

# CHURCH HISTORY

## 1. INTRODUCTION & PREHISTORY

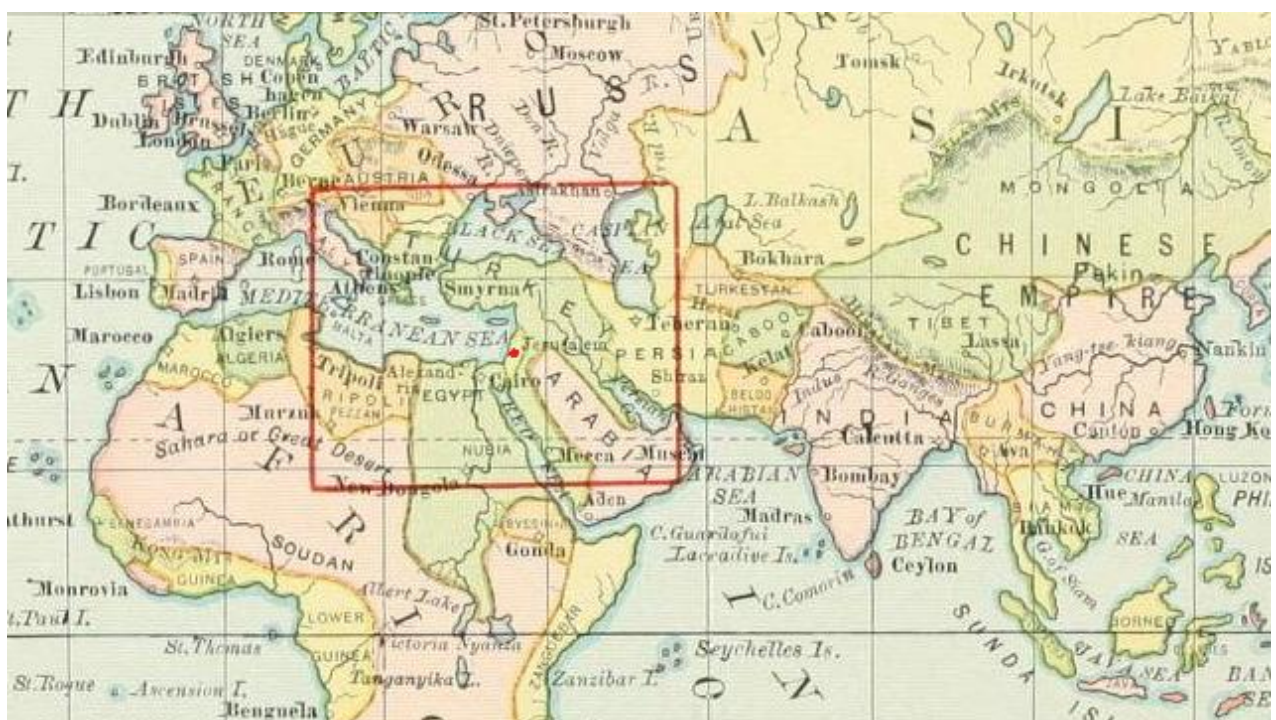
### WHY STUDY CHURCH HISTORY?

1. It is the history of God at work in the world
  - a. Jesus promised that He would build His Church
    - i. Matthew 16:18
    - ii. Matthew 28:19-20
  - b. God is in control of history
    - i. Acts 4:27-28
2. It is *our* history
3. To protect us from false teaching
4. To spot abuses of history
  - Anachronism: The way things are now are the way they have always been.
5. To avoid making the same mistakes
6. To recognise our privilege and responsibility

### WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

- Many history classes assume a great deal of background knowledge that is crucial in understanding the world the Church is born into.
- How did we go from Priests, Prophets, Kings in the Old Testament to Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and all those Herod's – Herod the Great, Herod Antipas, Herod Phillip, Herod the Tetrarch – in the New Testament?
- We need to explore some of the important historical events that set the stage for the New Testament to unfold.

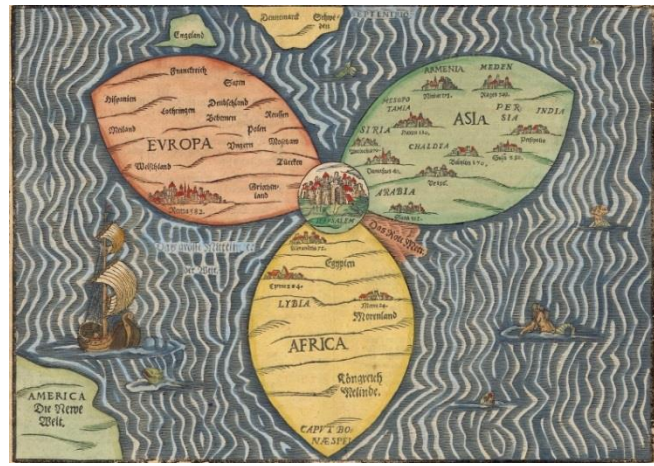
The geographical location of Israel and its strategic importance:



## “THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD”

Though this map was drawn up in 1518, it reflected an idea that had long been held.

- Name means *City of Peace*, or *Vision of Peace*
- Destroyed: 3 times
- Surrounded / Besieged: 24 times
- Attacked: More than 50 times
- Captured / Recaptured: 44 times
- Yet Jerusalem always rises again



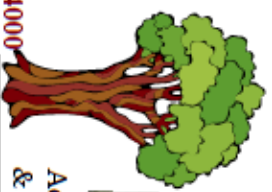
## ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN RELIGIONS

- Most religions of the time were either:
  - Polytheistic (Worship of many gods).
  - Henotheistic (Worshipping one of the many gods above all others).
- Idols (statues, paintings, altars) and temples to these gods abounded.
- The sun, moon, stars, rivers & mountains were often associated with deities.
- Jews were the obvious exception: Monotheism (Belief in the existence of only one God).
- The Romans especially found the Jewish religion to be perplexing.
- Gods were believed to be tied to geographical areas:
  - 2 Kings 5:17
  - Ezekiel 10:15-19, 11:22-25

## CONQUERORS

No empire had the same philosophy for managing conquered lands. Movement was difficult and news travelled very slowly. How do you keep your newly won territories in check?

- Assyrians:
  - Took large numbers of people captive and relocated them to another part of the empire, while settling other captives in their place.
  - Aim was twofold:
    - Create a stable empire by intermarriage of different peoples (loss of identity and culture).
    - You could not call on your gods for help if you were removed from your land!
- Babylonians:
  - Took captive the high-ranking families, the intellectuals and other promising candidates and moved them to Babylon (Daniel and his friends).
  - Their aim was to teach and assimilate them into Babylonian culture and religion, which they would find so compelling that they would spread it to their people and so stop any revolts from occurring.
  - The lower classes of captives were used as servants or slaves throughout the empire.



4000 BC  
Garden of Eden

Adam & Eve

Cain & Abel

Seth Born

Call on the Lord

Men Begin to

Adam Enoch

Dies Translated Born



2294

Tower of Babel

Earth "Divided"

Hyksos Period in Egypt - c.1650-1550

Egyptian Slavery



2000 BC

Abraham Called

Jacob Born

Joseph to Egypt

Moses at Sinai

Joshua into Canaan

Era of the Judges

Saul David



1926 BC

1841

Assyrian Destruction (Shalmaneser V)

The Samaritans

Assyria falls to Babylon - 612 BC

Babylon falls to Medo-Persia - 539 BC

**EXILE**



1000 BC

Solomon

1020-980

Rehoboam

Jehoshaphat

Uzziah

Ahaz

Hezekiah

Manasseh

Josiah

1<sup>st</sup> Deportation

Edict of Cyrus 538

Temple Rebuilt

Judah

Joel

Isaiah

Micah

586

70 years

520-16

Nahum, Zephaniah

Habakkuk, Jeremiah

Ezekiel & Daniel

Haggai & Zechariah

Birth of Jesus: 6-5 BC

Hellenism



Rome

Esther

Made Jerusalem Queen

Decree

Alexander the Great

Seleucid & Ptolemaic Dynasties

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

Maccabean Revolt

Conquers Herod's Judea

Temple

500 BC

482

458

Malachi

336-323

321/305

c.250

175-163

164

64

19



Ezra & Nehemiah

Spread of Greek Culture & Language

Independence

- Greeks:
  - Settled colonial cities to establish trade, in fact Greek became the trading language throughout the Mediterranean & Middle East.
  - Did not remain a united empire for very long.
  
- Romans:
  - Key tactic was to arrange 'god-swaps': When Rome conquered a territory, they would add the particular gods of that people to their own and force the people of that region to adopt the Roman gods.
  - For example, the planets in our Solar System are named after Roman gods, who are all just equivalents of the Greek Gods (Mercury → Hermes, Venus → Aphrodite, Jupiter → Zeus, etc.).
  - This neutralized faith in a sense, because you could not ask your god to deliver you from your enemy (Romans) if your enemy (Romans) worship him (or her) too!
  - Only one exception to the rule: the Jews.
    - The Jews had no idols, pictures or statues of their God, so it was difficult to know how to include Him or what He was like.
    - Jews ferociously resisted any efforts to be made to worship any God other than Yahweh.
  
- In Deuteronomy 28:1-14, God promises blessing for His people if they continue to keep the Covenant made at Sinai (Mosaic).
- This included protection from, and victory over, their enemies (v.7, 10)
- Verses 15-68 deal with God's promise of curse if His people should follow after false gods and turn away from obedience to Him and forget the Covenant:
 

*"The LORD will scatter you among all the peoples, from the one end of the earth to the other, and there you will serve other gods, wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known."* (v.34)

## ASSYRIAN CONQUEST OF ISRAEL

- King Shalmaneser V defeated the Northern Kingdom in 721 BC.
- Many Israelites were taken to various parts of the empire and foreign people were sent to Israel.
- There was no return from this exile, the people remained scattered.
- Inter-marriage and blending of cultures resulted in the people known as *Samaritans*.
- Hated by the Jews for being 'half-breeds' (and thus giving up their ancestry), but also for their idolatry, because the Samaritans had built their own temple on Mount Gerazim and worshipped there (John 4:20).
- This temple was destroyed by the Jews around 100 BC, but Samaritans continue to worship on that site to this day.

## BABYLONIAN CONQUEST OF JUDAH

- Despite seeing what happened to Israel, the people of Judah did not repent and cease their wickedness before God.
- The Babylonian empire arose in what is today Iraq. They became a force to be reckoned with then they conquered Assyria in 612 BC.

- King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to expand his kingdom and gain control of trade routes to Egypt. That put him in direct conflict with Judah.
- Nebuchadnezzar's army invaded Judah in 605 BC and finally conquered Jerusalem in 597 BC.
- They deported many Jews to Babylon and installed a puppet king, Zedekiah, who despite the warnings of the prophet Jeremiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar's rule.
- Zedekiah, instead of turning to God, placed his faith and trust in Egypt, hoping they would send an army to support his rebellion. This did not happen.
- Nebuchadnezzar's army returned in 587 BC and ruined the city of Jerusalem and its walls, including the temple. They carried off many of the sacred temple vessels to Babylon along with more captives.

## EFFECTS OF THE EXILE ON THE JEWISH PEOPLE

- Jewish Law was centred on two pillars:
  1. Temple centred ceremonial worship
  2. Obedience to ethical & moral instructions
- The Prophets had criticized the people for paying close attention to pillar 1 but ignoring pillar 2. BOTH were needed, in balance.
- After the Exile and the subsequent destruction of the temple, pillar 2 became the foundation of Jewish religion. New places of assembly and learning, called *Synagogues*, were set up all over the empire. It was here that Jews could meet to study the Law and discuss and debate it.
- During the days of Temple worship, it was the Priests who were considered the religious authorities, but now the expert teachers in the Law, called *Rabbis*, began to rival the authority of the priests.
- They began to teach that in addition to the *written* Law of Moses, there was an *oral* Law that was passed on by Moses to Joshua and eventually to the Rabbis, that explained how to interpret the written Law properly.
- Through the so-called Oral Law the Rabbis sought to address questions not directly answered in the Mosaic Law. For example: Deuteronomy 21:18-21

*If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have disciplined him, will not listen to them, then his father and his mother are to lay hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. They shall say to the elders of his city, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not listen to us. He is a glutton and a drunkard." Then all the men of his city must stone him with stones, until he dies. In this way you are to remove the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.*

What other behaviours would also make a son 'rebellious' besides being a glutton and a drunkard? From what age might this law be enforced? Should both parents consent to the punishment?

- The *Scribes* were those who copied Biblical books and wrote down the teachings of the Rabbis (that would eventually be compiled into a book called the *Mishna*). They also taught what they learned from the Rabbis.
- Their emphasis on the strict obedience of the Law sowed the seeds for the group that would later become known as *Pharisees*.



*The Cyrus Cylinder*

- In 538 BC, after conquering the Babylonian Empire, Cyrus the king of Persia issued a decree allowing all deported and captive people in Babylon to return to their homes.
- Isaiah prophesied that this would happen, even calling Cyrus by name (Isaiah 44:28, 45:1), between 200-150 years before! This causes many sceptics to assume that this part of Isaiah was written long after and then added to the book.
- Many Jews returned home, but many also chose to stay where they had settled. It is from these people that the *Magi* (wise men) were believed to have come to search for Jesus.
- Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt under the leadership of Nehemiah and Ezra, but it paled in comparison to Solomon's Temple:
  - Necessity - Many Jews had become accustomed to religious life without the temple, and therefore temple worship did not regain its centrality as before the Exile.
  - Splendour - They lacked comparable resources
  - Glory - The Ark of the Covenant, the single most important part of the first Temple, was lost. It is not mentioned as being carried off to Babylon or being brought back. And apart from Indiana Jones, no-one has seen it since. Rather, the Mishna states that "the Foundation Stone" of the first Temple was placed in the Holy of Holies.

## **ALEXANDER THE GREAT**

- Alexander took over the throne of Macedonia (northern-Greece) in 336 BC, aged 20. He was tutored by the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle and he had ambitions of conquering the whole known world. In 334 BC he began an expansion of his empire that included southern-Greece, Persia, Palestine, Egypt and up to the borders of modern-day India.
- His appetite for conquest did not diminish, but his troops had become more and more home-sick: They had been on campaign for the best part of 10 years! After a terrible 12-day march through the Indian desert, they had had enough. Alexander was forced to turn back and head home.
- However, in order to punish his army for their rebellion, he chose the most difficult and challenging road home and many soldiers died on the way.
- While camping at Babylon, Alexander suddenly became ill, most likely due to being poisoned, and died soon after, at the age of only 32.

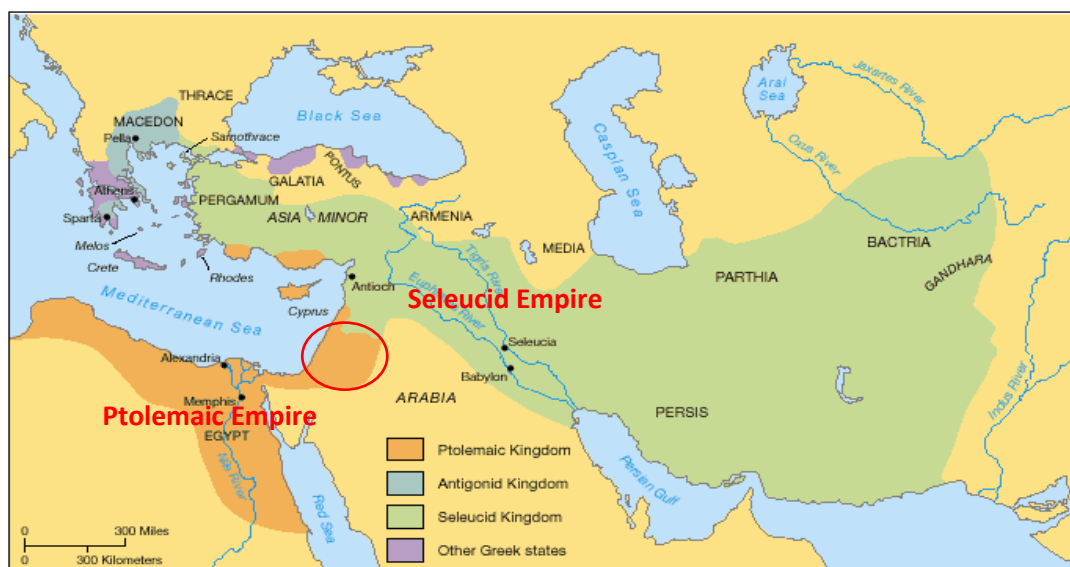


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- While Alexander was an extraordinarily gifted general and soldier who commanded the greatest empire ever seen at that time, his greatest legacy was the spread of Greek language and culture throughout the Middle East and Mediterranean. He founded the important port city of Alexandria, and many other Greek colonies were settled all over his empire, making Greek the language of trade for centuries to come, including New Testament times.
- After his death there was a mad scramble for control of his vast empire. It was divided between his four generals, but in no time, they went to war with each other in the quest to become the new Alexander.
- BONUS: Daniel 8:1-8 prophesies Alexander's rise, his victory over the king of Persia, his sudden death and the four-way split of his empire.

## SELEUCID & PTOLEMAIC DYNASTIES

- The two most important generals, Seleucus and Ptolemy, soon neutralised most of the threat posed by the other generals, but the struggle for supremacy between their kingdoms lasted hundreds of years, with neither being able to fully conquer the other.



- Israel was caught in the middle, and so control over that region constantly shifted as it was conquered and then reconquered until the Seleucids finally drove the Ptolemies out and incorporated Israel into their kingdom.
- It is important to note that both these empires championed Greek ways, and that the city of Alexandria especially had a large population of Jews who had relocated there.
- *Hellenism* (The influence of Greek language, culture, philosophy and religion) was a real problem for the Jews: How much Greek culture and learning could you adopt and still call yourself a pure Jew? Some Jews embraced it wholeheartedly, while others rejected it completely. Others adopted it purely because they wanted to maintain a good relationship with their Greek overlords.
- It was really only in Jerusalem where Hellenism was resisted by the general population, it thrived in other regions of Israel.

## SEPTUAGINT

- As a result of Alexander's spread of the Greek language, Jews who lived outside of Israel (especially in Alexandria, Egypt) over time began to lose their ability to read Hebrew, and so required a Greek translation of the Old Testament.
- This Greek translation came to be known as the *Septuagint*, (Latin for "70"), as 72 rabbis supposedly each went into a cave to do the translation and when they emerged, they all had the same document, word for word!
- Work on this translation started around 250 BC and continued for about a hundred years, with various subsequent revisions.
- Because different translators were involved, there are different translation styles present. Some parts of the Septuagint, such as the Pentateuch, are excellent, while other parts are less well translated.
- It was the Bible of the Early Church, as almost all the quotes from the Old Testament in the New Testament are from the Greek, not the Hebrew text.
- It was also the main basis for the Old Latin, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, Slavonic, and Arabic translations of the Old Testament, and remains the text of the Greek Orthodox Church to this day.
- The Septuagint contained all 39 books of the Old Testament, plus the *Apocrypha*. These were books that were mostly written in Greek and all dated after the death of the last prophet Malachi (and the ceasing of divine revelation), so were never considered to be inspired Scripture by the Jews, but rather as useful reading. The books of Maccabees for example are a history of the events around the Maccabean revolt.
- The Apocryphal books are Tobit; Judith; the Wisdom of Solomon; Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach; Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah, additions to Daniel (The Prayer of Azarias, the Song of the Three Children, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon); additions to Esther; 1 Maccabees; 2 Maccabees; 3 Maccabees; 4 Maccabees; 1 Esdras; Odes (including the Prayer of Manasseh); the Psalms of Solomon, and Psalm 151.
- As we will see in future classes, The Roman Catholic & Greek Orthodox Churches accept these books as Scripture, which we would strongly disagree with.



## ANTIOCHUS IV

- The Seleucids began to rule over Israel from 198 BC, with respite from their wars with the Ptolemies in Egypt. Although it started as a peaceful time and Jews could practice their religion in peace, it didn't take long for a new enemy to rise and challenge the Seleucids.
- By this time, the Romans had already unified *Italia* (what is today the country of Italy) and were expanding rapidly.
- When Antiochus IV came to power in 175 BC, Jewish fortunes took a turn for the worst.
- He gave himself the title *Epiphanes*, meaning "God manifest". He is almost certainly the 'Little Horn' prophesied in Daniel 8:9-12.
- He believed that Rome was having such success against them because the Greek gods were angry, and that the only option was to unify the Seleucid empire in the worship of Zeus (chief of the Greek gods).
- He enacted very strong Hellenistic reforms, trying to unite the empire culturally.
- Antiochus became desperate for money to fund his increasingly expensive wars with the Romans and Ptolemies. He deposed the Jewish High Priest Onias when a man called Jason offered him a large sum of money to buy the office. Remember that the office of High Priest was reserved for men from the tribe of Levi, specifically descendants of Aaron.
- But a certain Menelaos, brother of Onias, made a higher bid to Antiochus, and he was installed as High Priest. In order to pay his debt to Antiochus he raided the Temple treasury.
- While Antiochus was on a war campaign in Egypt, Jason led a revolt against him.
- Furious, Antiochus returned in 168 BC and plundered Jerusalem, installing a pagan altar in the Temple and plundered whatever money or valuables were still left.
- Practice of the Jewish religion became illegal: Temple sacrifice, circumcision and Sabbath observance were not allowed.
- Jews were forced to offer sacrifice to Zeus or be killed. While some Jews resisted, some gave in and for pragmatic or other reasons complied.

## MACCABEAN REVOLT & INDEPENDENCE

- Revolt broke out in the town of Modiin in 167 BC, when a priest by the name of Matthias killed a Jew who was about to offer the required sacrifice to Zeus, as well as the Greek soldier who was forcing him.
- He and his sons fled to the hills and formed a war band. They were joined by many of the *Hassidim* (keepers of the Law). Matthias died soon after, and his son Judah, who was nicknamed "Maccabeus" (meaning *Hammer*) took charge. Eventually the whole revolution would bear his name.
- They waged war on the Seleucids by using guerrilla tactics: short and quick ambushes meant to negate the vast difference in numbers.
- In 164 BC they managed to win back Jerusalem, and they cleansed and re-dedicated the Temple.
- The Jewish festival of *Hanukkah* celebrates this re-dedication of the Temple. According to Rabbinic tradition, the victorious Maccabees could only find a small sealed jug of oil that had remained pure and uncontaminated, and although it only contained enough oil to sustain the Menorah for one day, it miraculously lasted for eight days, by which time further oil could be procured.
- Hanukkah is the "Feast of the Dedication" mentioned in John 10:22.

