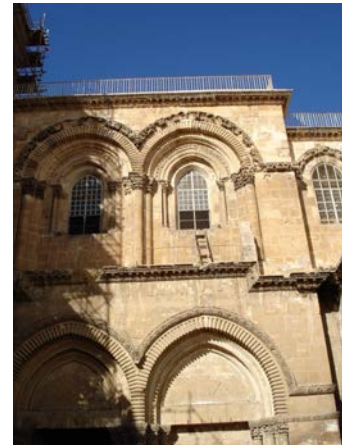


Jerusalem's
Church of the
Holy Sepulchre



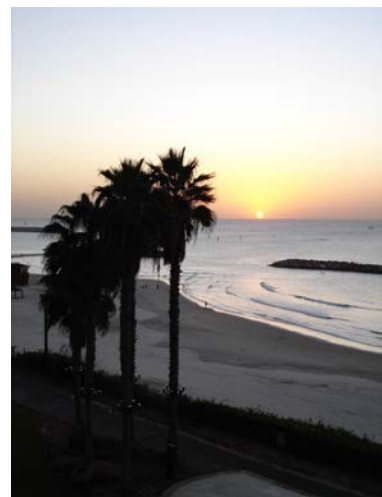
CLASS #5—REVIVING & MAINTAINING GOD'S ECCLESIA

"HOW TO AVOID DEATH" AND THE ECCLESIA IN THE KINGDOM AGE

1

CLASS OUTLINE: REVIVING & MAINTAINING GOD'S ECCLESIA

- How to Revive a Dying Church: A Quick Review
- Change or Die...It's Our Choice
- *Anatomy of a Revived Church*: Key Findings
- Looking Forward to the Kingdom Age
- Some Final Comments



The Sun Sets on
Modern Day Israel

2

2

How to Revive a Dying Church: A Quick Review

The Path to Revitalization: Core Pillars of Church Renewal

Based on Thom Rainer's analysis, revitalized churches succeed by making the deliberate choice to prioritize God's mission over personal comfort and long-standing traditions.



3

Change or Die: It's Our Choice

Change or Die: The Science of Lasting Transformation

THE PROBLEM: WHY CHANGE FAILS (The Three F's)



Facts, Fear, and Force are Ineffective
Data-driven logic and scare tactics fail because people use denial to escape anxiety.



90% Failure Rate in Crises

Most people cannot sustain behavioral changes even when their lives depend on it.



Force Generates Resistance

Relying on mandates or positional power creates resentment rather than genuine commitment.

THE SOLUTION: THE KEYS TO CHANGE (The Three R's)



Relate: Form Emotional Connections

Join a community or find a mentor to provide hope and support.



Repeat: Build New Neurological Pathways

Practice new skills consistently until the behavior becomes automatic and ingrained.



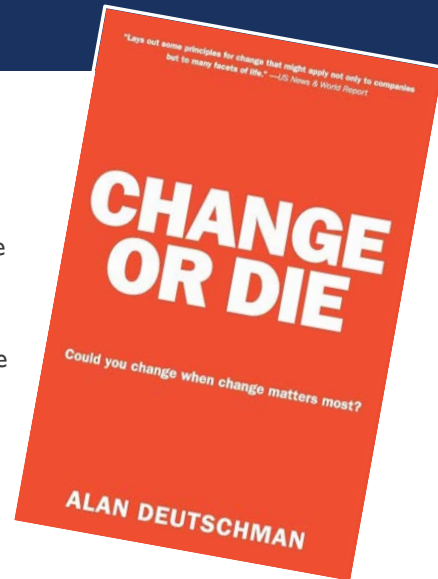
Reframe: Adopt a New Identity

Replace old belief systems with an empowering outlook on yourself and the world.

4

CHANGE OR DIE (1/4)

- “Change or Die: Could you change when change matters most?”
 - Written by Alan Deutschman
 - It explores why individuals & organizations struggle to make necessary, life-saving behavioral changes, and introduces a practical framework for achieving lasting transformation
 - The book originated from a sensational *Fast Company* article that posed a stark question:
 - “If your doctor told you to change your lifestyle or die, could you do it?”



