An Examination of Religious History: 33-1500 A.D.

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An Examination of Religious History:
33-1500 A.D.

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GUYTON E. MONTGOMERY

INTRODUCTION:
A. Note: Throughout this lesson there will be references to “Christians” and “Christianity.” These references do not always refer to those that have been obedient and added to the body of Jesus Christ as in Acts 2. These terms are accommodative to represent those that would profess themselves to be adherents to protestantism or believing in Jesus. A true follower of Christ is one that has an obedient faith (James 2:14-17). This requires his obedience in repentance (Luke 13:3), confessing Christ (Romans 10:10), putting Christ on in Baptism (Gal. 3:27), and living daily for Him (Rom. 12:1-2). This type of faith can only be produced by the word of God (Rom. 10:17).
B. Many dread and despise the study of history, often questioning its relevance.
1. To better understand and appreciate the study of history, it is important to define what is under consideration.
   a. A basic definition of history is in Webster’s dictionary under meaning number two which states: “what has happened in the life or development of a people, country, institution, etc; a systematic account of this, usually in chronological order with an analyst and explanation.” (Webster)
   b. The fifth meaning in Webster’s Dictionary is “the branch of knowledge that deals systematically with the past; a recording, analyzing, correlating, and explaining of past events.”
2. A good rewarding study of history is not merely a mental retention of facts and figures. Instead, it should lead to an understanding from proper analyzation and correlation. In turn, the student should then be able to explain or teach this understanding to others.
   a. Analyzing historical events involves the examining and separating them into parts so as to find out their nature, function and interrelationship.
   b. Correlating historical events involves connecting the event under consideration with other events whether in the past, present or future.
   c. Through this study one can ascertain how a particular event is relevant to oneself and others as a student and have an appreciation for the event.
C. Misconception and misunderstanding have led many individuals to underestimate the value of studying history.
1. Boredom is often cited to dismiss one’s apathetical view of history.
   a. A careful study of history reveals many of the same topics that are used to make books, television and movies interesting (war, love triangles, deception, power struggles, wealth, vengeance, etc…).
   b. Many television shows and movies base their program on historical
events.
1) Hatfield & McCoys, TV Mini-Series produced in 2012, based upon the historical family feud between the two families on the West Virginia and Kentucky border following the civil war. (imdb.com)
2) The Men Who Built America, produced by History channel in 2012, focused upon Andrew Carnegie, J.P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt, John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford (imdb.com)

D. It is plausible that the study of history is spurned due to not wanting to face the truth.
1. History reveals positive memories and experiences while also unearthing negative moments and emotions.
   a. Studying the history of World War II brought Tom Brokaw to write concerning the “Greatest Generation”
      1) Concerning their service he wrote, “They answered the call to help save the world from the two most powerful and ruthless military machines ever assembled, instruments of conquest in the hands of fascist maniacs. They faced great odds and a late start, but they did not protest. At a time in their lives when their days and nights should have been filled with innocent adventure, love, and the lessons of the workaday world, they were fighting often hand to hand, in the most primitive conditions possible, across the bloodied landscape of France, Belgium, Italy, Austria.” (Brokaw 1997, 19)
      2) Concerning their contribution to society following the war. “They were mature beyond their years, tempted by what they had been through, disciplined by their military training and sacrifices. They married in record numbers and gave birth to another distinctive generation the Baby Boomers. They stayed true to their values of personal responsibility, duty, honor and faith.” (Brokaw 1998, 20)
   b. However, studying the time period of World War II also sheds light upon dark moments.
      1) One sees the mortality & vicious treatment in concentration camps.
         “At the end of World War II, between seven and nine million people had been uprooted from their homes by the Nazis…But in the final analysis it was the Nazis’ racist antisemitic ideology that tipped the scales - and the result was the destruction of about six million Jews, approximately one-third of the Jewish people. The Holocaust saw the liquidation of hundreds upon hundreds of Jewish communities…” (Spector & Rozett 2013, 485).
      2) In WWII 16,111,566 men served with 405,399 deaths and 670,846 wounded. (Chamers 1999, 849).
2. Due to the brutal, painful dark moments in history, some have attempted to erase these events through denial. Consider for example, that despite the overwhelming evidence of concentration camps there are those that refuse to acknowledge their existence. As Lt. Col. Dave Grossman stated, “The sheer awfulness of atrocity makes us wish it away.” (Grossman 1996, 212)
DISCUSSION:

I. There is a Godly Expectation of Man to Study and Remember History.
   A. In the Old Testament God set in order remembrances.
      1. Observing the Sabbath was a remembrance of God’s creation in six days, and His rest upon the seventh day (Exodus 20:8-11).
      2. The Passover was observed regularly by God’s command to remember the exodus (Num. 9:1-5; Lev. 23:5; Exo. 12:1-28).
      3. The Israelites were instructed not to forget how they provoked the Lord (Deut. 9:7).
      4. God desired the Israelites to remember the time they were slaves in Egypt (Deut. 15:15).
   B. In the New Testament God set in order remembrances.
      1. The church at Rome was told to consider the writings of old because they were written for learning (Romans 15:1-6; cf. Psalm 69:9).
         a. They were to remember lessons from Abraham and David (Rom. 14:1-6).
         b. They were to behold the goodness and severity of God (Romans 11:22).
      2. The church at Corinth was reminded of their ancestors coming from Egypt and being in the wilderness. The Corinthians were told that these events were to serve as examples (1 Cor. 10:1-15; note: vs. 6, 11 cf. Exo. 13:1; Num. 14:29,32; Exo. 16:2; 17:2; 32:6).
      3. The institution of the Lord’s Supper and its command of observance is to help man remember the past, “This do in Remembrance of me.” (1 Cor. 11:23-29).
      4. The writer of the book of Hebrews cited historical examples of Faith for the readers consideration: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Raham, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, prophets. Without a study of history it would be impossible for someone to understand these references. (Hebrews 11)

II. History has a Tendency to Repeat Itself.
   A. History often repeats itself in the life of an individual.
      1. Abraham of presenting his wife as his sister in Egypt (Gen. 12:13). He did the same when dealing with King Abimelech (Gen. 20:2).
      2. The cunningness and deceitfulness of Jacob is seen over and over again: selling the birthright (Gen. 25:27-34), deceiving Isaac for the blessing (Gen. 27:1-29) and deceiving Laban (Gen. 30:23-31:10).
         a. “What goes around, comes around.”
         b. Laban deceived Jacob into marrying Leah instead of Rachel, and received an extra seven years of service (Genesis 29:21-30).
   B. History often repeats itself in the following generation. This repetitive cycle is shown forth in several historical events.
      1. Isaac, Abraham’s son, presents his wife Rebekah as his sister to the men in Gerar and King Abimelech (Gen. 26:6-9).
      2. Jacob was deceived by his sons concerning what happened to Joseph (Gen. 37:31-36).
   C. History often repeats itself over and over again for the ages.
      1. The book of Judges represents a period of Old Testament history that shows Israel cycling their behavior over and over again. They followed God, but would then leave His ways. Persecution would come and
exist for a period of time. The Israelites would grow tired of the persecution and would turn back to God. God would deliver them from the oppressors by the hand of a Judge, and the Israelites would be faithful for a period of time. Then the cycle would repeat as they would fall away once more.

2. Plurality of wives (women and concubines) have caused negative consequences all through the ages.
   a. Abraham was married to Sarah, but conceived a child with Hagar (Genesis 16).
   b. The wise Solomon failed to exercise wisdom by taking a multiplicity of wives which led to him building places of worship to idols in the high places.

3. Consider the negative impacts of alcoholic (fermented) beverages.
   a. Noah planted a vineyard, created alcoholic beverage, and became inebriated. His drunkeness was to the degree that he was unable to cover his own nakedness (Genesis 9:20-24).
   b. Lot allowed himself to become drunken so that he did not know he was conceiving a child with his daughters (Genesis 19:30-38).
   c. Nabal refused to help David and his servants. While Nabal was working himself into a drunken stupor unable to defend his house, his wife was exercising prudent judgment. (1 Samuel 25).
   d. King Elah was “drinking himself drunk” to the point he was defenseless and Zimri came in and killed him (1 Kings 16:8-10).
   e. “Every day, almost 29 people in the United States die in alcohol-impaired vehicle crashes - that’s one person every 50 minutes in 2016 (Jean)
   f. On average nearly 20 people per minute are victims are domestic violence; that comes to 10,000,000 men and women per year. (NCADV). Not all domestic violence is caused by the influence of alcohol. However, in one study it was shown that domestic violence decreased when alcoholism treatment programs were used. While there are many studies that support the link between alcoholism and domestic violence, this author has seen the common link through his experience as a law enforcement officer.

D. A wise man will study history to avoid making past mistakes and learn from what works and duplicate such behavior.

III. Lessons Learned From 33-1500 AD.
   A. “Christianity in the Middle Ages has been a concern of too few among English-speaking Protestant church historians.” (Cannon 1960, 7). This is an area of study that many Christians, preachers and elders have overlooked. It would do everyone well to become acquainted with these events. As Solomon penned, “there is no new thing under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9).
   B. Events that took place from 33-1500 AD continue to has a bearing in 2018.
      1. Roman Catholicism continues to exist and have an influence upon the world.
         a. While the problem is not exclusive to Catholocism, the decisions made to prohibit marriage of priests (celibacy) have contributed to the scandalous conduct of priests and pedophilia.
         b. In 1985 Father Thomas Doyle warned of the sexual abuse by “clergy,” but the US conference of bishops ignored it. It was
that same year that Gilbert Gauthe admitted to abusing 37 boys and pleaded guilty to 34 criminal counts. The history includes: Cardinal Hans Hermann Groer of Vienna, Austria and Priest John Geoghan (130 victims). Allegations of sexual abuse have spread across the world including Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and Brazil. In 2004 more than 4,000 priests were reported as being accused of sexual abuse between the years of 1950 to 2002. (Park)

2. A lack of historical intellect handicaps an individual from understanding the world around him

a. The Muslim religion continues to have a bearing upon the world.

1) Consider the events of September 11th, 2001 when Islamic Terrorists attacked the World Trade Center, Pentagon and crashed a plane in Pennsylvania.

2) The religion of Islam continues to spread throughout the world and has a political bearing.

a) Norman Geisler Wrote:

“Today, Islam is the second largest religion in the world, with over one billion adherents. That is one out of every five persons on earth. Indeed, Islam is now reputed to be the fastest growing religion in the world. This and recent events make it necessary for us to focus our efforts to defend the Faith once for all delivery to the saints.” (Geisler & Saleeb 2002, 8)

b) Pew Research Center provided the following information:

“Muslims are the fastest-growing religious group in the world... Yet many facts about Muslims are not well known in some of these places, and most Americans - who live in a country with a relatively small Muslim population - have said they know little or nothin about Islam…There were 1.8 billion Muslims in the world as of 2015—roughly 24% of the global population... if current demographic trends continue, the number of Muslims is expected to exceed the number of Christians by the end of this century... According to our estimate, there are about 3.45 million Muslims of all ages in the U.S.,... views toward Muslims are now warmer than they were a few years ago.” (Lipka)

c) It is thought that Constantine’s influence as a government official was able to help the spread of “Christianity.” It would do man well to observe that a government tolerant of Islamic beliefs can have a great impact in the spread of Islam. To a Christian this should be concerning. (Latourette 1975)

3) Many have opposed the efforts to fight terrorism and have advocated a tolerance towards those of Islamic belief.

a) Darryl Worley, country artist, was prompted to write the song “Have you Forgotten.” While simplistic, the meaning is clear asking the listener to remember what it was like as Americans watched in terror the towers coming down, the
Pentagon attacked, and the plane crashed.

b) The events of 9/11/11 were not isolated! Consider the crusades and constant conflict through the ages between Muslims and “Christians.”

b. Many people and politicians believe that the Jews are still God’s chosen people; and are making decisions to side with Israel based upon this misinformation.

1) While motivation can be argued and attributed to many different reasons, President Donald Trump chose to announce on December 6th that the United States would recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel (Landler).

2) Palestine and Israel continue to fight over this city because the Israelites view the city as rightfully belonging to them.

3) God sent a strong message in the destruction of Jerusalem showing that His kingdom is not earthly (John 18:36), and that there is no longer a division between Jew nor Greek. Instead all people are to be one in Christ (Galatians 3:28-29).

c. There can be no peace in the middle east as long people hold to Judaism, Islam or anything else other than Christ!

CONCLUSION:

A. It is important to study Biblical history, religious history and world history so that an individual can be informed of the world around him and make decisions based upon truth (John 8:32).

B. There are many reasons to study history.

1. Concerning learning from past mistakes, George Santayana (12/6/1863-9/26/1952) philosopher, essayist, poet, and novelist wrote his famous aphorism “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” (Santayana)

2. Concerning the importance of studying history in the development of an individual G. R. Elton (British historian and instructor at the University of Glasgow, Cambridge University and Clare College) wrote:

   “Even a superficial acquaintance with the existence, through millennia of time, of numberless human beings helps to correct the normal adolescent inclination to relate the world to oneself instead of relating oneself to the world; if growing up means coming to terms with the fact that everybody has to live in company, and that in that company he or she will not be the sole focus of interest, understanding about other people in other times and places powerfully assists by putting the uniqueness of one’s personal experience into proper perspective.” (Vaughn 1985).

3. Concerning the influence of history on public policy Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (professor of history at the City University of New York and special assistant to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson) wrote:

   “It is elusive because, if one excludes charismatic politics - the politics of the prophet and the medicine man - one is bound to conclude that all thought which leads to decisions public policy is in essence historical Public decision in rational politics necessarily implies a guess about the future derived from the experience of the past.”
REFERENCES:


INTRODUCTION
A. It is important to know of the prophecies concerning Christ and His kingdom or church
B. Prophecies alone are not enough, must have the fulfillment of those prophecies
C. The reason it is so important to study this, is because it is the fulfillment of God’s plan. Eph. 3: 10, 11 “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
D. In this study we will examine the prophecies of Christ and His church or kingdom and their fulfillment.
E. It is also very important to study how the kingdom is maintainable.

DISCUSSION
I. PROPHECY OF THE ONE TO BUILD
A. Born of the seed of woman. Gen. 3: 15
   1. A woman shall compass a man. Jer. 31: 22
   2. He would be born of a virgin. Isa. : 14; 7
   3. No man would have any part in His birth.
   4. His was a miraculous birth.
   5. The fulfillment. Matt. 1: 18 – 25
B. Through Abrahams seed (descendant) all nations would be blessed. Gen.12: 1-3; 22: 18
   1. The promise continues through Isaac (Gen. 26: 2 – 5).
   2. The promise continues through Jacob (Gen. 28: 1ff).
   3. The promise fulfilled in Christ (Gal. 3: 16 – 19).
C. The seed of David to build. Acts 2: 30
   1. It would be after the death of David. Acts 2: 29
   2. It is called the throne of the Lord. I Kings 2: 12; I Chron. 29: 23;
   Acts 2: 32 – 36
   3. The throne established. Isa. 9: 7; Acts 2: 30, 34, 35
   4. David’s throne was on earth but the Lord’s throne is in heaven. Psa.
   39: 3,4, 34 – 37; Acts 2: 33
   5. Christ to rule as priest and king on His throne. Psa. 110: 1; Acts 2: 33;
Zach. 6: 13; Acts 2: 33; Heb. 8: 1
   a. Christ could not be high priest on earth. He was of the tribe of Judah and priest were to be of the tribe of Levi. Heb. 8: 4
   b. There is no literal, physical rule. He is of the tribe of Judah and His kingly throne is in heaven.
D. The Lord’s life is an example for us.
   1. He did the Father’s will.
2. “My meat is to the will of Him that sent me.” Jn. 4: 34
3. Christ did not come to earth to do His own will. Jn. 6: 38
4. He left us an example to follow. I Pet. 2: 21, 22

E. His death.
1. Satan would bruise the head of the Lord. Gen. 3: 15
   a. This was accomplished by the death of the Lord on the cross.
   b. However, the resurrection of the Lord delivered a mortal wound to Satan.
2. Things to happen surrounding His crucifixion.
   a. They pieced His hands, feet and side.
   b. They parted His garments and cast lots upon them. Psa. 22: 16 – 18
   c. His death prophesied in Isa. 53 and fulfilled in Matt. 27: 35, 50

