

HANDOUT – Lesson 211 – CHURCH HISTORY

DATE	CHURCH CHARACTERISTICS	REV REF	KEY MESSAGE FROM CHRIST
Death of Christ thru 1 st century	"Apostolic" period Church is new, Planting of congregations is primary focus	Ephesus, Rev 2:1-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christ portrayed as the one holding and walking among the churches Church is hard-working, perseveres in face of hardship Church does not tolerate evil men or false teachers Church has fallen from its first love Overcomers will eat of the tree of life in Paradise.
2 nd and 3 rd centuries	"Persecution" period Commentators point to ten Roman emperors as representing the ten days of persecution.	Smyrna, Rev 2:8-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christ portrayed as the resurrected one, the First and the Last Church is outwardly afflicted and impoverished, but spiritually rich Church about to experienced suffering, prison and persecution to the point of death. Persecution for "ten days" Overcomers will receive crown of life and will not be hurt by the second death.
4 th thru 6 th centuries	"Institutionalization" period Constantine makes Christianity the state religion	Pergamum, Rev 2:12-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christ portrayed with sharp, two-edged sword proceeding from His mouth Church lives where Satan has his throne, but still remains faithful Church has begun to tolerate false teachers like Balaam who entice believers into sin, especially sexual immorality. Overcomers will receive hidden manna and a white stone with a new name
7 th thru 16 th centuries	"Catholic Church" period Church becomes corrupt and many false doctrines are introduced. Power concentrated in hands of church hierarchy.	Thyatira, Rev 2:18-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christ portrayed in power and anger with eyes of blazing fire and feet of glowing metal Church doing more works than ever Church allowing false teaching to lead believers astray – especially into sexual immorality False teacher ("Jezebel") unwilling to repent. She and those who follow her will suffer intensely and her descendants will be struck dead. Overcomers will receive authority to rule over all nations and will receive the Morning Star
16 th thru 17 th centuries	"Reformation" period Protestant movement revitalizes the church and removes the intermediary priestly hierarchy. Places responsibility back into hands of laity under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit.	Sardis, Rev 3:1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christ portrayed as holding the Holy Spirit ("seven spirits of God") and the angels of the seven churches Church has reputation of being alive, but is really all but dead. Their deeds are not complete in the sight of God. They need to wake up. The few who have not "soiled their garments" will walk with Christ, along with the overcomers. These will not be blotted out of the Book of Life and Christ will acknowledge them as His own.
18 th thru early 20 th centuries	"Missionary" period Protestant missionary movement expands throughout the world	Philadelphia, Rev 3:7-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christ portrayed as opening what no one can shut and shutting what no one can open. Christ has placed an open door before the church that no one can shut. Church has little strength and is harassed by Jews, whom Christ will cause to repent. Christ will "hold them fast" out of the Great Tribulation, and He urges the church to also hold on to what they have. Overcomers will become pillars in the Temple and will never again have to leave the presence of God, and will also receive new names.
Early 20 th century to present	"Age of Apostasy" Protestant church loses its effectiveness. Believers are distracted by material wealth.	Laodicea, Rev 3:14-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christ is portrayed as the Amen, the true witness and ruler of creation. Church is as disgusting and useless as lukewarm water. Church thinks itself wealthy, though spiritually they are pitiful, poor and blind. Christ loves and disciplines them, calling them to open the door to Him. Overcomers will rule with Christ.