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CHANGE OR DIE (2/4)

- Deutschman’s core finding is disturbing:
 - Studies show that up to 90% of people facing a life-threatening crisis (like heart disease) fail to make & sustain the necessary behavioral changes to survive
- The Problem: **The Three F’s—Why Change Fails**
 - Deutschman argues that most attempts to drive change, whether in a person’s life or a large corporation, fail because they rely on three common, yet ineffective, motivators:
 - **Facts:** Simply providing overwhelming data or statistics about the danger (e.g., “Smoking causes cancer”) rarely works, because people are masters of denial & information avoidance
 - **Fear:** While fear can create temporary compliance (e.g., immediately after a heart attack), the intense emotion is often so paralyzing that people revert to old habits to escape the anxiety
 - **Force:** Relying solely on positional power, mandates, or rules (e.g., a boss saying “You must change”) generates resentment & resistance rather than genuine commitment

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CHANGE OR DIE (3/4)

■ The Solution: **The Three R's—The Keys to Lasting Change**

- Drawing on breakthrough research from medical leaders & organizational change agents, Deutschman provides three interdependent keys that drive profound, sustained change:

Key	Action	Focus
1. Relate	Form an emotional connection with a person, mentor, or community that inspires and sustains hope. The new relationship acts as a vital lifeline and helps the individual believe change is possible.	New Hope (Emotional/Spiritual)
2. Repeat	Practice and master new habits and skills consistently over time. The mentor or community provides the framework for constant repetition until the new behavior becomes automatic, creating new neurological pathways.	New Skills (Behavioral)
3. Reframe	Learn a new way of thinking about your situation and life. The new relationship/community helps you dismantle the old "frames" (belief systems) that led to failure and replace them with a positive, empowering new outlook on the world and your own identity.	New Thinking (Cognitive)

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CHANGE OR DIE (4/4)

- Lasting transformation is not about incremental adjustments or willpower alone, but about connecting with a community that:
 - Offers hope
 - Practices the behaviors that build skills
 - Fundamentally changes the way you see yourself & the world

It is up to us, God will help, but we must want to change.



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ANATOMY OF A REVIVED CHURCH: INITIAL COMMENTS

- There are thousands of churches that choose to die every year
 - In fact, if you include all the declining churches in America, three out of four have to change or they will die
 - Some churches are declining rapidly toward death, while others are declining slowly and they must decide to change before their conditions worsen
- The key issue is why church members & leaders choose not to change, even when the solutions seem to be staring them in their collective faces
- The book makes it clear,
 - **Change doesn't include changing God's fundamentals, i.e., God's unchangeable truths**
 - **Change in congregations must be rooted in the truths of the Bible**, saturated with prayer & empowered by God alone

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WHAT ARE YOUR ANSWERS & BE HONEST

1. How would you evaluate your ecclesia right now? Healthy, not so healthy, very sick, dying? Why did you make this choice?
2. Why do you think that approximately three out of four churches in America are declining today, and that about one in five are dying?
3. Do you know of an ecclesia or church that has chosen to close its doors? Why do you think churches chose to die?
4. As we look at "change or die" realities, can you name some areas we shouldn't consider changing?
5. What are some of the similarities between a person refusing to change health and lifestyle habits, and an ecclesia/church refusing to change methods and programs?