II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH
A. Prophesies regarding the coming of the Lord’s church
1. The prophesy of Isaiah. Isa. 2; 2, 3
   a. The time - “Last days.” Last days - the Christian dispensation had their beginning on Pentecost. Acts 2: 15 – 17; Heb. 1: 1 – 2; I Tim. 4: 1; II Tim 3: 1 – 5
   b. “Mountain of the Lord’s house.” - Mountain of the house is the church. I Tim. 3: 15; Eph. 2: 20 – 22 The church and the kingdom are the same thing. Matt 16: 18, 19; Acts 2
   c. “Exalted above the hills.” - Hills refer to other institutions. Mountain of the Lord’s house, the church is exalted above other institutions.
   d. “All nations flow unto it.” This refers to Jew and Gentile. Micah 4: 3; Isa 62: 2
      1) The limited commission was to lost sheep of the house of Israel. They were not to go unto the Gentiles. Matt. 10: 5, 6
      2) The great commission is to all races and nationalities. Matt. 11: 28 – 30; Matt 28: 19; Matt. 28: 19
      3) Fulfilled. Acts 2
   e. “He will teach us of His ways.”
      1) Old law would be abolished. Amos 8: 5, 9; Col. 2: 14 – 16
      2) The New Law to be given. Heb. 8: 8 – 13; 10: 9 – 10; 9: 16, 17
      3) The method of God’s drawing. Isa. 1: 18; Acts 17: 2; Jn. 6: 44, 45
   f. “Out of Zion (Jerusalem) shall go for the law, and he word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”
      1) The place - Jerusalem. Lk. 24: 47 – 49
      2) We are now under the law to Christ. I Cor. 9: 21; Gal. 6: 2; James 1: 25
      3) The great commission was announced for the first time. Acts 2: 32 – 38
      4) The facts of the gospel - Death, burial and resurrection of Christ, could not be preached until it had occurred. Ai Cor. 25: 1 - 3
      5) The death and burial had taken place and the resurrection had also been fulfilled.
2. The prophecy of Daniel.
a. Daniel was in captivity in Babylon
b. While there king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. Dan. 2
   1) The magicians or astrologers or Chaldeans could not interpret
      the dream. Dan. 2: 10
   2) The image’s head was of fine gold., his breast was of silver,
      his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs, his feet part of iron
      and part of clay.
   3) Daniel interpreted the dream. Dan. 2: 36 – 44
c. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar “thou art this head of Gold.”
   1) After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee
   2) And another third kingdom of fine brass, which shall bear rule
      over all the earth.
   3) And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as
      iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things - part of iron
      and part of clay
d. There would be four kingdoms
   1) Babylonian. Dan. 2: 38; B.C. 600
   3) Macedonion. Dan. 2: 39
   4) Roman Empire. Dan 2: 40 – 43
e. The time of fulfillment. Dan. 2: 44; Lk. 3: 1 -3
   1) Danial 2: 44 said “in the days of these kings.”
   2) These kings refer to the emperors of Rome
   3) Part of clay and part of iron - some were strong and some
      were weak.
f. Daniel had a vision. Dan. 7: 13 – 15 B.C. 555
   1) One like the Son of man came to the Ancient of days.

III. JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARED THE WAY FOR THE LORD.
   A. He was the forerunner preparing the way for Christ and His kingdom. Isa.
      40: 3 - 5; Mal 3: 1; Matt. 3: 3; Lk. 3: 4; Jn. 1: 23
   B. He was preparing the people for the Lord’s coming. Lk. 1: 17, 77
      a. “Kingdom of heaven at hand.” Matt 3: 1-3; Lk. 3: 1 – 3 (A D 26)
      b. Jesus taught, “repent: “for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
         Matt.4: 17 (A D 30)
      c. The apostles were told, “as you go, preach, saying the kingdom of
         heaven is at hand. Matt 10: 7. (A D 30)
      d. The disciples that were sent to the Jews only, were told to preach
         the, “kingdom of God is nigh unto you. Lk. 10: 9 (A D 32)
      e. Christ “will build.” Matt. 16: 18 (A D 32) (Limited commission)
      f. Joseph waited for the kingdom. Mk. 15: 43

IV. JESUS SAID I WILL BUILD. MATT. 16: 18
   A. “I will build.” future tense.
      1. It is still in the future at the time Jesus made tis statement.
      2. It had not been built at this time, yet, in promise.
   B. “My church.”
      a. He had the right to build based upon he confession Peter made in
         Matt. 16: 16
      b. The fact that He is the Son if God gave Him the right to build His
         church.
c. “My church “ shows possession, ownership.

C. “Gates of Hades.”
   a. The gates of hades nor anything else could cause Him not to build His church,  
   b. Some say, “they put Him to death,” He could not establish His kingdom, so as an afterthought He built the church instead.  
   c. It was necessary for Christ to die in order that His church or kingdom could be purchased with His blood. Acts 20: 28  
   d. Church and kingdom are the same institution. Matt. 16: 18, 19  
   e. Jesus arose from the dead and built His church the kingdom.

D. Note our Lord’s statement in Mark 9: 1
   a. Jesus said, “verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.” Some will not die till they see the kingdom come with power.  
   b. Acts 1: 9. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” They would receive power after the Holy Ghost came upon them, the apostles.  
   c. The apostles were to tarry in Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high. Lk. 24: 49  
   d. After the resurrection Acts 1: 9 - 11 the apostles went to Jerusalem. Acts 1: 12  
   e. On the day of Pentecost the apostles were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Act 2: 4  
   f. In these passages the apostles were told that they would receive power after the Holy Ghost came on them.  
   g. Kingdom would come with power. Mark 9: 1 Power would come after Holy Ghost came on them. Acts 1: 8 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts 2: 4.  
   h. Kingdom would come with power, the power would come when the Holy Ghost came  
   i. The Holy Ghost came in Acts 2: 1 -8. Power would come with Holy Ghost and the kingdom would come with power: Holy Ghost came, the power came therefore the kingdom.

V. THE KINGDOM WAS ESTABLISHED AND IT IS MAINTAINABLE
A. Maintained if it continues in God’s plan of entrance, into the kingdom  
   a. One must hear the gospel for faith to be produced. Rom. 10: 17  
   b. One must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Mk. 16: 1; Jn. 8: 24 Acts 16: 31  
   c. Confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Rom. 10: 9, 10; Acts 8: 36 – 38  

B. Maintained by the work God planned for His children.  
   a. Preaching the gospel. I Thess. 1: 8; II Cor. 11: 8; Phil. 4: 14 – 18  
   b. Providing for the poor. Acts 4: 34, 35; 6: 1 7; I Tim. 5: 16; Gal. 6: 10  
   c. Edifying the church. Eph. 4: 11 – 15
d. By continuing in the apostles doctrine. Acts 2: 42
C. By continuing in God’s plan for our worship
   a. We are to worship in spirit and in truth. Jn. 4: 24
   b. We partake of the Lord’s supper. I Cor. 10: 16; 11: 20 – 30; Acts 20: 7
   c. We are to sing in worship. Eph. 5: 18, 19; Col 3: 16
   d. Praying is another part of our worship. Acts 2: 42; I Thess. 5: 17; 25
   e. We are to give as we have been prospered. I Cor. 16: 1, 2; II Cor. 9: 7
   f. We are to teach and preach. Acts 2: 42; I Tim. 3: 15
D. By being devoted to Christ.
   a. He is the Saviour. Lk. 2: 11; Jn. 4: 42; Tit. 1: 4; II Pet. 3: 18
   b. He bought us. I Cor. 6: 19, 20; Rom. 5: 8, 9
   c. He is Lord. Acts 2: 36; Eph. 3: 9 11 – 14; Mk. 2: 28
   d. He is the light. Jn. 8: 12; 1: 4 9; 3: 17 – 19
   e. He is the creator. Eph. 3: 9 – 11; Col. 1: 14 – 17; Jn. 1: 1 – 3, 14
E. By being devoted to His Word.
   a. It is His eternal word. Matt. 24: 35; I Pet. 1: 25
   b. It is His inspired word. II Tim 3: 16; I Cor. 2: 13
   c. It is the life giving word. Matt. 4: 4
   d. It is infallible. Psa. 119: 160
   e. It is the saving word. James 1: 21
   f. The word of Christ is comforting. II Thess. 4: 14 – 18; Psalms 23

CONCLUSION
A. In this lesson we discussed Christ coming into the world
B. We discussed His being the seed of woman, the seed of Abraham and David
C. We discussed His life and death.
D. We discussed the prophecies of the kingdom and its establishment, thus, fulfilling the prophecies.
E. We discussed the maintaining of the church in the world today.
   a. By God’s plan of entrance into the church.
   b. By living God’s plan for our lives
   c. By maintaining the work God planned for us.
   d. By following God’s plan for worship

REFERENCES:
While writing this outline I gleaned some from an outline, by brother Roy Hearn titled “The Church.” It was an outline that brother Hearn taught in Bible class at Memphis School of Preaching in, 1972, when I was a student.
INTRODUCTION:

A. With the establishment of the Church of Christ in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost day following the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ (Acts 2); the rest of the New Testament (Acts 2 – Revelation 22) records the inspired history of the early years of that church to near the end of the first century.

1. The New Testament is the authoritative pattern for this church (2 Tim. 1:13; 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Heb. 8:5).
   a. It is “the Faith” that has once for all been revealed (Jude 3; James 1:25).
   b. Christians are to “standfast in” and “holdfast to” that Faith (1 Cor. 16:13; 1 Thess. 5:21; Titus 1:9).

2. Following the New Testament pattern requires respect and adherence to “divine Authority” (Col. 3:17; 2 Cor. 5:7).
   a. We do not have authority to add to or subtract from God’s word (Deut. 3:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).
   b. Nor do we have authority to change, twist, or pervert God’s word (Gal. 1:6-10; 2 Pet. 3:16; 2 John 9-11; 1 Pet. 4:11).

B. Inspiration predicted a “falling away”; a departure from the New Testament pattern.

1. Jesus warned of “false prophets” (Matt. 7:15).
2. The apostle Paul predicted in the early A.D. 50’s a general “apostasy” coming:
   a. 2 Thess. 2:1-12 – Before the final coming of Christ there would be a “falling away”; an apostasy developing over a period of time and its beginning was already underway.
   c. Paul warned Timothy of a time when there would be a departure from the faith by those who will not endure sound doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:2-4).

4. The apostle John warned of false prophets (1 John 4:1).

C. The thrust of our study is to examine some of the departures from God and His Truth affecting the Lord’s Church in the first Century (Acts – Revelation).

DISCUSSION:

I. SOME INFLUENCES AFFECTING THE EARLY CHURCH OF CHRIST: “In order to understand the history of the church we must know the world in which the church had its beginning and in which it moved. The
social, philosophical and religious movements of the day affected the church from its beginning.” (The Eternal Kingdom, F.W. Mattox; 1961)

A. The influence of the four world powers as seen in Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2: (The following suggestions were made by Rex A. Turner in an article which appeared in SOUND DOCTRINE in the 1970’s) showing how these four world powers (Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman), in keeping with God’s plan, contributed to the establishment and spread of the Kingdom of God.

1. The Babylonian Empire’s chief contribution was the Jewish synagogue.
   a. Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the temple in Jerusalem and carried the Jews, except the poorest, to Babylon.
   b. Ezekiel was raised up to encourage the Jews to worship God in the land of Babylon which gave rise to synagogue worship among the captive Jews.
   c. By the coming of Christ and His Church, synagogues were prevalent throughout the Roman world.
   d. These synagogues served as stepping stones or launching boards, for the rise and growth of the early church.
   e. In spreading the gospel, the apostles would first go to the Jewish synagogues.

2. The Medo-Persian Empire’s chief contribution was its commitment to the principle of law and order. By the coming of Christ, the Medo-Persians’ respect and commitment to the principle of law and order had come to be incorporated into the Roman Empire to a high degree.

3. The Grecian Empire’s chief contribution was its Greek language, which came to be a near universal language.
   a. Alexander the Great, a student of the Greek philosopher Aristotle, sought to infuse the Grecian culture and language among all the peoples he conquered.
   b. By the time Christ came, the Jews in Palestine spoke in the Hebrew tongue called Aramaic, but most also spoke in the more widely used Hellenistic Greek, the language spoken by the “common man.”
   c. This common language is known as “Koine”, which means “common” or “general”. The New Testament was written in this “Koine Greek” language which is a “dead” language, meaning it has not and does not change.
   d. “There is no language known to man that could be better used to convey a divine message. Over the entire Roman world this Greek language possessed a uniformity that made it possible to convey a fine distinction of thought and be accurately understood. The language itself possesses tenses and moods that enable an exactness of expression not possible in English.” (The Eternal Kingdom by F.W. Mattox, p.29)

4. The Roman Empire’s contributions to the spread of the gospel and the Lord’s church:
   a. The peace and stability of a central and powerful government was essential for the effective spread of the gospel.
   b. The opening up of the world to trade with good roads and freedom of travel and communication facilitated the spread of the gospel.
   c. Universal law, unity of mankind, common coinage (currency), free
trade, good roads, law and order all combined to bring prosperity
over the whole Roman world.

d. The Roman Empire has been called “the cradle of Christianity”!
There was a provision for Roman citizenship so that the Roman
Empire unwittingly became the protectorate for the infant church.
The apostle Paul, on occasion, was protected by his Roman
citizenship! (Acts 22:25-30; 23:27)
e. While the above conditions in the Roman Empire initially helped
the spread and growth of the church; before the end of the first
century the Romans would begin a long and severe persecution of
the church.

B. Some negative influences on the early church:
1. Slavery (forced labor): it is estimated that there were more slaves than
freemen in the first century. Labor by freemen became disgraceful and
unprofitable.
2. A heavy Tax system: The extravagance of the Roman Emperors and
their administrations wasted the wealth of the world, which brought
about a burdensome taxation. There was an annual tax collected by
the city councils, and a direct tax collected by the publicans.
3. There was a large number of people with no jobs and no way of
making a living, thus a “daily dole of bread” was given to the poorest
class of people by the state.
4. Immorality, corruption, wickedness were rampant as described by
Paul in Romans 1:18-32.
5. Paganism (idolatry) was well adapted to the promotion of immorality
and wickedness: Divorce was commonplace; Abortion was practiced
extensively – the sickly or deformed child was drowned at birth and
the fate of the normal child was solely in the hands of the father. No
respect for human life, but rather a thirst for human bloodshed in the
sport of the gladiators. All such immoral degradation was unopposed
by the pagan religions.

C. The influence and opposition of the Jewish Leaders:
1. By the first Century the Jews had developed their “traditions” which
they substituted for the Law of God given through Moses.
2. Traditional interpretations divided the Jews into denominational
groups such as:
   a. The Sadducees: (the higher, richer class of the Jews)
      1) The “Modernists” of their day. They believed in free will and
         the rejection of traditional interpretations of the Mosaic Law.
      2) They denied that there would be a resurrection or future
         rewards and punishments.
      3) The high priest Caiaphas who condemned Christ was a
         Sadducee.
   b. The Pharisees: (The reform party of the Jews)
      1) “They held that the Law of Moses was supplemented by a
         great amount of oral tradition which they believed was given
         by God at the same time as the giving of the Law.” (The
         Eternal Kingdom; F.W. Mattox, p. 28)
      2) The Pharisees posed the greatest opposition to Christ and His
         teaching and continued to lead the opposition to His Church
         and the preaching of the gospel throughout the first century.
c. The Essenes: (An exclusive sect of the Pharisees, but are not mentioned in the N.T.)
d. The Zealots: (Another fanatical off-shoot of the Pharisees of which little is said in the N.T.)

D. The Lord’s Church had its beginning in a world filled with powerful influences, including radical religious beliefs and practices strongly opposed to the teachings and practices of Christianity. It is not surprising that THERE WERE NUMEROUS MORAL AND DOCTRINAL DEPARTURES FROM GOD AND HIS TRUTH as recorded in the New Testament!

II. INDIVIDUALS WHO DEPARTED FROM GOD AND HIS WORD:
A. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)
   1. Lied to God and attempted to deceive the Holy Spirit.
   2. The consequences of their sin was death, which shows the seriousness of departing from God.

B. Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-13, 18-24)
   1. Shows that Christians can fall.
   2. When one falls, there is need for restoration (Gal. 6:1; Jam. 5:19-20).
   3. The requirements for restoration (1 Jn. 1:7-10)

C. Demas (2 Tim. 4:10)
   1. A fellow-laborer of Paul (Col. 4:14; Phile. 24).
   2. Departed from Paul, from God, and from his duty.
   3. Motivated by his love for the world (1 Jn. 2:15-17; Jam. 4:4).

D. Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:18-20)
   1. Paul, in charging Timothy to “…war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience;” mentions Hymenaeus and Alexander, who had made shipwreck of faith.
   2. Hymenaeus, along with Philetus, had erred from the truth, teaching that the resurrection is past already, overthrowing the faith of some (2 Tim. 2:17-18).
   3. If this Alexander is the same as the one in 2 Tim. 4:14-15, he did Paul much evil and strongly opposed Paul’s preaching.
   4. These men (err ing brothers in Christ) were “delivered unto Satan” (disfellowshipped) that they might be restored to faithfulness!