- The battle for Jewish independence wasn't over until 142 BC, when the Seleucids were finally kicked out for good by the Maccabees.
  - This led to the establishment of the *Hasmonean* dynasty, when Simon Maccabee began to rule in the capacity of High Priest.
  - The throne passed to his descendants, who were all priest-kings, and they slowly but surely won back old territories that were lost previously. This included the land of the Samaritans, and the destruction of their pagan temple.
  - Although Israel now enjoyed independence from outside powers, internally there was anything but unity. During this time two opposing factions emerged from seeds planted many years before: The *Pharisees* and the *Sadducees*.
- 
- The Pharisees were strong believers in the importance of keeping the Law, both the written Law of Moses and the Oral Law of the Rabbis. They put additional rules in place on top of what Moses commanded to make sure that you wouldn't break the Law.
  - Most often they worked full-time jobs and dedicated their free time to study and teaching.
  - They enjoyed support from the common people, those who were less likely to be influenced by Hellenism, which they rejected and strongly opposed.
- 
- The Sadducees were nobles, wealthy families from Jerusalem, who were connected to the priesthood.
  - They were in charge of Temple worship and all related functions (including turning God's House into a 'den of thieves' – Matthew 21:13).
  - They were disliked and distrusted by the common people, as the priesthood had become more and more corrupt since the days of Menelaus, who had bought the High Priesthood.
  - They embraced Hellenism, rejected the traditions of the Pharisees, and did not believe in the afterlife or angels (Acts 23:8).
  - Sadducees made up the majority of the Jewish Sanhedrin (ruling council), and so had control over what was decided there.
- 
- A group of Jews called the *Essenes* believed that Temple worship had been so corrupted that they rejected it completely and moved to the desert to settle 'pure' Jewish communities who could focus on keeping the Law to the fullest.
  - It is believed that the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 were buried in those caves by Essene communities. Because they rejected marriage, they soon died out.
- 
- The animosity between the different factions grew, making political life very unstable. During this time of relative peace in Israel, the Romans had greatly expanded their influence. There were those 'wise' enough to see that war with Rome would be a certainty in future and it would be best to align themselves with the Romans. Thus in 64 BC some of the Jews appealed to Rome to come and restore order. The Roman general Pompey came and did just that but brought with him Roman rule and the end of Israel's short-lived independence. Israel had basically been conquered without any fighting or bloodshed.
  - Pompey caused the Jews great embarrassment when he walked into the Temple and even into the Holy of Holies, without divine repercussion. He did however allow the Temple to be cleansed and sacrifices to be continued as usual.

## ROMAN RULE

- At this time, Rome was a Republic. The last Roman king had been kicked out in 510 BC. A Senate ruled from Rome, while their generals were responsible for leading their fierce, well-equipped and well-trained armies into battle.
- It was not a stable republic however, as there were always those who sought power. To placate the potential dictators, a Triumvirate of rulers was appointed: Pompey, Julius Caesar and Crassus. After Crassus died, the rivalry between Pompey and Julius intensified. In 49 BC Julius met Pompey in open war and defeated him, becoming the emperor of Rome in all but name.
- After a chaotic series of events following the assassination of Julius in 44 BC, his adopted son Octavian became emperor, and took the name *Augustus* (meaning “venerable one”), though he always referred to himself as simply ‘the first citizen’ of Rome, the first among equals as it were and never called himself emperor.
- He was emperor when Jesus was born (Luke 2:1).
- A final note on the Ptolemies: Cleopatra, the renowned queen of Egypt, was a direct descendant of Ptolemy, and so she was of Greek heritage. After military defeat by Octavian in 31 BC, she committed suicide and her infant son was killed, and Egypt became part of the growing Roman Empire.



Roman Empire under Caesar Augustus

- As stated previously, Romans expected conquered peoples to mingle worship of their gods. They quickly found that the Jews were ready to take up arms (and fight ferociously) to oppose this idea, and so they were granted an exception: They were allowed to worship Yahweh alone. The Romans even thought of the Jews as ‘atheists’, because they did not have any statues or pictures of their God.

- Rome offered leadership of its outer territories to those indebted to them, to ensure they would remain loyal. Herod the Great is a good example. He was an Edomite (descendant of Esau) and had no right or claim to the Jewish kingship, but Rome installed him as king in 37 BC. He therefore always knew that without Rome's backing he would be in deep trouble with the Jews and therefore never even considered revolting.
- It also explains why he was willing to kill babies in Bethlehem to ensure that no 'king of the Jews' would rise up and overthrow him.
- In an effort to increase his popularity, Herod the Great commissioned the expansion and restoration of the Temple in 19 BC, which was not ultimately completed until 64 AD.
- His kingdom was divided between his sons, which is why we meet so many different Herods in the New Testament: Herod Antipas, Herod Phillip, Herod the Tetrarch, Herod Agrippa I & II.
- The Romans played games with the Herods, constantly moving them around to ensure that no one of them became too popular. A Roman governor oversaw Jerusalem and carried ultimate authority (such as Pontius Pilate).
- A group of Jews who supported Herod arose, called the *Herodians*.
- The Sadducees realised that their influence was dependant on Herod who was rebuilding the Temple, and the Romans who kept the Herods in power, and so were politically involved with them.

## MESSIANIC EXPECTATION

- This is something that we often misunderstand when reading the Gospel accounts.
- The people in Jesus' day were expecting the Messiah to come. We see so many examples of this:
  - The wise men looking for the star (see Numbers 24:17).
  - Simeon (Luke 2:25) waiting to see the Messiah at the temple.
  - Anna (Luke 2:36-38).
  - People asking John the Baptist if he is the Messiah (John 1:19-21).
  - The *Zealots*
    - They were protestors seeking political revolution.
    - They believed that when Messiah comes, he will need an army to fight the Romans, and they had to be ready.
    - One of the disciples, Simon, was a Zealot (Luke 6:15).
- Why was there this expectation that Messiah could appear at any moment? Answer: Daniel 9:25

"Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until the Prince Messiah shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks."

The Jews couldn't know the exact date, as the prophecy is too vague: When was this decree to rebuild Jerusalem given? Was it during the time of Cyrus (538 BC), or when Nehemiah received permission to return (about 458 BC), or a time in-between?

The weeks are almost universally accepted as meaning a period of seven years. Thus  $69 * 7 = 483$  years. You see that in adding 483 years to that second date for example puts you in the time of Jesus. Because everyone had access to this prophecy (even the wise men in Babylon), they could do the math and realise that Messiah must be near.

# CHURCH HISTORY

## 2. THE CHURCH TODAY



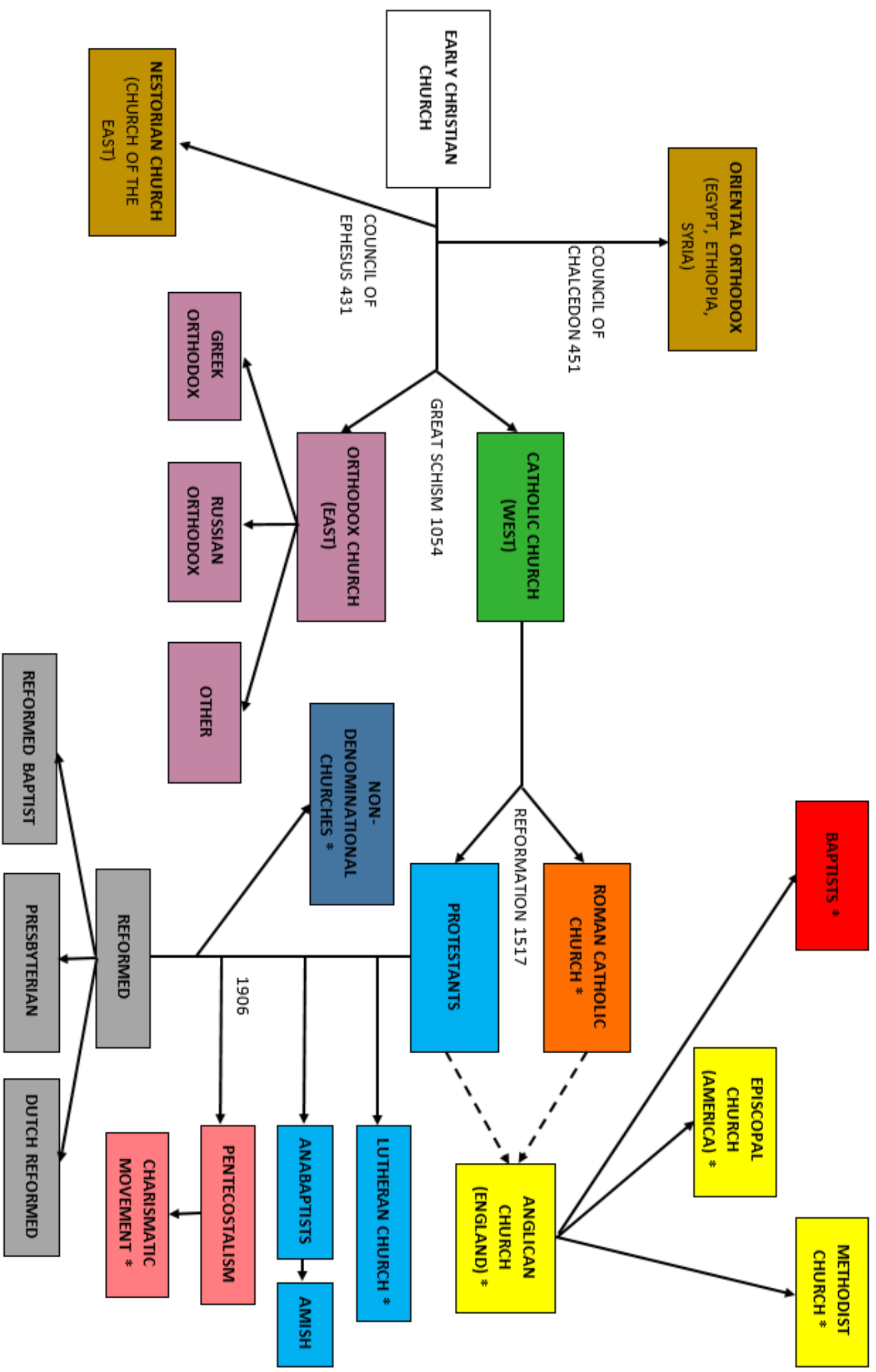
### WHY BEGIN IN THE PRESENT?

1. Church history is like a jigsaw puzzle. There are countless loose pieces that come together to form a complete picture. If we start by completing the border, the outline, first, it will be easier to see and understand where the individual pieces fit in the greater picture later in our course.
2. Understanding the differences and divisions between the different branches of Christianity will help us answer sceptics.
3. The history of the Church in South Africa has been largely shaped by Protestant theology
  - a. Dutch (1652) → Dutch Reformed Church (NG Kerk)
  - b. French Huguenots (1688-89) → Fleeing persecution by Roman Catholics
  - c. British (1806) → Presbyterian & Anglican
  - What does it mean to be Protestant?
  - What are the other major branches of Christianity and what do they believe?
4. To evaluate and determine the accuracy of historical claims made by many of the branches of Christianity.

### WHY IS THE CHURCH SO DIVIDED?

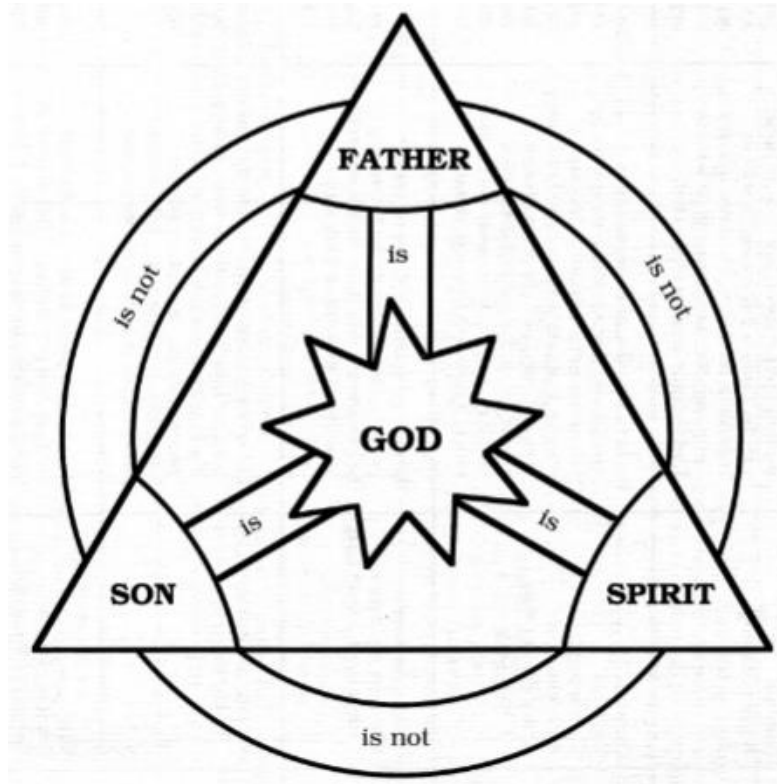
1. There are three major branches of Christianity:

○ Roman Catholicism	1.2 billion		Numbers are from polls, not from testing the fruit and genuineness of their faith. What effect would such a test have on these numbers?
○ Protestantism	900 million		
○ Eastern Orthodox	350 million		
2. Sceptics and especially Muslims like to throw around the 'fact' that there are 33 000 Christian denominations. However, this figure
  - Includes heretical groups (Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Oneness Pentecostals, Unitarians, etc.)
  - Counts Independent churches (such as FBC) each as a separate denomination.We certainly are divided, the chart on page 2 is a simplified version to try and illustrate the situation, there are many denominations not listed.
3. Didn't Jesus promise that we would have unity in the Church?
  - John 17:20-21a *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one,"*
  - Did He mean absolute agreement and conformity?
  - Perhaps we are too impatient – If we compare our timeline to that of the Old Testament we would still only be in the book of Genesis.
4. 'Unity' is a complicated idea: Every group that calls for unity, for all the different branches of Christianity to lay aside their differences and focus on the things we all agree on, is essentially saying "If everyone would just agree with me we would have unity".
5. There are serious differences, and as Oss Guinness put it *"The differences make a difference"*. Words, definitions and doctrines matter. As we will see later, Martin Luther essentially went to theological war with the Catholic Church over ONE word: *ALONE*.
6. The focus of our study today and next week will be comparing the beliefs of the 3 major branches.



## WHAT WE ALL AGREE ON:

- The Trinity & God's attributes
- The centrality of Jesus Christ – His life, death, resurrection and ascension.
- The resurrection of believers to eternal life.
- God's victory in history and the new creation.
- The conclusions of the first 6 Ecumenical Councils (All to do with who Jesus is)



## SO WHAT IS THE PROBLEM THEN?



While the Roman Empire was at times physically divided into East and West, there was a language division as well. The Roman language of Latin, while the official language of the Empire, never really caught on in its Eastern parts. Why? **Hellenism**. Recall the map of Alexander the Great's Empire: He conquered all the Eastern territories on his way to India, but he never travelled Westward.

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew (Old Testament, with a few chapters in Aramaic) and Greek (New Testament). The ability to read Hebrew quickly became rare in the Church: Only *two* Early Church Fathers could read both Hebrew and Greek: Origen (East) & Jerome (West), which is why their writings became very influential, as we will discuss later in the course.

Even though it is not a Biblical language, the 'Western Church' did its theological writing, thinking and teaching in Latin. If you think of where Latin is most often used today it is in legal applications. The Roman Empire gave us Law. It is still one of the foundations of South African law to this day.

The 'Eastern Church' did its theological writing, thinking and teaching in Greek. Greek culture was heavily influenced by Greek philosophy (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc.) and concepts and ideas derived from philosophy served as a foundation for much of their theological discourse.

From early on then one can see how misunderstandings could take place, because it was not enough to translate words from one language to another, the *concept* of what the word had to be translated. As time went on, the use of different languages became a barrier that prevented clear communication between the two churches and would contribute to the *Great Schism* (separation, breaking) in 1054.

Latin continued to be the theological language of the Western (Catholic) Church until the Reformation and the official language of the Roman Catholic Church to this day. Greek is still the official language of the Eastern (Orthodox) Church. Protestant Churches followed the Reformation push for Christians to have access to the Bible (and church services) in their own language.

## NOTES ON THE CHART

- We start with the Early Church, also known as the *Catholic* Church. The word 'Catholic' simply means universal, in other words the one church that has gone into the world to preach the Gospel. The idea of it being associated with the *Roman* Catholic Church is a much later development.
- In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century there were two *schisms*, i.e. churches separating due to doctrinal differences that were seen as non-negotiable.
  - The Nestorian Churches disagreed with the conclusions reached by the Council of Ephesus in 431. We believe that they are in serious error with regards to who Jesus Christ is, as we will see later in the course (It is named after Nestorius, who may not have actually believed what is attributed to him).
  - The Oriental Orthodox Churches disagreed with the conclusions reached by the council of Chalcedon in 451. As time passed it seems that in this case the disagreement had more to do with the way the Council worded its conclusions than with actual doctrinal disagreement.
- The Great Schism of 1054, as we will see below, was the result of centuries' worth of misunderstandings, internal strife and competition added to what became irreconcilable doctrinal differences. It was finally made official when the Bishop representing the Pope at a meeting *excommunicated* the leaders of the Eastern church, who then in turn excommunicated the leaders of the Western church. To excommunicate someone was to formally declare that they are no longer part of the Church, they are outside the faith, and thus in very real danger of going to Hell.
- The Catholic Church became known as the *Western* Church and Eastern Orthodoxy as the *Eastern* Church.
- Over time the Eastern Orthodox divided into different 'denominations' based the countries the churches were in (Greece, Russia, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania, etc.). Their doctrines remained the same regardless.
- In 1517, Martin Luther set in motion the Reformation, though like the Great Schism it had been the result of rising internal conflict and disagreements regarding what the Scriptures teach and who should have access to them (John Wycliffe, called 'The Morningstar of the Reformation' lived 150 years before Luther!)
- It is after the Reformation that I think one can truly begin to speak of the *Roman* Catholic Church as we would eventually know today.



- Those who chose to break away from the Catholic Church later came to be known as ‘Protestants’.
- The term Protestant is almost meaningless today, given the sheer amount of denominations that claim that title. It is almost as if being Protestant just means you are not Roman Catholic or Orthodox. It is much more than that as we will discuss shortly.
- The Anglican Church (or The Church of England) came into being in 1534, when King Henry VIII broke with the Roman Catholic Church, declaring himself the Head of the Church. It started out as a carbon copy of Roman Catholicism but was heavily influenced by leaders who had adopted the principles of the Reformation.
- Anglican Churches include features of both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, and churches tend to focus more on one of the two.
- The Lutheran Church was named after Martin Luther but was really built on the doctrine of his successor, Philip Melancthon. It is important to note that Luther never wanted to establish a new church, even less one that bore his name! He was hoping to bring reform to the Catholic Church.
- Reformed Churches are characterised by 3 C’s that describe their theological foundation: Creeds, Covenants & Calvinism (a system built upon the teachings of the Reformer John Calvin, but also Augustine of Hippo and as they would argue the Apostle Paul).
- It is important to note that the Charismatic and/or Pentecostal (there are some slight differences in the two terms) movement is a *recent* phenomenon. Modern charismatic beliefs and practices are unknown for most of the history of the Church. The early Pentecostals even called themselves *Restorationists*, seemingly admitting this fact. It was not until the *Azusa Street Revival* in 1906 that this movement began in earnest.
- Today, the Charismatic movement is by far the fastest growing Christian movement. The \* next to some of the Church names in the chart indicate that there are indeed some Churches in those denominations that adhere to Charismatic teaching and practice. We will be discussing the gifts of the Spirit and what happened in the book of Acts in more detail in a future lesson.
- Baptists are part of the Protestant tradition.

## KEY BELIEFS & DOCTRINES

- As can be seen from the chart, when the Reformers split from the Roman Church the Eastern Orthodox Church had been on its own path for almost 500 years after the Great Schism.
- One should not be surprised therefore that Protestants and Roman Catholics have more in common with each other theologically than either have in common with Eastern Orthodoxy, even though on the surface Roman Catholics and the Orthodox share many common practices and beliefs.
- One writer put it this way: “Protestants and Roman Catholics ask the same theological questions but give different answers. In Eastern Orthodoxy, both the questions they ask *and* the answers they give are different”.
- Eastern Orthodoxy is very difficult to understand because we approach theology through the perspective of the Western Church tradition (which I believe to be correct over against the Eastern tradition) and because there is a great focus on the philosophical and on *mystery* – Many of their doctrines are not explained in the detail one would find from Western theologians.

## PROTESTANT DISTINCTIVES

- True and faithful Protestantism holds to what are often called the *5 Solas of the Reformation*. It is a list in Latin of the five key points that drove the Reformation and summarised the core beliefs of the Reformers. Even though it was only formally compiled many years later one can clearly see these doctrines present in the works of the Reformers. They are:

<i>Sola Scriptura</i>	→	Scripture Alone (Rom 15:4, 2 Tim 3:16)	
<i>Sola Gratia</i>	→	Grace Alone (Eph 2:8-9)	
<i>Sola Fide</i>	→	Faith Alone (Eph 2:8-9, Rom 1:16-17)	→ The ALONE that awoke Martin Luther
<i>Solus Christus</i>	→	Christ Alone (John 14:6, Acts 4:12)	
<i>Soli Deo Gloria</i>	→	Glory of God Alone (John 17:1-5, 1 Corinthians 10:31)	

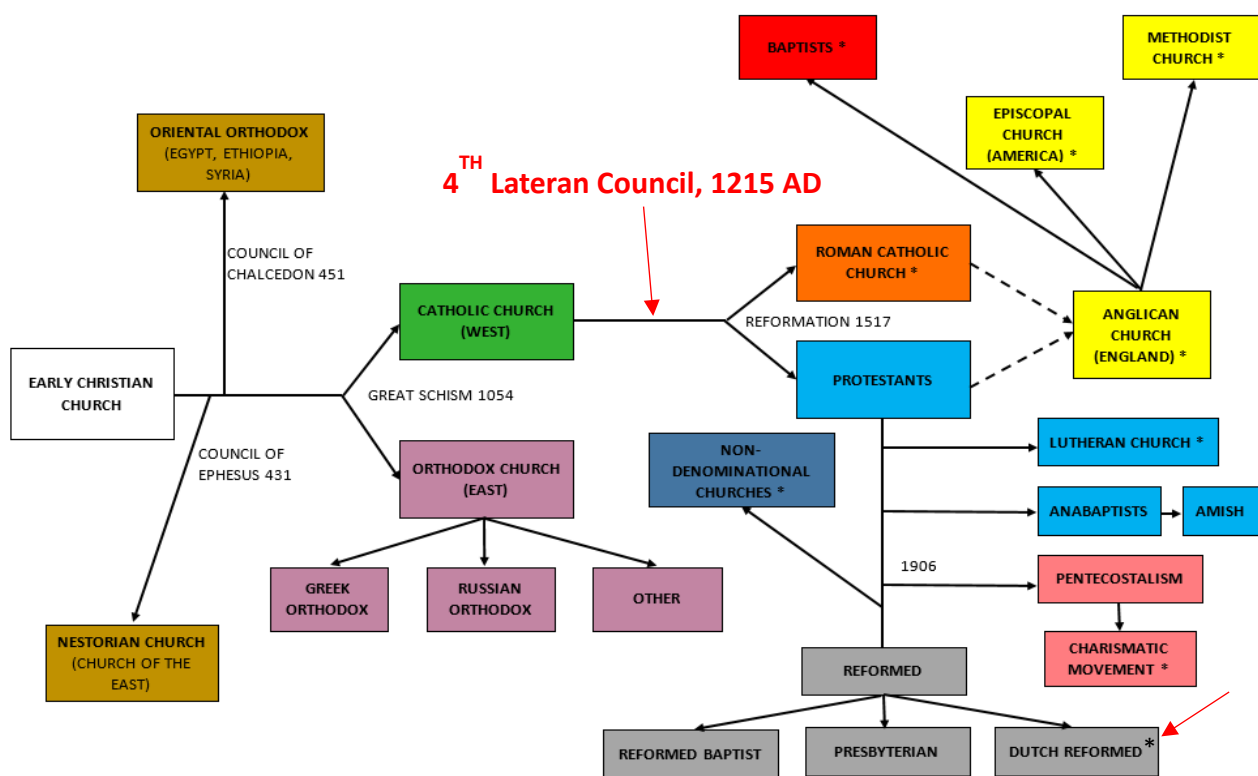


### 3. THE CHURCH TODAY – PART 2



#### WHAT SPLIT THE EASTERN AND WESTERN CHURCHES?

- Firstly, I must make a clarification: While I said in the previous lecture that one can only really begin to speak of the Roman Catholic Church after the Reformation, that might not have been the most insightful comment. After all, why did the Reformers feel they could not continue in the Catholic Church and had to break away?
- It would be better to say that many scholars agree that most of the core beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church had been put in place by 1215 AD, and that disagreements with these core doctrines led to the Reformation and then the Roman Catholic Church as we know it today.