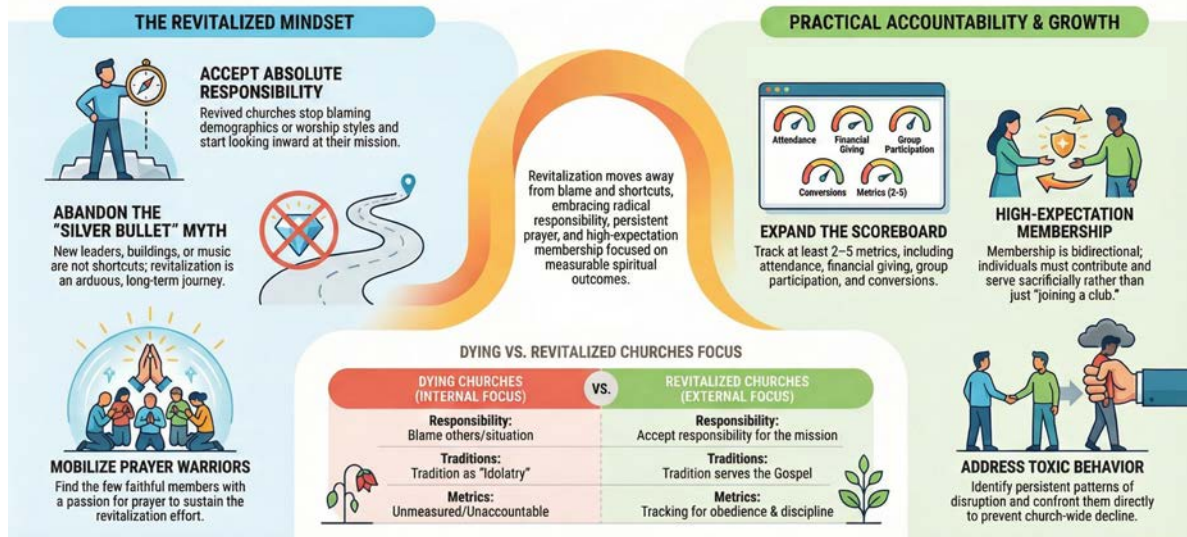
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Key Learnings

PILLARS OF REVITALIZATION: MOVING FROM DECLINE TO VITALITY

A high-level roadmap for revitalizing a declining congregation, embracing responsibility, prayer, and accountability.



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#1 ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY (1/2)

- Dying churches blame others, but **revived churches accept responsibility**
 - So, who & what do dying churches blame—here are a few of the culprits
 - It's another church's fault
 - It's the worship style
 - It's the pasture's/elders' fault
 - It's the denominations' fault
 - It's the community's fault
 - It's the demographics fault
- A healthy church has a desire to understand, reach & minister to their community



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#1 ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY (2/2)

- Church leaders & members who refused to accept their God-given responsibility to reach and minister both inside & outside the walls of their church buildings are on a clear path to decline and likely death
 - But church leaders & members who embrace the reality of the Great Commission and great commandment will be part of a church that doesn't just survive but thrives & grows
- You can't blame others
 - It's not the fault of the situation in which your church finds itself in
- **Blame must be transformed to words of hope, encouragement, ministry & possibility**

We have the responsibility to keep oil in our lamps.

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#2 OVERCOMING THE TRAPS OF TRADITION

- Traditions are not inherently evil
 - **When traditions become a fixation or obsession, they often become issues of idolatry**
 - They become more important than sharing the gospel message, teaching people, serving the community, and making changes that make a difference
 - In essence, the tradition becomes an object of worship
- Traditions to be considered

1. Worship & music style 2. Order of worship service 3. The times of worship services 4. The role of the pastor (i.e., leaders) 5. The role and function of committees	6. Ministry & programs 7. Church buildings 8. How specific rooms in the church are used 9. Business meetings 10. Staff positions
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#3 EXPANDING THE SCOREBOARD (1/3)

- **Revitalized churches are counting**
 - They have a scoreboard and many of them have expanded their scorecard
 - What was fascinating about these revived churches is how, when & what they decide to count
- Most of them had at least two metrics that they followed closely & some of them had as many as four or five

Does your ecclesia use any metrics?



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#3 EXPANDING THE SCOREBOARD (2/3)

- **Worship Attendance**—they did not say that they had to increase attendance, they did not say that they had to have a numerical turnaround, instead they dreamed again & reached into the community
- **Financial Giving**—first, you should have a systematic process for thanking first time givers. Second, tie the money to the mission, and third, thank generous members for their gifts
- **Group Ministry**—more than seven out of the 10 revitalized churches made certain that they tracked attendance in committees

“If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it.” – Lord Kelvin

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#3 EXPANDING THE SCOREBOARD (3/3)

- **Conversions**—if we think the gospel is important, if we think telling people about Jesus is important, if we believe Jesus is the only way to salvation, shouldn't we know how many people we're reaching
- **Ministry**—leaders of revived churches were doing their best to determine whether they were building-up disciples

Does your ecclesia have disciples or members?