E. Diotrephes (3 John 9-11)
   1. In contrast to Gaius and Demetrius, whom John commends highly for their faithfulness to the Truth, he describes Diotrephes as an arrogant, self-willed, dictator whose deeds were evil!
   2. He rejected apostolic authority by refusing John and the letter he had written to the church. John said he “…receiveth us not” (v. 9).
   3. He “…loveth to have the pre-eminence…” he wanted and assumed power, and authority that was not his.
   4. He “pratted” (to babble or accuse falsely) against John with malicious (evil) words, and would not receive or welcome the missionary brethren who came.
   5. He was an evil influence in the church. Many congregations of the Lord’s people have been hindered or torn asunder by brethren with Diotrephes’ characteristics.

III. DEPARTURES ASSOCIATED WITH LOCAL NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES:
A. The Church at Corinth
1. Paul wrote two letters to this church dealing with problems of departure.
2. Many were promoting division (1 Cor. 1:10-13). By following and calling themselves after men, contentions and factions had been created. They had become carnal minded (1 Cor. 3:3).
3. The practice and condoning of immorality (1 Cor. 5).
4. Some were going to secular law to settle differences with brethren (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15-17).
5. There were divisions and heresies among them (1 Cor. 11:18-19).
6. Abusing the Lord’s Supper in combining it with a common meal and the and the consequences for doing such (1 Cor. 11:20-34).
7. Some were misusing “miraculous gifts” (1 Cor. 12-14).
8. Paul made it clear to the Corinthians that one can fall and depart from God (1 Cor. 10:1-12).
9. In the second letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he indicated that many of them had repented and were restored (2 Cor. 1:14; 2:5-11; 7:11).
10. Nevertheless, Paul still had to deal with false apostles, deceitful workers, and false brethren at Corinth (2 Cor. 11:13-28).

B. The churches of Galatia:
1. The Galatians were led away from Christ and the gospel to a “perverted gospel” (Gal. 1:6-12).
2. The false teachers who led them away were the Judaizers who were teaching that the Gentile converts must comply with circumcision commanded in the Law of Moses in order to be saved.
3. The false teaching was dealt with in the “Jerusalem Conference” recorded by Luke in Acts 15, which occurred around around A.D. 50. Paul records a brief account of this conference in Gal. 2:1-10, and gives some information in addition to Luke’s account.
   a. After the conversion of Cornelius and his household, the first gentile converts in Acts 10, the Judaizers at Jerusalem “contended” with Peter, as to whether a Christian Jew could eat with an “uncircumcised” Gentile (Acts 11:1-3).
   b. Then later when Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch following the first missionary journey, Judaizers came down from Judea and taught that circumcision was essential to salvation (Acts 15:1-2).
      1) Paul and Barnabas along with certain others were sent to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders about this false teaching.
      2) We learn from Gal. 2:2-3 that the trip to Jerusalem was divinely authorized, and that Titus was among the “other of them” who also went along.
   c. At Jerusalem the false teaching of the Judaizers was soundly defeated and rejected by Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and James (Acts 15:4-21).
      1) The Jerusalem apostles and elders wrote a letter and sent it with Paul and Barnabas and other chosen men back to the church at Antioch informing them that the teaching of the Judaizers was false (Acts 15:22-35).
      2) But these false teachers continued to peddle their error and had been successful in deceiving the Galatians who were
“bewitched” by them (Gal. 3:1), and had “fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4).

C. The Colossian Heresy:
1. It is believed that Epaphras established the church at Colossae as there is no evidence that Paul ever visited Colossae.
2. Epaphras visited Paul in Rome and reported the heresy facing the Colossian church which prompted Paul to write this letter to them dealing with the multiple aspects of what is known as “the Colossian Heresy.”
3. The basis of this heresy was the origin of evil which prompted the concept that all matter including the fleshly body is evil, therefore the need to put down the desires and indulgences of the flesh which gave rise to “asceticism.”
4. The factions at Colossae involved Greeks, Phrygians, and Jews which produced a combination of false philosophy, ceremonialism, angel worship, and asceticism, all of which Paul warned against:
   a. The false philosophy of the Greeks (Col. 2:8).
   b. The ceremonialism of the Judaistic Pharisees and the ascetic practices of the Essenes (Col. 2:16).
   c. The worship of angels by the Oriental Mystics (Col. 2:18).
   d. All of these groups practiced asceticism (Col. 2:20-23).
5. The Colossian Heresy involved teachings that would develop into a prominent doctrine in later years known as “Gnosticism.”
   a. It involved the concept of “superior knowledge.”
   b. This so-called “superior knowledge” reasoned that all matter is evil and opposed to God. Therefore, God would not have directly created the world, so He must have used a series of intermediate beings (angels) over a long period of time, each being less divine, until the point was reached where contact with matter was possible.
   c. The Colossian Gnostics believed Christ to be the lowest of these intermediate beings, thus denying the Deity of Christ.
   d. Some believed spiritual growth could come about only by separating oneself as far as possible from matter by refusing to give in to the desires of the body which led to extreme asceticism.
   e. Others believed that the soul could be pure and unaffected by what the body did which led to the conclusion that one was free to engage in sin without the soul being affected.
6. Paul attacks the “Colossian Heresy” as he defends the Truth:
   a. The truth relative to God the Father (Col. 1:12-13).
   b. The truth relative to Jesus Christ the Son of God (Col. 1:13-23).
   c. The fullness of the Godhead is in Christ (Col. 2:9).
   d. We are made free in Christ (Col. 2:10-13).
   e. Warnings against false teachers and false doctrines (Col. 2:14-15).
   f. The Colossians must NOT: 1) bow to ceremonial prohibitions (2:16-17); 2) worship inferior beings (2:18-19); 3) submit to ascetic regulations given by men (2:20-23).
   g. Things the Colossians should and must do (3:1-4).

D. The Church at Ephesus:
1. The church at Ephesus had a great history:
c. Paul wrote the Ephesian letter to them in about A.D. 62.
d. Timothy was left in Ephesus when Paul went to Macedonia, to charge some that they teach no other doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3).
e. Was one of seven churches of Asia to receive a letter from the Lord (Rev. 2:1-7).

2. Jesus commended them for their works of labor, patient endurance, intolerance of evil people, trying and rejecting false apostles (Rev. 2:2-3); and hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans (2:6),

3. But, they had a major problem that threatened their very existence if they didn’t correct it: “…thou hast left thy first love” (vs. 4).
   a. This is one of the most destructive and common departures from God that individuals and congregations have faced down through the years.
   b. Their original fervent love for Christ and His work had declined. No doubt they were still going through the motions as they had always done but the “fervency of love” was gone! This would soon affect all aspects of their work for the Lord!
   c. God has placed great emphasis in His word on maintaining a fervent love for the things of God (Matt. 22:34-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Rom. 13:10; 1 Pet. 4:8; 1 Cor. 12:31-13:13; Jn. 34-35; Col. 3:14).
   d. Paul commanded the church at Ephesus to be “rooted and grounded in love” (Eph. 3:17); to “speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15); to “walk in love” (Eph. 5:1).
   e. We must guard against the danger of leaving fervent love and becoming satisfied with custom or formality, having a “form of godliness” (2 Tim. 3:5; Matt. 15:8).
   f. It is a gradual process that happens through neglect (Heb. 2:1-3);

4. The Ephesian church had “fallen” (Rev. 2:5) out of favor and fellowship with God. A spiritual decline that, without repentance, leads to nonexistence!

E. The Church at Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17).

1. Pergamos was an idolatrous city, very loyal to Rome who made it the capital city of the province of Asia and the headquarters for emperor worship, the leading religion of the city, although a number of idolatrous gods were also worshipped.
   a. Emperor worship was made a test of loyalty even among Christians. All were to say, “Lord Caesar.” All were allowed to serve his own god, as long as Caesar was served above all!
   b. Antipas was martyred because he refused to give allegiance to Caesar above Christ.
   c. Jesus describes Pergamos as “Satan’s seat” and “where Satan dwelleth” (Rev. 2:13).

2. The church at Pergamos had adopted a tolerant attitude toward false teachers, and was allowing sin to exist among them.
   a. Jesus said they had in their midst, “them that hold the doctrine of Balaam” and “them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans” (Rev. 2:14-15)
   b. Jesus calls upon them to repent (v. 16), which required them to separate from and denounce all false teaching.
   c. Christians must always be ready to defend the truth (1 Pet. 3:15;
Jude 3). Jesus acknowledged those who were faithful in the midst of persecution, even though some were willing to compromise with satan.

3. The doctrine of Balaam:
   a. “Balaam” is used symbolically in that they were teaching the same things that Balaam taught and for the same reasons.
   b. When God would not allow Balaam to curse the children of Israel at Balak’s request, but blessed them instead (Num. 22-24), Balaam worked out a compromise with Balak the king of Moab, counselling him to send daughters of Moab to the men of Israel to entice them into joining their idolatrous worship which involved fornication (Num. 25:1-2; 31:16), which brought about a plague among the congregation of the Lord.
   c. These members of the church in Pergamos were compromising with idolatry to avoid persecution, instead of remaining faithful to receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).
   d. To “eat things sacrificed unto idols” (v. 14), involved partaking in the sacrifice and ritual of idol worship and not simply eating meats as discussed by Paul in (1 Cor. 8-10).

4. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans (v. 15)
   a. It is believed that the Nicolaitans were a sect of the Gnostics who called themselves Christians.
   b. They believed it was alright to commit fornication and adultery and this compromise was being tolerated by the church at Pergamos.
   c. Jesus commanded them to repent or else He would quickly bring judgment upon them with the sword of His word.

F. A similar departure at Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29, involving the “Jezebel-like Woman” who claimed to be a prophetess, was teaching a false doctrine leading others to commit fornication and engage in idolatrous practices.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. There is evidence all through the New Testament that the Apostasy (departure from the Faith) predicted by inspired writers that history has recorded over several centuries was well under way by the end of the first Century.
2. We have seen many contributing factors leading to departures. Let us learn from the New Testament how to identify, avoid, and scripturally deal with departures when they occur.
3. Let us never forget the constant need for restoration of all who have departed from God and His divine pattern.
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INTRODUCTION:
A. “The Jewish revolt of 66-73 AD produced one of the most remarkable military campaigns in Roman history.” (Biggs 1999)
   1. The conflict began with what the Romans believed to be a routine operation to suppress turmoil in a remote, troublesome province. (Biggs 1999)
   2. It ended as a seven-year war with great loss of life to both the Romans and Jews. (Biggs 1999)
B. This great conflict could have been avoided if the Jewish nation had surrendered their will to God’s.

DISCUSSION:
I. DURING THE FIRST CENTURY, VARIOUS JEWISH FACTIONS FOUGHT IN JERUSALEM FOR LEADERSHIP AND CONTROL OF THE REBELLION. (Biggs 1999)
   A. The two main factions were the Zealots and the Sanhedrin. (Biggs 1999)
      1. The Zealots were radical nationalists, intent on war with Rome. (Biggs 1999)
      2. The Sanhedrin was a religious court of elder priests, and although the court was bitterly divided, the majority of its members, led by the High Priest Ananas, desired peace. (Biggs 1999)
   B. The Sanhedrin became the rebel government, because of its established leadership organization, but it never exerted control over the Zealots, and was in constant fear of being overthrown by them. (Biggs 1999)
   C. In an attempt to influence and moderate the Zealots’ power, the Sanhedrin appointed five regional governors. (Biggs 1999)
      1. Joseph ben (son of) Matthias, a learned Jewish priest who shared Ananas’ dislike of the rebellion, received the governorship of Galilee. (Biggs 1999)
      2. He was to unite the disorganized rebel groups in Galilee and stop their provocative raids against the Romans, in the hope of eventually securing a negotiated peace. (Biggs 1999)
   D. The Sanhedrin was overthrown by Zealots in Jerusalem, and Ananas was executed. (Biggs 1999)
      1. The Zealots pressured Josephus to prosecute a more vigorous revolt against Rome. (Biggs 1999)
      2. Rival Zealot leaders such as John of Gischala concocted ploys to remove Josephus from power and made attempts to assassinate him. (Biggs 1999)
      3. Josephus still hedged for peace, but in the end he was persuaded to fight the Romans by the growing realization that the revolt had gone
too far to be reversed and by Josephus’ belief that God had directed him through a dream to fight the Roman army. (Biggs 1999)

E. By the start of Vespasian’s campaign, Josephus had amassed a professional army of 250 horse soldiers, 4,500 infantrymen and an elite personal guard of 600 men, plus another 30,000 men, mostly unreliable draftees. (Biggs 1999)

F. Josephus also fortified many towns, the strongest being Jotapata, a natural fortress perched on a rock outcrop. (Biggs 1999)

II. RELATIONS BETWEEN ROME AND JUDEA BEGAN RAPIDLY DETERIORATING AFTER 37 AD, WHEN GAIUS CAESAR (CALIGULA) BECAME EMPEROR. (Biggs 1999)

A. Caligula suffered from a delusion that he was the god Zeus. (Biggs 1999)
   1. In 40 AD he decreed that a statue representing him as Zeus be erected in the temple at Jerusalem, and that all Jews were to worship and sacrifice to his statue. (Biggs 1999)
   2. An immediate Jewish uprising was averted only by the timely assassination of Caligula by members of his own Praetorian Guard in 41 AD. (Biggs 1999)

B. In 66 AD the strained Judeo-Roman relations could not withstand the brutal rule of Procurator Gessius Florus. (Biggs 1999)
   1. He raided the Temple treasury, allowed anti-semitic riots to proceed unchecked in Caesarea, and crucified hundreds of Jews in Jerusalem merely for displaying insolence to him. (Biggs 1999)
   2. When the outraged populace of Jerusalem finally rose in revolt in late July, Gessius fled the city, and the Roman garrison succumbed to the armed mobs. (Biggs 1999)
   3. In November 66 AD, Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, tried to restore order, but the bulk of his army was destroyed.

III. EMPEROR NERO CHOSE VESPASIAN TO SUBDUE JUDEA. (Biggs 1999)

A. In late April 67, Vespasian’s army, a force totaling almost 60,000 fighting men, was finally ready to take to the field. (Biggs 1999)
   1. He advanced on Gabara, burning all the villages and hamlets in his path.
      a. Finding the city lightly defended, he overwhelmed it on his first assault. (Biggs 1999)
      b. As a warning against resistance, he had all its inhabitants slaughtered, sparing only the children. (Biggs 1999)
   2. He then turned toward Jotapata, the strongest fortress in Galilee, from where Josephus led the Jewish rebellion. (Biggs 1999)
      a. It took the Romans 40 days of fierce battle to take Jotapata, with heavy casualties to the Roman forces. (Biggs 1999)
      b. Bitter at the grief the siege had cost them, the Romans showed no pity. (Biggs 1999)
         1) According to Josephus, the total Jewish slain in Jotapata exceeded 40,000. (Biggs 1999)
         2) The only survivors were 1,200 prisoners taken by Vespasian to be sold into slavery. (Biggs 1999)
      c. Near the end of the battle, Josephus realized that the Zealots were determined that all within would give their lives defending the city and that none would be taken prisoner. (Biggs 1999)
1) Seeking to save his own life, Josephus suggested to the city leaders that he slip past the Roman lines at night, so that once free, he could rally the rest of Galilee to their rescue. (Biggs 1999)

2) The Zealots distrusted Josephus and accused him of treason. (Biggs 1999)

3) When the Zealots threatened to assign a guard to him, Josephus promptly dropped his proposal to leave the city. (Biggs 1999)

d. After the battle was over, Josephus was himself brought in chains to Vespasian, who ordered him to be sent immediately to Rome for Nero to personally judge, which likely would have meant his execution. (Biggs 1999)

1) Josephus asked for a private word with Vespasian and prophesied that he would become the Roman Emperor. (Biggs 1999)

2) At first Vespasian doubted Josephus’ words, thinking him a liar who was merely trying to save his own life. But, instead of sending his captive to Rome, he kept Josephus in chains as a prisoner in Titus’ army. (Biggs 1999)

3) Less than one year later, in June 68, Nero was dead, and a year of bloody civil war began that saw three consecutive Roman emperors rise and fall in rapid succession. (Biggs 1999)

4) The conflict ended with Vespasian being proclaimed Caesar in July 69 in Judea and returning to Rome as Ruler of the World. (Biggs 1999)