- Last week we looked at what it means to be Protestant, and how important it is to know what you believe.
- This week we go back in time to look at the event that was the chief catalyst for the Great Schism (separation or split) between the Eastern and Western Churches in 1054.

#### 1. DIFFERENCES REGARDING THE TRINITY

The differences in language and cultural background began to work itself out in theology very early, especially in how the Eastern Church and the Western Church tried to make sense of the Trinity:

- There is ONE God in THREE distinct Persons. The challenge then is to determine what makes the persons distinct from each other? They are clearly distinct, yet there is a sameness that makes them indivisibly ONE. You cannot say one is stronger, holier, 'more' eternal, more omniscient (all-knowing) or omnipresent (present everywhere at the same time) than the others, because they all share the attributes of being equally God. All three Persons are equally worthy of worship and adoration.
- Using Biblical language, the distinctions came down to how each Person *has* their Personhood: In order to truly be Father, the Father must have a Son. But the Father has eternally been Father,

therefore His Son must have existed eternally as well. The Bible speaks of the Son being begotten of the Father:

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”* John 3:16 MEV.

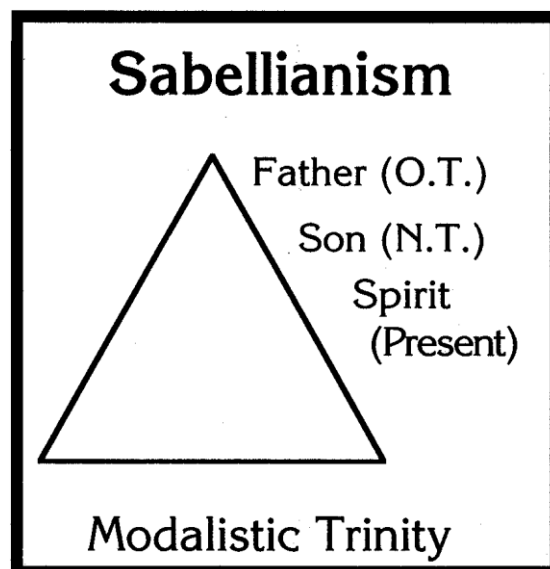
- To *beget* is to have a child, one with the same nature as you. Humans can only beget humans. Since the Father eternally begets the Son, then the Son shares the Father’s nature and is also God. Because He is the *only* begotten Son, He is unique in His Sonship. So that is what sets their Persons apart.
- But if Jesus is the only *begotten* of the Father, what about the Spirit? The Bible says that the Holy Spirit *proceeds* from the Father:

*“But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me.”* John 15:26 MEV.

- Again, if the Holy Spirit is God, then He is eternal, and this is an eternal procession. Also, He is clearly a Person, not some impersonal or spiritual force floating around!

## WESTERN UNDERSTANDING

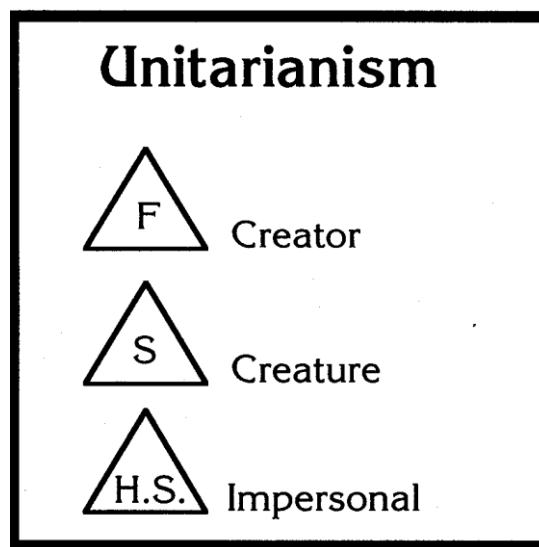
- The Western Church tended to start with the fact that there is only ONE God, and then argued for how one God could be THREE distinct persons.
- *Personhood* was a term that came from Roman Law and provided an explanation for both the unity and distinctions between the three Persons.
- *BONUS*: Because Western theology stressed the oneness of God a heresy called Modalism (or *Sabellianism*) sprang up in the Western Church, when a bishop by the name of Sabellius began to teach that God was really only ONE Person who manifested (or revealed) Himself in three different *modes* or roles over the course of time: Father (Old Testament), Son (Gospels), Holy Spirit (New Testament onwards).



False views of the Trinity (House 1992:50)

## EASTERN UNDERSTANDING

- The Eastern Church tended to start with the fact that there are THREE persons and argued for how there can be only ONE God.
- Greek philosophy was concerned about finding and identifying the *source* of every substance. For placing things into hierarchies of importance. Philosophers were constantly trying to find out what exactly made something what it was. For example, there was a popular theory that everything material (physical) consisted of one of the four elements: earth, air, fire or water, or a combination of those four. Someone then said that there must be another element that is even more basic than these four, and so they began to search for the *quintessence*, the one element that would bring the four together.
- Theologians began to apply this same thinking to God: What is the *source* of God, what is it that ultimately makes God, *God*? They looked at the Biblical language and found that the Son is begotten of the Father, while the Spirit proceeds from the Father. God the Father is then ultimately the source of the Trinity, because without Him there could be no Son or Spirit. In effect they created a hierarchy in the Trinity, with the Father being the most important person.
- Because we use the phrase “*The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit*”, that could easily become a hierarchy in our minds if we don’t guard against it! All three Persons are equally God and of equal value and importance.
- *BONUS*: Because Eastern theology stressed the *Threeness* of the Persons and essentially elevated the Father above the Son and Spirit, the heresy of Arianism took root in the East. Arius taught that only the Father was eternal, Jesus was created by Him. Therefore, only the Father can be said to be truly God (UNITarianism [one] vs. TRINItarianism [three])



False views of the Trinity (House 1992:50)

## ARE THERE EXAMPLES WITH WHICH WE CAN EXPLAIN THE TRINITY?

No, they all fall short, and most of them descend into heresy:

1. God is like water – Water can be a solid (ice), liquid (water) or gas (steam). Three in one.
  - a. This is an example of *Modalism*, not Trinitarianism: Water can exist in any of those states but not all three at the same time. The three Persons of the Trinity are always present, and they are distinct.
2. God is like an egg – You have the shell, the yolk and the egg-white. Three in one.
  - a. This is an example of *Tri-theism* (three separate gods), not Trinitarianism: If you crack open the egg you can easily separate the shell, yolk and egg-white and use them in

different applications. They can exist on their own. The Trinity is indivisible, you cannot separate the three persons.

3. God is like a lightbulb – The Father is the bulb, the Son is the light given off by the bulb, and the Spirit is the electricity that powers the bulb. Three in one.
  - a. This is an example of *Unitarianism*: The Father is the most important, without Him there would be no Son (the light), and the Spirit is just an impersonal force (electricity).

In short, the Trinity, while clearly established in Scripture, is a concept that is almost impossible for human minds to grasp. There is nothing else like it, it is wholly unique. We should therefore stick as closely as possible to Biblical language and avoid trying to explain the unexplainable with feeble human examples!

## THE CONTROVERSY

- In order to definitively deal with heresies regarding the Trinity, especially Arianism, a Council was called at Nicaea in 325 AD. There Arianism was condemned as heresy and a creed was drawn up to promote the true Christian teaching. Because the focus of the Council was on Jesus and His relationship to the Father, the creed only said this about the Holy Spirit: “*We believe in the Holy Spirit*”. Like in what is called today the *Apostles’ Creed*.
- Theologians (especially the *Cappadocian Fathers*) began to develop the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and at the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD, the Nicene Creed was expanded, and now said the following about the Holy Spirit:

*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.*

- The Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople were *ecumenical* councils, meaning that there were representatives from both the Eastern and Western Churches present. The resulting creed was viewed as the official teaching of the Universal (Catholic) Church.
- It thus came as a surprise to bishops and theologians from the East when over time they began to hear Western bishops and theologians add words to the creed when it came to the Holy Spirit:

*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father **and the Son**.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.*

- This addition is known as the *filioque* (Latin for *and the Son*) controversy, and by the 800’s AD it was universally accepted and taught in the Western Church. Why did it come about?
- As you can see, the Western Church agreed that the Spirit proceeded from the Father, but as they began to study Scripture, they came to the conclusion that the relationship between the Son and the Spirit is not as straightforward as originally thought:
  - Firstly, it helps draw further distinction between the Son and the Spirit. After all, if one is eternally begotten by, and the other eternally proceeding from, the Father, what really makes the Son and Spirit different from each other? But it also has good Biblical support.
  - “*But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.*” John 14:26 MEV. Why send the Spirit in the Name of the Son, and not the Name of the Father?

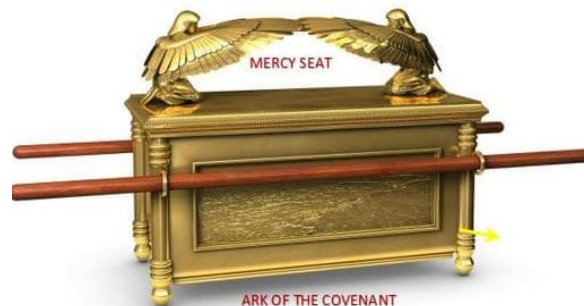
- Even though John 15:26 says that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, Jesus said that *He* would send the Spirit.
- In Luke 3:16, John the Baptist says that “*He (Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit...*”
- In John 16:14 Jesus says that “*He (The Spirit) will glorify Me, for He will receive from Me and will declare it to you.*” If the Spirit proceeded from the Father alone, why is He receiving from Jesus?
- Probably most convincingly, in Romans 8:9 the Spirit is called the Spirit of *God*, and the Spirit of *Christ*: “*You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. Now if any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him*”.
- Interestingly enough, the Western theologians also referenced Revelation 22:1 “*Then he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb (The Son)*”, where they took the river of life to be the Holy Spirit (based on John 4:10-14 and John 7:37-39, also Revelation 21:6). They saw in these verses the picture of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Throne of God the Father and God the Son.

## THE FALLOUT

- For the record, as far as we are capable of understanding the Trinity, I think that the Western theologians got it right. I do believe that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. I would not call anyone a heretic for believing otherwise or for saying they don’t know.
- This did however cause major problems in the Church:
  - The Western Church did not go about it in the right way. They should have called an ecumenical council in order to debate what they believe Scripture taught with their Eastern brethren, not snuck the term in there without any consultation.
  - The Eastern Church was extremely offended, because by altering the wording of the Nicene Creed the Western Church was departing from the Catholic teaching regarding the Holy Spirit.
  - Because of their commitment to the view that God the Father is the source of the Trinity, the Eastern Church thought that the West was robbing the Father of glory that belonged to Him alone and sharing it with the Son.
  - They also questioned how the Western Church could dare to try and ‘peek behind the divine curtain’ as it were and say they so definitively understand the Trinity (as we will see next week, to the Eastern Church God’s essence is really unknowable).
- The act of adding the *filioque* clause to the Nicene Creed is undoubtably the greatest event that shaped the split in 1054. Both the Eastern and Western Churches began to view one another with increasing suspicion, to interpret each other’s’ words in the least charitable sense, and each trying their best to influence and reform the other.
- For all the talk of unity and reconciliation, it is going to take one of the major branches of Christianity (or two, if you take the Western Church as both Protestants & Roman Catholics) to admit that they have been fundamentally wrong about the Trinity for the last 1000 years. That is going to take an awful amount of humility!
- Of course, there are liberals who say, “Well who cares about the filioque, let’s just get along”. But it is not so simple for true and faithful Orthodox, Protestants and Roman Catholics. They would want to know you agree with them theologically.
- As we will see next week, both the Orthodox and Roman Catholics claim to be the custodians of the true teachings of the Apostles, which has been carried down through the ages. To admit that your teaching has been wrong is to admit that the other side were the true *Apostolic* Church.

## 2. ICONS & STATUES

- Christians had begun to use art very early on. We have wall paintings from about 250 AD (more than 1500 years ago!) that have survived.
- The early Church borrowed a lot of its practices from Judaism and their Synagogues. Apart from the Temple items that God instructed the Jews to make, they refrained from making images based on the Second Commandment.

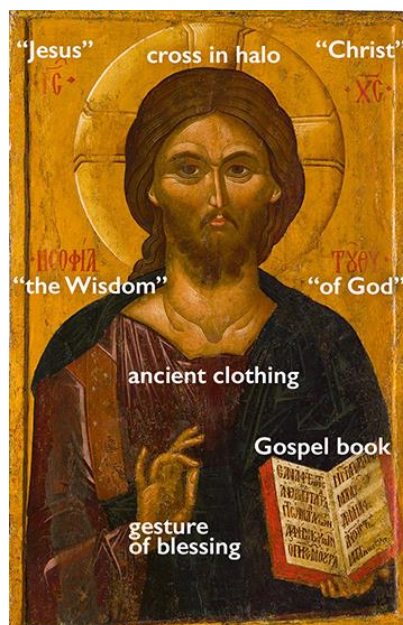


*You shall not make for yourself any graven idol, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water below the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; Ex 20:4-5a MEV*

- They also wanted to distinguish themselves from pagan idolatry that was rampant in the Roman Empire: People made a living selling statues of the gods that they had cast or carved.
- However, as time went by, these practices began to slip back into the Church, especially after Christianity became the State religion of Rome (381 AD) and people began to depict Jesus, Mary, the Apostles etc. in statue form. These were not intended for worship, and therefore did not violate the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment they argued.

## THE EASTERN CHURCH

- The Eastern Church offered serious resistance to the use of statues, preferring to use *icons* (from the Greek for 'image'). These are 2-D mosaics or paintings that depict Jesus or some other holy figure from Christianity (such as Mary) and is used to aid in worship and personal devotion.
- Orthodoxy teaches that the first icon was painted by Luke himself, of baby Jesus and Mary.

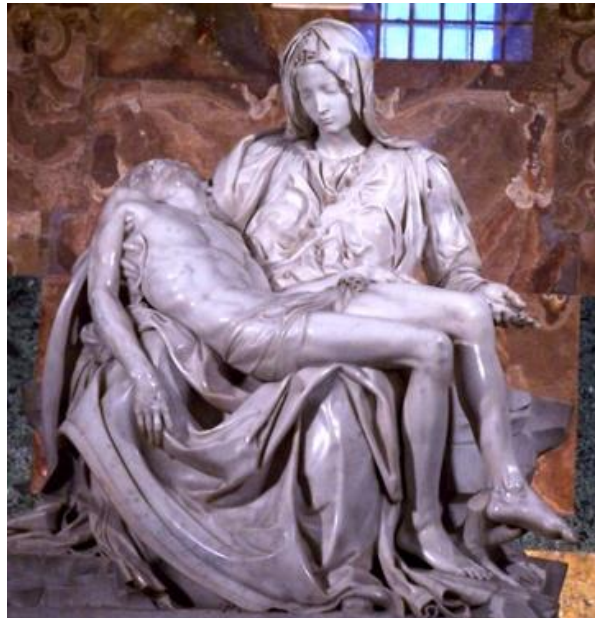


*Christ Pantokrator (the Almighty) from the late 1400's*



- Icons are filled with religious symbolism and truth that help focus the mind of the believer upon God's truth, often called 'windows to heaven'. The idea is that looking at the icon while praying helps focus your prayer.
- They depict people as they are now, in their heavenly glory (which is why they have halos around their heads). Thus, icons focus on spiritual truths. They are painted in a 'distorted' way on purpose, to show that we on earth do not see spiritual things perfectly as we one day will.
- Eastern Orthodox Christians *do not* worship icons. Even though they bow before and kiss icons, light candles and lamps, and burn incense before them, they would say that they venerate them, but that worship is meant to pass *through* this 'window' to Jesus Christ.
- They would argue today that it is like having a photo on your wall: You know that the person is not in the photo, but it represents them, they are with you in a way, and it is meant to stir certain emotions in you.
- Icons celebrate the fact that Jesus became a man (*incarnation*): Before God took human form in Christ, we had no idea what He looked like and so to try and make an image of Him would be blasphemy. Once God became incarnate, depiction was now possible.
- Many welcomed the use of pictures because no-one had access to the Bible and most people were illiterate. Thus, icons served as a teaching method.

## THE WESTERN CHURCH

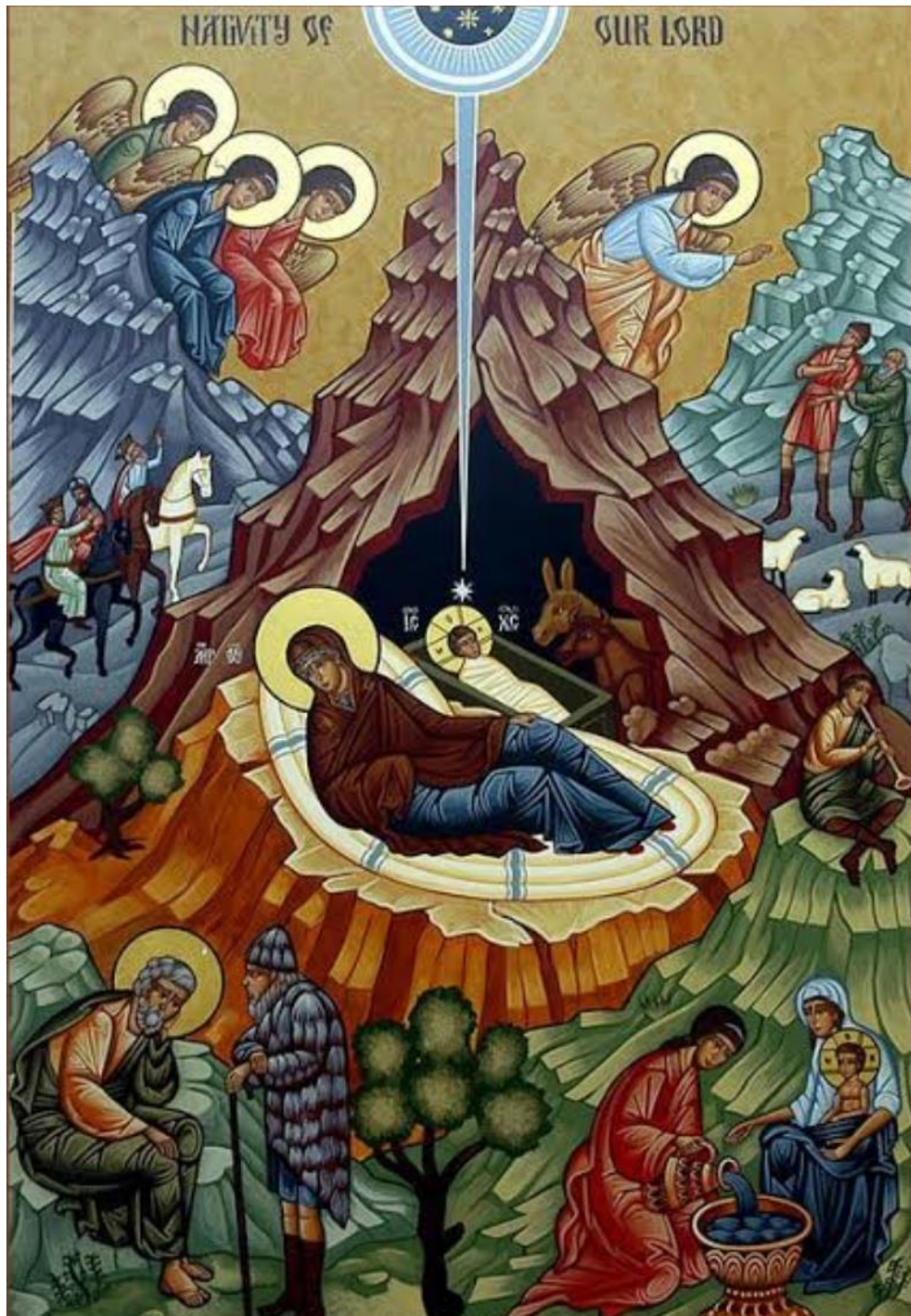


Mary, mother of Jesus, holding his body after the crucifixion

- Roman Catholics have no issues with the use of statues in their devotion and worship. They also do not worship the statues themselves, and they would make the same sorts of arguments as the Eastern Church to justify it, but there are clearly some differences:
  - Statues are 3-D, and therefore depict the full human form. The Eastern Church wanted to avoid the 'sensuality' that this could depict.
  - Statues are of Jesus, Mary or other holy Christians as they were on earth, thus more bound to the physical than the spiritual.
  - Many parts of the Eastern Empire were being conquered by the new Muslim Empire that emerged in the 630's and Muslims did not take kindly to religious statues of any kind. The East wanted therefore to shed the image of Christians making 'idols' but got no help from the Western Church in that regard.

## PROTESTANT CONCERNS

- During the Reformation, Protestants removed all icons and statues from their churches and discouraged their use by Christians.
- This was because especially John Calvin had a good understanding of the human heart: Our hearts are walking *idol-factories*, and therefore even those with the best intentions cannot help but be drawn to the worship of either icons or statues whether explicitly or implicitly.
- God has given humans great creativity and many gifted artists, yet that doesn't mean that we are free to use those gifts without boundaries.
- But most importantly, we don't *need* to know what Jesus looked like. We have the Bible. If we look at what Scripture teaches about Him, we learn who He really is, what He is like and we get to know Him in a way that a picture, a photo or even a video could never communicate.



## REFERENCE

House HW 1992. *Charts of Christian Theology & Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan

### 3. THE CHURCH TODAY – PART 3



#### ROMAN CATHOLIC & ORTHODOX BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

- Please note that one can devote entire courses to the study of Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy. These notes are meant to be a summary of generally accepted theology and practices of these Church branches.
- We must always be graceful when critiquing the views of those we don't agree with: Be honest in our representation of their beliefs and engage with their best arguments and examples, not the most extreme view we can find. If we would like them to do the same to us, it is only fair.
- Our study of the doctrine Eastern Orthodoxy will focus specifically on the *Greek Orthodox Church*, as it is the most influential for the parts of Church History that we will be studying.

#### 1. SCRIPTURE

- All three major branches of Christianity accept the 39 books of the Old Testament & the 27 books of the New Testament as Scripture.
- Roman Catholics & Eastern Orthodox accept the *Apocryphal* books as part of the Bible (which were included the Greek Septuagint), while Protestants don't (following the Reformers).
- The Bible of the Roman Catholic Church was the Latin *Vulgate*, translated from Hebrew (OT) and Greek (NT) by Jerome in the early 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Jerome went to Bethlehem and learned Hebrew from the Jews. He therefore did not want to include the Apocrypha in his translation because he understood that the Jews never viewed those books as being inspired. He was overruled by Church authorities and included them.
- The Greek Orthodox use the Greek *Septuagint* as their translation.

There are differences in the role that the Bible plays and the authority that is given to its teaching:

- Protestants believe in *Sola Scriptura*, making the Bible the final authority on any theological issue. There is much of value to be found in the writings of the Church Fathers and the historic doctrines of the Church insofar as they agree with Scripture, but it alone is *theopneustos* – “God breathed” (2 Tim 3:16).
- Both Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics reject *Sola Scriptura*. They both give equal authority to Tradition and the Teachings of the Church.
- Tradition means ‘handing over’, ‘transmission of’
  - Word suggests the action of conveying a deposit of knowledge.
  - It was the Church who gave us Scripture. (*But what about the Old Testament?*)
  - We might have inspired Scripture, but who will provide and infallible interpretation for us?
  - Orthodoxy: The consensus (agreement) of the Church on what the correct interpretation is.
  - Catholicism: The consensus of the Church is important, but the Pope is uniquely gifted to infallibly interpret Scripture. A claim Protestants & Orthodox deny.
- Consensus of the Church includes:
  - The Creeds
  - The decisions of the Church Councils
    - Eastern Orthodox only accept the *Ecumenical Councils* (Both East & West being present). The last one being the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 AD. No longer possible after the Great Schism of 1054.
    - Roman Catholic Church accepts the authority of all subsequent Western Councils, the last one as recently as the Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965.
  - The teaching of those and apostolic succession
    - Apostolic succession is the belief that Christ appointed the apostles and the apostles then appointed other leaders called presbyters or elders or bishops.