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#4 COMMITTING TO POWERFUL PRAYER

- The writer commented that he had not yet seen a church revitalized that was not undergirded by a powerful movement of prayer
 - Prayer is categorically impressive
 - It is a priority, it is imperative
- Even Jesus had to chastise his disciples about failing to pray in a moment of great need (Matthew 26:40-41),

"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective"

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#4 COMMITTING TO POWERFUL PRAYER: PRAYER WARRIOR (1/2)

- Finding: **Prayer consistently proceeded & sustained revitalization**
- The principle of the few – the need of a prayer warrior
 - A prayer warrior is a person who not only believes in the power of prayer but also seeks to mobilize others to fight the battle of spiritual warfare
 - They usually had only a few people working alongside them to pray for people in the church and the ministries of the church
- The principle is clear, **prayer is a prerequisite for revitalization**
 - It is also a byproduct of it, in most cases
 - Prayer in the church often resides in the hands of only a few faithful members

When was the last time your ecclesia had a prayer session?

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#4 COMMITTING TO POWERFUL PRAYER: PRAYER WARRIOR (2/2)

- The writer comments, “For those of you seeking to lead revitalization let me exhort you”
 - First, if you don’t know the prayer warriors in your church find them
 - Second, if you cannot find them start asking people in the church to help you find those who have passion for prayer
 - Third, encourage your prayer warriors
- Prayer, to be clear, even persistent prayer isn’t a guarantee of revitalization, **ultimately it is up to God & his timing**
 - If we truly want to see God working in our ecclesias, we must turn to him in prayer



Roberto Ferruzzi
(1870)

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#5 DEALING WITH TOXINS

- **Church toxins are deadly, and it is usually one church member**
- There is always pain associated with dealing with such a toxin
 - It is indeed painful to do something, but the alternative never works
- Why do so many of us put off the painful task of dealing with a church toxin?
- In the **revived churches leaders confronted the problem & the problem makers**
- Fortunately, **toxic members are rare**, but if not addressed they will eventually destroy the church



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#5 DEALING WITH TOXINS: LESSONS

- **Lesson #1—a critic is not the same thing as a toxic member**
 - Most ecclesias have critics, every single one, a critic disagrees with you, or they disagree with others in the church
 - A critic does not like some aspect of the church's ministry, but disagreement does not equal toxicity
- **Lesson #2—a toxic member has a pattern of misbehavior**
 - The toxic member has a pattern of disruption, disunity & negativity that is persistent, consistent and typically intense
 - Watch for the long-term patterns, it is where you will find the toxic members
- **Lesson #3—followers of toxic members are influenced by them**
 - Fortunately, most are usually willing to follow healthy leadership over time

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#5 DEALING WITH TOXINS: THE PERSISTENT PRAYER

- Remember, we are God's instruments, he has the power & we must approach Him in prayer
- **Revived churches prayerfully sought the wisdom & collective efforts of others**
- We are not meant to be autocratic leaders totally on our own without input or support from others
 - The unavoidable issue of confrontation here is a simple but difficult truth
- Most church leaders must confront a toxic member at some point
 - Most of the leaders with whom we spoke followed the guideline of Matthew 18:15-17
 - Dealing with the toxic church member is exceedingly difficult but not dealing with them assures decline will continue

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#6 SEEKING SILVER BULLETS

- **There are no silver bullets for churches in need of revitalization**
- There are no shortcuts, the challenge of such a turnaround is usually arduous & long
- The autonomy of revived churches revealed clearly that if you depend on a silver bullet solution for revitalization it is guaranteed not to happen
- In simple terms, leaders & members of revived churches took responsibility for the church's problems
- Typical silver bullets include **New Leaders, Money, New Music, and New Location & Facilities**

We can't do it alone, but God will not do it for us.

