

A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

# Discipline through the Ages

**A 12-part study of the Church in the World**  
In 300-year Segments

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Last updated: 6/22/2022



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**Contents**

<b>LESSON 1 – THY KINGDOM COME .....</b>	<b>1</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	1
A CHURCH, A CHURCH, MY KINGDOM FOR A CHURCH.....	1
<i>Kingdom? What Kingdom?</i> .....	2
<i>Who Belongs to this Kingdom?</i> .....	3
<i>The Church as Witness</i> .....	4
<i>Gospel Fundamentals</i> .....	7
<b>LESSON 2: 35-313 AD.....</b>	<b>9</b>
THE AGE OF PERSECUTIONS .....	9
PART I: PLANTING THE GARDEN OF GOD .....	9
<i>Seed of the Apostles</i> .....	9
<i>Fate of the Apostles and Early Church Leaders</i> .....	9
PART II: THE END OF AN AGE .....	11
<i>Seeds of a Nation</i> .....	11
<i>The Fall of Jerusalem</i> .....	13
PART III: FORGED IN THE CRUCIBLE .....	16
<i>Seeds of Discipleship</i> .....	16
<i>Growing a Convert into a Leader</i> .....	17
PART IV: THE CROWN OF MARTYRDOM .....	18
<i>Seeds of the Martyrs</i> .....	18
<i>Outline of the Persecutions</i> .....	19
<b>LESSON 3 – CHURCH INFANCY TO 300AD .....</b>	<b>23</b>
EARLY CHURCH PRACTICES .....	23
<i>WORSHIP PLACE</i> .....	23
<i>OCCASIONS FOR WORSHIP</i> .....	23
<i>ORDER OF WORSHIP</i> .....	24
<i>DISCIPLINE IN THE EARLY CHURCH</i> .....	27
HERESY VERSUS ORTHODOXY.....	30
<i>THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE</i> .....	30
<i>HERESY AS THE STIMULANT TO ORTHODOXY</i> .....	31
<i>THE EARLY HERESIES</i> .....	32
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES .....	35
<b>LESSON 4: 300-600.....</b>	<b>39</b>
THE AGE OF MONASTICISM.....	39
<i>Imperial Shepherds – Impoverished Sheep</i> .....	39
INTRA-CHURCH RIVALRIES: ISSUES OF CONTROL .....	41
<i>DONATIST SCHISM</i> .....	41
<i>ARIANISM</i> .....	41
<i>MONASTICISM</i> .....	41
CONFESSIONS OF FAITH.....	43
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES .....	45
THE CHURCH AS STATE .....	46
<i>“The Strongman Syndrome” 400-600</i> .....	46
<i>The First Warrior Pope</i> .....	48
<b>LESSON 5: 600-900.....</b>	<b>51</b>
THE AGE OF MISSIONS .....	51
<i>The Barbarian Hordes</i> .....	51

<i>Charlemagne</i> .....	51
<i>The Missionaries</i> .....	53
<b>LESSON 6: 900-1200</b> .....	<b>55</b>
OUT OF EGYPT – RULE OF MAN VS. RULE OF GOD.....	55
<i>Church Construction</i> .....	55
<i>The Crusades</i> .....	56
<i>The Remnant</i> .....	57
<i>The Scholastic Giants</i> .....	60
<i>The Monastic Movement</i> .....	62
<b>LESSON 7: 1200-1500</b> .....	<b>65</b>
ON THE EVE OF REFORM .....	65
DISCIPLINE – THE RULE FOR ALL AGES.....	66
DAWN OF A NEW AGE : THE REFORMATION .....	68
<i>Enlightenment, Reason and Rationalism</i> .....	68
<i>“Wild Boar in the Vineyard”</i> .....	69
PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE REFORMATION.....	72
<i>AUTONOMY</i> .....	72
<i>REASON</i> .....	73
<i>NATURE</i> .....	74
<i>HARMONY</i> .....	74
<b>LESSON 8: 1500-1700</b> .....	<b>75</b>
REFORMATION – RETURN TO GRACE.....	75
<i>THE FIVE SOLAS</i> .....	76
<i>The Authority of the Bible</i> .....	78
<i>Justification by Faith</i> .....	78
<i>Sacraments</i> .....	78
<i>Church Polity</i> .....	78
<i>Cultural Impact</i> .....	79
<i>An Age of Confessions</i> .....	79
<i>Puritanism</i> .....	80
RESULTS OF THE REFORMATION.....	82
<b>LESSON 9: 1500-1700</b> .....	<b>85</b>
REFORMATION AROUND THE GLOBE .....	85
<i>Germany</i> .....	85
<i>Zurich</i> .....	86
<i>CALVINISM</i> .....	88
<i>Geneva</i> .....	88
<i>France</i> .....	90
<i>Scotland</i> .....	90
<i>England</i> .....	91
<i>English Reformation under Henry VIII</i> .....	92
<i>Elizabethan Age</i> .....	92
<i>Cromwell, Oliver</i> .....	93
<b>LESSON 10: 1700-1900</b> .....	<b>95</b>
SPLINTERED CHRISTIANITY .....	95
<i>Wesleyan Arminianism</i> .....	95
<i>Revival – the Great Awakening</i> .....	96
<i>Deism</i> .....	97
IMPERIALISM & MISSIONS .....	97
THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION .....	98
<i>The Rise of the Cults</i> .....	99
<i>Darwinism</i> .....	100

<i>Marxism</i> .....	100
<b>LESSON 11: 1900-PRESENT</b> .....	<b>101</b>
AGE OF SCIENCE, DISILLUSIONMENT, AND SECULARISM .....	101
<i>The World Wars</i> .....	101
<i>Technology as God</i> .....	101
GOVERNMENT AS SAVIOR .....	101
<i>Education as Social Engineering</i> .....	101
<i>Media as Mediator</i> .....	101
<i>Missions as Liberation</i> .....	101
THE NATURE OF MAN, SOCIETY AND GOD.....	101
<i>Mysticism in a Mechanistic World</i> .....	101
<i>Alienation, Solitude, and Isolation</i> .....	101
<i>The Culture Wars – Relative truths</i> .....	101
CONSUMER-BASED CHRISTIANITY .....	101
WORSHIP THEN AND NOW.....	101
<b>LESSON 12: CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>103</b>
THE IMITATION OF CHRIST .....	104
THE EXERCISE OF LEADERSHIP .....	105
DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL SPIRITUALISTS.....	106
STEREO-TYPING FRIENDS AND FOES .....	106
CHURCH POLITY AND POLITICS.....	107
FAMILY AND CHURCH.....	108
PERSONAL DEVOTIONS.....	108
SOCIAL REFORMS AND SERVICES .....	108
CORPORATE WORSHIP.....	109
<b>APPENDIX 1 - CHURCH HISTORY TIMELINE</b> .....	<b>111</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2 – EXCERPTS FROM MARTIN LUTHER’S 95 THESES</b> .....	<b>117</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3 - NEW TESTAMENT ACCEPTANCE</b> .....	<b>119</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>121</b>

Last Updated 6/22/2022



# Lesson 1 – Thy Kingdom Come

## INTRODUCTION

Why study Church History? Why not just forget about the past and pursue a better course in the future? After all, there's really no need to raise old issues or open old wounds, stirring up the muck of past events, personalities, and institutions. I suppose the cliché of being doomed to repeat our mistakes comes to mind, but does such a sentiment have a place in a Kingdom ruled by God, and guided by His Spirit? The Church is much like a foundry in which fine steel is purified and forged into weapons and tools capable of sustained usefulness to their maker. In God's foundry, there are no unnecessary events, personalities, or institutions. Each one achieves his purposes, and refines his people. The only question before us is how best to use the information of the past to achieve God's purposes today.

The course is divided into 300-year segments. Each segment contains information about the major personalities, events, and concepts that shaped that period and in turn were shaped by it. While some bias exists in the selection of the sources and content, I tried to pick sources that are balanced and Biblical. I chose the people, ideas, and events that I felt most influenced the development of discipline in the Church. That's the focus of the course. Some assert that without discipline there can be no church. It might also be asserted that without orthodoxy there can be no discipline, because there can be no heresy. And yet it was the exercise of discipline in the church that led to some of its cruelest and bloodiest conflicts. That leads to the central question of this course: should discipline be more concerned with theology (orthodoxy), or behavior (orthopraxis)? Does history show an unholy alliance between church and state that pushes doctrine over practice, damaging the Church's reputation and causing harm to its people?

The analysis of this course is primarily drawn from Jeremy Jackson's book *No Other Foundation* about which Francis Schaeffer writes,

This is the finest book available on church history. It is faithful to the facts of history. But it goes beyond cold facts to uncover the meaning of the past for today, in light of Christian truth. I hope this becomes a standard evangelical work — in colleges and seminaries, but also in homes of everyday Christians.

This course is intended to challenge you, to motivate you, and to encourage you to build on the foundation laid down by Jesus Christ. We walk in the paths he walked, and we pursue the life he asks of us. This is a "meat" course. It focuses on obedience and action. We have been called to the *obedience* of faith, not to faith alone (Rm.1:5; Jm.2:26). We'll be discussing some practical applications of our lessons each week. The examples and experiences of our forefathers in New and Old Testaments, as well as history, are available to guide and encourage us.<sup>1</sup> Some of the examples are negative ones, and this may stimulate some lively discussions. We won't avoid controversy for the sake of unity if it is at the expense of an honest and open examination of our heritage. Feel free to share your views. Do not feel free to impose them on others.<sup>2</sup>

### ***A Church, A Church, My Kingdom for A Church***

The Kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor. 10:6-11

<sup>2</sup> 1Cor.6:12, 10:23 All things are permissible – not all things are beneficial. All things are permissible – not all things are constructive.

## Lesson 1: Thy Kingdom Come

servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn’ (Mat.13:24-30).

The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear (Mat.13:37-43 NIV)

### **Kingdom? What Kingdom?**

When I first decided to do this course, I mentioned it to a non-Christian friend at work. His initial response was interesting: “The history of which church?” Shall we study the Catholics or the Protestants, the True and Invisible church or the Sunday morning Social Club? By what standard will we measure the experience of our foregone brothers and sisters so we may learn from their experience? How do we know if what they did was right or wrong? Just what do we mean by the term “church?” I believe Jesus’ parable of the wheat and the weeds quoted above is a depiction of the church as it exists in the world. It illustrates the difficulty of deciding who among us is a true believer and who is a mimic. God forbids second-guessing His election of another to His Kingdom, or judging the eternal condition of our brothers and sisters in the faith. Does that effectively destroy our ability to exercise discipline within the Body?

Let’s look a little closer at that word “weed” Jesus uses in the parable quoted above. The closest word we can find in today’s language is probably darnel, which is called *zowan* by present-day Palestinians. It bears some resemblance to the original Greek word *zizania*. It looks in every way like true wheat. Even an expert cannot distinguish the two until they produce their fruit; then anyone can tell them apart. The fruit of the darnel is not as heavy or as compact as the wheat. It is poisonous to both man and beast, producing nausea and giddiness.<sup>1</sup> William Arnot, a Reformed pastor of the last century, is vehement in his opposition to the use of this parable to describe the church. He points out that Jesus himself gave the answer to what the field was: the world and not the church. And yet Jesus tells us that in the world we are like yeast sifted through flour; or again he says, the kingdom is like good fish and bad both drawn into the kingdom’s net (Mat.13:33,47). Anthony Hoekema writes,

In searching for the central meaning of the kingdom, the first question to be settled is whether the kingdom stands for a realm or territory over which God rules or for the reign or rule of God as such. The most widely accepted understanding of the kingdom of God is that its primary meaning is the rule or reign of God rather than a territory over which he rules...

The kingdom must not be understood as merely the salvation of certain individuals or even as the reign of God in the hearts of his people; it means nothing less than the reign of God over his entire created universe...

The kingdom is established by God’s sovereign grace, and its blessings are to be received as gifts of that grace. Man’s duty is not to bring the kingdom into existence, but to enter into it by faith, and to pray that

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<sup>1</sup> Arnot, p. 78.

## Lesson 1: Thy Kingdom Come

he may be enabled more and more to submit himself to the beneficent rule of God in every area of his life.<sup>1</sup>

So we cannot say, “Here is the kingdom” or “there is the kingdom,” nor can we say, “here is the church, and there it is not.” We cannot wall ourselves in with ecclesiastical boundaries. We cannot be effective in the Great Commission by insulating ourselves from the world. This commingling of saved and unsaved within the walls of the Church provides an insight into the historical aberrations of the social institution known as the church. A book titled “People of the Lie”<sup>2</sup> contends that evil people feel compelled to appear normal and righteous to maintain their self-esteem. They mingle with God’s people to remove the stigma of their own sinfulness. They become part of the lie of an unproductive Christian life. They walk and talk and act just like the real thing, but they have no peace, no purpose, no joy, and no fulfillment. It has also been true that when the church provides a path to power in society, it makes itself an unwitting weapon in the hands of unscrupulous people. And that is where the reputation of the Church became sullied over the years, leading to bloody Crusades and Inquisitions. God’s kingdom by contrast is apolitical. It exercises dominion over the heart, soul and mind of its people, not civil government.

### Who Belongs to this Kingdom?

#### *Discipline: the Root of Discipleship*

If the church has invisible boundaries known only to God, and if the darnel is not to be pulled out of the field where it grows alongside the wheat, does that mean there can be no discipline within the church? No! Absolutely not. And this is why: to the extent that wheat remains true to its nature, or darnel remains true to its apparent nature, it doesn’t need to be corrected. The two grow and develop identically until the harvest. Then the two may be rightly divided. They are either gathered into the barn or burned by those appointed to do so. The two appear as one when they stand in the field. To the casual observer, the mixed field is uniform. Both crops testify of their wheat-like nature right up to the Harvest.

But there are other weeds in the field that definitely need to be removed. They do not remain true to the nature and appearance of wheat. Such weeds cripple the wheat and even the darnel. They draw away nourishment from each. They testify to their own corrupt nature. They produce a confused and haphazard appearance where a groomed and nurtured crop should stand. Perhaps a parasite would provide a better analogy. A parasite which afflicts the well-being of the farmer’s wheat must likewise be removed, at once. Removal is a corrective action particularly suited to these ailments. But what if the wheat itself becomes bent or partially withered. Do we likewise remove it? Do we rip it out by its roots and leave barren soil behind to be infilled by thorns and wild vines? Or do we instead irrigate it with water, feed it, and stake it upright to keep it growing full and straight?

The discipline described by Paul is like that applied to the bent stalk of wheat. It is restorative. It is discipline which rebukes the offender, separates him from the fellowship of the Body, and then draws him back into fellowship when he has shown the fruits of repentance. The goal is to build him up and not cast him out. However, this does not address the problem of the thistles and parasites in the crop. There is no correction that will ever convert these pests into a crop of wheat. So these are two very different afflictions within the church, and they require very different remedies. Please do not confuse this with an attack on the behavior of those who are not and do

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<sup>1</sup> Hoekema, Anthony, *The Bible and the Future* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1979), pp.44-45.

<sup>2</sup> Peck, M. Scott *The People of the Lie* (Touchstone NYC, 1983).

## Lesson 1: Thy Kingdom Come

not claim to be under the Lordship of Christ. Paul says very clearly in 1 Cor. 5:12, “What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church. Are you not to judge those inside?”

To put the question in more concrete terms, “Are we obligated by Scripture, or even by the laws of men, to put up with cursing, adultery, incest, molestation, robbery, murder, seduction of minors, or flagrant violations of personal integrity and mutual respect?” Of course not! But at what point do we exclude someone from the Body of Christ by a formal act of excommunication, or by refusing the person communion with the Body, or even by denying admission to the church entirely? This becomes all the more difficult to decide because there is no hierarchy of sin. At what point do we call the police and hand over sinners to civil authority against their impenitent will? The standard we apply here cannot be an arbitrary one. Nor can it rest on the application of a laundry list of forbidden activities. The standard of discipline in the church, as well as the standard of God’s Judgment, is not the nature of the sin itself. It is the willingness of the sinner to repent from actions which violate the clear teachings of God’s Word.

Why do I even raise the issue of proper church discipline in a history course? First of all, because the history of the church is the history of its obedience to Christ. Obedience necessarily means the application of both internal and external discipline, in order to produce such obedience. I raise it, secondly, because misapplied church discipline has been the primary complaint of those who oppose the church, based on its violation of human rights by disciplinary tribunals. They could rightly point to church discipline which was used to oppress those who truly served Christ. They could rightly point to church discipline which failed to punish those who slandered the name of Christ with their hypocrisy and disrepute, those who have been *Christian* in name only.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the misapplication of church discipline has undermined the effectiveness of church missions, and it has refuted the testimony of church witnesses.

Church discipline led to early rifts in church unity, called “schisms.” Church discipline led to the infamous Inquisitions. Church discipline led to the witch hunts of Salem. Yet church discipline also led to the creeds, the confessions, and the Reformation. Unless we understand the role of discipline, and learn to distinguish between *separation* from, and *insulation* from the world, we cannot appreciate the people, events, and circumstances which led to the church as we know it today. It is a standard by which we can contrast the Bride of Christ, with adulterous and worldly institutions which may call themselves a church, but whose behavior suggests a different parentage (Joh 8:42-44).

### **The Church as Witness**

#### *The Church’s Marks of Distinction*

Now let’s try to get a handle on this corporate entity known as the church, or the Bride of Christ. What are we referring to when we use the term “church?” The definitions which follow are austere but the words have been carefully chosen and deserve our close attention.

The biblical word for “church” in the Old Testament is *mi’qara* (OT:4744 a convocation or summoning together), or *qahal* (OT:6951 an assembly). The New Testament word is *ecclesia*, meaning those who are called. Both convey the idea of an assembly called by God. It can refer to a local church body, whether or not assembled for worship (Act.5:11,11:26; Rom.16:4; Cor.11:8,16:1); it can refer to a gathering in someone’s home (Rom.16:5,23; 1Cor.16:19; Col.4:15); it

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<sup>1</sup> Consider the pedophilia abuses by Catholic priests in the 1990’s that were known but undisciplined.

## Lesson 1: Thy Kingdom Come

can even refer to the total body of believers whether in heaven or on earth (Eph.1:22,3:10,21,5:23; Col.1:18, 24).

Roman Catholics and Protestants disagree on the essential nature of the church. It is important to look at this parting of the ways to understand why the split occurred in the church during the Reformation and why it remains to this day. The Roman Catholics tend to refer to the church as the external and visible organization of the *clergy*. Protestants refer to its essence as the invisible and spiritual communion of *saints*, or true believers of all ages; they are united in the Spiritual Body of Jesus Christ. As such, the Protestants' definition of "the church" excludes non-believers who may attend the gathering of the believers. The Catholic definition excludes the laity. Later on we'll see why this dividing line was necessary in the church's development.

There are three distinctions which apply to the term "church" when it is used in everyday speech and each has its own dynamic at work:

**1. The Church Militant vs. The Church Triumphant** – The Church Militant is the church on earth as it is engaged in a holy war. The Church Triumphant is the church as it exists in heaven: the sword has been exchanged for the palm of victory.

**2. The Visible vs. The Invisible Church** – The church on earth is invisible as far as her spiritual nature is concerned. Therefore, it is impossible to determine who does or does not belong to her. The church becomes visible, however, in the profession and conduct of her members, in the administration of the Word and the Sacraments, and in her external organization and government.

**3. The church as an organism vs. the church as an institution** – This description of the church as an organism naturally applies only to the visible church as the communal relationship of believers in distinction from their relation to the world. It describes the church as a body which is not limited to the sum of its members at any given time (which is what an institution is). Rather it is a body which continues on through changes in membership, changes in practice, and changes in generations of participants. Its identity is therefore distinct from any one member, or even any combination of members.

### *The Church Defined*

**INVISIBLE CHURCH** – the company of the elect who are called by the Spirit God. We might say this group is established by the Witness of the Heart.

**VISIBLE CHURCH** – the community of those who profess the true faith, together with their children. We might say this is established by the Witness of the Tongue, accompanied by the Evidence of our Deeds.

What then distinguishes a church in its outward appearance from any other religious or secular body? This question leads us to other Catholic-Protestant distinctions.

#### **CATHOLIC view of the Church –**

1. The unity of a world-wide organization.
2. The holiness of its dogmas, moral precepts, worship and discipline.
3. The catholicity of its outreach based on the number of its members worldwide.

#### **PROTESTANT view of the Church –**

1. The unity of the Spiritual Body of Christ.
2. The holiness of its members as holy in Christ and holy in principle; they have received new life and are destined for perfect holiness in heaven.

## Lesson 1: Thy Kingdom Come

3. The catholicity of its membership, which includes all those who have believed in all ages and all lands.

### *The Church's Activities in the World*

1. *The true preaching of the Word of God*, i.e. preaching which is true to the fundamentals of Christianity, and which has a controlling influence on both faith and practice (1Joh 4:1-3; 2Joh 9). We'll examine just what these fundamentals include shortly.

2. *The right administration of its sacraments*, i.e. they are consistent with the Word, performed by lawful ministers of the Word, given only to believers and their seed (Mat.28:19; Mk.16:16; Ac.2:42; 1Cor.11:23-30). Limiting the administration of the sacraments to "lawful ministers" is subtle, but the verses in Acts and 1Corinthians refer to those who pass on what they received (a succession of teaching is passed from one group or generation to the next).

3. *The faithful exercise of discipline*, i.e. discipline is mandated by Scripture to maintain purity of doctrine and the holiness of the Sacraments (Mat18:18; 1Cor 5:1-5,13; 14:33,40; Rev 2:14,15, 20).<sup>1</sup>

### *The Church's Mission: What does it do?*

The church really has only two functions *within* the corporate Body:

**1. WORSHIP** – this is corporate fellowship with each other and with the Lord for the express purposes of hearing His Word and praising His Name with song and thanksgiving (Ps.100; Mic.4:2; Mat.18:20; Luk 24:32; 1Co.1:9; 1Joh 1:3).

**2. DISCIPLESHIP** – The church is the vehicle by which the Faith is propagated. What was taught to the Apostles was entrusted to others capable of passing it on unaltered to all who would follow the Lord. This teaching and discipling was not the passing on of mere doctrine and law, but the demonstration of doctrine and law through personal example. It was not passing down to inferiors the rules of behavior as if a chain of command were in operation, but a mutual and collaborative teaching through each member's gifts. "Teach and admonish one another" (Col.3:16). "Submit yourselves one to another" (Eph.5:21).

No one was to be above another, but all were to be equal brothers in the Lord, calling no one Father, and no one Teacher but the Christ. The one who would lead would do so from in front, as by example, not from above. This may be carried too far as with Congregational churches, or substantially ignored as with Episcopal and Catholic churches. For discipleship see also Mat.23:8-12; Joh 13:34,35;14:23; Rom.15:14; Eph.4:11-16; 2Tim.2:2,24-26; Tit.2; 2Joh 9,10.

*Outside* the corporate fellowship, as we become yeast sifted through the flour of the world, church members translate these two basic functions into two related activities:

**1. SERVICE** – Living out the faith which has been given to us by the Grace of God through serving our neighbors as Christ came to serve the will of the Father by serving us. This is our daily and even our minute to minute worship of the Father, both inside and outside the Body. We make no distinction in the places of our service. We love our enemies as well as our brothers.

**2. EVANGELISM** – The proclamation of the Good News so that we may bring the external call of the Father to all He has prepared beforehand. If we have not been obedient in our walk with Jesus, then we make a lie of the proclamation. We bring the name of the Lord into contempt in the

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<sup>1</sup> Berkhof, L. *Summary of Christian Doctrine* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1983), pp. 151-153.

## Lesson 1: Thy Kingdom Come

eyes of the world (Rom. 2:24). The success of our discipleship determines the success of our outreach. We make no distinction between those we call. We evangelize the lost, not just seekers.

You may be expecting a treatment of church structure at this point but it will not be coming. What little we know of early church structure does not come from doctrinal mandates or points of ecclesiastical law, but from the natural outworking of the relationships described in the New Testament. The Bible is not a handbook of Church Order, or a textbook of Philosophy. It is not an exposition of Law, or a description of Religion *per se*. It is a letter of Love from God Almighty to His chosen people, telling them how to properly understand their relationship to each other and to Him. If our hearts are right with God and with each other, then the formality of church structure will be a side issue. The structure of the church in the third and fourth centuries was little different than the church which soon followed, and which distorted the Truth of God's Word for personal gain. It was the attitude of the church which would change, not its outward appearance. Because no structure is specified apart from a rule of elders and a distribution of gifts, I will leave the analysis of church structure to history itself as we explore the subtle changes which permitted a monolithic hierarchy to substitute its own law for God's.

### *The Church's Testimony: What does it have to say?*

First, let's examine the content of the Gospel. It should distinguish Christianity from all other religions and cults, and define orthodoxy within the Body. Then we can proceed to examine history with this Gospel as our template to help us understand all those confusing heresies strewn about the historical landscape. It's tempting to over-explain and over-define the Gospel message until the average listener says to himself, "This is too technical and too hard to understand." That's the heritage left by the Christian theologians of the last century. They tried to justify Christianity to secular scholars who scoffed at the Gospel's lack of scientific merit and proof. Christianity is as deep as the mind of God, and yet it can be easily grasped by a child.

### **Gospel Fundamentals**

Paul puts the Gospel in a nutshell in 1st Corinthians 15:3-8, "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep."

Paul emphasizes the fulfillment of God's promises in the Scriptures, and the fact that there is eye-witness testimony to Christ's resurrection. These two crucial aspects remain in every Gospel presentation today. Our testimony of a changed (resurrected) life confirms the fact that we enjoy new life because Christ lives. This conviction of what we know to be true in our own life is still the key to successful evangelism. Anything less is hearsay and will not be believed. Obedience born of this conviction produces fruit because it reflects God's Truth in a tangible way that others can see and experience. To this living testimony we must add a clear statement of the Gospel, such as this one used by Evangelism Explosion III<sup>1</sup>:

1. Heaven is a free gift which cannot be earned or deserved.
2. Man is a sinner who cannot save himself from sin's penalty.
3. God is loving and merciful. He doesn't want to punish us, but God is also just. To uphold his holy law, he must punish sin with death, which is sin's penalty.

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<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, D. James, *Evangelism Explosion*, (Tyndale House Publishers; 4th edition, July, 2002)

## Lesson 1: Thy Kingdom Come

4. This presents a dilemma, which is answered in the person of Jesus Christ, the infinite God-man. He was without sin. He died on the cross to pay the debt we owe to the Father for our sins and to purchase a place for us in heaven.
5. We may receive this gift by saving faith. Saving faith means trusting in Jesus alone for our salvation, and resting on what he has done, rather than relying on what we have done.

### Current Gospel Trends

As clear as this may seem, it uses Christian jargon. It has technical words and phrases that are unknown to the average listener today. Paul's statement that what happened was "according to the Scriptures" assumes that the hearers know those Scriptures. But today, they may not know there is a God, much less what the Bible is, who Jesus is, what sin means, where "Law" comes from, or why it would apply to them. They may doubt absolute truth, universal law, a living and personal God, a sentient Creator, eternal life, the idea of sin and salvation, objective morality, or any number of things that were taken for granted only a century ago. The phrase "according to the Scriptures" that Paul uses is probably nonsense to them. They suspect we are coming to them with an irrational myth that may be helpful to *us* to cope with an increasingly complex world, but it is irrelevant to *them*. It is all a neatly wrapped package of superstition and irrationalism, as far as they are concerned.

But we aren't talking about the challenges of apologetics here. We're talking about what we are presenting to the world as truth. We're talking about what the church understands that truth to be. Within the walls of the church today, there is lively disagreement as to the content of the gospel, and the reliability of the Bible. There are challenges to doctrine, in which Paul is said to present a different gospel than what Jesus presented. The proliferation of bible translations for commercial profit has cast doubt on the content of God's word. The doctrinal chaos created by the Scofield Reference bible in 1909 has been replicated many times over with dozens of competing theologies today. Some of our most conservative seminaries are preaching a different gospel today than what the church has traditionally preached. Churches have become so fond of growth, that they have compromised the gospel for fear of offending those who attend. We are now a group of politically savvy, market-based, consumer-oriented, vendors of personal growth.<sup>1</sup>

It's to our shame that we must define *for the church* the gospel which we proclaim. It is even worse that by doing so, we separate ourselves from much of the evangelical community. *The history of the church, and of its theology, is the history of the struggle to maintain doctrinal purity, and visible obedience.* That's why church history is the story of church discipline. Many churches today have abandoned the creeds and confessions, calling them "divisive." I suspect they are called divisive because they declare orthodoxy. And by declaring orthodoxy, they define heresy. It may be that some of those who oppose creeds are preaching another gospel, and do not want to be called to account for it. They reject the idea that they are subject to church discipline, and so they place themselves outside the church, outside its orthodoxy, and outside the bounds of the historic faith.

*The history of discipline in the church, is the history of the preservation and transmission of this gospel message.*

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<sup>1</sup> See *No Place for Truth*, or *God in the Wasteland* both by David Wells; *Truth Decay* by Douglas Groothuis; also, *Beyond Culture Wars* by Michael Horton;

## **Lesson 2: 35-313 AD**

### ***The Age of Persecutions***

**Overview** – This is a study of the transitional period of the church, from Christianity as an outlaw religion to Christianity as a legitimized religion of the Roman Empire. Much of the structure and doctrine of the church became crystallized during this period of trial by fire. And much of the church's expansion was completed at this time as well, so much so that Paul could declare, "This is the Gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven." We will be spending three sessions on this period. This is more than we will spend on any other period except perhaps the present day, because almost all of what the church became, and thought, and taught till the present time, has its seeds in the first three hundred years of its existence as a body.

### ***Part I: Planting the Garden of God***

#### **Seed of the Apostles**

The Bible covers the history of the church up to about 62 AD, which marks the basic end of the Apostolic Age. This is followed by the Anti-Nicene period, which includes all the developments which preceded the Council of Nicea in 325. It is a time of trial by fire for the church. A cruel Jewish persecution following the death of Stephen c.35. almost exterminated the seedling church. Nearly two thousand Christians were killed at Jerusalem. Most of the Hellenist Christians fled the city, providentially taking the Gospel to wherever they went. Some who had witnessed the events of Pentecost, returned to Rome and began a church there even before Paul had arrived. Those who stayed behind in Jerusalem were identified first as Jews and only secondly as followers of Christ. To the Jews, these new converts to Christ must have seemed like one of our own false cults would seem to us today. They use the same language but there is something basically different about them. The Jews were quick to deny any association with them, and almost as quick to have them killed. Martyrdom was the crown for every one of the Apostles except John who, by tradition and Biblical testimony, died a natural death (Joh 21:22-23).

#### **Fate of the Apostles and Early Church Leaders**

We find the death of James the son of Zebedee in the book of Acts, 12:2. James was beheaded in 44 AD by Herod Agrippa. Two of the seven deacons, Timon and Parmenas were martyred at about the same time at Corinth and Phillipi in Macedonia respectively. The other Apostles' fates come to us from extra-Biblical sources and in brief this is how they and the early church fathers were returned to the Lord:

**Philip** was sent on important missions into the Asiatic countries. In Phrygia he converted many snake worshippers raising the ire of the local priests. They martyred him 8 years after James by being scourged and then crucified. Bartholomew removed and buried the body and was almost killed himself for doing it.

**Matthew** preached for 9 years in Judea writing his gospel in Hebrew for use by the Jews to whom he had preached. James the Less then translated it into Greek. He was slain by the sword in Parthia (60 AD). Mark, a convert of Peter, had recorded Peter's discourses at the request of the Roman converts. He established a bishopric at Alexandria and then went to Libya as a missionary. When he returned to Alexandria, he was martyred by being dragged through the streets and then burned by some Egyptians jealous of his power. His bones were gathered and taken to Venice where he is the patron saint.

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

**James the Less** was killed by the Jews of Jerusalem who incited a mob to attack and stone him to death.

**Matthias** was also killed at Jerusalem being first stoned and then beheaded. Some have said that the reason we hear nothing more of him after his selection is that the choice was improper, Paul having been God's anointed replacement for the outsider Judas. Choosing by lot thereby loses its only acceptable example. When Simeon is chosen to replace James as the bishop of Jerusalem, it is by vote and not by lot.

**Andrew** preached to many Asiatic nations and was condemned to death by the governor of Patrae in Greece for denouncing his idolatry. He was crucified on an 'X' shaped cross to which he was tied and not nailed to slow his death. He hung there for three days preaching continually to those around him. The listeners begged the governor to let him down but when the last cord was cut Andrew fell to the ground dead.

**Peter and Paul** had prayed that the Lord would confound the magic tricks of Simon Magus who was a favorite of the emperor Nero. When Simon fell to the ground and broke both legs after a feat of flying, Nero had Peter and Paul locked in prison for nine months, during which time they converted two captains of the guards and forty-seven others. Peter was brought out for execution. He was scourged and then crucified head-down by his own request because he felt unworthy to suffer the same fate as Christ. Paul was then beheaded with the sword c.64 AD

**Jude** made many converts in Persia which enraged those in power. He was crucified in 72 AD

**Bartholomew** translated the book of Matthew into the heathen languages and was either killed by the sword or beaten to death by idolaters.

**Thomas**, also known as Didymus in Greek, preached in Parthia and India and arousing the anger of the pagan priests, he was thrust through by a spear. He left behind many churches in India that exist to this day. Members are called "Thomas Christians."

**Luke** may have died a natural death.

**Simon the Zealot** preached in Mauritania and other parts of Africa and even in Britain where he was crucified by the pagans in 74 AD

**Barnabas** died of unknown causes in 73 AD He is listed among the post-Apostolic teachers of the church (sometimes called the Apostolic Fathers). His epistle is authoritative but was excluded from the Canon of the Church in later centuries. If you would like to read it, you can find it in paperback in a book called "The Lost Books of the Bible and the Forgotten Books of Eden" (Alpha House, 1926, reprint World Bible Publishers).

**Timothy** was outraged by a feast in 97 AD which bears a resemblance to Halloween. After he reproved them for their idolatry, the crowd beat him to death with the sticks which they carried as magic wands.

**James**, also called **James the Righteous**, the Lord's earthly kin who was Bishop of Jerusalem and probable author of the Book of James, was seized following the arrest of Peter and Paul in about 62 AD. He was admired and revered even by the Jews as a righteous man who took no one at face value. The Scribes and Pharisees had come to him and asked him to explain to the people who would be arriving from around the world to attend the Passover feast that this man named Jesus was not the Christ [perhaps expecting that he would continue to reject Jesus as the Christ even though he was his brother]. They stood him on the Sanctuary parapet and shouted their questions to him, "Tell us, righteous one, what is meant by 'the door of Jesus.'" James replied, "Why do you

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

question me about the Son of Man? He is sitting in heaven at the right hand of the Great Power, and he will come on the clouds of heaven.” Many were convinced by James’ testimony. Angered by this, the Pharisees and Sadducees rushed up the parapet steps, throwing James headlong from its summit. Then, finding him still alive, they stoned and then clubbed him to death even as he prayed for them. The siege of Jerusalem was not long afterwards and many noted the coincidence.<sup>1</sup>

**John** was at Ephesus but was ordered by the Emperor Domitian to be sent to Rome where he was sentenced to be boiled in oil. He was saved from this fate and banished to the island of Patmos instead where he wrote his revelation. When Domitian died, the new emperor Nerva was kind to the Christians and sent John back to Ephesus where he lived to be one hundred years old.<sup>2</sup>

### *Part II: The End of an Age*

#### **Seeds of a Nation**

Now that we’ve seen a bit of the passing of the Apostolic Age, I would like to explore the passing away of the Jewish world before continuing on to the formation of the Anti-Nicene church. I want to begin with the proposition that the physical nation of Israel does not stand side by side with the Spiritual nation in the Kingdom of God (Rom.9:6-8). Rather Israel’s time was allotted to it for repentance and, as with the Ark, God sealed his remnant when the time was ripe.

Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’ But he will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’... People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. Luke 13:25,29

Most scholars put the date of the new testament at approximately 95 AD. Others place it closer to 65 AD. I would like to suggest that the earlier date is more probably the correct one because of one singular event of such awesome proportion that it seems inconceivable the writers of the New Testament would have ignored it. It is the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD which also resulted in the destruction by fire of Herod’s Temple at Jerusalem. It had taken 18,000 men 9 years to build it. When it comes to discussing the endtimes of Matthew 24, or of the Revelation of John, most modern speakers on the subject ignore the history of God’s Judgment on the physical nation of Israel and go straight to the sensational events of today to explain the fulfillment of those prophecies. It has a disturbing tendency to distract believers from the labor at hand. The coming of the kingdom of God and the fulfillment of God’s precious word have manifestations both in the present and in the future. The historical context of God’s word is central to Christianity. Unless we understand what God has finished and what he has left to be revealed at the Last Day, we will be hopelessly confused by the parade of historical events we will study in this course. Anthony Hoekema writes in his book “The Bible and the Future,”

So keen is the recognition that there will be a future age in distinction from the present age that there are a number of passages where the two ages are spoken of together. [There is] the juxtaposition of the two ages in the New Testament use of the expressions “the last days” and “the last day.” ...We are in the last days now. When the expression is found in the singular, however (“the last day”), it never refers to the present age but always to the age to come, usually to the Day of Judgment or the day of resurrection.

Oscar Cullmann uses a well-known figure: the Christian believer lives between D-day and V-day. D-day was the first coming of Christ, when the enemy was decisively defeated; V-day is the Second Coming of

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<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, pp. 100-102.

<sup>2</sup> Foxe, pp. 24-38.

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

Christ, when the enemy shall totally and finally surrender... The battle that decides the victory has already taken place.

The New Testament believer, therefore, is aware that history is moving toward the goal of this final consummation. This consummation of history, as he sees it, includes such events as the Second Coming of Christ, the general resurrection, the Day of Judgment, and the new heavens and new earth. Since the new heavens and new earth will be the culmination of history, we may say that all history is moving toward this goal.

The church is caught up in the tension between the present age and the age to come. As George Ladd puts it: "The church has experienced the victory of the Kingdom of God; and yet the church is, like other men, at the mercy of the powers of this world.... This very situation creates a severe tension — indeed, acute conflict; for the church is the focal point of the conflict between good and evil, God and Satan, until the end of the age. The church can never be at rest or take her ease but must always be the church in struggle and conflict, often persecuted, but sure of the ultimate victory."

We may now note that this tension is illustrated and exemplified by New Testament teaching on the kingdom of God....Only God can place us into the kingdom. ...Yet this fact does not relieve us of responsibility with regard to the kingdom. ...The kingdom of God demands from us repentance and faith. On a number of occasions Jesus said that we must enter the kingdom of God. One can only enter the kingdom by humbling himself like a child, by doing the will of the Father in heaven, or by having a righteousness which exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. ...The kingdom of God, as a matter of fact, demands nothing less than total commitment. ...No one should seek to enter the kingdom unless he has thoroughly counted the cost.<sup>1</sup>

Here we see the connection between membership and obedience in the True church. The kingdom of God is marked by the committed discipleship of Christ's followers. The birth of the Kingdom in the person of Jesus Christ brought with it an end to the Age of Temple, Priest and Sacrifice.

Keeping the tension between the "already" and the "not yet" in mind, let's begin to lay the historical foundations of the church in the first century AD. Whether the events which follow provide the fulfillment of the New Testament prophecies below or provide simply the first installment in the tension Hoekema describes above, understand that the writings of Eusebius dating from the 3rd century AD indicate it was his own understanding that the events indeed fulfilled Matthew 24 and the Revelation of John.<sup>2</sup> And so to set the Biblical stage for what is about to come, here are those pertinent Scripture passages that from time to time have caused disagreement among Biblical scholars as to their historical (not prophetic) application:

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.' Luke 19:41-44.

So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand — then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains ... How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!... There will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Mat.24:15-16, 19, 21-22, 30-31, 34.

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<sup>1</sup> Hoekema, pp.18-19, 21, 32, 52-53

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, pp. 117, 125.

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

In as much as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them... And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again... Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved. Romans 11:13-14, 23, 25-26.