- Their practices, beliefs and interpretations were passed down from the Apostles through the Church Fathers up to the present.
- For the Roman Catholic Church, apostolic succession runs through the Apostle Peter all the way to the current Pope.
- For the Orthodox, it runs through all the Apostles, but particularly Andrew (Peter's brother) who they believed founded the Church in Byzantium (which became Constantinople).
- Icons
- Protestants are often guilty of what they are accused of by Roman Catholics & Orthodox: That *Sola Scriptura* means I have the freedom to take my Bible and interpret it any way I want, any way "the Spirit leads me". No! Protestants more than anyone should seek to study the Bible, make use of resources, and sit under solid Biblical teaching and preaching, to discern truth from their own feelings or 'spiritual experiences'.

## 2. WHAT SALVATION MEANS

- There are differences in how the Churches view the process & goal of Salvation.
- The Western Tradition (which includes Protestants) is very legal, therefore has very strong legal concepts: Judgement, justification, sin, wrath, forgiveness, etc.
- Augustine of Hippo did a lot of work on the idea of original sin (based on the New Testament teaching): Human beings are born sinful (as a result of Adam's *original sin*) and commit sins against God from as soon as we are able. God in his righteousness must judge sin, and therefore humanity is doomed to destruction and eternal separation from Him. However, Jesus in his Grace offers Himself as a sinless, perfect substitute, taking our sin and suffering the wrath of God in our place. His death and resurrection opened the way to relationship with God through faith.
- While both Roman Catholics and Protestants agree that salvation is only possible because God first showed His Grace toward us by sending His Son to die in our place, and that we must respond in faith to receive salvation, there are *major* disagreements about the particulars. Protestants state that salvation is BY grace alone, THROUGH faith *alone*.
- From the (Roman Catholic) Council of Trent (1545-1563): *If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema.* Anathema means to be cursed, cut off from God and certainly hell bound.
- The word 'salvation' in the Bible is clearly divided into three parts:
  - Justification – The moment where we are pronounced forgiven, freed of all our sin and debt.
  - Sanctification – Our Christian life of living in obedience, overcoming sin, relationship with God.
  - Glorification – When we are made new, given our resurrection bodies and made perfect.
- Roman Catholics make no distinction between Justification and Sanctification, therefore, once you have been justified and you sin again, you are in trouble! You need to do good works to earn your forgiveness again.
- In Roman Catholicism there are two types of sin: *venial & mortal*:
  - A mortal sin is defined as a **grave action** that is committed in **full knowledge** of its gravity and with the **full consent** of the sinner's will and is a turning away from God.
  - A venial sin generally fulfils only two of the three criteria and is not seen as a turning away from God.
- If a Christian dies without having repented of committing a venial sin, they will still go to heaven. If he/she dies without having repented of a mortal sin, that person is guaranteed to go to hell.
- The Roman Catholic doctrine of *purgatory* says that all believers who die must first go through a period of cleansing fire before being pure enough to enter heaven. It could last for anything from a couple of years to millions of years depending on your life. Ironically enough, it came into existence first as an encouragement: Don't worry Christian that you feel so imperfect and unworthy, God is going to cleanse you before you go into his presence!

- Only the Pope has the authority to reduce time in purgatory, either through proclamation, or the issue of indulgences.
- It is a terrible doctrine that makes light of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross in paying for our sin and making us clean! It is not found anywhere in Scripture, rather they appeal to an obscure verse in 2 Maccabees.
- The Orthodox Church did not share the same Latin legal foundation and was heavily influenced by Greek philosophy.
- Eastern Orthodoxy rejects the doctrine of being born in sin (original sin). They don't have a big focus on sin and forgiveness at all, and that's why a number of them despise Augustine as a heretic even though he is considered a saint in the Orthodox Church as well.
- For them salvation is all about the *resurrection* and God making everything new.
- The process of *theosis* (becoming like God) is emphasized over justification, sanctification and glorification. It almost seems that we come so close to God that in the end we are changed, NOT into gods, but we almost lose our humanity. This goes far beyond the Biblical language: the bride of Christ (the Church) will be united to Him, not individuals, and we will always remain fully human.
- It is a very mystical religion, and difficult to understand for us from the Western tradition.

### 3. MARY & THE SAINTS

- In the early Church there was a lot of discussion on who Jesus was. In fact, that's what most of the early Church Councils spent most of their time debating: How do we find proper balance between His divinity and humanity?
- During these debates, someone asked the brilliant question: Is Mary *theotokos*? Is she the 'God-bearer', literally 'the mother of God?'. The reason why it is so brilliant is that the answer must be YES...BUT! In its original form it had nothing to do with Mary herself, but everything to do with the baby in her womb: was it both God and man, or only man?
- Our friend Nestorius said that Mary was the mother of Jesus (the man), but not of Christ (God).
- The correct view is that from the very beginning Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. Two natures in ONE person. His deity he has always had but his humanity came from Mary.
- But this term 'mother of God' stuck (unfortunately). Mary very soon took a place of real prominence in the thoughts of many.
  - Pagan cultic influences on the Church.
  - The influence of the non-canonical book the *Gospel of James* (or the *Protoevangelium of James*)
  - People naturally seek ways to bypass having to deal with Jesus directly (idol factories).
- The four Marian Dogmas (a dogma is a doctrine that *must* be believed):
  - Mary as Mother of God (mostly in the good sense).
  - Perpetual virginity - The idea that Mary's womb was so sanctified that no other children were worthy of it. She also never had relations with Joseph her husband. 4<sup>th</sup> Century onward. Allegorical interpretation of Ezekiel 44:2:

*Then the Lord said to me: This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it. Because the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it, therefore it shall be shut*
  - Immaculate conception – Mary was born without the stain of original sin, God kept her. Only dogmatised in 1854. Creates a lot of problems.
  - Her bodily assumption into heaven. Mary did not die but was taken up to be with the Lord. Only dogmatised in 1950!
- Mary is Jacob's ladder (Genesis 28:12), the link between God and men. She is also the burning bush in Exodus 3, touched by God but not consumed.

- Both Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches will insist that they venerate (or honour) Mary, but they don't worship her. Read this Catholic prayer, the *Memorare*, regularly offered to Mary, and then make up your own mind:

*Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins my Mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful; O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me, Amen.*

If you watched the *Passion of the Christ* and you were theologically astute, you would have seen that the thief on the cross that asks Jesus to remember him when He is in His kingdom is wearing a brown pouch (scapular) around his neck.



According to Catholic tradition, Mary appeared to a monk in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and told him that anyone who dies wearing this scapular would be guaranteed a place in heaven and will be released from Purgatory by Mary on the first Saturday after their death. It makes a mockery of Jesus' words to him.

- The word *saint* simply means 'holy'.
- In both Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, the Saints are those Believers who by
  - moral example
  - courage and bravery
  - great spiritual lives
 can achieve a place of honour among God's people. They are venerated in icons (Orthodox & Catholic) and statues (Catholic) and special feast days named after them.
- They now serve as intercessors for Christians in the efforts to help them to become more like Christ. Both Orthodox and Roman Catholics are encouraged to pray to the saints to ask them for intercession.
- Their lives are viewed as an example for Christians to follow.
- In Roman Catholicism, the good deeds of the saints go into the Treasury of Merit, a type of spiritual bank believers can draw grace from.
- Process of becoming a saint (being canonized):
  - Wait five years after the person's death.
  - Verify that they had lived a virtuous, Godly life or had suffered death for the sake of Jesus.
  - Two "verifiable" miracles should have occurred as a result of the intercession of the person in question (This step is not required in Eastern Orthodoxy).
- In the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope took over the sole responsibility for declaring Saints in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the Popes throughout history canonized only a few saints (a few didn't canonize anyone), i.e. it was a strict and controlled process. In modern times, Pope John Paul II canonized 482 people, and the current Pope Francis has canonized 898 saints. It almost becomes a meaningless category.
- The problem: We are *all* saints! 1 Corinthians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, Romans 1:7.

#### 4. CHURCH GOVERNANCE

- The Roman Catholic Church is governed by the Pope. The office of the Pope was given to Peter in Matthew 16:18 and passed on to his successors. The Pope is Christ's representative on earth and therefore the rightful head over the global Church.
- All other branches of Christianity are thus in rebellion and cut off from the True Church.
- In the Eastern Orthodox Church, there are four major centres: Constantinople (now Istanbul in Turkey), Antioch, Alexandria & Jerusalem. The Bishop of Constantinople (*Ecumenical Patriarch*) is the figurehead, spokesperson and representative of the church to the outside world, but he does not have ultimate authority.
- For them there is no apostolic succession in terms of an office, only in the preservation of the true teaching of the Apostles.
- Many Eastern Orthodox churches are thus independent, holding to the same doctrine but with their own language and some unique customs.

BONUS: The office of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Anglican church functions on this same principle: he is the figurehead but cannot demand loyalty and obedience as the Pope does.

- Protestant Churches also deny the office of the Pope and believe in some form of Church independence.
- There are differences in terms of how churches should be governed: In the Baptist tradition there is a strong belief that churches should be autonomous, run by the local Pastors/Elders only. Some believe that local Pastors should be accountable to an overseer (Bishop), while others such as Dutch Reformed Churches believe Synods make governing decisions which local Pastors then put into action.

#### 5. SACRAMENTS

- Roman Catholicism has defined seven (7) sacraments, which most Eastern Orthodox would accept:
  - Baptism
  - Confirmation (Making a public declaration of faith)
  - Eucharist (Communion...but not really)
  - Marriage
  - Holy orders (becoming a priest, monk, nun)
  - Penance (Doing good deeds to prove that you are repentant)
  - Extreme unction (Anointing of those on their deathbed)
- Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and some Protestant Churches all baptize babies.
- For Roman Catholics, baptism washes away the stain of original sin and regenerates.
- Catholics sprinkle their babies.
- For Eastern Orthodox, baptism makes the baby born-again, a Christian.
- Because they speak Greek, they know that baptise means to immerse, and so they dunk the baby under the water three times!
- The central part of a Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox church service is the *Eucharist* (Thanksgiving), what we would call communion but with some distinctions. In fact, walking into a Catholic or Orthodox church you will see the altar have prominent place.
- Both believe that the bread and wine are the *literal* body and blood of Jesus:
  - For the Roman Catholics he is offered for sins anew in a bloodless sacrifice.
  - The process of transubstantiation: Items become the body and blood without ceasing to look like bread and wine.
  - For the Eastern Orthodox consuming the bread and wine is transformational, making us more like God by partaking of His *divine energies*.
  - For them the process is a mystery, they don't seek to explain it.

- Therefore, the priest serves the congregants, the items are not distributed, because spilling a drop of wine would be spilling the blood of Christ, and a wasted crumb of bread is a part of the body of Christ.
- If a person is excommunicated from the Church and lose access to the body and blood of Jesus, they are in real danger of hell. This gave the Church a great deal of power, as we will see in later lectures.

## 6. KNOWING GOD

- In Eastern Orthodoxy, theology is all about mystery and about the unknowability of God.
- They stress the fact that we can only describe God by what he is not: Immortal (NOT mortal) for example.
- This is called *Apophatic* theology (describing God only in negative terms [what He is NOT]).
- Human terms are too corrupted to meaningfully apply to God: We cannot say that God is *love* because our definition of love is totally inadequate.
- While there is something to be learned there regarding God's holiness and our limited capacity to understand Him, it misses that the Bible gives us very clear statements about what God is like.
- Roman Catholics and Protestants hold to *Cataphatic* theology: We believe that we can describe God in positive terms (what He IS) while remembering that our human language is very limited and we should always properly define our terms.

## 7. CLERICAL MARRIAGE

- Roman Catholic clergy are forbidden from being married.
- According to them, the Apostle Paul held the unmarried, celibate life as the highest possible standard for Christians (1 Corinthians 7:8).
- Unfortunately, this system has caused much abuse. Many Bishops and Cardinals, even some who became Popes, had multiple children with 'concubines' who they didn't marry and therefore didn't break the official rule.
- Eastern Orthodox priests may be married when they are ordained, but you cannot marry after ordination as a single person or a widower. Orthodox Bishops are not allowed to be married.
- Marriage is a wonderful gift God has given humanity. It is the ultimate picture of Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:32).

## 8. CONCLUSION

- While we can learn from Eastern Orthodoxy & Roman Catholicism, these Churches reject the doctrine that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. This means that they are preaching a different Gospel than the one the Apostles preached.
- We also totally reject the continual re-offering of the sacrifice of Jesus in the Eucharist. Jesus died once for all, a perfect and holy sacrifice.
- We can therefore not stand in unity with Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy in the faith. It should greatly sadden us that this is the case, and we should continue to pray for them and share the Gospel with them.
- This doesn't mean that there are not true believers in those churches – there may be many saved Roman Catholics for example, but then it is *in spite of Roman Catholicism*, not because of it.



# CHURCH HISTORY

## 5. THE EARLY CHURCH



### 1. WHEN DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?

#### 1. Abraham.

- This would generally be the view of Reformed churches.
- Romans 4:16 – Abraham is the father of all those who believe.
- God has always only had *one* people, made up of Jews and Gentiles.
- Advantages of this view:
  - Gives great importance to the Old Testament.
  - Shows God's faithfulness throughout time.
- Disadvantages of this view:
  - Places Christians under the Law, which they must divide into three parts (Civil, Ceremonial, Moral) to explain why only the 10 Commandments still apply today and not the rest of the 613 laws.
  - The Bible does seem to make a distinction between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church.

#### 2. With the Incarnation of Jesus.

- This is generally the view of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.
- Without Jesus coming to earth there would be no church.
- Advantages of this view:
  - Places emphasis on the fact that the Church is the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27).
  - It avoids spiritualising the Church by reading it into Old Testament passages.
- Disadvantages of this view:
  - It is an easy step from 'Without Jesus there would be no Church' to 'Without *Mary* there would be no Jesus'. *Mary* therefore becomes the founder of the Church.
  - It tends to downplay the key role of the Holy Spirit in the birth of the Church.

#### 3. At Pentecost.

- This is the view of many Protestant churches.
- It is the coming of the Holy Spirit that made *witnesses* of Jesus' followers and sent them to the ends of the earth (Luke 12:12, Acts 1:8).
- Advantages of this view:
  - It stresses the *newness* of the New Covenant.
  - It gives the proper place to the role and work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.
  - In this view, Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, but the Law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21).
- Disadvantages of this view:
  - It tends to treat large parts of the Old Testament as irrelevant to its story.
  - There can be an overemphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit.

#### 4. Our view at FBC?

- We agree that there would have been no Church without the Incarnation of Jesus and His perfect sinless life, death on the cross and resurrection from the dead.
- We affirm that Abraham was justified through faith alone and that we who likewise believe are his spiritual children.
- But it was with the Outpouring of God the Holy Spirit that the Church began: Confused, uncertain, in many ways fearful disciples were turned into courageous preachers of the good news who saw thousands come to Christ through the power and conviction of the Holy Spirit, and a world-wide movement was launched (Acts 1:8).

## 2. THE ROMAN EMPIRE



*The three missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul*

- The *pax Romana* ('peace of Rome') established by the rule of Caesar Augustus allowed for safe travel within the vast borders of the Roman Empire.
- One of the keys to this was the Roman road system: They had built roads in order to swiftly move army troops, supplies and intelligence.
- Trade also made travelling easier: It was easy to board a ship travelling between the many port cities within the empire.
- All these factors contributed to the rapid spread of the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire.

## 3. THE EARLIEST CHURCH

- The events regarding the birth and settling of the Church are recorded in the book of Acts.
- Acts covers events that are spread over about a 30-year period.
- For most of its very early years the Church consisted almost exclusively of Jewish believers. It took about 8 years for the gospel to spread beyond the Jews.

- But didn't the Jews reject Jesus and kill him? Some of them, yes. When doing history, one should always be careful of using blanket phrases such as *the Jews* (or *the Muslims* or *the Christians*):
  - The Jewish Sanhedrin arranged to have Jesus arrested and tried at night to avoid an uprising from the people (remember the crowd who had welcomed him and praised him just a few days earlier?)
  - The events surrounding the crucifixion happened while Jews were preparing their Passover feasts, and most of Jerusalem was probably not present or even aware of what was happening.
  - The crowd who wanted Jesus crucified was most likely a mob stirred up by the religious leaders.
- The early Church borrowed many practices from the Jewish synagogue meetings. In fact, many Jewish Christians still attended synagogue weekly and were tolerated. There was singing, readings from the Scriptures, prayer, preaching, and they often ate together (both communion and fellowship meals) (Acts 2:42).
- The Romans viewed Christianity as an offshoot of Judaism and so Christians were free to practise their religion and they were not required to offer sacrifices to the Roman gods.
- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament:
  - Jews (Acts 2:1-4)
  - Samaritans (Acts 8:12-17)
  - God-fearers – Gentiles who practised the Jewish religion but were not circumcised (Acts 10:44-48)
  - Gentiles (Acts 19:1-6)
- These events took place to show that God no longer shows partiality to a certain people-group, but salvation and membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is open to ALL (Acts 15:1-31). Even the Apostles did not fully understand this at first!
- The Church began as an exclusively Jewish movement, but gentile believers gradually became the majority. Take the Roman Church: When the Emperor Claudius issued a decree banning Jews from Rome in the 40s AD, the Church had a Jewish majority. When the Jews could return about 10 years later, it now had a gentile majority → The background to the Book of Romans.
- Over time, as Jews began to realise that Christianity was not just a passing phase but a real threat to Judaism, the religious leaders began to appeal to the Roman authorities to treat Christianity as a separate religion. This meant that Christians no longer enjoyed the protection that the Jews did.
- The ritual that was required was simple: In public places, usually in the marketplace, you had to take a pinch of incense, throw it on the altar and say *Kaiser kurios* (Caesar is lord). But for Christians, there was only one Lord: Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 4:5). This led, as we will see, to various bouts of persecution against the Church and made it difficult for Christians to conduct business (Revelation 13:17).
  - This was proof that from the very beginning, Jesus was worshipped as God. If *lord* was simply an honorary title, why did they not want to say that Caesar is lord?
- The Jews revolted against Roman rule in 66 AD. Many had been left jobless after the Temple had been completed in 64 AD and others wanted to establish an independent Israel.
- The revolt culminated in the sacking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- These were the darkest days in Israel's history: According to the Jewish historian Josephus, approximately 1.1 million people were killed and another 97,000 were enslaved. Many Jews

had come to Jerusalem from all over the empire to celebrate the Passover (for which attendance was compulsory for all able Jewish males).

- Jesus predicted these events in Matthew 24. His words regarding the Temple are stunningly precise: not one stone would be left upon another (verse 2). During the battle in Jerusalem, a fire broke out that could not be contained, and it spread to the Temple. All the gold furnishings and utensils melted in the heat and ran in between the stones, which were all toppled by the Roman soldiers to plunder every little piece of gold.



- The Western Wall (or Wailing Wall) in Jerusalem is associated with the Temple but was not part of the original Temple complex.
- After the fall of Jerusalem, the divide between Jews and Christians became permanent: Jewish Christians were no longer allowed to attend synagogue, and hostilities between the groups grew.
- Up until that time, the presence of the Apostles had been a source of stability and comfort. Even after some of them had been put to death for their faith, their influence was still keenly felt:
  - The Church is built on the foundation of the Apostles and (New Testament) Prophets (Ephesians 2:19-22). The Apostles and those on whom they laid hands operated in miraculous gifts to authenticate that the message they preached, the Gospel, was of Jesus.
  - It was entrusted to them and their companions to write the inspired New Testament scriptures. These documents, often letters such as those written by Paul for example, were spread around, copied and read in churches across the empire.
  - They battled heresy and false doctrines that quickly began to spring up in and around the Church.
- But the office of Apostle had specific criteria that could not be fulfilled by any after the original Apostles had died (Acts 1:21-22, Galatians 1 & 2), and in time they all did die.

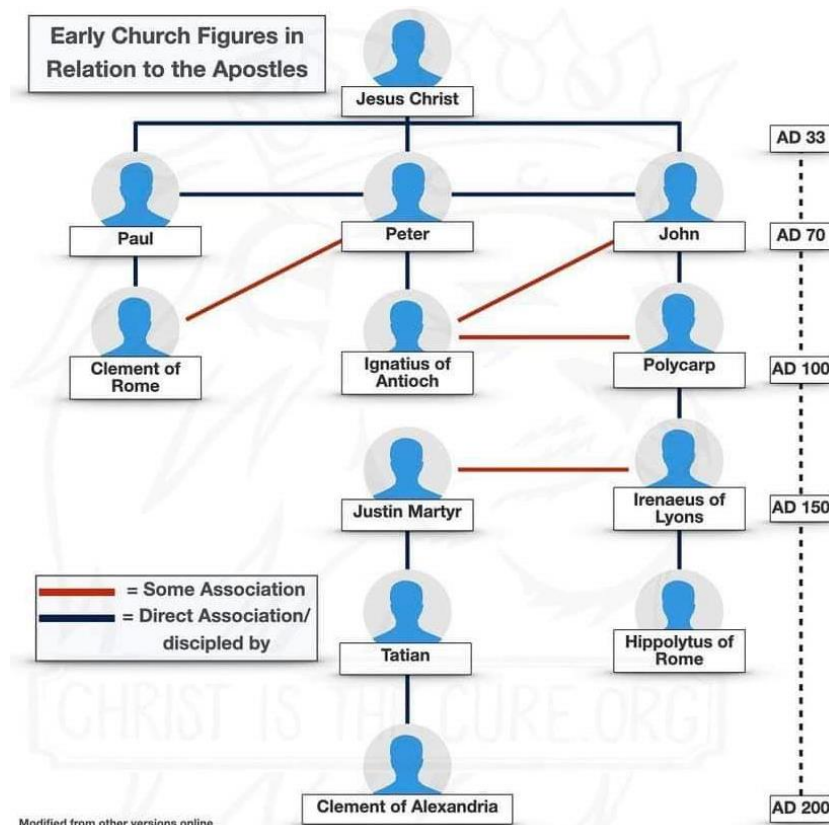
#### 4. THE CHURCH AFTER THE APOSTLES

Every year, at the times of Easter and Christmas, you will hear of controversial documentaries or books being released, arguing that true Christianity has been corrupted and that what the Apostles believed is *totally* different to what we believe today. They will say things like:

- Did you know that the first list of New Testament books that includes all 27 books found in our canon today is only found in a letter written by Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in 367 AD?
  - Did you know that there were dozens of gospel accounts that were just thrown out, and only four were taken to be 'Scripture'?
- Don't let sceptics fool you. The books of the Bible were in use from the moment they were first written and distributed. Yes it took time for certain books to gain universal acceptance (Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, Revelation), and other books to be universally rejected (Shepherd of Hermas, Wisdom of Solomon), but the idea that the canon popped into existence out of nowhere in 367 AD is absurd.
  - Our doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is *not* that the Church decided which books belong in the canon and which didn't (this is the Roman Catholic and Orthodox view), but that God through His Holy Spirit enabled the Church to identify the inspired books from those that weren't.
  - If one looks at the idea that many gospels were thrown out, here are a few examples that show this idea to be false (and there are many more quotes from the Early Church Fathers):
    - Marcion's canon (140's AD). Marcion was a heretic who wanted a bible that only taught what he believed, so he rejected three of the four gospels and only included an edited version of Luke. Wait, what about all the dozens of other gospels?!
    - Tatian's *Diatessaron* (meaning "Out of the four") was an attempt to harmonise the four gospels into one book (160 – 175 AD, the precise date is uncertain). Only four?!
    - "There are four gospels like the four winds" – Irenaeus (180's AD)
    - The *Muratorian* fragment (180's AD) containing the names of 19 of the 27 books of the New Testament, including Luke and John and mentioning two other gospels whose names are missing. Again, what about all the other gospels that were supposedly in wide circulation?
    - There were many books that carried the title "Gospel of...", most famously *Peter*, *Thomas* and more recently *Judas*, but clearly these books were written long after the events of the First Century and were unknown in the Early Church.
    - It is important to understand that even though the Early Church had access to the writings of Scripture there was no Bible yet, and no library where ordinary Christians could go to check the Scriptures to see if their Pastors/Bishops were teaching correct theology and doctrine.
  - It is important, because in the Second Century the Church faced its first major heresy: *Gnosticism*. It was not a Christian heresy per se, rather there were people who tried to adapt Christianity to fit gnostic teaching, the greatest examples being Valentinius and Marcion.
    - Gnosticism was a dualistic religion: Good and Evil are eternally in conflict with one another, with neither being strong enough to completely subdue the other. "Good" is everything *spiritual*. "Evil" is everything *material/physical*. Spirit = good. Matter = evil.
    - Human beings are spirits trapped in an evil, material world, and the only way to escape and once again achieve a purely spiritual state is through enlightenment, learning and coming to understand secret knowledge (*gnosis*).
    - What are the implications for Christianity?
      - Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament is evil, because He created the material world.
      - A higher being, Jesus the Christ, was sent to liberate humanity from the clutches of this evil creator god, by bringing the secret knowledge we need. After all, Jesus said

that *you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free* didn't he (John 8:32)? Plus, Jesus only explained the parables to his disciples so that they alone would have understanding. They could then pass on this secret understanding to those who were worthy.