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#6 SEEKING SILVER BULLETS: SUMMARY

- Members & leaders must stop making excuses and get down to the nitty gritty work of revitalization
- Leaders of revived churches know they could not delegate or outsource obedience, and they knew revitalization would not and should not take place without action

**“Vision without action is a daydream.
Action without vision is a nightmare.”—
Japanese proverb**



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#7 CHOOSING MEANINGFUL MEMBERSHIP (1/2)

- **Membership is valid, it is a biblical point**
- Membership is not having your name on a role though there's nothing wrong with keeping track of people that way
- Ultimately, **membership is about belonging & contributing**
 - Membership means sacrificing for the greater good of the body
- People shouldn't join churches as they join country clubs
 - They don't simply pay their dues and get their perks
- Membership is about giving, not receiving, serving instead of being served

Membership in an ecclesia is bidirectional.

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#7 CHOOSING MEANINGFUL MEMBERSHIP (2/2)

- Autonomy of revived churches showed that three different levels of membership classes can be beneficial
 - The first level is simply an **informational membership class**
 - The second level embodies **expectations** as part of the entry into the church
 - The third level connects **assimilation** as an actual part of the entry process
- In other words, new members are somehow connected with the ministry and/or groups in the congregation before they are granted full membership

The common theme...moving the congregation from a low expectation membership to high expectation membership.

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#7 CHOOSING MEANINGFUL MEMBERSHIP: INFORMATIONAL

- One of the most consistent changes in the revived churches was a new & focused emphasis on how new members are brought into the congregation
- All the membership classes provided information for the prospective new members
- Significant percentage of the church leaders were empathetic that the information should include some expression of vision for the church

What is your ecclesia's new member onboarding process?

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#7 CHOOSING MEANINGFUL MEMBERSHIP: ASSIMILATION

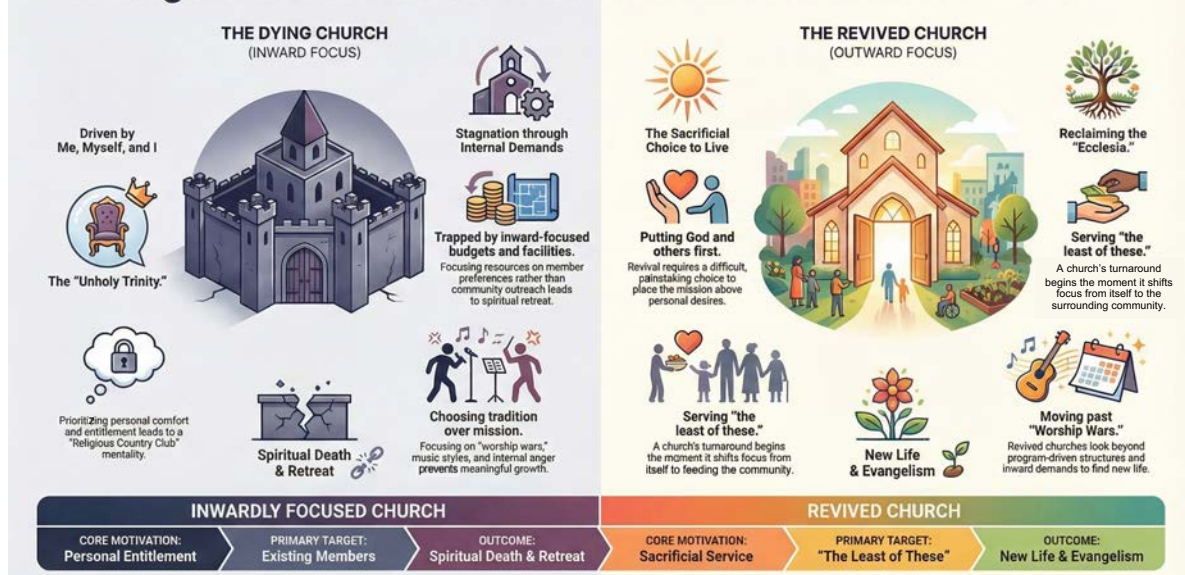
- In simple terms, no one is granted membership until he or she is either part of a ministry or connected to a small group or Sunday school class
- Congregations that had transformed from almost meaningless membership to highly meaningful membership were highly successful
- The **most common tool** used to create a culture of meaningful membership was a **new member class**
 - Those entry points almost always included information that prospective member needed to know & they often included expectations of membership
 - Some of the most effective churches used a new membership class as the beginning point and a highly proactive step towards assimilation

