was a prominent English Reformer of the later Middle Ages. He was a leading philosopher at Oxford University. He fell into conflict with the church and was condemned by the Pope in 1377, because he agreed that the government should seize the property of corrupt clergymen. In 1382 he was sent from Oxford and went to live in Lutterworth. One of his major achievements was the launching of a new translation of the Late Vulgate Bible into English. His followers became known as "Lollards." They are the "locusts" of Revelation 9. Wycliffe was the 5th Messenger.



Girolamo Savonarola (1452 - 1498), was a dominican monk who was a preacher and prophet who spoke out forcefully against the church, as the "Babylon" of the Book of Revelation, urging the same message of repentance as John the Baptist. He was puritanical and during the Florentine carnival in 1497, he organized the "bonfire of the vanities" destroying paintings etc. Pope Alexander VI excommunicated him and together with his fellow friars, Domenico da Pescia and Silvestro Maruffi, he was hanged and burnt in Piazza Signoria in Florence on 23 May 1498.



Later Reformers

Martin Luther (1483 - 1546) first studied law and then entered the monastery in Erfurt and later became a professor of theology at Wittenberg. He preached "Justification by Faith," the Scriptures alone and the glory of God alone. His teachings sparked the Reformation. He was the 6th Messenger to the Church.



Ninety-five Theses (October 31, 1517)
The "95 Theses," were written by Martin Luther and are regarded as the spark that ignited the Protestant Reformation. Luther's theses expressed his displeasure with some of the Roman Church's clergy's abuses and doctrines, particularly the sale of indulgences, and purgatory. Luther's writings encouraged others to share their doubts about the Church and to protest against it; it also challenged the teachings of the Church on the authority of the Pope.



Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560)
German scholar and humanist. He was second only to Martin Luther as a figure in the Lutheran Reformation. He was professor of Greek at the University of Wittenberg when he met Luther, and they soon became friends. He was able to explain the new gospel to those outside the movement. At the Diet of Augsburg (1530) he wrote and presented the Augsburg Confession: Luther's views.



Ulrich Zwingli (1484 - 1531) born in Switzerland and believed in the Bible as a precise authority. Zwingli's theology and morality were based on a single principle: if the Old or New Testament did not say something explicitly and literally, then no Christian should believe or practice it. He denounced the use of music, pictures and sculptures in church. He disagreed with Luther in that he believed that the bread and wine of the mass were a memorial, rather than the literal body and blood of Christ. But was first to persecute Anabaptists.



William Tyndale (1496 - 1536) was a theologian and scholar, speaking eight languages fluently. He was the first man to take advantage of Gutenberg's invention to print the New Testament in the English language. Tyndale's Bible translation, including commentaries, was banned and he was condemned as a heretic. Captured outside of England and held prisoner he was strangled and burnt at the stake on orders of King Henry VIII of England in 1536. His final words were, "LORD open The King of England's Eyes"



Historic Preview of the Gospel Age

Johannas Gutenberg (1398-1468)

Until the widespread use of Gutenberg's moveable typeface, printing on paper was quite expensive and thus limited in scope. But the expansion of travel and the exploration of the New World brought Christendom to Africa, Asia and Americas. Sadly the Church of Rome became a dominant force across the whole globe.

