

## 1st Church Era

Old Testament   New Testament

**MOSES & JOSHUA** 1447–1361 BC  
**EPHESUS** "First", "Desirable"

**"I know your works, your labor, your patience...and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary."**

Moses spent 40 years leading Israel out of Egypt through the wilderness' trials to the entrance of the Promised Land (ACT 7:23,30; DEU 34:7). Joshua assisted Moses throughout the 40 years and at age 80 began leading Israel for 30 years (JOS 24:29).

**"...you cannot bear those who are evil"**

Moses destroyed the golden calf and had 3000 of the most calloused idolaters put to death (EXO 32:20,26-28).

**"you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars"**

Korah, Dathan, Abiram, On and 250 leaders from the tribes claimed equality with Moses; after Moses called upon God to render judgment on their claims, the earth swallowed the primary usurpers and fire destroyed the 250 (NUM 16:1-35).

**"you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes"**

Phinehas led the slaughter of the followers of Balaam, who conquered the people through seductive teachings (NUM 25:1-11).

**"you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place..."**

Without the stabilizing influence of Moses and Joshua, Israel succumbed to the influence of the idolatrous religions of Canaan and entered a new historical period (JDG 2:10).

## 2nd Church Era

Old Testament   New Testament

**THE JUDGES PERIOD** 1361–1051 BC  
**SMYRNA** "Bitter Affliction"

**"I know your works, tribulation, and poverty"**

After the deaths of the elders who outlived Joshua, the tribes disobeyed God by turning to idolatry and were conquered and spoiled by their enemies so that they were greatly distressed (JDG 2:11-19).

**"I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."**

The tribe of Dan made a Levite a priest and worshiped idols until the days of David; they claimed to be part of the people of God but worshiped things which represented the devil (JDG 18:1-4,14-20,30-31).

**"The devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested..."**

Samson was cast into prison until he came to himself and fulfilled God's purpose (JDG 16:21-30).

**"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."**

The end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> era came and life was given to the 3<sup>rd</sup> when God told the last judge He would give Israel a human king (1SA 8:1-9).

## 3rd Church Era

Old Testament   New Testament

**UNITED MONARCHY PERIOD** 1051–931 BC  
**PERGAMOS** "Earthy Height"

**"you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith"**

David was the one who fulfilled this commendation of whole-hearted loyalty to God; he was a man after God's heart (ACT 13:22).

**"you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality"**

Solomon married wives who brought idolatry to the palace and paraded it before Israel (1KI 11:1-8).

**"you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans"**

Rehoboam adopted this form of government (1KI 12:1-14).

**"Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth."**

Because Solomon held to the doctrine of Balaam, God promised to divide the kingdom after he died (1KI 11:9-11); the kingdom was divided when Rehoboam adopted the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

## 4th Church Era

Old Testament   New Testament

**THE DIVIDED MONARCHIES PERIOD** 931–538 BC  
**THYATIRA** "Sacrifice of Labor"

**"as for your works, the last are more than the first"**

The only two kings who diligently sought God during this period were toward the end of the era: Hezekiah and Josiah (2KI 18:1-3; 22:1-2).

**"you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and beguile My servants"**

Jezebel, the wife of king Ahab, forced the Northern Kingdom of Israel to worship Baal (1KI 16:31; 18:17-19).

**"I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent."**

God gave Jezebel almost 30 years to repent after her pagan priests were killed by Elijah, yet she never changed (2KI 9:22).

**"I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation..."**

A sickbed represented a premature death; Jezebel suffered an ugly premature death (2KI 9:30-33). Those who followed her were destroyed by Jehu (2KI 10:18-28).

**"And I will kill her children with death."**

Both of Jezebel's sons died prematurely: Ahaziah died from complications after an accident (2KI 1:2-17), and Jehoram was killed by an arrow (2KI 9:22-26).

**"...as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan..."**

God told Elijah that there were 7000 Israelites who refused to bow the knee to Baal during the time of Jezebel's influence (1KI 19:18).

## 5th Church Era

Old Testament   New Testament

**RESTORATION PERIOD** 538–167 BC  
**SARDIS** "Remnant"

**"...you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead"**

The Jews who returned from Babylonian exile claimed to be a nation and the people of God, but they were vassals of a foreign king and their actions were not in accordance with the royal law. (NEH 5:1-9)

**"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard;"**

The Jews during this period had a difficult time remembering why they had been sent back to their land. After their initial works of clearing the temple foundation and erecting an altar were accomplished, the people became self-absorbed and ignored finishing what they started. God sent them Haggai and Zechariah to rally and Nehemiah to rebuild the temple, and Nehemiah to rebuild the wall of the city (NEH 6:15).

**"hold fast and repent."**

This era had to be corrected numerous times for failing to persevere in rebuilding the nation of Judah, for intermarriage with the pagan peoples in the land and for transgressing the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment (NEH 13:6-30).

**"You have a few names... who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white..."**

In addition to Haggai, Zechariah and Nehemiah, the name of Ezra was considered undefiled (EZR 7-10).

**"Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you."**

This era ended when Antiochus Epiphanes came as a thief to the city of Jerusalem to destroy many of the people and spoil the temple (Josephus, Antiquities. XII.V.4).

## 6th Church Era

Old Testament   New Testament

**HASMONEAN PERIOD** 167–76 BC  
**PHILADELPHIA** "Brotherly Love"

**"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength."**

The only direct scriptural reference to this era reveals that some of the Jews stood firm in their loyalty to God (DAN 1.1:32). Under direction of Judas Maccabeus, small Jewish forces continually defeated much stronger and more numerous forces of the Seleucids (Antiquities, XII.VII).

**"have kept My word, and have not denied My name"**

Many of the Jews during the beginning of this period abandoned God's way for the Greek ways, thus denying God's word and authority. The followers of the Maccabean family refused to acquiesce (1MAC 2:15-26).

**"Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie..."**

All of those who claimed Jewish heritage, yet submitted themselves to the edict of Antiochus Epiphanes—by sacrificing to idols, profaning the Sabbath, eating unclean meats and refusing to practice circumcision—were actually of the congregation of Satan (1MAC 1:41-53).

## 7th Church Era

Old Testament   New Testament

**RULE OF THE PHARISEES** 76 BC – AD 70  
**LAODICEA** "Let the People Judge"  
"Judgment of the People"

**"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot."**

The Pharisees' obedience to the law was hypocritical: only to be seen by others, not out of a sincere desire to love God and man (MAT 5:20; 16:6-12).

**"because you are lukewarm...I will vomit you out of My mouth."**

Jesus was nauseated by the hypocrisy of the leaders of the final era of the OT Church, and brought that era to an end when the Romans destroyed the temple in AD 70.

**"...you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'..."**

The Pharisees saw themselves spiritually superior to all others. (LUK 18:9-12)

**"—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked"**

The Pharisees found fault in others, held that their interpretation of the law was more important than the law itself, and refused to repent of their hatred of Jesus Christ (MAR 7:1-13; JOH 11:53-57).

**"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten..."**

Just a few days prior to His death Jesus gave one last warning to the 7<sup>th</sup> era, pointing out the selfishness which motivated their religious hypocrisy (MAT 23).

# ERAS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CHURCH APPENDIX G