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Summary

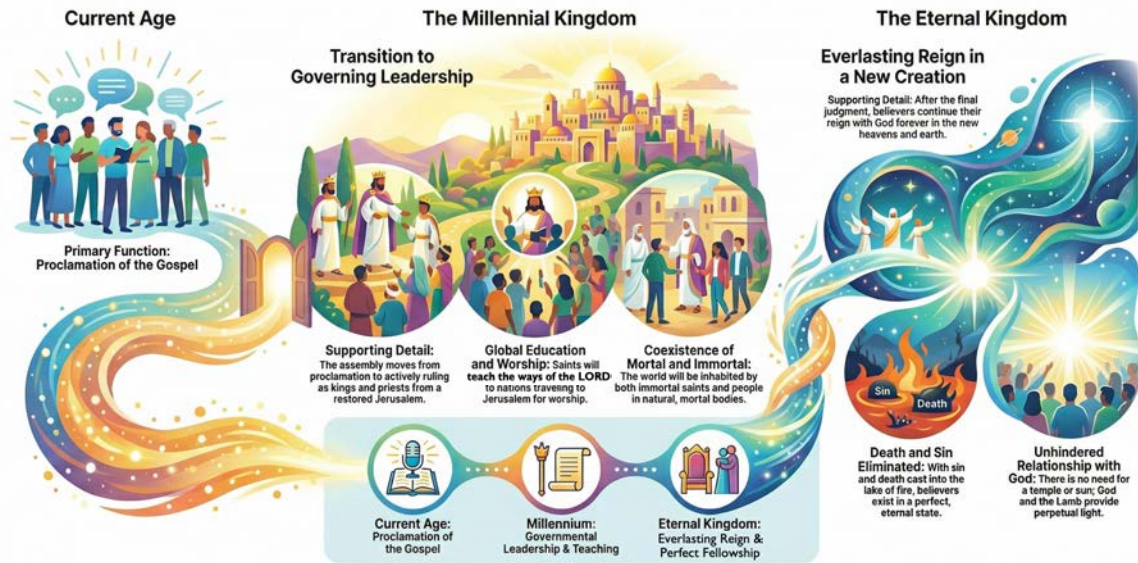
Change or Die: The Path from Self-Focus to Church Revival



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Looking Forward to the Kingdom Age

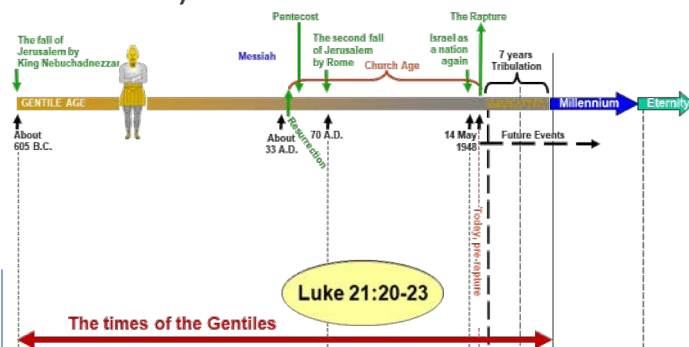
The Future of the Ecclesia: From Proclamation to Eternal Reign



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LOOKING FORWARD TO THE KINGDOM AGE (1/5)

- The **ecclesia**, the assembly of believers, will undoubtedly operate differently in the Kingdom Age
- In the “millennial” period, the ecclesia will likely transition from its current mission of proclamation to actively ruling & reigning with Christ
- After the millennium, in the “eternal” period, the saints will continue to reign with God & Christ forever



Daniel 2 Timeline,
www.thesecondcomingofchrist.org

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LOOKING FORWARD TO THE KINGDOM AGE (2/5)