### **The Fall of Jerusalem**

Politically, for the Jews, hard times had come in the years after the crucifixion. The emperor of Rome changed every other week and demands were ever being made to put the latest statue of the emperor in the Temple for its worship. Factions within Jerusalem's Jewish community opposed the emperor-worship and Roman Rule in general. Talk of the Messiah by local Christians stimulated a new wave of Messianic expectation among the Jews who had not believed Jesus was the Anointed One. This talk of a physical savior-king disturbed the Romans who became suspicious of an imminent rebellion.

Then in 66 AD., Florus, who was procurator of Judea, forcefully took 17 talents (approx. \$61,200) from the Temple Treasury at Jerusalem. A riot broke out, started by those who were outraged at the Roman's effrontery and who had incidentally been looking for just such an occasion to pick a fight. In an effort to quickly suppress the riot, Roman legions scourged and crucified over 3600 Jews. Two Jewish factions rose up: the rebels, or Zealots, who wanted autonomy, and the pacifists, who wanted peaceful co-existence for business' sake. These two factions were viciously opposed to each other, throwing rocks whenever two groups of them met in the street. The rebels were comprised of cut-throats (literally) who loved to slip into a crowd of their opposition with hidden daggers and dispatch them in broad daylight. The first victim was the high priest, Jonathan. The Pharisees sided with the Zealots who had been fighting Rome relentlessly since the days of Herod. There was a legitimate fear that Caligula, the latest maniac of Rome, would desecrate the Temple as Antiochus Epiphanes IV had done 200 years earlier when his statue was placed in the temple and a fatted pig was sacrificed on the altar. Talk of war with Rome was rampant.

In 68 AD the animosity between these two factions erupted into a pitched battle with the Romans trying to play referee. The radicals won the bloody confrontation after killing 12,000 opposition members, including nearly all the rich in Jerusalem, and incidentally the source of local Roman influence and support. Another revolt began against the foreign occupation. Masada's Roman garrison was surrounded, falsely coaxed into disarmament and surrender by Menahem and his Zealots, and then brutally slaughtered. Eleazar, son of Ananias, the Temple Captain, ordered the sacrifice for the emperor to cease, which was the signal for open revolt. By August, the entire city and several citadels were in the hands of the rebels. Greek cities in Judea, symbols of Rome's dominance, were also attacked by the rebel forces.<sup>1</sup> In retaliation, the gentiles of Caesarea slew 20,000 Jews. Thousands more were sold into slavery. The gentiles of Damascus cut the throats of some 10,000 Jews in a single day.<sup>2</sup>

Hearing of disastrous earthquakes and volcanic eruptions during the preceding 4 years, and then being warned in a vision, the Christians in Jerusalem fled the city and headed for the mountains of Pella as Christ had cautioned them to do. Not one of them died in the holocaust which soon followed. The Jews were so angry at this "desertion" by the Christian Jews that they forever barred them from their synagogues.<sup>3</sup> The 12th Roman Legion was dispatched to Jerusalem to quell the rebellion, but it was disastrously defeated by the rebels. The Jews declared themselves an

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<sup>1</sup> McMillan Bible Atlas, N.Y., 1977, Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, p.251

<sup>2</sup> Durant, pp. 542-549.

<sup>3</sup> Shelley, p. 36.

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

independent country, struck their own coins, and divided the country into 7 military districts. Command of Galilee was given to the future historian, Josephus.<sup>1</sup> More troops were dispatched from Rome under the command of a Roman legate named Vespasian. He began a sweeping campaign which forced the rebels further and further inland until he had driven them into their last two strongholds at Jerusalem and Masada.

Although Josephus is far from reliable, as a Jewish priest and eyewitness to the events his use of the imagery of Scripture to describe what he saw is revealing: angelic armies were seen surrounding Jewish cities. "Chariots and troops of soldiers... running about among the clouds." This description, curiously enough, was repeated by the Roman historian Tacitus and can even be found in the Talmud (Yoma, folio 39B).

In 70 AD, Vespasian laid siege to Jerusalem. There were some 600,000 rebels walled up within, plus many others who had come for the Passover feast, some three million in all. Meanwhile, the mad fiddler of Rome, emperor Nero, had committed suicide to avoid his own murder by the mob for his many crimes. Vespasian was chosen as the new emperor. He left his son Titus to continue the siege against the rebel leader, John of Giscala. This Zealot leader had outfoxed Titus 2 years earlier and escaped to Jerusalem where he removed his rival Simon. In preparation for the last stand at Masada, the rebels began gathering all the food available in the city by force. Any who tried to leave the city were murdered and their money confiscated on the grounds that they were deserters. As the famine grew worse, the houses were ransacked for food and the inhabitants tortured or killed by the rebels. Little children were dashed against walls and floors. Brutal mutilations were carried out by the Rebels in their search for more and more food stores. People began to steal the food from each other's mouths, mothers stole even from their children. Mary, the daughter of Eleazar, of a good family and rich, took her suckling baby and killed it, cooking it for food. When the aroma wafted into the surrounding area the rebels broke down the door and demanded the food. She held out the uncooked half to them. Even these callous murderers turned away in horror.

After 5 months some 116,000 bodies had been thrown over the walls of Jerusalem. There were too many to even bury anymore. Soon they were piled up in the valleys surrounding the city, including the Valley of Hinnom also known as gehenna or hell. A river of putrefaction flowed from under the decaying corpses, permeating the entire city with the stench of death. Titus himself cried out for the mercy of God denying that any of it was his doing.<sup>2</sup> As the battle for the city raged on, the Temple was set aflame using Roman brands (by the Jews, says the historian Josephus ... see Daniel 9:26). Of those Jews who survived, 97,000 were sold as slaves. Between 600,000 and 1,197,000 Jews were killed during the siege. The high priesthood and the Sanhedrin were abolished. The temple was razed leaving not one stone on another. It has never been rebuilt nor have sacrifices ever been made there again. The Sadducees disappeared while the Pharisees and rabbis became the leaders of a homeless people. The forced exodus from Jerusalem was so massive that Jewish scholars began to date the DIASPORA (or Dispersion) from the destruction of Herod's temple rather than the Babylonian Captivity.<sup>3</sup>

The remnants of the rebel forces fled the city under the command of Eleazar Ben Jair and took up a final defensive stand in Herod's summer fortress at Masada until 73 AD. The Romans waited them out and then, after completing an assault ramp to breach the rebel defenses, the Romans decided to delay the final attack until daylight. To preclude capture, the defenders of Masada, all

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. McMillan, pp.251-257

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, pp. 112-116.

<sup>3</sup> Durant, p. 545.

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

960 men, women and children, committed mass suicide during the night.<sup>1</sup> As if the earth itself were responding to this awful judgment, massive earthquakes and minor volcanic eruptions began throughout the Mediterranean. Unexpectedly in 79 AD., following many minor and not so minor eruptions, Mt. Vesuvius had a catastrophic final eruption that buried Pompeii in 50-60 feet of mud, lava, and ash wreaking judgment on those who had been the instruments of God's judgment on Israel (Rev.16:18-21). Babylon had indeed been relived.<sup>2</sup>

In the second century, other events related to the nation of Israel arise. In AD 115-16 the Jews of Cyrene, Egypt, Cyprus and Mesopotamia again rose up against Rome. During the bloody suppression which ensued, some 220,000 people died in Cyrene; 240,000 in Cyprus — for centuries after no Jew was even allowed to enter Cyprus. In AD 130, Hadrian tried the same tactics as Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the resulting rebellion was every bit as fierce as before. One-half million Jews died in battle, as many starved to death, and many more succumbed to numerous pogroms which ensued world-wide.

Even so, in AD 132 **Simeon Bar Cocheba** (a self-proclaimed Messiah who was acknowledged as such by the famous Jewish expositor of the law, Akkiba) led the Jews in their last quest to recover their homeland and their freedom. They fought Rome for three years during which the Romans destroyed 985 towns in Palestine and slew 580,000 men. Nearly all Judea was laid waste. The pagan city of Aelia Capitolina rose on the site of Jerusalem with shrines to Venus and Jupiter. Circumcision was forbidden, as was the observance of the Sabbath or any other holiday. The successor to the Sanhedrin (or Council of 70) had been known as the Council at Jamnia. Even this was dissolved and outlawed. Public instruction of the Law was forbidden. Akkiba, now 95, refused to be quieted and died with the basic tenet of the Law on his lips, "Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one."

The reason this is important is because the seat of Christianity was moved from Jerusalem very early in church history and there is a reason for it. "A time is coming, and has now come, when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, a time when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (Joh 4:21-24). Jesus wept when he saw Jerusalem for the last time because he knew, as it was true of his own role as a sacrificial offering it would also be true of Israel as a nation, that "unless a seed falls to the ground and dies it remains a single seed. But if it dies it produces many seeds." Christ's death as a man would mean the planting of God's spiritual Garden. And Israel's death as a nation would mean the harvesting of all nations in Christ.

The false Christ who was prophesied came and was proclaimed, and then was summarily dismissed by God's hand. Perhaps we saw only a type of all false messiahs in Simon Bar Kocheba, and he returns again and again in history in other guises. Israel ceased as a political entity for nearly two thousand years, and even when it rose from the ashes of W.W.II it never resurrected the priesthood, never rebuilt the Temple, never appeased the wrath of God with sacrifices. God's special relationship with his people has continued unbroken through the ages with another Israel, the remnant of ancient Israel, known as Spiritual Israel, God's faithful Bride as we defined the church at the beginning of the course. That's why Jesus told his disciples to go first to the Jews. They were to draw out his chosen people as a remnant so his Abrahamic promises would be kept. Paul too always went first to the Jews and only then to the Gentiles, drawing out God's wandering sheep. In time this distinction vanished and the Jews were approached without special favor by the church. If anything, they were mistakenly perceived as "Christ killers." It was Christ's purpose to

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<sup>1</sup> loc.cit., McMillan.

<sup>2</sup> Feder, Theo., "Great Treasures of Pompeii and Herculaneum (Abbeville Press, Inc., N.Y., 1978), pp.7-9

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

pay for all our sins on the cross of atonement and his persecutors were the proxies of all mankind, mimicking our own rebellion and unbelief. This misperception of Jews during the middle ages will be seen as a natural consequence of the twisted theology of the times when we get to that portion of church history in a few weeks.

It must be said that this view of physical Israel's role in the Kingdom of God is not the only one possible, nor is it necessarily the correct one. It is a personal view, one widely held in reformed circles, but not one that must be accepted by the student of church history. With that disclaimer let's return to the church, Spiritual Israel, and explore its function as a discipling ground for the followers of Christ.

### *Part III: Forged in the Crucible*

#### **Seeds of Discipleship**

Using Scripture as "The Rule of Life and Faith"

Following the Fall of Jerusalem and after his return from exile, the Apostle John traveled widely encouraging and teaching the churches even at his advanced age. One account of the Apostle John's adventures following the fall of Jerusalem involved a young lad of ardent spirit that he noticed while visiting the church at Smyrna. He left the boy in the keeping of the Bishop "with all earnestness, in the presence of the church and Christ as my witness." The cleric took the boy home, brought him up, kept him in his presence, looked after him and finally gave him the grace of Baptism. After this he relaxed his constant care and watchfulness, having put the seal of the Lord on him for protection. The youngster snatched at liberty too soon and was led astray by a bad crowd of friends. Little by little he was led into their ways until he had renounced God's salvation and in his rebellion, feeling that his life was already in ruins, sought after more and more heinous crimes with which to impress his friends. He became their leader and formed them into a gang of bandits.

John had occasion to return to Smyrna one day and went to the Bishop saying, "Come now, bishop, repay me the deposit which Christ and I left in your keeping in the presence of the church over which you reside as my witness." The bishop replied, "He is dead to God," and then he told John the sad tale. John tore his clothes in grief saying, "A fine guardian I left of our brother's soul. However, fetch me a horse immediately." He rode off to the bandits' hide-out in the mountains. As he approached, the young man turned to flee out of shame, but John called out to him, "You still have hopes of life. I will account to Christ for you. If need be I will gladly die in your place, as Christ died for us; to save you I will give my own life. Stop! Believe! Christ sent me."

When he heard this the young man stopped and threw down his weapons, breaking into tears. When the old man came to him he flung his arms around John, pleading for himself with groans as best he could, and baptized a second time with tears, he hid his sin-laden right hand from sight. But John solemnly pledged his word that he had found pardon for him from the Savior. He prayed, knelt down, and kissed the hidden hand, cleansed by repentance. Then he brought him back to the church, interceded for him with many prayers, shared with him the ordeal of continuous fasting, brought his mind under control by all the enchanting power of words, and did not leave him, we are told, till he had restored him to the Church, giving a perfect example of true repentance and a perfect proof of regeneration, the trophy of a visible resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

I took the time to give you this story which dates back to the third century or earlier, so that you would have a feel for the function and role of the individual Christian in the life of the church.

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<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, pp. 129-131

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

This is the description of the commitment which will testify to the visible resurrection. This is the reason for the success of the early church. This is the kind of discipleship that marked the lives of the Apostles and that was taught to the seedling church. We will see more of this type of discipling when we look at the practices of the Anti-Nicene church. The closest discipling program that we have in our own day is the result of the efforts of the Navigators who have resurrected this one on one method of teaching.

Let's take some time now to look at what they have discovered during the past thirty years. Its essence is revealed in a book by one of their officers who serves as International Ministry Representative, Leroy Eims. In "The Marks of Discipleship" Mr. Eims tells us that as a general rule it can take 2 years to turn a convert into a disciple (we'll examine these distinctions shortly), 2 more years to turn the disciple into a worker, and 3 more years to turn the worker into a leader. He says this is not unreasonable when we look at how much time Jesus spent with his disciples: if he spent 12 hours a day with them for 3 years, that's 13,140 hours. If we could spend 7 hours a week with a person (4 in church and 3 elsewhere), and that might be high, it totals only 365 hours a year. At that rate it would take us 36 years to match the time spent by Jesus! The profiles of a convert, disciple, worker and leader in outline look like this:

### **Growing a Convert into a Leader**

#### CONVERT –

1. He gives evidences of possessing new life (2Cor.5:17).
2. His attitude toward Jesus Christ is now favorable.
3. His attitude toward sin is now unfavorable.

#### GROWING DISCIPLE –

1. He puts Christ first in the major areas of his life and is taking steps to separate from sin (Luk 9:23; Rom.12:1-2).
2. He continues in the Word through such means of intake as Bible story and Scripture memory; he is regular in applying the Word to his life with the help of the Holy Spirit (Joh 8:31; Jm.1:22-25, Ps.119:59)
3. He maintains a consistent devotional life and is growing in faith and intercessory prayer (Mk.1:35; Heb 11:6; Col.4:2-4).
4. He attends church regularly and demonstrates Christ's love identifying with and serving other believers (Ps.122:1; Heb 10:25; Joh 13:34-35; 1Joh 4:20-21; Gal.5:13).
5. He is openly identified with Jesus Christ where he lives and works, manifests a heart for witnessing, gives his testimony clearly, and presents the gospel regularly with increasing effectiveness (Mat.5:16; Col.4:6; 1Pet.3:15).
6. He is a learner who is open and teachable (Ac.17:11).
7. He is a visible follower and learner of Jesus Christ, and demonstrates consistency and faithfulness in all of the above areas (Luk 16:10).

#### WORKER –

1. He evidences growth in the virtues and skills outlined listed under 'growing disciple' (1Pet.3:18).
2. He shows a growing compassion for the lost and demonstrates his ability to lead men to Christ personally (Mt.9:36-38; Rom.1:6).

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

3. He is being used of God to establish believers who have become disciples, either personally or in a discipling group context (Col.1:28-29).
4. He is currently engaged in the task of making disciples (Mt.28:19).
5. Regular intake of the Word by all means and the quiet time are now habits in his life (Phil.4:9).

LEADER –

1. He is an equipped worker who evidences growth in the virtues and skills listed under ‘worker.’
2. He has been used of God to help disciples become workers (2Tim.2:2).
3. He is banding and leading workers in evangelizing the lost and establishing believers (Mk.1:38)
4. He displays faithfulness and integrity in his life and ministry (2Tim.2:19-21).<sup>1</sup>

Knowing what goes into the making of an effective disciple using these guidelines, it may become easier to understand the distinctions made by the church in first centuries between clergy and laity, members and catechumens. While we may all be priests, some of us are less effective, less gifted, less motivated than others and submissiveness to those who exercise responsibility therefore becomes essential to our growth within the Body. Divisiveness is the consequence of arrogant and unfounded self-elevation. Even in the first two hundred years of church history we find schisms emerging from such competition for Christ’s favor. It is no less a challenge today to remove our selves from comparisons between each other (Gal 6:4).

Now let’s see how this was put into practice by the first century church. Then we can appreciate how discipling and worship changed with time, first moving away from the norms of the early church, and then turning back to them.

### ***Part IV: The Crown of Martyrdom***

#### **Seeds of the Martyrs**

Battle Cry of the Faith: “To the Lions!”

For the Apostolic church, early gatherings were very simple, very basic affairs. The contents of this early worship included the reading and singing of psalms, personal testimonies about the latest persecutions, and the communion. The people who came were characterized by their humility, submission and equality, with slaves and slave masters sitting side by side in service to the Lord. Every Christian present was a missionary in his own right. The designation of missionary as we know it really didn’t begin until the middle ages. Paul’s missionary journeys were no different in substance than what every other Christian was doing, but by the grace of God Paul’s work was more extensive in its outreach and in its impact on the church.<sup>2</sup>

Within 300 years the whole of the Roman Empire was nominally Christianized. Later we will see the efforts of the great individual missionaries effecting the establishment of strong churches that would have an impact on entire countries: e.g. Patrick in Ireland, Columba in Scotland, Augustine in England (different than the theologian), Boniface in Germany, Ansgar in Scandinavia, and Cyril in the Slavic nations.<sup>3</sup> But in the first century the heroes were the unknown Christians who shared their faith with family and friends, employers and acquaintances. Christianity was growing very

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<sup>1</sup> Eims, Leroy *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Navpress, Colorado Springs, 1978) pp. 184-188.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff, II.40-41.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.20

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

naturally from within. It was so successful that rumors were spreading abroad of a secret society in Rome that was worshipping an unknown God. This disturbed the Romans who feared the instability of any group that was not directly under their control. The meetings of the Christians were forbidden and were moved into the catacombs at night. Every conceivable calamity was blamed on the Christians including famine and flood.

Then came the cruel laws, riots, and the call, "To the lions with the Christians!"<sup>1</sup> This began the persecutions of the church that John had foretold in his Revelation. The accusations leveled against the Christians included disorderly nightly meetings, rebellion, murdering their children, and even cannibalism (from a misunderstanding of the communion)! The persecutions produced many informers and false witnesses. The church devised signs to recognize each other, e.g. drawing half of the fish for the other person to complete. The Romans devised their own means to identify the Christians in the form of a test oath that would compromise their beliefs. In Christlike fashion, the martyrs of the Faith demonstrated that "unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." (John 12:24)

### Outline of the Persecutions

**First General Persecution** Under Nero, AD 64. Nero was the royal arsonist of Rome who blamed the catastrophe on the Christians. Notables executed during this persecution included: Aristarchus of Thessalonica, Trophimus (a convert of Paul's who was appointed Bishop of Gaul by Paul's direction), Erastus (another Pauline convert, Bishop of Macedonia and chamberlain of Corinth), Joseph (a.k.a. Barsabas, a disciple of Christ who was a candidate with Matthias to replace Judas), Ananias Bishop of Damascus (who was used to cure Paul's blindness).

**ASSAULT ON JERUSALEM** under Nero and Vespasian in AD 70. Although the Christians escaped the slaughter of the Siege, Vespasian ordered the execution of all those in the line of David to put an end to Jewish hopes for an heir to the ancient throne. The purge was continued by his son Titus and then later by his other son Domitian. The grandsons of Jude, the Lord's brother, were brought before the emperor one day. After questioning them, hearing that the kingdom was not of this world, and then seeing the calluses on their hands from working their small field to pay their taxes, Domitian ended the purge of David's heirs.

**Second Persecution** Under Domitian AD 85. This was the most brutal of the persecutions. Notables executed: Dionysius the Areopagite (the appointed Bishop of Athens); Timothy the disciple of Paul and Bishop of Ephesus; Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem; and Nicomedes, a Christian of distinction at Rome.

**Third Persecution** Under Trajan AD 108. Notables executed: Phocas, Bishop of Pontus; Alexander, Bishop of Rome; and Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (traditionally one of the children Christ held in his arms; a disciple of the Apostle John). He was scourged, and splinters of wood dipped in oil were lit and put to his side. He was then mangled by pincers and torn apart by wild beasts. Hadrian, who succeeded Trajan as emperor, ended the persecution on request of Quadratus, Bishop of Athens.

**Fourth Persecution** Under Marcus Aurelius AD 163. The persecutions had spread to Gaul and Lyons by this time. Notables executed: Justin Martyr, the Philosopher; Appolonius a Roman Senator; Fructuosus, Bishop of Tarragon on the east coast of Spain; and Polycarpus, a convert of the Apostle John who served the Lord for 60 years as a prominent teacher and evangelist. He died a martyr at age 86. A crowd at the Coliseum became enraged that the executions of Christians

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<sup>1</sup> Schaff, II., p. 35.

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

resulted in the conversion of some spectators. They called for the arrest of Polycarpus as the most visible Christian in the city. He heard the commotion and hid himself in a closet, but was discovered by a little girl who told the authorities. He had a dream the night before that his bed was on fire and now decided that it was God's will that he receive the crown of martyrdom. When his captors arrived he greeted them cheerfully and served them a feast, requesting only that he be allowed an hour to pray. His captors were shamed. They took him before the judge who sentenced him to be burned. The flames were intense enough to force back the guards but Polycarpus sang hymns unconsumed! This startled the attendants who speared him until his blood doused the flames. Still alive he was speared again and again until dead and then recommitted to the flames. The people began to worship him as if a god.<sup>1</sup>

**Fifth General Persecution** Under Commodus, Pertinax, and Julianus AD 200. Notables executed: Leonidas, father of Origen, and two of Origen's friends (Plutarchus and Serenus).

**Sixth Persecution** Under Maximus and Gordian A.D.235. Notables executed: Pontianus, Bishop of Rome was first banished to Sardinia and then murdered there. His successor, Anteros, collected the histories of the martyrs which so enraged the Romans that he suffered martyrdom only 40 days after taking office. The Roman Senator Pammachius, his entire family, and 42 others were all beheaded in a single day and their heads spiked on the city gates. Also executed were Senator Simplicius; Quiritus, a Roman nobleman. and his entire family; Martina a noblewoman; and Hippolitus, a Christian prelate.

**Seventh Persecution** Under Decius and Gallus AD 249. Notables executed: Fabian, Bishop of Rome, Cyril, Bishop of Gortyna on Crete; Babylas, Bishop of Antioch; and Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem. Origen was tortured but not executed.

**Eighth Persecution** Under Valerian (by influence of an Egyptian magician named Macrianus) AD 257. The church had grown so phenomenally by this time that the heathen temples were all but deserted. Notables executed: Stephen, Sextus, and Laurentius, Bishops of Rome, and Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. Laurentius (St.Lawrence) was archdeacon under Sextus. He accompanied Sextus when the latter was executed and was told that his death would be soon also. He took over as the Bishop and was approached by Macrianus, governor of Rome, to hand over the "treasures" of the Church to be used for the defense of the Empire. The Roman church was very wealthy even at this early stage. Lawrence promised to gather the riches if he could be given three days. He smuggled the treasures out of the church building to keep them for the needs of the poor and the orphans. He then gathered a chosen number of the congregation: a row each of the lame, blind, orphans, widows, the weak and the helpless. "These are the real treasures of the church," he said, "In the widows and orphans you behold her gold and her silver, her pearls and precious stones. Make use of them by asking for their prayers; they will prove your best weapons against your foes." Enraged, the governor had Lawrence roasted on a searing gridiron. Lawrence endured without crying out but prayed instead for the church and for the conversion of the Empire. A Roman soldier standing there was converted on the spot and then suffered martyrdom himself.<sup>2</sup>

**Ninth Persecution** Under Aurelian and Diocletian (through his co-ruler Maximian) AD 270. Maximian executed an entire legion of 6000 soldiers (The Theban Legion) when they refused to join a sacrifice because they had accepted Christ; also executed was St. Alban of England at Verulam, now St. Albans in Herts., Eng.

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<sup>1</sup> Foxe, pp. 55-56.

<sup>2</sup> Foxe, pp. 84-86.

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

**Tenth Persecution** Under Diocletian and Galerius AD 303-305. St. Sebastian and St. George of England executed (hence St. George fighting the dragon of Rome, Satan's proxy); Constantine then became the first Christian emperor of Rome in AD 306.<sup>1</sup> He ended the persecutions because of his own conversion, real or not, and then, by his Edict of 313, he legalized Christianity

By the end of the 2nd century martyrdom was seen not only as a higher grade of Christian virtue but also as a baptism of fire and blood. It was considered an ample substitution for the baptism of water, and for purifying the martyr from sin thus securing an entrance into heaven.<sup>2</sup> The entire epic of the persecutions was made into a folklore and then idolized by the early Christians. Not only were the martyrs worshipped, but anything they owned or touched was worshipped as well. Pilgrimages became a profitable trade, promenading the tourists past the homes and relics of the local martyrs.<sup>3</sup> It is not very different today with our guided tours of the Holy Land. The church expanded worldwide during the next thousand years as if Satan were bound. No persecution against the Christians would be repeated until the time of John Wycliffe in the late 1300's.<sup>4</sup> Even then it wouldn't be a persecution of the Church as a whole by the state, but of the Church in part by itself: a purge of dissent.

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<sup>1</sup> Forbush, pp. 1-32.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff, II., p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Forbush, p. 32.

## Lesson 2: The Age of Persecutions 35-313 AD

## Lesson 3 – Church Infancy to 300AD

### *Early Church Practices*

The question to address this week is, “How, when, and where did the early church worship and what importance does the answer hold for us today in how we conduct our own church?”

#### **WORSHIP PLACE**

Until the close of the 2nd century, worship was held in private houses (in dining rooms), or deserts, grave sites of martyrs, or in the Catacombs. The reason for seeking out such unusual places is more a consequence of the times than of preference. They were driven to these out of the way places by poverty, oppression, illegality, a love of silence/solitude when seeking out God, and possibly by an aversion to pagan art which was prominent in any other public building. Justin Martyr once said to a Roman Prefect, “the Christians assemble wherever it is convenient, because their God is not, like the gods of the heathen, enclosed in space, but is invisibly present everywhere.”

After 250, churches were built to accommodate the rapid growth of the membership. Over 40 existed in Rome alone by the year 300. It was Constantine who began the great church construction program using the Basilica as the style. The one he built in Tyre looked something like this:

It included a large portico, an atrium surrounded by granite columns with a fountain in the center to wash the hands and feet before entering the church. There were inner porticoes, a nave or central space with galleries above the aisles and covered by a cedar roof. There was a most holy altar, thrones for the bishops or elders, and benches or seats for the others. The church was surrounded by halls and enclosed by a wall. The ‘clergy’ sat at the East end of the church (in the choir), and the people sat in the nave without a barrier between them. The barrier came as early as the 4th century though, creating an impassable dividing line between the priesthood and the laity.

#### **OCCASIONS FOR WORSHIP**

**THE LORD’S DAY** – Sunday, the first day of the week was celebrated in memory of the resurrection since the apostolic age – it was universally so in the 2nd century without dissent. It could not be a fixed Sabbath in the civil sense (without work/business) until Constantine gave it the backing of law. “Regular public worship absolutely requires a stated day of worship.” It was never considered a continuation of the Jewish Sabbath, but instead it was always contrasted with it. Tertullian viewed the Lord’s Day as a rest from sin. He thought it wrong to fast or kneel in prayer for the day: “Sunday we give to joy.” But he also thought it essential to abstain from work and worry to avoid giving Satan a foot in the door. Wednesday and Friday were half day fasts (till 3 p.m.) serving as days of penance or watch-days.<sup>1</sup>

**PASSOVER** – Easter and Pentecost were the beginning and end of a continuous celebration of Christ’s resurrection and power. There was an “Easter vigil” of fasting which was sometimes carried through from the previous week, and then came a time of watchfulness kept with special devotion till the break of day. The celebration was concluded with the feast of resurrection. The forty-day period of lent wasn’t fixed until the close of the 5th century after which it was taught that lent referred to the 40 day fast of Christ. Because of calendar differences and ignorance it appeared at times to the world that one part of the church was in mourning over Christ’s death

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<sup>1</sup> Schaff, II.198-204.

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

while another part was celebrating it.<sup>1</sup> Considering the charge of cannibalism, this was a mildly amusing accusation.

**EPIPHANY** was generally condemned as an oriental innovation based on a Gnostic practice. It had a later origin than the Anti-Nicene period and celebrated collectively the Incarnation, Baptism of Christ, visit of the Magi, first miracle of Cana, and feeding of 5,000.<sup>2</sup>

#### ORDER OF WORSHIP

The earliest description of worship that we have comes from Pliny c.109. He tells us that the Christians assembled on an appointed day (Sunday) at sunrise, sang responsively a song to Christ as to God, and then pledged themselves by an oath not to do any evil work, to commit no robbery, theft, adultery, nor to break their word, nor sacrifice property entrusted to them. Afterwards, at evening, they gathered again to eat “ordinary and innocent” food (the agape love feast – morning worship was accompanied by the Eucharist).

About 140 AD Justin Martyr describes it this way: On Sunday everyone meets, a section is read from the Memoirs of the Apostles (the Gospels) and the writings of the Prophets (O.T.) for as long as time permits! (wouldn't any Pastor love that one!) When the reader has finished, the president (presiding elder) in a discourse gives an exhortation to imitate these things. After this everyone rose in common prayer. At the close of prayer the Eucharist is served (bread and wine with water). The president offers prayer and thanks for them and the congregation responds 'Amen.' Then the consecrated elements were distributed to each one, partaken, and carried by deacons to the houses of the absent. A free will offering is taken from the wealthy and the willing and given to the president, who gives them to the orphans and widows, poor and needy, prisoners and strangers, and takes care of all who are in want. Song is also a part of the celebration service, taken from the Psalter. Just for interest's sake, here is a second century poem that has found its way into our present day Psalter:

Bridle of untamed colts, wing of unwandering birds, Sure helm of babes, Shepherd of royal lambs!  
Assemble thy simple children, to Praise holily, To hymn guilelessly with innocent mouths,  
Christ, the guide of children. O King of saints, All-subduing Word of the Most High Father,  
Prince of Wisdom, Support of sorrows, That rejoicest in the ages,  
Jesus, Savior of the human race, Shepherd, Husbandman, Helm, Bridle, Heavenly Wing,  
Of the all holy flock, Fisher of men who are saved,  
Catching the chaste fishes with sweet life From the hateful wave of a sea of vices.  
Guide us, Shepherd of rational sheep; Guide harmless children,

O holy King, O footsteps of Christ, O heavenly way, Perennial Word,  
Endless Age, Eternal Light, Fount of Mercy, Performer of virtue.  
Noble is the life of those who praise God, O Christ Jesus,  
Heavenly milk of the sweet breasts of the graces Of the Bride, Pressed out of thy wisdom.  
Babes, nourished with tender mouths, Filled with the dewy spirit Of the spiritual breast,  
Let us sing together simple praises True Hymns to Christ the King,  
Holy reward for the doctrine of life, Let us sing together, Sing in simplicity to the mighty Child.  
O choir of peace, The Christ begotten, O chaste people Let us praise together the God of Peace.

*literal translation of a poem by Clement of Alexandria c.175.*<sup>3</sup>

From the middle of the 2nd century the public worship service was broken into two parts: one for the faithful and one for the catechumens. The latter had scripture reading, preaching, prayer, and

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<sup>1</sup> Schaff, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 221.

<sup>3</sup> ibid., pp. 222-224.

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

song and was open to the unbaptized or those under penance. The faithful then would take communion after all the unbelievers and unbaptized had been escorted out by the deacons, the doors were closed or guarded. This began the Christian mystery worship which led ultimately to the “Secret Discipline;” many have said the source of transubstantiation is also found here. Yet there remains a need to keep the sacraments holy, and to ascribe the proper interpretation to them.<sup>1</sup>

**THE LORD’S SUPPER**- This sacrament was considered symbolic spiritually, and yet it was universally regarded not only as a sacrament but also as a sacrifice superseding all the provisional and typical sacrifices of the O.T. However, the Ante-Nicene Fathers conceived it not as an unbloody repetition of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, but simply as a commemoration and renewed appropriation of that atonement, and above all, a thank-offering of the whole church.<sup>2</sup>

**BAPTISM** – The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, chapter 7 provides for baptism after catechetical instruction. It reads of the ceremony, “Baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in running water. But if you have none, then baptize in other water, and if you can’t do it in cold water, then in warm. If you have neither [running nor standing], pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Justin Martyr tells us that “Those who are convinced of the truth of our doctrine, and have promised to live according to it, are exhorted to prayer, fasting, and repentance for past sins, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are led by us to a place where is water, and in this way they are regenerated, as we also have been regenerated; that is, they receive the water both in the name of God, the Father and Ruler of all, and of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost.” Thanksgiving, benediction and brotherly kiss concluded the ceremony.<sup>3</sup>

The first six chapters of the Didache, or Book of Apostolic Teachings, contains an early catechism based on the Sermon on the Mount. Duration was sometimes two to three years to ensure that the sinfulness was past to a great extent and the baptism would therefore be more efficacious. Confirmation was originally closely connected with baptism and involved laying on hands and anointing with fragrant balsam oil.

**INFANT BAPTISM** – This was an option given to parents even as far back as the Apostolic Age, the precedent having been a consecration by circumcision. There wasn’t a single voice against the lawfulness of infant baptism which was supported by Christ’s entreaty “suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.”<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, pupil of the Apostle John, said that “Christ passed through all the stages of life, to sanction them all, and came to redeem, through himself, all who through him are born again unto God, sucklings, children, boys, youths and adults.” It implies a sacramental regeneration as opposed to a moral or spiritual regeneration which require a conscious act of the will to attain conversion, an exercise of faith and repentance, of which an infant is incapable. Confirmation has evolved into such an affirmation of faith and repentance by the catechumen (rather than by the catechist), as if the child now grown mature were ratifying the baptismal oath made on the child’s behalf by the parents. The thing signified by the baptism is applied to the individual by his knowing affirmation of it.<sup>5</sup>

We are looking at what the church was like in the first two centuries, not because it is binding on us, but because it will help us grasp what the early church understood the Biblical directives to mean. Overlapping the time of the Apostles, the early Christians had a unique opportunity to hear

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<sup>1</sup> Schaff, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. pp. 247-251.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 256

<sup>5</sup> Schaff, p. 259

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

Apostolic objections to their practices (or approvals of them). Anti-Nicene Christianity was refreshingly open in its discussions of doctrine and order. “There was an underlying health in the church which was able to survive disputes carried on in a manner which shocks our modern (anemic?) sensibilities.”<sup>1</sup> We can find the roots of many of our present church practices active even then. For example:

1. the disciplining of the Body.
2. the distinction between clergy and laity.
3. the creation of a separate priesthood (called sacerdotalism).
4. the increase of subordinate offices (e.g. sub-deacons, readers, acolyths or bishop’s aides, exorcists, precentors or cantors, janitors or sextons, catechists, and interpreters).
5. the creation of the episcopate (bishopry).
6. Roman primacy (Roman-centered authority).
7. the unity of a catholic church, rather than independent congregations.

This centralization of the Body at this point in history should be considered a legitimate response to heretics and other forms of divisiveness. Papism and episcopacy were advocated by Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, to protect the church’s heritage from those who sought to use the church as a path to earthly glory and dominion. Once church power and authority had been consolidated, there was little to prevent the marriage of church and state. Tertullian felt it was both unnatural and unhealthy to have a Christian emperor or to give both civil and ecclesiastical power to a single person. But as time went on and the Roman Empire began to crumble from within, the need for stability overshadowed all other considerations.<sup>2</sup> While time may ultimately have proved Tertullian correct, the unity of church and state at this moment in time contributed to the church’s final success. In the same way that David was able to exercise compassionate kingship because Joab, his general, exercised raw military might, the church of 4th century Rome was able to preserve the teachings of the Apostolic Age because Rome’s secular strength safeguarded the church even as the world around it disintegrated.

Consolidating church organization meant restricted individual liberty in the interest of order, and it also meant there was a real temptation to abuse church power.<sup>3</sup> This is the very issue which led to the Reformation in the second millennium of the church. The list of early church practices on the preceding pages are as natural as the aberrations which resulted from them. They were not inherently bad, but they lent themselves to misuse. The separation of clergy and laity was a natural progression from the Jewish heritage of the early church and from the pagan traditions of priesthood, altar and sacrifice. The extraordinary pentecostal illumination the Holy Spirit afforded the Apostles passed away with them. And the old reminiscences began to reassert themselves in the lives of God’s people, just as the reminiscences of the “good ol’ days” under the heel of slavery had reasserted themselves in the desert below Mount Sinai.<sup>4</sup>

To combat this backsliding, a special class of Christians developed. While Ignatius hinted at creating a separate priesthood, it was Clement of Rome writing to the church at Corinth who planted the seeds for its evolution. Tertullian clearly indicated in his writings that there was an early distinction between the laity and eldership when he constantly referred to the elders in charge as “sacerdotes.” The complete hierarchy of the church was in place by the early 3rd century, virtually as we know it today under Roman Catholicism. The exaltation of the eldership led to their

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff, II. p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Schaff, p. 123.

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

separation as an independent caste.<sup>1</sup> Yet the concept of a universal priesthood continued to emerge from time to time, e.g. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons in the early 2nd century, taught the Biblically grounded truth of a universal priesthood as did the Montanists. However, this latter group went even further, allowing women to teach publicly in the church. If you haven't addressed the question yet, I recommend Paul Jewett's text on the "Ordination of Women" which nicely lays out the arguments on both sides, and then curiously concludes that the Bible needs rewriting! That recommendation became the basis for the NCC's advocacy of a non-sexist version of the Bible a few years ago.

Tertullian, who first recognized the emerging clergy-laity distinction, also opposed it asking, "Are not we laymen also priests? ... Where there is no college of ministers, you administer the sacrament, you baptize, you are a priest for yourself alone. And where there are three of you, there is a church, though you be only laymen... For each one lives by his own faith, and there is no respect of persons with God."<sup>2</sup> Lay teachers were also acceptable in the early church as when Origen was permitted to expound the Bible prior to ordination. The 4th General Council of Carthage in 398 AD. prohibited laymen from teaching in the presence of clergymen without their consent, implying that it was permissible with that consent. Such laymen included many of the church's finest teachers: Hermas (author of some Apocrypha), Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Arnobius, and Lactantius.<sup>3</sup>

Roman primacy evolved because Rome was already a hub of the civilized world. Paul and Peter died there. The epistle to the Romans is one of the most important in the New Testament. The persecution by Nero and his successors brought the Roman Christians great honor. And extensive wisdom coupled with a desire for universal norms of belief made them a logical choice to lead the catholic church. The unity of such catholicism is presupposed in the Christian faith: "There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." Eph 4:4-6. There was no visible vs. invisible distinction at this time because nobody in his right mind would suffer the type of persecution that was ongoing until 313 AD. for the sake of membership in a social club. But as Christianity became more and more "popular" the only way to maintain unity was to organize and systematize. Tertullian likened the church to Noah's Ark: you're either on board or you're lost.<sup>4</sup> This idea removed the understanding of the parable of the wheat and the tares with which we began the course. We'll see the consequences of such universal exclusiveness in the Post-Nicene era.

#### **DISCIPLINE IN THE EARLY CHURCH**

Discipline was formalized at the Council of Ancyra, 314 AD. Penitents fell into four classes:

**WEEPERS** – who prostrated themselves at the church doors in mourning garments begging to return to good standing from both clergy and laity.

**HEARERS** – who were allowed to hear the Scripture lessons and the sermon, but not join the body.

**KNEELERS** – who attended public prayers, but only on their knees while the rest stood.

**STANDERS** – who could take part in the entire worship service standing, but they were excluded from the communion.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 126-127.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 128-129.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 171.