- Jesus therefore could not have been human, because that would mean he joined himself to evil matter. This was the heresy of *Docetism* (to seem). In other words, Jesus *seemed* to be born, die and rise again but it couldn't have been because he was only a spirit, not flesh.
  - It is ironic that the first major challenge to the church faced was not whether Jesus was God but whether He was a man! Modern men have a problem with Jesus being born of a VIRGIN, the Gnostics had a problem with Jesus being BORN at all.
- Gnosticism is a very important concept to understand because it is alive and well even in our day. How? "I am a woman *trapped* in a man's body". The idea that your body (the material) and who you really are on the inside (the spiritual) are completely unrelated is Gnostic.
  - Marcion was a 'Christian' theologian and evangelist, who, in order to spread this 'Christian Gnosticism', came up with his own version of the Bible. Because he rejected the Old Testament God as evil, he threw out the Old Testament and heavily edited the New Testament to remove any favourable mention of the Jews.
    - He hated the Jews because they worshipped the god of evil in his view.
  - Marcion was excommunicated by the church in 144 AD, but they could not stop him from spreading his message, and this brought much confusion to the average person who did not have a Bible in order to gauge the truth of his message.
- In order to refute Marcion, the Church could not simply appeal to the Scriptures because he did not accept them all. So, the Church chose the most logical way to counter Marcion's teaching: By appealing to *Apostolic succession*.



*Apostolic Succession (credit to christsthecure.org)*

- They made argument for a Catholic or universal Church by showing that their teachers have been taught by someone who had been taught by the apostles and therefore had the true message:
  - Church leaders, such as Irenaeus, were trained by men who knew the Apostles (Polycarp, Ignatius) and so they would be the authorities on what the Apostles themselves taught.
- These men rejected Marcion's teaching because it was clearly not found in the teaching of the Apostles. The Apostle John seemed to argue against an early form of Gnosticism when writing the books of 1 & 2 John.
- It was the best form of argument that the Church had available, and it was a testimony to them that they were ultimately successful in subduing Marcionism.
- As Christians Rose up to defeat the gnostic heresy it also helped them clarify their own beliefs, as heresy often does.
- But. The lines drawn on the above chart are solid, indicating that we can prove these associations, but they are not as clear cut as that. For example, the evidence points to the fact that Polycarp *knew* John, but was he disciplined by him?
- Irenaeus said that one teaching that had been passed down directly from the Apostles was that Jesus was over 50 when he died. That is wrong, no-one believes that today.
- The primary way the teachings of the Apostles were passed on was not through men, who are fallible and can get things wrong, but through the words of the New Testament writings.

- The Roman Catholic Church especially, but also the Orthodox Church to a lesser degree, took this idea of Apostolic succession and rode off into all kinds of directions with it:
- Instead of saying that it served its purpose and that we should now appeal to Scripture above any teachings of men, they expanded the idea to argue that *they* alone hold to the true teachings of the Apostles through an unbroken line of Popes, the successors of Peter.
- This is an abuse of Church history, and shows what a wonderful gift the Bible is that we have today: We don't have to argue about who knew who and to what degree did they influence one another (though that is an interesting topic), we can appeal to the words of the Apostles, and Jesus(!) directly.



# CHURCH HISTORY

## 6. PERSECUTION & CONSTANTINE



### 1. THE REALITY OF PERSECUTION

- Bible verses on persecution:
  - Matthew 5:10-12
  - Mark 10:29-30
  - John 15:19-20
  - John 16:33
  - Romans 8:17-18
  - 2 Corinthians 12:9-10
  - 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4
  - 2 Timothy 3:11-12
  - 1 Peter 4:12-16
- The Bible is clear that Christians can expect to be persecuted for their faith.
- Persecution of Christians began very early on: *Martyr* comes from the Greek word for *messenger*. Messengers of the Gospel were often put to death for their faith.
- As far as we can tell from Church tradition, all the Apostles except John died as martyrs.
- The most prominent early Church Fathers were also martyred.
- Many Christians viewed their martyrdom as an example to be followed.
- Wrong reactions to persecution:
  - Avoid it at all costs.
  - Actively seek it.
- Persecution of the Church:
  - Was intermittent, there were times of toleration.
  - Usually confined to particular geographical areas (though some were Empire-wide).
  - Varied in severity: For some Christians, persecution meant being severely tortured or maimed but left alive, others were killed. Many that died did so in the arena, for the pleasure of spectators, others were burned or cut down with the sword. Others still were worked to death in Roman gold and silver mines.
- **Important questions to consider:** Is persecution good for the Church? What reasons would you give for avoiding persecution?
- We can understand why the Jews persecuted Christians, but why did the Romans do so?
  - Christians were seen as superstitious for believing in the resurrection of a man, which doesn't happen! Also, according to them this man, Jesus, was a traitor who was put to death for rebelling against Roman rule. If Jesus rejected Roman rule, so would his followers they argued.
  - Many Romans still regarded Christianity as a branch of Judaism, and so when the Jews rebelled in 66 AD and again in 132 AD, Christians were (unfairly) viewed as complicit in these acts.
  - Christians were viewed as disloyal citizens of the Empire because they would not partake in Roman religious festivals and celebrations.
  - Christians made no distinctions between peoples and welcomed all into their religion: it was very popular among the poor, oppressed and outcasts. Slaves,

women and children abounded but intellectual Romans thought it to be the religion of the lower classes (remember that they considered non-Latin and -Greek speakers *Barbarians*).

- Christian gatherings were not open to just anyone, and often happened in secret. Soon rumours began to spread that they ate human flesh and drank blood (communion) and that they practised incest (because they called each other *brothers & sisters*).
- Many Christians did not believe in taking up arms. Some considered killing, even in war, to be against Christ's commandments, while others did not want to fight to expand the wicked and pagan Roman Empire. This again caused them to be seen as disloyal subjects of the Empire. Because Christians were so unpopular and unlikely to fight back, the Romans could easily make scapegoats out of them:

*If the Tiber reaches the walls, if the Nile does not rise to the fields, if the sky does not move or the earth does, if there is famine, if there is plague, the cry is at once "The Christians to the lion!"* – Tertullian, 197 AD.

## 2. TIMELINE OF PERSECUTION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

- 35** Stephen martyred by Jewish mob; the Apostle Paul converted (?).
- 42** Apostle James (brother of John) beheaded by Herod Agrippa I.
- 62** James (brother of Jesus), leader of Jerusalem church, killed on order of Jewish leaders.
- 64** Great fire in Rome is blamed on Christians by Emperor Nero, who cruelly persecutes them.
  - \* Fire burned for 6 days and almost certainly happened because Nero had plans to develop a new palace and temple complex but required space to do so.
- 65** Peter and Paul executed in Rome under Nero (according to tradition).
- 66** Jewish revolt breaks out that ends in the Roman destruction of the Temple in **70 AD**.
- 90-96** Emperor Domitian demands to be worshipped as a god and has many Christians killed for refusing.
- 100?** Clement of Rome is martyred, though traditional accounts of his death vary greatly.
- 107** Simeon, bishop of Jerusalem, martyred under Emperor Trajan.
- 112** Trajan writes to Pliny (a Roman governor) to say that only those who practise Christianity openly should be persecuted. If they denied Christ, they could be set free.
  - \* Pliny said that Christians were good citizens, they paid taxes and didn't cause trouble. He struggled to understand why they needed to be persecuted.
  - \* He also said that there were so many Christians that it was stretching Roman resources!
- 117** Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, also martyred under Trajan.
  - \* He was the first person to speak of the *Catholic* Church.
  - \* Said the Bishop was head over all the churches, elders, pastors and deacons in a city.
  - \* Sent to Rome to be thrown to the lions; wrote 7 letters to churches on the way.

- \* Called his chains *spiritual pearls* and sought martyrdom to be with Christ.
- 132** Outbreak of 2<sup>nd</sup> Jewish revolt led by Simon Bar Kokhba, who many believed to be the Messiah. Defeated by Emperor Hadrian's forces in **135** AD and Jerusalem sacked.
  - \* Hadrian realised Roman expansion had limits: Had a wall built to keep enemies out.
- 155** Polycarp martyred, though there was no outbreak of persecution at the time.
  - \* "*Eighty-six years have I served Him. He has never done me wrong. How then can I blaspheme the god who saved me?*"
- 165** Justin Martyr martyred under Marcus Aurelius.
  - \* He was a Greek philosopher who converted to Christianity.
  - \* The *Apologetists* took Christianity to the intellectual sphere and debated scholars and philosophers.
  - \* Justin clearly did not have the whole New Testament, and his attempts to merge Christianity with philosophical ideas means his theology was wonky in places.
- 197** Tertullian writes his *Apologeticum* in which he decries the Roman hatred of Christians.
  - \* Wrote "*The blood of Christians is seed*".
  - \* He believed that Jesus was coming back at any moment, therefore did not want his wife to get pregnant or she would be in that state for eternity...
- 202** Emperor Septimius Severus forbids conversions to Christianity or Judaism.
- 203** Two female martyrs, Perpetua & Felicitas, thrown to wild bulls in the arena.
  - \* Influential scholar Origen's father is martyred. In order to stop him from going his mother hid his clothes.
  - \* Origen became the father of the *allegorical* method of interpretation.
- 235** Emperor Maximinius Thrax persecutes church leaders.
- 250** Emperor Decius orders universal offering of incense to the Emperor. Church leaders arrested; Origen jailed and tortured; Fabian, bishop of Rome, martyred, as are bishops of Antioch and Jerusalem; Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (now Tunis), flees.
  - \* Cyprian was accused of cowardice for fleeing and not setting the example of martyrdom.
  - \* He was not a coward. Rather, he viewed himself and his role as too crucial for the church.
  - \* He had converted at age 26, and by 29 he was made bishop, a huge responsibility! This shows that there were not many mature believers in the churches of Carthage.
- 251** Decius dies; Cyprian returns to Carthage and deals with lapsed Christians; Novation schism.
  - \* Everyone who offered incense to the Emperor received a certificate, the *libellus*.
  - \* What about Christians who had offered sacrifice and now wanted to return to the church?
  - \* The *sacrificati* were all those who willingly sacrificed, whether they gave in immediately or

suffered tremendous torture before giving in.

- \* The *libellatici* never sacrificed but had purchased false certificates stating that they had.
- \* The *Confessors* were those who, even after suffering torture and often being maimed, did not deny Christ. They became very influential in dealing with those who had lapsed.
- \* **Consider the following:** 1. The Apostle Peter had denied Jesus and was not condemned.  
2. How would you feel if a family member had been killed or maimed for their faith and now these 'cowards' wanted to come back into the church?
- \* Surprisingly, the Confessors were very forgiving, and wanted to allow repentant believers Back.
- \* Cyprian and other bishops felt *they* should decide the fate of the lapsed, not the Confessors. Cyprian was in favour of allowing lapsed Christians back...on their death bed, if they had lived lives of repentance and did good works to make up for their unfaithfulness.
- \* Novation, another bishop, didn't want to allow lapsed Christians back under ANY circumstances.
- \* Those who agreed with Novation broke away and started their own churches. Cyprian rejected this and said that only the *Catholic* Church is the true Church. The Roman Catholic Church will often quote Cyprian to argue that he had them in mind (clearly he didn't).
- \* The issue remained unresolved and would soon rear its head again.

**252-53** Emperor Callus revives persecutions of Decius. Origen, weakened by torture, dies in **254**.

**257-58** Emperor Valerian blames military defeat on Christians. After failing to exile them, he persecuted them. Cyprian of Carthage martyred willingly and without hesitation.

**286** Emperor Diocletian divides the Empire into two: Each with an *Augustus* (ruler) and a *Caesar* (deputy), who would take over from the Augustus after 20 years.

**303** Great Persecution under Emperor Diocletian. Church buildings to be destroyed, sacred writings burned, Christians to lose civil rights, clergy to be imprisoned and forced to sacrifice, and (in **304**) all people to sacrifice on pain of death.

**305** Diocletian and Maximian abdicate; hiatus in persecution. Constantius becomes Augustus in the West. Galerius becomes Augustus in the East and continues persecution of Christians.

**306** Constantius dies. His son, Constantine, named Augustus of the West by the army.

**311** Donatist schism begins.

- \* Many Christians had given up precious Christian writings to be burned. Others, having not learned from the Novation controversy, pretended to hand over Christian writings, though these were fake or unrelated books written in a language the soldiers didn't understand.

- \* The *traditores* (from which we get the word *traitor*) were *those that handed over* writings to be burned.
- \* Donatus in North Africa became the leader of a group who said that the *traditores* were not true Christians. The problem was that many bishops or church leaders had handed over writings. According to the Donatists these leaders were unbelievers, and this meant that any ordinations, baptisms or giving of communion they had performed were invalid.
- \* On the one hand, we would agree that only true Christians should perform these tasks, but we would reject the idea that there is power in them of themselves.
- \* Donatism fractured the African church and contributed to its collapse when faced with Islam 300 years later.

**312** Constantine defeats Maxentius to take control of Western Empire. Before the battle he sees a vision of the cross, and later sees the *Chi Rho* sign and hears a voice “In this sign conquer”.

**313** Constantine and Licinius (now Augustus in the East) meet; the resulting “Edict” of Milan grants toleration of Christianity. Christians no longer actively persecuted, yet Christianity remains illegal in the Eastern Empire.

**321** Arius condemned as a heretic and excommunicated from the church in Alexandria.

- \* Because Christianity is still illegal in the East, there is not much the churches can do to enforce this.

\* Arius taught that Jesus was a created being (*There was when the Son was not*).

\* He used songs to spread his theology and gained a large following.

**324** Constantine defeats Licinius to unite East and West and become the sole Roman emperor. He renames the city of Byzantium to Constantinople (now Istanbul in Turkey) and makes it the new capital of the Empire. Christian persecution ends and is now fully legal.

**325** Constantine assembles the Council of Nicaea to deal with the Arian heresy.

- \* This was almost certainly more of a political move than a religious one: He did not want the empire he had worked so hard to unite to fracture because of religious differences.
- \* Contrary to what the *Da Vinci Code* claims, Jesus was not made God by Constantine at this council. Constantine also did not decide which gospel accounts would be included in the Bible. The main discussion was what the Bible teaches regarding the divinity of Jesus.
- \* Because both sides appealed to Scripture, they ended up settling on a non-Biblical word to Describe the divine nature of Jesus: He was *homoousios*, of *the same* substance as the Father, not *homoiousios*, of *a similar* substance as the Father, as Arius argued.
- \* The council voted 316-2 in favour of accepting the *homoousios* position as Biblical truth. Constantine did not vote or influence the result in any way.

\* Unfortunately, despite this defeat Arianism was not dead, and it slowly crept back into the mainstream. Constantine, ever the politician, was eventually baptised on his death bed...by an Arian bishop.

**381** Emperor Theodosius I makes Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire.

**391** Theodosius declares pagan worship illegal and orders temples to be shut.

\* He was the last emperor to rule over the united Roman empire. After his death his sons divide it in two, and it remained so until the fall of Rome in **476**.

- For the first three hundred years, to be a Christian could cost you your life, could result in persecution and incredible suffering. This was very effective in keeping false believers out of the Church.
- But suddenly, first through the work of Constantine and then Theodosius, this changed.
- When Constantine legalised Christianity he also ordered the Church to be compensated for books and writings that were destroyed and property that was confiscated. This meant that the Church suddenly became wealthy, and we all know that where there is money all kinds of interesting people follow.
- When Theodosius made Christianity the state religion, it meant that most Roman citizens adopted Christian practices without undergoing true conversion. It resulted in a blending of Christianity with pagan rituals and beliefs.
- It also meant that the Church and State became closely linked, with the Church gaining political influence, but the emperors expecting to have a say in Church affairs.
- It birthed the monastic movement, which began with monks who moved to the desert in order to live solitary lives of contemplation and prayer away from the corruption they saw in the Church. Men like Simeon the Stylite followed this tradition and took it to new extremes.
- BUT it wasn't all bad news. Even though persecution had kept some churches strong, it had wiped out many churches and had often left young Christians with no shepherds or pastors. Now there could be discipleship and Christian education.
- The Church's newfound wealth and the peace it enjoyed could be employed for the copying and spreading of Christian writings and Bible books.
- The Bible could be translated into Latin and spread over the Empire (a very good translation for the tools Jerome had at his disposal).
- Being able to influence rulers could result in the accepting of good policies and the rejection of bad policies.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- The right reaction to persecution:
  - Prepare yourself for it and bear it bravely if it should come.
- Examine your own heart.
- Be slow to judge those who experienced persecution.
- Be thankful to God for preserving His Church and giving us great examples of faithful and brave men and women who stood firm in their faith.

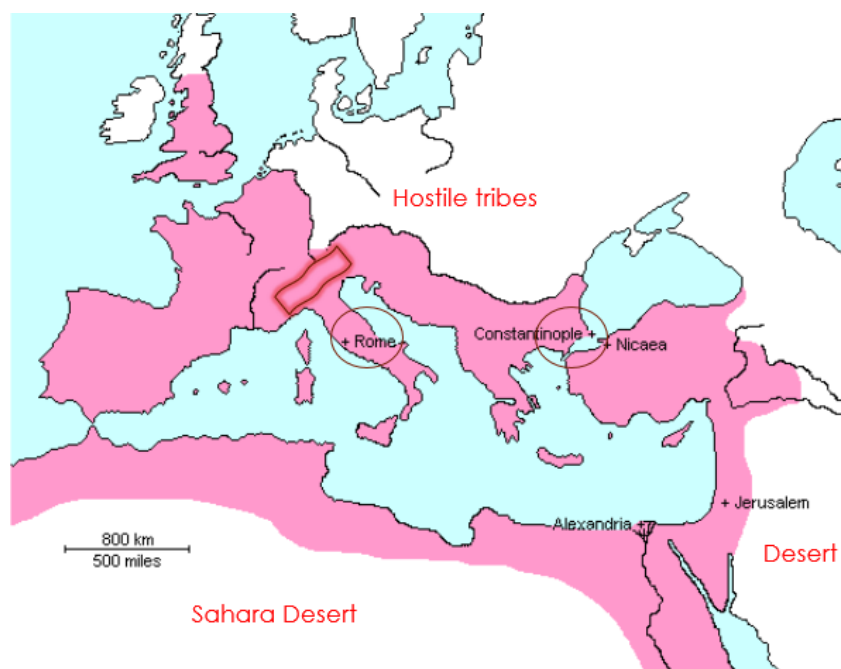
## CHURCH HISTORY

### 7. DECLINE OF ROME, RISE OF THE POPES

#### 1. WHO IS THE POPE?

- “Pope” is derived from Latin papa, meaning “father”.
- It was used in reference to all Bishops (overseers, shepherds) early on; in the 9th century that the term begins to be exclusively used for the bishop of Rome and it's only in the 11th century that Pope Gregory VII decrees that the term may only be used for the bishop of Rome.
- The Successor of Peter as appointed by Jesus (Matt. 18):
  - Appointed to be Christ’s representative on earth
  - Leads and shepherds the Church
  - Wields Jesus’s authority
  - The ultimate defender and proclaimer of pure doctrine
  - The supreme interpreter of Holy Scripture.
- Bishops were originally elected by popular vote: Ambrose of Milan (340-397) a famous example – A secular governor who was appointed bishop by popular demand.
- Bishops could also be appointed by their successors (if candidate was generally accepted) but later became tied to politics – kings used their power to either influence appointments or just appoint bishops themselves. Not a healthy situation for the Church!
- To stop corruption and favouritism, the College of Cardinals was established in 1059 to elect the Pope. These were Church officials who would nominate candidates, debate the choices and then vote. When the new Pope has been selected, a signal is given to the outside world in the form of white smoke coming from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel.
- Using the word ‘Pope’ is a matter of convention and does not entail accepting Roman Catholic claims regarding the office.