■ Millennial Period

■ Role & function:

- **Governmental leadership:** The saints will serve as kings & priests, reigning with Christ from a restored Jerusalem (Rev 20:4)
 - The original Greek meaning of *ecclesia* refers to a governmental assembly “called out” to legislate and govern a city or nation
 - In the kingdom, believers will fulfill this role spiritually & politically
- **Teaching & evangelism:** The ecclesia will help teach the nations the ways of the LORD (Mic 4:2)
 - During this time, the world will be inhabited by the immortal saints and people in natural, mortal bodies, including those born during the millennium

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LOOKING FORWARD TO THE KINGDOM AGE (3/5)

■ Role & function: (con't)

- **Worship:** As the spiritual center of the world, Jerusalem will be the place to which all nations will go to worship the LORD (Zec 14:16 & 17)
 - The ecclesia, in its state of immortality, will participate fully in this worship
- **Spiritual warfare:** With sin bound for a period, the ecclesia's battle against sin will be diminished
 - The primary challenge will be the continued presence of sin in the mortal population

One Potential View of
Ezekiel's Temple,
bibletruth.net.aug



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LOOKING FORWARD TO THE KINGDOM AGE (4/5)

- **In the eternal kingdom** (i.e., after the millennium)
 - After the second final judgment, the eternal kingdom of God is established in the new heavens & new earth
 - The operation of the ecclesia at this stage is a continuation & ultimate fulfillment of its millennial role
- **Role & function:**
 - **Everlasting reign:** The ecclesia will have no end to its reign with God & His son
 - Sin & death will be cast into the lake of fire, and believers will exist in a perfect, eternal state (Rev 20:14)

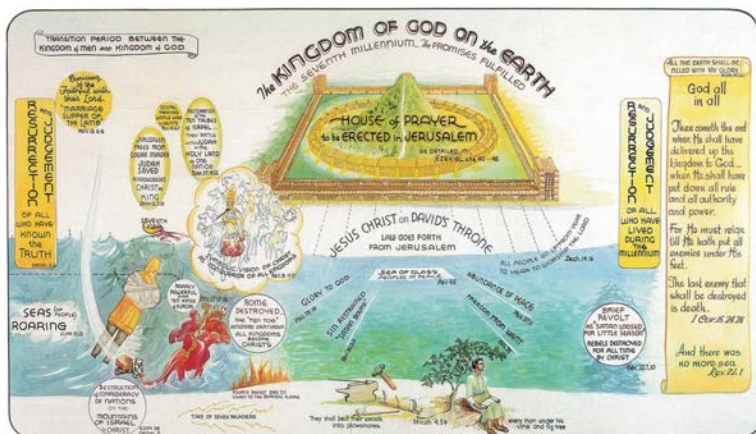
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LOOKING FORWARD TO THE KINGDOM AGE (5/5)

- **Role & function: (con't)**
 - **Perfect relationship with God:** There will be no need for a temple, sun, or moon in the eternal kingdom because God & the Lamb will be its perpetual light (Rev 21:22 & 23)
 - Believers will live in perfect, unhindered relationship with God for all eternity

God's 7000 Year Plan,
www.gods7000yearplan.com



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LET US NOT FORGET (1/2)

- The sobering words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5 and starting verse 1,

1Th 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

1Th 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

1Th 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

1Th 5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

1Th 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

1Th 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

1Th 5:7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

1Th 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

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LET US NOT FORGET (2/2)

- The Apostle Paul stated in 1 Thessalonians 5 continues in verse 9,
- This is why we “do church”
- Remember our Lord Jesus Christ who walks amongst his Father’s ecclesias
 - Without which we have no hope, no salvation
 - Let us pray every day that God opens our eyes so that we might see the ecclesia as God & Jesus sees it
 - Let us pray that we see the changes that need to be made, even if they might be difficult
 - Let us pray that we allow God to work within the ecclesia & within us to be instruments of change so that the ecclesia doesn’t just survive, but thrives

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PARTING COMMENT

- Let's always remember the Great Commission...

Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit:
Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Christ is always with us. It is us who leave him!



End of Study