

MARANATHA COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HOME STUDY

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HISTORY 255X

CHURCH HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

As we undertake the preparation of a text covering the history of Christianity we feel that the reader should be made aware of our purpose in making such a presentation. We all know that there are many such histories that have been written by fine authors such as Schaff, Qualben, Walker, Fisher, and others. Why then must there be another?

We feel that the righteous followers of God before the time of Christ were following a plan looking forward to His coming. If they followed the plan set forth by God at that time they will be found among Christians in the coming kingdom of God. They are, therefore, worthy of a place in Christian history. Their lives were a type of the true Christian life in the same way that their sacrifices were a type of Christ. Some of the finest examples for Christian living were set forth by these fine brethren who lived before Christ was born.

In the same way the unrighteous before the time of Christ were an example of how not to live. Taking upon themselves the spirit of iniquity, they established many evil rites and practices together with the pagan organizations which still affect our lives and will be a misleading influence to our children. Many histories fail to go back to the very root of many of our problems today.

When we speak of Christianity we are referring to the followers of Christ. The Church of which we write will be the true Church, started by Christ and builded upon the apostolic foundation according to the principles laid down by Him. We believe that this true Church and some of her history is described in Revelation 12. She is shown here in conflict with an evil power which we will locate in our history.

In Revelation 17 we find this same evil power carrying or supporting another Church. In this chapter the woman representing the Church makes quite a different picture. The description of her is filled with evil and her influence is widespread. She also has harlot daughters or other Churchly organizations full of abominations and helping to mislead the world and draw the inhabitants down to destruction. This text will not only identify the true Church throughout history but we want our readers to become aware of this evil organization, this apostate Church, which is still affecting world affairs and waging war against the true followers of Christ. We do want it understood that any criticism which we offer is not directed toward any person or group of persons but we must oppose that evil organization against which our Heavenly Father speaks and we must also oppose the evil daughters of this organization.

Most Church histories have been written about this apostate Church and she has been considered as the true Church by many who have been misled. Others have used the history of her evil daughter Churches as the history of the true Church. There are many good people in all of these organizations and this makes it easy to lead many more to destruction. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12. We must place the true Church of God foremost in our history but we will also show the connection between the true Church and the good sincere people in other organizations. The effect of extreme evil upon the growth of God's Church will also be shown.

Since the beginning of time the earth has been a testing place for man. There has been a constant struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Man is a free moral agent and he has constantly been drawn by both forces. God has tried to lead us gently along the path of righteousness but Satan is always calling us aside.

Just as Christ was tempted by Satan, we are always in a position where the things of this world appeal to our carnal nature. These things we must recognize and overcome. May God bless you and the Holy Spirit guide you as you read this text.

CHAPTER I

Webster defines history as "an account of what has happened". The first event of history we find recorded in Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". After this there followed the creation of the various things that make up our world. God made the first history. Before creation there was nothing done of which we have any record.

God provided the elements and set in motion the forces to make further history. In general, objects of nature as created by God follow or respond to the laws laid down by Him. Thus we see around us the fulfillment of a divine plan or pattern that has been going on since the beginning of our time. There was but one very uncertain quantity set free in the world. At the end of His creation "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth". Genesis 1:26. Man was given a directing and controlling power over the earth, a power to choose the life he would live. With this power God gave man a great responsibility, the responsibility of doing things right. God tried to help man by giving him rules or commandments to follow. They were good rules, given in love and understanding by a loving Heavenly Father. But man was God's masterpiece. He was given a choice. He could obey God and the world would be clean and free from sin or he could follow his own carnal nature and fill the world with evil. How did man take his responsibility? How does the history of man look after these many centuries?

Besides God and His creation another force was present in the world. This force was strong and its influence has been great. We have mentioned this great power in our introduction. He is seen opposing the true Church. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her a thousand two hundred and threescore days". Revelation 12:3-6. This power even fought against the very angels of God in Heaven. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven". Revelation 12:7-8. This evil power in control of a force of evil angels was cast out of heaven. "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him". Revelation 12:9.

Thus we see that history has been greatly altered by a great evil system controlled by Satan and his angels. Because of his great system of deceit he has had access to the very heart of Christianity. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,

but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places". Ephesians 6:12. "Spiritual wickedness in high places" could well apply to that evil Church symbolized by the wicked woman of Revelation 17. "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication". Revelation 17:1-2. This scripture could apply to no power but the Roman Church. "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration". Revelation 17:6. No other power but Roman Church together with the Roman Empire which carried and sustained her, Revelation 17:3, ever brought about such persecution and martyrdom. When we consider the history of the Holy Roman Empire this fact will become even more apparent. However, we must consider the work of Satan from the beginning of time since he has been with us from creation.