#### 2. MOVING THE CAPITAL



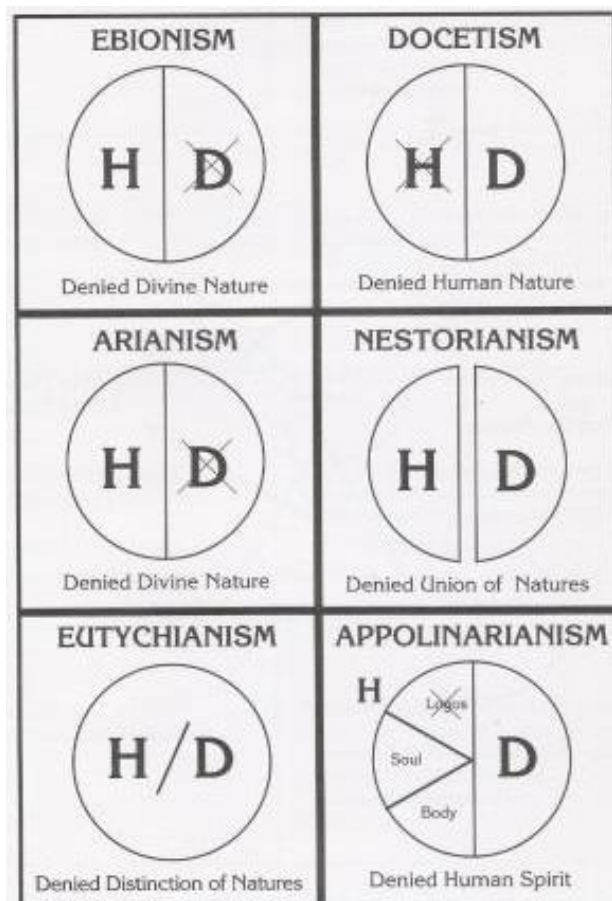
- Last week we ended off with Christianity becoming the state religion of the Roman Empire under Theodosius I who was the last emperor to rule over the united Roman Empire.
- This empire was bordered by deserts to the East and South, hostile Germanic tribes to the North and the Atlantic Ocean to the West.
- Remember that Constantine had moved the capital of the Empire to Constantinople...and so what do you do if the emperor says, 'hey I'm moving to new city?' Well you had any ambition you would say well "I was just thinking about moving there!" and so you pack up and you move to the new city with the emperor. In this way many prominent people left Rome and settled in the "New Rome".
- If you compare the locations of Rome and Constantinople and you'll see that has a capital city Constantinople is in a much better location than Rome. Rome is situated inland, and with no access to a port it was not a major trade city. Constantinople was based on a very important trade route between the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea.
- Rome was cut off from Europe by the Alps. In wintertime it was almost impossible to cross these mountains and so it caused great delays in land travel to and from Rome. Constantinople is situated in the Strait of Bosphorus, which is 500m wide at its narrowest point and thus it served as the link of land-based trade between the Middle East and Europe.
- Constantinople became a very influential city, such that it was not renamed by other Emperors who took up residence there. It would remain the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire until the year 1453 when it was conquered by the Ottoman Turks under Mehmed the second, that's more than a thousand years!
- The church in Rome, as the only major Western church, had grown in influence over the major churches in the East (Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem) in settling of disputes. If there was disagreement between them, they would refer to Rome for it's input.
- Now it was left with a big problem: it always regarded itself as the most important church because it was the capital church; but now that the capital that moved to Constantinople what gave the Roman church it's importance?
- What had been a popular argument early on the church really began to come to prominence: the idea that the Roman church was important because it was founded by the Apostle Peter. In Matthew 18 Jesus had given the keys of the kingdom to Peter. It was also the place where Paul, but especially Peter had been martyred. This city is where Christ had founded his Church. With all this uncertainty regarding the Fate of the Western Empire the church was the one thing that stood as a pillar where everyone could find stability and so the Roman Bishop really began to come into his own.
- The church relied heavily on the arguments of Augustine of Hippo as we will see shortly.
- Just for interest sake the Roman church claimed to have been founded by the Apostle Peter; so who do you think the church of Constantinople claimed to be the one who started the church in Constantinople, which was called the new Rome? The Apostle Andrew, Peter's brother.
- After the death of Theodosius in 395 his kingdom was divided between his sons and it remained a divided Kingdom up until the fall of the Western Empire. His son, Honorius, who inherited the Western Empire did not make Rome his capital, rather the city of Ravenna, a port city in Northern Italy.



### 3. CHRISTOLOGICAL HERESIES

Now, while all of this is going on, the Church is still in the process of working out its 'Christology' (doctrine of Christ).

- The council of Nicaea (325) settled that Jesus was fully divine, of the same substance as the Father.
- Yet questions still remained as to how His divinity and humanity fit together (the *hypostatic union*). Many efforts were made to try and explain this union, but most of them were heretical and so further Church councils were needed and called to come to the Biblical position on this issue.
- On this issue, more than almost any other, we need to heed the quote that is attributed to Charles Spurgeon: **"Discernment is not telling right from wrong, but telling right from almost right."**
- What you believe about Jesus has real implications for our salvation:
  - If Jesus was not 100% God: He could not be the blameless and sinless Lamb of God.
  - If Jesus was not 100% human: He could not be our substitute.
  - "What has not been assumed has not been healed" – Gregory of Nazianzus.
  - This is a very narrow line to tread, and it is easy to fall off to either side into heresy.
- Church councils agreed on correct doctrines by voting (Nicaea, bishops voted 316-2). Not by Papal proclamation. The Popes didn't even attend early Church councils, they sent representatives.
- Why did they, as 'heads' of the Church, not just decree what must be done and which belief is incorrect? Because no-one in the Early Church believed the Pope had that authority!



H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. p. 55.

These two charts are from an excellent book called *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*. It gives great summaries of the different views on doctrines, it's a wonderful study tool. There is a copy in the Church Library.

Many people today will claim to believe in Jesus, the question is *which* Jesus they believe in.

Viewpoint	Ebionism	Docetism	Arianism	Apollinarianism	Nestorianism	Eutychianism
<b>Denial</b>	Genuine Deity	Genuine Humanity	Genuine Deity	Completeness of Humanity	Unity of Person	Distinction of Natures
<b>Explanation</b>	Christ had the Spirit after baptism; He was not pre-existent; "adoptionism"	Jesus had the appearance of a human ('seemed' to be human), but He was really only divine.	Christ was the first and highest created being; <i>homoiousios</i> , not <i>homoousios</i>	The divine Logos took the place of Jesus' human mind/spirit	The union of divinity and human was moral, not organic, resulting in two persons. The human was completely controlled by the divine.	Monophysitism; the human nature was swallowed up by the divine nature, resulting in a hybrid third nature – a <i>tertium quid</i> .
<b>Church response</b>	No official response	No official response	Condemned at Council of Nicaea (325)	Condemned at Council of Constantinople (381)	Condemned at Council of Ephesus (431)	Condemned at Council of Chalcedon (451)
<b>Primary argument for</b>	They are monotheistic	They affirm Christ's deity	They teach that Christ is subordinate to the Father	They affirm Christ's deity	Distinguished the human Jesus, who died, from the Divine Son, who cannot die	Maintained the unity of Christ's Person
<b>Primary argument against</b>	Jesus is only worthy of worship if He is truly divine (John 1:1; 20:28; Heb 13:8)	If Christ were not truly human, He could not redeem humanity (Heb 2:14; 1 John 4:1-3)	Jesus is only worthy of worship if He is truly divine; Arianism tends toward polytheism. If Christ were not truly Divine, He could not save us (Phil 2:6; Rev 1:8)	If Christ did not have a human mind/spirit, He was not truly human (Heb 2:14; 1 John 4:1-3)	If the death of Christ was the act of a human person and not of God, it could not be efficacious to save (Rev 1:12-18)	If Christ were neither God nor man, He could neither redeem as man nor God (Phil. 2:6)
<b>Time</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Century	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> Century	4 <sup>th</sup> Century	4 <sup>th</sup> Century	5 <sup>th</sup> Century	5 <sup>th</sup> Century
<b>Proponents</b>	Judaizers	Basillides; Valentinus; Patripassians; Sabellians	Arius of Alexandria; Origen (?)	Apollinarius of Laodicea; Justin Martyr	Nestorius	Eutyches; Emperor Theodosius II
<b>Opponents</b>	Irenaeus; Hippolytus; Origen; Eusebius	Irenaeus; Hippolytus	Athanasius; Ossius	Basil; Theodosius I; Gregory of Nazianzus; Gregory of Nyssa	Cyril of Alexandria	Flavian of Constantinople; <b>Pope Leo I</b> ; Theodoret; Eusebius

H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. pp. 53-54.

- With regards to the Eutychian heresy, Pope Leo I - rightly called 'the Great' - wrote a very carefully argued statement that was straight down the middle of this narrow line, showing that the human and divine natures of Christ were both necessary and reasonable.
- It was sent to the Council of Chalcedon in 451, read out, and accepted as the Biblically correct position.
- He had argued from his perceived position as Head of the Church, and his careful and impressive argumentation resulted in many turning to the Pope with theological queries.
- It also caused another problem for the Roman Catholic claims to the Pope's office:

Pope Honorius was condemned as a heretic in 682 for promoting a form of Eutychianism... after he was already dead. How could the man, who according to the Roman Catholic Church, was appointed to be Christ's representative, the shepherd of the Church, the ultimate defender and proclaimer of pure doctrine, turn out to be an unbeliever?!

#### 4. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

- Augustine's theology was broadly shaped by two major controversies in his life.
- The first was the Donatist Controversy, which erupted after the great persecution under the emperor Diocletian in the year 303 - 311.
- The Donatists argued that anyone who had handed over Christian scriptures or had offered sacrifice to the emperor we're not true Christians. If you were a bishop and you had lapsed then your entire office was invalid, meaning that you and any other bishops you ordained were not Christians and therefore any baptisms you performed, any communion given or a burial done was done by non-believers and therefore invalid.
- In dealing with the Donatist controversy we come to that side of Augustine that is loved by the Roman Catholic church in that Augustine argued that salvation is only to be found in the church. In a way it's very similar to what Cyprian argued: you can't break away from the universal church and just start your own church; it's only in the one true church that you can have salvation. Now there's a sense in which that is true, but Augustine took it too far; that was almost saying that it is the church that dispenses salvation and so contradicts his doctrine of Grace.
- In order to defend the one true church and suppress the Donatist Movement, Augustine requested help from the Roman army, which he justified by quoting Luke 14:23:

"Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled.' (MEV)

- Of course, in hindsight we can see that this was extremely unwise:
  1. Firstly, because we cannot establish or enforce doctrinal purity with the sword. Our battle is spiritual, for the hearts of men with the truth of the Gospel.
  2. Having an army at its back puts the Church in an unhealthy position of power.
  3. These are the unhealthy ties between the Church and State:
    - Augustine was greatly influential in the idea that baptism removes original sin. Infant baptism slowly began to be practised.
    - Baptising babies helped the State keep track of births and taxable people.
  4. It is inevitable, with our story today, that there will come a day that the Church calls for the help of the army to settle disputes, but no army comes.
- Secondly was Augustine's battle with a bishop named Pelagius.
- Pelagius rejected the idea that human beings are born in sin and therefore need God's grace for salvation. He said that every human being was born neutral and that we are able through good works and through our own devotion to God to earn our salvation.
- Augustine argued that Adam and Eve had the ability to sin but also the ability not to sin. After their disobedience to God's command and the Fall that resulted from it, human beings

now no longer have the ability not to sin. All we have is the *inability not* to sin. In other words, we are born sinful because we have inherited Adam's sin nature and as soon as we are able, we begin to sin against God.

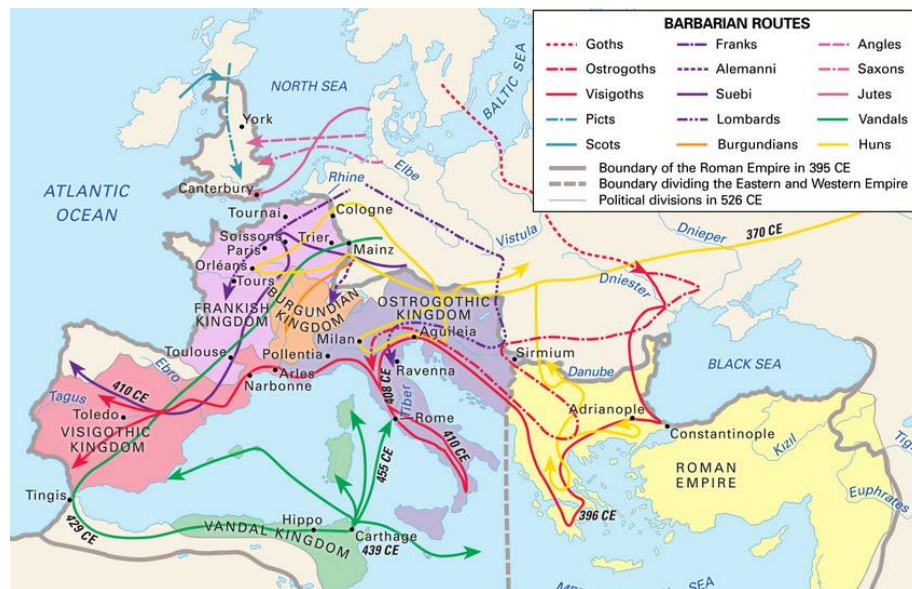
- People often ask the question: Do we sin because we are sinners or are we sinners because we sin? Augustine's answer is yes. It is both of those.
- So, Augustine is mightily appreciated by the Protestant church for saying that salvation is only possible by grace. If God had not first given us his grace, then none of us would ever seek after God, we would have stayed trapped in our sin. There is nothing in us that seeks after God, as the book of Romans says.
- Once one is born again, they now again have the ability to sin and the ability *not* to sin; and when we receive our Resurrection bodies and we are with Christ forever we will only have the *inability* to sin (We will only want to do that which is pleasing to God).

## 5. THE DECLINE OF ROME

- The Roman empire had grown at a phenomenal pace over a period of about 600 years, and it did so largely through conquests.
  - I mean it began from the city of Rome - it wasn't the Italian Empire - it was the Roman Empire - so literally from this one City the Empire spread out over Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa.
  - The problem is though is that once you've conquered territory you had to hold on to it. Western Europe has many natural barriers, so it was very difficult to keep conquered territory under Roman rule.
  - There were constant mini invasions and attempts at taking territory from the fringes of the Roman empire by various Germanic tribes who were looking to expand their own land or because they were being driven from their lands by other tribes that forced them to move into Roman territory.
  - Hadrian's Wall in Britain was very successful in policing the border, but you couldn't build a wall across the entire European continent.
- 
- The Roman Empire was fundamentally upheld by the strength of its army. It was a well-trained, disciplined, battle-hardened fighting machine.
  - The army was almost permanently at War or involved in War or border skirmishes with invaders.
  - The inevitable casualties meant that the army regularly had to be resupplied with fresh soldiers. But it takes time to train soldiers, especially horseman and archers.
  - So at first you bring over additional units; then you make use of your reserve soldiers; then you start conscripting the best men that you have in the empire; then the mediocre guys and after while you're left with only the inept. Remember that a lot of Christians still did not wish to fight in the Roman army for various reasons.
  - Slowly but surely over time the quality of soldiers in the army began to decline, the size of the army began to decline, and the army was forced to rely heavily on mercenaries.
  - Mercenaries are soldiers of fortune. They fight for whoever pays them the most money or promises them the most plunder after the war is over.
  - They had no particular loyalty and so if they saw that the battle was taking a turn for the worst they often just packed up and left. Or worse, defected to the other side!
  - So, they were very unreliable and extremely expensive.
  - The Romans then began to bargain with some of the Germanic tribes on the borders and basically paid them not to invade. Now that is a terrible position to be bargaining from

because inevitably in a few months the Chiefs of these tribes and come back and say that they need more money, or more supplies, and so it put Rome on the backfoot.

- Loss of territory, either by being driven back by invaders or in treaties with allied tribes, may have resulted in the loss of Roman gold and silver Mines, which impacted the income of the empire.



- So, with the decline of the army and of the persistence of the various Germanic tribes the Unthinkable happened:
  - In the year 410 Alaric the Visigoth walked into the city of Rome having defeated the army of the Western Emperor.
  - The Eternal City had been conquered by Barbarians.
  - This is a tremendous blow to the morale of the Roman Empire which had been all about the *glory* of Rome and those days were now over.
  - If Rome could not hold out, which city could be safe?
- Alaric and His Army did not sack the city. They were Arian 'Christians' and while they stole everything they could carry they did very little damage and urged citizens to take refuge in Churches where they would be safe. Then they packed up and left.
- This was embarrassing: The enemy conquered the most prized city in the Empire and didn't occupy it, they just left!
- After the Visigoths showed that the Roman army could be defeated, you could almost install a revolving door to Rome as many tribes tried to come against the city.
- In the year 452 when Attila the Hun crossed the Alps with an unstoppable army in order to conquer Rome, Pope Leo the Great, went out to meet Attila the Hun and convinced him (monetarily and theologically) to turn his army around and not sack Rome.
- Unfortunately, he could not convince the Vandals to do the same in the year 455; but did get them to promise that they would not burn down the city or slaughter civilians.
- In the year 476 finally fell to Odoacer, a former rebellious Roman general of Germanic origin.
- He was pronounced king of Italy.
- By this time Rome itself had gone from a population of more than a million people at its peak to about 50,000.

- The emperor in the East, Zeno, claimed that as the only remaining Emperor he was now the rightful ruler of the Western Empire as well. In practice, that is like me proclaiming myself emperor, because Zeno didn't have the resources to win the Western Empire back.
- Because he had no real hope of conquering the territory, he said that the Bishop of Rome would be his representative in the West.
- The emperor Justinian (482 -565) made an attempt to reconquer some of the Western lands including Carthage, but again, the trouble with conquering territory is keeping hold of it – surrounded by hostile neighbours, a constant supply of soldiers, horses, equipment and provisions was a necessity, but greatly expensive.
- Bubonic Plague (a precursor to the Black Death) broke out in The Eastern Empire in 541, and Constantinople suffered the brunt of the outbreak and thousands of people died.
- The Germanic tribes slowly thus were able to wrestle these territories back.

By the Year 500, the Western Empire had completely dissolved and was replaced with various Germanic kingdoms:



## 6. THE RISE OF THE POPES

- The appointment of the Popes as the Eastern Emperor's representative gave them a lot of power and influence with the Germanic Kings.
- Many of them had converted to Christianity, and the Popes would grant titles and give legitimacy to their rule.
- The Pope also became their channel of negotiation with the Eastern Emperor.
- The Popes therefore became important and influential figures on the European political stage. Ironically, it took the fall of Rome and of the Western Empire for the Popes to rise to their place of prominence.
- A document, *The Donation of Constantine*, stated that the Popes were entitled to large portions of land in Italy and sole authority in the Western Empire.
- Now Pope became a landowner as well. Although this document was proven to be fake in 1407, it had been extremely influential, and the Popes held on to these lands until 1870!



- The masterstroke of the Popes' political manoeuvring was in crowning Charles, king of the Franks, as "Emperor of the Romans" on December 25, 800. He is known to us as Charlemagne (Charles the Great) and established what eventually became known as the *Holy Roman Empire*.
- Popes began to use *excommunication* as a weapon. Being kicked out of the Church meant you could not receive communion, have yourself or your children baptised, receive a Christian burial or be in fellowship with other Christians.
- The closest modern equivalent is if your smartphone breaks or is stolen: You are unable to communicate, to do banking, to access social media.
- In 1077, Henry IV and the Pope had a disagreement about who had the right to appoint German bishops. Pope Gregory then issued a decree saying that Christians were released from their allegiance to Henry, who was excommunicated.
- Knowing he now faced rebellion and invasion from all Christians loyal to the Pope, Henry was forced to apologise, but only after the Pope made him wait outside in the snow for 3 days.
- What an incredible rise to power: From humble shepherds of the church in Rome to exercising authority over kings and manipulating events throughout Europe!
- It was the power of the Popes that gave rise to the infamous Crusades.

## 7. IN CONCLUSION

- Christians should not fret if we see Empires falling. For many, when Rome fell Armageddon was around the corner, they had given up hope – Augustine, in the aftermath of Rome falling in 410, wrote of the City of Man, which is earthly and temporary, and the City of God, which we await, which is eternal and unconquerable. As Christians our abode is the City of God, we are but visitors to the City of Man.
- We need to immerse ourselves in sound theology, knowing the difference between right and almost right! Make sure you are fed with the Word and sound teaching and preaching.
- The Church should be very careful how it involves itself in politics – we should lobby for good and just laws, and pray for our country to have wise, Christian leaders, but not seek to get our way using coercion or manipulation. We should never become the Church of any political party...We are the Church of Christ!
- We can easily forget our main mission: We are to proclaim the gospel first and foremost. That in itself will bring about more transformation in this world than we can imagine.

## CHURCH HISTORY

### 8. ISLAM & THE CRUSADES

#### 1. THE CRUSADES IN PERSPECTIVE

- The Crusades, the wars fought with Muslims in the name of Christ, are an infamous stain on the history of the Church.
- They are the most recognised and well-known atrocities in Christian history and yet very few people know or understand the history behind these wars.
- Did bloodthirsty and intolerant Christians make war to pillage and destroy the kingdom of the peace-loving and tolerant Muslim people?
- Let us first put the Crusades in perspective:
  - From 1095 to 1291 about 6 million people, Muslims, Christians and Jews, died in these wars.
  - Joseph Stalin, in his own lifetime, killed 20 million of his own people.
  - Yet secular historians who denounce the Crusades as only evil are desperate to come up with some “positive” aspects of Stalin’s regime. We need to judge history using balanced scales.
- It is undeniable that atrocities were committed in the name of Christ and Christianity, but they were in complete contrast to Biblical Christianity. Jesus would never condone wicked acts done for His sake.

#### 2. WHAT IS ISLAM?

- *Islam* – Complete submission to God (*Allah* in Arabic).
- *Muslim* – One who submits to God.
- Not simply a religion, but “*a complete way of life covering family, social, political, spiritual, religious, financial, community and personal spheres.*” – Colin Edwards.
- It covers what to eat, how to dress, when to pray, the pattern of daily and yearly life.
- Guidance is provided in different forms: The Qur’an, the perfect example of Muhammad, the *hadith* (the sayings of Muhammad) and *sharia* (law and moral code).
- 1.9 billion adherents (almost 25% of world’s population).
- Although it began in the Middle East, 85% of adherents to Islam are not Arabs. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of any country (231m), followed by Pakistan (213m) and India (200m).
- To convert to Islam, one must recite the *Shahadah*: *There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger.* For this declaration to have any effect it must be recited in Arabic, with a sincere heart.
- The 5 Pillars of Islam:
  1. *Shahadah* – Declaration of witness. Said at times of prayer, when a baby is born, as a person is dying.



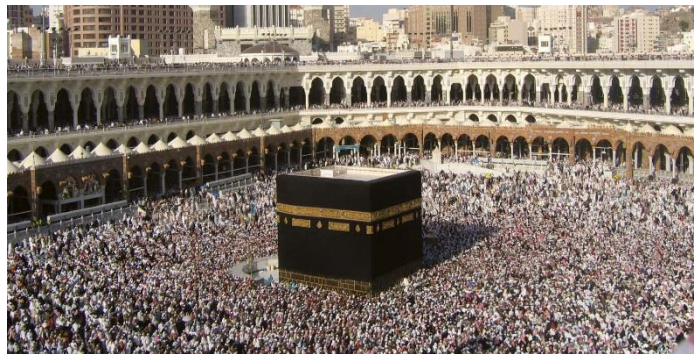
2. *Salat* – Prayers. Five daily prayers give a routine to life. Muslims generally stick to these scripted prayers and don't offer their own words in prayer to God. Prayer is always towards Mecca.
  3. *Zakat* – Almsgiving. Muslims are required to give away at least 2.5% of one's money, both to care for the poor and to ensure that the giver doesn't become ensnared by the love of money.
  4. *Sawn* – Fasting. The month of *Ramadan* is set aside for fasting daily from sunrise to sunset. Muslims are to abstain from food and drink during daylight hours, unless they are sick, pregnant, or travelling. It is done in commemoration of *the day of visitation*, when Muhammad received his first vision.
  5. *Hajj* – Pilgrimage. All those who are able to do so must make one trip to Mecca in their lifetime in the last month of the year, where they join millions of other Muslims for self-reflection, prayer at the *Kaaba* and the *Eid al Adha* (Festival of Sacrifice) remembering Abraham's willingness to offer up his own beloved son (Ishmael, not Issac).
- The controversial "6<sup>th</sup> Pillar":
    6. *Jihad* – Struggle. There is much disagreement about what this term means exactly and whether it should be considered a Pillar of Islam or not. The most radical groups see any 'holy war' as jihad; thus, any time Muslims need to fight to spread Islam or weaken the *infidels* (unbelievers) military action is necessary and justified. Others see this struggle as a purely spiritual battle to live out the Muslim faith, build a Muslim society and to defend Islam militarily only if necessary.
  - The Six Articles of Faith:
    - The absolute oneness of Allah. There only one God (monotheism) and he is only one person (*Unitarianism*). To associate any other person or deity with Allah is to commit *shirk*, which is an unforgivable sin. In his greatness, Allah is completely transcendent and unknowable.
    - The existence of angels. Muslims live in constant awareness of the spiritual realm. Because Allah is so wholly separate, he cannot communicate with us directly, and so created angels in order to convey messages to his human prophets. They also offer spiritual support to Muslims. Some evil spirits also exist – *jinn* (from where we get the word 'genie'), and these spirits try to lead the faithful astray.
    - The prophets. Muhammad is seen as the last and final messenger in the line of prophets that includes Adam, Noah, Moses, Abraham and Jesus (*Issa*).
    - The Qur'an ('recitation'). The Qur'an is the literal, unchanged word of God, delivered to Muhammad by the angel *Jibril* (Gabriel). Other prophets had brought scriptures in the past, but these had been corrupted by sinful humanity:
      - Moses – Torah (*Tawrat*)
      - David – Psalms (*Zabur*)
      - Jesus – Gospel (*Injil*)
- The Qur'an is seen as the culmination of these writings and therefore where any of them disagree with the Qur'an on a teaching it is evidence of their corruption. The Qur'an is written in Arabic and must be read, studied and memorised in Arabic. Reading it in an English version might help you better understand some passages, but it doesn't have any authority. Many Muslims cannot read Arabic.
- Day of judgement. Muhammad's message was for people to turn to Allah from idolatry, because a final day of judgement is coming, followed by heaven for the faithful and hell for the lost.