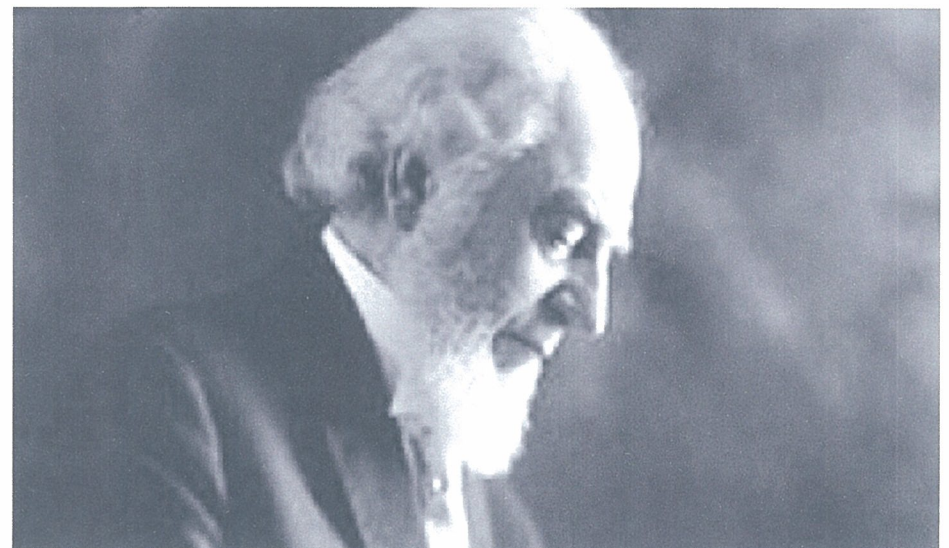


Michael Servetus (1511-1553)

While Michael Servetus was not perfectly clear on the pre-human existence of Jesus, he nevertheless was VERY clear on the errors of trinity and predestination. Sadly his contentious written confrontations with John Calvin led Calvin to declare in a letter to a friend, William Farel (Feb 13, 1546) that "...If he comes here [to Geneva], if my authority is worth anything, I will never permit him to depart alive." (Calvin required he be roasted at the stake.)

Final Lessons of Historic Preview of Gospel Age

- A. The Lord's Great Prophecy Shows Christ's Loving Care
- B. Reality is that more than just leaders suffered (Rev 17:6)
- C. We must make the Truth our own if we expect to hold fast under persecution.
- D. Avoid Nicolaitain-ism: Don't dominate or be dominated.
- E. Teach--but not with the "wisdom of words lest the Cross of Christ be made to none effect." (1 Cor 1:17)
- F. Be "determined not to know anything among the brethren save Jesus Christ and him Crucified.
- G. Be transparent representatives of the Lord Jesus and our Father in Heaven.
- H. Do not put self in the place of Christ for others to follow.
 - I. Know the Harvest Message well and the truths which affirm the Lord's *parousia* his second presence.
- J. Express thankfulness daily for all the examples of faith.
- K. Remember that the End of the Age has come and Matthew 24 has been proven true.
- L. Take the "Whole Counsel" of Scripture and the "Whole Counsel" of Brother Russell.



HISTORIC PREVIEW OF THE GOSPEL AGE

PROMISES & ADMONITIONS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Revelation 2 & 3

WHILE the messages given to the seven churches specified in the Revelation were doubtless applicable to them, they properly have a still wider application to the entire Gospel Church, the number seven representing completeness. The *Book of Revelation* is a book of symbols, which our Lord "sent and signified [told it in signs and symbols] by His angel unto His servant John." (*Revelation 1:1*.) . . . To be in harmony, then, with the rest of the book, "the seven churches which are in Asia" must be symbolic; and as the book is chiefly history written beforehand, they must symbolize seven successive stages

in the history of the Christian Church, covering the period between the First Advent and the Second Coming of Christ. The fulfillment, we think, proves the correctness of this position." R5992

"The *first three chapters of Revelation* contain particular specifications and general admonitions, not only for the local churches therein mentioned, but for all "overcomers." They apply not only to the different epochs in the history of the Church as a whole, but to different classes in any one epoch in the history of the Church." R4870

Church		Admonitions		Promises	
1	Ephesus (2:1-7)	Rev 2:4 "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."	Whoever is not rendering some service to our King in the present time of multiplied opportunities has at very most the "lukewarm" love that is offensive to the Master".-- <u>Rev. 2:4</u> . R2497, Q102	Rev 2:7 "To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life , which is in the Paradise of God.." NAS	The overcomers of the Gospel age shall have full liberty to partake of that tree under most blessed and satisfactory conditions, when the knowledge will be of benefit to them under divine approval. R5992:5
2	Smyrna (2:8-11)	Rev 2:10 "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested....Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."	Some of the most sublime pictures of Christian endurance were enacted during the Smyrna period. The call was for faithfulness unto death... R5992:6	Rev 2:11 "He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death ." NAS	The true children of God were suffering death at this stage of the church, but are encouraged that they shall not be hurt of the second death. HG97:6 All others than the class of overcomers of the Gospel Church will be greatly injured by the second death. R649:5