5) Vespasian immediately freed Joseph and appointed him consultant and negotiator for his son Titus, who led the Roman army for the remainder of the Jewish War. (Biggs 1999)

a) After the war, Joseph ben Matthias returned with Titus to Rome. (Biggs 1999)

b) There, Emperor Vespasian gave him the home in which he had lived as a private citizen, a full pension and Roman citizenship. (Biggs 1999)

c) It was while living in luxury at the Caesar’s court that Joseph adopted the Latin name of Flavius Josephus (taking the family name of Flavius from the emperor) and wrote his histories of the Jewish revolt, including those events following his capture, to which he was a firsthand witness in Titus’ army. (Biggs 1999)

d) It is primarily through Josephus that today we know the full details of the assault on Jotapata, of the incredible siege of Jerusalem, of the Roman destruction of the Temple, and of the fateful last stand of the Jews at Masada in 73 AD. (Biggs 1999)

IV. The Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD

A. Vespasian rode with his cavalry up to the walls of Jerusalem, but was declared Emperor while in Judea, and was called back to Rome. (Josephus 1988)

1. Vespasian sent his son Titus with elite troops to crush Jerusalem. (Josephus 1988)

2. After a desert march from Egypt, Titus arrived at Caesarea, where he
organized his forces. (Josephus 1988)

B. Meanwhile, in Jerusalem strife among the Jewish factions escalated. (Josephus 1988)
   1. Fighting between the Zealots led by Eleazar, the followers of John of Gischala, and the followers of Simon, son of Giora, led to the deaths of priests and worshippers at the very altar itself. (Josephus 1988)
   2. “For despite war, the sacrifices went on, and those who had journeyed from all over the world to worship there sprinkled the altar with their own blood.” (Josephus 1988)

C. The three warring camps regularly rushed out and burned each other’s food supplies. (Josephus 1988)
   1. The area around the temple became a mass of ruins as a result. (Josephus 1988)
   2. Great stores of grain, which would have supplied the Jews for years while besieged by the Romans, were destroyed by the factions themselves. (Josephus 1988)
   3. Jerusalem eventually fell to self-imposed famine as a result. (Josephus 1988)

D. Terrorized by the bloody contentions of the three factions, many Jews prayed that the Romans might come and deliver them from the internal strife. (Josephus 1988)
   1. The three parties, disagreeing on everything else, united in putting to death any who favored peace with Rome. (Josephus 1988)
   2. So, there was no other hope of escape for the Jewish common people. (Josephus 1988)

E. Titus formed camps for his armies within full view of the residents of Jerusalem, hoping to intimidate the Jews. (Josephus 1988)
   1. There were 23,400 Jewish combatants and rebels within the city. (Josephus 1988)
   2. But, strife among the Jewish factions ultimately subdued the city, “which suffered nothing worse from the Romans than what the partisans inflicted on each other.” (Josephus 1988)

F. Three walls fortified the city of Jerusalem, except where impassable ravines bordered it. (Josephus 1988)
   1. The inner wall, erected by David, Solomon, and their successors, boasted 60 towers; the middle wall, 14; and the outer wall, erected by King Agrippa to enclose the northern additions to the city, 90 towers. (Josephus 1988)
   2. The circumference of the city was about four miles. (Josephus 1988)

G. Titus leveled the ground to the city walls, removing all garden fences and felling every fruit tree while filling in the gullies. (Josephus 1988)
   1. Opposite the northern and western wall Titus arranged his forces seven ranks deep: three of infantry in front and of cavalry to the rear, with a line of archers in the middle. (Josephus 1988)
   2. Roman soldiers destroyed the suburbs, erected earthworks on which to bring up battering rams, and breached the walls one by one. (Josephus 1988)
   3. Siege towers were built, and plated with iron, so they couldn’t be set afire by the Jews, and archers and stone throwers killed many Jews from the towers, high out of reach of Jewish weaponry. (Josephus 1988)
4. By the end of the taking of Jerusalem, the Romans had used every tree for twelve miles around. (Josephus 1988)

H. Titus did everything within his power to persuade the surrender of the Jews. (Josephus 1988)
1. Some 500 Jews were captured daily. Many of the captured Jews were crucified before the walls of the city, in hopes to intimidate the rest into surrender. (Josephus 1988)
2. Titus’ goal was to preserve the city and the temple, and promised to restore property after the war to every Jew who would surrender. (Josephus 1988)
3. On many occasions at Titus’ orders, Josephus pleaded with the Jews to surrender, to save their city and the temple, even arguing that God was using the Romans to punish the Jews, and that it was futile for them to fight against the Romans, thus ultimately against God. (Josephus 1988)

I. Some of the Jews did surrender to the Romans. (Josephus 1988)
1. Titus released most of the Jewish deserters, to encourage more to surrender. (Josephus 1988)
2. Some of the Jews, before their surrender, swallowed gold coins, and then after their surrender and release by Titus, they would have ample supplies once the gold coins passed through their digestive system. (Josephus 1988)
   a. Arab and Syrian allies to the Romans, once they learned of this, began cutting open the Jewish deserters, and searching their intestines for the gold coins; 2000 were killed in this manner in one night. (Josephus 1988)
   b. Titus threatened death to any repeating the crime, but greed drove the barbarians more than the threat of death, and they continued the practice in hiding. (Josephus 1988)
3. The Jewish rebels executed every Jew caught trying to surrender to the Romans. (Josephus 1988)

J. At Titus’ orders, and in only three days, Roman soldiers built a wall five miles long, surrounding Jerusalem, and blocking every possible exit. (Josephus 1988)
1. Titus placed garrisons within thirteen different forts attached at intervals to the outside of the wall, and sentries patrolled the intervals throughout the night. (Josephus 1988)
2. The Jews were now compelled to either surrender or starve. (Josephus 1988)
3. Thousands upon thousands of Jews were devoured by famine within the city; there were so many deaths from starvation, bodies were just thrown into ravines. (Josephus 1988)
4. Parents, driven mad by hunger, kept any available food for themselves, to the detriment of their own infant children. (Josephus 1988)
5. Josephus told of a wealthy woman of Bethezuba named Mary, who killed her own infant son, roasted his body, and devoured half of it immediately, hiding the remainder. (Josephus 1988)
6. Titus declared before his god that the Jews were themselves responsible for these atrocities, and not him. (Josephus 1988)

K. Titus had no intention of destroying the Temple, but he could not refrain the fury of his soldiers. (Josephus 1988)
1. Roman soldiers slaughtered every man, woman, and child in the vicinity of the Temple. (Josephus 1988)
2. They plundered the Temple, taking anything of value, and then set it afire.
3. The Roman soldiers offered sacrifice inside the Temple court, acclaiming Titus as imperator. (Josephus 1988)

L. Near the end of the campaign, the remaining Jews had finally retreated to the upper city, laying in ambush among the ruins, and still executing all who tried to surrender. (Josephus 1988)
1. Roman soldiers massacred everyone they found, burning the houses, with any who had taken shelter within them. (Josephus 1988)
2. “So great was the slaughter that in many places the flames were put out by streams of blood.” (Josephus 1988)

M. 1,100,000 Jews died in the siege of Jerusalem, and 97,000 were taken prisoner. (Josephus 1988)
1. Those under the age of seventeen were sold into slavery. (Josephus 1988)
2. The rest were either sent to the mines in Egypt or presented to the provinces to be destroyed by sword or beast in the theatres. (Josephus 1988)

**CONCLUSION:**

A. Had the Jews accepted Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, they could have saved themselves from the destruction brought upon them by the Romans.
1. Matthew 23:35-38
2. Indeed, the Jews were reaping the consequences of their own mistakes.

B. “For the elect’s sake”, Jesus warned of the coming destruction upon the Jews by the Roman army. Matthew 24:1-35
1. Eusebius wrote of the Jewish Christians being warned by revelation from God to depart Jerusalem and to dwell in Pella, a city of Perea. (Eusebius 1926)
2. “To it (Pella) those who believed on Christ migrated from Jerusalem, that when holy men had altogether deserted the royal capital of the Jews and the whole land of Judea, the judgement of God might at last overtake them for all their crimes against the Christ and His apostles, and all that generation of the wicked be utterly blotted out from among men.” (Eusebius 1926)

C. May we take God at His Word, trust Him, and submit our will to His will!

**REFERENCES**


**INTRODUCTION:**

A. Many are the benefits of studying history today.

B. As we peruse the history of Judaism after the first century:
   1. We cannot consult Scripture for information, for inspiration ceased with the last apostle; we can from Scripture make application from this topic to our present.
   2. We must cull material, due to the enormity of historical happenings related to the religion of Judaism during this time frame.

**DISCUSSION:**

I. HISTORY OF JUDAISM – 2ND CENTURY (100 – 199 A.D.).
   A. The rift between Judaism and Christianity became greater because of the exploits of one Gamaliel II.
      1. He was the first person to lead the Sanhedrin as Nasi (prince, president) ten years after the fall of the temple.
         a. In his position, he strengthened the Jewish faith, severely weakened by the loss of the Temple and Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and by the Jewish loss of political autonomy (Lotha 2013).
         b. Gamaliel also put an end to the division among Jewish spiritual leaders:
            1) Some belonged to the school of Hillel.
            2) Others, to the school of Shammai.
            3) Gamaliel unified these two groups by ruling that Hillel’s more lenient interpretations of Jewish law were authoritative (Schechter and Bacher 1906).
      2. Gamaliel instituted a prayer in the Eighteen Benedictions against heretics (Christians), as he felt such were a danger to the unity of Judaism. He made the recitation of the “eighteen prayers” a duty to be performed three times a day by every Israelite (Schechter and Bacher 1906).
      3. Gamaliel also excluded sectarians (including Christians) from the synagogues (AICE 2017).
      4. Gamaliel took it upon himself to standardize the Jewish calendar and thus fix the dates of festivals; this helped to further unify all Jews (Lotha 2013).
      5. To those who dissented from his views, Gamaliel was dictatorial, even excommunicating his own brother-in-law.
      6. Eventually, Gamaliel was deposed due to his harsh methods, but was later restored to power.
      7. When he died, Gamaliel was buried, at his own request, in simple linen, to discourage the expensive burials that had impoverished many Jewish families (Lotha 2013).
B. Jewish hatred for Rome obviously did not subside after the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem.
   1. Cyrenian king-messiah Lukuas-Andreas led a widespread revolt against Trajan, Roman emperor from 98-117 A.D.
   2. This war involved Jews of Egypt, Cyrenaica, Cyprus, Mesopotamia, and to a minor degree those of Palestine.
   3. One objective of the revolt was to free Palestine from Roman rule (Feldman 2017).
   4. The uprising led to the death of thousands of Jews and led to the destruction of the Great Synagogue of Alexandria. In describing the aftermath of the bloodbath in Alexandria, Kavon (2017) writes the “Mediterranean…turned red with the blood of the Jewish victims. It was a bitter battle that ended the glory and vitality of Jewish life in Alexandria.”
   5. This revolt also resulted in the destruction of the entire Jewish community on the island of Cyprus and the subsequent banning of any Jew coming to Cyprus afterward (AICE 2017).
   6. Christians, however, did not participate in this unsuccessful uprising, which furthered the animosity of Jews toward Christians.

C. Perhaps the most significant event of the second century relating to Judaism was the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132-135 A.D.), the second major Jewish revolt against Rome during that time period.
   1. Simon Bar Kokhba, viewed by some as the Jewish Messiah, spearheaded this resistance effort against Rome.
   2. He established an independent Jewish state over which he ruled for three years as Prince.
   3. His kingdom was short-lived, as it was conquered following this two and a half year war. This defeat by the Romans had a tremendous impact on Jewish Palestine:
      a. Judaea was heavily devastated. It is estimated the Romans killed over a half million Jews and destroyed 985 villages and 50 fortresses (AICE 2017).
      b. The Jews were no longer allowed to inhabit Jerusalem.
      c. Jewish life shifted from Judaea to Galilee and beyond. Jews were scattered, and Anti-Semitism would follow them wherever they went.
   4. Though Rome won against this Jewish resistance, it came at a considerable cost, so much so that the Roman Emperor Hadrian did not conclude his report to the Roman Senate with the customary “All is well with me and the legions” (Shafer 2003).
   5. Many questions remain unanswered concerning the precise circumstances of the war. It is not certain what caused the outbreak of the revolt and why Hadrian needed the full military Roman force to crush it. What was the “final straw” that led to the revolt? Suggestions:
      a. “Decades of an almost continuously and deliberately anti-Jewish policy on the part of the Roman Emperors since Vespasian” (Shafer 2003).
      b. The founding of the Aelia Capitolina by Hadrian (ca. 130 A.D.). The Aelia Capitolina was a Roman colony built by Hadrian on the site of Jerusalem, in ruins since 70 A.D. (Young 2013). There is, however, no consensus among historians as to whether the
Aelia Capitolina was built before the revolt or after, though latest archaeological evidence seems to point to the former.

c. The prohibition of circumcision.
   1) The Romans viewed circumcision as a threat since among the Jews conversion to Judaism and circumcision were inextricably linked.
   2) The ban against circumcision was an effort by Rome to prevent the Jews from filling their ranks with converts not Jewish by birth.
   3) Some experts, however, believe such a ban was issued after the revolt instead of before it to further oppress the Jews (Shafer 2003).

d. The withdrawal of the permission to rebuild the Temple.
   1) “The forcing of the Jews to contribute their regular half-shekel offerings for the Jerusalem Temple to the rebuilding of the Temple of Jupiter on the capital” (Shafer 2003).
   2) In essence, Rome was demanding allegiance to their god Jupiter rather than to the God of the Jews.

6. As in the revolt against Trajan, so in the revolt here: Christians again failed to join the Jews, adding to even further animosity of Jews toward Christians.

D. Other significant events regarding Judaism in the second century:
   1. Antoninus Pius, Hadrian’s successor, repealed many of the previously instituted harsh policies towards Jews (138-161 A.D.)
   2. Roman emperor Lucius Septimius Severus treated Jews relatively well.
      a. He allowed them to participate in public offices and be exempt from formalities contrary to Judaism.
      b. He did not, however, allow the Jews to convert others (AICE 2017).

A. For the Roman Empire, Carroll (2001) states “the third century was a period of civil war, barbarian invasion, and general social breakdown.” However, Judaism, for the most part, flourished during this time period. Of Judaism, Carroll further says “Judaism had found its own place in the empire, with concentrations of Jews to be found nearly everywhere.” He estimates the number of Jews at that time to be substantial, numbering at least three million.

B. The Mishna was compiled/edited under Rabbi Judah the Prince around 200 A.D.
   1. The Mishna is a record of the oral law handed down in the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. It is a collection of rabbinic teachings, sayings, and interpretations.
   2. The purpose of this compilation was so that the oral law and learning might not vanish. The oral law contained the explanations of the written law – Jews feel one cannot be understood without the other (Waldman, Rosenfeld, and Botwinick 2000).
   3. In the Mishna:
      a. The Temple and the laws that govern it still exist, though the Temple had been destroyed 130 years earlier.
      b. Roman occupation is ignored.
      c. Is a description of a life of sanctification, “in which the rituals of the Temple are adapted for communal participation in a world
that has no Temple” (Wiener 2017).

4. The Mishna contains disputes between different rabbinic sages, such as:
   a. When does one begin the morning prayers?
   b. How does one treat produce that may or may not have had the priestly gifts separated from it?
   c. How does one constitute a Jewish marriage?
   d. What are the limitations of the liability of someone who watches another’s property?
   e. Can cheese and meat be on the same table?

5. The Mishna is said not to be a code of Jewish law, but rather is a study book of law; its intention was to “train the sages in thinking through the legal issues that inform the halacha (Jewish law)” (Wiener 2017).

C. Roman Emperor Caracalla allowed free Jews within the empire to become full Roman citizens in 212 A.D. (AICE 2017).

D. Emperor Alexander Severus allowed for a revival of Jewish rights, including permission to visit Jerusalem (Krauss 1906).

III. HISTORY OF JUDAISM – 4TH CENTURY (300 – 399 A.D.).

A. The “conversion” of Constantine to Christianity in 312 A.D., Carroll (2001) states, “may have been the most implication-laden event in Western history.”
   1. This was a foreboding event for the Jews, as history bears witness.
   2. Constantine’s conversion helped to further escalate the conflict between Christians and Jews, as he would enact laws that would all but eliminate Jewish political autonomy (Carroll 2001).

B. After three successive “Christian” emperors, a pagan by the name of Julian the Greek took the throne.
   1. He attempted to undo what his predecessors had done, becoming quite probably the most favorable emperor the Jews ever had (Wein 2010).
   2. Julian ordered the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem rebuilt, “stone upon stone, to falsify the very words of Jesus” (Carroll 2001).
   3. The Temple reconstruction efforts as well as the Jews’ joy were short-lived as Julian died during an invasion of Persia which had failed (Carroll 2001).