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

Formal restoration of these penitents came by the laying on of hands and the pronouncement of a benediction by the priest. This, combined with a belief that sins which followed baptism needed special handling, may be the source of priestly intercession later on. “Though originating in deep moral earnestness, too much formality and legal constraint always deadens the spirit, instead of supporting and regulating it.”<sup>1</sup>

The question of discipline became very heated at times and even led to several splits or “schisms” in the early church, such as the schism of Hippolytus at Rome. The schism of Felicissimus at Carthage was the result of his opposition to the election of Cyprian to be Bishop right after his baptism by a voice vote of the congregation. While rightly instigated, this opposition was headed by Novatus, an unprincipled demagogue of an elder, and his reputation became the reputation of the group he led. The Novatian Schism which produced an anti-pope in 251 AD. was the consequence of self-righteousness. The Novatians considered themselves the only ‘pure’ communion and they were completely unforgiving of the fallen. The present Nazarene doctrine of holiness finds its roots here. Finally, the Meletian Schism of 305 AD. was born from a zeal for strictness that led to counter-ordinations of elders and priests, counter-excommunications, and membership raids. The adherents later joined the Arians.

Discipline was not the result of someone’s desire to lord it over someone else. It was the necessary means of maintaining the purity of faith that had been handed down generation after generation. There were many heresies growing up in the body as new converts brought their old ways with them. A list of these aberrations of faith is substantial:

Judaism, Heathenism, Ebionism, Gnosticism, Simonianism (Simon Magus), Nicolaitians  
Cerinthus, Basilides, Valentinus, Marcion, Ophites, Saturninus, Carpocrates, Tatian, Justin’s  
Gnostics, Hermogenes, Manicheans, and Montanism

We won’t deal with all of these, perhaps only two or three in the next section. I want to end this part with a non-heresy that has reemerged in this century: Millenarianism, the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for 1000 years before the general resurrection and judgment. We dealt with this tangentially in the Fall of Jerusalem but now we can be more direct in describing its origins. The intent here is not to condemn or promote the interpretation itself, but to point out some aspects of it that are often distorted. The original name of this Doctrine of the End Times was Chiliasm. It was not a doctrine of the church that could be found in any creed or form of devotion, but it was a widely held opinion of such distinguished teachers such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactantius. It was opposed by Caius, Origen, Dionysius the Great, Eusebius, and later both Justin and Augustine. Barnabas was the first and only teacher of premillennialism in the early church, teaching that the church would not go through the Tribulation. His martyrdom must have been quite a shock.

Philip Schaff, the great church historian of the last century tells us, “The Jewish Chiliasm rested on a carnal misapprehension of the Messianic Kingdom, a literal interpretation of prophetic figures, and an overestimate of the importance of the Jewish people and the holy city as the center of that Kingdom. It was developed shortly before and after Christ in the apocalyptic literature, as in the Book of Enoch, the Apocalypse of Baruch, 4th Esdras, the Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs, and the Sibylline Books. It was adopted by the heretical sect of the Ebionites, and the Gnostic Cerinthus.”<sup>2</sup> Millenarianism is a minority view. If you hold this view, try to listen with an open mind and heart when the latent dangers which exist in the doctrine are clearly presented, and then

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<sup>1</sup> Schaff, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff, II.614.

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

avoid those pitfalls in your own walk with the Lord. Your salvation does not depend on a correct interpretation of the End Times, but your success as a servant and soldier of the Lord does rely on the strength of your faith under trial and persecution. Don't let your faith rest on a belief that God owes you an excuse not to participate in a tribulation. Next week we enter the realm of Theology and Church practice in the first three centuries.

*Heresy versus Orthodoxy*

“Seeds of Truth”

**THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE**

The Canon of Old Testament Scripture was first formalized by Council in the late 4th century; it included several Apocryphal works. The addition of these works was likely caused by the Council’s reliance on the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) rather than the Hebrew. The Hebrew Bible used by the Jews was well-established in the first century and it was limited to the 39 books we now have. The 5<sup>th</sup> c. Jerome Bible included many of the Apocrypha and Talmudic writings, but Jerome himself was opposed to their inclusion. No writings outside the 39 books of the Hebrew Bible were ever referred to by the phrase, ‘as the Scripture says.’

As for the New Testament, Paul’s epistles circulated as a unit from as early as AD 80. While we find evidence from the late second century of the other New Testament books, including the Four Gospels, we also find Christian writers citing other works, as for example Clement’s letters and those of Hermas. We do the same today in quoting from Spurgeon and Whitefield.

The criteria used to establish which books would be used to instruct the church were really very much the same as those used during the Reformation:

- 1) Self-authentication: They are unique on their face, having a profound effect on the people who read them. Justin Martyr, Tatian, Theophilus, Hilary, Victorinus, and Augustine are some of those early Christians who were drawn by hearing or reading God’s Word itself.
- 2) Early use in worship: The Books or letters were used in worship in Apostolic Times. Paul told the churches to use his letters to instruct (Col.4:16). We have already heard Justin Martyr’s description of the early services and the use made of Apostolic writings.
- 3) Apostolic Ties: The fundamental test of authenticity was a text’s connection with an Apostle. Was the text written by an Apostle or by someone with very close ties to an Apostle? Early worshippers recognized that the Apostles had a unique relationship with the Lord. Clement of Rome wrote, “Christ is from God and the Apostles from Christ... The Church is built on them as a foundation.” (1 Clement 42; 24.77)

Eusebius, famed Christian historian and Bishop of Caesarea from 314 until his death, tells us that when Mark and Luke had published their gospels, John finally took to writing his own. He had relied entirely on the spoken word prior to that time. The three gospels already written were in general circulation and copies had come into John’s hands. He welcomed them and confirmed their accuracy, but remarked that the narrative only lacked the story of what Christ had done first of all at the beginning of his mission.<sup>1</sup> Eusebius also attests to the veracity of John’s 1st Epistle as being that of the Apostle John, and he accepts 1st Peter as also valid. These he calls ‘Recognized’ works. There is a class of disputed but familiar works which includes James, Jude, 2nd Peter, and 2nd and 3rd John. Among the ‘spurious’ books he places Acts, the Shepherd, Revelation of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Teachings of the Apostles, and the Revelation of John, although he says many include Revelation in the Recognized books, as well as Hebrews.<sup>2</sup> All other writings are tossed out as written by heretics. Recognizing his own deficiencies, however, Eusebius defers to future historians who may stumble across earlier writers than he was able to find and so lay to rest the doubts he expresses.

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<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 134.

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

What caused the church to specifically enumerate the writings which were to be regarded as true Scripture was a series of heretical attacks on church teachings and authority in the late 2nd century, especially by Marcion. This son of a Bishop was anti-Semitic and a preacher of strict asceticism. To cut away any hint of Jewish roots in the Gospel, Marcion taught that the harsh God of the Old Testament was different than the God of Love in the New Testament. He produced his own Bible in which no Old Testament writings were included, and those of the New Testament were ‘re-interpreted’ for clarity’s sake. The church’s response in selecting the NT Canon is surprising because the books chosen were from very early times the same 27 books that we now hold.<sup>1</sup> They were first listed in an Easter letter written by Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria in 367. This list became accepted definitively as Scripture in the East that year. And then in the West, at Councils held in Hippo in 393 and Carthage in 397, the same list was published and accepted (we’ll come to the East/West split next week).<sup>2</sup>

Is this then conclusive? Not absolutely, but neither should the choices be casually disregarded. “By no means do all men seek God, and the certainty of the divine origin of Scripture is given only to those who do. This situation guarantees that debate about Scripture will go on.” We can see, however, that the question of divine origin leads to an assumption that anyone who claims to take God seriously but the Bible lightly is engaged in a deception.<sup>3</sup> The preaching of the Gospel cannot be long effective if God’s Law, revealed in Scripture, is in any way toyed with or made secondary to human ends.<sup>4</sup>

#### **HERESY AS THE STIMULANT TO ORTHODOXY**

With the Canon relatively fixed, the question of its interpretation remained a matter for controversy within the church, and between church bodies. The intellectual melting pot of the Middle East led to many new ideas permeating the basic teachings of Hebrew theology. What follows is a brief outline of some of the major heresies which created unrest during the formative years of the church. These heresies were not necessarily considered heretical at the time, but the ramifications of these ideas made it very clear in later years that the free-spirited discourse of ideas had to stop. The church was being forced to develop its dogma after the fact and in direct response to ideas which undermined the authority of Scripture and the understanding of Christ’s work on the cross. Even in our own time, while we may agree on the words used in the Scriptures, we do not often agree on their meaning, or on the events and persons they refer to, or even on the application we are to make from them.

The sampling of heresies below shows how easily the church found itself in dispute. They had no systematic theology to use as a guideline to Biblical interpretation, no commentaries, no texts on hermeneutics. Instead, church elders relied on the basic truths of Scripture, their knowledge of the character of God, and their experience of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

With those firmly fixed in their minds they began an analysis of the teachings of church leaders to determine orthodoxy and heresy. Even when we look to Scripture today, the method of interpretation we use is not as important as the motive for interpretation. We should approach Scripture with the intent to discern God’s will for our life, to discern how to live the life of faith consistent with Christ’s teachings. And we should not go beyond what is written in Scripture trying to fill in the blanks.

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Jackson, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 57.

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

The heresies of the first three hundred years are heresies of the West and primarily concern the Christian walk, morality and ethics. The heresies of the East, which we will study in the post-300 periods, tend to be more concerned with theological correctness than with application.

#### **THE EARLY HERESIES**

##### ***JUDAISM –***

The issue confronted is whether Christianity should remain within Judaism or become an independent and distinct religion. If it remains within Judaism then,

1. Circumcision is a prerequisite to salvation for men.
2. Obedience to Jewish Law is necessary including Sabbath and Kosher requirements.

##### *Objections:*

1. It denies salvation by faith through Christ's Atoning sacrifice.
2. It undermines obedience inspired by love and thankfulness rather than reward.

**A. Nazarenes** – Taught that Jesus was Messiah whose teachings supersede Moses and the Prophets, but those of Jewish descent must still obey the law.

**B. Ebionites** – Taught that Jesus was only a man, even if a prophet and spokesman of God. Some accepted Jesus' virgin birth. Others said he was born of the union of Joseph and Mary but then Christ descended on that offspring at his baptism in the form of a dove. The Christ departed the man prior to his crucifixion and resurrection.

##### ***HELLENISM –***

The absorption of Greek philosophy into Christian theology, especially the distinction between spirit and matter, most commonly referred to as DUALISM.

**A. Platonism** (following the teachings of Plato) and NeoPlatonism (new Platonism or Platonism ver. 2) Using the philosophy of Plato to analyze and restate Christian Truth: flesh and matter are evil while pure spirit is good. The impetus for its development is that it affords an explanation for continuing sin in the lives of Christian converts.

##### *Aberrations of Platonism–*

1. Christ was spirit, not flesh, and therefore didn't suffer on the cross.
2. The resurrection is spiritual, not physical and therefore takes place daily.
3. Sex is evil, food is evil, drink is evil, etc.
4. Asceticism and mysticism are paths to true righteousness.

**B. Gnosticism** – Prominent founders within the Christian community include Simon Magus (the Samaritan magician found in the Book of Acts), Basilides of Alexandria, and Valentinus of Alexandria. It has its source in "gnosis" or special knowledge that has been revealed and transmitted secretly to the initiates of the sect.

*Offshoot:* Manicheanism. Augustine was a Manichean for 9 years (374-383).

##### *Aberrations of Gnosticism–*

1. Salvation is the freeing of spirit from flesh.
2. Salvation is attained by teaching revealed truth through "mysteries" which return the individual to pure spirit in stages (mysteries were ceremonies with mystical effects on participants).

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

3. Christian and Jewish writings are purely allegorical and must be properly interpreted by one with special knowledge to reveal the underlying truth.
4. Other teachings of Jesus exist outside of written Scripture, entrusted to those with the hidden knowledge for transmission orally to deserving initiates.
5. God is not a being with personality but is the all-permeating 1st Principle, 1st Cause and True Love without form.
6. Satan is the God of the Old Testament (called Demiurge) and the creator of the world of matter.
7. Gnosticism minimized the historical elements of Scripture, Christ's actual existence and crucifixion and physical resurrection as a man, the tangible and historical participation of God in the lives of his people individually and in the life of Israel as a nation.

**C. Pantheism** – “God” is an all-inclusive phrase describing Nature without personality and that life-force which resides innately in all things.

*Offshoot:* Modalism in which God emerges from the abstract whole of his being to take on the attributes of a man, father/creator, or Holy Spirit as his present “mode” of being.

#### **MARCIONITES –**

Marcion was a native of Sinope, a seaport in Pontus on the south coast of the Black Sea and home of the famous cynic Diogenes. He was the son of a wealthy bishop and he was raised as a Christian. He went to Rome in 138 or 139 and joined a church there where he taught his unorthodox views. He gained a following but was consequently cut off from the communion table. He split the congregation when he left with his followers. Teachings:

1. Nature is Dualistic.
2. The God of the Old Testament was evil.
3. Marcion rejected any secret body of knowledge or allegorical interpretation of Scripture.
4. The Demiurge created men and their souls.
5. A second God, hidden until Christ's coming, is the God of Love.
6. The God of Love undertook to rescue men he didn't create and owed nothing to from the Demiurge.
7. The God of Love revealed himself in Jesus who was not born of men through the Demiurge, but was only a phantom who seemed to be a man. This was called docetism from the Greek meaning “to appear.” An offshoot of this teaching is called Modalism in which God appears or acts in 3 different modes, revealed one at a time as Father, Son or Holy Spirit and then he returns to his abstract whole. See Pantheism above. Sabellius was a proponent of Modalism and he was excommunicated by Bishop Calistus of Rome in 220.
8. Sexual union was forbidden.
9. Marriage was rejected.
10. Martyrdom was prized.
11. Salvation comes by faith alone.

Marcion was an organizer and gathered his followers into churches. He assembled probably the first authoritative collection of early Christian writings which later came into Eusebius' possession. These are the only source we have for our knowledge of the first three centuries of the church.

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

#### ***MONTANISM –***

c.156-172 Montanus was raised in Phrygia in Asia Minor and his movement is sometimes called the “Phrygian” movement. Its teachings include,

1. Revival of prophets and new revelation.
2. Asceticism, fasting, celibacy, and martyrdom as path to righteousness.
3. An early end of the world.
4. Imminent second coming of Christ.
5. The New Jerusalem would be an ideal society located ... at Phrygia, of course.
6. Speaking in tongues is the sign of salvation.
7. There will be a millennial reign of Christ (a belief called “Chiliasm”).

The most prominent adherent to Montanism was Tertullian of Carthage (150-225). Tertullian was the son of a wealthy pagan who converted to Christianity in his late thirties. He was widely read in history, philosophy, and Greek, and he practiced law at Rome. He wrote a major treatise against Marcion and was a hero of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (200-258). Tertullian was alienated by the changing face of the majority church and he became a Montanist late in life perhaps in pursuit of the original vitality of the Christian faith. Tertullian remained critical of the majority church until his death, speaking out against authoritarianism, cliquishness, and centrism.

#### ***SCHISMS (or splits) -***

**A. Novation Schism.** Novatian was a presbyter of the Roman church. His followers voiced dissatisfaction with lax moral practices and with the lenient treatment of those who denied the faith during the persecutions of the church. Novation began a parallel church structure by appointing his own bishops. His opponents included Calistus, Bishop of Rome, who taught that no sin is unforgivable if the sinner is genuinely contrite. He also pointed to the parable of the wheat and the tares to describe the composition of the church as a whole which was not to be pre-judged by its participants. Other famous opponents included Stephen, Bishop of Rome, Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, Clement of Alexandria (-215), and Origen of Alexandria (182-251).

#### ***Aberrations –***

1. There is no forgiveness of sins after salvation -OR-
2. There is no forgiveness of “deadly sins” after salvation.

The deadly sins as Tertullian defined them: idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, fornication, false-witness, and fraud. The definition of deadly sins became an instant hit and everyone began his own list of the “big 7.” Scripture teaches there are no better or worse sins, and the unforgivable sin is the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit by identifying Him with Satan (Matt.12:24-31) or by worshipping Satan despite complete knowledge of the freedom offered through Christ (Heb 6).

**B. Donatists –** Responding to the Diocletian Persecution (c. 303-305) and the subsequent appointment of a bishop of Carthage who had broken faith during the persecution, a group of Carthaginians chose a counter-bishop who in 316 was succeeded by Donatus from whom the schism took its name.

The Donatist adherents were primarily North African and non-Latin and the split may well have been exacerbated by racial tension. When the Christian Emperor Constantine called a synod under pressure from the Donatists (who by then had appointed some 270 bishops), those of the “Catholic Church” refused to attend. Constantine tried to compel attendance by force but later gave up that

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

method. A newcomer named Augustine tried to act as mediator between the feuding groups but failed. The Donatists remained independent until the Vandals sacked Rome.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Biographical Sketches*

**Tertullian** (c.160-c.220) – A Latin church father and apologist, born in Carthage, North Africa of heathen parents. His father was a man of rank in proconsular service. He was groomed for politics with a wide-ranging education including Roman law. In about 195 he embraced Christianity with deep conviction. The rest of his life was devoted to defending the Christian faith against heathen, Jew and heretic, and to studying and pursuing the strictest morality of life. Tertullian was married and considered Christian marriage a very high and noble state.

In 197, only two years after his conversion, he wrote an apology in Latin called “Against Marcion” in which he refuted Gnosticism and the Marcionite variations on that theme. Then in 206 he cast his lot with the Montanists. He considered their discipleship and their teachings to be nearer to the primitive church than those the Catholic Church was practicing at the time. Even then there was a yearning for a first century church and to return to the old days! The Catholic church was teaching that the Canon was closed, that prophetic revelation had ceased, and that the extraordinary gifts of the Apostolic Age had died with them. The reformed church has not altered that stance at all.

Tertullian’s great ability in speech and prose were used to challenge what he perceived as compromise and worldliness in the Catholic church, and to defend Montanist Puritanism. His phrases were often vindictive and designed to produce shame and remorse in his audience. He was an ardent teacher and defender of pure Christianity and bitterly attacked the heretics and false teachers in the church. He opposed infant baptism and made the first statement of the trinity in “Against Praxeas.”<sup>2</sup>

**Origen** (pronounced: or’i jen) (c. 185-254) – Christian writer and teacher, born of Christian parents in Alexandria and educated there. His father, Leonidas, was martyred in the persecution of Septimus Severus in 202. Origen had to go to prison and suffer for his faith with his father, but his mother restrained him. All family property was seized and the family went into poverty.

Origen supported his family by teaching classical Greek scholarship and literature and by copying manuscripts. When he was 18, his scholarship and piety led to his appointment as a catechist, one who instructs others in preparation for baptism. He reopened the Catechetical School which had been closed after Clement’s departure. He visited imprisoned Christians and maintained the School even during periods of persecution. He was an ascetic and became a eunuch in 210.

Origen wrote commentaries on nearly all the books of the Bible, many papers on doctrine and many other works that might be classified as inspirational or application oriented. One his most famous volumes was called the HEXAPLA, a Bible in six columns, six languages. He wrote the first systematic theology called “De Principiis” in which he developed his allegorical system of interpretation. He also wrote an apology against the pagan Celsus who had accused Christians of being weak minded and weak willed.

Origen believed in universal salvation (as opposed to election), the subordination of Christ to the Father, and souls which exist prior to their embodiment at birth.<sup>3</sup> After forty years of service he was ordained in Palestine about 230 by a couple of friendly bishops. This infuriated the bishop of Alexandria who viewed the act as a “flagrant disregard of his jurisdiction.” The bishop then had

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<sup>1</sup> Latourette, .I.120-139.

<sup>2</sup> Moyer, p. 396.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 309.

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

the synods banish Origen from his see and depose him from the priesthood. Long after his death Origen would be labelled a heretic by ecumenical council.<sup>1</sup> Origen retired to Caesarea in Palestine where he opened another theological school. During the Decian persecution he died from maltreatment in prison.<sup>2</sup>

**Polycarp** (c.69-c.155) – A church father born at Smyrna. He was a disciple of the Apostle John, a friend of Ignatius, and a teacher of Pothinus and Irenaeus. One of his still-existing letters written to the church at Philippi makes many references to various parts of the New Testament and speaks of Paul’s earlier epistle to that church, giving us external corroboration of the integrity of the New Testament. About 155 in Smyrna he was martyred. When asked to recant and live, he is reputed to have said, “Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He hath done me no wrong. How can I speak evil of my King who saved me?”<sup>3</sup>

**Cyprian** (c.200-258) – Bishop of Carthage in North Africa, born nearby. His father was a noble and wealthy Roman officer of high rank who gave Cyprian a good Greek education. He became a Christian in middle life, an ascetic, a Biblical student and a student of great men of the church, especially Tertullian. In 248 or 249, after only a year as a Christian, the church at Carthage made him a presbyter. The next year they asked him to take over the vacant office of bishop, which placed him at the head of the North African clergy. Apparently no one else wanted the job.

The period was one of internal splits and external persecutions. Cyprian went into seclusion for about 2 years to escape seizure, and to continue to urge the church by letter to remain faithful in the face of opposition. When the persecution ended, Cyprian was firm with those who had “lapsed” and broken faith with Christ. He demanded confession and unmistakable evidence of penitence, and then pardoned the fallen.

In 257 the emperor Valerian banished Cyprian, and then summoned him to Utica to stand trial. Refusing to deny the faith he was summarily executed. His most famous letter was entitled, “The Unity of the Church.” In it he declared that the unity of the church rested on making the bishops the representatives of the Apostles, and on making the chair of Peter the center of episcopal unity: a papacy in other words.<sup>4</sup>

**Irenaeus** (c.155-c.200) – Bishop of Lyons, probably born in Smyrna in western Asia Minor. He apparently received a Greek education as a child and then received his Christian education under Polycarp. He may have been a missionary to Gaul and is reputed to have converted almost the entire population of Lyons. He had served as elder at Lugdunum for several years when Pothinus, bishop of Lyons fell victim to the persecutions under Marcus Aurelius. The next year Irenaeus was elected his successor.

Irenaeus’ greatest literary work was “Against All Heresies” written in Gaul about 185. In that work he upheld Christ’s incarnation as fleshly rather than spiritual, and he defended Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection as historical fact. He had a Rule of faith, and he upheld apostolic succession as the basis for accepting the validity of church teachings. He did this to refute allegations by some pagans and heretics that the original teachings of the church had become corrupted by mixing in non-Christian teachings. He asserted instead that what had been passed on from Christ to the Apostles had in turn been passed on faithfully and accurately in an unbroken line to the present

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<sup>1</sup> Latourette, I.151.

<sup>2</sup> Moyer, p. 309.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 331.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 108.

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

church fathers.<sup>1</sup> He was the first of the church fathers to make full use of the New Testament in his writings and to show the unity of the Old and New Testaments.<sup>2</sup>

**Clement I (of Rome)** (c.30-100) – One of the earliest bishops of Rome and may have been the Clement mentioned by Paul in Phil. 4:3. He wrote an epistle to the Corinthians about 96 which is the oldest specimen of post-Apostolic literature. In it Clement quotes extensively from the Old Testament and mentions Peter and Paul frequently. It is most valuable for its information concerning the exalted position of the bishops or elders in the church and apostolic succession.<sup>3</sup>

**Clement of Alexandria** (c.150-c.215) -Father of the Eastern Church, born in Athens. He was converted in his later years and was strongly influenced toward an allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures rather than literal by Pantaenus, who was head of the catechetical school at Alexandria. When Pantaenus died in 190, Clement took over the school until driven out in 202 under the persecution of Severus. Origen and Alexander of Jerusalem were two of his pupils.

Clement was widely read in Greek Philosophy, Greek literature, Old and New Testament studies, apocryphal and questionable Christian writings, and in the writings of Gnostics and other heresies. He called his own philosophy “Christian Gnosticism”<sup>4</sup> but the “gnosis” or knowledge that was gained as a Christian came by faith and not by reason. One who possesses such knowledge imitates God so far as possible, exercises self-restraint, loves God and neighbor, and does good not out of fear but out of love.<sup>5</sup> He emphasized ethics and moral obligations as the outworking of the Christian faith. His perception of Christ seems to show that he didn’t think of Christ as a man, but as an apparent man. He gives no clear picture of his conception of the Holy Spirit, but did make it clear that he perceived Christ to be God made flesh. He believed, as did Tertullian, that every individual is free and is able to respond to God or to refuse to do so. He also believed only a single additional repentance was possible for a grievous sin after salvation.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Latourette, I.131.

<sup>2</sup> Moyer, p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> Latourette, I.148.

<sup>6</sup> op. cit.

### Lesson 3: Church Infancy to 300 AD

## Lesson 4: 300-600

### *The Age of Monasticism*

#### **Imperial Shepherds – Impoverished Sheep**

In 305, Diocletian stepped down from the Roman throne hoping to avoid civil war by substituting an intricate plan of decentralization for an imperial throne. He failed. By 310 there were six men vying for the throne and civil war was imminent. Diocletian's general, Constantius, had died and his troops were backing the general's son, Constantine, for the throne. Galerius was out of town and too distant to oppose Constantine so he reluctantly recognized Constantine as emperor too. Maximian's son, Maxentius, thought if Constantine could do it as a general's son, then so could he. He declared himself emperor, entrenched himself in Rome, and defied Constantine to take the city. Constantine was up to the challenge.

Constantine's army invaded Italy from Gaul (France). Though a worshipper of Helios, the sun god, Constantine had a miraculous conversion to Christianity on the afternoon before his battle with Maxentius. He saw a flaming cross in the sky with the words "in this sign conquer." Early the next morning he dreamed he heard a voice telling him to have his soldiers mark their shields with the letter "X" with a line drawn through it and the symbol of Christ curled around the top. Maxentius, for some unknown reason, left the security of Rome to meet Constantine on the Mulvian Bridge across the Tiber river. He was defeated there and drowned in the Tiber. Thus, Constantine became the undisputed emperor of the West in 312 AD

Constantine's conversion was not as sudden as it might seem. Constantine was devoted to his mother Helena, who became a Christian after her divorce from Constantius. Constantine had personally seen the failure of three separate persecutions during his lifetime and was undoubtedly persuaded that they would not be suppressed. He was also impressed with the order and morality of Christian conduct. And in spite of severe oppression and cruelty, Christians had seldom revolted against Rome and even taught their followers submission to civil powers and the divine origins of authority. All of these were venerable traits for the Roman citizenry to emulate, and for the emperor to encourage.

In 321 Constantine made the first day of the week a holiday and called it "the venerable day of the Sun" (Sunday). He may have identified the sun god Helios with the Christian God in some way, or perhaps he was simply translating the symbology of an old familiar faith to one lesser known. Certainly one of the Bible's most striking images is Jesus as the light of the world. We know that in 335 December 25th was the designated day to celebrate the birth of Christ, but whether it was to coordinate the holiday with the annual sun festival or to oppose it is a matter of speculation. Christian records of the time refer to Christ as the "Sun of Righteousness" which he is indeed, and so we may assume that the substitution of Sun for Son in various phrases of the time is not a clear indicator that Roman paganism was somehow supplanting true Christian doctrine in the minds of the people. Such transliterations are common even today in many song lyrics. Constantine openly favored Christianity by:

1. Encouraging his subjects to become Christians.
2. Giving Christian Bishops the authority of judges in their dioceses.
3. Exempting church realty from taxation.
4. Giving money to needy congregations.
5. Building several churches (one in Constantinople).
6. Forbidding the worship of images in the new capital.

#### Lesson 4: The Age of Monasticism 300-600

7. Revoking the Edict of Milan by which he pledged toleration and freedom for all religions – he revoked such protection for heretical sects and ordered the destruction of their meeting places.
8. He gave his sons a Christian education.
9. He financed his mother's Christian charities.
10. He ordered a church of the Holy Sepulcher be built over the alleged tomb of Christ in Jerusalem (still standing).
11. Helena (his mother) built a chapel over the traditional site of Jesus' birth at Bethlehem (still standing).

Even so, during his reign Constantine executed his son, his nephew and his second wife for reasons still unknown. That is why the sincerity of his Christian conversion remains an issue right to this day.

Constantine was troubled by theological issues which created divisions in his "new order." He therefore called bishops to be his political aides, he presided over their religious councils and he enforced their decisions, thus wedding church to state in its most fundamental sense.<sup>1</sup> Not only were divisions emerging in the church, but the constant wars against the tribes of Asia and Eastern Europe were creating security problems that led to a division of the Empire itself. As if sensing the inevitable degeneration of Rome, Constantine moved the seat of the empire to an old fortress city in present-day Turkey called "Byzantium" and renamed it "New Rome." Its popular name became Constantinople, the city of Constantine. In the course of time, it became the seat of an Eastern Empire and an Eastern Orthodoxy, and following the fall of Rome it stood as the center of Western civilization for the next thousand years.

It might be helpful at this point to say that the issue of what constituted heresy or apostasy on the part of an individual or of a church was really moot up to this point. There was no means of enforcement, no central agency to declare orthodoxy for all others. However, once Constantine established his authority in both spheres of influence, both secular and ecclesiastical, this limitation evaporated. It became possible to exercise discipline and authority over the church universal with all the power of the imperial throne behind it. Every little movement prompted by a whim of interpretation sought the emperor's ear to enforce its Scriptural view, and to incidentally enhance its prestige and influence. The days of encouragement, exhortation and rebuke by a loving elder were quietly replaced by the sound of soldier's boots and prison doors during the coming centuries.

While we're here, what do we mean by heresy? The dictionary definition is this: "an opinion or doctrine at variance with established religious beliefs, esp. dissension from or denial of Roman Catholic dogma by a professed believer or baptized church member." Apostasy, on the other hand is "an abandonment of one's religious faith..." and it describes someone who has lost his salvation, and not just the fellowship of other believers. We must determine, in the examination of various theological beliefs, whether they merely describe a break in the uniform interpretation of Scripture, or whether the avowed interpretation is so far from Truth that it constitutes a disavowal of Christian teaching altogether. Disagreement between two believers or between two schools of thought doesn't necessarily mean apostasy on the part of one or the other, and rejection of mainline teaching; and heretical doesn't necessarily mean apostasy either.

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<sup>1</sup> Cairns, pp. 86-89.

## ***Intra-Church Rivalries: Issues of Control***

**The three biggest issues creating theological divisions in Constantine's time were these:**

### **DONATIST SCHISM**

To repeat our discussion of Donatism, the rigorists who hadn't backed down during Diocletian's persecution refused to accept a "traditore" or "hander-over of the Scriptures" as the consecrator of the new bishop of Carthage. Rather than submit to his rule, the Donatists appointed their own bishop which resulted in the development of a dual church system complete with Popes and counter-Popes (or anti-Popes), bishops and counter-bishops. But the Donatists were too strong to simply banish or declare as heretics. Constantine accommodated them in the various councils which he called.

### **ARIANISM**

The Arian controversy lasted from the time of Constantine in 318 until 451 when the Council of Chalcedon finally put it to rest. Arius, a priest in Alexandria, denied the true divinity of Jesus Christ. He taught that the Son was not eternal but was created by the Father, and therefore the Son was not God by nature. He had a changeable nature. His honor and dignity were earned from the Father by Jesus' righteous life on earth rather than being inherent in Jesus' identity as God. Jesus was not "consubstantial" with the Father (i.e. of the same substance). The Holy Spirit was begotten by the Logos (Christ) and therefore was less than either the Son or the Father.

Arius' bishop, Alexander, condemned Arius' teachings and defrocked him and his followers. However, Arius had many sympathizers throughout the empire and a major conflict arose.<sup>1</sup> Eusebius writes the dispute was so intense that "the Christian religion afforded a subject of profane merriment to the pagans, even in their theaters." Constantine was upset with both Alexander and Arius. He wrote each of them and said, "There was no need to make these questions public ... since they are problems that idleness alone raises, and whose only use is to sharpen men's wits ... these are silly actions worthy of inexperienced children, and not of priests or reasonable men." Constantine called for the first ecumenical council of the church to resolve the dispute. It met at Nicea in 325. The bishops who met there debated the nature of the person of Jesus Christ for over two months. Arius was opposed in the debate by the archdeacon Athanasius from Alexandria. Arius lost. The Nicene Creed reference to the nature of the person of Jesus Christ reads "being one essence (homo-ousios) with the Father." Arius and his followers were banished from the empire.

Although settled in theory, Constantine wavered on the issue (his sister was an Arian) and he permitted some of the bishops to return from exile in 328. They immediately began a series of political maneuverings that led to the exile of Athanasius in 335, then bishop of Alexandria. Arius was declared orthodox and was scheduled for reinstatement in the church when he died in 336. The conflict continued for the next 150 years.

### **MONASTICISM**

As Christianity became more and more the haven of the general population, its standards became more and more subdued. God's people became displaced by the teeming masses. Two competing philosophies arose that were the stimulants to one of the most influential movements of all time:

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<sup>1</sup> Cairns, p. 92.

## Lesson 4: The Age of Monasticism 300-600

**a. antinomianism** (at the far left) taught that the Christian was above the law and beyond mere morality, and could therefore do as he pleased. “Once saved, always saved” was corrupted into “Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we live.”

**b. rigorists** (at the far right) taught with Puritanical fervor, that the perfection of the person and the soul is an attainable goal in this lifetime, and in some versions of their teaching, a goal that could be surpassed. Mere salvation wasn’t enough.

Somewhere between these two extremes came a group of Christian purists who, frustrated by the lack of commitment in the church body, decided to seclude themselves in trial communities called monasteries to work out a formula for Christian living. It quickly degenerated into an escapist retreat on the one hand, and an elitist club on the other. If martyrdom was no longer the mark of someone who had made it, then perhaps a monk’s habit and hairdo might be an appropriate alternative, a mark of distinction and apartness — the sign of someone to be envied but not imitated.

Jeremy Jackson points out the underlying dangers of the “monastic solution” to Christian nominalism in these cautions:

1. People, being gregarious by nature, tend to gather together in flocks. Flocks, by identifying themselves distinctly from all other flocks, also tend to exclude all others. They are inherently alienating.
2. A flock tends to feather its own nest, cater to the internal needs of its members, and thereby it tends to “become a service organization, gratifying human egos, human mores, human traditions. The Gospel is adapted to society, instead of society being adapted to the Gospel.”<sup>1</sup>
3. “Anyone who takes Jesus’ words seriously is thought to be either a fanatic, whose conduct is vaguely threatening, or a super-saint, whose example is not for the likes of us.” We’ll look at a few examples of these “intense” personalities shortly.

Why is this dual-track existence of the church so inescapable? Why does the church compromise so readily and follow secular fads so easily? “Just as the secular mind prefers to push Christ aside and talk about Paul or Augustine or Luther, so the ecclesiastical mind, the mind absorbed in the church as a mere institution, is more taken with the thoughts and deeds of churchmen than with the Word of the Founder of the Church.

“This is because the only alternative to accepting the supernaturally revealed standard... of the church... is to accept as a normative standard... the actual state of the church at any one point in time.”<sup>2</sup>

We wind up determining who Jesus is, or how “successful” his teachings are by looking at his followers. This is why we established the tools of our historical investigation using a Biblical standard against which to judge history, and why we must refuse to accept history as the standard against which to judge the Scriptures. But for all the mistakes that have been made by the church in the past 2000 years, there have been far many more successes. Standards of morality we take for granted today were foreign concepts to those in the 4th century, and change did not come about easily or quickly.

It is overly simplistic to characterize monastic life as either escapist or elitist. It was in the monasteries that the dark ages were held at bay. It was in the monasteries that we find the watchmen of God’s kingdom fighting the good fight at the very gates of Hell. Monasteries were

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*

## Lesson 4: The Age of Monasticism 300-600

the preservers of learning, the keepers of the eternal flame, the translators and transcribers of the Scriptures, the expounders of the Truth of God. Monasteries were planted in the remotest corners of the earth as bastions of civilization and hope in a dying world. We find the sweet Spirit of God changing individual lives and sanctifying society through their influence. It was by their influence that perhaps the church's greatest theologian of all, Augustine of Hippo, came to know Christ. Monasteries offered a visible demonstration of the life-renewing power of the Gospel. They were like the bronze snake lifted high above the people to inspire and encourage them, to remind them of God's grace and forgiveness, and to testify that the Kingdom of God is a mighty fortress, a secure refuge in times of trouble, and these were troubled times indeed.

The struggle of the Christian walk is an agonizing one. It is the runner in the race striving against time, pain and exhaustion to win the race — but whether he wins or whether he loses, he strives for the prize with each agonizing kick. His willingness to sacrifice himself to the needs of the task are evidenced moment by moment as he pushes himself past his own endurance barriers into that blissful state of total commitment and dedication. That description belies both the antinomian and the rigorist views of the Christian life. But what drove so many into the monasteries might be described as a shortening of the race course, and a waving of the time limit in the church at large. They withdrew to a place where there were still expectations to be met.

If the church was becoming secularized by its popularity and, in 381, by its “officiality” as the authorized religion of Rome (all others having been outlawed by Theodosius), it nonetheless had its own salty effects on society at large.

### **In the 1st five centuries of its existence, the church**

1. Established world-wide missions
2. Created its own literature
3. Developed a world-wide cohesive organization
4. Made its intellectual statements of belief, and
5. Determined its form of worship

All of these achievements have remained the standards for the church to this day.<sup>1</sup> The enormous ramifications which flow from impressing the Mind of Christ on society, are evidenced in the following behavioral and intellectual changes that took place in those early centuries:

1. Polytheism became monotheism.
2. Immorality became a private matter instead of public.
3. Gladiatorial contests were replaced by schools of learning.
4. Theater and music became ornate forms of worship instead of tawdry exhibitions on street corners.
5. Infanticide was supplanted by orphanages and hospitals.
6. Sexual practices became circumspect and ordered.
7. Slavery was gradually seen as an affront to God's law.
8. Charity became the norm of duty rather than the exception of patronage.
9. Marriage became the kingpin of property law and social standards of behavior.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Confessions of Faith***

These accomplishments are profound and they demonstrate the power which attends the display of Christ-likeness in the lives of humble followers of Christ. Yet the desire to follow Christ

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<sup>1</sup> Latourette, I.237.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 237.239.

#### Lesson 4: The Age of Monasticism 300-600

stimulates imitation and competition from the world. It was in this forge of competing forces that the church hammered out its statement of belief as a mark of distinction for the church, and a standard of truth for the world.

The earliest statement of Faith or Confession (or Rule of Life as it is sometimes referred to) is the following:

I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty; And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, Our Lord, And in the Holy Ghost, the holy church, the resurrection of the flesh.<sup>1</sup>

Toward the end of the 2nd century we find this version:

I believe in God the Father, Almighty; And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, Our Lord, Who was born of the Holy Ghost, and the Virgin Mary, Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried; On the third day he rose from the dead, ascended in heaven, sat down at the right hand of the Father; From whence he will come to judge the living and the dead; And in the Holy Ghost, the holy church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the flesh.

The original Eastern Trinitarian formula reads like this:

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, of whom everything is, And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, through whom everything is, And in the Holy Ghost.<sup>2</sup>

The Nicene Confession of 325 reads as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth, who because of us men and because of our salvation came down and became incarnate, becoming man, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead; And in the Holy Spirit.

They went on to add a postscript:

But as for those who say, there was when He was not and, before being born He was not, and that He came into existence out of nothing, or who assert that the Son of God is of a different hypostasis or substance, or is created, or is subject to alteration or change — these the Catholic Church anathematizes.

The Council at Chalcedon in 451 stated it this way:

... our Lord Jesus Christ is one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead and the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same of a rational soul and body, consubstantial with the Father in Godhead, and the same consubstantial with us in manhood, like us in all things except sin; begotten from the Father before the ages as regards his Godhead, and in the last days, the same, because of us and because of our salvation, begotten from the Virgin Mary, the *theotokos*, as regards his manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, made known in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the difference of the natures being by no means removed because of the union, but the property of each nature preserved and coalescing in one *prosopon* and one *hypostasis* – not parted or divided into two *prosopa*, but one and the same Son, only begotten, Divine Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets of old and Jesus Christ Himself have taught us about Him and the creed of our fathers has handed down.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lohse, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Lohse, pp. 52-53.

## Lesson 4: The Age of Monasticism 300-600

In these statements of faith we find a renunciation of Arian teachings and a rejection of the teachings of those who described Christ as less than or more than human in his sufferings on the cross, a rejection of Modalism, a rejection of polytheism in any form, a rejection of any teaching that Christ was less than God incarnate, a refutation that Christ did not die or rise from the dead, an affirmation of Christ's virgin birth, an affirmation of the second coming of Christ, of a Day of Judgment, and a declaration that Christ's sacrifice on the cross was an atoning sacrifice to pay for our sin. And the postscript to the Nicene Creed makes it abundantly clear that they considered such teachings to be apostate and not merely heretical.

