

# The church in the end times

B Jones, NYR 2016

1. What is the church?
  - a. All those who are saved by the blood of Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit
  - b. The bride of Christ
  - c. Distinct body separate from those saved in other dispensations
2. Historical churches
  - a. Ephesus: First love lost
  - b. Smyrna: Church under persecution
  - c. Pergamum: The worldly church
  - d. Thyatira: The church mixed with idolatry
  - e. Sardis: The lifeless church
  - f. Philadelphia: The faithful remnant
  - g. Laodicea: The lukewarm church
3. Church absent from tribulation
  - a. Rev. 3:10: Church to be kept from tribulation
  - b. Matt. 24: 15-28: References to Judea and Sabbath are Jewish, not Christian
  - c. Christians are to *endure* ongoing tribulation; Jews addressed in Matthew 24 are told to *escape* tribulation
  - d. Church and Holy Spirit are absent from scenes on the earth during the tribulation; the one who restrains has been taken out of the way (2 Thess. 2:7)
  - e. Cries of the godly for vengeance are characteristic of the Law, not the Church of Christ (Rev. 6:10)
4. Rapture
  - a. Described in 1 Thess. 4, 1 Cor. 15
  - b. Event occurs at start of Revelation 4
  - c. Bodily resurrection vs spirit entering presence of Christ at moment of death (Luke 16, 23:43)
5. Twenty-four elders representing the church (Rev. 4:4,10; 5:5-14; 7:11,13; 11:16-18; 14:3; 19:4)
  - a. Wearing white (priestly) robes
    - i. Correspond to the 24 divisions of priests (1 Chron. 24:1-19), or 25 with high priest (Eze. 8:16). (Who is High Priest of the elders?)
  - b. Wearing crowns
    - i. Awarded at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor. 4:5, 2 Cor. 5:9-10; 1 Cor. 3:13-15; Rom. 14:10, Matt. 16:27; Eph. 6:8; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12)
      1. Judgment seat not shown in Revelation; assumed to follow rapture
      2. Only crowns/commendation awarded, unlike white throne of Rev. 20:11 where unbelievers are judged
    - ii. Crowns cast down before God (Rev. 4:10)
  - c. Seated on thrones, ready to judge
  - d. "Elder" is a title closely associated with the church
  - e. Elders occupied with:
    - i. Worshiping God
    - ii. Declaring the worthiness of Christ
    - iii. Expounding on spiritual matters (Rev. 7:14, 11:16-18; see 1 Cor. 2:16, 1 Peter 1:10-12)
    - iv. *Not* working; Sabbath rest
6. Other groups
  - a. 144,000 sealed Jews
  - b. Gentile multitude of chapter 7 (distinct from elders)
  - c. Nations of Rev 21:24-26 (may be the same as Chapter 7)

7. The marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6-10)
  - a. The ideal husband (Eph. 5:25-32)
    - i. Loves his wife
    - ii. Cares for his wife's condition
    - iii. Knows his wife (1 Peter 3:7)
  - b. The ideal wife
    - i. Respects her husband
    - ii. Is faithful
    - iii. Depends on her husband
8. Armies arrayed in white (Rev. 19:14)
  - a. Share in victory without actual combat
9. Reigning/judging with Christ through millennium (20:4)
  - a. Assumed to reign from heaven in resurrection bodies rather than on earth
  - b. Judging even angels (1 Cor. 6:1-3)
  - c. What else does the Lord entrust us with?
    - i. Gospel (1 Tim. 1:11)
    - ii. The Word (2 Tim. 2:15)
10. New Jerusalem (Rev. 21)

**What does the picture of New Jerusalem tell us about the Lord's church?**

**+There is only one new Jerusalem:** Like the scattering of worship sites in the Old Testament, the fragmentation into denominations of the present time are contrary to God's desire.

**The height, width, and length are equal:** The church maintains proportion and balance without favoring some doctrines and practice to the neglect of others.

**The structure is built of precious and imperishable materials:** The church is founded upon the precious blood of Christ and His unchanging truth.

**The city is built of transparent gold:** The church should be open and transparent.

**There is no temple:** The church has no need of a man-made structure to mediate between man and God.

**God is the city's light and the Lamb is its lamp:** The sole light for the church's teachings is God's truth as revealed by His son.

**The nations walk by its light:** By its moral influence, the church is a light to the world (Matt. 5:14).

**The kings of the earth bring their glory into it:** Earthly authorities do not borrow glory from the church but those who are godly subordinate the glory of their position to the service of the Lord.

**The city has walls but its gates are always open:** The church never closes itself to entry but there is distinctness and separation between the inside and the outside.

**Nothing unclean will enter:** Unjudged sin should not settle in the church.

**Nor anything detestable or false:** Complete truthfulness should characterize Christian relations. *"Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another"* (Eph. 4:25).

**All present are written in the book of life:** The unsaved have no place in the church.

1 Peter 3:11-12 asks what sort of people we should be as we await the day of the Lord when all will be brought to account. It is well to also ask ourselves what sort of church we should be.

(This outline owes much to William Kelly's *Lectures on the Book of the Revelation*)