C. The next emperor, Theodosius, set about to undo all that Julian had done:
   1. He decreed the Sanhedrin could no longer meet.
   2. He set about to abolish the Jewish calendar, for “without knowing the dates of the Jewish holidays there is no way for Jews to survive as Jews” (Wein 2010).

D. One positive accomplishment, at least in the eyes of the Jews, during this time period was the Jerusalem Talmud was completed and published between about 350-400 A.D.
   1. The Talmud consisted of the Mishna.
   2. It also contained the Gemara – a rabbinic commentary on and interpretation of the Mishna (Dimitrovsky 2017).

CONCLUSION:
Consider these points of application:

A. Regardless of historical events, the prime reason for the rift between Judaism and Christianity is the Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah.
B. Zeal is a wonderful thing; zeal without knowledge can be disastrous (Romans 10:1-3).
C. Some people never learn. The Jews were in subjection to Rome for the same reason they had been in subjection to Assyria, Babylon, and others – for rebelling against God. The cycle merely continued.
D. Freedom is precious – never take it for granted.
E. We can be a law-abiding citizen and be a Christian at the same time, even under oppressive regimes – Paul a prime example.
F. War is evil.
G. Prejudice remains a sin.

**REFERENCES:**


INTRODUCTION:
A. The period between the fifth and ninth centuries is considered by many Jewish historians to be the dark ages of Jewish history.
B. Not many reliable sources of information are available for an in-depth study during this period of time.

DISCUSSION:
I. In order to get a clear picture of what happened not just with the Jewish religion but Jewish society as a whole during the 5th and 9th centuries there is a need to look back at the 1st century.
A. There were two main events which greatly influenced the lives of the Jews during this time period.
1. The first event was the establishment of the church and Christianity in AD 33.
2. The second event which had as great of an influence on Judaism was the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.
B. With the establishment of the church the Jews began to see a decline in the influence which they had in both the religious and political world at the time.
1. Beginning about the time of the crucifixion of Jesus and the establishment of the church, Pontius Pilate (procurator of Judea AD 26-36) and Caligula (procurator of Judea 37-41) both increased the tensions between the Jews and the Roman government.
   a. Pontius Pilate began to tax the Jews of Judea very heavily, as well as putting into place a large presence of hostile Roman troops with their pagan practices.
   b. Caligula declared himself as deity and forced the erection of himself in the Temple of Jerusalem.
2. This period of time saw many Jews and non-Jews converting from Judaism and their pagan religions to Christianity.
   a. Christianity was becoming the fastest growing group not just in Judea but throughout all the world at the time.
   b. The influence of Paul and his fellow workers among Jew and Gentile is considered by many historians to be a major factor in this growth.
   c. By AD 130 approximately one-third of the Roman Empire had converted to Christianity.
C. The events of beginning in AD 33 came to a head in AD 66 with the uprising of the Jews against Rome.
   1. The priest at that time quit offering sacrifices on behalf of Rome.
   2. Roman history records this as the Jewish War.
D. The Jewish War led to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 changing the
way of life for the Jews.
1. Rome chose not to devastate Judea nor expel the Jews.
   a. Many Jews did decide to leave the area looking for a better life elsewhere.
   b. Those who remained suffered captivity, impoverishment, and seizure of their land.
2. With the fall of Jerusalem, the Jews lost both their ruling class and religious leadership in the collapse of the priesthood.

E. The loss of the priesthood opened the door for a new group of leaders known as rabbis.
1. One of the leading rabbis of the time was Johanan ben Zakkai.
2. Johanan ben Zakkai managed to impress Vespasian and received permission to open a school in Jamnia.
3. Johanan ben Zakkai accompanied with his colleagues began to reorganize Judaism into Rabbinic Judaism.
4. It was during this time under Rabbinic Judaism that the synagogue became a part of the Jewish daily life.

II. Just before the start of the fifth century Palestine came under Byzantine rule.
A. This rule would last from the mid-fourth century into the seventh century.
B. It is under this rule that the Jews in Palestine would become severely oppressed.
1. Laws were introduced targeting the Jews and their freedoms.
   a. The Jews were not allowed under law to marry anyone who was a Christian.
   b. They were forbidden by law to hold public office.
   c. It was made illegal for them to build new synagogues.
   d. They were stripped of the right to own Christian slaves limiting their ability to compete with Christians who were still allowed to Jewish slaves.
   e. In AD 429 the patriarchate, the last vestige of Jewish autonomy was abolished.
   f. Justinian (ruled AD 527-565) dictated conduct in the synagogue, including that rabbinic interpretation of scripture was to be prohibited.
2. During this time some attempted to outlaw Judaism altogether.
   a. Under Spain’s King Sisebut (ruled 612-621) Jews were given the choice of either converting to Christianity, being exiled, or being put to death.
   b. Saint Augustine (AD 354-430) advocated that the Jews should not be utterly destroyed but instead should be survive in a state of poverty and social exclusion.
   c. Pope Gregory 1 (ruled AD 590-604) as well as succeeding popes throughout the Middle ages adopted the policy which was forwarded by Augustine.

C. At the beginning of the seventh century (AD 603) the Jews began to see some hope for some relief from the oppression which they were suffering under Byzantine domination.
1. It was at this time that Persian king Chosroes II began his attack on the eastern provinces of Rome.
2. The Jews looked very favorably upon King Chosroes and the Persians as their hope for liberation.
3. By AD 614 with the help of the Jews King Chosroes was able to conquer Jerusalem.
   a. Chosroes killed and deported large numbers of Christians.
   b. Upon his conquest of Jerusalem he handed the city of Jerusalem back to the Jews.
4. Soon after returning the city of Jerusalem to the Jews Chosroes determined that the Jews were not strong enough to guarantee a Persian stronghold.
   a. In AD 617 Chosroes reversed his decision and returned the city of Jerusalem back to the oversight of Christians.
   b. In AD 629 Roman emperor Heraclius conquered the city once more returning it back to Byzantine control.

III. Over the course of time from the fall of Jerusalem to the fifth century the academic epicenter of Judaism moved from Jerusalem to Babylonia.
   A. With the influx of the rabbinical scholars to Babylon came the establishment of the Jewish commentary known as the Babylonian Talmud.
      1. The Babylonian Talmud was completed in AD 499.
      2. It was written in Aramaic in the area that is now known as Iraq.
   B. During the time of the Middle Ages the Babylonian Talmud became the central authoritative source for the Jews.
      1. The rabbis had taken on not only a role as religious leaders but also serving as judges in civil and social matters.
      2. From the time of the Middle Ages until modern time the rabbis have turned to the Babylonian Talmud as their source for the legal decisions that they would hand down.

IV. In the early to mid-seventh century both the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds would be changed by the entrance of a new group following after their leader Muhammad.
   A. In AD 622 Muhammad moved himself and his followers to Medina where they would establish a community upon the teachings of Muhammad, known as Islam.
   B. By the mid-eighth century Muhammad’s followers had stretched out from their small community at Medina.
      1. They seized Palestine and Egypt from the Byzantine Empire reducing it to the Balkans, Asia Minor, and parts of southern Italy.
      2. They seized Iraq and Persia from the 1,200-year-old Persian Empire.
   C. The Jews now found a freedom and unity which they had not known for centuries.
      1. They were under one Islamic empire that stretched from the Indus River in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west.
      2. The Jews saw near immediate relief from the persecution which they had suffered for so long under the hands of those who professed to follow Christianity.
   D. Although the Jews had found freedom, they still were being oppressed by the new Islamic empire.
      1. They were not alone this time in their oppression since the Islamic empire was oppressing Jew and Christian alike.
      2. This oppression was hard upon the Christian community that resided under Islamic rule.
      3. It was not so hard upon the Jews since the oppression which they faced under Islam was not as great as that which they faced under Christians.
E. Muslims looked upon Christians and Jews as protected subjects and placed them under a set of rules which is called the Pact of Umar:

1. The Pact of Umar Christians and Jews could practice their respective religious practices and retain their property with the understanding they would abide by certain rules.
   a. They would pay special taxes.
   b. They would build no new nor repair old churches nor synagogues.
   c. They would hold no public religious service not try to convert others.
   d. They were not permitted to strike a Muslim.
   e. They were not permitted to carry a weapon.
   f. They were not permitted to ride a horse.
   g. They would wear special recognizable clothing.

2. Fortunately for the Jews the Muslims did not always adhere to the Pact of Umar very strictly thus allowing them at times to prosper.

F. In AD 750 the Abbasid dynasty had taken control of Palestine making Baghdad its capital in AD 762.

1. In doing so the Abbasid dynasty revoked a prohibition which had been put in place by the Byzantine empire prohibiting the Jews from inhabiting the city.

2. Baghdad now becomes a world Metropolis causing the Jewish community of Iraq to prosper.

3. Under the Islamic rule the Jews would once again reclaim their semi-autonomous rule that they enjoyed in previous years under the Persian empire.

4. The Muslims would now recognize the exilarch as the leader of the Jews.
   a. The exilarch claimed to be a descendant of Jehoiachin, king of Judah.
   b. The exilarch was permitted by the Islamic rulers to collect taxes and appoint judges.
   c. The exilarch was treated as royalty.

G. Although they were still subjects of another group of people the Jews would prosper religiously, economically, and socially.

1. With the economic boom brought to the area of Iraq by the Muslims the Jews by the ninth century had in the most part moved from being farmers living in rural communities to be merchants and tradesmen living in the cities.

2. Although the exilarch was permitted to appoint judges for the most part the rabbis still acted as the judges in most communities.

3. They were allowed to establish academies in Iraq.
   a. The chief subject in these academies was religious law.
   b. The chief textbook in the academies was the Babylonian Talmud.

Conclusion:

H. What has been noticed is more than just Judaism as a religion.

I. One can see that during this 500 years span the Jews suffered much on a social and economic level.

J. Since the Jews religious life is so closely tied in to their social and economic life what effects one has a direct effect on the other.
INTRODUCTION:
A. Remember or remembrance appears in the scripture some 198 times.
   1. We would not be asked to remember unless it was important.
   2. Think of how many of the great defenses utilized historical reminders.
B. Studying history can benefit us by learning from the experience of others.
   1. This is why remembering past teachings and experiences is so valuable.
   2. Realizing what lessons are discovered from things of the past to help us through the future.
C. Looking at the history of Judaism brings about many challenges.
   1. There are many events which we will not be able to adequately discuss in such a short time.
   2. We will discuss a few events to establish a basis for the lesson which we will be presenting.
   3. Perhaps your appetite will be wetted enough to study more in depth of the rich history of Judaism from this time period.
D. The history of Judaism in this period of time can be quite revealing.

DISCUSSION:
I. TIMELINE HIGHLIGHTS 901 AD TO 1400 AD.
A. THE TENTH CENTURY (901-1000 AD).
   1. High Jewish courtiers join Muslim court in Spain, 940 AD.
   2. First Spanish yeshiva created in Córdoba, Spain, 970 AD
B. THE ELEVENTH CENTURY (1001 – 1100 AD).
   1. Start of Jewish golden age in Spain, 1013 AD.
   2. Egyptian Jews persecuted. Many flee to Byzantine Empire or Yemen, 1020 AD.
   3. Jews allowed into England, 1066 AD.
   4. School of Rashi takes root in northern France, 1070 AD.
   5. Christians expand rule in Spain and outlaw Judaism, 1080 AD.
   7. Crusaders capture Jerusalem, massacre Muslim and Jewish residents, 1099 AD.
C. THE TWELFTH CENTURY (1101 – 1200 AD).
   1. First recorded blood libel, in Norwich, England, 1144 AD.
   2. Second Crusade. Renewed violence targeting Jews, 1147-1149 AD.
   3. Rabbenu Tam and Rashbam initiate first rabbinical synod in Ashkenaz (France and Germany), 1150 AD.
   4. Jews establish a synagogue in Kai-feng, China, 1163 AD.
5. Shi‘ite Muslims force Jews to convert in Yemen, 1165 AD.
6. Moses Maimonides completes the Mishneh Torah, 1185 AD.
7. Muslims reconquer Jerusalem. Jews invited to return, 1187-1192 AD.
8. Jews facing death by angry mobs during Third Crusade take their own lives in York, England, 1190 AD.

D. THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY (1201 – 1300 AD).
1. 300 Western European rabbis answer Saladin’s call to return to Jerusalem, 1211 AD.
2. First Jewish community in Switzerland established in Basel, 1213 AD.
3. Fourth church Lateran Council promotes more intense anti-Jewish legislation, 1215 AD.
4. A French rabbi bans Maimonides’ Guide to the Perplexed (1190), 1232 AD.
5. Pope Frederick II proclaims blood libel to be baseless, 1236 AD.
6. The Christian king of Aragon grants a charter of rights for the Jews, 1239 AD.
7. Paris disputation, followed by burnings of the Talmud, 1240 AD.
8. First blood libel in Spain, 1250 AD.
9. The Barcelona Disputation, Nachmanides vs. Pablo Christiani, 1263 AD.
10. Polish Jewish community inaugurated with first charter of rights, 1264 AD and expanded in 1333.
11. Jews expelled from Naples kingdom and southern Italy, 1288 AD.
12. England expels its Jews, 1290 AD.
13. Muslims drive crusaders out of the land of Israel, 1291 AD.
14. Rindfleisch massacres of Jews in Germany, 1298 AD.

E. THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY (1301 – 1400 AD).
1. Rabbi Shlomo Ben Aderet of Spain bans all Jewish study of philosophy and science for anyone under the age of 25, 1305 AD.
2. Jews of France expelled 1306 AD.
3. “Black Death” plague strikes Europe; Jews accused of poisoning wells, 1348–1349 AD.
4. Jews expelled from Hungarian communities, 1349–1360 AD.
5. Inquisition, forced conversions of Jews, and final expulsion of Jews from Spain, 1391-1492.

II. SOME MAJOR ISSUES INFLUENCING JUDAISM IN THIS TIME PERIOD.
A. Schools of learning were important in keeping the laws alive.
1. Rabbis would establish Yeshivas to further instruct students.
2. Yeshiva are traditional Jewish schools.
   a. Traditionally a yeshiva was a rabbinical academy devoted to the study of:
      1) Hebrew Bible - The sacred writings of Judaism, called by Christians the Old Testament, and comprising the Law (Torah), the Prophets, and the Hagiographa (Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles).
      2) Tanakh is an acronym for Torah, Nev‘i‘im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings).
3) The Talmud is a set of books consisting of the Mishna (repeated study), the Gemara (completion), and certain auxiliary materials.

4) Other rabbinic literature.

b. Many other types of were utilized which would be a considerable study in and of itself.

B. During the Medieval Period (950-1750) there were two major branches of Judaism thought.

1. The Ashkenazic, or Franco-German group.
   a. They traced their cultural affiliation to Italy and Palestine.
   b. They drew their school texts, values and judgements from the Talmud and the Midrash.
   c. They had established a culture of their own.

2. Sephardic, or Andalusian-Spanish.
   a. They traced their cultural affiliation to Babylonia and from the influences of their respective immediate locations.
   b. They dwelled mainly in Muslim Spain and their traditions came to an end in the invasion of Spain in 1147-48.

C. Not all was peaceful for the Jews in this period of time, regardless of the locations they dwelled in.

1. The different factions were always a constant problem.
2. There were the Jews trying to practice their beliefs.
3. There were the Muslims to contend with.
4. There were the Christians (Catholics) to contend with.

III. MAJOR INFLUENTIAL EVENTS IN THIS TIME PERIOD.

A. Blood Libels.

1. False charges brought against the Jews.
   a. A convert from Judaism charged that every year Jews kidnapped or bought a Christian child and killed him in a reenactment of the Crucifixion in order to mock Christianity.
   b. That Jews use the victim’s blood in baking MATZAH, the unleavened bread used in the PASSOVER SEDER.
   c. The first well-documented blood libel took place in 1144 in Norwich, England, where a boy named William disappeared shortly before Easter.

2. The first case of the blood libel in continental Europe occurred in 1171 in Blois, France, where Jews were burned at the stake as the result of the accusation.

3. The Catholic Church as a whole condemned them. Already in 1245 Pope Innocent IV forbade Christians from bringing the accusation.

B. The Crusades.

1. The Christian-Muslim fighting during the Crusades, which lasted from the end of the 11th century to the end of the 13th, left the land devastated.

2. It is not known exactly how many died from the crusades.

C. The “Black Death” plague.

1. One third to half of Europe’s population died from the Black Death (Bubonic plague).
   a. Though many Jews were among the dead they were accused of poisoning the wells.
   b. The local churches made the accusations and tortured the Jews in
order to get them to confess.
2. Despite protests of the Pope Clement VI, over 60 large and 150 small Jewish communities were destroyed.
3. The plague actually originated in China.
   a. It was spread by rats which came on board ships from Asia to ports in Europe.
   b. It is estimated that 25 million people died within the three year period.