### *Biographical Sketches*

**Jerome** – Bible translator and advocate of monasticism. He was born to Christian parents in Dalmatia. He studied in Rome for 8 years and became a Christian at age nineteen, baptized by the Pope. He lived the life of a hermit in Aquilea near Rome.

During a severe illness he had a vision of Christ who reproached him for his study of Greek and Latin. He went to a remote cave in the desert and employed a Jewish rabbi to help him learn Hebrew. In 382 Pope Damasus called Jerome to Rome to have a new translation of the Scriptures made from the original Hebrew and Greek. His work later became known as the Latin Vulgate, the officially recognized and authorized version for the Catholic church.<sup>1</sup>

**Augustine** – Born of a heathen father and Christian mother, Augustine was sent to Carthage to be educated. He fell in love with a girl there, had a son, but felt that sex was his defiling passion. After reading a work by Cicero, he was convinced intellectually that the pursuit of truth should be his life's ambition. He read the Bible but it seemed crude and barbarous to him. For a time he became a Manichean (Gnostic-like), and then he became a grammar teacher, and then a teacher of rhetoric in Carthage. At age 30, he separated from his long time mistress, became engaged to a young woman of wealth and position, but driven by his inner passions he never settled down. Then, in Milan, he came under the preaching of bishop Ambrose who taught him that the Christian life could be both eloquent and intelligent, and that the OT could be restated allegorically to avoid the troublesome conclusions that he had drawn on first reading.

The final stimulus to his conversion was the example of Anthony and the Egyptian hermits as they withstood the temptations of the world. In agony of spirit, he walked through his garden one day and heard the voice of child singing "take it and read it." He took hold of the new testament and came to Romans 13:13-14, "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." All doubt faded away, and on the eve of the following Easter 387, he was again baptized by Ambrose in Milan. He then lost in quick succession his mother and his son. In despair, he was eager to depart the world, but God had need of his services and he was called into the priesthood and made bishop of Hippo "against his will."<sup>2</sup>

**John of Antioch** (also called **Chrysostom** meaning "golden mouthed") – Well educated in rhetoric and law, he became a monk from 373 to 381. He was then ordained a deacon by Bishop Meletius of Antioch. In 386 he was appointed preaching elder there, and became the most popular and powerful of the Biblical expositors. He wrote many commentaries on Scripture, and became highly influential in his writings. In 398 John was called to be archbishop of Constantinople, but his outspoken opposition to the sexual shenanigans going on there offended the unscrupulous queen, Eudoxia. She persuaded Theophilus, the infamous bishop of Alexandria, to call a synod in

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<sup>1</sup> Moyer, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley, pp. 141-143.

## Lesson 4: The Age of Monasticism 300-600

403 to silence and condemn John. False charges were brought and John was banished for life and died in exile.<sup>1</sup>

**Benedict** – Founder of the Benedictine Order. He adopted the most extreme form of asceticism and lived as a hermit in a cave. He spent three years there until called as abbot of a neighboring monastery. His strict discipline proved bothersome to the monks, however, and he narrowly escaped death by poison! He returned to his cave until hounded from there too. He left for Monte Cassino a much wiser man for the experience. He wrote his famous Rule of Faith and Life, taught, preached and lived a pattern of monastic piety. His “Rule” was designed to address the issue of unworthiness in prior monastic orders. He felt that discipline was at the heart of the issue, and yet, based on past experience, he knew that it must not be too heavy a yoke for ordinary men. He viewed the monastery as a spiritual garrison for Christ in a hostile world. None would be permitted to enter the order without undergoing a one year trial period. Authority was exercised by the abbot and all agreed to submit to that authority. On the other hand, the abbot could decide major matters only after consulting with the whole body.

To avoid contamination from the external world, the monastery was to be as self-sufficient as possible, and, to avoid the evil of idleness, each brother was to be occupied at fixed times in manual labor, and at other fixed times in religious reading. Worship was observed 7 times in each 24 hour period for approximately 20 minutes each. Because of the extensive reading required, each monastery came equipped with a library. It was not long before the monks were copying and reading the classical works of Greece and Rome thus preserving them for future generations.

**Justinian** – Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire 527-565. His long reign was the most brilliant in the history of the Byzantine empire. He carried on almost constant war against the pagans, both within and without the empire. In 529 he closed the ancient pagan philosophical school of Athens. He built Saint Sophia, the cathedral church at Constantinople. He was an adherent of the orthodox faith and called the 5th Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 553 which dealt with the Monophysite problem. The monophysites taught that Christ had a single nature, or at least his human nature was so well absorbed by his divine nature that it was not distinguishable. This worried the orthodox church which felt that such a statement challenged the whole concept of redemption. If Christ was not fully human, then no sacrifice had been made.

Justinian wrote his famous “Institutes” (not to be confused with Calvin’s “Institutes”) which regulated not only political affairs, but also ethical and ecclesiastical affairs. He gathered under one cover the Corpus Juris Civilis or Civil Law of Rome. He persecuted and punished not only the pagans, but also the Manichaeans, Arians, and other heretics, with his wrath falling most heavily on the Montanists. He condemned Origen openly for his doctrines and helped accelerate the church-state relationship, with the church taking second position to the state.

### *The Church As State*

#### **“The Strongman Syndrome” 400-600**

When the force of Visigoths led by Alaric took and sacked Rome in 410, and when in 430 (as Augustine lay dying in Hippo) the Vandals besieged the city, it was just the beginning of 600 years of barbarian invasions. Odoacer of the Ostrogoths dethroned the last of the western emperors in 476 and brought with him the Arian persuasion of Christianity passed on to the Ostrogoths by the great missionary Ulphilas. The conflict between the Arian and Catholic camps colored much of this period as the church strove to speak with a single unified voice. A succession and variety of

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<sup>1</sup> Moyer, pp. 90-91.

## Lesson 4: The Age of Monasticism 300-600

barbarian kingdoms came to power in the wake of Rome's fall, each bringing with it its own unique contribution to church history, art and practice:

**The Visigoths in Spain** (415-711) Introduced artistic techniques, motifs and designs

**The Ostrogoths in Italy** (493-554) Brought classical and Byzantine art

**The Burgundians in S.E. Gaul** (400-1033) The 1st barbarians to give up Arianism for Catholicism

**The Vandals in N. Africa** (429-533) Closed the brothels of "Christian" Carthage

**The Franks under the Merovingians** (486-752) Established a system of equity law that became the foundation for ecclesiastical jurisprudence  
**The Lombards in N. Italy** (568-774) Elected a king advised by nobles with a legislature and the source of Romanesque architecture

**The Jutes, Angles and Saxons in Britain** (443-485) Provided missionaries for N.W. Europe & Scandinavia.<sup>1</sup>

These 200 years flesh out the actual beginning of Papal power in the church. We can see much of it in the life of Ambrose; then at the end of this period we continue to see Papal power expand during Gregory The Great's reign as both Pope and mini-emperor of the west.

**Ambrose** (340-397) – Bishop of Milan 374-397. Born in Gaul, the son of a high-ranking Roman who was prefect of one of the four great prefectures of the empire encompassing Gaul, Britain and Spain. His father died early and the family returned to Rome where Ambrose was educated for the law. Ambrose became civil governor of the territory headquartered at Milan, and then became Admirable Magistrate.

When the Arian Bishop of Milan died, strife between the Arians and the Catholics erupted and Ambrose, in his role as consular authority, went to the church to maintain order. When someone cried out, "Ambrose for Bishop!" the crowd took up the shout and Ambrose reluctantly accepted. The problem was this: Ambrose was only a catechist, not baptized. After his "election" he was quickly baptized, passed through the intermediary offices and — 8 days later — consecrated Bishop of Milan. He was deeply religious and humble and recognized his lack of training. He went straight to work studying the Bible, Greek theologians and preachers. He learned and taught at the same time, orthodox in his doctrine, a gifted orator and preacher, a firm disciplinarian, and greatly loved.<sup>2</sup>

By 380 Christianity was the official religion of Rome. The Emperor Theodosius published an imperial command:

"It is our will that all the peoples we rule shall practice that religion which the divine Peter the Apostle transmitted to the Romans. We shall believe in the single Deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, under the concept of equal majesty and of the Holy Trinity.

"We command that those persons who follow this rule shall embrace the name of Catholic Christians. The rest, however, whom we adjudge demented and insane, shall sustain the infamy of heretical dogmas, their meeting places shall not receive the name of churches, and they shall be smitten first by divine vengeance and secondly by the retribution of our own initiative, which We shall assume in accordance with divine judgment."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cairns, pp. 126-131.

<sup>2</sup> Moyer, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Shelley, p. 111.

## Lesson 4: The Age of Monasticism 300-600

Church construction reflected this attitude of imperial divinity and of the “transformation” of human imperfection into divine perfection for the saints in general. A Greek traveler in Persia describes a palace in which a chapel was “a hall covered with a dome; the inside was adorned with sapphires sparkling with a celestial blue brilliance, and standing out against the blue background of the stones were golden images of the gods, glittering like stars in the firmament.” This style of mosaic-encrusted interior became the pattern for Byzantine churches, displaying at least God and the demigod who represented him on earth.

In 390 a Greek charioteer at Thessalonica was accused of homosexual practices and imprisoned by the governor. When the day of the races approached, the people rose up and demanded the charioteer’s release. The governor refused. The mob murdered him and freed the prisoner. At the next race, Theodosius had the gates closed and guarded by a contingent of soldiers. At a signal, they entered and exterminated the 7,000 attendees.

When Theodosius had the 7,000 at Thessalonica massacred, Ambrose refused to give him communion until he repented. He courageously wrote Theodosius a letter of diplomatic rebuke:

“I cannot deny that you have a zeal for the faith, and that you fear God, but you have a naturally passionate spirit which becomes ungovernable when you are excited. I call on you to repent. You can only atone for your sin by tears, by penitence, by humbling your soul before God. You are a man, and as you have sinned as a man, so you must repent. No angel, no archangel can forgive you. God alone can forgive you, and He forgives only those who repent.”<sup>1</sup>

The weapon Ambrose forged and which would be taken up again and again by the western papal throne, was the threat of excommunication, a weapon never used at Constantinople. The split between east and west was more than geographic. Bamber Gascoigne refers to the two approaches as “Greek Catholic and Roman Orthodox” because while the Greek Orthodox Church might have been more universal at the time, it was the Roman Catholic Church which was more correct in its practices.

Ambrose left more than a strong papacy behind him: one of his greatest legacies was that Augustine of Hippo was converted by his powerful preaching. Ambrose also left behind many literary works, and he not only wrote many hymns but he created a style of hymn called Ambrosian Chant. Ambrose reintroduced congregational singing into the churches and he maintained peace (if not harmony) between the Arians and the newly-named Catholics. He set a tone for the Roman Papacy that was to last until the Reformation, a seat of secular as well as spiritual dominance.

### **The First Warrior Pope**

**Gregory The Great** (540-604) – Pope from 590-604. Gregory was born to an old senatorial family of Rome, educated for government service and indeed held the highest civil office in Rome as its Prefect or Governor at age 33. After his father’s death in 575 (when Gregory inherited his father’s wealth) he quit his government post, turned the family estate into a monastery and became a monk. He built six other monasteries in Sicily but lived in such strict abstinence and austerity that he undermined his health.

Gregory was chosen as one of the seven cardinal deacons of Rome, then Ambassador of the Pope to the imperial court at Constantinople from 578 to 585. When he returned to Rome he was made Abbot of his own monastery. In 590, when the black plague killed Pope Pelagius II, Gregory was unanimously elected by the senate, the clergy and the people to be Bishop or Pope of Rome. He refused the office, fled the city and hid in the forest. He was found and dragged back to Rome,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 112.

## Lesson 4: The Age of Monasticism 300-600

where he finally submitted to his calling. He humbled himself and the people for three days, and legend notes the coincidence that the plague soon subsided.<sup>1</sup>

There was no emperor in the west and Gregory became its strong man. When the Lombards laid siege to Rome, he raised an army and defeated the “Arian” Lombards and then made peace with them. He held vast estates in Rome (called the Patrimony of Peter), Sicily, Italy, Southern France and North Africa. He used his vast power and wealth to strengthen the position of the western church, but also to provide for the needs of its people in a system of welfare.

Gregory glorified the past and held tradition on a par with the Scriptures. He interpreted the Bible allegorically, as in his text on Job called “Moralia.” He promoted the doctrines and practices of good works and penance, of purgatory, the veneration of relics, mass and transubstantiation, the celibacy of the clergy, liturgy in worship, the traditional historic episcopacy, and the importance of missions. He sent Augustine of Canterbury to England and made him the first Roman Catholic Archbishop in the British Isles.<sup>2</sup>

Yet despite the power Gregory wielded, he was not a proud man. He opposed openly and vehemently the claims of John IV, then Patriarch of Constantinople, to the title of “Universal Bishop.” It was an honorary title bestowed on patriarchs by the emperors Leo and Justinian, and confirmed by synod in 588. Even so, Gregory characterized the title as “foolish, proud, profane, wicked, pestiferous, blasphemous, and diabolical usurpation.”<sup>3</sup> By contrast, Gregory referred to himself as “the servant of the servants of God.” To Gregory, as it was to Augustine, pride is a vicious hound that dogs us relentlessly, that “raises itself up against all the members of the soul, and as a universal death and disease corrupts the whole body.”<sup>4</sup>

Gregory incorporated into church theology, not only the teachings of the early fathers which he passed on to the church of the middle ages, but also the superstitions and pagan beliefs of the common populace. Once formulated, this body of theology became orthodoxy for subsequent theologians and bishops. For example:

**Imputed Sin and Free Will** – Adam’s fall only weakened our freedom of will. Therefore under grace we may win merit for ourselves by good works.

**Repentance** – For sins committed after baptism the process of forgiveness involves remorse, confession and then meritorious works. The greater the sin, the greater the need for penitence, or paying back. Whether it is enough remains a mystery till death.

**Intercession of the Saints** – Because the effectiveness of our penance is unknown, we may appeal to past saints for intercession on our behalf with Christ. Gregory did not originate this belief, but he did ratify it.

**Holy Relics** – Saints’ and Martyrs’ locks of hair, finger nails, toes, garments etc. were believed to have great power especially for defense against evil.

**Purgatory** – A middle ground to finish sanctification after death if full penance had not been made in this life.

**Eucharist** – The bread and wine were “transubstantiated” or transmuted into the actual blood and flesh of Christ. The meal was seen as a sacrifice offered by the priest for the sins of men — not the same as Christ’s sacrifice for all his people — but for the post-baptismal sins of its

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Moyer, pp. 168-169.

<sup>3</sup> Shelley, p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 186.

#### Lesson 4: The Age of Monasticism 300-600

participants, or for those who had already departed and were in purgatory (it provided an early release).

In all of these things, we see a passion to “do” for God, for self, and for others. It is a compulsion to gain worth, and accrue merit — to become deserving of God’s great gift. And it seems that all of this is a consequence of guilt rather than thankfulness for freedom from God’s wrath. This misperception of God’s grace colors church theology for the next 1,000 years.

## **Lesson 5: 600-900**

### ***The Age of Missions***

#### **The Barbarian Hordes**

“If you can’t beat ‘em, let ‘em join the club!”

With power and organization reverting to the church in the western world, it is easiest to understand the period from 600 to 900 as a jockeying for control by numerous competing kingdoms.

The importance of this period is not so much in the struggle for power that dominated the period, but in the resolution to the struggle that the church fell upon: missions. If this age is to be known for any single contribution to history it must be that it was the finest Age of Missions we’ve ever known. The seeds planted by previous generations of missionaries in the period from 300 to 600 were now reaching fruition in the work of individual men under the power of God’s Spirit, and we’ll look at the lives of a few of these giants shortly. Yet we see in the church’s desire for unity, dominance and organization a corresponding manipulation of the missionary arm of the church to overcome the enemy from within, to make missions the instrument of church consolidation and control. There were two totally different perspectives at work here. The individual missionaries perceived their role as agents of Jesus Christ bringing hope and life to a dying world. The church hierarchy, however, perceived the role of the missionary as an extension of the papal throne, a means to promote papal and/or imperial influence around the world. In a period of world-wide chaos and instability, both perspectives had their value.

This period also saw the rise of the Islamic Empire, which took its own missionary zeal for Mohammed to the world by the use of a sword. That characterized the Christian response as well, for this was the age of the crusades, a passionate and bloody exercise in carnal evangelism. It is the age of Feudalism in which land is the source of power and wealth. The Arian Ostrogoths too saw their mission in life as a Christian one: to bring to the world the salvation of Christian order and authority, if not the salvation of the souls of those they conquered. Charlemagne came to power in the late 8th century using the power of his armies to subjugate and proselytize the Saxons for the glory of Pope Leo III and the church. Under Charlemagne, the state regained its dominance over the church for a time, through a kind of mutual admiration society, armed protection for official sanction.

#### **Charlemagne**

Charles did not come to power overnight, nor was he without mighty predecessors who paved the way for a unified Europe. Clovis was the first real king of the Merovingian line of Germanic rulers in Gaul and ruled from 481 to 511. Though pagans, both Clovis and his father maintained good relations with the bishops of Gaul. In 493 Clovis married Clotilda, a Catholic Burgundian princess. The first child was baptized and died. Clovis blamed the baptism. The second child was baptized and became ill, but Clotilda prayed for him and he recovered. Clovis feared baptism would be the death of him.<sup>1</sup> After calling upon Christ and receiving a significant victory over the Alemanni however, he and 3000 soldiers were baptized into the Catholic faith on Christmas day in 496. He became the protector of the church in Gaul and founded many churches and monasteries there.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bomiley, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> Moyer, p. 95.

## Lesson 5: The Age of Missions 600-900

What is significant in this “mass conversion” approach to evangelism is that it was the primary means of conversion during this period, and it resulted in the paganizing of Christianity. The lesson to be learned is that one on one conversion is not only the Biblical norm, it is the only norm and one in which the individual is confronted with his own personal sin, his own personal need for Christ, and his own personal confession of faith. While the mass conversions helped to knit Christianity into the social fabric of Europe, they did nothing to build up the spiritual fabric of Europe’s people.

With the matter of which faith, Catholic or Arian, settled by Clovis’ decision, the only issue remaining was what to do with the remaining pagans of the realm. At the Synod of Whitby in 664, the English too had come into Rome’s orbit. The Celtic king had been confronted with Peter’s possession of the keys to heaven and rather than take a chance, he sided with Roman Catholicism against the Arians. The Irish began sending missionaries to the Saxons and to Scandinavia as more and more of western Europe became catholicized. But the Saxons were holding on to their pagan ways.

In 714, Charlemagne’s grandfather, Charles Martel (also affectionately known as the “Hammer”), became Mayor of the Palace, the seat of true power in the Merovingian kingdom. He defeated an army of Moslem invaders from North Africa in 732 at the battle of Tours and sent them running into Spain, ending their threat to the Frankish kingdom permanently. Charles Martel’s son, Pepin became successor to his father’s chair.

In 751 Pepin III (Pippin), the Short came to power as the first Carolingian king of the Franks. He was coronated by the great English missionary to the Germans, Boniface (whom we will look at shortly), thus securing papal recognition. In 754 he was again crowned by Pope Stephen III as patrician of the Romans. With this sanctioning by the Pope of the reign of a king, the cementing of an ominous relationship was taking place between church and state. Pepin gave vast estates to the church from the territories secured from the Lombards, and over which the Pope would have *political* sovereignty. These are collectively known as the Patrimony of St. Peter.<sup>1</sup> Pepin’s reign ended in 768 and was eventually transferred to his son, Charles the Great. When the Lombards attempted to regain their territories from the Pope, Charles defeated them in 774, affirmed the donation of Pippin and proclaimed himself king of the Lombards. He then donated even more lands to the church.

In 799 Pope Leo III was leading a procession through the streets of Rome when an armed band kidnapped him on behalf of the previous pope, Adrian I. Perjury and adultery were the charges levelled against Leo. Leo’s supporters managed to rescue him, but as fighting continued in the streets, Leo realized he would need a strong protector. He called upon Charles the Great, king of the Franks. The next year, 800, Charles crossed the Alps with an army to settle the issue once and for all. In December, Charles presided over a meeting of bishops, nobles, diplomats, members of the royal household, and rebels.

On December 23, the Pope absolved himself of all guilt in the matter, and on Christmas day Leo III placed a golden crown on Charles’ head as the congregation cried: “To Charles, the most pious, crowned Augustus by God, to the great peace-making Emperor, long life and victory.” Charles liked the title. In fact he signed all his dispatches, “Charles, by the will of God, Roman Emperor Augustus.” Even Constantinople recognized him in 812, after some fast footwork to soothe the Eastern emperor who disliked Charles’ title.

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<sup>1</sup> Moyer, pp. 320-321.

## Lesson 5: The Age of Missions 600-900

With Charles we finally see the grafting together of church and state, and some semblance of political unity in Europe. Charles drove the Muslims down to Barcelona. He conquered the Bavarians and Saxons and then, to maintain the victory, he divided Saxony into bishoprics, built monasteries, and proclaimed harsh laws against paganism. Eating meat during Lent, cremating the dead, and pretending to be baptized were offenses punishable by death. Charles then turned east and soundly defeated the Avars and the Slavs pushing them past the Danube in present day Austria.

Charles' contributions were many. He enhances civil rule, and gave both power and prestige to the church. He encouraged education and called into public service eminent scholars, poets, and historians from Britain and Italy. He used ecclesiastics as counselors. He attended church, encouraged his subjects to attend, and gave tithes to support the church (requiring his subjects to do likewise). He encouraged preaching and sermon writing. He opposed image worship (the Iconoclast Controversy) even against the decision of the Second Council of Nicea. His doctrine included upholding the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son (an orthodox statement of today). On the other hand he was a cruel despot to the Saxons, and he married several women and divorced them at his whim.<sup>1</sup>

When Charles died, the kingdom disintegrated into a series of civil wars, and new invasions began immediately.<sup>2</sup> Feudalism arrived as the only means of defense against the invaders. Church officials were forced into close ties with the feudal barons of France and the kings of Germany. Bishops and abbots became "vassals" receiving fiefs for which they were obligated to provide the usual feudal services. For the next 200 years the Pope was not in a position to challenge or order anyone. The only respite in the period was the relative peace brought by Otto the Great of Germany who restored the Roman Empire in the West in 962.<sup>3</sup>

### The Missionaries

**Willibrord**, missionary to the Netherlands and teacher of Boniface. He was born in Northumberland, England of devout Christian parents, reared in the Celtic church, and educated at the monastery at Ripon. He continued his education in Ireland. In 690 he embarked from England for Frisia with eleven companions and landed at the mouth of the Rhine in present-day Holland. In 695 he went to Rome to receive archiepiscopal consecration. Willibrord established the headquarters of his archbishopric at Utrecht, where he labored for nearly 45 years, three of them with Boniface as his assistant.

**Winfred**, also known as **Boniface** "Doer of Good." Boniface was the product of the Benedictine monastic movement, born in Devonshire, England and commissioned by Pope Gregory II in 729 to evangelize Germany. While doing so, he was also able to bring the missionaries of Ireland and England into a closer relationship with Rome. Boniface was not a novice at missionary work. He was ordained at age 30 and in 716 sailed with a few friends to Frisia (present-day Netherlands) to help Willibrord. With strong opposition from the local Frisian king, Boniface abandoned his mission call and returned to Rome from 718-719. He began a work in Thuringia, but when he heard that the Frisian king had died, he returned to Frisia to help the great missionary Willibrord for three years until 722. He then moved on to Thuringia to begin his life's work. He spent 10 highly successful years there.

The then-inhabitants of Germany (Thuringia) were worshippers of nature spirits with animal sacrifices. Boniface marched into a shrine in the sacred forest of Thor, the thunder god. The cult

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<sup>1</sup> Moyer, pp. 85-86.

<sup>2</sup> Bromiley, pp. 191-196.

<sup>3</sup> Bromiley, pp. 198-199.

## Lesson 5: The Age of Missions 600-900

object was a massive oak. Boniface took an ax to it and just as he levelled the first stroke, a mighty wind toppled the tree. The pagans immediately converted to Christianity. Boniface used the wood to build a chapel to St. Peter.

Boniface organized the masses he converted into districts so they would leave a church structure behind him, firmly bound to the central authority at Rome. In 732 he became an archbishop with authority to establish new sees in Germany. In 739 Boniface was made an apostolic vicar or Papal legate carrying with him all the power and authority of the Pope. In 742 he organized the church in Bavaria and Germany and established the important and influential monastery at Fulda in 744. He assembled the first German council, organized churches, schools and monasteries in the Roman fashion, and trained and sent missionaries from the German churches. It was the work of Boniface, more than anyone else, that created the foundation for the medieval papacy. In 746 Boniface became Archbishop of Mainz and worked among the Franks trying to reform it.

But troubled by his early failure at Frisia, Boniface returned there in 753 with a company of monks and priests. For two years he traveled among them, preaching, baptizing thousands of converts, destroying pagan temples, and building churches. In 755 a group of pagan hostiles sealed his faith as a martyr, dying with the Gospel in his hands. Charlemagne was 12 years old at the time.<sup>1</sup>

**Anskar**, “Apostle to the North,” was born of Frankish parents in northwestern France. He became a Benedictine monk and was educated at the famous monastery of Corbie. He was called to a missionary work by the Christian king and queen of Denmark. He built a mission and a boys school in Schleswig, but when the king became unpopular two years later, Anskar had to flee Denmark. He then spent two years in Sweden. When a new king came to the throne in Denmark, Anskar was called back. In 829, the first bishopric was established at Hamburg for all of the northern country, and Anskar was consecrated its first bishop. Later, when Bremen and Hamburg united, Anskar was made archbishop. He then returned to Rome to receive papal consecration and a papal commission as legate to the Swedes, Danes, Slavs and other races of the north. While he laid the foundations for Christianity in those countries, they were not won for another 150 years.

**Cyril and Methodius** (brothers), missionaries to the Slavs by invitation of Duke Ratislav of Moravia in 862, and by commission of emperor Michael III. Cyril invented an alphabet (still the alphabet of Russia) and translated the Bible into the Slavic language. In 868 the brothers went to Rome to obtain official sanction for the use of the Slavic language, thus bringing their work under the supervision of the Roman church. Cyril died at Rome in 869 and Methodius returned to Moravia as archbishop.

**Wilfrid**, bishop of Northumbria in England and abbot of the monastery at Ripon where Willibrord had been educated. In 863 he became the driving force behind the adoption of the Roman Catholic form of the faith (as opposed to the Celtic aberrations) at the Synod of Whitby.

In the lives of these famous missionaries we see an obvious trend in the consolidation and the subjugation of the European churches to the authority of the Roman papacy, built on the work of Pope Gregory the Great and unified by the network of monasteries established throughout Europe. This pattern continued for the rest of the medieval period, spurred on by the desire for another Rome, a united empire, and the spiritual conviction of a handful of men who devoted themselves to the preaching and teaching of God’s Holy Word.

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<sup>1</sup> Moyer, pp. 50-51.

## Lesson 6: 900-1200

### *Out of Egypt – Rule of Man vs. Rule of God*

In the tenth and eleventh centuries the church had fallen from power into a state of legalized servitude to the feudal land barons. This two hundred year period saw the practice of lay investiture instituted, whereby the land barons and kings controlled both the appointment and the installation of churchmen a practice called “lay investiture.” The German church especially had become a state church.

In 910 the **Benedictine Order** of Cluny had been founded in Burgundy. A movement emanated from Cluny calling for monastic reform. It demanded enforcement of clerical celibacy, the abolition of simony, and the separation of church and state. “Simony” was the sale or purchase of a church office, named such after the infamous Simon the Magician of Scripture.

Nearly 300 Cluniac houses were freed from secular interference and in 1059 the College of Cardinals was created. This institution freed the papacy from the king by establishing the election of the pope by the College of Cardinals. This severing of ties reached a pinnacle in 1073 when an arch-deacon named Hildebrand was elected pope and became Gregory VII (1073-1085).

Instead of asking for equality between church and state, Gregory VII insisted spiritual power was supreme over state authority. In 1075 he formally prohibited lay investiture. He threatened to excommunicate any layman who performed it and any churchman who submitted to it. Specifically, Gregory VII accused Henry IV, King of Germany, of both simony and lay investiture; then summoned Henry to Rome to explain his conduct.

Henry’s response was to convene a synod of German bishops in 1076 that declared Gregory a usurper and unfit to occupy the Roman see. In retaliation, Gregory excommunicated Henry and deposed him, absolving Henry’s subjects from all oaths of allegiance under Feudal law. A revolt of German nobles immediately resulted. Henry showed up on Gregory’s doorstep in January 1077 in Canossa, a castle in the mountains of Italy. Dressed as a penitent, the king stood in the snow barefoot for three days and begged forgiveness. Then, in Gregory’s words “We loosed the chain of the anathema and at length received him ... into the lap of the Holy Mother Church.”<sup>1</sup>

The struggle wasn’t over until 1122 when a compromise known as the Concordat of Worms resolved that the church, while having the right to elect individuals to church office, would exercise that right only in the presence of the emperor or his representative.

### **Church Construction**

This was a feverish period of church construction. Between 1163 and 1235 the great Gothic cathedral at Notre Dame was erected. Some 500 great Gothic churches were built in France alone. The Gothic style was conceived by the abbot of St. Denis near Paris during the restoration of his abbey church. Abbot Suger wrote, “I seem to find myself, as it were, in some strange part of the universe which was neither wholly of the baseness of the earth nor wholly of the serenity of heaven, but by the grace of God I seemed lifted in a mystic manner from this lower towards the upper sphere.” The majesty of the church structures reflected the majesty of the papal office as it rose above all secular offices to become the single most powerful office in Europe. The holders of that office began to emerge from the ranks of canon lawyers, experts in church administration, instead of arising from the monastic orders.

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<sup>1</sup> Bromiley, pp. 198-199.

## Lesson 6: Rule of Man vs. Rule of God 900-1200

The first of this new breed of world-class power brokers was Pope Innocent III (1198-1216). He announced, “The successor of Peter is the **Vicar<sup>1</sup> of Christ**: he has been established as a mediator between God and man, below God but beyond man; less than God but more than man; who shall judge all and be judged by no one.” Innocent III told the princes of Europe in Josephian fashion that the papacy was like the sun while kings were like the moon. As the moon received its light from the sun, so kings derived their powers from the pope. Almost everyone believed in heaven and hell and in the pope’s management of the grace to get to one and avoid the other.

Thus the pope’s first weapon was the threat of excommunication. He could pronounce peasants and princes alike to be anathema and they would be “set apart” from the church, deprived of the grace essential for salvation. After such a sentence, a bell rang as if for a funeral, a book was closed and a candle was extinguished — all to symbolize the cutting off of the offender. If he entered a church during Mass, he was expelled or the Mass was halted. The offender could not be a guardian, executor or party to a contract. He could not receive a Christian burial at death nor be buried in sacred soil.

The pope’s second weapon was the interdict, a type of “ecclesiastical lock-out.” An interdict fell upon an entire nation rather than an individual. It suspended all public worship and, with the exception of baptism and extreme unction, it withdrew the sacraments from the lands of disobedient rulers.

In England, King John (nicknamed “Lockland”) differed with Innocent over the election of the archbishop of Canterbury. This was the same John of Robin Hood fame, brother of Richard the Lion Heart. John has been described as “cruel, mean, licentious, faithless, weak of will, without counterbalancing virtues.” John refused to accept Innocent’s appointment of Stephen Langton, a noted scholar and theologian. John confiscated the estates of the see, and expelled the monks of Canterbury. Naturally Innocent laid an interdict on England. John confiscated the property of the English clergy who supported Innocent. Innocent excommunicated John. John took hostage the children of some of the barons. Innocent deposed John (1213), and then he authorized Philip II of France to execute the sentence. John, meeting increasing hostility from the nobility decided to back down. John was forced to become a vassal to Innocent, receiving England back as a fief, and paying Innocent a sizable annual tribute.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Crusades**

Pilgrimages were very popular in the 11th century. In 1065 a mass of 7000 pilgrims from Germany met opposition from a band of fanatic Islamites called Seljuk Turks. The Turks overran Jerusalem and Asia Minor, and in 1071 captured the eastern emperor and scattered his army. Asia Minor was the chief source of revenue and troops for Byzantium and trinket sales were down in the Holy Land. In 1095 the Eastern Emperor, Alexius I appealed for help from the West. Pope Urban II proclaimed the First Crusade open for volunteers. So impassioned was his plea that a roar rose from the crowd: DEUS VOLT! God wills it! Urban thought that was a catchy phrase and declared it the authorized battle cry to use against the Muslims. He promised forgiveness for past sins to all who would go and fight and a share of the booty as well. This was an “indulgence” of past sins which soon was extended to those who couldn’t go but who could help finance the Crusade. They could purchase an indulgence, much as we purchase war bonds.

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<sup>1</sup> Vicar – one who acts in behalf of another (substitute); a person who is authorized to perform the functions of another as the other’s deputy.

<sup>2</sup> Bromiley, pp. 203-204.

## Lesson 6: Rule of Man vs. Rule of God 900-1200

During that 1st Crusade there were horrible attacks against the Jews, Christians were involved in rape and plunder, and incredible atrocities were committed against the Muslims. Crusaders with crosses on their fronts sawed open the dead bodies of Muslims in search of gold, sometimes cooking and eating the flesh. Jerusalem was retaken with a force of 5000 knights and infantry only to fall again and again. A 2nd crusade called in 1149 by Bernhard of Clairvaux under papal command withered away; the 3rd crusade of 1189 was led by Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, Richard the Lion Heart of England and Philip Augustus of France. Saladin fought them to a standstill and the crusade ended in a truce; the 4th crusade was intentionally off-target and overran Constantinople instead of rescuing Jerusalem (Innocent declared it a Satanic plot and excommunicated all participants) but kept his presence of mind long enough to appoint an archbishop successor to his old enemy; that crusade was followed by a children's crusade and the final 5th crusade.

Constantinople never recovered from the damage done. The Greek and Latin churches were irrevocably split when Jerusalem fell finally in 1291, it ended the crusades. It was a pope who called the first crusade, and popes who renewed the call — they, not the emperors, wanted a united church East and West, and universal sovereignty. They failed to realize that God does not use the sword to take what already belongs to him.

### **The Remnant**

In the 12th century, the image of Rome was changing for the worse. In a work entitled “Gospel According to the Mark of Silver,” we see the Pope gathering his cardinals for a sermon on the mount. Urging them to fleece suitors at the papal court, the pope says,

For I have given you an example, that you also should take gifts as I have taken them. Blessed are the rich, for they shall be filled, Blessed are they that have, for they shall not go away empty, Blessed are the wealthy, for theirs is the court of Rome.<sup>1</sup>

At this point in time, church institutions held nearly 25 per cent of all European real estate. The great medieval warrior generals were bishops, such as the brutal Bishop Odo of Bayeux, William the Conqueror's right hand man in 1066. The King of France, just before the year 1000, appointed himself abbot of St. Denis, a wealthy monastery, for economic reasons. That same striving for economic security characterized the monastic movement as a whole, even to its reformed wing. This was the Church at its lowest ebb.

The Cluniac movement through gifts and takeovers had become an immensely wealthy group of a hundred houses. “Conceived in faith, it became mired in works.”<sup>2</sup> In the 11th century, a lay minority movement group called “The Reformists” attacked the idea of an elite clergy, denied the need for a priestly mediator and insisted authority resides in Scripture alone as opened to us by the Holy Spirit. The harsh response of the clergy led to burnings for heresy at Orleans, France in 1022. Here we see the seeds of the Reformation. The Reformation was not a sudden realization by Martin Luther that the Catholic Church misunderstood the doctrine of grace. It was the culmination of 600 years of corruption, depravity and hypocrisy forced upon a populace who hungered for the vitality of true Christian faith.

When all society is seen as part of the church, and yet that society is obviously sinful, a spiritual elitism tends to blossom. It is evidenced in the 11th century in insisting that the clergy be celibate, or in the exclusion of the laity from receiving the cup (4th Lateran Council, 1215). If there is no distinction in being a believer, because everyone is, then the emphasis tends to fall on rank/office,

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Jackson, p. 85.

## Lesson 6: Rule of Man vs. Rule of God 900-1200

or on signs of exceptional holiness which leads to the adoration of saints. When church-goers use the impersonal pronoun “they” to refer to the minister and/or church officers, this tendency toward elitism is present.<sup>1</sup>

Such a group of elitists resided in the monasteries in the 10th century and yet this elitist corps would construct the movements that, by the time of the Reformation, would forever split the western world into three competing intellectual camps:

**Traditionalists** who would cling to the catholic heritage;

**Reformists** who opposed more than they upheld and hence inherited the label of protestants; and

**Separatists** who rejected God altogether in favor of humanism and human reason.

As we explore the seeds of the Reformation in the 600 years preceding, keep these three very distinct categories in mind. They will take on many forms in various movements as we explore their growth during the pre-reformation and fruition period during the Reformation itself.

Monasteries increasingly enjoyed certain privileges through the 13th century. They were “protected” from interference by the church and by the state. They were exempt from taxation and vassal duties. They were free to pursue their vision of a Christian ideal.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, a number of monasteries were coerced by secular princes into diverting the endowments to the princes. The princes returned only part of the revenues and allowed enrollment to fall off. In many other monasteries lay patrons had appointed abbots who valued the post more as a livelihood than a calling. These abbots brought with them their wives, families, warriors, horses and hunting dogs.<sup>3</sup>

The monastery at Cluny (founded 910) took a different approach to monastic order. Where previous monasteries were separate and independent compartments, at Cluny each new house was headed by a Cluny graduate and formed a congregation of monasteries around the core at Cluny. This became the ideal for the Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits. Cluny was Benedictine in its approach but made certain modifications based on a reform movement led by Benedict of Ariane (not Benedict of Nursia). These changes stressed silence except in group worship. The services were lengthened and elaborated. Monks no longer worked in the fields. That was done by serfs while the monks prayed. The abbey churches were huge. Scholarship was not encouraged and the study of classical non-Christian authors was either forbidden or deprecated.<sup>4</sup>

More and more it became the practice for monasteries to be put in the ownership or under the control of some famous abbey. This was to avoid the influence of a lay proprietor and to ensure the strict observance of the Rule.<sup>5</sup>

A monastery at Bec in Normandy, was begun at the start of the 11th century by **Herbein**. In contrast to Cluny, it became a center of intellectual life and theological activity. In the 1050's Anselm joined the group at Bec. He was the greatest theological intellect between Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. And so Bec became famous and wealthy.<sup>6</sup> In Anselm we find the seeds of Scholasticism – the pursuit of balance between reason and faith. Extreme Scholasticism eventually led to the Separatists – the Scientific Solution to everything, Humanism, Marxism, Atheism and Nihilism. But in Anselm himself we do not find these aberrations of pure reason.

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Latourette, I.421.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 417.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 419.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp. 421-422.

<sup>6</sup> op. cit.

## Lesson 6: Rule of Man vs. Rule of God 900-1200

Universities arose in the 12th and 13th centuries as associations or guilds of teachers with theology as their major subject. Paris became a leading university as did Bologna. They were chartered from the Pope and pursued the relation of faith and reason. The questions they sought answers to were like these:

1. Is God's revelation that culminated in Christ consistent with reason or are the two contradictory?
2. If the two are compatible, which should have priority, the faith which is the basis of Christian commitment, or man's reason?
3. Can reason demonstrate as true what the Christian believes about God?
4. If it cannot, does what is received by faith complement what is reached by reason, or do the two contradict each other?
5. If reason seems to deny what the Christian accepts on faith as given by God, should he follow reason and discard faith, or can he find some way to hold to both? <sup>1</sup>

The method used by Scholasticism to reach answers to these questions was Aristotelian logic (if, then, else, therefore) and the dialectic of Plato's Socrates (leading the listener to a conclusion by a series of probing questions). To acquaint themselves with the Greek philosophers the Scholastics used the only texts they had, the Latin materials available in the monastic libraries. They began to search out original Greek works or alternative translations from Persia where the Nestorian heretics had left them in 400. They began to attend Moslem schools which carried Syriac translations and Arab schools in Spain where Jews, Christians and Moslems studied together. The Eastern theology of Constantinople was encountered and brought West into this "new wave" theology.