3	Pergamos (2:12-17)	Rev 2:15 "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."	The doctrine of the Nicolaitans seems to be the theory of lordship or headship in the church...the strife as to who should be greatest existed amongst many of the patriarchs--fathers--of the prominent churches. R5993:1	Rev 2:17 "To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna , and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'	That incorruptible hidden manna in the golden pot represents the grace of God in the Church of the First-born, and teaches what is elsewhere plainly stated in the Scriptures, that the "little flock" shall enjoy the incorruptible life, immortality. R4012
4	Thyatira (2:18-29)	Rev 2:20 "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."	If we are inclined to feel or speak strongly of the wicked course of Jezebel, as we should, let us not forget that somewhat similar practices prevail in our day. R4741	Rev 2:26, 28 "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations . . . And I will give him the morning star."	The Bride, will be with the Lord in his Millennial throne as he promised, "To him that overcometh will I grant power over the nations"; and again, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world"?—in conjunction with their Lord <u>Rev. 2:26; I Cor. 6:2</u> . R4084 As the bright and morning Star, He is leading on to a glorious sunrise--the dawning of the Messianic Day, which is to scatter earth's night and to bring blessings instead of the curse. R5323
5	Sardis (3:1-6)	Rev 3:4 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy." NAS	The majority of the Sardis Church had not kept their garments undefiled. No one will gain the prize of the "high calling" if he does not keep his garments undefiled from the flesh...from all stains upon the robe (<u>I John 1:7</u> .) ...Only the individual himself can know to what extent he has watched his conduct and kept up his communication with the Lord and daily scrutinized life's affairs, the incidents of the day, and asked forgiveness for shortcomings and trespasses. R4870	Rev 3:5 "He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments ; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." NAS	Who conquers in himself the spirit of the world. R1113:4; C225 The love of self, of popularity, of worldly prosperity, as well as love for man-made creeds and theories. R4870:5 Our overcoming consists not in perfect works, but in a perfect heart or will. R962

6	Philadelphia (3:7-13)	<p>Rev 3:11 "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."</p>	<p>Do not let slip from you the blessed relationship which was entered into, which was established for you by Me, to give up all earthly ambitions and to strive daily for the great prize which I set before you--The crown is yours now, by virtue of the arrangement which I have made with you as your Advocate, and by virtue of the Covenant of Sacrifice which you have made with Me. Hold fast your crown! Do not allow it to pass to another. R5532</p>	<p>Rev 3:12 "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."</p>	<p>Not simply an unimportant part, but a vital one, which cannot be removed while the structure exists. R5993:4</p> <p>This is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Righteousness of Jehovah." (Jer. 33:16) The name of the Bridegroom is given to his Bride. R3970</p>
7	Laodicea (3:14-22)	<p>Rev 3:18 "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."</p> <p>Rev 3:20 "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."</p>	<p>At the cost of faithful and constant submission to the discipline of the Lord in the fiery trials which are necessary to consume our dross and refine our gold. R1944:2</p> <p>Knocking gently with the prophecies to arouse the virgins, but not to arouse the world. R2978:4</p> <p>The man who never hears the "knock" is evidently not counted worthy to hear it. But those who hear are just as evidently not compelled to respond and to accept the present, knocking King. R2978:4</p>	<p>Rev 3:21 "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."</p>	<p>To overcome requires energy, force of character, perseverance and steadfast, patient endurance to the very end of the present life. R1719:3</p> <p>During the world's judgment the overcomers of this Gospel Age, the brethren, the Bride, will be with the Lord in his Millennial throne as he promised, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." R4870</p> <p>For a thousand years they shall reign over the world, for the scattering of all ignorance and blindness and the uplifting of all the families of the earth, the living and the dead. R5802</p>

"Be thou faithful unto death. . . .



and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2:10