IV. MAJOR INFLUENTIAL PERSONS DURING THIS TIME PERIOD.
   A. Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (1040-1105), Known as Rashi.
      1. Born in Troyes, France he attended the academies of Mainz and Worms.
      2. He founded a school around 1070, which attracted many prominent pupils. Rashi’s last years were aggrieved by the massacres committed at the outset of the First Crusade (1095-96), in which he lost relatives and friends.
      3. Rashi commented on most, if not all, the books of the Bible.
         a. The main distinguishing characteristic of his commentary is a compromise between the literal interpretations and those based on ancient rabbinic midrash.
         b. Rashi centers his commentaries on meticulous analysis of the language of the text.
         c. Rashi’s commentary on the Bible, and particularly that on the Pentateuch, enjoyed enormous circulation.
         d. The summit of Rashi’s creative work was his commentary to the Babylonian Talmud.
         e. His commentary on the Talmud became the basis for all later literary activity in this field in France and Germany.
   B. Moses ben Maimonides (1135 – 1204).
      1. Jewish Philosopher also known as Rambam.
      2. His most important works was the MISHNA TORAH in 1178. It was the first commentary to codify halakhah in a logical system.
      4. THE THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF FAITH.
         a. Belief in the existence of God.
         b. Belief in God’s Unity.
         c. Belief in God’s in corporeality.
         d. Belief in God’s eternity.
         e. Belief that God alone is to be worshiped.
         f. Belief in prophecy.
         g. Belief in Moses as the greatest of the prophets.
         h. Belief that the Torah was given by God to Moses.
         i. Belief that the Torah is immutable.
         j. Belief that God knows the thoughts and deeds of men.
         k. Belief that God rewards and punishes.
         l. Belief in the advent of the Messiah.
         m. Belief in the resurrection of the dead.
      5. These books are still widely used in Jewish instruction.
CONCLUSION:

A. We learn the Jewish law was a good law but continued long past it was intended.
B. We learn what happens when the truth is ignored.
C. We learn that chaos is the end result when God’s law is compromised.
D. We learn should never ever tamper with God’s word.

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INTRODUCTION:

A. On September 11, 2001 I was working a secular job in Prattville, Alabama.
   1. As I walked past the break room, I saw several people staring at the television who normally would have been busy working.
   2. They explained to me that there had been an explosion in one of the towers in New York City, so I began watching also.
   3. Then we all watched in shock as a plane crashed into the second tower.
   4. I will never forget that incredulous, sickening feeling.
   5. That day was a wake-up call to our nation and to the world to realize and examine the threat of Islam.
   6. Since September 11, 2001 in the U.S.A. there have been at least 31 unsuccessful terrorist attacks (Wikipedia “Unsuccessful”), and at least 13 successful attacks by Muslims (estimated conservatively) (Wikipedia “Terrorism”).

B. Why is it important to study Islam?
   1. No matter what many people today may say, Islam is a great danger to the lives of people in the modern world.
   2. However, there is a threat greater than Islam’s use of physical force, and that is its threat to the everlasting souls of those who follow that false religion.
      a. With the rapid spread of Islam, souls are being led astray and given false hope at an alarming rate.
      b. Islam “is the world’s second-largest religion and the fastest-growing major religion in the world, with over 1.8 billion followers or 24.1% of the global population, known as Muslims” (Wikipedia “Islam”).
      c. Though a sad reality, the founder of Islam was one of the most successful false prophets the world has ever seen, and the religion he started has impacted the entire world.
      d. Concerning Muhammad: “During the 23-year period of his prophethood, Muhammad accomplished what by any account must be considered among the most significant achievements of human history. First, he transmitted both the text of the Qur’ān and his own understanding of the Divine Word, which is the foundation of all later Qur’ānic commentaries. Second, he established a body of Sunnah and Hadith that are, after the Qur’ān, the most important sources for all things Islamic. Third, he laid the foundation for a new religious and spiritual community, taught many disciples, and created the means for the continuity and transmission of the Islamic tradition. Finally, he formed a new society, unifying Arabia in a sociopolitical structure based on the Qur’ān and establishing an empire of faith in the hearts and minds of his followers, who then took his message to the farthest confines of the Earth. It can therefore be argued that Muhammad’s mark on history was as profound and enduring as anything recorded in the pages of human history” (Britannica; quoted by Liddell 2015, 10).
3. Islam is constantly on the news, and on the minds of our neighbors, because it is constantly impacting our world.
   a. Christians would be wise to make the best use of these events.
   b. For example, public teaching by Christians against Islam can actually be a tool to pique our neighbors’ interest in spiritual things.
   c. Seminars or lectureships have been conducted by churches of Christ examining Islam, and many non-Christian visitors have attended these meetings with interest.
   d. Such efforts may lead to personal Bible studies and saved souls.
   e. As will be shown in this document, Christianity is superior to Islam in every way.

4. Christians need to be informed about the devices of their adversary.
   a. Any wise military commander will stress the importance of understanding how the enemy thinks; how much more important is it to understand how the greatest enemy of man thinks? (1 Pet. 5:8).
   b. “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11 KJV).
   c. Job said, “Oh…that mine adversary had written a book” (Job 31:35).
   d. Job would have studied his enemy’s book to understand how he thinks.
   e. Christians would be wise to study the teachings of Islam to be better equipped to defeat this powerful force of Satan.
   f. Those who know the truth see Islam as both a spiritual and a physical threat, and it would be foolish to remain ignorant about such a global force of evil.

C. When studying this topic, it must be understood that some facts may be lost to history, and it is sometimes difficult to discern truth from traditions.
   1. “The Qurʾān yields little concrete biographical information about the Islamic Prophet…the text provides no dates for any of the historical events it alludes to, and almost none of the Qurʾānic messenger’s contemporaries are mentioned by name (a rare exception is at 33:37). Hence, even if one accepts that the Qurʾānic corpus authentically documents the preaching of Muhammad, taken by itself it simply does not provide sufficient information for even a concise biographical sketch. Most of the biographical information that the Islamic tradition preserves about Muhammad thus occurs outside the Qurʾān, in the so-called sīrah (Arabic: “biography”) literature” (Watt and Sinai 2017).
   2. “…it is distinctly possible that some reports about events in Muhammad’s life emerged not from historical memory but from exegetical speculation about the historical context of particular verses of the Qurʾān. By carefully comparing alternative versions of one and the same biographical narrative, scholars have been able to show that a certain number of traditions about Muhammad’s life—for instance, an account of the Prophet’s emigration from Mecca to Medina—were in circulation already by the end of the 7th century. An important collector of such early traditions was ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr, a relative of ‘Āʾishah who was probably born in 643–644 and who is plausibly viewed as having had firsthand access to former companions
of the Prophet. Moreover, a number of rudimentary details about Muhammad are confirmed by non-Islamic sources dating from the first decades after Muhammad’s traditional date of death” (Watt and Sinai 2017).

3. “All things considered, there is no compelling reason to suggest that the basic scaffolding of the traditional Islamic account of Muhammad’s life is unhistorical. At the same time, the nature of the sources is not such as to inspire confidence that we possess historically certain knowledge about the Prophet’s life that is as detailed as many earlier scholars tended to assume. Especially the customary chronological framework for Muhammad’s life appears to have been worked out by later transmitters and collectors such as Ibn Ishāq, rather than being traceable to the earliest layer of Islamic traditions about Muhammad” (Watt and Sinai 2017).

D. In this study, the history of Islam will be approached according to the most widely accepted Islamic traditions.
1. It should also be stated that this writer does not believe that Muhammad was a true prophet.
2. If Muhammad is referred to as a “prophet” in this material, that term is only being used accommodatively.

E. This study will cover three main points: Inception, Infidelity, and Inferiority.

**DISCUSSION:**

I. INCEPTION

A. It is impossible to study the beginnings of Islam without studying the life of Muhammad.
1. In fact, “the Quran as a historical source thus presupposes a knowledge of the general outline of Muhammad’s life” (Watt 1961).
2. “To the Muslim mind, Muhammad is the most important person in all of human history. While it is absolutely imperative to understand that Muslims do not believe that Muhammad was divine or that he is to be worshipped, nevertheless, Muhammad is considered to be the greatest human being—the ultimate example and model of human existence” (Miller 2005, 1).
3. “Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah” (Quran 33:21 Yusuf Ali; quoted by Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).
4. Muslims claim that the religion of Islam existed before the time of Muhammad: “The Religion of Islam is often called Muhammadanism. Muhammad, the Arabian Prophet, did not institute Islam, however. Like the other prophets in their time, Muhammad taught his own people, the Arabs, the Religion of Islam. Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) perfected and completed Islam in its fundamental principles. Thus he became the last of the Prophets. The Holy Quran (the “Bible” of the Moslems) shows that the work of the prophets before him was completed by him. History tells us that he was the last of the prophets to be sent to mankind” (Yasin Mosque n.d.).
5. “The word Islam means ‘the resignation of one’s own Will and
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judgement to the Will and judgement of God’. A Moslem (or Muslim) is ‘one who resigns himself entirely to God’ (Yasin Mosque n.d.).

B. Muhammad was born in A.D. 570 in Mecca (in Saudi Arabia, formerly known as Arabia) and was originally given the name “Abū al-Qāsim Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim” (Cranford 1991, 8).

1. “Mecca, the chief city of Hejaz, is a Sabæan word for “sanctuary,” and it was a sanctuary for drunkenness and licentious orgies. The Kaaba, the sacred shrine at Mecca, had three hundred idols indulging everyone’s desires” (Vaughn 2003, 67; emphasis his).

2. “Arab is a Semitic term for a “desert dweller.” This is important in perceiving the reasons behind many of the choices they made in life and worship. The Arabs generally worshiped the moon. The sun brought pain, discouragement, and sorrow to desert dwellers, but the moon brought refreshing interludes from the heat of the day” (Vaughn 2003, 67; emphasis his).

3. “The black meteorite stone of the Kaaba in Mecca, which was sacred long before Islam, was held by pagan legend to have been dropped from the sky by Hobal, the moon-god, and was worshiped by pilgrims and travelers who regarded the moon as a deity” (Nutting 1964, 8; quoted by Vaughn 2003, 67).

4. “Muhammad’s father, Abdallah, was from one of the Northern Arabic tribes known as the Quraysh. This tribe enjoyed influence and power due to their abilities to trade, and because of their responsibilities to the “sacred well” and the Ka’aba (a religious stone said to have been placed by Abraham and Ishmael.) Abdallah died near the time that Muhammad was born, leaving young Muhammad without a ‘Father-figure’ in the earliest formative years of his life, forcing his mother Amina to raise young Muhammad” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

5. Robert Morey wrote that “Muhammad’s mother Aminah was of an excitable nature and often claimed that she was visited by spirits, or jinns. She also at times claimed to have visions and religious experiences…” (Morey 1992, 71).

6. Amina passed away when Muhammad was only six years old (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017), and it is unknown to what extent her religious views had impacted him.

7. However, later in his life he claimed to experience religious visions and revelations similar to his mother’s claims.

8. After the passing of his mother, Muhammad’s grandfather, Abdul Muttalab, would take care of him for the next two years until he also passed away (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

9. Muhammad’s uncle Abu Talib would be his guardian until adulthood (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

II. INFIDELITY

A. MUHAMMAD IN MECCA

1. What events led to Muhammad claiming to be the apostle of God and the last of all prophets?

2. “Muhammad’s early religious life would have been influenced by a great number of religious beliefs. Though there were sects of Jews and ‘Christians’ – in the Arab world, it appears that the beliefs of these
were not totally consistent with their original sources. For this reason, they struggled with converting Arabs to the true God as found in the Bible” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

3. “Growing up, young Muhammad would have worshipped in Mecca at the shrine city of the Ka’aba (Cube). This cube-shaped building is known as ‘the house of Allah’ and is believed by Muslims to have been built by Abraham and Ishmael. During his youth, however, the Ka’aba would have been filled with pagan gods and idols. Tribes would have come from all over Arabia to worship the various gods found there” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

4. “It was customary for pilgrims to descend upon Mecca for the purpose worshipping some 360 gods, walking around the Ka’aba seven times and kissing and touching the ‘black stone.’ This custom Muhammad would later keep, even after dismantling the idolatrous pagan gods in Mecca” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

5. “With all of this confusion in the early life of this child, it may be easy to understand some later inconsistencies of the adult. When a child has no consistent parenting, and no consistent religious worldview, confusion is likely to be the outcome” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

6. While accompanying his uncle on a trading journey to Syria, Muhammad was allegedly recognized as a future prophet by a “Christian monk” (Watt and Sinai 2017); however, if he were truly a Christian, he would not have been a monk (Matt. 28:19-20), and he should have known that there would be no “future prophets” (Zech. 13:1-3; John 16:13; 1 Cor. 13:8-12; Gal. 1:6-9; Eph. 4:8-16).

7. Muhammad was hired by “a merchant woman of dignity and wealth” named Khadija (Ishaq 1982, 82).
   a. “She hired Muhammad as a travelling salesman to go to Syria and trade her goods. She sent with him a slave boy named Maysara” (Spencer 2006, 38).
   b. Upon their return Maysara told Khadija that he “saw two angels shielding Muhammad” in the scorching heat (Spencer 2006, 38).
   c. “Khadija was also impressed that Muhammad had doubled her wealth on his journey. She proposed marriage, although she was forty and Muhammad was twenty-five” (Spencer 2006, 38).
   d. “Khadijah is said to have been about 40, but she bears Muhammad at least two sons, who die young, and four daughters. The best known of the latter is Fātīmah, the future wife of Muhammad’s cousin ʿAlī, whom Shiʿite Muslims regard as Muhammad’s divinely ordained successor. Until Khadijah’s death some three years before Muhammad’s emigration (hijrah) to Medina in 622, Muhammad takes no other wife, even though polygamy is common” (Watt and Sinai 2017).
   e. “Khadija’s cousin was a convert to the Arabic brand of Christianity. Waraqa bin Naufal had been a Jewish Priest before his conversion to ‘Christianity.’ He had studied the Jewish scriptures and had learned of a ‘prophet that would come to the people’” (Ishaq 1982, 69).
   f. Once Waraqa had heard the story that had been told by Maysara, he said, “if this is true, verily Muhammad is the prophet of this
people...his time has come” (Ishaq 1982, 83).

g. There was a fifteen year period after Muhammad’s marriage known as “The Silent Period” (A.D. 595 to 610), in which Muhammad presumably carried on the usual business of his life (Miller 2005, 5).

B. MUHAMMAD IN MECCA AS A SELF-PROCLAIMED MESSENGER

1. The traditions say that “When Muhammad was approximately forty years old, he would declare himself to be the prophet of God to the Arabic people. He used to go to the cave in Mount Hira where he would be in seclusion and could worship Allah in peace. He did so continuously for many (days and) nights... till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira” (Sahih Al Bukhari 1997, Vol. 9; Book 9; #6982).

a. Mt. Hira was a desert hill a few miles north of Mecca, and Muhammad would go there during the month of Ramadan, the month of heat (Miller 2005, 5).

b. Surah (“chapter”) 96 in the Quran is concerning this initial alleged revelation from the angel Gabriel, who, Muhammad claimed, would bring on-going revelations over the next twenty-three years (Miller 2005, 5).

c. “It is believed that Muhammad received these revelations while in a quasi-sleep or trance-like state. The utterances that were the product of these trances were recorded in Al-Quran, which means ‘the lecture,’ ‘the reading,’ or ‘the recitation.’ The utterances that came from Muhammad when he was not under the influence of one of these ecstatic conditions are known as the Hadith. While the latter body of information is held in high regard by the Islamic community, and believed to represent accurate depictions of the remarks and daily occurrences in the life of Muhammad, only the Quran is considered to be the inspired word of Allah” (Miller 2005, 5-6).

1) The Quran is comprised of 114 chapters (called Suras) and is about twenty percent shorter than the New Testament Scriptures of the Holy Bible.

2) When asked about the experience of revelation Muhammad reported, “sometimes it is revealed like the ringing of a bell. This form of inspiration is the hardest of them all and then it passes off after I have grasped what is inspired. Sometimes the Angel comes in the form of a man and talks to me and I grasp whatever he says” (Esack 2005, 43).

3) “After Muhammad would receive revelations he would later recite it to his companions, who also memorized it or wrote it down. Before the Quran was commonly available in written form, speaking it from memory prevailed as the mode of teaching it to others” (Faruqi and Ibsen 1987).