**Maimonides**, the famous Jewish philosopher and admirer of Aristotle, was also studied and the neo-Platonic ideas of the first five centuries were revived as a consequence. However, this was not a re-examination of basic Christian principles. The years since those early heresies had seen changes in the security and stability of Catholic doctrine. The Scholastics were able to build on the answers given by earlier generations. They were also more concerned with the nature and attributes of God than their forebears.<sup>2</sup>

What had formerly been the domain of the East, theology, was not hotly pursued by the West whose domain had been discipline. The East-West schism was more than geographical and more than just a fight for political dominance. There was a completely different approach to the Christian walk. In the East you had to talk a good game. In the West you had to walk a good game. In the East you had to know the theological ramifications of your doctrine, even if you couldn't apply the doctrine to daily living. In the West you had to outwardly manifest your humility and devotion in daily living, even if you had no basis for why you should behave that way. From 900-1500 there is a melding of these two distinct approaches to Christian living and theology.

**Mysticism** had become a major force in about 500 when the works of the Greek theologians were published under the pseudonym of "Dionysius the Areopagite." They were probably developed in the Monophysite circles of Syria. They gained wide acceptance as subapostolic expositions of how the celestial hierarchy of God and the angels was related to the ecclesiastical hierarchy of bishops and priests with their sacraments. The writings of Dionysius formed the basis for the thought of

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<sup>1</sup> Latourette, I.496.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 498.

## Lesson 6: Rule of Man vs. Rule of God 900-1200

Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas.<sup>1</sup> This period therefore not only knit East and West together, but also past and present.

**Realism versus Nominalism** – Scholasticism ran into some philosophical arguments early on that have had great impact on church doctrine and application. The greatest issue was the confrontation between Realism and Nominalism. Briefly contrasted, the two schools of thought go like this:

*Realism* – Plato declared that words or phrases which describe “universals” have an independent existence from the individual units which comprise them. We have coined the phrase, “the whole is more than the sum of its parts” to describe this approach. As applied to theology this would mean that mankind as a whole has been corrupted by the sin of Adam. The saving work of Christ is for mankind as a whole and not for isolated individual men. The church is more than the sum of individual Christians or local congregations.

*Nominalism* – This school of thought maintains that only particular things are real and universals are merely words coined by the intellect. Terms such as mankind, city, nation, animal and church are concepts of the mind. Only individual objects and events exist. Men, seeing what they believe to be resemblances between objects, invent abstract terms to group individual objects together. Likewise, the Trinity must refer to three individual gods no matter what concept we try to link them with.<sup>2</sup>

### The Scholastic Giants

**ANSELM** (1033-1109) – Anselm was born in northern Italy. His father was not religious, but his mother was pious and devout. After his mother’s early death and an argument with his father, Anselm went to England. In 1060 he entered a monastery at Bec where Lanfranc was abbot. After Lanfranc became Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm became abbot in 1063. In 1093 he succeeded Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury. He stoutly maintained the church’s privileges against the arrogance of the king, William Rufus. Henry I, successor to Rufus, banished Anselm. He left for Cluny where he was greeted with cheers.

Anselm belonged to the realist school and endeavored to prove the existence of God ontologically<sup>3</sup> (i.e. based on the outcome or consequences of a divine being’s existence). The argument proceeds that if we define God as that greater than which nothing can be thought, then if we also surmise that the greatest without existence is less than the greatest with existence, God must exist or be less than the greatest that can be thought.<sup>4</sup>

As to the relationship between faith and reason, Anselm said, “I believe that I may understand,” thus placing faith before reason. In Anselm we find “mysticism combined with scholasticism, gentleness with strength of character, pious devotion with lofty speculation, prayer with logical analysis.”<sup>5</sup> “Through reluctant necessity Anselm was an administrator. He was also, but not unwillingly, a man of prayer who left behind him a guide for meditation and spiritual self-examination. He was, moreover, a pastor who as prior, abbot, and archbishop had much at heart the welfare of his flock. He cared for them one by one as individuals as well as in groups.”<sup>6</sup>

Anselm was a contemporary of **Hildebrand** (Gregory VII) with as large an impress on church history. He maintained that belief in God, the nature of God, the Trinity, immortality, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Pelikan, I.344.

<sup>2</sup> Latourette, I.498-502,

<sup>3</sup> Moyer, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Runes, Dictionary of Philosophy, Littlefield Adams, 1965, page 219.

<sup>5</sup> Moyer, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Latourette, I.499.

## Lesson 6: Rule of Man vs. Rule of God 900-1200

incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, could be reached by reason and were the inescapable accompaniments of a rational view of the universe.<sup>1</sup>

**PETER ABELARD** (1079-1142) – On as high an intellectual plane as Anselm, but considerably lower moral plane, was Peter Abelard, a contemporary and opponent of Bernard of Clairvaux. Abelard was intellectually keen and thrived on debate. He was charming and a stimulating teacher who attracted throngs of students, but he was also arrogant. He loved to challenge accepted beliefs and to best his rivals in debate, including elders and teachers. And yet it is from Abelard that we receive one of the most influential interpretations of the atonement. He believed it was the function of reason using Aristotelian logic to refute error and illumine the truth which comes through divine revelation and is apprehended by faith.<sup>2</sup>

Abelard was born in Brittany of Aristocratic parents. His father was a scholar and both parents later adopted the monastic life. At the height of his early fame, Abelard fell in love with the beautiful and educated Heloise, niece of a canon of the cathedral in Paris. He became her tutor, gained a position in her uncle's home and seduced her. She bore his child. Abelard secretly married her. Her uncle was infuriated and had Abelard emasculated. Abelard then had Heloise become a nun. He became a monk and traveled from one monastery to the next. He wrote extensively and gained many enemies along the way.

Abelard was charged with heresy in 1121, and in 1140 Bernard of Clairvaux had him condemned at the Council of Sens for his teachings on the Trinity, the atonement, free will, and original sin. Bernard was a mystic, stressing divine love rather than speculative theology, and he was intensely committed to the traditional formulas of the faith. Abelard had spoken out against nominalism with its three-god Trinity in a way that left him open to charges of Modalism. Abelard appealed to Rome, but the Pope confirmed the condemnation. He was excommunicated. Cluny gave him refuge, he was later reconciled with Bernard, and he spent his last months in prayer and reading.

Abelard challenged his students and pointed out the weaknesses in both realism and nominalism. In his teachings on ethics, Abelard held that sin is not the overt act alone, but primarily it is the motive for the act that speaks to its sinfulness. He held that mankind does not share in the guilt of Adam's sin, but that all share Adam's punishment. Man's inclination to sin doesn't impute guilt any more than his good works merit God's favor. By reason many may choose good over evil. His intent in doing good, his motive, is what determines sin.

Abelard's teachings on atonement were likewise questionable. He rejected Anselm's position that Jesus' satisfaction of God's wrath on the cross was necessary for the forgiveness of sins. He pointed out that God had forgiven sins before Christ came. Christ's sacrifice was to take on himself the suffering of mankind which comes as a result of sin. This "morally persuades" us of God's love and releases in us a new capacity for love. That is certainly not Reformed doctrine.

**THOMAS AQUINAS** (1225-1274) – Thomas was born near Naples. He received his early education at the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino where his uncle was abbot. Then he attended the University of Naples and became a Dominican monk there in 1244. That displeased his family who forced him to stay at home for the next two years. During that time he read and absorbed the Bible, some works of Aristotle and the "Sentences" of Peter the Lombard (the standard text of a theological education). When his family released him, Thomas went to Paris and then Cologne where he became the most outstanding student of an outstanding teacher, Albert Magnus. Thomas then spent several years at the University of Paris where he received his

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<sup>1</sup> Latourette, I.500.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 502.

## Lesson 6: Rule of Man vs. Rule of God 900-1200

doctorate. In his mid-twenties he declined appointment to be abbot of Monte Cassino. He was a friend of Bonaventure, later head of the Franciscan Order.

Thomas became a member of the court at Rome, was commissioned by the pope and became a popular lecturer and preacher. He refused at one point the Archbishopric of Naples, and then from 1265 to 1273 he wrote his masterpiece, “Summa Theologiae.” This later became the authoritative statement of the faith at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and again in 1879. Thomas held that prior reason was always to lead to subsequent faith, and yet faith is also a road to truth.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas was large and quiet (known in school as the “dumb ox,” calm, kindly, quietly charming and deeply religious. He wrote hymns and commentaries in addition to theology and philosophy. When the secular clergy attempted to oust the Dominican friars from the University of Paris, Thomas defended the friars. He favored Aristotelian thought over Platonic and therefore gained some Franciscan opponents who favored Augustine and his Platonism. It was Thomas who set forth the relation of reason to faith in such a way that it became easy for other Aristotelians to rationalize their philosophical bent with the Christian faith.

Aquinas felt that much of truth is not to be reached by reason. It can come only by faith, that is, by feeling and will. since God is the origin of both nature and revelation, both reason and faith are from Him and cannot be in conflict, nor can knowledge reached through the senses and reason contradict the truth which is given through revelation and apprehended by faith. He rejected Anselm’s view that the existence of God is self-evident and can be proved. Aquinas maintained that God’s existence must be accepted on faith alone. In Aquinas we see combined the views of Abelard and Anselm on the atonement: Christ both made satisfaction for man’s sin and moved men to love.<sup>2</sup>

What makes Aquinas unique is the place and time of his teaching. More than anyone else between 950 and 1350, he provided Christianity with a firm intellectual foundation, giving reason an honorable place in Christian thought. He stated clearly and comprehensively the basic Christian truths that the church had held for a thousand years, and in so doing, he refuted the proponents of heretical movements that had gained a foothold in the major universities and seemed to be gaining in popularity. We’ll discuss some those movements in the fluctuations of monasticism shortly.

**WILLIAM OF OCCAM** (1300-1350) – The point to finish with here is that Scholasticism had reached its peak in Aquinas. By 1330 it was under strong attack by an Englishman named William of Occam. An Oxford student and a member of the Franciscan Order, William was a radical, a rebel, a nominalist and controversialist by temperament and conviction. Like Paul, William argued that reason and logic are foolishness in God’s sight. He severed completely the tie between reason and faith. He rejected all of Anselm’s and Aquinas’ “proofs” for God and used Aristotelian logic to do it. No new monastic orders arose from 1300 to 1550 and in that fact alone we can see the decay that preceded the Reformation.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Monastic Movement**

Let’s go back to the monastic movement as a whole to see what Scholasticism was competing with, and then we’ll close with the lay movements of this period.

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<sup>1</sup> Moyer, p. 16; Latourette, I,511.

<sup>2</sup> Latourette, I,511-513.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 513-518.

## Lesson 6: Rule of Man vs. Rule of God 900-1200

**CISTERCIANS** – The Cistercian movement in monasticism began in 1098 with Robert, a Benedictine monk who was zealous for reform and strict observance of the monastic ideal. There were five distinct characteristics that separated the Cistercians from the Benedictines.

First and least was the color of their habits. They wore greyish white instead of black and were referred to as “white monks.”

Second, was their vow of poverty. Where the Cluniacs were building great churches and wore costly liturgical vestments, the white monks used painted wooden crosses, silver rather than gold, and linen instead of silk. They refused to raise money for their houses by tithes, offerings, altar and burial dues or from the labor of serfs.

Third, they established their monasteries far from the city, cleared and tilled their own land, and followed the rule of silence.

Fourth, they spent less time in liturgies and more time in private devotions. This was the opposite of the Cluniac trends. There were no schools for oblate children (those dedicated by their elders to the monastic life). The minimum age was sixteen to join the group, old enough to make a reasoned decision.

Fifth, the Cistercians welded together their houses better than the Cluniacs. They accomplished this by using identical service books, visiting easy abbey annually by the abbot of Cistercium or by the abbot of one of the four eldest foundations, and all the abbots assembled at Cistercium annually for fellowship and to settle any legislative or disciplinary actions.<sup>1</sup>

**BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX** (1090-1153) – Bernard was the most influential individual in the religious life of Western Europe of his generation. He was born of two devout parents of noble stock. He became a Cistercian monk in about 1112 at age 22. He brought with him about thirty friends and relatives including 5 brothers he had persuaded. In 1115 at age 25 Bernard became abbot of a new foundation at Clairvaux. He remained head of that house until his death in 1153. Bernard was a mystic, meaning basically that the thrust of his religious devotion was in a life of private prayer and in the cultivation of the sense of the presence of God.

Bernard was moved by the love of Christ and was committed to him not only as God but also as man. He promoted the revival of the adoration of Jesus in his humanity, especially through the hymn “Jesu, dulcis memoria” which begins, “Jesus the very thought of you with sweetness fills my breast.” He was eloquent and persuasive as a preacher and orator. He wrote several books and was instrumental in healing a schism that nearly resulted in the election of two popes. He supported orthodoxy vigorously and in fact one of his monks became Pope.<sup>2</sup>

The last monastic movement we’ll deal with is called the “Friars” or mendicant orders. These are usually broken into four groups: the **Franciscans** (Brothers Minor or Grey Friars), the **Dominicans** (the Preachers or Black Friars), the Carmelites (White Friars), and the Augustinians (Austin Friars). They all combined the monastic ideals of poverty, chastity, obedience, and community living with preaching to those outside their fellowship. They were therefore missionaries by inclination. Where other missionary groups sought seclusion, the mendicant orders sought the large cities of the world.

**FRANCIS OF ASSISI** (1181-1226) – He was the son of a well known and wealthy cloth merchant. He was a play-boy, like Augustine, and a leader of the pack. Over time Francis began

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<sup>1</sup> Latourette, I.422-424.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 424-425.

## Lesson 6: Rule of Man vs. Rule of God 900-1200

to change. He gave himself to the service of the poor and of lepers. He spent a lot of time in solitude and contemplation of Christ's sacrifice. He was thought insane. His father, enraged, locked him up and finally took him to the bishop to disinherit him. Francis stripped himself naked before the bishop and devoted himself entirely to "our father which art in heaven". He set himself to the restoration of chapels and begged for his food.

In 1209 during the reading of the Gospel at mass, Francis responded to a call to become a traveling preacher. Others in religious zeal joined him, taking on the vow of poverty, preaching, and serving the poor. In 1210 he and eleven companions went to Rome to seek approval to pursue their way of life. It was granted. With that approval throngs flocked to his preaching where before he was as likely to have been tarred and feathered.

Francis' teaching was unstudied and direct. It stressed the adoration of God, repentance, generosity and the forgiveness of wrongs. It encouraged love of neighbor and enemy, humility, abstention from vices especially of the flesh, fasting, and confession of sins to a priest.<sup>1</sup>

Francis' devotion and zeal weren't unusual for the times. There were many wandering lay preachers, many of them ascetics, and many heretics. There were movements similar to neighborhood bible studies called Confraternities and singing guilds which presented songs of penitence and adoration in the vernacular. There were the Flagellants who bewailed their sins and marched through the streets in loin cloths scourging themselves until the blood ran. That movement quickly died out. The lay group we'll close with are the Waldenses.

**PETER WALDO** (1140-1205) – He was a rich merchant of Lyons. He realized one day that life is short and insecure. He went to a theologian to ask the way to heaven. He was told to sell what he had and give to the poor. He did. He provided for his wife and children, distributed the rest to the poor and begged for his daily bread. He studied the New Testament in a translation of his native tongue, and began to preach. When the Archbishop of Lyons forbade his preaching, he appealed to the Pope. The Pope permitted him to continue in dioceses where the bishops would permit it. That restriction was too hampering and Peter Waldo and his followers soon disregarded it. They asked authorization from the Third Lateran Council (1179) but were denied. In 1184 they were excommunicated. There was good reason. The Waldenses taught:

1. Do not heed Pope or bishop
2. Church of Rome is corrupt
3. Women and laymen can preach
4. Masses and prayers for the dead are unscriptural
5. Purgatory is the trouble that comes to us in this life
6. Prayers needn't be said in church to be effective
7. Prayers should be said in the vernacular, not Latin
8. Church music and canonical hours are jaded
9. Laymen are as competent to hear confessions as priests
10. Every lie is a deadly sin
11. Oaths, even in court, are unscriptural
12. All taking of human life is against God's law.<sup>2</sup>

Note the year of their excommunication: 1184. The next time we'll see this group, is during the Reformation.

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<sup>1</sup> Latourette, I.429-431.

<sup>2</sup> Latourette, I. 451-452.

## **Lesson 7: 1200-1500**

### ***On The Eve Of Reform***

In the 12th Century, heresy was the denial by a baptized person of any revealed truth of the Christian faith or any disobedience to established authority. The church had two primary objectives in dealing with heresy: the conversion of the heretic and the preservation of Christian society.<sup>1</sup>

More and more, the heretics were defined as those who opposed church authority rather than those who opposed Biblical truth. To be sure, the heresies of the first four hundred years were still to be found, as in the case of the “Cathari” or Albigenses. But there were also those whose only heresy was calling for a return to the Bible. The Waldenses were such a group; and yet, though we see in them a foreshadowing of the Reformation, their view of salvation, a life of penance and poverty, lacks the clear note of God’s grace that sounded so powerfully in the Reformation.<sup>2</sup>

In a completely different category from the Waldenses, were the Albigenses (named for the town of Albi in southern France where they were very influential). The Albigenses referred to themselves as the Cathari (meaning “pure ones”). Like the Gnostics of the early church, the Cathari perceived the universe as an eternal conflict between two powers, the one good and the other evil. Matter, including the human body, is the work of this evil power.

From the Waldenses we hear the first loud voice calling for the surrender of worldly power by the Church, and for the supremacy of scripture over papal declaration of truth. From the Albigenses we hear a perversion of Biblical truth: Christ was pure spirit, not a man. He was one who came to teach the path to salvation, but who was not the means of salvation itself.

For the Catholic Church, there was no difference between the two. A Spaniard named Dominic Guzman (1170-1221) felt that the heretics who preached a gospel of poverty and penance mixed with heresy, could somehow be reached if the Church presented itself to them in the same poverty. Then, perhaps, these groups would accept the church’s teachings because they would perceive the church’s teachers as speaking with sincerity and truth. And so the Dominicans were created as a direct response to the Albigenses. Two years after the Dominican mission to southern France was ended by Innocent II’s “get tough” policy, the Catholic Church’s new response to both the Albigenses and the Waldenses was the creation of the **INQUISITION**. It had begun in 1184 when Pope Lucius III required bishops to “inquire” into the beliefs of their subjects. Heresy or harboring a heretic brought immediate excommunication. In 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council under Innocent III’s leadership, provided for State punishment of heretics, the confiscation of property, excommunication for those who failed to take action against heretics, and total forgiveness of sins for those who cooperated.

In 1220 the pope took the Inquisition from the bishops and placed it in the hands of the newly formed Dominicans. In 1229 the Synod of Toulouse formalized the procedures of the Inquisition in such a way that the alleged heretic had virtually no rights, the inquisitor had no restraints of law, the trial was held in secret, and the accused had to prove his innocence. In 1252 Pope Innocent IV authorized torture as a valid means of obtaining information. The Inquisitor was forbidden by Canon law from shedding blood – but anything else was permissible to save “the body by amputating a rotten limb.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bromiley, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. pp. 225-230.

## Lesson 7: On the Eve of Reform 1200-1500

In 1300 Pope Boniface VIII declared a jubilee and authorized a full pardon of all sins for all who reverently visited the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul during The Holy Year. He appeared before the visiting pilgrims in imperial robes declaring, “I am Caesar. I am emperor.” His crown contained 48 rubies, 72 sapphires, 45 emeralds and 66 large pearls.<sup>1</sup>

So confident of his power was Boniface, that he decided to challenge two kings: Edward I of England and Philip the Fair of France. Since 1296 Boniface had a continuing conflict with them both over taxation of the clergy and church property. Boniface had to concede to these monarchs the necessity of taxation of clergy for a common defense and for other valid reasons. However, in 1301 when Philip imprisoned a French bishop on charges of treason, Boniface ordered the official’s release and rescinded his earlier concession on taxation. Boniface then issued “Unum Sanctum” in which he asserted “It is altogether necessary for every human being to be subject to the Roman pontiff.”<sup>2</sup> Philip had already gathered his country’s leadership into the Estates General. He now mustered their support to depose Boniface. He accused Boniface of an illegitimate election, heresy, simony, and immorality. Boniface was confronted at his mountain retreat in Anagni by Philip’s lieutenant Nogaret and some troops. Boniface died several weeks later.

At this point in time, the pope’s power began a steady decline. It became clear that the general populace of Europe understood a clear distinction existed between temporal and spiritual power, and the boundary was not to be crossed. In 1305 the College of Cardinals elected a Frenchman as pope, Clement V. He never set foot in Rome. It began the 72 year period of the BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY of the papacy at Avignon in France. In 1378 an Italian pope, Urban VI, was elected at Rome. A counter-pope, Clement VII, was elected by the French marking the Great Schism of the papacy which lasted for the next 39 years.<sup>3</sup>

Out of this conflict between church and state, and between factions within the church, came two concepts basic to the Reformation. The first was the concept of a national church, and the second was the concept of a church governed by representative bodies, rather than ruled by executive fiat. Two men arose to articulate a whole new approach to church government: John Wyclif of England, and John Hus of Czechoslovakia.

### *Discipline – The Rule For All Ages*

The issue under debate was “dominion” or “lordship” and how it was to be exercised on behalf of God.<sup>4</sup> For our purposes, the issue is really discipline and how it is to be exercised by the church. We have seen a progression from the biblical period during which discipline was exercised by moral persuasion and personal example, to amoral persuasion and impersonal rank. The path of training, too, was changed from personal experience in the biblical period, to vicarious experience at an institution of higher learning during the middle ages — and at the same time, from comprehensive universal discipleship for the masses, to specialized exclusionary discipleship for an elite clergy.

**John Wyclif**, an instructor at Oxford, argued that the English government had the divinely assigned responsibility to correct the abuses of the church within its own borders, and to remove from office those churchmen who continued in their sin. In a sense, Wyclif was calling for a return to lay investiture. In 1377 the pope condemned Wyclif’s teachings. Only the power of the English throne protected him from the threats of the papal throne. To restate Wyclif’s assertions in a way

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<sup>1</sup> Bromiley, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 236.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. pp. 238-239.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 243.

## Lesson 7: On the Eve of Reform 1200-1500

that more clearly reveals the Biblical foundations of his argument, Wyclif believed that dominion is founded on grace. Every man, whether priest or layman, holds an equal place in the eyes of God. It is a personal relationship between man and God, with Christ alone as mediator. The only basis for clerical office is character.

Wyclif, at the point of the Great Schism, further asserted that poverty isn't an evangelical tool for the Dominicans or other mendicant monks, but a prerequisite for all would-be apostles. "Such a view leaves no room for the temporal power of the pope."<sup>1</sup> Christ alone is head of the church, and we are all his servants. Wyclif then went on to identify *both* popes as the antichrist. In his predestinarian view of the church, Wyclif taught that it includes the whole number of the elect containing "only men that shall be saved." No man, not even a pope, knows whether he is a limb of the fiend, or a limb of the church. "As each man shall hope that he shall be safe in bliss, so he should suppose that he be a limb of the holy church."<sup>2</sup>

The consequences of such a view of the church, a view completely at odds with the teachings of the Catholic church at the time, led Wyclif to conclude that the church is a unity without hierarchy and without sects of monks, friars, and priests. Nor can the salvation of the elect be conditioned on masses, indulgences, penance, or "priestcraft." He went on to attack pardons, absolutions, pilgrimages, idol worship, adoration of the saints, a treasury of merit dispensed by the pope, and extreme unction.

Still not content, Wyclif declared the right of every man to examine Scripture for himself as the ultimate source of authority. When he reached the doctrine of transubstantiation and produced a 12-point argument against it — saying that Christ's presence in the eucharist was sacramental, not material — he lost his support among the English clergy. The Archbishop of Canterbury declared him a heretic. He was silenced at Oxford in 1382, but not before he led a team of translators in the production of an English Bible.

That same year, Anne of Bohemia and King Richard II of England were married, forming an alliance between the two countries. As a result, students of both countries traveled back and forth between the universities at Prague and Oxford. By this means, Wyclif's teachings had a profound effect in Bohemia. A strong national party there was led by John Hus, who adopted Wyclif's teachings. He preached them from the pulpit at Bethlehem Chapel near the university of Prague where he influenced many of the students. The Archbishop of Prague complained to the pope who authorized Wyclif's teachings be stamped out. When Hus opposed the sale of indulgences for support of King Wenceslas' war against Naples, Hus lost his king's support and protection. He retired to southern Bohemia.

In 1414 as the Council of Constance approached, Hus saw an opportunity to present his views to an assembly of clergy from around the world. When he arrived, he was arrested by the Inquisition, tried, held prisoner for 8 months, and then burned at the stake, July 6, 1415. He prayed,

O most holy Christ, draw me, weak as I am, after Yourself, for if You do not draw us, we cannot follow You. Strengthen my spirit, that it may be willing. If the flesh is weak, let your grace precede us; come between and follow, for without You we cannot undergo for Your sake cruel death. Give me a fearless heart, a right faith, a firm hope, a perfect love, that for Your sake, I may lay down my life with patience and joy. Amen!

For the followers of Wyclif and Hus, it was clear that reform would not come from within the church. Only a separate and opposing movement could ensure God's Word would reign. Wyclif's

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<sup>1</sup> Bromiley, p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 245.

bible was smuggled into England from abroad and retranslated into the native tongue of many other nations. When Guttenburg's printing press was invented in the mid-fifteenth century, there was nothing finer to publish than the Bible. The vernacular text of God's Word was disseminated throughout Europe to a people hungry for the Truth of God and the Gospel. The church had so far deteriorated, that even the priests weren't sure what they were reading in Latin on any given Sunday morning. But within just a short time, even the lowliest peasant was aware of the contents of Scripture. The stage was set for the Reformation and the sweeping of the temple.

### *Dawn of a New Age : The Reformation*

#### **Enlightenment, Reason and Rationalism**

This will be a brief excursion into philosophy. It is necessary to understand why the Reformation became the focal point for the three-way split in human thought, mentioned earlier in the course. The Reformation itself lasted 130 years or so, from October 31, 1517 when Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the door of the Wittenberg Chapel, to October 24, 1648 when the Treaty of Westphalia marked the end of the Thirty-Years War and established legal Protestant states.

Wyclif contributed several basic concepts to the pre-Reformation movement. These were grounded in the teachings of Aquinas, Augustine, and Thomas Bradwardine of England. "Everything that happens, happens by necessity." God is the essential cause of everything except evil. For Augustine this meant that the church is the congregation of the predestined, because God does not call evil into the Kingdom of Heaven; and yet, those whom God calls will irresistibly come to him. This is so, because of the very nature of God. If God causes all things to be, then he causes salvation for those whom he chooses. The chosen do not cause their own salvation. Hence this idea of predestination runs counter to the theology of the Roman Church, because if there is predestination for some, then logically there are others who are not predestined. And perhaps some of the hierarchs of the Roman Catholic Church are in the group that is not predestined. This would indicate that participation in, or absolution by, the Roman Catholic Church institution, is irrelevant to salvation because only God knows who will be saved. This is confirmed by Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares that we began the course with.

Therefore, the true church is not the hierarchical institution of salvation, as the Catholic church portrayed itself; in fact the true church must be in opposition to the "mixed body" in the hierarchical institution of the church, in the same way that those who follow Christ must belong to him and not to the world. The basic law of the true church is not the law of the pope, which is transient, but the law of the Bible, which is eternal. These concepts of Wyclif were not intended to be anti-Catholic, nor did Wyclif feel compelled to leave the Roman Church.

But if there are some who are predestined, and some who are not, then there must surely be some basis by which to distinguish the two groups. The basis is the law of Christ: the external manifestation of an inward change in response to the love of God. Wyclif noted two forms of human domination: the *evangelical*, which flows from the law of love and service, and the *civil*, which flows from the need to control sinful behavior by force. Since the church is the body of the predestined, force is not needed to supplement the ministry of the Holy Spirit who guarantees the salvation of the believer. There is a mutual commitment to love on the part of believers, which expresses itself in service, and which is under the rule of Christ. From this it follows that the church must be poor; it must not exercise the economic and political control, which characterizes the civil form of domination through force and coercion.

Because Wyclif's attack is based on the law of Christ as given in the Bible, he developed the authority of Scripture over and against the authority of tradition, and against the symbolic

interpretation of the Bible. This led him to conclude that the Preaching of the Word of God is more important than all the ecclesiastical sacraments. This further led to a change in spiritual emphasis during this period, from the *visual* to the *aural*, i.e. from the *seen* sacrament, ceremony and architecture of the Roman Church, to the *spoken* and heard law of God which we see in the pre-Reformation movement. It marks a turning point in religious philosophy from REALISM to NOMINALISM. Realism sees the essences of things, their “ideas” (from *eidōs* or “picture”); while the nominalism of William of Ockham, perceives the “atoms” or individuality of things — meaning indivisible discrete entities (such as words). Scripture is not an allegorical compendium of mystical concepts, but a concrete exposition of God’s law, which is to be heard and obeyed in a very practical way.<sup>1</sup>

From this pre-Reformation philosophy, we move into the Reformation itself. The most critical difference in this period is the emphasis on the Grace of God as distinct from Wyclif’s emphasis on the Law of God. Because of the Gutenberg printing press, the stir caused by Luther’s unintended battlecry is carried around the world by pamphlet. It precipitates a military as well as religious revolution. The liberation of thought from the dominion of the Roman Catholic church has profound effects on humanists such as Erasmus; and the lack of restraint by any recognized spiritual authority, leads to the splintering of the church, and to the splintering of the European territories as well. The rush of ideas, philosophies, and movements, and the freedom from fear of Roman retaliation (because of the rediscovered power of the kings), leads into a Scholastic revival called the AGE OF REASON. It is led by astronomer-mathematicians Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, Boyle, Leibnitz, and Newton in the 17th century. This is followed by the AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT in the 18th century, where we meet physicists Bernoulli, Fahrenheit, Franklin, Watt, Coulomb, and Volta, as well as political and social philosophers such as Hume, Montesquieu, Diderot, Rousseau, Voltaire, Blackstone, Kant, Malthus, Burke, and America’s own Madison. But first we’ll examine the life of Martin Luther to examine the source of this new-found freedom of expression.

### “Wild Boar in the Vineyard”

#### *Martin Luther*

Luther was a German theologian and a major leader of the Protestant Reformation. Luther, the son of a Saxon miner, was born at Eisleben on Nov. 10, 1483. He was brutally disciplined as a child, and carried his image of inadequacy and sinfulness into his adult spiritual life. He entered the University of Erfurt when he was 18 years old. After graduation, he began to study law in 1505. In July of that year, however, he narrowly escaped death when a bolt of lightning knocked him to the ground in a thunderstorm. In a typical response of the middle-ages to danger, Luther vowed to the patron saint of miners to become a monk, “St. Anne, save me! and I’ll become a monk.” To his parents’ chagrin, he entered the monastery of the Augustinian Hermits at Erfurt, where he was ordained in 1507. The following year he was sent to Wittenberg, where he continued his studies and lectured in moral philosophy.

In 1511 he received his doctorate in theology and an appointment as professor of Scripture, which he held for the rest of his life. Luther visited Rome in 1510 on business for his order, and was shocked to find corruption in high ecclesiastical places. He was well acquainted with the scholastic theology of his day, but he made the study of the Bible, especially the epistles of Saint Paul, the center of his work. Luther found that his teachings diverged increasingly from the traditional beliefs of the Roman church. Trying every means available to rid himself of his sinfulness by penance and self-denial, Luther grew frustrated and angry with God over his inability to merit

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<sup>1</sup> Tillich, pp. 203-207.

## Lesson 7: On the Eve of Reform 1200-1500

favor from God. He perceived God to be the same stern, unforgiving, and punishing task-master that his father had been in his youth.

In 1515, while reading Romans 1:17, Luther was suddenly struck by the apprehension of the grace of God embodied in salvation by faith alone.

“I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise.”

“In devil’s dungeon chained I lay, The pangs of death swept o’er me. My Sin devoured me night and day, In which my mother bore me. My anguish ever grew more rife, I took no pleasure in my life, And sin had made me crazy.

Thus spoke the Son, “Hold thou to me, From now on thou wilt make it. I gave my very life for thee, And for thee I will stake it. For I am thine and thou art mine, And where I am our lives entwine, The Old Fiend cannot shake it.”<sup>1</sup>

His studies had led him to the conclusion that Christ was the sole mediator between God and man, and that forgiveness of sin and salvation are effected by God’s grace alone, and are received by faith alone on the part of man. This point of view turned him against scholastic theology, which had emphasized man’s role in his own salvation, and against many church practices that emphasized justification by good works. His approach to theology soon led to a clash between Luther and church officials, precipitating the dramatic events of the Reformation.

### *Dispute over Indulgences*

The doctrine of indulgences, with its mechanical view of sin and repentance, aroused Luther’s indignation. The sale by the church of indulgences — the remission of temporal punishments for sins committed and confessed to a priest — brought in much revenue. The archbishop of Mainz, Albert of Brandenburg, sponsored such a sale in 1517 to pay the pope for his appointment to Mainz *and* for the construction of Saint Peter’s in Rome. He selected Johann TETZEL, a Dominican friar, to preach the indulgences and collect the revenues. When Tetzel arrived in nearby Saxony, and people poured across the border to buy indulgences from him, Luther decided it was high time that someone brought the whole issue into open debate. Being an instructor at the school, the common method of calling for a debate was to post a topic for discussion and to invite opposition. It is likely Luther had no idea of the impact his challenge would have on the Roman Catholic hierarchy. He posted his famous 95 theses on the door of the castle church at Wittenberg on Oct. 31, 1517.

Although some of the theses directly criticized papal policies, they were put forward as tentative objections for discussion. In his preface, Luther explains, “In the desire and with the purpose of elucidating the truth, a disputation will be held on the underwritten propositions... He [Luther] therefore asks those who cannot be present and discuss the subject with us orally, to do so by letter in their absence.” In his more formal protestation he says, “I implore all men, by the faith of Christ, either to point out to me a better way, if such a way has been divinely revealed to any, or at least to submit their opinion to the judgment of God and of the church.”<sup>2</sup> Copies of the 95 theses quickly spread throughout Europe, and unleashed a storm of controversy. The 95 theses invited debate on *three general subjects* (a selection of the theses may be found in the Appendix):

- 1) the traffic in indulgences, which Luther insisted was unscriptural, ineffective, and dangerous;
- 2) the power of the pope in forgiveness of sins, which Luther rejected; and

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 257-258.

<sup>2</sup> Cairns, p. 235.

## Lesson 7: On the Eve of Reform 1200-1500

3) the treasury of the church, which Luther contended was the gospel, and not the merits of Christ and the saints (the Church claimed it had been placed in charge of a “treasury of merits”).

During 1518 and 1519, Luther defended his theology before his fellow Augustinians and publicly debated in Leipzig with the theologian Johann ECK, who had condemned the ideas of Luther. Meanwhile, church officials acted against him. The Saxon Dominican provincial charged him with heresy, and he was summoned to appear in Augsburg before the papal legate, Cardinal CAJETAN. Refusing to recant, he fled to Wittenberg, seeking the protection of the elector FREDERICK III of Saxony. When the Wittenberg faculty sent a letter to Frederick declaring its solidarity with Luther, the elector refused to send Luther to Rome, where he would certainly meet imprisonment or death.

### *Reforms*

In 1520, Luther completed three celebrated works in which he stated his views. In his *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, he invited the German princes to take the reform of the church into their own hands; in *A Prelude Concerning the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, he attacked the papacy and the current theology of sacraments; and in his treatise *On the Freedom of a Christian Man*, he stated his position on justification and good works.

The bull of Pope LEO X Exsurge Domine, issued on June 15 that same year, gave Luther 60 days to recant; the mails were no better then: Luther received his 60-day notice three months later. It began, “Arise, O Lord, and judge Thy cause. A wild boar has invaded Thy vineyard.” Forty-one of Luther’s beliefs were judged to be “heretical, or scandalous, or false, or offensive to pious ears, or seductive of simple minds, or repugnant to Catholic truth.” In December of 1520, Luther led a throng of his students outside Wittenberg to burn copies of the Canon Law. He said, “They have burned my books, I burn theirs.”<sup>1</sup> The Decret Romanum Pontificem, Jan. 3, 1521, excommunicated Luther.

Summoned before Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, at the Diet of Worms in April 1521, Luther again refused to recant, and was put under the ban of the empire. The meeting hall was surrounded by Luther’s knightly supporters, permitting Luther to speak his mind in relative safety. When asked if he still stood by all that he had written, Luther asked for time to reflect on his reply, and the next day he strongly affirmed that he did. When he began to explain the basis for his beliefs, he was interrupted and told to make it short. Luther responded in autonomous fashion,

Since then your majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by the Scriptures and plain reason — I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other — my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

Afterward, Luther took refuge in the Wartburg castle, where he lived in seclusion for eight months. During that time he translated the New Testament into German and wrote a number of pamphlets.

In March 1522 he returned to Wittenberg to restore order against enthusiastic iconoclasts who were destroying altars, images, and crucifixes. His reforming work during subsequent years included the writing of the Small and Large Catechisms, sermon books, more than a dozen hymns, over 100 volumes of tracts, treatises, biblical commentaries, thousands of letters, and the translation of the whole Bible into German.

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<sup>1</sup> Bromiley, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> Cairns, p. 241.

## Lesson 7: On the Eve of Reform 1200-1500

With Philipp Melancthon and others, Luther organized the Evangelical churches in the German territories, whose princes supported him. He abolished many traditional practices, including confession and private mass. Priests married; convents and monasteries were abandoned. These were difficult times. Luther lost some popular support when he urged suppression of the Knights' Revolt (1522) and the Peasants' War (1524-26); his failure to reach doctrinal accord with Ulrich Zwingli on the nature of the eucharist (1529) split the Reform movement. He also split with the leading humanist, Erasmus.

At the outset of the Reformation movement, Erasmus had sympathized with Luther, insisting that he was not a heretic. In fact, the two men were so much alike in their thoughts on church reform, that their writings were often confused with each other. Erasmus, however, worked for reform from within the church; and his view of the nature of man stemmed from his humanistic philosophy which tended toward a concept that man is competent to work out his own salvation. He therefore differed markedly with Luther on the doctrine of salvation as it applied to free will.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, Luther found personal solace in his marriage (1525) to a former Cistercian nun, Katherina von Bora; they raised six children.

At Worms, Luther had stood alone. When the Evangelicals presented the AUGSBURG CONFESSION to Charles V and the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, many theologians, princes, and city councils subscribed to that classic Protestant statement of faith. By the time of Luther's death, a large part of northern Europe had left the Roman Catholic church for new Evangelical communities.

Late in 1545, Luther was asked to arbitrate a dispute in Eisleben. Despite the icy winter weather, he traveled there. The quarrel was settled on Feb. 17, 1546, but the strain had been very great and Luther died the next day.

Luther left behind a movement that quickly spread throughout the Western world. Luther had been spared the pain of seeing Protestants and Catholics in open warfare; but the next year, in April of 1547, hostilities began. Luther's doctrines, especially justification by faith and the final authority of the Bible, were adopted by other reformers, and are shared by many Protestant denominations today. As the founder of the 16th-century Reformation, he is one of the major figures of Christianity and of Western civilization.<sup>2</sup>

### *Philosophical Foundations of the Reformation*

We are going to look forward at this point, to the philosophy of the Enlightenment to gain an appreciation for the Reformation's contributions to a new world view. While it throws us off chronologically, it is in the Enlightenment that we find the Reformation analyzed and categorized.

We'll look at four main concepts:

1. The Kantian definition of Autonomy;
2. Reason versus Revelation;
3. Nature; and
4. Harmony

#### **AUTONOMY**

Immaturity is the inability to use one's own reason without the guidance of somebody else. In other words, there is an inability to distinguish right from wrong. The free use of reason is the essence of enlightenment. One lives much more comfortably if one has guardians, whether

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<sup>1</sup> Cairns. p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis W. Spitz, "Luther," Grolier's Electronic Encyclopedia, 1987.