- Predestination. Muslims believe that everything that happens, both good and evil, was predestined by Allah. The concept of God's will (*Insh'allah* "if Allah wills") is central to life. It is a very fatalistic outlook on life: Things are going to happen the way they will happen and that is the will of Allah.

### 3. THE BIRTH OF ISLAM

- Muhammad was born in 570 in the city of Mecca in modern-day Saudi Arabia.
- He had lost both parents by the age of 6 and was raised by his uncle, Abu Talib.
- Muhammad's family was in charge of guarding the *Kaaba*, a large black stone (possibly a meteorite) in Mecca that was the focal point of the polytheistic religions in Arabia at the time. It was said to be surrounded by all the idols of these religions.



- Abu Talib was a trader and under his training Muhammad became a successful trader as well. Mecca was an important trade city at the time and Muhammad was soon leading caravan trips to and from the city to buy and sell various goods.
- His life would change when in the year 610, on his fortieth birthday, he received a vision. In it, the angel Gabriel revealed that Allah had chosen Muhammad to be his last prophet, the one to turn all the world from their corrupted idol worship to the true worship of Allah alone. He was to receive and record the words of Allah and proclaim them to the world.
- His initial reaction was one of fear, that an evil spirit was deceiving him; it was his wife Khadija that convinced him that the message had truly been from Allah. She is considered the first convert to Islam.
- Initially, Muhammad's movement grew very slowly. He was illiterate and could not write down the messages he received. He had to tell them to his followers who would write it down on whatever they could find (Papermaking was only known to the Chinese at that time) and compile them later.
- He was also preaching strict monotheism, in complete contrast to the polytheism which had been widely practised for centuries in the region. This put him on a collision course with his family, as he denounced the pagan worship at the Kaaba which was a great source of income not just for them but for the city itself.
- Muhammad lived in Mecca for three years with his band of followers. Toward the end of these three years Muhammad claimed to have visited heaven in a night vision. He was taken to Jerusalem by Gabriel, and from there to Paradise, where he met all the previous prophets (including Jesus) and received the core message of Islam and detailed rituals of daily prayer.
- The mosque in Jerusalem that is built where the Jewish temple once stood is called the 'Dome of the rock' because it was from a rock on the temple mount that Muhammad travelled to Paradise. It remains the third most holy site in Islam.

- In 622, the leaders of Mecca took action and tried to assassinate Muhammad. He fled with his followers to the city of *Yathrib*, which was renamed to *Medina* (“city of the prophet”) after his death. From there he consolidated and grew his power base.
- Muhammad managed to unite the different Arab tribes that were constantly at war with each other over territorial or religious disagreements. He did this by preaching that the disputed lands of the Middle East belonged to the Muslims because Abraham’s son *Ishmael* was his heir (not Isaac as the Biblical account says) and so it was *their* rightful inheritance. And of course, he preached that they should abandon their polytheism and unite under the new religion. This proved to be extremely effective in bringing the different Arab tribes together.
- In 629, Muhammed and his army conquered Mecca, and the whole Arabian Peninsula came under his political and theological influence. The Kaaba was cleansed of all idols and Muslim practices of were put in place.
- Mecca and Medina are considered so holy that non-Muslims may not enter them:



- The *suras* (chapters) in the Qur’an are not arranged in chronological order and can therefore be very confusing. There are reading lists available online to help in this regard. If looked at in chronological order, there are three divisions in the Qur’an:
  - The first consists of the revelation Muhammad received while still in Mecca, before his flight to Medina, where he makes the argument for religious freedom and tolerance. Verses about Islam being a religion of peace are generally from this period.
  - The second while he was taking refuge in Medina.
  - The third, after he had taken over Mecca and has a much stricter focus on Islamic theocracy and law. The verses about violence in the name of Allah are generally from this period.
- In addition to the Qur’an, the sayings of Muhammad, his explanations of Qur’anic texts and examples he set for Muslims to follow were collected in the *Hadith*. The Hadith serve as an important guide for everyday life.
- Muhammad died in 632 without leaving a successor (*caliph*). Immediately, divisions arose between his followers as to who was best qualified to succeed him.
- This is the origin of what we know today as the *Sunni* and *Shi’a* sects of Islam.
- The Sunnis believed that Abu Bakr, the first male convert to Islam and best friend of Muhammad should succeed him. They wanted the best and most capable administrator and leader in the position.

- The Shi'a saw the position as prophetic more than administrative, and therefore wanted a blood-relative of Muhammad to succeed him. Since Muhammad had no sons, his son-in-law Ali was their choice.
- The Sunni majority won, and Abu Bakr became the first caliph. Ali would eventually become the fourth caliph, but the division would never be healed, even if at first it did not hinder Muslim expansion.
- Today, the Sunni account for about 90% of all Muslims. The Shi'a about 10%, and a tiny percentage belong to fringe sects. Shi'a Islam is centred around the country of Iran, which is why most Muslim countries both dislike and distrust Iran, and some (Bahrain, UAE) have even gone so far as to sign treaties with Israel, the traditional archenemy, in acknowledging the threat that Iran poses to the region.
- Sunnis and Shi's also differ on the contents of the Hadith.

#### 4. ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

- Even though they are usually lumped together as “the three great Abrahamic faiths”, Islam, Judaism and Christianity differ significantly from each other. Don't let anyone fool you into thinking that these religions agree on the really important doctrines and only disagree about the less important doctrines.
- From what the Qur'an claims regarding Christianity, it seems clear that Muhammad never read the New Testament himself. Rather, he probably met some (heretical?) Christians on the various trade routes who discussed it with him. He shows no understanding of even the basic concept of the Trinity, constantly referring to it as Tritheism, which it is not.
- Muslims would say that Biblical prophecies such Deuteronomy 18:15-18 (speaking about Jesus) and John 16:7-13 (speaking about the Holy Spirit) refer to the coming of Muhammad as the last and ultimate prophet of Allah. This argument has no grounds contextually or exegetically, it can only be arrived at if it is read into the text.
- Some people refer to Muslims as ‘the Muhammadans’ but this is incorrect. Islam could exist without Muhammad as Allah could have chosen another messenger in his place. The same is not true of Christianity. Without Christ, there is no Christian religion. He is central to our faith.
- According to the Qur'an Jesus was not crucified, so it is said that someone (thought to be Judas) who resembled Jesus died on the cross. This means that in Islam there is no doctrine of the atonement. There is no payment for sin.
- In other words, Islam has no Saviour. Salvation is by good works, weighed on a scale against your evil deeds on the day of judgement. But also, by Allah's mercy: Muslims cannot tell you for certain whether they are going to heaven, because Allah might decide otherwise and tip the scales in your favour or to your damnation at the last second.
- Muslims, unlike Christians, would never claim to have a living relationship with God. The very idea is blasphemy to them. They only live in submission to what he has revealed.
- As stated earlier, it is a fatalistic outlook on life. As Christians we believe that God is sovereign over everything and in a sense determines *all* that will take place, yet we as humans are able to make *meaningful* choices in life, we are not simply surrendered to a predetermined fate.
- The third caliph, Uthman, had come to the realization that many variant readings of the Qur'an were in existence (as people copied verses on skins, bones, rocks, papyrus etc. and passed them along). He ordered all the fragments to be collected and an authorized,

standard version of the Qur'an was compiled. All other writings were destroyed. We thus have no idea of how this version compares to the original that Muhammad received. Yet Muslims will claim that the Qur'an has been unedited and untranslated, unlike the Bible.

- But because there was free transmission of the Biblical text, we today have thousands and thousands of copies of manuscripts in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Aramaic and Hebrew just to name a few, and have thus been able to reconstruct what the original documents said with 99.4% accuracy, according to highly-respected scholar Bruce Metzger. The 0.6% has no impact on doctrine, it is simply variant spellings of names etc.
- Christians need to understand that when we call on Muslims to repent of their sin and accept and follow Jesus Christ as Lord, we are asking them to commit *shirk*. They are risking eternal hell for believing that He is God, and we need to be aware of that burden. It is a very serious matter and should be done with much prayer, patient conversations and Bible reading together if possible.
- Muslim life is centred around their religion, with detailed guides on what to do, when and how. When they convert to Christianity, they often struggle to adapt to a one day a week Bible study and a Sunday service, especially after praying 5 times a day as a Muslim! We need to ensure that Muslim converts are given enough reading material and Christian fellowship.

## 5. ISLAMIC EXPANSION

- Muhammad brings the Arabian Peninsula under his influence. After his death in 632, Islamic expansion takes off.
- In 638 Jerusalem falls to the Muslims.
- By 661 Muslims hold the Middle East and Egypt.
- By 732 they had conquered the whole North Africa and had crossed the Mediterranean Sea into Spain and France. They had also moved east into Asia.



- Expansion into Europe was only halted in 732, at the Battle of Tours, when a man named Charles Martel ('The Hammer') led an army that defeated the larger Muslim army through tactical genius.
- He then strengthened the border to make sure that the Muslims could come no further into France, and they settled in Spain.

- Charles was the *Mayor of the Palace* of the king of the Franks (i.e. the person behind the scenes who actually ran the kingdom). He began to build strong ties with the Pope, a process carried on by his son Pepin, whom the Pope declared to be the rightful king of the Franks in 751, deposing the current king. Pepin's son Charlemagne (The Great) was declared emperor of the Romans in 800, solidifying their alliance with the Pope.
- Just spare a thought for Pepin: His father was known as the HAMMER; his son as the GREAT; but he was known as the SHORT. Pepin the Short. History can be cruel.
- Expansion into the East was halted at the Battle of Talas in 751. It was fought in modern day Kyrgyzstan between Muslim and Chinese armies.
- Even though the Arabs won the Battle both sides realised that neither wanted to expand the borders any further:
  - The Arabs because it was just logistically going to be too difficult to expand further in that direction
  - The Chinese because the Muslims were ferocious fighters.
- However, some of the Chinese prisoners that were taken possessed the secret knowledge that the Chinese had hidden from the rest of the world for so long: the art of paper making. This art would travel through the Muslim world up into Europe and be critical in the development of printing many centuries later.

So how did the Muslims do it? How did they manage to create which at that time was the largest empire the world had ever seen in just over 100 years? It still ranks in the top 5 largest empires today!

- The main reasons for the rapid expansion of the Muslim Empire who firstly the element of surprise. No-one expected the Arab tribes to unite themselves under a leader who had dreams of expanding his influence.
- They fought with religious zeal. As with any religion, some were more sincere about spreading the faith than others, but religion can be a powerful rallying tool.
- They were raised in the desert, so were adapted to the harsh climate and terrain. Desert warfare using camels was something they were skilled at.
- Europe was torn by constant wars between the Germanic kings; North Africa was splintered due to the Donatist schism. Often the Muslims were only conducting raids into these areas, only for the resistance to completely collapse, leaving the Muslims to add that territory to their empire.
- Islamic peoples were not as susceptible to plague as Europeans, due to:
  - Plagues do not thrive in hot, dry climates
  - Most Arabs led a nomadic existence, and were not bound to cities
  - Islam requires continual ritualistic cleansing
- Not all conquering was done to spread Islam.
- Different Muslim dynasties emerged as new tribes/families came into power.
- Some were bent on converting everyone in their new territories to Islam.
- Others wanted to profit from their new territories. By law you could not tax a Muslim, but you could tax unbelievers heavily, and so that became a deterrent for forcing conversion.
- Thus, Christians in Muslim lands were treated differently depending on the ruler – some left them alone, some forbid them from public worship, some took all their rights and made life very hard for them. Others killed anyone who did not convert to Islam.

## 6. PAPAL INFLUENCE

- The Muslim Conquest of the Middle East and North Africa signals a big shift in the balance of the church. Remember that you had five major churches who kept each other in check: Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Constantinople. But suddenly, because of Islamic conquest, you only had Rome and Constantinople left.
- Their rivalry became more and more bitter, leading to the Great Schism in 1054, which is going to be key in the Pope's drive to go on Crusade.
- On Christmas day in 800, Charles was kneeling in prayer before the altar of the church in Rome when the Pope placed the Crown on his head and declared him Emperor of the Romans. The setting was significant because it signified that it was by the power and authority of the Pope that Charles was made emperor. In contrast, about 1,000 years later Napoleon Bonaparte kicked out the reigning Holy Roman Emperor. He then took the crown and placed it on his own head, signifying that was not the church that gave him his power, but his own military might.
- Ironically, From that day in 800 when the allegiance between Pope and emperor was solidified the cracks began to show almost immediately, because the question remained as to who had the *ultimate* authority - Did the church have authority over the state or the state over the church? Who was really in charge, the kings or the Popes?
- Charlemagne's reforms led to what is known as *Christendom*. For the next 1000 years, Europe's education, politics, social life and religion would all be 'Christian'. Again, not everything done in the name of Christianity is truly Christian, but I am sure his intentions were sincere.
- After Charlemagne's death his kingdom is divided between his many sons. The split is basically beginning of the kingdom known as France, and in 962 the Holy Roman Empire (Germany and parts of Italy) was established. As Voltaire said, the Holy Roman Empire was neither Holy, nor Roman, nor an empire, but the very name *Holy* signified the Pope's influence. You also see the rise of other recognisable kingdoms.



- The Popes were still regarded as the Eastern Emperor's representative.
- The Roman Catholic sacrament of penance. It started out as a good idea - the church encouraged you to not just *say* that you're sorry for your sin, but to actually do something to *show* that you are sorry. Your sins had consequences that you had to take responsibility for consequences. Of course, because there is a wrong view of Jesus's sacrifice for our sin, penance inevitably became a way of earning forgiveness for your sin.

- What would happen is you would go to your priest and confess your sin. He would then decide on a suitable punishment.
- For example if you went to the priest and said that you had desired your neighbour's house or his wife then the priest would say in order for you to be forgiven, you need to climb the 50 steps of the church while stopping to say a prayer at every step. In other words, it was a very public punishment but was also time consuming.
- People who wanted to avoid being seen conducting penance or were just too time-pressed began to ask if they couldn't just pay a monetary fine instead.
- This, along with the development of the doctrine of *purgatory* (that all Christians must first go through millions of years of fiery cleansing of their sins before they are fit to enter heaven) led to the Church beginning to sell indulgences.
- Buying an indulgence brought forgiveness for your sin in place of penance or could shorten the time you will spend in purgatory after death.

## 7. WHY THE CRUSADES?

- In order to keep it simple I'm going to use convention and refer to the European Crusaders as *the Christians* and those who opposed them as *the Muslims*. There certainly were true believers on both sides, but many were false believers who fought with no concern for either God. As we have seen, the problem with having Christianity as the state religion is that everyone is now a Christian, regardless of the condition of their hearts.
- After Jerusalem fell to the Muslims it was still possible to make pilgrimages there. Jerusalem was special to Christians as that is the city where Jesus was crucified, and centuries earlier Constantine's mother had a church build over the cave where they thought Jesus was buried, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. People thought that there was spiritual significance in visiting these 'holy sites'.
- When the Seljuk Turks took over these territories from the Arabs in the 11 Century and started spreading their dynasty, they treated Christians very harshly. Now it was no longer safe for Christians to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem for they were attacked, harassed and often killed. They also destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
- The Turks conquered territory right up until the Strait of Bosphorus. The Bosphorus Strait at its narrowest point is only 500m, so from the ramparts of Constantinople the enemy could be seen, they became a constant threat.
- The Turks also defeated an army of the Eastern Roman emperor at the battle of Manzikert in 1071.
- These were not peace-loving, tolerant people who just wanted to do their own thing and be left alone!





Our old friend St. Augustine again proved influential here because he had developed what is called a *just war theory*: A theory of under which circumstances it is just and right for Christians to make war:

- Firstly, Christianity itself was under threat by the Muslims. If Christians did not oppose them, they would be in danger of being wiped out (as far as they could see).
- Secondly, they had to relieve the suffering of Christians who were being mistreated under Muslim rule.
- Thirdly, any war against Islam would not be considered conquest, because they would be taking back land that had once been in Christian hands. Muslim expansion had been into lands that they had never possessed and so were not the rightful owners of.

The Eastern Emperor, Alexius, grew increasingly desperate, and in March of 1095 he called on the Pope Urban II, his “representative” in the West, for help.

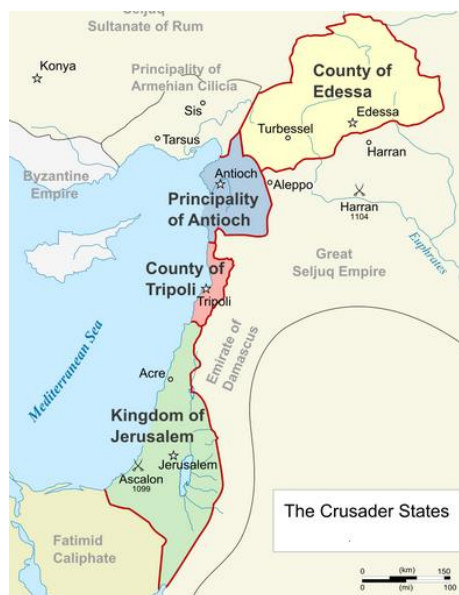
- This was an opportunity the Pope could only have dreamt of: The church had officially split into East and West in 1054, just 40 years earlier, and having the Eastern Emperor owe him a favour for assisting him militarily could prove decisive in his attempts to once again unite the Church under his rule.
- The Pope knew that Alexius could not ask the European kings for aid because they were just as often at war with him as they were with each other as they sought to increase their own territory, and so would certainly not help him defend his kingdom. But it was for this same reason that the Pope could not simply call on the kings to provide military aid to Constantinople.
- Using the principles of just war theory, the situation of the Christians in the holy land, and his spiritual authority all to his advantage, he devised the perfect plan: Not “let’s go and help Constantinople”, but “Let’s go and liberate Jerusalem!”

## 8. THE FIRST CRUSADE

- The Pope made a famous speech at the Council of Claremont in November 1095 and said it was the duty of every Christian to assist with the retaking of Jerusalem. His words were so stirring and powerful that the people began to chant “Deus vult!”. “God wills it!”
- He then set the departure date for August 1096, then went on a speaking tour through Europe to spread this message.
- Urban promised indulgences to all who attempted the journey whether you made it to Jerusalem or not.
- Simply by going you were guaranteed to completely skip purgatory and go straight to heaven, what is called a *plenary* indulgence. This is going to be one of the sticking points for Martin Luther: If the Pope can send *anyone* directly to heaven why doesn't he do that for *everyone*?
- He managed to convince 150,000 people to go on this crusade. But of this number only 40,000 were men and even fewer were soldiers.
- Most them just religious fanatics who got swept up with the idea of going to fight for Christ and win back the lands that belong to Jesus their Lord.
- Now there was very little organisation: not all of them left at the same time, some didn't go all the way. Thomas Madden: “A *crusade army was in effect a loosely organised mob of soldiers, clergy, servants and followers heading in roughly the same direction for roughly the same purposes*”.
- It is difficult to describe the effect that Urban’s speeches had on the European population. Some were so convinced that God had willed the capturing of Jerusalem that they said “Why

wait a year? Let's go right now!". This was known as the *People's Crusade* and it was led by a monk, Peter the Hermit. He whipped up a mob of people into a frenzy and began *walking* to the Holy Land to retake Jerusalem.

- This was a ragtag bunch, there were a handful of knights with them but mostly peasants and monks, ill equipped and with no weapons to speak of. On the way they raided and killed Jews for supplies, but many of them starved. When they arrived at Constantinople the emperor carried them over the water straight away as he didn't want them causing any trouble in his city. They rushed into Muslim territory and were slaughtered.
- Now this early attempt at carrying out "God's will" should have provided proof that God had *not* blessed this war, that this was misguided Christianity.
- But despite its lack of organisation, once the First Crusade got underway it was immensely successful. Against all odds and probably against the Pope's better judgement the Crusaders conquered Edessa, Antioch and then Jerusalem in 1099! This led to the creation of the *Crusader States*.



- The Crusaders massacred many people in the process, even those who had surrendered and Jews in the city who had nothing to do with this war. So, while this was a great victory for Christendom, it was achieved in the most horrendous way possible.
- And again, you have the problem of trying to hold on to conquered territory:
  - Jerusalem was surrounded on every side by hostile enemies also it had to be constantly resupplied with soldiers, equipment supplies horses etc.
  - Jerusalem is not a coastal city and an open supply route from port cities was crucial to ensure the city could be resupplied.
  - It was phenomenally expensive and quickly drained the coffers of the church in Rome.
- This is really when the Pope's began to sell indulgences, as they needed to finance the crusader States.

## 9. THE SECOND CRUSADE

- The sweeping success of the first crusade resulted in many more people coming to the Holy Land, either with religious zeal or looking for plunder.
- You must remember that for the Christians victory was inevitable because they believed that God had sent them on this quest. But then 1144 the Muslims reconquered the Christian city of Edessa. This was a rude awakening for the Christians and a motivator for the Muslims.
- Pope Eugenius then launched the Second Crusade in 1145 to retake Edessa, but by this time the Muslim Turks had regrouped and knew what to expect, and so the second crusade was a failure, they were defeated and driven back.

## 10. THE THIRD CRUSADE

- A man named Saladin realised the key to success is to once again unite the Muslim tribes that had become increasingly fragmented. He began the process of uniting the various Muslim tribes getting in Egypt and Syria until finally he was strong enough to make War and holy land and The Crusaders were no match for his army; he retook Jerusalem in 1187.
- At this time there was various disputes and wars between European Kings, especially between the kings of England, France and the Holy Roman Emperor. The Pope then declared that there be a 7-year truce between the kings of Europe so that they could focus on crusading and winning back Jerusalem.
- This allowed Richard the Lionheart of England, Philip of France and Frederick Barbarossa, The Holy Roman Emperor, to go on Crusade.
- Frederick died when he fell from his horse as he was crossing a river wearing his full armour. His death resulted in most of his forces returning home.
- This left Philip and Richard in a battle for supremacy over the Crusader army. Eventually Richard triumphed and Philip returned to France.
- Richard the Lionheart was a brave and talented general and strategist and under his leadership the Crusaders conquer a lot of the coastal territories of the Muslims but he could not retake Jerusalem because he knew it did not have the strength to refortify it and hold on to it. It was no use expending soldiers and resources to capture the city without then being able to defend it against the Muslim reinforcements that were surely on their way.
- He made a treaty with Saladin which allowed Christians to enter Jerusalem safely for a period of 10 years. Then he had to go back home because (remember the Robin Hood movies) his brother John was busy usurping his authority, but also King Philip of France was busy making inroads into his territory.
- Now the Third Crusade was controversial because the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire had made a treaty with Saladin in order to hamper the progress of the Crusaders and this was seen as a great betrayal.
- He did so because he was tired of these Crusaders moving through his Kingdom causing nothing but trouble and food shortages. But really, he was jealous: According to him, he was the only Roman Emperor, and Frederick Barbarossa's claim to be the *Holy* Roman Emperor was an insult to him.
- This was to come back and haunt Constantinople in the near future.