4) “Due to the fact that the Quran was revealed in disjointed verses and chapters, a point came when it needed to be gathered into a coherent whole text. There are disagreements among both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars as to when the Quran was compiled. Some believe Muhammad compiled it before he died, while others believe it was collected by either
5) Some of the Quran’s fatal errors include denying the Sonship of Christ, the Deity of Christ, His crucifixion, and His resurrection.

d. Regarding this initial revelation, Bukhari records: “(The Prophet added), ‘The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and again asked me to read, and I replied, ‘I do not know how to read.’ Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and asked me again to read, but again I replied, ‘I do not know how to read (or, what shall I read?).’ Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me and then released me and said, ‘Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), Has created man from a clot. Read! And Your Lord is Most Generous... [unto]... that which he knew not’ (V. 96:1-5)” (Sahih Al Bukhari 1997, Vol. 9; Book 9; #6982).

e. Tradition says that Muhammad ran home and hid, scared that he was demon possessed or had gone mad (Ishaq 1982, 106; al-Tabari 1989, Vol. 6; 76).

f. Khadija then visited her cousin Waraqa and told him what Muhammad had experienced in the cave.

g. Waraqa exclaimed: “Holy! Holy! Verily by Him in whose hand is Waraqa’s soul, if thou has spoken to me the truth, O Khadija, there hath come unto him the greatest Namus [that is, Gabriel] who came to Moses aforetime, and lo, he is the Prophet of this people. Bid him’ be of good heart” (Ishaq 1982, 107).

h. “Muhammad continues to receive revelations but for three years limits himself to speaking about them in private. When God finally commands him to take up public preaching, he initially encounters no opposition” (Watt and Sinai 2017).

i. He tried diligently “…to create a following among his own people in Mecca. These were the days when Muhammad would recite the ‘peaceful’ passages that are found in the Quran” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

j. “However, after the Qurʾānic proclamations begin to deny the existence of gods other than Allāh and thereby to attack the religious beliefs and practices of the Quraysh tribe, tensions arise between Muhammad and his small circle of adherents, on the one hand, and the remaining inhabitants of Mecca, on the other” (Watt and Sinai 2017).

k. “Where did Muhammad get his understanding of the one true God? When Muhammad was twelve years old, his uncle Abu Talib, took him on a trip to Syria. They went by a Syrian monastery” (Vaughn 2003, 70).

1) “According to Islamic tradition, Muhammad met a Christian monk called Bahira, who was to change his whole life” (Nutting 1964, 17; quoted by Vaughn 2003, 70).

2) “It was from this meeting that Muhammad began to have a revulsion for the idolatrous worship in Mecca” (Vaughn 2003, 70).
3) “This was not unique since several other prominent citizens of Mecca at that time had already denounced the paganism of their homeland and declared their faith in the one true God, including Jews and Christians” (Geisler and Saleeb 1993, 70; quoted by Vaughn 2003, 70).

l. The people wanted him to stop proclaiming his message, so they “promised Muhammad that they would make him the richest man in Mecca, give him as many wives as he desired and would submit to his commands—if he would only make an agreement” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

m. “This is what we will give you, Muhammad, so desist from reviling our gods and do not speak evilly of them. If you will not do so, we offer you one means which will be to your advantage and to ours.’ What is it? He asked. They said, ‘You will worship our gods, al-Lat, and al-Uzza, for a year and we shall worship your god for a year’” (al-Tabari 1989, Vol. 6; 106-107).

n. “At first, Muhammad flatly refused their offer: he would not compromise his faith. He noted clearly that they did not worship the same entities. You can read this in Quran 109” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

o. “Persecution, however, became extreme. Times became difficult for Muhammad and his followers. It is at this point that many believe Muhammad began to soften his stance about compromising with the people and allowing the gods of the Quraysh to be honored as well as Allah. This event may be found in what is known as “The Satanic Verses” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

p. According to al-Tabari: “The Messenger of God was eager for the welfare of his people and wished to effect a reconciliation with them...” (al-Tabari 1989, Vol. 6; 107-108)

q. “According to early sources, Satan used Muhammad’s desires to put his words into Muhammad’s mouth. So, Muhammad recited Satan’s words as if they were God’s words and allowed honor and prayer to be offered to these pagan gods” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

r. Vanwinkle wrote, according to many original sources, the Quran originally read: “Have you thought upon al-Lat and al-Uzza and Manat, the third, the other?” These are the high flying cranes; verily their intercession is accepted with approval” (Quran 53:21).

s. “Muslims today reject this idea. However, this subject is found in many of the earliest, most reliable Islamic sources” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

t. “When Quraysh heard this, they rejoiced and were happy and delighted at the way in which he spoke of their gods...” (al-Tabari 1989, Vol. 6; 108).

u. “Gabriel then reproved Muhammad and corrected his error. Consequently Muhammad recited a different verse for that portion of the Quran (which is what you find in today’s Quran)” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017; cf. Quran 53:19-22).

v. Gabriel said to Muhammad: “‘Muhammad what have you done? You have recited to the people that which I did not bring to you from God, and you have said that which was not said to you.’ Then
the Messenger of God was much grieved and feared God greatly, but God sent down a revelation to him, for He was merciful to him, consoling him and making the matter light for him, informing him that there had never been a prophet or a messenger before him who desired as he desired and wished as he wished but that Satan had cast words into his recitation, as he had cast words on Muhammad’s tongue.” (al-Tabari 1989, Vol. 6; 109).

w. “So, Allah apparently told Muhammad something like… ‘Hey, don’t worry about it, the prophets before were also guilty of reciting the words of Satan and attributing them to God.’ It seems as if Allah shrugged it off as no big deal. (This, of course, is inconsistent with the Bible prophets and the God of the Bible.)” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

x. With persecutions continuing, “…some of Muhammad’s followers are forced to seek temporary refuge with the Christian ruler of Ethiopia. For some years, the other chief clans of Mecca even refuse to trade and intermarry with Muhammad’s clan, since the latter continues to offer him protection. Sometime after the end of this boycott, one of the most famous events in the Prophet’s ministry takes place: his so-called Night Journey, during which he is miraculously transported to Jerusalem to pray with Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets. From there Muhammad continues to ascend to heaven, where God imposes on him the five daily prayers of Islam” (Watt and Sinai 2017).

C. MUHAMMAD MOVES TO MEDINA

1. “About 619, both Khadijah and Muhammad’s uncle Abū Ṭālib die, and another uncle, Abū Lahab, succeeds to the leadership of the clan of Hāshim. Abū Lahab withdraws the clan’s protection from Muhammad, meaning that the latter can now be attacked without fear of retribution and is therefore no longer safe at Mecca. After failing to win protection in the nearby town of Al-Ṭāʾif, Muhammad secures a pledge of protection from a representative number of the inhabitants of the oasis town of Yathrib, also known as Medina (from its Qur’ānic appellation al-madīnah, ‘the town’)” (Watt and Sinai 2017).

2. “Yathrib was soon renamed Madīnah an-Nabī (Arabic: ‘City of the Prophet’), but an-Nabī was soon dropped, so its name is ‘Medina’, meaning the city”’” (Shamsi 1984; quoted by Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

3. The promise of protection “enables Muhammad and his followers to leave Mecca for Medina, which, unlike Mecca, is partly inhabited by Jewish tribes. Together with Abū Bakr, the future first caliph, Muhammad is the last to depart” (Watt and Sinai 2017).

4. “The persecution against Muhammad continued and he figured that the Meccans would end up killing him. So Muhammad began sending his followers to Medina for safety. This migration from Mecca to Medina is called the “Hijrah” [or Hegira]. This marks the establishment of the first Islamic community…The Hijrah is also identified as the official start of the Islamic calendar, which was set to Julian 16 July 622” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

D. MUHAMMAD’S MILITARY METHODS

1. “Prior to Muhammad’s flight to Medina, Allah told him that he could
now fight against the Meccans. Defensive and aggressive violence against non-Muslims was now allowed, encouraged, and practiced. Many of the non-violent verses in the Quran were now “abrogated”, or canceled out. Circumstances had changed, Muhammad’s opportunities had changed, and so the rules of the “game” had changed. Thus, Muhammad’s Islam would change. What started out as a peaceful, ‘let’s get along’ idea was changed to a political system which allowed the sword to expand their system…a definite change had taken place from Mecca to Medina. The ‘you have your religion and I’ll have mine,’ (Quran 109) have been replaced by verses which require fighting” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

2. “And fight them until there is no more Fitnah (disbelief and worshipping of others along with Allah) and (all and every kind of) worship is for Allah (Alone). But if they cease, let there be no transgression except against Az-Zalimun (the polytheists, and wrong-doers, etc.)” (Quran 2:193 Mohsin Khan; quoted by Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

3. Men who swore allegiance to Muhammad during these times realized the implications: “In swearing allegiance to him you are pledging yourselves to wage war against all mankind” (al-Tabari 1989, Vol. 6; 134).

4. “Thus, the Hijrah would officially begin not only the religious cause of Islam, but more important to Muhammad’s cause, the political system” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

5. “At Medina, Muhammad has a house built that simultaneously serves as a prayer venue for his followers. He also drafts a covenant that joins together “the Believers and Submitters [or Muslims] of Quraysh and of Yathrib” as well as some of Medina’s Jewish tribes into a community (ummah) recognizing Muhammad as the “Messenger of God.” However, relations with the Jews of Medina steadily worsen. Eighteen months after the emigration, a revelation bids the Muslims to pray in the direction of the Meccan Ka’bah, rather than to continue facing toward Jerusalem as is Jewish practice. At about the same time, the Medinan Muslims begin raiding Meccan caravans. When, during one of these raids, they are surprised by a Meccan relief force at Badr in 624, the Muslims, aided by angels, score a surprising victory. In response, the Meccans try to capture Medina, once in 625 in the Battle of Uhud and again in 627 in the so-called Battle of the Trench; both attempts to dislodge Muhammad are ultimately unsuccessful. After each of the three major military encounters with the Meccans, Muhammad and his followers manage to oust another of the three main Jewish tribes of Medina. In the case of the last Jewish tribe to be displaced, the Qurayzah, all adult males are executed, and the women and children are enslaved” (Watt and Sinai 2017).

6. “In roughly ten years, Muhammad was responsible for twenty seven (27) battles that he took an active part in, and seventy three (73) raids and battles in which he was not involved. That is 100 battles in ten years. While it is not exactly accurate to say that Muhammad spread the religion of Islam by the sword, it is certainly accurate to say that Political Islam (the political system) was spread by the sword” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

7. “There were indeed other options available to disbelievers than
Islamic conversion. Those who were conquered were given choices, specifically “people of the book” (Jews and Christians). First and most hopefully for the conquerors, an unbeliever would convert to Islam. However, if a person refused to convert to Islam, especially if he was a Jew or Christian, a second choice was given to him. He could agree to pay the “Jizya” tax and live in subjugation to the Muslims. If the ‘people of the book’ neither want to pay the tax nor live as secondary citizens to the Muslims, there was a third choice. The choice to be murdered. So, yes, technically there were other choices when the Islamic conquerors were successful. Technically, it is true that a person was not forced to become a Muslim. Now, one might ask, were the other options reasonable choices?” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

8. “So, as Islam grew, the warrior Muhammad was able by force, to conquer travelling nomads and take their goods. He acquired much wealth, sometimes land, and great influence with the sword” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

9. “Facing the task of providing for the refugees, who followed him from Mecca, Muhammad ordered that rich caravans traveling from Medina to Mecca can be attacked and their goods plundered. It seems that every time Muhammad had to solve a problem he received a ‘vision.’ This he did to justify robbing and killing” (Vaughn 2003, 76; cf. Quran 22:39-40).

10. Islam was not a religion of peace in Muhammad’s time, and neither is it today.

11. “The victories he had in battle made it easier for him to amass soldiers. They were very interested in the spoil they received for these raids were on rich caravans” (Vaughn 2003, 78).

12. Surely those soldiers were also interested in the sex slaves that Muhammad allowed them to have (Quran 23:5, 6; 70:30).
   a. Muhammad’s example and teachings appealed to men’s lusts of the flesh (girls/women), the lust of the eyes (riches and land), and the pride of life (power)—such have been the allurements of Satan since the foundation of the world (cf. Gen. 3:5-6; Matt. 4:3-11; 1 John 2:15-17).
   c. One who understands how Satan works should be able to see through Muhammad’s smokescreen of sinful temptations (Psa. 119:11; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:13-15; 1 Pet. 5:8).

13. Looking back on his life, Muhammad said: “I have been sent with the shortest expressions bearing the widest meanings, and I have been made victorious with terror (cast in the hearts of the enemy), and while I was sleeping, the keys of the treasures of the world were brought to me and put in my hand” (Sahih Al Bukhari 1997, Vol. 4; Book 56; #)

14. Robert Spencer remarks: “That he was made ‘victorious with terror’ is undeniable, given the tumultuous history of his prophetic career, with its raids, wars, and assassinations. Muhammad was referring, of course, not to terror in the modern sense of terrorism but to the terror that Allah would cast into the hearts of unbelievers (cf. Qur’an 3:151; 7:4-5; 8:12; 8:60; etc.)—something akin to what Jews and Christians know
as the ‘fear of God.’ But for him, that terror was inseparable from the terror his warriors cast into the hearts of their opponents, because for him, they were the instruments of Allah’s wrath. And certainly those warriors, and the theology that promised them booty in this world and endless physical pleasures in the next if they but fought for Islam, would put into Muhammad’s hand ‘the keys of the treasures of the world.’ Those treasures would belong to the Muslims—by means of terror, the terror of Allah” (2006, 166).

15. Muslims claim that Muhammad was a descendent of Ishmael.
   a. The Bible contains an interesting prophecy about Ishmael: “…call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren” (Genesis 16:11-12).
   b. One may not know all that is implied by that prophecy, but it is at least interesting that such words are reminiscent of the life and legacy of Muhammad.

E. MUHAMMAD BACK TO MECCA
1. “In 628 Muhammad makes the bold move of setting out to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Meccans are determined to prevent the Muslims from entering the city, and Muhammad halts at Al-Hudaybiyyah, on the edge of the sacred territory of Mecca. A treaty is concluded between the two parties: hostilities are to cease, and the Muslims are given permission to make the pilgrimage to Mecca in 629. Two months later Muhammad leads his forces against the Jewish oasis of Khaybar, north of Medina. After a siege, it submits, but the Jews are allowed to remain on condition of sending half of their date harvest to Medina. The following year, Muhammad and his followers perform the pilgrimage as stipulated by the treaty of Al-Hudaybiyyah. Subsequently, however, an attack by Meccan allies upon allies of Muhammad leads to the latter’s denunciation of the treaty with the Meccans. In 630 he marches a substantial army on Mecca. The town submits, and Muhammad declares an amnesty” (Watt and Sinai 2017).

2. “After his return to Medina, Muhammad receives deputations from various Arabian tribes who declare their allegiance to the Muslim polity. Still in 630, Muhammad embarks on a campaign to the Syrian border and reaches Tabūk, where he secures the submission of various towns. Muhammad personally leads the pilgrimage to Mecca in 632, the so-called Farewell Pilgrimage, the precedent for all future Muslim pilgrimages” (Watt and Sinai 2017).

F. MUHAMMAD’S MARRIAGES
1. “Until Khadijah’s death some three years before Muhammad’s emigration (hijrah) to Medina in 622, Muhammad takes no other wife, even though polygamy is common” (Watt and Sinai 2017).
   a. After Khadijah’s death, Muhammad fully embraced polygamy: “Muhammad was married to thirteen women, including eleven at one time. He relegated them to either consecutive days or (according to some accounts) all in one night. He had sex with a 9-year-old girl and married his adopted son’s wife (after arranging a quick divorce). On top of that, Muhammad had a multitude of slave girls and concubines with whom he had sex - sometimes on
the very days in which they watched their husbands and fathers die at the hands of his army” (TheReligionofPeace.com 2017).

b. Another source says that Muhammad married 15 women, marrying a different woman every year (Vaughn 2003, 75).

c. Interestingly, the Quran only allows a man to have four wives (Quran 4:3), so Muhammad was not living according to his own teachings.

d. “How can someone be a perfect moral example for the whole human race and not even live by one of the basic laws he laid down as from God?” (Geisler and Saleeb 1993, 171; quoted by Vaughn 2003, 75).

2. The 52 year old Muhammad married a six year old named Aisha and had sexual relations with her when she was only nine years old!

a. “Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Prophet (may the blessing and peace of Allah be upon him) married her when she was six years old, and he consummated her in marriage when she was nine years old. Then she remained with him for nine years (i.e. till his death)” (Sahih Al-Bukhari 5133; quoted by Vanwinkle “Not a Muslim” 2017).

b. This innocent little girl took her dolls with her when she became Muhammad’s “bride:” “Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) reported that Allah’s Apostle (may peace be upon him) married her when she was seven years old, and she was taken to his house as a bride when she was nine, and her dolls were with her; and when he (the Holy Prophet) died she was eighteen years old” (Sahih Muslim 3310; quoted by Vanwinkle “Not a Muslim” 2017).