## Lesson 7: On the Eve of Reform 1200-1500

religious, political, philosophical, or educational. But it was Immanuel Kant's intention "to drive men out of their security under the guidance of other people," because this security contradicts the true nature of man.<sup>1</sup> Autonomy means "self-law" or a law unto one's self. It is not arbitrariness or willfulness, nor is it lawless subjectivity as we might define sinfulness. The essential nature of the human will, according to Kant, is the law of reason. It is the law implicit in man's rational structure. Many philosophers of the Enlightenment identified autonomy with the divine will, or as Scripture might define it, the law which God has written on men's hearts.

The opposite of autonomy is heteronomy, meaning "strange" or foreign law. Kant viewed heteronomy as arbitrariness or willfulness, because if we obey a strange authority in contradiction of our "self-law," then we abandon reason. We are seeking security from a foreign authority which deprives us of the courage to use our reason, because of fear of punishment. Thus in attempting to escape fear, we actually submit to fear of the foreign authority to which we have fled for security! All religious authority can become heteronomous if it is not also theonomous – based on God's divine law, which is an absolute standard.

Even Calvin clearly stated that the Bible can be our authority only when the Holy Spirit witnesses to it. Where this inner witness is lacking, the authority of the Bible has no meaning. Obedience to biblical authority without such a witness would be mere external subjection, without inward personal experience. Paul Tillich writes,

"Men are always looking for the security of heteronomy — the breaking up of ecclesiastical heteronomy means that the masses of people run to other heteronomies, such as totalitarian systems, sectarian fanaticism, or fundamentalistic narrowness, thus closing themselves off from the whole development of autonomous thought in modern times."<sup>2</sup>

### REASON

In the Age of Enlightenment and before, REASON carried four meanings with it, none of which should be viewed as contradictory to God's revelation; rather these are some of the means by which God reveals himself to man, and by which God's Word is interpreted by man:

- a. *Universal Reason or logos* – the logos is the universal form and principle of everything created, whether in reality as a whole, or in the mind in particular. The reality of an idea grasps the mind at the same instant the mind grasps the reality of the idea; both are part of the *logos* structure created by God.
- b. *Critical Reason* – It was not conceived of as a calculating reason, which decides whether to do this or that. Rather, it was a full, passionate, revolutionary emphasis on man's essential goodness in the name of the principle of justice (as in the French Revolution). It was based in part on a belief that by transforming society, the human mind is able to re-establish the *logos* structure originally created by God.
- c. *Intuitive Reason* – This is a non-analytic reason which expresses itself in terms of descriptions; it looks at the meanings of things, trying to understand them. We look at samples and examine them, compare them, and obtain a universal concept which covers the different samples, and shows their point of identity (deductive reasoning).

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<sup>1</sup> Tillich, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 323.

## Lesson 7: On the Eve of Reform 1200-1500

d. *Technical Reason* – This analyzes reality into its smallest elements, and then construes them into other larger things. It is our most common understanding of the word “reason” in today’s world (inductive reasoning).

### **NATURE**

Nature has two fundamental concepts:

- a. The **MATERIAL** nature, which refers to things in nature that may be studied under the topics of physics, biology, botany, etc. and normally are sub or non human.
- b. The **FORMAL** nature, which refers to man as distinct from other creatures, because man’s body contains a mind or spirit.

When the term “natural law” is used in the Age of Enlightenment, it usually means rational law, and refers to the *formal* nature of a thing rather than its *material* nature.

### **HARMONY**

This idea forms the core of “providence.” In spite of every individual thing and every individual human being going his own way, there is an overall *harmony* to creation and to history. This harmony disavows the notion that God long ago created the earth and now sits on his throne asleep. The reformers fought this “watch maker” theory tooth and nail.

In spite of human frailty and estrangement from God, God determines every moment — bringing to fulfillment his will and the overall structure, integrity and purpose of his creation. He maintains its harmony.<sup>1</sup>

Now, let’s apply these philosophical viewpoints to daily living: if there is no belief in harmony, there can be no democracy, because the minority will not accept the validity of the decision of the majority. The Christian has no need of a central authority, because harmony is founded on the authority of Scripture. Scripture unites the Christian’s experiential knowledge of the world, with God’s revealed knowledge of the world, as it is related to the Christian.

To explore more of the Reformation period, we’ll look at some of the famous battle-cries of the Reformation, the historical events of the three centuries from the 1500’s through the 1800’s, and at the teachings of John Calvin. That’s in our next lesson. In the final lesson, we’ll examine the Scientific Age from 1900 to the present, and at some of the modern theologians around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Tillich, pp. 320-335.

## Lesson 8: 1500-1700

### *Reformation – Return to Grace*

Reform movements have been a feature of the Christian church throughout its history and were particularly evident in the 14th and 15th centuries as we saw earlier in the course. Protestantism took its name from the “Protestatio” issued by Anabaptist reformers at the Diet of Speyer in 1529. Within two decades the Reformation had spread through most of northwest Europe. We’re going to examine the Protestant Reformation in geographical segments in this lesson, and we’ll look at the impact of some major personalities of the period.

In England, King Henry VIII repudiated papal authority over the church, and the Church of England was set on a course of reform that made it essentially a Protestant body (although Anglicans are often classified separately). In Switzerland, France, parts of Germany, Scotland, and the Netherlands, a second style of non-Lutheran reform began to take shape, influenced chiefly by the French-turned-Genevan John Calvin, and the Swiss leader, Ulrich Zwingli,. At the same time a more radical style of Protestantism appeared on the left wing of the movement. Anabaptists, Mennonites, and others rebaptized Christians and initiated them into a movement that drastically rejected Catholic practices, even where Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anglicanism did not.

The Reformation spread from these bases into Scandinavia and central Europe, but it rarely penetrated Russian and southeastern Europe, where the Orthodox church prevailed, or southern Europe, which remained staunchly Roman Catholic. After a series of religious wars from the mid-16th to the mid-17th century, most Protestants (except the radicals) and Catholics settled for the principle that the rulers of a region should determine the religion of that province or state. Separation of church and state, a principle that other Protestants came to hold late in the 18th century, began to break the purely Protestant hold on northwest Europe. In the latter part of the 18th century and throughout the 19th century into the present, Protestant missionaries spread the movement into most of the world. Protestant beachheads were established on many Asian and African shores but not until recently in Catholic Latin America. From 1607, when Anglicans arrived in Virginia, until late in the 19th century, after large-scale immigration from southern Europe and Ireland, all of North America except Quebec was thought of as a largely Protestant domain. So great was the animosity between Catholics and Protestants, that the Protestants physically harassed the Catholics as they came off the ships at Ellis Island during the great period of immigration at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century in America. In fact, the epithet of “papist” was still being levelled at John F. Kennedy (an Irish Catholic) in the presidential election of 1960. The news media asked him whether he would obey the pope or the Constitution.

That takes us back to the issue of authority in Church Discipline. What happened from the time of Pope Gregory the Great until the Reformation was the steady consolidation of power under the dominion of the clergy, and the establishment of a papist regime. The Church became a political machine rather than an instrument of the Gospel. Form had replaced truth. Coercion had replaced love. Rank had replaced servanthood. And the authority of men replaced the authority of God’s Word. This called for a renewed declaration of authority. These declarations came in two forms. There were five principles of the Reformation, which came to be known as the *Solas*. And then there was the development of the great Confessions, from the early 1500’s to the mid 1600’s. The Confessions intended to define church orthodoxy from the text of the Scriptures alone, as a means of preserving Scriptural truth from distortion and misinterpretation by individuals.

In other words, the Roman Catholic Church replaced the Bible with the papacy as the source of authority, truth, and doctrine. It became so centralized that the declaration of a single man, the

## Lesson 8: Reformation – Return to Grace 1500-1700

Pope, could over-rule the overwhelming authority of Scripture and the interpretations of a host of biblical scholars. To do that, sources other than the traditional texts were used to support the opinions of the Pope. That's where the Apocrypha came into play. The Book of Maccabees lent support and credence to the Roman Catholic practice of prayer for the dead, while the rest of Scripture indicated that death ended our ability to declare our faith in Christ.

On the other hand, if we permit personal interpretation of the Bible to rule the church, avoiding the evils of centralized authority and the traditions of men, we fall into chaos. We have as many interpretations as there are believers. Such a practice undermines the clear Scriptural doctrine that some are given to teach and others are not. The Reformation brought the principles of contract law to bear when interpreting Scripture. We call these interpretive rules "hermeneutics." They were intended to establish a systematic and consistent interpretation of the Bible. That didn't happen. And so the Reformers were forced to do exactly what the Roman Catholic Church had done: to declare in writing what the teachings of the Bible are. The difference between the Catholic and Protestant approaches, is that the Protestants declared the Bible as the source of authority. But to do that, they had to declare the canon of the Bible. Only with an accepted text would they be able to point to the passages of the Bible that authorized each practice, and justified each statement of theology. If the text changes, whether by additions or deletions, the body of truth changes. Today, the use of the Alexandrian and Vaticanus codices to modify the underlying text of Scripture is cause for great concern. In 1949, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, kept by a Gnostic sect, was also cause for great concern.

In this extraordinary and historic effort to lay an orthodox foundation for doctrine, and a standard by which discipline could be exercised, the Reformers sounded five battle cries against Catholicism and its church-based means of salvation. These battle cries were designed to turn God's people back to the Bible, back to grace, and back to Christ's sacrifice as the only cause of our salvation: The Bible alone is our authority concerning salvation, which comes by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.

### **THE FIVE SOLAS**

**Sola Scriptura** – The source of all authority is *Scripture alone*.

This *does not* mean that the Bible is the only place where truth can be found. It *does not* mean that the Bible is equally clear to all people. It *does not* mean that the instruction of Church is not helpful and authoritative. It does mean that the Scriptures are the final and infallible authority for faith and practice. It is not referring to those who want to be their own teachers ("just-me-and-my-Bible") rejecting all other instruction. However, all other authorities, even if valid, will be fallible; therefore they must always be subordinate to the Scriptures.

**Solus Christus** – The object of our faith is *Christ alone*.

The Catholic Mass involves the belief that Priests actually break the body of Christ each time they administer the Lord's Table. The sacrament thus becomes a means and not just a sign of salvation, with the priest acting as our intercessor. The Catholic church also elevated Mary beyond the role the mother of Jesus, and made her the mother of God, deifying her. She became central to the salvation of the world, a co-redemptrix with her Son. As such, Mary became an additional intercessor between man and God. Lists of recognized Saints became intercessors on behalf of men, and prayers began to go up to these departed saints.

There is no other name by which a man can be saved other than the name Jesus. (Acts 4:11) Jesus intercedes on our behalf (Hebrews 7:23-28). His sacrifice is sufficient to atone for the sins of the

## Lesson 8: Reformation – Return to Grace 1500-1700

Church. There is no biblical basis to turn to anyone but Christ for intercession. Also, the priesthood of the individual believer (1Peter 2:4-10) makes any intercession by the church priest unnecessary. Every Christian is able to approach the throne of God to declare his praises, confess his sins, and offer his supplications. And so salvation is by Christ alone, not Christ plus...

**Sola Gratia** – Salvation is by *grace alone*.

You may recall the debate between Augustine and Pelagius in the late fourth century as to whether salvation was by grace alone, or man was saved by his works. In the early 1600's, a successor to this heresy, named Arminius, taught that God's grace provided Christ as an atonement for sin, but Christ only made us salvable; he did not finally save us. God's grace extended to all men, but it was up to each man to come to Christ. Thus, man's exercise of free will was necessary to obtain and maintain salvation. Grace was therefore only provisional, and salvation was cooperative (synergistic). This was the position of the Catholic church at the time of the Reformation. At issue is the condition of man apart from Christ (total depravity).

The Reformers taught that man is totally incapable of saving himself, and nothing in him desires, understands, or believes the things of God. And so, apart from grace, he cannot come to God. He must be enabled. Man's salvation is all of God by grace. Man contributes nothing to it. He merely receives what God has graciously offered. And so it is by grace alone, not grace plus...

**Sola Fide** – Salvation comes by *faith alone*.

This was the very doctrine that prompted Martin Luther in his 95 theses to challenge the Catholic position of indulgences. The Catholic position in opposition to Luther's Sola Fide was that the grace of God, by His good pleasure was poured into us. As this pouring or infusing occurred, it made us inherently righteous and thus able to perform good works. By faith, then, our free will cooperates with grace, performs the necessary works, and merits our salvation. Faith, in that sense, is not a gift but a work (contra Eph. 2:8). Justification to the Catholic mind was a process, not an event. Sanctification was not an effect of justification, but the means of justification. The canons of the Council of Trent in 1563 lay out the Catholic opposition to the Reformers view that God *declares* us justified by faith alone. The righteousness of the sinner is not his own works, but the works of Christ imputed to him. Christ's righteousness is *considered* our own; it covers us, but it is not infused in us (Rom. 4). Our only plea before the Judgment throne is faith alone, in Christ's work alone, not faith plus our own works...

Where do our works fit in? What value does sanctification have? SOLA FIDE means we are saved by grace through faith *alone*, but not through a faith that *is alone*. It is faith alone that is the basis for our salvation, but our salvation is made clearly evident by our works.

**Soli Deo Gloria** – It is all to the *glory of God alone*. One of the central issues however, during the Reformation was the improper exultation of the officers in the Church. Even during the third century, the highest form of worship toward God could only be offered by those in full time ministry. And so the clergy and laity were separated, with greater glory going to the clergy. The service of God was the only worthwhile "calling," all other vocations being common and inferior. They believed that ordinary work was necessary, but demeaning.

The Reformers began to use the term "calling" to refer to *any* vocation that God equipped someone to perform. They believed that whatever work God had given us to do, if it was done faithfully, it would glorify Him in the same way as other faithful work. In *1Cor 10:31*, Paul teaches that whatever we do, it should be done by faith to the glory of God. The Reformers made no distinction between spiritual or temporal; sacred or secular. They believed that God had created us to be

workers or producers. Whether you were in the pulpit, the field, or the home, everything done by faith would bring glory to God.

### **The Authority of the Bible**

*Sola Scriptura* has not led to unanimity among us. Differing interpretations of the same Bible have produced the most divided movement of any in the great world religions, as hundreds of sects in at least a dozen great Protestant families of churches (Anglicanism, Congregationalism, Methodism, Presbyterianism, Lutheranism, the Baptist churches, and the like) compete in free societies. Attitudes toward the Bible in contemporary Protestantism range from belief in its literal truth on the fundamentalist end of the spectrum, to extremely free interpretations among liberal Protestants.

### **Justification by Faith**

Second only to belief in the Bible as a mark of Protestantism is the conviction that humans are not saved by their merits or good works — as the 16th-century reformers heard Catholics claiming — but only “by grace, through faith.” According to Protestants, God took the initiative in saving the world from sin through the atoning sacrifice of his son Jesus Christ; and even the faith that led people to believe in this sacrificial redemption on their behalf, was a *gift* not an achievement. Nonetheless, however consistent Protestant teaching on this subject may be, Protestant cultures have often produced earnest strivers after God—sober and hard-working people who try to prove that they are God’s elect — and preachers or other leaders who seem as legalistic in their approach to church life as the 16th-century Catholics were. The world cannot make the distinction between works as an *effect* of grace, and works as a *means* of grace. Even within the church, anyone who emphasizes obedience and discipline is considered a legalist. In its proper use, however, legalism only refers to meritorious works. The world cannot see it, but to the church, works as the *fruit* of grace is glorifying to Christ, while works as the *means* of grace glorifies man at Christ’s expense.

### **Sacraments**

Most Protestants share faith in the divine Trinity—God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; most of them keep alive the ancient creedal witness to the fact that Jesus Christ was and is both divine and human; most celebrate two sacraments (sacred acts instituted by Christ): baptism and the Lord’s Supper. They are divided over whether to immerse the baptized in water or to apply water in other ways; the age at which to baptize people, although most practice infant baptism; whether baptism imparts grace or is a sign of response and obedience. Some Protestants believe that Jesus is somehow really present in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper, whereas others consider this sacrament an act of remembrance and obedience. In their worship, Protestants more than most other Christians, stress the preaching of the Word of God as an agent for building faith.

### **Church Polity**

Protestants allow for many styles of church government, from the Episcopal, where bishops rule, to the congregational, which acknowledges no earthly authority beyond the local. Accenting “the priesthood of all believers,” they have assigned an important role to the laity, although in practice many Protestant churches are quite clerical in outlook. Increasingly during the past century, and especially in recent decades, Protestant churches have ordained women to the ministry and have encouraged them to take lay leadership roles.

Protestantism, more than Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, has faced two recurrent problems. The FIRST relates to the internal unity of the movement. From the Reformation until the present, Protestants have sought concord, but more often than not have remained in dispute. In the

## Lesson 8: Reformation – Return to Grace 1500-1700

20th century, however, the Ecumenical Movement has gathered strength. In addition to the organic mergers of separate bodies that have taken place, movements of federation, councils for cooperation, and coalitions for common tasks have been formed. The SECOND problem involves civil authority. Orthodoxy and Catholicism found alliances with the throne congenial, but Protestants were restless about their early decisions to keep such alliances. Movements for religious toleration were most aggressive and successful in Protestant countries. The act of separating church and state (in most countries) has made it difficult for Protestants to produce coherent views of how Christians should live with both spiritual and civil responsibilities. This problem was presented in its most acute form in the dilemma of the Confessing church in Nazi Germany (as in the case of Dietrich Bonhoeffer).

### Cultural Impact

The rejection of the Catholic tradition, and in some instances a tendency toward iconoclasm (an attack on established beliefs), militated against the development of a specifically Protestant style in the VISUAL ARTS — although many great artists have been Protestants. In general, the Protestant contribution has been a simplicity, even austerity, of design and decoration. This is particularly true of the Calvinist and the Scandinavian Lutheran traditions.

In MUSIC and LITERATURE the Protestant contribution has been enormous. Vernacular versions of the Bible, such as Luther's and the King James', played a formative role in the development of modern German and English literature. Emphasis on preaching, and lack of strong centers of doctrinal authority, contributed to a diversity of opinion and expression, as reflected, for example, in the work of John Milton. A strong musical tradition developed out of the encouragement of hymn-singing and the use of the organ and other instruments, reaching its pinnacle in the work of Johann Sebastian Bach.

The lack of central authority, and thus the acceptability of divergent views, has resulted in what liberals might call a "a rich theological tradition," with Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, and Paul Tillich in the 20th century.<sup>1</sup> Conservatives, like J.C. Ryle (*The Upper Room*), say the abandonment of Reformation theology, with its common rule of faith and practice, has been *the death of discipline*, and a return to superstition and authoritarianism.

### An Age of Confessions

1530 – Augsburg Confession	1566 – Belgic Confession
1537 – Smalcald Articles (Luther)	1615 – Irish Articles of Religion
1544 – Waldensian Confession (1655)	1618 – Canons of Dordt (Dordrecht)
1559 – French Confession	1632 – Dordrecht Confession
1560 – Scots Confession	1644 – London Baptist Confession (1689)
1563 – English Articles of Religion	1646 – Westminster Confession
1563 – Heidelberg Catechism	1658 – Savoy Declaration
1564 – Helvetic Confession	1689 – Baptist Catechism

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<sup>1</sup> Martin E. Marty Bibliography: Barth, Karl, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (1952; Eng. trans., 1972) and *Protestant Thought* (1959; repr. 1969); Brown, Robert McAfee, *The Spirit of Protestantism* (1961); Greven, Philip, *The Protestant Temperament* (1978); Hordern, William E., *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology*, rev. ed. (1968); Leonard, Emile, *A History of Protestantism*, 3 vols. to date, trans. by Joyce M. H. Reid (1968); Marty, Martin E., *Protestantism* (1972); Mehl, Roger, *The Sociology of Protestantism* (1970); Miller, William R., *Contemporary American Protestant Thought, 1900-1970* (1973); Pauck, Wilhelm, *The Heritage of the Reformation*, rev. ed. (1968); Welch, Claude, *Protestant Christianity Interpreted through Its Development* (1954); Whale, J. S., *The Protestant Tradition* (1955).

## Lesson 8: Reformation – Return to Grace 1500-1700

In the next lesson we'll look at the Reformation in England and other nations separately. But the influence of England was so widespread, riding the back of colonialism, that we would be amiss to overlook one highly influential personality: William Tyndale. His translation of the Bible into the English language in the early 1500s, was as revolutionary in England, as Luther's translation had been in Germany. It led to Tyndale being burned at the stake. And yet, just three years later, it became the authoritative translation. The subsequent King James version of 1611 was largely the result of Tyndale's work. It not only stabilized the English language for the next 400 years, but it gave a common vocabulary to all English-speaking nations.

Tyndale's book, *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528), ignited a firestorm of opposition to Roman rule in the civil order, and to the aberrant practices of the Roman Catholic clergy. The book's subtitle was "*How Christian Rulers Ought To Govern.*" Its premise was that the Bible establishes government, and government must submit to the rule of God, not to the rule of men. In other words, Tyndale was calling for the government to submit to the *discipline* of God's word, even as he called for civil government to be free from the rule of the pope. He dared to assert that even the pope was not above the law of God, nor was any king above the law. That was a revolutionary idea at the time; but it's a basic and eternal principle of Scripture.

In the 1650s, there was a second Reformation in England. This was the point at which Catholicism was supplanted by Protestantism, and the Book of Common Prayer was returned to its Protestant roots, when Thomas Cranmer brought the Reformation to England, and convinced Henry VIII to break from Roman Catholicism. Elizabeth I had done what she could to broker a peace between her Catholic and Protestant subjects, by compromising Gospel truth. But in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, that peace was broken, and the two camps – abandoning church discipline – pursued a more violent political and military solution. It led to the English Civil War of 1642, and the republican ideals of Oliver Cromwell and covenant theology. This was the PURITAN AGE.

And a hundred years later, the Age of Confessions, Republicanism, and Puritans, would coalesce to give birth to the American Republic, and Constitutional law. Because of the importance of this extraordinary period, we'll take a few moments to explore what Puritanism is, and why it matters.

### Puritanism

"No one will deny that if Christian faith is real, it will affect society. If, as Jesus said, the truth is something that we do when his mind is in us, then visible changes in conduct are not options but inevitabilities. And if a large number of people in society – even if still a minority – seek to live Christ, then we can expect to see important changes in society at large... If provisions are made for moral and spiritual discipline among Christians, in the Christian church, then what if all society is deemed '*Christian*'? May one exercise, in good faith, the same discipline for everybody, with the reasonable aspiration to protect and preserve society from decadence? ...May one so define '*civil*' that it is synonymous with '*religious*'?"<sup>1</sup>

That's the premise underlying *Puritanism*: that the civil and religious spheres are not as distinct as we would have them – that what is Caesar's and what is God's are not divisible as to *rule*. God owns all, and governs all. He appoints rulers, who are accountable to Him (Rom 13.1). What do they have that was not given to them? (1Cor 4.7) Assuming the *civil* consensus is Christian, as it was in America for its first two hundred years (1660-1860), and a majority of the people and their leaders are Christian, are non-Christians to be judged and *disciplined* by those Christ-like values? Are those offenses to be written into the law? How are distinctions to be made between discipline proper to those who are in the church, and those who are not? And when the composition of the society is no longer predominantly Christian, as we find today, the values of the majority will color

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, p. 157.

## Lesson 8: Reformation – Return to Grace 1500-1700

the law of the land, just as we're seeing. The Christian must exercise the right and responsibility to campaign for laws which best preserve the fabric of society, based on God's law.<sup>1</sup> John Calvin was called to Geneva to be its governor, and to implement such a plan. It was an exploration in the practicalities of such an endeavor.

Would such a *partial* theocracy even be possible? If it hadn't worked for Israel in the past, why should it be feasible in the present? Calvin would be both pastor and magistrate. "He hoped to purify Geneva, to make it what, indeed, the admiring John Knox and many Englishmen judged it to be: 'The finest school of Christ on earth since the Apostles.'" <sup>2</sup> And then came Servetus. He had escaped the Catholic Inquisition, and came to Geneva to stir up trouble. He broke the law, and was subject to the death penalty, which Calvin enforced as the magistrate, and not as the pastor. And in that one act, we see the difficulty of melding both offices in one. The lust for the sword, and the reflection on the cross, is never pretty: *all who take the sword will perish by the sword.* (Mat 26:52)

The Puritans wished to "purify" the Church of England, the civil church where priests were paid by the state, and where Church doctrine was written into the law. They wanted to purge the remains of the corruption which survived from the Roman connection. Many had been refugees on the Continent while Bloody Mary executed their Protestant leaders. Some focused on the vestments, and the distinction between clergy and laity. Others went after the sacraments, and the bodily presence of Christ in them, as superstitious nonsense. Some wanted a presbyterian form of church government, with the election of pastors by their people. But in general, as Calvinists, Puritans held to a covenant or federalist theology. God made promises to man that were conditioned on his obedience to God's laws contained in the Bible. To enable men to read the Bible, and understand their duties, was the motivation for Tyndale to translate the Bible into English. In this view, there were two covenants: the covenant of works with Adam as the federal head (representative) of all mankind, and the covenant of grace variously dispensed after the fall, with Christ as the federal head of all the elect.

Covenant theology laid the foundation for an obligation binding on all men, elect and non-elect, and gave support to the political theory which held that all men are created equal, and thus the state and all society came into being as a contract, a *covenant*, an expression of "natural law." This was used to limit the power of the monarch, and held both church and state to be associations or contracts entered into voluntarily; thus they were subject to modification, or dissolution. On that basis, the Puritans wanted to remain within the Church of England and to have it cleansed or reformed according to their theology. Because of Puritan opposition to the doctrines, practices, and polity of the Anglican Church, they were considered *opponents* of the Church, not reformers of it. Another group, known as Separatists or Independents, like the Anabaptists on the Continent, wanted "gathered" churches: independent churches that were self-governing. These would be comprised of self-professed Christians – therefore its members were not infants, and they were not *all* the residents of the geographical area.<sup>3</sup>

Including both these groups as church members, had been the practice of the Anglican church, and of the Roman Catholic Church. Both churches were been Arminian in their theology (universal atonement), and therefore the Calvinistic emphasis on election was repugnant to them. When In 1625, Charles I became king of England. He favored episcopacy and was against the Puritans. And Roman Catholicism was dominant the Anglican Church. He found an able ally in William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury. He opposed the strong Puritan influence at Oxford, his alma mater. He

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, pp. 160-161.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> Latourette, vol. 2, p. 813-815.

## Lesson 8: Reformation – Return to Grace 1500-1700

suppressed Puritan lectureships whenever possible, opposed Calvinism, stood for Arminianism, discouraged the Puritan observance of Sunday, and encouraged Sunday sports and amusements. The Long Parliament impeached him, tried him, freed him, but later beheaded him.

The Westminster Assembly was then called to advise Parliament on religious questions. It was comprised of clergy and laity, mostly Puritans. It drew up the Directory of the Public Worship of God, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Longer and Shorter Westminster Catechisms. These set forth the Reformed system of theology and church government, shaped less by Calvin than by Augustinian and federalist theology. They were also influenced by the Irish Articles of 1615, supposedly the work of Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656).<sup>1</sup>

### ***Results of the Reformation***

An obvious result of the Protestant Reformation was the division of Western Christendom into Protestant and Catholic areas. Another result was the development of national churches and creeds. But creeds served more as legal documents, with civil and criminal penalties, than as statements of doctrinal truth for purposes of church discipline. They were used for punitive purposes instead of restorative. These shifts in authority and rule strengthened the growth of modern nation-states, just as, earlier, growing national consciousness had facilitated the development of the Reformation. But where the pulpit had invaded the throne under papism, the throne now invaded the pulpit. In England, the *Act of Uniformity* of 1662 forced 2000 Protestant preachers from their pulpits. They refused to submit to the revised Book of Common Prayer which required Roman Catholic prayers and practices in the Church of England. They not only lost their pulpits, but under penalty of law, were forbidden to teach or preach, in public or in private. This was called “The Great Ejection.”

Those who stayed in England and pushed for reform were known as Puritans. Those who fled to the Netherlands and to the Americas, were known as Pilgrims. That experience led the Americans to later separate church and state, so that the government would have no right to determine who could teach or rule in the church, nor have any say in the content of its doctrine. Church discipline, limited to particular churches and denominations, was for the *Church* to exercise by persuasion, not the state to enforce by coercion, and threats of imprisonment and death. America was becoming a melting pot of nationalities *and* of religions. As a result, the strength of the Church, its influence on the culture, was weakening. Which Christians would authoritatively speak for “the Church”?

The Catholic Counter-Reformation — including the founding of the Jesuits by Ignatius Loyola (sanctioned 1540), the Council of Trent (1545-63), the Inquisition, the Index, and reformed clergy like Charles Borromeo — gave new life to the old church. It was in part a result of the Reformation movement. Finally, the Reformation introduced much radical change in thought, and in ecclesiastical and political organization; thus it began many of the trends that characterize the modern world.<sup>2</sup>

In the next lesson, we’ll look at the nationalism of the Church. It not only distilled and applied the truths of Scripture to the civil life of those nations for the better, but it also divided the Church by culture and national borders, into artificial and worldly institutions, contrary to Scripture:

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 820-21.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis W. Spitz – Bibliography: Bainton, Roland H., *Women of the Reformation* (1977); Chadwick, Owen, *The Reformation* (1964); Dickens, A. G., *The English Reformation* (1964) and *The German Nation and Martin Luther* (1974); Donaldson, Gordon, *The Scottish Reformation* (1972); Grimm, Harold, *The Reformation Era 1500-1650* (1954); Hillerbrand, Hans. J., *Christendom Divided: The Protestant Reformation* (1971); McNeill, John T., *The History and Character of Calvinism* (1954); Olin, John, *Luther, Erasmus and the Reformation* (1970); Ozment, G. R., *The Reformation in the Cities* (1975); Smith, P., *The Age of Reformation, 2 vols.* (1962); Spitz, Lewis W., *The Renaissance and Reformation Movement* (1971).

## Lesson 8: Reformation – Return to Grace 1500-1700

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph 4:3-6)

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free –and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (1Co 12:13)

Lesson 8: Reformation – Return to Grace 1500-1700

## **Lesson 9: 1500-1700**

### ***Reformation Around The Globe***

#### **Germany**

##### ***Luther***

In Luther's treatise "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," he argued that Rome's sacramental system held Christians "captive." He attacked the papacy for depriving the individual Christian of his freedom to approach God directly by faith. Luther defined sacrament as an ordinance instituted by Christ and exclusively Christian. He found only baptism and the Lord's Supper are valid by this test, and these two were to be administered by a "community of believing Christians" rather than an exclusive priesthood. He redefined the church from a sacred hierarchy headed by the pope, to a community of believers who are all priests called to offer sacrifices to God. As for the role of works Luther wrote "Good works do not make a good man, but a good man does good works." In that light, monasticism was no longer necessary. All useful callings are equally sacred in God's eyes, whether secular or ecclesiastical. Luther abolished the office of bishop in Wittenberg, saying that churches needed pastors not dignitaries. Celibacy was abandoned. The liturgy was rewritten in German. The laity received both bread and wine at the communion. The pope had long since restricted wine to the clergy to avoid the laity spilling the literal blood of Christ as the doctrine of transubstantiation would lead one to believe.

The freedom of worship issue crossed over to freedom from oppression as the peasants revolted against the feudal lords. Luther condemned the uprising as satanic and that drove many back to the Catholic Church or to more radical versions of reform. Nearly 100,000 peasants were killed in Germany during the conflict and Luther was condemned by them as a false prophet. Luther's conservative approach afforded a philosophical basis for princely power over the church and its territories in opposition to any claim by the Roman Church.

##### ***Augsburg Compromise***

By 1530 a gathering of Reformation leaders had been called at Augsburg to draw up a common statement of faith. That historic meeting is known as the Diet of Augsburg. Lutheranism was presented to the assembly by young Philip Melancthon in Luther's absence. Luther was still an outlaw to the Catholic emperor Charles V. Many princes and cities signed the completed Augsburg Confession of faith, but for other than spiritual reasons.<sup>1</sup> When the emperor Charles attempted to crush the growing rebellion, the Lutheran princes banded together and a civil war broke out and continued sporadically for the next decade.

After years of conflict the settlement reached in the Peace of Augsburg (1555) provided that each German prince would determine the religious affiliation (Roman Catholic or Lutheran) of the territory he ruled. All non-Lutheran protestants were outlawed, and all property belonging to Catholic bishops was to be relinquished should they become Lutheran. Lutheranism also became the established religion of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland. Apart from the role of the princes, however, the Reformation spread rapidly as a popular movement. It penetrated Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, and Transylvania. In ancient fashion, each prince would decide the religion of his subjects.

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<sup>1</sup> Bromiley, pp. 258-264.

## Zurich

### *Zwingli.*

The Reformation in Switzerland initially developed in Zurich under the leadership of the priest Ulrich Zwingli. Zwingli had been influenced by Erasmus and by Christian humanism. He arrived at an evangelical understanding of Christianity from his study of the Bible and from contacts with Lutherans. On Jan. 1, 1519, he began a 6-year series of sermons on the New Testament that moved the city council and the people of Zurich toward reform. The favorable response to The Sixty-Seven Articles, which he prepared for public disputation with a papal representative in 1523, proved the popularity of his program. He called for the abolition of the Mass (and its replacement by a symbolic Lord's Supper), independence from Episcopal control, and a reform of the city-state in which both priests and Christian magistrates would conform to the will of God. His influence spread to other Swiss cantons such as Basel, Saint Gall, and Bern.

The Protestant city council of Zurich had ordered the leaders of a fringe reform movement there to stop holding bible classes. Four days earlier they had ordered all parents to have their babies baptized within 8 days of birth or suffer banishment. Meeting in prayer at the Manz house near the largest church in the city, a dozen or so men took a decisive action that helped to turn the Reformation into an important revival of biblical principles. Former priest George Blaurock asked Conrad Grebel to baptize him in apostolic fashion – upon confession of faith in Jesus Christ. Grebel baptized him instantly and together they proceeded to baptize the others present. Anabaptism was born. Today's descendants of the Anabaptists include Mennonites, Baptists, Quakers, and many Congregationalists.

**Anabaptist** means “rebaptizer,” a moniker hung on them by their detractors. They preferred “Baptists” — ignoring infant sprinkling as an invalid ceremony, and refusing to baptize their own children as a way of separating from state control. The fundamental issue, however, was not baptism, but the right relationship of church and state. They found no scriptural support for church-state alliances, nor for CHRISTENDOM as a political order.

Lutheranism had become so established in Germany, that the Baptists could find little distinction between Lutherans and Catholics, as far as state support was concerned. They therefore separated themselves from that movement and distinguished their beliefs by refusing to participate in any exercise of worldly power, whether by taking oaths, serving in the military or holding public office. They had chosen this approach in response to another Protestant movement led by Ulrich Zwingli.

Zwingli used the backing of the city council to institute his extensive reforms of the Catholic church practices. Zwingli was even more conservative than Luther, and forbade anything not specifically commanded by Scripture. All candles, statues, music and pictures were removed from the churches in the city-state of Zurich. But the state-control issue was untouched. It simply altered its teachings from Roman Catholic to Reformed.

This was the ground of dispute between the Anabaptists and Zwinglians. The city council had the Anabaptists arrested and in some cases executed by fire, water and sword. Despite fleeing Zurich for Germany some five thousand Anabaptists were killed by the Protestant governments of Germany and Austria during the Reformation years. They curiously had been declared heretics by the very reformers who claimed Scripture as the only source of authority. Perhaps politics and power were the only real issues of the time in this fallen world, and no amount of reform short of true salvation by the Grace of God would change the hearts of men from hatred, fear, and greed, to the love of Christ.

## Lesson 9: Reformation Around the Globe 1500-1700

For the Lutherans and Catholics of “mainline” Protestantism, Anabaptists were wild-eyed fanatics to whom, as we saw with early Christians, any accusation was likely to be attached. A cult of pseudo-Anabaptists in Munster had established an earthly reign of Christ under a newcomer to the city named Jan Matthys. This chiliastic movement (pre-millennialism: 1000 year reign of Christ) took over the city which then was besieged by the bishop’s troops. The troops were held at bay by force of arms. A former bartender named Jan of Leiden seized power in June of 1534 and declared himself “King David.” Claiming new revelations from God, he reintroduced the Old Testament practice of polygamy and took a harem to himself. For centuries, the term “Anabaptist” was inevitably linked to this event.

On the other side, Menno Simons, a former priest, traveled throughout the lower Rhine to encourage the scattered Anabaptists. He was a pacifist by conviction and in spite of the danger to his own life. His rejection of violence became a characteristic of the movement he nurtured and which we know today as the Mennonites. Bands of them lived as outlaws in Switzerland, Moravia, and the Netherlands.

### **Schleitheim Confession**

The Anabaptists called the first “synod” of the Protestant Reformation in 1527. Its leading figure, Michael Sattler, was burned at the stake four months later. There were four basic convictions that the Anabaptists enumerated in their confession of faith that later generations of Protestants finally adopted.

First is the need for discipleship. The Christian’s relationship with Christ must go beyond the mystical inner experience of Christ espoused by the monastics, and it must go beyond the acceptance of doctrinal stances espoused by synods and councils. It must involve “a daily walk with God, in which Christ’s teaching and example shape a transformed style of life.” “No one can truly know Christ except he follow him in life.”<sup>1</sup>

The second conviction was the “principle of love” which naturally flows from the first conviction. They treated non-Anabaptists with pacifism, going neither to war against strangers nor to defense of themselves against their persecutors. They also refused to become participants in the exercise of state domination over individuals. Within the Anabaptist community, love led to mutual aid, redistribution of wealth, and in some cases communal living.

The third conviction was the congregational view of church authority. Membership came only by baptism based on a confession of personal faith in Christ. Decisions were made by the entire membership. Doctrine was established by consensus in open and vigorous discussion. Discipline was corporate as each individual was “assisted” in living a life of faith.

The fourth conviction was the insistence on separation of church and state. Christians are a “free, unforced, uncompelled people.” Faith is a free gift of God, and civil authorities exceed their competence when they “champion the Word of God with a fist.” The church is distinct from society even when society claims to be Christian. The Anabaptists were the first and foremost champions of religious freedom: the right to worship without state support and without state persecution.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bromiley, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 266-272,

## CALVINISM

### Geneva

The third wing of the Reformation is called “Reformed” or “Calvinistic” Christianity. It differed from Lutheranism and Anabaptist teachings in many ways, and yet shared many teachings as well. From Calvin’s teachings we derive the present-day denominations of Presbyterian, Dutch and German Reformed, and many Baptists and Congregationalists.

Luther emphasized justification by faith and the miracle of forgiveness, while Calvin emphasized the sovereignty of God and assurance of salvation. If Luther sounded the trumpet for reform, Calvin orchestrated the score by which the Reformation became a part of Western civilization. Calvin studied in Paris, probably from 1521 to 1526, where he was introduced to humanistic scholarship and to appeals for reform of the church. He then studied law at his father’s bidding from about 1525 to 1530. When his father died in 1531, Calvin turned immediately to his first love—study of the classics and theology. Between 1526 and 1531, he experienced a distinctly Protestant conversion. “God,” he wrote much later, “at last turned my course in another direction by the secret rein of his providence.” Calvin’s first published work was a commentary on Seneca’s *De Clementia* (1532). A profusion of influential commentaries on books of the Bible followed.

His position in France became precarious when in 1533 his friend Nicholas Cop, rector of the University of Paris, gave a public address supporting reform. The two shared such similar views of reform that Cop’s work was often mistaken for Calvin’s own. Eventually Calvin was forced to flee in 1535 to Basel, Switzerland. There he produced a small book about his new reformed beliefs. It was designed to offer a brief summary of essential Christian belief and to defend French Protestants, who were then undergoing serious persecution, as true heirs of the early church. This first edition of Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536) contained only six brief sections. By the last edition (1559), it had grown to 79 full chapters. The *Institutes* presents with unmatched clarity, a vision of God in his majesty, of Christ as prophet, priest, and king, of the Holy Spirit as the giver of faith, of the Bible as the final authority, and of the church as the holy people of God. Its doctrine of predestination is Calvin’s deduction from his belief in human sinfulness, and God’s sovereign mercy in Christ.

