



KATOOMBA

— BAPTIST CHURCH —

CHRIST'S CHURCH THROUGH THE AGES

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

- **The study of Church History releases us from the narrow lens of our contemporary context and circumstance.**
 - It can become rather easy to end up hyper-focussed on the events and ordeals of our own time – so much so, that we can lose the necessary perspective that history gives us.
 - It helps us to ‘get outside of ourselves’, so to speak; providing a mechanism by which we can see, analyse, and assess our place in the overarching story of God’s sovereign will.
 - Furthermore, it gives us a sounding board by which we can measure and evaluate both the positive and negative aspects of our time (regarding Church, politics, society, culture, etc.) as compared to those of times past.
- **The study of Church History connects us to the lives of our ancestors – and thus, that which is historic and traditional.**
 - In a time when modern Western culture is infatuated with individuality, novelty, situational ethics, fad-based consumerism, social media trends, and the like – connecting with the historic and traditional is as important as ever.
 - In fact, it is now quintessentially counter-cultural.

- The history of Christ's Church forms a vital component of our Christian identity, by virtue of our membership thereof.
- It is our heritage. It is our spiritual ancestry. It is the awe-inspiring legacy that we have inherited from the Saints of ages past; that we, ourselves, are now guardians and caretakers of.

• **The study of Church History anchors us to things beyond ourselves – particularly, the transcendent work of God in history.**

- We have a duty to know our history – for it is the history of God's work in the world, as the reign and rule of Christ the King expands and marches on.
- Such knowledge tethers us to a firm foundation; something that cannot be altered or changed; that which is etched into the record of history.
- It demonstrates to us that God has indeed fulfilled His promises, and that He continues to do so.
- We are able to see that the Kingdom of God is expanding through space and time, and that Christ is indeed conquering all His enemies, as promised.

• **The study of Church History provides the necessary theological guard rails for Christian faith and practice.**

- By studying the history of the Church, we are inherently studying the works of Christians from ages past.
- This provides us with the remarkable ability to consult the minds of so many brilliant theologians across the course of thousands of years.
- In doing so, we are able to see how the Church has exegeted, explicated, and applied the Biblical texts.
- It shows us how our Christian predecessors have worked through profound (and often complex) theological issues – thereby helping us to frame our own beliefs and practices today.
- By nature, this is what the Church Councils, Creeds, and Confessions are.