At creation man was placed in the garden of Eden. Provided by God, especially for His masterpiece, the garden contained all that was beautiful and good. If man had obeyed God he could have lived free of troubles and problems. However, the thing which happened to Adam and Eve is typical of mankind. First there was the temptation of desire. The fruit which was not for man was appealing in appearance and aroused man's appetite. Then the Devil or one of his agents entering into a serpent added his lies and deceit. With our human desire and a little urging from the wrong source we seem prone to wander from the right path. So, father Adam sinned and death was pronounced upon all mankind as a result. All the good and beautiful things of the garden were lost to man as Adam and Eve were driven out. Even then God gave hope and an implied redemption. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel". From this we understand that in the race of mankind there would always be someone who would be opposing sin. In the end, Christ who was born of woman would overcome sin and redeem mankind.

From the time of the fall of man God planned for his redemption. Looking forward to the time of Christ God was in close contact with those who understood the blessings of serving Him. Redemption was to require sacrifice and the shedding of blood. We have no record of God's instruction in this matter. However, we know that there must have been such instruction. We find the sons of Adam making offerings to God. Abel's offering was right and Cain's offering was not acceptable. "And in the process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had no respect". Genesis 4:3-5. God would never have rejected Cain's offering if He had not given him instruction as to what should be offered and how it should be offered. God must have started instructing men from the beginning to lead them up to the time of Christ. They must look forward to the coming of Christ and understand what it meant to them. Repentance for sins, sacrifice, and obedience have always been required of men. Animal sacrifices were a type of the great sacrifice to come. God would forgive and accept all who followed His plan.

As we have learned, there was a distinct difference between the brothers, Cain and Abel. Following the rejection by God, as we have read above, Cain showed his inner nature and slew his brother. "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him". Genesis 4:8. Cain could have been obedient to God but he was not. When God

rebuked him he could have accepted God's judgment and he could have repented of his wrong but he did not. Cain was rebellious and revengeful. He was punished by God. "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth". Genesis 4:11-12.

The line of Cain together with their occupations and a little concerning their nature is carefully recorded in the fourth chapter of Genesis. Cain's eldest son was Enoch. Cain builded a city which he named after Enoch. Following Enoch in the line of Cain were Irad, Mehujael, Methusael, and Lamech. Lamech had two wives, Adah and Zillah. Adah's sons were Jabal and Jubal. Jabel kept cattle and Jubal was a musician. Zillah's son, Tubalcain, was a metal worker. Lamech, fifth man in the line of Cain, was evidently of a violent nature. His attitude was apparently handed down by his forefathers. He referred back to Cain and his sin with the statement that he would still be avenged. "And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech; for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold". Genesis 4:23-24. Thus we get a picture of those who would do evil and oppose God. Cain's descendants were not the only ones. There came a time when most of the earth was wicked as we shall see.

From the very short record which we have of the life of Abel, we gather that he was a righteous man. His offering was accepted of God. God was concerned over his death. Cain was punished for Abel's murder. Eve understood that Seth was sent to take his place. "And Adam knew his wife again: and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew". Genesis 4:25.

It was through Seth that the line of Adam was carried down toward the birth of Christ. It was men from the line of Seth who served God up to the time of Noah and the flood. "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord". Genesis 4:26. The line of Seth included nine men: Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah. Two of these men deserve special mention. Enoch was probably far above the others. It is said that he walked with God. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him". Genesis 5:24.

Noah was another outstanding man in the line of Seth. "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God". Genesis 6:9. Noah arrived at a time when the world had grown very wicked. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually". Genesis 6:5. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth". Genesis 6:11-12. Noah was commissioned by God to make an ark that would preserve the righteous of the earth. "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them from the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch". Genesis 6:13-14. "And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him". Genesis 7:5.

We all know the story of the flood. We know that the earth was cleansed at that time. Most all flesh was destroyed. Of mankind, only Noah, his three sons, and their wives remained. It seemed that conditions should have been different after that. But God understood the weakness of man. Notice the following verses.

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done," Genesis 8:20-21, Thus after the cleansing of the earth and a never-to-be-forgotten punishment we still have man with his carnal nature making the history of the world.

HISTORY 255X
CHURCH HISTORY

LESSON 1

LEADING UP TO CHRIST
FROM CREATION TO THE FLOOD

Reading Assignment: Text pp. 1-5

Explanation:

The student should answer the following questions after carefully reading the text and considering carefully what is called for in the question. Clean paper 8½X11 size should be used so that your paper can be efficiently filed. Answers may be typewritten or written with a ballpoint pen. Answers must be complete but need not be long or drawn out.

Written Assignment:

1. By what means will the worshipers of God who lived before the time of Christ receive salvation?
2. What symbol is used in Revelation 12 to portray the true Church?
3. How do we know that we can be misled and go to everlasting death?
4. What was the one uncertain quantity of God's creation?
5. How did God try to help man?
6. How did Satan happen to be on earth and who came with him?
7. What kind of kingdom did Satan set up here on earth?
8. What was the sin of Adam and Eve?
9. Why didn't God accept the offering of Cain?
10. What was the sin of Cain?
11. How did men from the line of Seth show their feeling toward God?
12. Why did God destroy mankind with the flood?
13. Why was Noah chosen to build the ark and save a few righteous people?