After the publication of the *Institutes*, Calvin fully intended to devote his life to further study. On a trip to Strasbourg in July 1536, however, he was forced to detour through Geneva where he hoped to stay only one night. The fiery Guillaume Farel, who had labored long for the reform of that city, had other plans. Threatening Calvin with a curse from God, Farel persuaded him to remain. The next 2 years were difficult, as Calvin’s rigorous plans for reform of church and city clashed with Geneva’s long-standing moral indifference. In 1538, Calvin and Farel were expelled from the city. Calvin proceeded to Strasbourg where he spent the most enjoyable years of his life as pastor of the city’s French congregation. While in Strasbourg, Calvin produced an influential commentary on the Book of Romans, oversaw the preparation of a liturgy and a psalm book that he would use later in Geneva, and married the widow Idelette de Bure, taking her two children as his own.

When friends of Calvin gained control of the Geneva council in 1541, they asked him to return, and he reluctantly agreed. During the next 14 years his reforms met stiff resistance. Some Genevans then, and many critics later, considered Calvin’s morality absurdly severe, with its banning of plays and its attempt to introduce religious pamphlets and psalm singing into Geneva’s taverns. Others have admired the courage of his conviction that all of life should glorify God. Finally, the libertines blundered in 1553 by offering backhanded support to the heretic Michael

## Lesson 9: Reformation Around the Globe 1500-1700

Servetus. Servetus was condemned to death by burning by the city fathers, and by 1555 the city belonged to Calvin. The Presbyterian church order that he instituted established a principle of lay involvement that had great impact throughout Europe.

During Calvin's last years, Geneva was home to many religious refugees who carried away the desire to implement a Genevan reform in their own countries. His personal letters and published works reached from the British Isles to the Baltic. The Geneva Academy, founded in 1559, extended the circle of his influence. His lucid use of French promoted that language much as Luther's work spread the influence of German. By the time he died, Calvin, in spite of a reserved personality, had generated profound love among his friends and intense scorn from his enemies. His influence, which spread throughout the Western world, was felt especially in Scotland through the work of John Knox.<sup>1</sup>

Calvin's doctrine was catholic in its acceptance of the Trinity, human sinfulness, and the saving work of Jesus Christ. It was Protestant in its commitment to the final authority of the Bible, justification by grace through faith alone, and the bondage of the will for salvation. It was distinctly reformed in its stress on the omnipotent sovereignty of God, the need for discipline in the church, and the ethical seriousness of life. Jacobus Arminius hated Calvin's teachings on the sovereignty of God. In 1610, the year following his death, a group of Arminius' followers wrote down the five main points of his teachings, and presented them in a document called the *Remonstrance*.

### *Five Points of Arminianism*

- (1) Man's will is free to choose either the Word of God or the Word of Satan and therefore man's salvation is his own choice;
- (2) Election is conditional upon man's response. God merely foreknows who will respond, he does not foreordain their salvation;
- (3) Christ's Atonement is universal and therefore redemption is universal. He only made man potentially salvable, not finally saved;
- (4) The Holy Spirit woos us, but because man has free will, he may resist the importuning of the Spirit;
- (5) Because man's will is free to accept salvation, it is equally free to reject it and therefore man may lose his salvation through sin.

In 1618, 54 years after the death of Calvin and 9 years after the death of Arminius, at the Synod of Dort, a five point response to the five point position of Arminius was adopted. It has subsequently been referred to as the five points of Calvinism.

### *The Five Points of Calvinism*

These doctrinal statements were formulated by Dutch Reformed theologians at the Synod of Dort (1618-19) in response to the teachings of Arminianism. The five points teach that

- (1) humankind is spiritually incapacitated by sin;
- (2) God chooses (elects) unconditionally those who will be saved;

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<sup>1</sup> Mark A. Noll – Bibliography: Breen, Quirinus, John Calvin: A Study in French Humanism, rev. ed. (1968); Calvin, John, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1559 ed. trans. by F. L. Battles, ed. by J. T. McNeill (1960); Forstman, H. J., Word and Spirit: Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority (1962); Parker, T. H. L., John Calvin: A Biography (1975); Stauffer, Richard, The Humanness of John Calvin (1971); Wendel, Francois, Calvin: The Origin and Development of His Religious Thought (1963).

## Lesson 9: Reformation Around the Globe 1500-1700

- (3) the saving work of Christ is limited to those elected ones;
- (4) God's grace cannot be turned aside;
- (5) those whom God elects in Christ are saved forever.

These points are sometimes referred to under the acronym **TULIP**: standing for **T**otal Depravity, **U**nconditional Election, **L**imited Atonement, **I**rresistible Grace, and **P**erseverance of the Saints.

Early in the 20th century, the German sociologist Max Weber and the English economist R. H. Tawney, put forth the much-debated thesis that Calvinism promoted the rise of capitalism. Whether this is true or not, it cannot be denied that Calvinists have been deeply involved in political, social, educational, and economic developments in Western civilization. Puritanism in England and America is a product, to one degree or another, of the Calvinistic spirit.

Calvinism provides the basic doctrinal orientation of the Reformed Churches and Presbyterianism. Branches of some other Protestant denominations, such as the Baptists, have also been influenced by Calvinism.<sup>1</sup>

### France

Through Lutheran tracts and merchant missionaries, the evangelical movement spread to France, where it won many converts, among whom was John Calvin. In 1536, Calvin went to Geneva, where a reformation led by Guillaume Farel was well under way. Calvin was persuaded to stay in Geneva and helped organize the second major surge of Protestantism. In his Ordinances of 1541, he gave a new organization to the church consisting of pastors, doctors, elders, and deacons. His Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536) had great influence in France, Scotland (where John Knox carried the Calvinist reformation), and among the Puritans in England. Geneva became the center of a great missionary enterprise that reached into France, where the Huguenots became so powerful that a synod met in Paris in 1559 to organize a nationwide church of some 2,000 reformed congregations. In response to this growing power, nearly 7000 Huguenot leaders were massacred by the Catholic hierarchy on St. Bartholomew's Day 1572. As a result of the bloody *French Wars of Religion*, the Huguenot party was checked and the French monarchy kept the kingdom Catholic.

### Scotland

#### *John Knox*

Knox was born c.1514, d. Nov. 24, 1572. As the founder of Scottish Presbyterianism, he was the key figure of the Reformation in Scotland. After serving briefly as a Roman Catholic priest, he became a Protestant through the efforts of the Scottish reformer George Wishart. After Wishart was burned at the stake at St. Andrews in 1546, and after Protestant conspirators assassinated Wishart's judge, Cardinal David Beaton, that same year, Knox joined other rebellious Protestants barricaded in St. Andrews castle. There he was urged to preach. His zeal and obvious ability made him an immediate leader of the Protestant cause. When the castle of St. Andrews fell to Scottish and French Roman Catholics in July 1547, Knox was sentenced to serve on French galleys. After 19 months his release was secured by English Protestant influence. Knox then lived for four years in England, serving as a parish preacher in Berwick and Newcastle and becoming (1551) a chaplain

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<sup>1</sup> Mark A. Noll – Bibliography: Dakin, Arthur, Calvinism (1940; repr. 1971); Leith, John H., Introduction to the Reformed Tradition (1977); McNeill, John T., The History and Character of Calvinism, rev. ed. (1967); Warfield, B. B., Calvin and Calvinism (1931); Weber, Max, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. by Talcott Parsons (1950).

## Lesson 9: Reformation Around the Globe 1500-1700

to King Edward VI. His objections to the Second Book of Common Prayer in 1552 paved the way for the later Puritan movement in England.

Knox fled to the Continent in 1553 when the Catholic Mary I succeeded to the throne in England. He served as minister to English refugees in Frankfurt, met John Calvin in Geneva, and returned for a 9-month preaching tour in Scotland before settling as the minister of the English refugee church in Geneva (1556). Knox's theology, which stressed God's sovereignty, continued to develop along Calvinistic lines. He went well beyond Calvin in his political theory, however. In 1554, Knox had begun to justify resistance to faithless rulers who attack their dutiful subjects. While in Geneva, Knox published a notorious work, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558), in which he scathingly denounced rule by women monarchs. It was directed at the queen regent of Scotland, Mary of Guise, Mary, Queen Of Scots (then also queen of France), and England's Mary I—all Catholic monarchs. The work's major effects, however, were to embarrass Calvin, to offend the Protestant Elizabeth I, who succeeded Mary I to the English throne in 1558, and to make Knox *persona non grata* in England.

Knox returned to Scotland in May 1559 at the height of conflict between Catholics and Protestants. His inspirational preaching and timely aid from England allowed Protestant forces to triumph. The return of the widowed Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1561 led to a famous series of face-to-face confrontations between the young queen and Scotland's foremost preacher. When Mary was forced to abdicate in 1567, Protestantism was secured in Scotland. Knox played the leading role in formulating the constitution of the reformed Church of Scotland, and he remained an outspoken preacher until his death.

While Knox was not as consistent a Presbyterian or as devout a nationalist as later Protestants in Scotland, his work set the Church of Scotland on its Calvinistic and Presbyterian path. His principal work was his *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, published posthumously (1st complete ed., 5 vols., 1644). His only complete theological work was the *Treatise on Predestination* (1560).<sup>1</sup>

### **England**

Although England had a religious reform movement influenced by Lutheran ideas, the English Reformation occurred as a direct result of King Henry VIII's efforts to divorce his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. Thomas Cromwell, the king's chief minister, masterminded the formal break with the papacy. Under Cromwell's direction Parliament passed the Act in Restraint of Appeals (to Rome; 1533), followed by the Act of Supremacy (1534) fully defining the royal headship over the church. As archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer annulled Henry's marriage to Catherine, allowing the king to marry Anne Boleyn.

Although Henry himself wished to make no doctrinal changes, Cromwell and Cranmer authorized the translation of the Bible into English, and Cranmer was largely responsible for the Book Of Common Prayer, adopted under Henry's successor, Edward VI. The gains that Protestantism made under Edward (r. 1547-53) were lost under his Catholic sister Mary I (r. 1553-58). The religious settlement (1559) under Elizabeth I, however, guaranteed the Anglican establishment.

The Church of England is identified by adherence to the threefold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons and by a common order of worship found in the Book Of Common Prayer. The church is also characterized by a common attitude of loyalty to Christian tradition, while seeking to

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<sup>1</sup> Mark A. Noll – Bibliography: McEwen, J. S., *The Faith of John Knox* (1961); Muir, Edward, *John Knox: Portrait of a Calvinist* (1930; repr. 1978); Percy, Eustace, *John Knox* (1964); Reid, W. S., *Trumpeter of God: A Biography of John Knox* (1974); Ridley, Jasper, *John Knox* (1968).

## Lesson 9: Reformation Around the Globe 1500-1700

accommodate a wide range of people and views. It holds in tension the authorities of tradition, reason, and the Bible, but asserts the primacy of the Bible. It thus seeks to comprehend Catholic, humanist, and reformed elements, historically represented by Anglo-Catholics (high church), Liberals (broad church), and Evangelicals (low church).

The established status of the Church of England means that all Episcopal appointments are made by the crown, and all revisions of the liturgy must be approved by Parliament. Since the establishment of full religious toleration, however, Parliament has been composed of non-Anglicans as well as Anglicans, and this places the church in an awkward position. This has resulted in efforts, such as those represented by the Oxford Movement, to maintain the church's integrity by separating it from the state. On the other hand, it has also spurred efforts to comprehend other Christians in the national church. The Church of England has been active in the Ecumenical Movement.<sup>1</sup>

### **English Reformation under Henry VIII.**

In his role as supreme head of the church, Henry supervised the general direction of the Reformation. Between 1536 and 1540 all of the monasteries and nunneries in England were dissolved and their property confiscated by the government. An oath of supremacy, promising loyalty to the king as head of the church, could be required of all subjects, and those who refused it, like Sir Thomas MORE, could be executed.

In 1521, Henry had written a treatise against Martin Luther, for which Pope Leo X had awarded him the title "Defender of the Faith." Despite the organizational charges of his Reformation, Henry never adopted Protestant doctrines. The Latin Mass remained in use throughout his life, and theological changes were relatively minor, although both Cromwell and Thomas Cranmer, Henry's archbishop of Canterbury, favored Protestant beliefs.

### **Elizabethan Age**

The Elizabethan Age refers to the long reign (1558-1603) of Queen Elizabeth I of England, which is generally considered to be one of the greatest periods in English history. England not only became a leading maritime and commercial power but also enjoyed a major cultural and artistic renaissance, epitomized by the great dramatist William Shakespeare. The foundations for English strength and relative stability in this period were laid by economic prosperity and partial settlement of the religious issues that had disrupted national life since the Reformation. Under the so-called Elizabethan Settlement, the Church of England received its final form as an institution that took a middle road between Roman Catholicism and Calvinism. Although this settlement displeased the numerous Calvinists (known as Puritans) their dissent was generally tolerated, and they became a vocal force in the politics of the period. Moreover, the Protestants united in their opposition to the Catholics within England and Spain, with whom England was at war for much of the reign.

Although all the arts — including painting, music, and architecture — flourished during this eventful period, the outstanding achievements were in literature. In addition to Shakespeare, the age produced the dramatists Ben Johnson and Christopher Marlowe. Leading poets were Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser, whose epic *The Faerie Queene* was dedicated to Elizabeth. The queen translated the works of the Roman philosopher Boethius and patronized other scholars engaged in translation work. Particular attention was given to the translation of great religious writings, an effort that climaxed with the completion (1611) of the King James, or Authorized, Version of the Bible in the following reign. In other respects, the next reign was an anticlimax.

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<sup>1</sup> John E. Booty – Bibliography: Moorman, J. R. H. , A History of the Church of England

## Lesson 9: Reformation Around the Globe 1500-1700

Under the inept James I, England began the downward slide into political and religious strife that culminated in the English Civil War.<sup>1</sup>

### **Cromwell, Oliver**

Oliver Cromwell was one of the most important figures in British history, a great general, and lord protector of the Commonwealth, or republic, of England, Scotland, and Ireland for five years. He was born at Huntingdon on Apr. 25, 1599, to a local family that customarily furnished members of Parliament. Elected the member for Huntingdon in 1628, Cromwell made his mark by attacking the bishops of the Church of England. During the next 12 years he was prominent in local affairs in eastern England and was chosen (1640) to represent Cambridge in the LONG PARLIAMENT. Once again he attacked the bishops, urging their total abolition and advocating purification of the church by abandoning the Book of Common Prayer and instituting more sermons.

As war between King Charles I and Parliament approached, Cromwell prevented the dispatch of silver from Cambridge University to swell the king's funds; he also raised a troop and later a cavalry regiment (called the Ironsides) at Huntingdon. In the English Civil War, after winning most of East Anglia for Parliament, Cromwell was appointed lieutenant general and helped defeat the royalists in the Battle of Marston Moor (1644).

In 1645 he took part in the decisive victory at Naseby and, as second in command to Sir Thomas Fairfax, took Oxford in 1646, thus ending the first civil war. When the largely Presbyterian Parliament quarreled with its army, Cromwell, himself an Independent (congregationalist), sided with the sectarian soldiers. After defeating the Scots, who had allied with the king, at Preston in 1648, he decided that Charles was responsible for renewing the civil war and pressed for his trial and execution.

During 1649-51, Cromwell fought successfully in Ireland and Scotland, replacing Fairfax as commander in chief in 1650. When he perceived that the Rump Parliament (the remnant of the Long Parliament after the purge of the royalists and Presbyterians) was not pressing on with the reform of the church and state, and was antagonistic to the army, he forcibly dissolved it and invited (1653) a nominated assembly of Independents (Barebone's Parliament) to create a new society. But this assembly moved too fast and was too extreme for Cromwell's taste. After it resigned its power in December 1653, a written constitution, the *Instrument of Government*, was drawn up by a group of army officers. It made Cromwell lord protector to govern the country with the aid of a council of state and a single-chamber Parliament.

Before the first protectoral Parliament met, Cromwell and his council carried out many valuable reforms, particularly of the law. Neither of his two Parliaments passed much other legislation, however, its members being more concerned with constitutional questions. His second Parliament offered to make him king in 1657, an offer that he refused.

Cromwell had helped to fashion a first-class army and a large navy, which caused the Commonwealth to be recognized as a great power in Europe. England was victorious in the First Anglo-Dutch War (1652-54) and, by allying with the French against Spain, acquired Jamaica and Dunkerque and laid the foundations of an overseas empire. At home Cromwell succeeded in establishing a broad church with complete freedom for all Christian sects to worship as they wished outside it. His building up of the national prestige and his tolerance in religious matters—which was extended to the Jews, who were allowed to settle in England for the first time since 1290—

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<sup>1</sup> Bibliography: Black, J. B., *Reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603*, 2d ed. (1959); Rowse, A. L., *Elizabethan Renaissance: The Cultural Achievement* (1972); Smith, Lacey B., *Elizabethan World* (1967; repr. 1971).

## Lesson 9: Reformation Around the Globe 1500-1700

were his outstanding achievements. He grew more tolerant in his last years; although an avowed Puritan since the age of 30, he did not ban music, wine, or dancing at his court. He died on Sept. 3, 1658, to be succeeded peaceably by his son, Richard Cromwell. He was buried with pomp in Westminster Abbey; but his corpse was disinterred, hanged, and beheaded by order of King Charles II in 1661.<sup>1</sup>

Next week we'll look at how the Church progressed into the modern age, from 1700 to 1900.

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Ashley – Bibliography: Ashley, Maurice, *The Greatness of Oliver Cromwell* (1957; repr. 1966); Boyer, Richard, ed., *Oliver Cromwell and the Puritan Revolt* (1966); Fraser, Antonia, *The Lord Protector, Cromwell* (1973); Howell, Roger J., *Cromwell* (1977); New, John F. H., ed., *Oliver Cromwell, Pretender, Puritan Statesman, Paradox* (1972); Roots, Ivan A., comp. and ed., *Cromwell: A Profile* (1972); Wedgwood, C. V., *Oliver Cromwell*, rev. ed. (1973).

## Lesson 10: 1700-1900

### *Splintered Christianity*

The Reformation of the 1500s, took the European Church from the universal rule of Roman Catholicism under the pope, into the segmented rule of national churches. That is, Protestantism was splintered into the churches of England, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and others. With that nationalization of the churches, came the mixing of Church and State, and the confusion of ruling authority. For a millennium, the church of *Christendom* under Roman Catholicism and the Holy Roman Empire – was a political order. It invaded the domain of the state in order to carry the sword. It used the state's power to achieve its earthly ends, and it also accumulated its own power and money – even armies – to lord it over the nations.

When Protestantism severed itself from Rome, it favored worldly princes and turned to them for protection. But when Protestantism splintered into national churches, and then into a myriad of denominations and independent churches, it again became a target. The kings and princes of the world, having been freed from their bondage to Rome, sought to exercise the sort of authority over their people, *and* their churches, that Rome had exercised. The consequences for the churches of Europe were dire. But in America, separating church from state provided a period of what the churches thought would be “safety.” The church had *insulated* itself from the state.

However, in time, lacking cohesive power and a coherent voice, the church became *excluded* from the state, and then from the culture. It was *not* a victim. By its actions and inactions, the church insulated *itself* from both. As we'll see in the last lesson, the tables would turn. Societies around the world got busy insulating and marginalizing the Church, to escape its truth, to elude its moral compass, and to avoid *its discipline*. This was true even within the church. People want to be “free” to do what's right in their own mind (Jdg 17.6). The world thinks today, as always, that “freedom to sin” is liberty and life, instead of being enslavement and death. The Gospel call to liberty in Christ has been muffled by a number of means and factors, which we'll briefly explore here.

This period from 1700 to 1900, is the story of civilization's descent into the abyss. And in many ways, it's the tale of the Church's failure to stave off that descent. Instead of being one with Christ and with one another, the eye has said to hand, “I have no need of you.” (1Cor 12.21) Satan's age-old strategy has been to divide and conquer.

#### **Wesleyan Arminianism**

The Church of England was elitist, and more inclined to social status than Gospel outreach. The poor were largely excluded. John Wesley was a product of that church. But in an encounter with a group of Moravians during a dangerous sea voyage, Wesley's bent towards works, lack of peace, and legalistic view of salvation, were challenged. The Moravians were Hussites (John Hus), and well understood both the sovereignty and grace of God. They never feared for their salvation, as Wesley did. But when he finally came to understand that Gospel truth, he tempered it with his own bent, and created a hybrid theology between Calvinism and Arminianism. He became a three-point Calvinist. This drove his Calvinist friend, George Whitfield, to despair of ever convincing Wesley otherwise. Yet both of them teamed up to bring the Gospel to the rural areas, to move the Gospel out of the churches and into the fields where the people were, and to replace dry formality with a vibrant commitment to Christ, and to a changed life.

Whitefield was the innovator that Wesley could only imitate. He travelled extensively, even to America, conducted open-air preaching for those who couldn't travel to (or weren't permitted in) urban churches. He deployed lay preachers, held conferences, and brought disparate elements of

## Lesson 10: Splintered Christianity 1700-1900

international revival together. It was Whitefield who encouraged Wesley to speak to those that the bishop would exclude, like the miners, using means that the bishop would not authorize, in order to accomplish what the Lord had commanded.<sup>1</sup> Church discipline had been perverted by the hierarchy of the church, from protecting the gospel truth, to hiding it. It was used to enforce the traditions and orders of men, instead of conforming the church to the Word of God. Wesley and Whitefield would remind the Church of Christ's command to go into all the world.

In founding Methodism, Wesley created a democratic form of religion that was highly appealing in America with its democratic ideals. Man had a vote, a say in His salvation, which *election* seemed to deny. Calvinism was seen as too stern and elitist. But Methodism was everyman's religion: easy to understand and egalitarian. It became the favored religion of America; and reformed theology was increasingly set aside.<sup>2</sup> Puritanism would fall into disfavor during this period. Wesley understood the grace of God, having heard Luther's preface to Romans. But he also understood the demands that grace makes of the life lived to God. He understood his works could not save him, but he likewise understood that faith without works is dead. Wesley was "a shepherd of souls, ... keeping people together and organizing them without destroying the delicate filigree of mutual love and individual diversity... He was the genius for careful planning, for systematic methodical catechising, and visiting the 'circuits' year in and year out, from decade to decade, during half a century."<sup>3</sup>

### **Revival – the Great Awakening**

In New England, Calvinist Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) had heard of the great revivals in Europe, under Wesley and Whitefield. He prayed that they would come to his American shores. But when they finally arrived, they struck him as artificial, emotional, and lacking in any doctrinal foundation or cause. The belief was grounded more in the self, than in the truth of God. He wrote *Religious Affections* to express his dismay, and to distinguish true conversion from enthusiasm. Even so, the decaying church, for a brief time, showed signs of life. That will only make sense if we understand what had happened in America, after the Puritan experience in New England.

By nature, individuals are attracted to crowds, to centers of activity, and to seats of power. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, the center of American towns moved from the church, to the town hall, to sports arenas, and in our day (curiously) to the TV and the Internet. Having moved from the church to the field under Methodism and Revivalism, the church ceased being the seat of power; it ceased being the gathering place of the community. During the Industrial Revolution, the farms were replaced with factories, and urbanization pushed churches into the suburbs.

The Great Awakening, in many ways, was an early reaction to a changing economy. As markets changed, and manufacturing changed, and technology increased, people became increasingly isolated even as they became increasingly urbanized. It's the great paradox of our times. We sit in front of our TVs and computer screens, and look at our hand-held devices, with their endless stream of information, and won't talk to the person next to us. Our reality, the focus of our attention, has become more and more impersonal. As that trend gathers momentum, we're not only alienated and isolated from one another, but we're alienated and isolated from God. Our spiritual and social roots are being pulled up, and we react against it in a number of ways. One of the first ways, was a need for a renewed spiritual "experience." That's what Edwards encountered in the revivals of his day, the Great Awakening. There would be a second one at the opening of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> Wells, *No Place for Truth*, pp. 205-207.

<sup>3</sup> Jackson, p. 199-200.

## Deism

One sign of the failure of Church discipline to preserve the Gospel truth, and of the invasive influence of the Enlightenment upon the Church, was the emergence of deism. Deism is the belief in a God who is Creator, but not Sustainer. Deism is a form of theological *rationalism*, that believes in God on the basis of *reason*, without reference to *revelation*. God is unknowable, because deism casts off the anchor of God's Word, and puts reason in its place. The deist submits to the discipline of his own mind, but not to the discipline of God's revealed truth. Thus the authority of the Church, the authority of Scripture, and the power of the Holy Spirit, are rejected as irrational superstition. Thomas Jefferson was a deist. He rewrote the Bible, leaving out everything but the words of Christ, as if they were not written by the same men who wrote the rest. Now, *that's* irrational superstition. A deist is either a practical atheist, who lacks the courage to say there is no God; or else he's a practical idolater, who fashions a god in his own mind. A deist embraces naturalism without letting go of supernaturalism, and thereby he cannot justify either one to his own satisfaction.

## *Imperialism & Missions*

Colonialism began in the late 1400s. But by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, England, Germany, and France had divided much of the known world among themselves using economic exploitation, and not just military might. This virulent form of colonialism is named "imperialism." The British East India Company acted in its own best interests as a private corporation. But it was backed by British foreign policy and its military might. The Church of England, through its missionary agencies, was likewise employed in this "imperialistic outreach." To subdue their quarry, religion was thought to be an effective agent of the government, and a valid means by which to justify the subjugation of an entire nation or culture – bringing them Christ in British garb. "The sun never sets on the British Empire." In some ways, it mirrored the expansion of the Church under the Roman Empire. "Just as the *Pax Romana* (the Roman Peace) aided the great expansion at the start of the Christian Church, so the *Pax Britannica* (the British Peace) aided it in the modern era." A worldwide empire was facilitating global missions.<sup>1</sup> Whatever ends the secular world had in mind, God employed them to His own ends, using them as a means by which to place all things under Christ.

The revivalism of the 1700s, laid a foundation for the missions of the 1800s. Mission societies were founded in abundance: the Baptist Missionary Society by William Carey (1792); the London Missionary Society (1795); the Church Missionary Society (1799); the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804); and the Methodist Missionary Society (1813). Many missionaries recognized the danger of mixing the Gospel with politics and economics. And they were frustrated by needing military approval for outreach. Yet they enjoyed the protection and benefits of British citizenship, language, medicine, and technology. The modern world was overcoming the remotest spots on earth, and the Church was overcoming with it.

William Carey went to India under the umbrella of the East India Company. He set himself to learn and to translate the Bible into all the primary languages and dialects of India. He may not have done that, but what he accomplished was extraordinary. Over forty years, he translated the Bible forty translations and dialects, and became known as the Wyclif of the East.

In 1832, Daniel Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta, not only furthered the Gospel that Carey had brought to India, but instigated the construction of the British railway system that remains the lifeline of India today. He brought order and discipline to a church that had become lax, enforcing doctrine and practice which were thought "unacceptable" to the locals. But by diplomacy and love, he led

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, pp. 248-249.

## Lesson 10: Splintered Christianity 1700-1900

the church to effectively reach the myriad cultures of India with the truth and the life of the gospel, bringing liberty and prosperity, in opposition to caste and brutality. The benefits and cleansing that are inherent in the Gospel, cannot be fully appreciated without understanding and seeing the pain and filth that paganism and brutality can impose on a society. He was dearly loved by the people of India, as well as the people of England (Isa 61.1-2)

In 1807, Robert Morrison sailed into the port of Canton in China, with the London Missionary Society. He was a translator. His lifelong relationship with the East India Company was one of mutual need and mutual distrust. The company guarded its commercial interests in China by strictly refusing to let Westerners such as Morrison evangelize. They feared missionaries would offend their Chinese trade partners. But after Morrison's arrival in China, company officials learned of his language skills and hired him as a translator. They gave Morrison a salary but also attempted to restrict his missions activities. In 1815, for example, the company threatened to deport him when it learned that Morrison had completed, in secret, a translation of the New Testament. When Morrison had first sailed to China, he was asked, "Do you really expect to make an impression on the idolatry of the great Chinese empire?" In reply, Morrison spoke more prophetically than he knew: "No, sir, but I expect God will." <sup>1</sup>

In 1865, Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission, breaking all the rules. His mission had no denomination, no papacy, no carefully planned system of financing. And yet it became larger and more effective than any other mission in China. "For understandable reasons, Christianity tended to come across as a European product. A foreign, imperial aroma tended to hang around many mission stations... When Hudson Taylor shaved his head and grew a Chinese "pigtail" the opposition changed from ridicule to indignant criticism, to the effect that he was a disgrace to England." <sup>2</sup> But not to God, and not to the true Church. Taylor had to learn to "die," before God could use him.

The missionary tendency to confuse the Gospel with cultural norms, resulted in looking down on the native culture as inferior. Yet Paul didn't do that when he visited Athens. Genuine love and humility will take the trouble to know the mind of the other man, and not alienate him unnecessarily by denigrating his nation or his culture. It understands that the Gospel purifies by transcending the culture in order to transform the heart. It doesn't replace the culture with religion, but replaces death and sin with life and righteousness, through Christ and in Christ.

### ***The Industrial Revolution***

The march towards modernity and an age of technology, produced a widespread reaction by those woefully unprepared to replace a rural agrarian lifestyle, with an urban industrialized lifestyle. As manufacturing arose, millions fled from the country to the city. Having been self-sufficient, they became dependent on corporate employers – and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, on government providers.

One casualty of urbanization, was the local church, with its community life. It was where neighbors gathered to care for one another, and to worship together, and to affirm the truths of the faith. But in the city, with poor salaries, poor living conditions, and excessive workhours, the church had no time and often no place to gather, and no means to sustain itself. The Scientific Age was spawning the Technological Age, and there was no place for God or "superstition." Walt Whitman wrote *Leaves of Grass* as his tribute to modernity and industrial might. Others sang a lament. Backlash

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-52/hudson-taylor-and-missions-to-china-gallery-of-gritty.html> (1996).

<sup>2</sup> Jackson, p. 253.

## Lesson 10: Splintered Christianity 1700-1900

against forced labor and urbanization, didn't produce revival or reformation. Instead, it produced SPIRITISM and HERESY.

If religion in its traditional form was excluded from the marketplace, and later from the universities and local schools, then devilish rebels would invent their own form of religion. A confluence of ideas around the 1840s, led on the one hand to a general belief that science and reason would save mankind from ignorance and superstition. We'll call it *Scientism*. On the other hand, there was a widespread populist response to it, often born of that ignorance and superstition. And we'll call that response, *Reactionism*. The one was pushing for social change; and the other was pushing for social stability. As a result, from the 1830s to the 1860s, the world – and America in particular – entered into a period of unprecedented polarization. It continues today.

For SCIENTISM, if there was some other explanation for our existence, exclusive of God, then religion could be dispensed with. If there was a solution for man's sinful conduct, that didn't include "sin" but only "sickness", then religion could be dispensed with. If we could be educated to be righteous and loving, without calling upon God — and if morality could be derived through a social contract, then religion could be dispensed with. If the Bible could be shown to be mythology instead of history, then it could be dispensed with: discarded with Greek and Roman mythologies. The religion of Man, like the tower of Babel, could rise up to challenge and to replace God. But it needed a key idea, a theory to justify this desire to be free of God. What would that theory be? The answer is Darwinism in 1859.

But without the societal and religious changes in the decades leading up to it, paving the way for it, Darwinism might not have had the impact it did – which was instantaneous and worldwide. If Church discipline had been more vigilant, if doctrine had been better protected and preserved, then the world we know might have been far different. LIBERALISM in the Church was a breeding ground for secularism in the congregations, and heresy in the pulpits. Liberalism was born of a desire to justify faith and prove revelation, using the scientific method. It seeks to prove the veracity of Scripture to unbelievers. The Father of Liberalism was Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), a German biblical scholar who wanted to reconcile the criticisms of the Enlightenment, with traditional Protestantism. He was also influential in the rise of Higher Criticism. His work laid the foundation for modern hermeneutics. That, in turn, led modern evangelicals to respond with "The Chicago Statements," refuting the work of Schleiermacher and his successors, and upholding both traditional Biblical interpretation, and the authority of Scripture.

### The Rise of the Cults

1827 Plymouth Brethren founded – Darby *et al*  
1830 Mormonism founded – Joseph Smith –  
Book of Mormon published  
1830 Finney's revivals: 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Awakening  
1832 Church of Christ (Disciples) founded, made  
of Presbyterians distressed over factionalism  
**1833 Slavery Abolition Act – England**  
1833 John Darby formulates Dispensationalism  
1833 Keble's sermon 'Nat'l Apostasy' initiates the  
Oxford Movement in England (Church of Eng.  
is direct descendant of Apostolic Church)  
1835 Finney teaches theology at Oberlin College  
**1836 Mahan - Holiness Movement**  
1838-39 – Lutheran Church Mo. Synod founded  
1838 – Schleiermacher's *Hermeneutics* - Higher  
Criticism and dawn of Liberalism.

1840 Millerism – root of Seventh Day Adventists  
1843 Kierkegaard – Christian Existentialism  
1843 Schism in Church of Scotland  
1844 Millerite prediction of 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming fails  
1845 Southern Baptist Convention GA  
1846 Finney Systematic Theology  
1848 Karl Marx' Communist Manifesto  
1848 Perfectionist Movement Western NY  
1854 Immaculate Conception is Catholic dogma  
1855 d. Kierkegaard  
1857 Third Great Awakening Canada & U.S.  
**1859 Charles Darwin's Origin of Species**  
1860 AMERICAN CIVIL WAR  
1863 Seventh-Day Adventists – Ellen White  
1883 Nietzsche's *Superman*

## **Darwinism**

Darwinism, as opposed to evolution, is not a scientific theory. It is a religion. It holds onto its belief system despite the continuing lack of scientific evidence to support it. Ironically, it was, and it remains, a reaction to religion – specifically to Calvinism and to Judgement – in order to avoid admitting the sovereign and direct intervention of God in the creation of the universe, of life itself, and of accountability for our actions. It is an atheist’s dream god: self-defined and self-actuated. It seeks to substitute a mechanism of creation, for the Creator God, without answering the question, “Where did the material and the mechanism of creation come from?”

An adjunct “scientific religion,” String Theory, is likewise untestable. It has no scientific evidence to support its assertion that there are multiple dimensions and multiple universes. It relies on mathematical propositions that *cannot be tested*, because we’re limited to our own universe, with its own laws. That’s a religious or mythological claim, not a scientific theory.

“Is string theory science? Physicists and cosmologists have been debating the question for the past decade. Now the community is looking to philosophy for help... addressing the accusation that branches of theoretical physics have become detached from the realities of experimental science.” (*Scientific American*, from *Nature Magazine*, Dec 23, 2015)

String Theory, as it relates to religion, then, would require “a god” for each universe, a Law-Giver, because each universe has its own laws — its own rules of reality. This is not only inconsistent with the God of the Bible, but inconsistent with rational thought, as we’ve conceived of “rational.” For the atheist, it “proves” there can be no God; for the Christian it proves the theory is bogus. And in the end, the theory doesn’t answer the question, “Where did the material and mechanism (the laws) of creation come from?”

## **Marxism**

Marxist socialism, as opposed to economics, is not a scientific theory. It is a religion. It holds onto its belief system despite the continuing lack of evidence to support it. Ironically, it was, and it remains, a reaction to religion, “the opiate of the people,” as Marx put it. The Industrial Revolution was consolidating political and economic power in the hands of a few, instead of distributing them among the masses, for the common good. Materialism and Social inequality polarized societies in the industrialized nations, and alienated other nations. Factory workers were treated like serfs by the Lords of the Economic Manor. Marx sought social justice – returning the fruits of their labor, to the workers who earned it. The biblical principle of slaves submitting to their masters, was seen as allowing cruelty and injustice to continue unopposed. The economic aristocrats were not being held unaccountable by the people, and Marx wanted to put an end to it.

However, rather than put power in the hands of the workers, he put it in the hands of the ELITE. They would be the stewards and trustees, until the workers were ready to rule themselves. As it has proven time and again, the depravity of mankind won’t permit any form of liberty until it is still and yielded under Jesus Christ, Head of all. Every socialist scheme has failed; it has led only to tyranny – the substitution of socialist lords of the manor, for capitalist lords. When the Berlin wall fell in 1989, recalcitrant Marxists embedded elsewhere in the world, claimed socialism must be worldwide to succeed — it must have universal control of all means of production. They refused to accept the evidence, thus proving that Marxism is a religion. Since then, it has proceeded to consolidate political and economic power by pushing for nations without borders. It is a utopian lust for power and control, unsubmitted to God’s authority or laws.

Next week we’ll examine some major trends in a post-Christian world, and how the Church can be counter-cultural, even influential, rather than remain marginalized.

## **Lesson 11: 1900-Present**

### ***Age of Science, Disillusionment, and Secularism***

**The World Wars**

**Technology as God**

### ***Government as Savior***

**Education as Social Engineering**

**Media as Mediator**

**Missions as Liberation**

### ***The Nature of Man, Society and God***

**Mysticism in a Mechanistic World**

**Alienation, Solitude, and Isolation**

**The Culture Wars – Relative truths**

### ***Consumer-Based Christianity***

### ***Worship Then and Now***

## Lesson 11: Age of Science, Disillusionment, and Secularism 1900-Present

## Lesson 12: Conclusions

### Conclusions from Church History

From the beginning of the course, we have been saying that without discipline there is no church, because DISCIPLESHIP itself is grounded in *discipline*. Early church history indicates that discipleship was then correctly based on imitation of the behavior and character of Jesus Christ, especially as portrayed in Scriptural examples about the Apostles. It is also evident in the legendary example of the Apostle John as he restored the leader of the thieves. If discipline in the form of correction or chastisement was exercised, it was by persuasion rather than by punishment. After the church was legalized under the Roman Empire, there was no clearly defined basis of discipline other than to follow the “Way of Christ.” This principle was abstractly perceived as the “way of love,” but without a clear-cut pattern of imitation. In the Eastern and African churches this abstraction carried over into an abstract theology as well. In Rome, however, Christian discipleship was more a matter of behavior than of intellect, philosophy or dogma.

Discipline under the Roman approach referred to the outward corrective actions of the church and state rather than the inward urgings of the Holy Spirit. Discipline was intended to impose a set of rules on the disciple’s mind rather than a set of values on his soul. This type of “domination” by coercion we have learned is better exercised by the state than by the church. In fact, the church was the state under the Roman Empire after 376. Membership in the church was inescapable, but so too was anarchy, as Constantine quickly learned. With mixed cultural and religious backgrounds swarming into local congregations, it was inevitable that old belief systems would supplant some of the teachings of the church. To correct the problem Constantine assembled Church Councils and established an orthodox theology that governed all Christendom. Yet conformity to doctrine and orthodoxy is not the only basis of discipleship.

With the start of the Monastic movement in about 500, we saw an effort to expressly define a Rule of personal discipline, as opposed to general conformity to doctrine. This was done by listing a specific series of actions that were to be followed by the members of a particular order. Problems immediately arose. In the same way that there is no church without discipline, there is no discipline without personal relationships. That was the shortcoming of the monastic Rule. It segmented its membership into capsules of contemplation. Each monk was given a separate room for contemplation and isolation. The monks were virtually ungoverned in their personal pursuit of spiritual consciousness, fellow travelers on the road to Euphoria. This was definitely not the approach Jesus took with his disciples. Monasticism was founded on an abstract set of rules to change behavior instead of being founded on the person of Jesus Christ who grants a changed heart.

The monastic path of discipline degenerated into a Rule of self-denial and penance, a path condemned by Paul in Colossians 2:23. Penance leads to a kind of self-righteousness in the sense that the individual controls his own destiny by how well he conforms himself to the Rule. Luther considered this path of self-discipline utterly bankrupt. We know that Scripture teaches we are to be self-controlled, but self-discipline is a misnomer. Discipline must look to the Word of God as the source of its rigor and its authority, or else the autonomy which characterizes true discipline (as described by Tillich) degenerates into heteronomy, that is, foreign rule, and submission to an impersonal code instead of a very personal God.

It wasn’t long before the self-righteousness of monasticism became something far more sinister. The drive for power and control that was rampant in early church politics, led to limiting the supply of salvation. This was a way of increasing the price of disobedience. Righteousness was bestowed

## Lesson 12: Conclusions

by the church, in the form of indulgences and papal pardons. At that point salvation became something the disciple earned from the patronage of the church or bought from a traveling salesman, rather than something bestowed on an him by the Grace of God. People couldn't afford to offend the church or challenge its teachings for fear of eternal damnation. And that meant a great deal of power in the hands of church officials. If any Biblical discipleship was left, it was found in one-on-one relationships carried on apart from normal church activities, and that meant a revival was needed in the monasteries. The Cluniac movement was intended to provide just that. When it too failed, God placed his precious Word in the hands of the commoners through the Waldenses, lay preachers, and published bibles. If discipling relationships were being stymied in the churches then God intended to cultivate them in the streets.