## 11. THE FOURTH CRUSADE

- Pope Innocent the third was not happy or the fact that Richard failed to capture Jerusalem and he made his mission as a pope to regain the Holy Land for Christianity.
- He issued a rallying cry for a fourth Crusade in 1199, to be the greatest yet undertaken.
- The Crusaders met up in Venice, a semi-independent city in Italy, known for their quality ships. They commission ships to take them to the holy land. Because they expected thousands more to shortly join them, they had many extra ships built.
- However, far fewer Crusaders arrived than had been anticipated and this left them with the huge problem of paying for these ships.
- In utter desperation, after waiting for more Crusaders to arrive, after trying all other avenues, the Crusaders attacked and sacked Constantinople. They felt justified in doing so because the role of Constantinople's treaty with Saladin had not been forgotten.
- This was an act of (supposed) Christians killing other Christians and it nothing to do with the Muslims or the Holy Land.
- Constantinople would never recover its full splendour and it was this weakening that contributed to its fall to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

## 12. THE FALLOUT

- The fifth crusade led by King Louis 9th tried to capture Egypt and cut off Muslim supply routes to Jerusalem, but it was a total failure. The Crusaders were not prepared: They got trapped in the Nile Delta and were not equipped to deal with the desert terrain.
- Bit by bit the Muslims drove the Crusaders out and in 1291 the last of the Crusader strongholds fell, leaving the Holy Land once again in the hands of the Muslims.
- The appetite for crusading never completely abated but there are various challenges in mounting new Crusades in the following centuries, including:
  1. The weakening of the papacy
  2. The Black Death
  3. The king of France aligning himself with the Turks.
  4. Pope Leo X was planning a Crusade in 1517... but the emergence of Martin Luther put an end to those plans.
- It's important to realise that the Crusades were NOT a get-rich-quick scheme. It cost an enormous amount of money to finance a crusade and while they undoubtedly plundered spoils, they very rarely even broke even. King Louis of France's Fifth Crusade cost **6 times** the French crown's annual income!
- The Crusades were not viewed negatively by the Muslims until very recently; they were just viewed as any other wars that the Muslims had fought. Why? Because the Muslims won! They were successful in the long term.
  1. It was only after they began to lose territory and really at the fall of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War that they began to view the Crusades as atrocities committed by Christians.

2. The creation of the modern state of Israel placed a lot of attention on the Crusades and the battle for Jerusalem.

3. Guilt and shame for colonization drove the West to apologize for actions such as the Crusades when no apology was required by the Muslims.

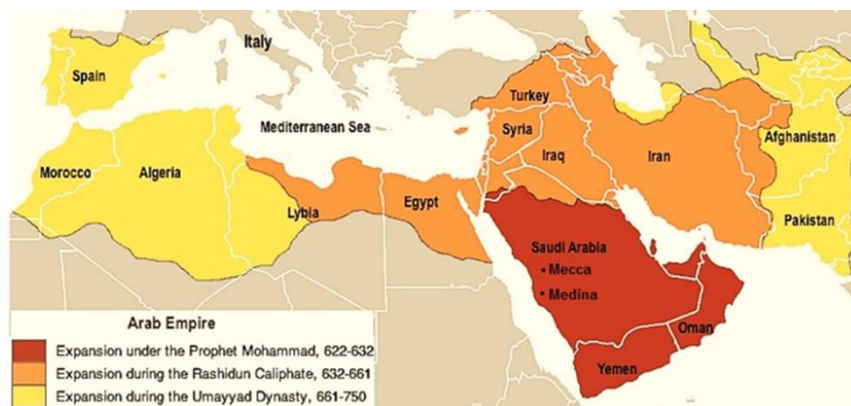
# CHURCH HISTORY



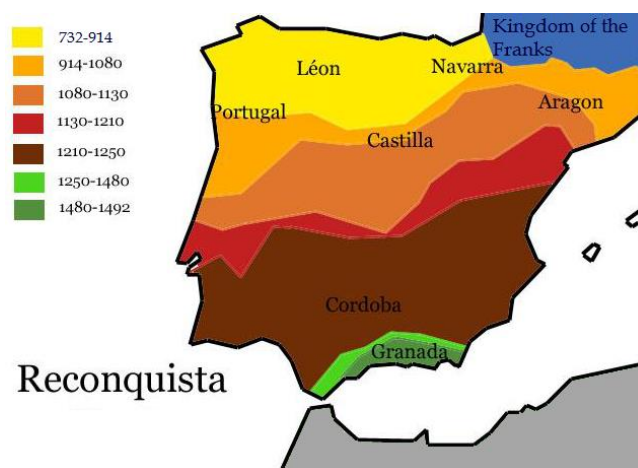
## 9. MORAL DECLINE OF THE CHURCH & THE REFORMATION

### 1. THE RECONQUISTA

- In our previous class we discussed the Crusades and looked at the five most important attempts at retaking the Holy Land in the name of Christ.
- There were numerous other attempts at crusading, some count as many as nine, but they were generally small and did not have much impact on the eventual outcome. There was however an important ongoing Crusade that had nothing to do with Jerusalem: Driving the Muslims in Spain out of Europe. This was known as the *Reconquista* (Reconquering).



- Going on crusade to Spain could also earn you an indulgence (while Crusading fever ran high) though it proved to be an enormously difficult task:



- The last Muslim state, Granada, only fell to the European 'Christians' in 1492, almost 800 years since they first arrived!
- If you know your world history, the year 1492 should ring a bell: It was the year Christopher Columbus, financed by the Spanish king and queen, set sail to find a sea route to India. Trade over land had become almost impossible due to these routes now being in Muslim hands.

- One of the most significant consequences of this gradual retaking of Muslim territory for Europe and Christianity was the discovery of Muslim learning. Muslims had been gained much knowledge in their conquest of far territories and this spread freely throughout their empire. This included:
  - Papermaking from the Chinese.
  - The Arabic numbering system (itself adapted from India). In Europe the tedious Roman numbering system (I, V, X, L, C, D, and M) had been used up to this point. The Arabs introduced the concept of the number *zero*, which was a revolution. Algebra, which still gives even some adults nightmares to this day, is named after a Muslim mathematician, *Al-Jabr*.
  - Greek philosophy and science. Almost all our knowledge of the Greek philosophers comes from the fact that Muslim scholars created libraries where they kept and translated these and other ancient writings into Arabic.
  - The world's first university, Al-Karaouine, was founded in Fez, Morocco in 859, almost 200 years before prestigious European universities such as Bologna and Oxford.
- The rediscovery of Greek philosophy had a profound effect on the Western Church, and many theologians once again (remember the Eastern Church more than a 1000 years ago) used philosophy to complement their theology. This movement was known as *Scholasticism*.

## 2. SCHOLASTICISM

- There were various atonement theories (understandings of why Jesus died on the cross) present throughout Church history:
  - Recapitulation. As the New Adam who succeeds where the original Adam failed, Jesus had to experience all the different stages of human life then die and rise in order to lead us from death to eternal life. (This is why Irenaeus thought that Jesus was 50 when He died). The Eastern Orthodox Church still holds to a form of this view.
  - Ransom. By his death Jesus paid the required ransom to the Devil in order to buy us back for Himself. This view is faulty for many reasons: God owes no-one anything. There is an unhealthy focus on the Devil's "authority", and none on God's righteous anger at sin.
  - *Christus Victor*. A form of the ransom theory that is closer to Biblical truth. By His death and resurrection Jesus achieved victory over sin, death and the Devil and made us free. This seems to be the majority view of the Church Fathers, yet it also misses the idea of God's righteous anger at sin.
  - Moral influence. Jesus died as the ultimate demonstration of God's love; this act was so powerful that it can change the hearts and minds of sinners who hear about it, causing them to turn to God.
  - Satisfaction. Developed by Anselm of Canterbury in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. By rebelling and sinning against God, humans have robbed Him of the glory due to Him. By dying in our place, Jesus repays the Father the honour we robbed Him of. This became the dominant view in the Western Church and was later refined by the Reformers into what we today know as *penal substitutionary* atonement, which we will define later.
- The most important Scholastic theologian was undoubtedly St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274). If one were to draw up a list of the most influential theologians in Church history, it would probably read like this:

- Augustine of Hippo
- Martin Luther
- Thomas Aquinas (Roman Catholic) / John Calvin (Protestant)
- His book, *Summa Theologica*, remains very influential today. Some protestants argue that he belongs on our side.
- He took Anselm's theory of the atonement and developed the *Treasury of Merit*: This was the idea that one drop of Jesus's blood was enough to satisfy God, yet he gave all of his blood, which means that he has extra merit to give to those who fall short. The good works of the saints and especially Mary are also deposited there. The Church had the right to withdraw grace from this treasury and give it to those who lacking good works. This became the explanation for how buying indulgences are able to shorten one's time in purgatory: the good works of Mary and the saints become the good works of the person holding the indulgence.
- Thomas learnt the very recently translated philosophy and physics of Aristotle and sought to use the truths he found there to better understand God and strengthen arguments for God's existence.
- The Roman Catholic Church had long taken communion to be the literal body and blood of Jesus, yet the bread stayed bread and the wine stayed wine. It was using Aristotelian physics that Aquinas was able to provide a sufficient explanation of what is known as *transubstantiation*.
  - Aristotle believed that in the *geocentric* model of astronomy (as many Greek philosophers did): the earth is the centre of the universe and the sun and planets revolve around it.
  - He also argued that all matter was made up of *substance* and *accidents* (note how this word has changed in meaning over the years).
  - Substance defines an object: human beings, for example.
  - Accidents are what distinguish objects of the same substance (shape, colour, features): Some humans are tall, others are short; some have black hair, some have blonde hair; yet they all share the same substance.
  - Aristotle argued that it is possible to change the accidents of an object but not its substance: No matter what changes you make to a human, they always remain human; they never become a cat, a tree or a rock.
  - So, the great miracle of transubstantiation, according to Aquinas, was that by the power of God the opposite happens of what Aristotle argued: in the mass the *substance* of the bread changes into the body of Christ and the *substance* of the wine changes into the blood of Christ, yet the *accidents* of the bread and wine remain unchanged. In other words, the substances have changed, but they don't look or feel or taste any different.
- This is critical to understand, because many sceptics point to an incident 400 years later as proof that "the Church has always been anti-science": In 1633, they would say, the Roman Catholic Church excommunicated Galileo Galilei and placed him under house arrest for daring to publish a book that argued that the solar system was *heliocentric*: the earth rotates around the sun. In fact, when Galileo invited the Bishops to peer into his telescope they flatly refused, showing themselves to be primitive and superstitious.
- The Roman Catholic Church did call Galileo's view a heresy (which Pope John Paul II formally overturned in 1992, only 359 years late), but not because the Church was anti-science! By denying that the earth was the centre of the universe, Galileo said that Aristotle was wrong. And if Aristotelian physics was wrong then the doctrine of transubstantiation collapses. That was the issue!



### 3. CORRUPTION IN THE CHURCH

- Thanks to *Christendom*, if you lived in Europe, you were a Christian, by default. But just to be sure, *Inquisitions* became common practice.
  - These were trials held by different kingdoms to root out suspected heretics, Jews and Muslims. Hmm, the state punishing heretics, where have we heard that before? Augustine! His justification of calling the army to put down the Donatists resonates throughout history.
  - The most infamous of these inquisitions was the *Spanish Inquisition*, which ran from 1478 to 1834 and resulted in the death of ± 3000 people. It is often mentioned in the same breath as the Crusades as the kind of atrocious acts that make it impossible for people to believe in the Christian God. Meanwhile, how many people today say that Communism (which killed more than 100 million people worldwide in the last century) is a “misunderstood system” that “just hasn’t been applied correctly yet”?
  - Killing in the name of Christ is an abuse of Christianity. Killing in the name of Communism ... is Communism.

With the rise of the Popes (and the Church) through political influence and power rather than the preaching of the Gospel, corruption in the church reached new heights:

- The offices of priest and bishop were sold to people who could afford to pay for it (a practice known as *simony*, after Simon in Acts 8) or given to family members.
  - This gave the recipients influence and a source of income (*benefice*) for performing priestly duties.
  - The only training required to be a priest was learning how to say the mass in Latin (in order to perform the miracle of transubstantiation). There was some preaching, but very little and mostly very basic.
  - Some people realised that there was money to be made in being priest of more than one church, because you acquired additional priestly benefices. They then paid others a portion of their benefices to conduct the priestly duties at churches on their behalf (basically subcontracting them).
  - Many men became quite wealthy using this method.
  - It left many churches without shepherds, and often in the only place in a town or city where one could find a (Latin) Bible, it was not even being read.
- Continuing the practice of selling indulgences.
  - With the Crusades coming to an end one would think that the Church would give up this line of income, but of course there were always new projects or urgent crises that need funding.
  - With Thomas Aquinas developing the Treasury of Merit, indulgences grew in popularity.
  - Unlike during the Crusades, plenary indulgences from the Pope became a rarity. Rather, they only reduced the amount of time you would spend in purgatory. Because for most Christians it would take millions of years to cleanse you of your sin, you could buy as many indulgences as you feel a sinner like you would need.
  - Soon, you could buy indulgences not just for yourself but also for dead family members and friends who were already experiencing purgatory. Emotional manipulation proved to be a very effective source of income.
  - Johann Tetzel (1465 - 1519), the used car salesman of selling indulgences, was commissioned by Pope Leo X to raise money for the construction of St. Peter’s

Church in Rome. He had a famous jingle: "When the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs". His extreme methods and bad theology came to the attention of Martin Luther and played a key role in the Reformation.

- Priests and Bishops disregarding priestly celibacy.
  - They held to it in theory as it was an official teaching of the Church, but many were living with concubines openly, some even appointing their children to Church positions in later years.
  - They would rather live in adultery than marry, because priests could not get married.
  - To the Roman Catholic Church Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 7:7-8 indicate that celibacy is the 'most spiritual' position to hold as a Christian and therefore the standard for priests and bishops.
  - Being unmarried meant that priests and bishops were mobile and could be sent to another village/town more easily.
  
- Popes openly became warmongers.
  - A few Popes who were deposed for scandal or heresy could call on kings aligned to them to send their armies to help them reclaim their office. These threats of war were very successful and left the Church with no choice but to reinstate these condemned Popes.
  - Popes would play kings off against one another to further their own agendas, leading to war and bloodshed.
  - Martin Luther was sent to Rome to deliver letters in 1510 and thought he was going to experience Christian paradise on earth, only to see, among the moral corruption in the city, 'The Warrior Pope' Julius II (he named himself after Julius Caesar the Roman general) riding his horse through the streets of Rome, wearing full armour.
  
- In response to this corruption in the Church, monastic life, which had been around for centuries, became a popular alternative for devoted Christians. Different orders were established, each with their own focus: Augustinians, Benedictines, Bridgettines, Carmelites, Dominicans, Franciscans, etc.
- Some orders shunned all learning and earthly possessions, others trained friars to go the towns and villages to preach the word of God and provide children with education. The Cistercians were crucial in the copying and translating of Biblical and other texts.
- In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, the famous St. Patrick went to Ireland and established a monastery that sent missionaries all over that country. This monastery preserved a lot of the scriptures and biblical writings in an age when the Western Roman Empire was in decline. These precious manuscripts and documents were later shipped back to Europe.
- Most orders spent a great deal of their time cultivating land and farming, and so monasteries proved to be a source of relief during times of famine.
- Monasteries sheltered the traveller, fed the hungry and cared for the sick, and so made an impact on the world through *cruce, libro et atro* (the cross, the book and the plough).
- Female monastic orders were also established and provided women, who in general had no real prospects in the world, with the opportunity to receive an education, flee unwanted marriage arrangements and the opportunity to live out a calling.

#### 4. BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY & ANOTHER GREAT SCHISM

- Some Popes overestimated their political strength and paid dearly for it.
- In 1303, after a bitter dispute with Pope Boniface VIII over taxing the Church, king Philip IV of France sent an army to Rome and kidnapped the Pope. He was brought to France, but the ordeal had been so shocking to him that he died shortly after. His successor elected in Rome did not last long, possibly due to being poisoned.
- Through his political scheming and showing himself to be a military threat, King Philip IV surely had a hand in the election of a French Pope, Clement V in 1305.
- In 1309, Clement stunned Europe by announcing that he was moving the seat of the Pope from Rome to Avignon in France. This caused consternation for many reasons:
  - With the Pope under his sovereignty and direct influence the king of France became the most powerful man in Europe overnight.
  - Rome was supposedly the seat of Peter and the source of the Pope's authority. How could you even talk of the papacy without Rome?
  - The Pope could freely pack the college of Cardinals with Frenchmen, ensuring that this change would endure.
- From 1309 to 1376, the Popes remained at Avignon in what is today called the *Babylonian Captivity* of the papacy.
- The Cardinals in Rome realised that something had to be done, and through a complicated process in 1378 managed to elect a Pope who promised to take the papacy back to Rome. Once elected however, he changed his mind and refused to move.
- The Cardinals in Rome deposed him and elected a new Pope who took residence in Rome. Now you had two Popes, who each promptly excommunicated the other. Two people who at the same time were the heads of the Church and equally God's representative on earth, kicking each other out of the Church. This is known as the *Great Schism* of the papacy and was a source of great embarrassment for the Church and signalled the end of the Popes as the effective rulers of Europe.
- Support for the Popes came almost exclusively from political reasoning and spared little thought for their theological views: The French king supported the French Pope. The Holy Roman Emperor supported the Roman Pope. The English supported the Roman Pope because they disliked the French. The Scots supported the French Pope because they didn't like England!
- The Church knew this could not continue, and so called for a council. Both Popes were told to resign so that they could elect a new Pope and heal the schism. A new Pope was elected, both reigning Popes refused to resign and now you had three Popes. Once again, they wasted no time in excommunicating each other.
- It was not until 1417 (40 years later) that the schism was finally healed, and you once again had a single Pope reigning from Rome.
- The division of the papacy thoroughly discredited the Church and was criticized by those demanding reform, notably John Wycliffe.

#### 5. BEGINNINGS OF REFORMATION

- John Wycliffe (1328-1384) and Jan Hus (1372-1415) planted the seeds of the Reformation. Wycliffe, an English university lecturer, wanted the Bible to be taught in church and viewed it as the ultimate source of authority to which even the Pope must bow.
- He denounced transubstantiation and said that the Church's interpretations of the Bible were skewed towards protecting the Papacy. The Latin Vulgate was very different to the original version by this time.

- The Church needed to abandon its quest for riches and influence and return to the preaching of the word and the Gospel.
- People needed to have the word of God available to them in a language that they could understand. He (with a team of students) began to translate the Bible into English from the Latin, an act which was illegal at the time. He was spared because he had rich patrons who kept him safe. He was condemned after his death as a heretic at the Council of Florence in 1415; his bones were dug up, ground to powder and thrown in the river Swift.
- His teachings spread to Bohemia where Jan Hus became the spokesperson and called for the reform of the Church. Hus did not have the protection that Wycliffe had and was arrested on his way to defend himself before the same Council of Florence. He refused to renounce his view and was burnt at the stake as a heretic. Hus means 'goose' in Czech and this is the origin of the phrase 'your goose is cooked'.
- With the fall of Constantinople in 1453 much Greek learning flooded into Europe as people fled the city. and the outbreak of the *Renaissance* (rebirth). The motto of the Renaissance was *ad fontes* ('to the source') as scholars and artists gained access to ancient documents and knowledge and began to build upon these foundations anew.
- Many Christian scholars began to look to the newly rediscovered Greek and Hebrew texts rather than the Latin.
- William Tyndale (1494–1536) was martyred for translating the Bible into English. His version, unlike Wycliffe's, was translated directly from the Hebrew and the Greek and became the first mass produced Bible in English.

## 6. THE REFORMATION

- Martin Luther was an Augustinian monk who struggled greatly to understand what God required of humanity. He would beat himself with a whip, sleep on cold, hard floors and deny himself any pleasures in life and yet he still didn't find relief for his sense of guilt. He would spend hours in confession, only to feel convicted that he didn't really mean it and so would spend the next few hours confessing that.
- The change in his life came when he became a lecturer at the university of Wittenberg, and began to study the Bible in order to teach it to others. The Psalms seemed to capture his struggle with God and sin, and yet the Psalmists were clearly true believers. It was in reading Romans 1:16 – the Just shall live by FAITH, and reading in the Greek 'repent' over against 'do penance' in the Latin that Luther realised that all that God requires of Christians is faith, not good works to earn salvation.
- Luther's visit to Rome, along with Johann Tetzel's appearance in Germany led Luther to believe that the Church needed reform.
- The 95 Theses which he nailed to the Church door (which served as the local bulletin board) was specifically with regards to the *abuse* of indulgences. It is very important to note that at least initially he was not against the Pope or the Roman Catholic Church. He did not mean to start a new church movement. His 95 Theses were written in Latin in order to ensure that lay people could not read it.
- Someone took this document, translated it into German and it spread like wildfire.
- Resistance from the Church hierarchy to Luther's attempts at reform alienated him. Some accused him of being a follower of Jan Hus and so he began to study Hus's works in a new light. He began to push for the Bible to be translated into the language of the common people, and to preach that salvation as by grace alone through faith alone and not by works.

- He was finally summoned to appear before the Holy Roman Emperor and Church officials at the Diet of Worms in 1521.
- Luther thought that he would be given chance to defend his views, but instead was told to renounce his teachings and get back in line with Roman Church doctrine.
- After asking for 24 hours to consider, Luther made this famous statement on his refusal to renounce his teaching:

*If, then, I am not convinced by testimonies of Scripture or by clear rational arguments—for I do not believe in the pope or in councils alone, since it has been established that they have often erred and contradicted each other—I am bound by the Bible texts that I have quoted. And as long as my conscience is captive to the Word of God, I cannot nor do I want to retract anything when things become doubtful. Salvation will be threatened if you go against your conscience. May God help me. Amen.*

- Luther was excommunicated and in order to protect him from persecution, he was secretly taken to the Wartburg Castle and lived there while he translated the Bible into German.
- His influence spread to Geneva where John Calvin became prominent and to Zurich, where Huldrych Zwingli became the spokesman for the Reformation.
- The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in 1440 meant that Protestant literature and most importantly Bibles could be printed in days where it used to take months to copy books by hand. The Church could not control this spread of the Reformation.
- The Council of Trent (1545-1563) was called in order to counter the Reformation, and this was where most of what is modern Roman Catholic doctrine was reaffirmed.
- The Reformers did wonderful work, but they were not perfect:
  - Luther and Zwingli agreed on every point except Communion – Zwingli’s view was close to our view today, while Luther held that Christ was present in the bread and wine. Based on this one disagreement, Luther refused to call Zwingli a brother in Christ.
  - They held to infant baptism as one’s entrance into the faith, and rejected a movement that called for Christians to receive *believers* baptism, by threat of death or imprisonment.
  - If God could only use perfect people, He could not use you.

We have spent some time on Protestant theology that came out of the Reformation, but it is worth revisiting some points:

1. The priesthood of all believers: equal access to God for all. Therefore, all jobs/work is equal in importance to that of the clergy. They give ordinary people purpose: Work and do your best to the glory of God. The birth of capitalism!
2. Ensuring that all Christians are free to own a copy of the Bible in their own language.
3. Making sense of our desire to sin even when we are Christians. We don't fall in and out of salvation; we are made new, yet we still struggle with our fleshly desires. *Simul justus et peccator*. At the same time justified and a sinner. God does not expect perfection from human beings, He gives us His grace.
4. John Calvin was responsible for requiring pastors to study Greek and Hebrew at seminary so that they can properly exegete and teach the Scriptures. We now benefit from this gift every time we hear a Sunday sermon