The study of discipleship in church history is actually a study of discipling relationships: relationships with God in the form of faithfulness and devotions, with the Word of God in the form of doctrine and meditation, with other Christians in the form of mutual encouragement, with the church in the form of submission and unity, with the state in the form of obedience without unfaithfulness, with society in the form of witnessing and service, and with ourselves in the form of honesty and integrity.

### *The Imitation of Christ*

The misdirections we have explored in church history have been the consequence of wrong imitation — either by failing to imitate the Way of Christ, or by wrongfully imitating the way of the world. Let's review some Scriptural passages that describe the correct path of discipline through imitation. When Paul became distressed over the hero-worship he saw at Corinth inspired by him and Apollos, he castigated the disciples there with these words,

So then, no more boasting about men! Men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Paul was apparently being challenged as to his integrity and as to the motive for gathering pupils to follow his teachings. Paul turns the tables a bit as if to challenge the motives of his detractors by writing, "Wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts." The church at Corinth had become caught up in the exposition and expositor of God's Word instead of finding delight in God's Word for its content alone. Paul was not a dynamic speaker, though an excellent writer (see 2 Cor.10:10). The listeners at Corinth were impressed by the more dynamic style and presentation of Apollos. It seems even then people were chasing after ribbons and lace instead of the gift they contained. Paul tried to curb their enthusiasm for exotic renderings of the Scriptures by writing this important caution, "I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, 'Do not go beyond what is written.'"

When the interpretations and exposition of God's Word step outside the bounds of the written words, there is always a tendency to teach heresy. So too, when the presentation of God's Word is attended with too much ceremony and glitter, there is a tendency to ignore the message and worship the vehicle instead. This is particularly true today in television and media events that glamorize the expositor and pursue the controversial. It is a throwback to the Gothic Cathedrals with their ornate and visually stunning structures that distract attendees from the message itself. Drum rolls and brass bands should immediately set off warning bells for the devoted disciple. God's Word does not have to be commercially packaged to be effective.

## Lesson 12: Conclusions

I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Paul is asking them to respect his relationship with them instead of chasing after every wind of teaching or style of preacher. He informs us of his personal relationship and devotion to them, as if they were his spiritual children. It is as a loving parent to a child that he writes, not as a warden to his inmates. He also seems to be downplaying the words he uses in favor of the example he displays. And he shows in mentioning Timothy that the successful disciple will be like his teacher in deed as well as word, living out the life he professes as his teacher lived it out before him.

Jesus taught us the same lesson when he said, “A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.” (Luk 6:40) Or again he says, “A new commandment I give you. Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.” (Joh 13:34) Jesus is telling us to imitate his love because he has imitated the love of the father. “If you really knew me, you would know my father as well... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14:7,9) And by imitating Jesus we will display his love to the world as a witness and a testimony.

But should we blindly follow the example of our teachers, trusting that they are correctly imitating their own teachers? Paul indicates we should not. “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” By adding the condition that it is only insofar as he conforms to Christ that we are to conform to him, Paul maintains the source of authority as God’s Word rather than his own example. God’s Word is where we find the description of Jesus Christ and the standard against which to measure Paul. His example is merely a visual presentation of Christlikeness to imitate. We are therefore able to maintain our autonomy based on Scripture when our imitation of our teachers is a cautious one.

### *The exercise of leadership*

Now that we’ve looked at the role of the disciple a little, let’s have a look at the discipler. There are three primary images used in Scripture to describe the role of the church leader. One is the parent-child image, another is the shepherd-sheep image, and the last is the watchman image from Ezekiel 3:17. All three place responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the leader, and yet Scripture doesn’t stop there. There are other responsibilities allocated to the flock with regard to the proper attitude toward leaders. In Hebrews 13:17 we read,

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

The word “obey” is the Greek “peitho” which means to persuade. This is more accurately rendered, “Suffer yourself to be persuaded by.” There is no right to persuade against one’s will, but by being such an example that persuasion is drawn out of respect for the elder’s own personal walk with God. This is drawn from Heb 13:7 which says, “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith,” and again from Heb 6:12, “imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.” It is the successful replication of Christlikeness that we are called to obey and no other, and yet all of us are sinners and subject to failure. How then are we to govern the body of Christ if there is no absolute allegiance to fallible leadership? The answer lies in the source of our allegiance.

## Lesson 12: Conclusions

Primarily, discipline and unity are the consequence of respect for the officers of the church as opposed to their position alone. And that respect is elicited by the extent to which personal devotion to Jesus Christ is displayed in the daily life of the leader. How he chooses to exercise control is as much a part of his respect as his personal witness. Obedience isn't something owed to him as much as it is earned by him. That's because authority remains in God's Word and Jesus' example.

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers not because you must, but because you are willing, ... not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock (1Pet.5:3).

Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. (1Thess.5:12)

The word respect in the second passage comes from the Greek word for knowledge by personal experience, or "appreciate." The word for "over" in Greek is "prohistamenous" meaning "to stand before" rather than to stand over. The purpose seems clear that if Christ is to be elevated then we, like the Holy Spirit, must have a "spotlight" ministry in regard to Christ. We must illuminate him without trying to steal the limelight for ourselves. Jesus said,

But you are not to be called "Rabbi" for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth "father" for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called "teacher" for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

With that very small sampling of Scripture, let's review what happens when we take these guidelines to extremes and let's very carefully define just what those extremes are.

### *Developing professional spiritualists*

Monks at first sought withdrawal from social ties and distractions rather than find their ministry in the service of others and the proclamation of the Gospel. They claimed it was necessary to discover the true path of grace with a little "g." That essentially meant the uninhibited pursuit of Eastern Mysticism and some golden fleece called nirvana. Even in our own century, Thomas Merton declared the goal of the monastic movement is to raise up spiritual soldiers by giving them the time they need to meditate on the deeper aspects of their relationship to God. While Christ spent much time apart and in prayer, he never abdicated his role as God's declarant IN the world with all its distractions and shortcomings.

The monastic movement at its start failed to imitate Christ's participation, leadership and evangelism in a sinful world. The separation of the professional cleric from the general populace also led to hero-worship and a type of caste system; there were ne'er do well Christians who couldn't be trusted with a glass of wine, and then there were super-Christians in the guise of monks and priests who couldn't be trusted with a soul. Jesus made no such distinction among his Apostles. He imparted greater knowledge to those who prodded him for it, but he held them all to an equal standard of love, humility and justice. None was ever above the others by any means beyond the personal respect he was willingly accorded by the others.

### *Stereo-typing friends and foes*

We learned from the Münster incident that defamed the Anabaptists for generations, we should not love or detest the teachings of unnamed masses that we have conveniently grouped under some label or epithet. We learned too from the murderous counter-reformation and counter-inquisitions that as Christians we should refrain from exercising the power of the state as we deal with our

## Lesson 12: Conclusions

opponents. By dealing with group labels rather than individuals, we depersonalize those we have relationships with and make them somehow less human. There is a sinister potential to such labeling tactics and that is to anesthetize our sensibilities toward others. It enables us to injure others without injuring our own conscience, without inflicting on ourselves the stigma of guilt and remorse for what we have said or done. The label itself is our excuse. “But they were only \_\_\_\_\_” What they were, was God’s creatures. Let’s draw an analogy.

The first thing the military does in boot camp is to teach recruits to call the enemy by an impersonal epithet, so that the *thing* they kill in battle won’t be human. It is no less unconscionable to label our foes and perceived foes with acceptable and descriptive terminology such as “Catholic,” “Methodist,” “Arminian” and “Mormon,” and then lambaste them as a group for their beliefs. Instead of taking each one as an individual who is potentially precious in the sight of God, we all too often treat people as items in a basket full of similar items. If God does not love us corporately but individually, and if God does not condemn us corporately but individually, then that is the approach we should take with our fellow men. Tribalism is the natural inclination of man, not of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Church Polity and Politics***

While it appears that God protected and enlarged his church by placing it under the auspices of the Roman Empire, it does not appear that the church works best when linked to the state. We have seen that the protection of the state normally means control by the state of church doctrine as well as church funding. Even during the Reformation, creation of state churches in Germany and England only led to a false belief by the citizenry that salvation was gained by membership in the organization. There is nothing to be gained by seeking state protection for church “rights.”

It is always wrong for the church as an institution to solicit state assistance to pursue its goals. And yet it is always right that the individual pursue active roles in the life of his society, whether in politics or socially. For the individual, there are no “rights” to be demanded and defended under the coercive rule of the state. Whatever rights need protection, those rights must belong to an innocent third party. Anger and retribution are never exercised in self-defense by the Christian. They are, however, legitimate in defense of a third party. Without the outrage of individuals like Wilberforce and Bonhoeffer who tenaciously opposed the enslavement of a race, there would be no witness for the justice of God.

Christ commanded us to be in the world, but apart from its hold on our will. Historically, when Christians failed to be active in government, the government did not likewise fail to be active in the church. The conflict of interest appears only when the church as a body tries to exercise the power of the state on its own behalf. Biblical examples from Esther and Acts demonstrate that this seems to be God’s method. Even Jewish temple life was corrupted when the Sadducees exercised corporate power under Roman authority.

For church government as regards the exercise of coercive state-like power, there are extremes to be avoided. When the papal throne totally dominated the church, there was a tendency to corrupt the Word of God. And at the same time, when the Anabaptists rejected all authority above the local level, there was also a tendency to corrupt the Word of God. Paul indicates that there is a clear responsibility on the part of church Elders to protect the Truth of God as it was originally imparted to them. There must therefore be some mechanism, like the early Cluniac movement instituted, to oversee the teaching of God’s Word at the local level without becoming dictatorial. The concept

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<sup>1</sup> See Jonathan Haidt’s book, *The Righteous Mind* (Vintage Books, Random House, Inc., NY, 2013).

## Lesson 12: Conclusions

of presbyterian rule and Synod oversight seems to provide a viable solution to balancing congregational versus centralized power.

### ***Family and Church***

We know from Martin Luther's experience and that of Karl Marx, that the negative influence of the parent leaves its permanent mark in the attitude of the child toward God. We know too, from the lives of the giants of the early church, that the positive influence of even one parent will also leave its permanent mark on the child. The faithful example of Christian parents will guide the child into the loving arms of God. It gives the child a clearer understanding of the precious gift we have received from God in the person of Jesus Christ.

The responsibility of the individual Christian to his family comes ahead of his responsibility to the church. God has created family relationships as a microcosm of church-based relationships. We are able to learn more about the character of God from the proper acting out of our roles in the family. That's why Paul referred to his converts as his spiritual children. When the church fails to act out the role of the loving and forgiving parent, it acts out the role of the abusive parent instead. At the other end of the spectrum, when the church fails to exercise proper control and parental oversight crucial to raising up its offspring, the church dissolves into chaos. God's Word loses its value and its perceived authority. Heresy runs amuck and discipline evaporates.

### ***Personal Devotions***

The child cannot receive salvation through the faith of the parents. So too, the individual cannot receive salvation through the faith of the church. Catholicism, Anglicanism and Lutheranism wrongfully taught that citizenship and church membership were equivalent roles, and that participation in either would result in salvation. This is simply false. The autonomy of the individual demands that his knowledge, his wisdom, his character and his behavior all be grounded in his personal experience of the power of God in his own life through his personal devotion to God. He cannot pay the professional cleric for his grace any more than the delinquent virgins could buy oil for their lamps from the faithful ones in the Biblical parable.

*This leads to several conclusions about discipleship in the church:*

We must make the Word of God available to the individual in his native tongue. Without it, the individual cannot intelligently devote himself to God, having no knowledge of God's will apart from what he is told by the church. Accountability in the church is a two-way street. The disciple is held accountable to the teacher, but the teacher is held accountable to the Word of God. Authority must remain in God's Holy Word. The individual needs to be counseled and instructed in the Word of God and in the means of personal grace, such as prayer, meditation, Bible study, good works and personal application of the truth of God in his daily life. Church membership should not come by request, but only by a demonstration of personal devotion to God. Any other method leads to false assurance and foreign beliefs.

### ***Social Reforms and Services***

The individual (as opposed to the church) needs to be actively engaged in good works in the world. This does not mean a social agenda carried out by government programs and political parties, nor does it imply responsibility for the starving millions around the globe. What it does mean is that, as the individual has opportunity, he cannot ignore his responsibility to provide for his fellow man. Spending a corporate total of a million dollars on a church building while giving ten thousand dollars to feed and clothe the needy in the same city indicates a misperception of the responsibility

## Lesson 12: Conclusions

the disciple has to the lost souls in the world. It was the visible demonstration of caring and sincerity on the part of the Friars that provided a testimony to the grace of God. It was the visible demonstration of disdain and greed on the part of the Catholic hierarchy that provided equal testimony to the hypocrisy and corruption of the church in the middle ages. We must not say, “I wish you well” to a starving world without also providing the gospel and the food it needs.

### *Corporate Worship*

Liturgy, pomp, and circumstance without understanding their doctrinal basis, leads to worship that is displeasing in the sight of God. Magnificent church structures without ample acknowledgment of the fact that they were designed to reflect the majesty of God, leads to the elevation of the builder in his own eyes; it fails to give credit, glory, and honor to God. Using church buildings and grounds as memorials to individuals, desecrates the sacredness of its function, which is to provide a common ground for gathering in the name of Jesus Christ. The building must therefore be more functional than glitzy. But it mustn't be neglected either, as if to treat the Bride of Christ with indifference. Any symbolism innate in the structure isn't necessarily repugnant. Stained glass and carved stone spires remind us of some of the attributes of God in their beauty, symmetry, soaring balance, enduring splendor and greatness.

The worship service must be in the vernacular with the emphasis placed on teaching the Word of God forcefully and with great integrity. God's Word is one of the means of our sanctification, and as the bread of life, it must be broken open to enable us to more readily digest its profound truths. This must not lead to excessive intellectualization of the very simple truth of the love of God. That leads to hero-worship in the church and to obscuring God's Word. Keep in mind that for those nations which have perhaps only 400 words in their vocabulary, the truth of God is just as understandable and just as efficacious. If the deaf can only sign the basics of language, then what value is found in tracing the subtle nuances of linguistic meaning in some foreign tongue? “Do not go beyond what is written” (1 Cor. 4:6).

Other means of teaching, such as music, provide a way to more readily understand the beauty and the profound truths of Scripture. Singing by the laity draws them into the common bond of fellowship. Administration of the sacraments is a visible and commonly understood means of reaffirming our covenantal relationship with God and with each other. It must not therefore be so infrequent as to lend it more mystical importance than it really has, nor should it be so commonplace that it becomes ritualistic and void of meaning. The liturgies of the Catholic faith became habits without foundation and that led to a constraint on the process of sanctification.

And finally, there must be a clear path to incorporate the individual into the role of church leader by progressive steps. Where the church has relied on specialized training at seminaries and universities, a dichotomy has emerged in discipleship. There are the same tendencies toward elitism that we found in the monastic movement. Tertullian clearly saw the need to equip each and every disciple for the work of Christ on earth. If everyone is properly equipped we are less likely to fall into the trap of abdicating our responsibility to be faithful servants of God, and we are more likely to respect the achievements of fellow disciples. Then perhaps, where two or three gather in his name, we will truly have a church instead of a soapbox from which to gain personal glory or infamy.

## Lesson 12: Conclusions

# Appendix 1 - Church History Timeline

## Roman Emperors, Christian Martyrs and Major events in Church History

*All dates are best guesses, some less so than others...*

- 27 BC-14 AD.....Augustus is emperor
- 14-37.....Tiberius is emperor**
- 35.....Jewish Persecution of Christians in Jerusalem
- 37-41.....Caligula is emperor
- 41-54.....Claudius is emperor
- 44.....James, Son of Zebedee beheaded
- 54-68.....Nero is emperor
- 60.....Paul tried by Felix
- 60.....Matthew killed in Parthia
- 64.....Rome burns, Nero blames the Christians**
- 64.....1st General Persecution
- 64.....Peter and Paul martyred at Rome
- 68.....Canon closed (?)**
- 66-70.....Revolt in Judea, Vespasian sent to quell it
- 69-79.....Vespasian is emperor
- 70.....Jerusalem destroyed
- 72.....Jude crucified
- 73.....Barnabas dies of unknown causes
- 73.....Masada falls**
- 74.....Simon the Zealot crucified in Britain
- 79.....Mt. Vesuvius explodes burying Pompei
- 79-81.....Titus is emperor
- 80.....Paul's letters are circulating as a group**
- 81-96.....Domitian (Titus' younger brother) is emperor
- 85.....2nd General Persecution
- 95.....Canon closed (?)**
- 96.....Clement I sends letter supporting Apostolic succession
- 96-98.....Nerva is emperor
- 97.....Timothy beaten to death by mob
- 98-117.....Trajan is emperor
- 108.....3rd General Persecution
- 110.....John dies of old age at Ephesus – End of Apostolic Era**
- 110.....Sunday is Christian Sabbath at this time
- 113-117.....Parthian War/Revolt of the Jews
- 115.....2nd Jewish uprising against Rome
- 117-138.....Hadrian is emperor (built Hadrian's wall in England)
- 132.....Simon Bar Cocheba declares himself Messiah
- 138-161.....Antoninus Pius is emperor
- 139.....Marcion splits church at Rome with heretical teachings
- 140.....Justin Martyr's description of Sabbath worship
- 140.....Shepherd of Hermas published as guide to church order
- 150.....Worship service divided between true believers & others
- 156.....Montanus' "Phrygian" movement: revival of prophets/revelation
- 161-180.....Marcus Aurelius (last great emperor of Rome)
- 163.....4th General Persecution
- 163.....Justin Martyr & Polycarpus martyred
- 180-192.....Commodus is emperor
- 185.....Irenaeus upholds incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection as fact
- 190.....Clement of Alexandria takes over catechetical school at Alexandria**
- 190.....Clement instructs young pupil named Origen
- 192.....5th General Persecution
- 193.....Pertinax is emperor
- 193-211.....Severus is emperor
- 195.....Tertullian becomes Christian
- 197.....Tertullian's Apology**
- c.199.....Apostle's Creed standardized
- 200.....Muratorian NT Canon established
- 202.....Clement of Alexandria trains Origen
- 206.....Tertullian joins Montanists
- 211-217.....Caracalla is emperor
- 218-222.....Elagabalus is emperor
- 222-235.....Severus Alexander is emperor
- 227.....Zoroastrianism revived in Parthia
- 230.....Origen ordained in Palestine
- 230.....Origen finishes first Hexapla & Sys. Theology**
- 235-238.....Maximinus is emperor

## Appendix 1: Timeline

- 235.....6th General persecution  
238-244.....Gordianus III is emperor  
244-249.....Philippus is emperor  
248.....Cyprian named Bishop of Carthage 1 yr. after conversion  
249-251.....Decius is emperor  
249.....7th General Persecution  
**250.....Origen's NT/Major period of church construction**  
251-253.....Gallus is emperor  
251.....Cyprian advocates Papism and episcopacy  
251.....Novatian schism and anti-pope  
253-259.....Valerian is emperor  
257.....8th General Persecution  
257.....St. Lawrence and Cyprian martyred  
259-268.....Gallien is emperor  
268-270.....Claudius II is emperor  
270-275.....Aurelian is emperor  
270.....9th General Persecution  
270.....St. Alban martyred  
275-276.....Tacitus is emperor  
276-282.....Probus is emperor  
282-283.....Carus is emperor  
284-305.....Diocletian is emperor  
**300.....Eusebius' NT/There are 40 churches in Rome**  
300.....Anthony of Koma becomes 1st monk (friend of Athanasius)  
303.....10th General Persecution  
303.....St. Sebastian and St. George martyred  
305.....Galerius and Constantius are emperor  
305.....Meletian schism  
306-337.....Constantine the Great is emperor  
**313 Christianity legalized by Edict of Constantine**  
314.....Council of Ancyra formalizes discipline  
316.....Donatist schism  
318.....Arian heresy denies true divinity of Christ  
321.....Constantine declares Sunday a holiday  
**325.....Council of Nicea called by Constantine**  
325.....Nicean Creed  
335.....Athanasius exiled, Arius declared orthodox  
335.....December 25th is being celebrated as Christmas  
337-361.....Rule by sons of Constantine  
341.....Ulphilas becomes missionary to the Goths  
361-363.....Julianus "The Apostate" (organized a pagan church)  
363-364.....Jovianus (surrendered Mesopotamia to the Persians)  
364-375.....Valentinus is emperor  
367.....Bishop Athanasius' Easter letter lists 27 books of NT  
373.....John Chrysostom becomes monk  
374.....Ambrose becomes Bishop of Milan  
374.....Augustine joins Manicheans  
375-383.....Gratianus is emperor  
376.....Visigoths cross the Danube  
379-395.....Theodosius "The Great" is emperor  
379.....Basil creates Rule of Discipline for eastern monasteries  
380.....Christianity becomes the official religion of Empire.  
381.....John Chrysostom ordained deacon  
**382.....Jerome Bible begun**  
384.....Bishop Ambrose' sermon leads to Augustine's conversion  
386.....Augustine of Hippo becomes Christian  
386.....John Chrysostom becomes elder  
387.....Augustine baptized  
389.....The great library of Alexandria intentionally destroyed by a Christian mob on Theodosius' orders.

**This marks the actual start of the DARK AGES, though usually dated from 476 when Rome falls.**

390.....Theodosius massacred 7000 people at Thessalonica to crush a rebellion there. Bishop Ambrose of Milan forces him to do penance.

**391.....Augustine ordained against his better judgment**

- 392.....Augustine opposes Donatist teaching that efficacy of sacrament depends on administrator  
395-408.....Arcadius- Emperor of the East  
395-423.....Honorius- Emperor of the West  
398.....John Chrysostom becomes archbishop of Constantinople  
398.....4th General Council at Carthage prohibits laymen from preaching without permission, and fixes NT for the west. OT at this time includes the apocrypha.

## Appendix 1: Timeline

### **400.....Jerome Bible completed**

400.....Augustine rejects Pelagian teachings which oppose predestination and imputed sin from Adam. He upholds irresistible grace.

407.....Roman Legions Evacuate Britain

408-450.....Theodosius II publishes the earliest collection of existing laws.

410-450.....Attila the Hun ravages the Empire.

419.....Pelagians banished

430.....Augustine dies

431.....Council at Ephesus condemns Pelagianism

### **432.....Patrick is missionary to Ireland**

436.....Aetius defeats the Visigoths

439.....Vandals take Carthage

450-457.....Marcian

450.....Attila the Hun moves into Gaul

451.....Council at Chalcedon renounces Arian teachings – Athanasian Creed

451.....Aetius defeats the Huns at Battle of Chalons with the help of the Visigoth king Theodoric I.

452.....Attila, warned by Pope Leo I, departs Italy

Sep. 454.....Valentinian murders Aetius

Mar. 455.....Valentinian murdered by Aetius' guards

455.....Eudoxia (Valentinian's widow) calls the Vandals from Africa to revenge her husband's death

### **Jun. 455.....Rome is sacked by the Vandals**

457-474.....Leo I- Emperor of the East

474.....Leo II-Emperor of the East

474-491.....Zeno- Emperor of the East

475-476.....Romulus Augustus- Last Emperor of the West

(400-1033).....The Burgundians rule in S.E.Gaul

(415-711).....The Visigoths rule in Spain

(429-533).....The Vandals rule in N.Africa

(443-485).....The Jutes, Angles and Saxons rule in Britain

481.....Clovis becomes first real king of the Franks

493.....Clovis becomes Catholic Christian

(486-752).....The Franks ruled by the Merovingians

(493-554).....The Ostrogoths rule in Italy

527.....Justinian is emperor of Easter Empire

529.....Council of Orange condemns Pelagianism

529.....Benedictine Order founded

529.....Justinian closes pagan philosophical school of Athens

553.....Justinian calls 5th Ecumenical Council at Constantinople: outlaws the Monophysites who teach single human nature of Christ

(568-774).....The Lombards rule in N.Italy

563.....Columba missionary to Scotland

590.....Gregory the Great becomes pope of Rome

591.....Columban missionary to Burgundians

### **596.....Augustine of Canterbury becomes missionary to Eng.**

600.....Mohammed founds Islam

663.....Wilfrid argues for Rome at Synod of Whitby

664.....Synod of Whitby turns Britain Catholic

690.....Willibrord becomes apostle to Frisia. Trains Boniface for 3 years.

714.....Charles Martel rules the Franks

### **723.....Boniface missionary to Germany (Thuringia)**

732.....Charles Martel stops the Moors at Battle of Tours

751.....Pepin III, the Short rules the Franks

751.....Boniface crowns Pepin

754.....Pope Stephen III crowns Pepin

756.....Pepin donates the Patrimony of St.Peter to church

### **774.....Charlemagne defeats the Lombards**

800.....Charlemagne becomes protector of the Pope

812.....Charlemagne recognized by Constantinople

814.....Charlemagne dies and his kingdom with him

829.....Anskar 1st Bishop of Hamburg. Missionary to Scandinavia

860.....Cyril and Methodius missionaries to Slavs

### **910.....Cluny monastery founded: opposes simony & lay investiture**

962.....Otto the Great of Germany restores W.Empire

1000.....Scholasticism begins

1022.....Lay reformists burned at stake at Orleans, France

1050.....Anselm joins group at Bec

### **1059.....College of Cardinals created**

1066.....William the Conqueror invades England

1071.....Eastern emperor captured by Seljuk Turks

### **1073.....Hildebrand elected as pope Gregory VII**

1075.....Gregory VII prohibits lay investiture

## Appendix 1: Timeline

- 1075.....Gregory declares papal infallibility as basis for appointing bishops over king's preferences.  
1077.....Henry begs forgiveness from Gregory VII in the snow  
**1093.....Anselm archbishop of Canterbury; ransom paid to God not Satan.**  
1095.....Eastern emperor Alexius I appeals for help against Turks  
1095.....1st Crusade called by pope Urban II  
1098.....Cistercian movement begun by Robert a Benedictine monk  
**1115.....Bernard founds monastery at Clairvaux**  
1121.....Abelard charged with heresy  
1122.....Concordat of Worms acknowledges church's right to elect bishops  
1122.....Abelard arranges contradictory statements from church Fathers and the Bible for his students to reconcile.  
1140.....Abelard declared heretic by Bernard of Clairvaux  
1149.....2nd Crusade called by Bernard of Clairvaux  
1163.....Cathedral at Notre Dame begun  
1179.....Peter Waldo approaches 3rd Lateran Council for permission to preach to the common people in the vernacular  
**1184.....Peter Waldo's movement condemned (Waldenses)**  
1189.....3rd Crusade starring Richard the Lion Heart  
1198.....Innocent III becomes pope; declares supremacy of papal throne  
**1209.....Francis of Assisi becomes an itinerant preacher**  
1213.....Innocent III deposes King John of England  
1215.....4th Lateran Council: Celibate clergy, laity denied communion, state punishment of heretics/supporters  
1220.....Inquisition placed in hands of Dominicans  
1229.....Council of Toulouse decrees forceful suppression of Waldenses; entrusted to the Dominican Order.  
**1244.....Thomas Aquinas becomes a Dominican monk**  
1252.....Pope Innocent IV authorizes torture for Inquisition  
1265.....Aquinas begins Summa Theologiae: prior reason leads to subsequent faith  
1291.....Holy Land falls to Islam  
1296.....Conflict between Pope Boniface and the kings of England and France  
1300.....Pope Boniface VIII declares Jubilee year and himself emperor  
1305.....Clement V, a Frenchman, elected pope; begins 72 year Babylonian Captivity of papacy at Avignon  
1330.....William of Occam leads strong attack on Scholasticism  
1377.....Wyclif's teachings condemned by pope  
1378.....Great Schism of the papacy for next 39 years  
**1415.....Council of Constance condemns Hus; burned at stake**  
1432.....Archbishop of Canterbury declares Wyclif a heretic  
1453.....Greek Orthodox Confession of Gennadius  
1486.....Vasco de Gama rounds Cape of Good Hope  
1492.....Columbus sails "Ocean Blue"  
1507.....Luther becomes monk at Erfurt  
1515.....Luther realizes salvation by grace  
**1517.....Luther posts 95 theses**  
1519.....Zwingli begins reform in Zurich  
1520.....Papal bull gives Luther 60 days to recant  
1521.....Luther takes stand at Diet of Worms  
1521.....Cortes destroys Aztec empire  
1522.....Knights' Revolt  
1524.....Peasants' War  
**1526.....William Tyndale smuggled bibles into England**  
1527.....Anabaptists call first synod of Protestant Reformation  
1529.....Luther splits with Zwingli on nature of eucharist  
1529.....Diet of Speir issues Anabaptist Protestatio  
1530.....Diet of Augsburg develops Augsburg Confession  
**1531.....Calvin converts to Protestantism**  
1533.....Pizarro destroys Incas  
1534.....King Henry VIII creates Anglican church  
1535.....Luther pens the Articles of Smalkald  
1536.....1st edition of Calvin's Institutes  
1538.....Calvin and Farel expelled from Geneva  
1540.....Jesuit order sanctioned for counter Reformation  
1541.....Calvin called back to Geneva  
**1545.....Council of Trent (until 1563)**  
1546.....Luther dies  
1547.....Open warfare between Protestants and Catholics in Germany  
1552.....John Knox objects to 2nd Book of Common Prayer in England  
1553.....Servetus executed at Geneva  
1553.....Knox flees to Continent when Mary Queen of Scots takes throne  
**1555.....Peace of Augsburg makes Germany Lutheran**  
1556.....John Knox minister of English refugee church in Geneva  
1556.....Roman Catechism  
1558.....Elizabeth takes throne of England  
1559.....Last edition of Calvin's Institutes  
1559.....French Confession of Faith

## Appendix 1: Timeline

- 1561.....Belgic Confession
- 1571.....Foxe's Book of Martyrs
- 1572.....7,000 Huguenot leaders murdered in France
- 1588.....Defeat of Spanish Armada by England
- 1607.....Anglicans arrive in Virginia
- 1611.....King James Bible**
- 1618.....Canons of Dordt – Five Points of Calvinism
- 1642.....Greek Orthodox Confession of Mogilas
- 1643.....Westminster Assembly – Confession
- 1644.....Oliver Cromwell defeats Royalists
- 1650.....Treaty of Westphalia ends 30 Years War
- 1658.....Oliver Cromwell dies
- 1675.....Helvetic Consensus (Confession)
- 1687.....Newton publishes Mathematical Principles
- 1725.....Moravians established
- 1733.....Great Awakening**
- 1738.....John Wesley visits Aldersgate
- 1739.....George Whitfield begins preaching
- 1741.....Jonathan Edwards – Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God
- 1776.....American Revolution**
- 1789.....French Revolution
- 1820.....F. Schleiermacher father of liberal Protestantism
- 1820.....Joseph Smith's vision – Mormonism
- 1830.....William Wilberforce preaches against slavery**
- 1848.....Karl Marx' Communist Manifesto
- 1859.....Charles Darwin's Origin of Species**
- 1860.....American Civil War
- 1879.....C.T. Russell founds Watch Tower – Jehovah's Witnesses
- 1909.....**Scofield Reference Bible – Dispensationalism**
- 1914.....World War I
- 1917.....Russian Revolution
- 1920.....Fundamentalism begins in America**
- 1924.....H.L. Mencken declares Christian Faith laughable
- 1926.....Scopes trial**
- 1939.....World War II
- 1940.....John Dewey redefines public education
- 1942.....National Association of Evangelicals**
- 1948.....World Council of Churches
- 1948.....Israel declared sovereign
- 1949.....Billy Graham begins crusade in Los Angeles
- 1950.....Korean War
- 1955.....New Age Cults – Eastern Mysticism
- 1962.....Vatican Council II
- 1965.....Vietnam War
- 1974.....Lausanne Congress on evangelization
- 1977.....Focus on the Family established
- 1978.....Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy
- 1979.....Moral Majority founded by Jerry Falwell
- 1980.....Personal Computers
- 1982.....Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics
- 1986.....Chicago Statement on Biblical Application
- 1989.....Christian Coalition founded by Pat Robertson
- 1990.....Middle East War
- 1995.....Internet use becomes widespread
- 1996.....Cambridge Declaration – Affirms Reformed Doctrine**
- 2001 .....World Trade Center attack – *War on Terrorism*
- 2003 .....Rise of **ISIS** seeking a modern Caliphate
- 2008 .....Stock Market Crash, Sep 29.
- 2011 ..... Exodus of Syrian refugees begins – *Islamic Diaspora*

## Appendix 1: Timeline

## APPENDIX 2 – Excerpts from Martin Luther’s 95 Theses

1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says repent, He means that the whole life of believers upon earth should be a constant and perpetual repentance.
2. This word cannot be understood of the sacrament of penance (i.e., confession and satisfaction), as administered by the priest.
3. Still the Lord does not mean to speak in this place solely of internal repentance; internal repentance is null, if it produce not externally every kind of mortification of the flesh.
4. Repentance and sorrow – i.e., true penance – endure as long as a man is displeased with himself – that is, until he passes from this life into eternity.
5. The pope is unable and desires not to remit any other penalty than that which he has imposed of his own good pleasure, or conformably to the canons – i.e., the papal ordinances.
6. The pope cannot remit any condemnation, but only declare and confirm the remission of God, except in the cases that appertain to himself. If he does otherwise, the condemnation remains entirely the same.
8. The laws of ecclesiastical penance ought to be imposed solely on the living, and have no regard to the dead.
21. The commissaries of indulgences are in error when they say that by the papal indulgence a man is delivered from every punishment and is saved.
25. The same power that the pope has over purgatory throughout the Church, each bishop possesses individually in his own diocese, and each priest in his own parish.
27. They preach mere human follies who maintain that as soon as the money rattles in the strong box, the soul flies out of purgatory.
28. This is certain that as soon as the money tinkles, avarice and love of gain arrive, increase, and multiply. But the support and prayers of the Church depend solely on God’s will and good pleasure.
32. Those who fancy themselves sure of salvation by indulgences will go to perdition along with those who teach them so.
35. They are teachers of antichristian doctrines who pretend that to deliver a soul from purgatory, or to buy an indulgence, there is no need of either sorrow or repentance.
36. Every Christian who truly repents of his sins, enjoys an entire remission both of the penalty and of the guilt, without any need of indulgences.
37. Every true Christian, whether dead or alive, participates in all the blessings of Christ or of the Church, by God’s gift, and without a letter of indulgence.
38. Still we should not condemn the papal dispensation and pardon; for this pardon is a declaration of the pardon of God.
40. True repentance and sorrow seek and love the punishment; but the mildness of indulgence absolves from the punishment, and begets hatred against it.
42. We should teach Christians that the pope has no thought or desire of comparing in any respect the act of buying indulgences with any work of mercy.
43. We should teach Christians that he who gives to the poor, or lends to the needy, does better than he who purchases an indulgence.
44. For the work of charity increaseth charity, and renders a man more pious; whereas the indulgence does not make him better, but only renders him more self-confident, and more secure from punishment.
45. We should teach Christians that whoever sees his neighbor in want, and yet buys an indulgence, does not buy the pope’s indulgence, but incurs God’s anger.
46. We should teach Christians that if they have no superfluity, they are bound to keep for their own households the means of procuring necessities, and ought not to squander their money in indulgences.

## Appendix 2: Excerpts from Luther's 95 Theses

47. We should teach Christians that the purchase of an indulgence is a matter of free choice and not of commandment.
48. We should teach Christians that the pope, having more need of prayers offered up in faith than of money, desires prayer more than money when he dispenses indulgences.
49. We should teach Christians that the pope's indulgence is good, if we put no confidence in it; but that nothing is more hurtful, if it diminishes our piety.
50. We should teach Christians that if the pope knew of the extortions of the preachers of indulgences, he would rather the mother-church of St. Peter were burned and reduced to ashes, than see it built up with the skin, the flesh, and the bones of his flock.
51. We should teach Christians that the pope (as it is his duty) would distribute his own money to the poor whom the indulgence-sellers are now stripping of their last farthing, even were he compelled to sell the mother-church of St. Peter.
52. To hope to be saved by indulgences is a lying and an empty hope; although even the commissary of indulgences, nay farther, the pope himself, should pledge their souls to guarantee it.
53. They are the enemies of the pope and of Jesus Christ, who, by reason of the preaching of indulgences, forbid the preaching of the Word of God.
55. The pope can have no other thought than this: If the indulgence, which is a lesser matter, be celebrated with ringing of a bell, with pomp and ceremony, much more should we honor and celebrate the gospel, which is a greater thing, with a hundred bells, and with a hundred pomps and ceremonies.
56. The treasures of the Church, whence the pope grants indulgences, are neither sufficiently named nor known among the people of Christ.
62. The true and precious treasure of the Church is the holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.
65. The treasures of the gospel are nets in which in former times the rich and those in easy circumstances were caught.
66. But the treasures of the indulgence are nets with which they now catch the riches of the people.
67. It is the duty of bishops and pastors to receive the commissaries of the apostolical indulgences with every mark of respect.
68. But it is still more their duty to ascertain with their eyes and ears that the said commissaries do not preach the dreams of their own imagination, instead of the orders of the pope.
71. Cursed by he who speaks against the indulgence of the pope.
72. But blessed be he who speaks against the foolish and impudent language of the preachers of indulgences.
76. The indulgence of the pope cannot take away the smallest daily sin, as far as regards the guilt or the offense.
79. It is blasphemy to say that the cross adorned with the arms of the pope is as effectual as the cross of Christ.
80. The bishops, pastors, and theologians who permit such things to be told the people, will have to render an account of them.
81. This shameless preaching, these impudent commendations of indulgences, make it difficult for the learned to defend the dignity and honor of the pope against the calumnies of the preachers, and the subtle and crafty questions of the common people.
86. Why, say they, does not the pope, who is richer than the richest Croesus, build the mother-church of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with that of poor Christians?
92. Would that we were quit of all these preachers who say to the Church: Peace! peace! and there is no peace.
94. We should exhort Christians to diligence in following Christ, their Head, through crosses, death, and hell.
95. For it is far better to enter into the kingdom of heaven through much tribulation than to acquire a carnal security by the consolations of a false peace.

### Appendix 3 - New Testament Acceptance

**AD 100-** Different parts of our New Testament were written by this time, but not yet collected and defined as ‘Scripture.’ Early Christian writers (e.g. Polycarp and Ignatius) quote from the Gospels and Paul’s letters, as well as from other Christian writings and oral sources. Paul’s letters were collected by AD 80 while Matthew, Mark, and Luke were brought together by AD 150.

**AD 200- The NT used in the church at Rome** (from the Muratorian Canon):

Four Gospels	Colossians
James	1 & 2 Thessalonians
Acts	1 & 2 Timothy
1 & 2 John	Titus
<i>Paul’s Letters:</i>	Philemon
Romans	Jude
1 & 2 Corinthians	Revelation of John
Galatians	Revelation of Peter
Ephesians	Wisdom of Solomon
Philippians	Shepherd of Hermas (used in private only)

**AD 250- The NT used by Origen:**

Four Gospels	<i>Disputed:</i>
Acts	Shepherd of Hermas
1 Peter	Hebrews
1 John	James
<i>Paul’s Letters:</i>	2 Peter
Romans	2 & 3 John
1 & 2 Corinthians	Jude
Galatians	Letter of Barnabas
Ephesians	Didache
Philippians	Gospel of the Hebrews
Colossians	
1 & 2 Thessalonians	
1 & 2 Timothy	
Titus	
Philemon	
Revelation of John	

**AD 300- NT used by Eusebius** (see “[Canon of Scripture](#)“)

**AD 400- NT fixed for the West by the Council at Carthage:**

Four Gospels	Jude
1 & 2 Peter	Hebrews
Acts	ames
1, 2 & 3 John	Revelation
Paul’s Letters	

**Excluded:** Shepherd of Hermas, Letter of Barnabas, Gospel of the Hebrews, Revelation of Peter, Acts of Peter, Didache.

## Appendix 3: New Testament Acceptance

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