3. Muslim men can have up to four wives (Quran 4:3).

a. They can also have sexual relations with the slave girls they possess (Quran 23:1-6; 70:30).

b. Interestingly, Muslim women are not allowed to have multiple husbands or “slave boys.”

4. “The Quran addresses how men are to view their wives, and one such passage tells men to view their partner as a ‘tilth.’ A tilth is a piece of land to be cultivated in order to plant seed” (Vanwinkle “Not a Muslim” 2017; cf. Quran 2:223).

G. MUHAMMAD’S MORTALITY MANIFESTED

1. “How did Muhammad die? While most books simply state that Muhammad died of a fever in the arms of Aisha, they don’t tell the complete story. According to many reliable Islamic sources, Muhammad died slowly and painfully over a 3 year period due to his being poisoned by a Jewish lady” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

a. The woman who poisoned Muhammad was one of his captives and had lost family members to his forces.

b. “The Apostle of Allah sent for Zaynab Bint al-Harith and said to her: What induced you to do what you have done? She replied: You have done to my people what you have done. You have killed my father, my uncle, and my husband, so I said to myself. If you are a prophet, the foreleg will inform you; and others have said: If you are a king we will get rid of you. The Jewess returned as she had come. He [Ibn Sa’d] said: The Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him, handed her over to the heirs of Bishr Ibn al-Bara who
put her to death” (Ibn Sa’d 1972, Vol. 2; 251-252).

c. Not only did the so-called “prophet” fail to detect the poison, but he also claimed that Allah would not allow this woman to kill him (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

d. He was wrong on both accounts, failing both of these tests of prophethood!

2. Here is another point worthy of note: “Allah states that If Muhammad would be a false prophet, that He (Allah) would ‘cut his (Muhammad’s) aorta’ – the ‘life artery’” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017; cf. Quran 69:44-46).

a. Muhammad ate the poisoned food and said he felt like his aorta was being cut.

b. “Narrated ‘Aishah - The Prophet in his ailment in which he died, used to say, ‘O ‘Aishah! I still feel the pain caused by the food I ate at Khaibar, and at this time, I feel as if my aorta is being cut from that poison’” (Sahih Al Bukhari 1997, Vol. 5; Book 64; #4428).

c. “He then said about the pain of which he died: I continued to feel pain from the morsel which I had eaten at Khaibar. This is the time when it has cut off my aorta” (Sunan Abu Dawud 2008, #4498).

d. Vanwinkle wrote, “Supposing these events are true. We would logically draw some conclusions…the Quran teaches that if Muhammad had been a false prophet, his aorta would have been cut. Muhammad himself claimed that his aorta had been cut. [If] Muslims are to accept what the Quran teaches as truth, It follows logically that: Muslims should believe that Muhammad was a false prophet” (“Muhammad” 2017).

3. The suffering was terrible for Muhammad: Aishah said: “I never saw anyone suffer more pain than the Messenger of Allah” (Sunan Ibn Majah 2007, #1622).

4. “He dies in June 632 in Medina. Since no arrangement for his succession has been made, his death provokes a major dispute over the future leadership of the community he has founded” (Watt and Sinai 2017).

5. “After his death would come the major split in Islam, the “Shia/Sunni Controversy” (Vanwinkle “Muhammad” 2017).

III. INFERIORITY

A. Although it is beneficial to study the history of how Islam began, it is also profitable to point out ways that Islam is inferior to Christianity.

B. Muhammad is Inferior to Jesus Christ (even according to the Quran!).

1. Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah (Quran 3:45; 9:31); Muhammad was not.

2. The Quran does not say that Muhammad did miracles, but that Jesus did! (Quran 3:49; 5:110).

3. Muhammad claimed to be a true apostle, but he could not begin to do “the signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12), nor lay hands on others to give them miraculous gifts (Acts 8:18; Rom. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:6); Jesus could both do miracles and baptize men with the Holy Spirit to give them miraculous power (Matt. 3:11; Acts 2:1-4; 22; 10:44-47; 11:16).

4. The Quran says that Muhammad sinned (Quran 40:55; 47:19; 48:1-
2), but it never claims Jesus sinned, and called Jesus “righteous” (Quran 6:85; cf. 3:45).

5. A 52 year old Muhammad had sexual relations with a 9 year old girl! (Vanwinkle “Not a Muslim” 2017; cf. Sahih Al Bukhari 1997, 5133).

6. Muhammad was a polygamist who taught that polygamy is acceptable, as long as you are a man—not a woman (Quran 4:3).

7. Muhammad’s example and teachings appealed to the lusts of the flesh (girls/women), the lust of the eyes (riches and land), and the pride of life (power)—hallmarks of Satan himself (cf. Gen. 3:5-6; Matt. 4:3-11; 1 John 2:15-17).

8. Muhammad is dead and in Hades; Jesus is alive in Heaven on the right hand of God the Father (Quran 4:158; Acts 2:22-36).

9. Muhammad was not raised from the dead, but even the Quran says that Jesus was raised up to Heaven (Quran 4:158).

10. Muhammad is accursed for preaching a different message than that revealed in God’s Word, the Holy Bible (Gal. 1:6-9).

11. Jesus will return, but Muhammad will not! (Quran 4:158; 43:61).

12. Jesus will baptize Muhammad: Based on the known events of Muhammad’s life, Jesus will baptize Muhammad in unquenchable fire (Matt. 3:11-12; Gal. 1:6-9).

C. The concept of “Allah” is inferior to the true God Yahweh.

1. The Quran says that Allah does not love unbelievers (Quran 3:31-32; 30:43-45); but the Bible says Yahweh loved all men before they loved Him (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10, 19).

2. In an article called “Is Allah God?” Phillip Vanwinkle wrote, “Allah’s ‘justice’ appears to be arbitrary and does not require a sinless sacrifice at all” (2017); while Yahweh’s justice is truly holy and consistent (Isa. 59:1-2; Hab. 1:13; Rom. 5:8-10; 6:23; 1 John 3:4).

3. Islamic writings state that Allah will place the guilt of Muslims on Jews and Christians (Sahih Muslim 2017, 6665, 6666, 6668); but Yahweh judges every man impartially, according to every man’s own works (Rom. 2:11; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 20:12-13).

4. The Quran says that Allah is the greatest of all deceivers (Quran 3:54; 7:99; 8:30)—perhaps this deceiver called “Allah” is really Satan in disguise (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

D. The Quran is Inferior to The Bible.

1. The Quran has no prophetic proofs; the Bible is full of them.

2. The Quran contains the testimony of only one man (versus 40 from over 1600 years who penned the Holy Bible).

3. The Quran says that God’s Word can never be altered or corrupted (Quran 6:34; 6:115; 10:64).

   a. However, modern Muslims say the original words of the Bible came from God but have been corrupted; thus, they contradict the Quran and Muhammad.

   b. Muhammad never claimed that the Bible was corrupted: “Muhammad did not question the accuracy of the Bible. The accusation that the Bible had been corrupted came centuries after Muhammad, at a time when Muslim scholars recognized that there were contradictions between the Quran and the Bible. Yet the Quran points to the Bible as truth over 120 times” (Green N.d.).
c. We have manuscripts and Bibles predating Muhammad, so we can prove that the Bible of Muhammad’s day said the same thing our Bibles say today.

4. The Quran gives lip service to the Bible while contradicting it.
   a. Muhammad could not read, and he may not have known enough about the Bible to realize that he was praising it and contradicting it at the same time!
   b. Muslims often discourage people from reading the Bible, perhaps for the same reasons that Catholics have—they know the Bible consistently and clearly condemns their teachings.
   c. One Muslim wrote, “Muslims should respect the Bible because it does still contain some of the original teachings of Allah. But there is no need to go to Bible classes or purchase one to read to try to learn about what our purpose is here in this life. The Quran makes it clear that Allah has indeed, perfected our ‘way of life’ for us and has conferred on us His favor and has chosen for us to submit to Him in Islam” (Estes n.d.).

5. Either the Bible is the Word of God, or it is not the Word of God.
   a. If the Bible is the Word of God, the Quran is not the Word of God.
      1) The Quran contradicts too many fundamental concepts found throughout the Bible, such as: the Sonship of Christ; the Fatherhood of God the Father and the love He showed by sending His Son to die for mankind’s salvation; the deity of Christ; the atoning sacrifice of Christ that was foreshadowed by innumerable blood sacrifices throughout the Patriarchal and Mosaic periods; the resurrection of Christ (which gives Christians the hope of resurrection); the Great Commission; and the New Testament plan of salvation, which includes baptism to obey the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (denied by Muslims).
      2) Muslims cannot do away with such monumental themes of the Bible simply by vainly alleging that the Bible has some errors in it!
      3) Again, if the Bible is truly God’s Word, the Quran cannot be.
   b. If the Bible is not the Word of God, the Quran is not the Word of God.
      1) The Quran claims that the original words of the Bible came from Heaven (Quran 2:87, 136; 3:3; 4:163; 5:46), and that words that came from Heaven cannot be altered or corrupted (Quran 6:34; 6:115; 10:64).
      2) Therefore, if the Bible did not originate with God, or has become corrupted, the Quran’s claims about the Bible coming from Heaven were also false, making the Quran a false book.
   c. Conclusion: No matter what, the Quran is not the Word of God!

E. Islam is Inferior to Christianity.
   1. The entire religion of Islam is based on the testimony of one man whom even the Quran says was a sinner—what if he committed the sin of lying when claiming prophethood?
   2. Islam is based on the testimony of a man who was inferior to Christ and a book that is inferior to the Bible.
3. Islam says one may earn salvation if good works outweigh bad works (Quran 11:114; cf. 2:271, 277; 40:9, 39:61, 7:43).
4. No true concept of redemption is found in Islam.
5. Islam teaches unconditional predestination (Quran 2:142; 6:39; 6:125), which is inferior to conditional salvation obtained by men choosing to love and obey Yahweh.
6. Islam’s Paradise is an appeal to men’s lusts of the flesh—like a harem in the sky with “bashful, dark-eyed virgins” (Quran 37:40-49).
7. Islam as a whole appeals to the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, while Christianity focuses on love and spiritual purity.
8. Islam’s polygamy is inferior to Christianity’s monogamy (Quran 4:3; Matt. 19:3-9).
9. Islam teaches that women are like pieces of land for men to cultivate (Quran 2:223); Christianity teaches men to love their wives enough to die for them (Eph. 5:25).
11. Islam condones sexual relations with children, claiming that Muhammad’s life is the ultimate example (Quran 33:21).
12. Islam teaches that faithful Muslims should fight, subdue, and/or kill unbelievers (Quran 9:29, 73, 123; 5:51; 48:29; Sahih Muslim 30, 4366); Christianity teaches love and kindness towards enemies (Matt. 5:38-48; Rom. 12:17-21).

**CONCLUSION:**

A. Islam stands or falls on the credibility of Muhammad.
   1. He was obviously a man who used his influence to fulfill his selfish desires, conveniently receiving “visions” to justify his latest sinful objectives.
   2. The Bible, of which Muhammad spoke highly, condemns Muhammad as a cursed bringer of a perverted gospel (Gal. 1:6-9), and a false prophet worthy of death (Zech. 13:1-3).
   3. Jesus said to judge false prophets by their fruits (Matt. 7:15-20), and Muhammad’s fruits show him to be a merciless molester with malicious motives, hidden under a cloak of alleged righteousness (cf. 2 Cor. 11:1-4, 13-15).
   4. Sadly, it seems that other men through the ages have mimicked Muhammad’s steps, such as Joseph Smith of the Mormons.

B. In this writer’s opinion, one reason Islam has spread so fast and far is because men professing to follow Christ became so divided after the days of the early church.
   1. Seeds of division like those Paul condemned (1 Cor. 1:10-13; Rom. 16:17; Gal. 1:6-9) seemed to especially sprout and flourish after the apostles were gone.
   2. As Jesus said, a house divided against itself cannot stand (Matt. 12:25), and there are also many sinners outside the house who pretend to be in the house, thereby bringing shame upon the true house of God (2 Cor. 11:13-15).
   3. Satan has the world believing that Christianity is a divided deformity, and people like the Muslims can see that.
4. A pamphlet distributed by the Muslim Students’ Association of Memphis, Tennessee states that when Muhammad was alive, “It was one of the darkest periods for all of human society, for even Christianity and Judaism had become ineffective and confused” (Muhammad 1974).

5. If those in man-made denominations who profess to be Christians would actually submit to what the Bible says and speak as the Bible speaks, there would be an even greater display of true unity, and the impact of Christianity on this world would increase immeasurably!

C. The greatest “weapon” against Islam is a united body of obedient believers who will stand and proclaim the words of the Holy Bible to the world.

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INTRODUCTION:
A. Matthew 10:39 “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”
   1. In this verse, Jesus expresses an interesting truth, the Lord’s followers may lose their lives for His sake.
   2. When this is contemplated with seriousness, it is a sobering thought. Jesus said we may have to die on His behalf.
      a. Some believe that the possibility is so small that it can be easily dismissed.
      b. Some vehemently deny that it could ever happen to us.
      c. Some tremble at the thought, wondering what they would do at such a time.
      d. Some boldly believe that they could endure and become a martyr for the gospel of Christ.
B. Martyrdom is not a subject about which we speak very often.
   1. Verses like Matthew 10:39 are used to encourage faithfulness, not to discuss martyrdom.
   2. But, martyrdom was a significant reality in the first century and several that followed.
C. As we look at the subject of martyrdom, keep in mind this rally cry of the early enemies of the Lord’s church: “Let there be no Christians!”

DISCUSSION:
I. THE DEFINITION OF A MARTYR
A. In the Greek language, the term “martyr” is “martos” or a form thereof.
   1. It is found 34 times in the New Testament.
   2. In the KJV, it is translated with three different words.
      a. Witness or witnesses (34 times)
         1) Revelation 1:5
         2) NOTE: Most of the time, the word refers to those who were eyewitnesses of events who testified about that which they had seen.
      b. Record (2 times) II Corinthians 1:23
      c. Martyr (3 times) Acts 22:20; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 17:6
B. A martyr can be referred to as a witness because he attests his belief in the gospel by dying for the cause of Christ.
C. Origen of Alexandria explains the development of the importance of the word “martyr.” He writes: “Not everyone who bears witness to the truth, whether he support it by words or deeds, or in whatever way, may properly be called a witness (martyr). But it has become the custom of the brotherhood, since they are struck with admiration of those who have contended to the death for truth and valor, to keep the name of martyr
more properly for those who have borne witness to the mystery of godliness by shedding their blood for it” (http://catholicexchange.com/the-crown-of-martyrdom).

D. “…someone who suffers persecution and death for advocating, renouncing, refusing to renounce, or refusing to advocate a belief or cause as demanded by an external party” (www.wikipedia.com, “Martyr”).

II. EXAMPLES OF MARTYRS FROM THE BIBLE
A. We could go back into the Old Testament and list many of the prophets who were slain because they were advocates for God.
1. Zechariah (II Chron. 24:20-21, esp. v. 21) “And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the Lord.”
3. Jesus even mentions the blood of the prophets who were slain in times past (Matt. 23:35). “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.”

B. John the Baptist (Matt. 14:3-12)
1. Herod shut him up in prison (Matt. 14:3).
2. He did this because of John’s preaching (Matt. 14:4; See also Luke 3:19).
3. He wanted to put John to death (Matt. 14:5).
4. After Herodias danced before Herod, she asked for John’s head and Herod fulfilled her request (Matt. 14:6-11). “And he sent, and beheaded John in prison.”
5. His disciples came, and took the body, and buried it (Matt. 14:12).

C. Jesus died as a martyr.
1. Both the Jews and the Gentiles were responsible for His death (Acts 4:27-28).
2. He was crucified outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem (Matt. 27:35).
3. Twice in the Revelation, Jesus is referred to as a faithful witness (Rev. 1:5; 3:14) “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

D. There are three named martyrs after the day of Pentecost.
1. Stephen (Acts 7:59-60)
2. James (Acts 12:2)
3. Antipas (Rev. 2:13)

E. In the Revelation, John sees souls under the altar that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held (Rev. 6:9).

F. Others:
1. Jesus taught that His apostles would become martyrs (Matt. 24:9). “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.”
2. Specific statements made about some of the apostles:
   a. James and John (Matt. 20:22-23)
   b. Peter (John 21:18-19)
   c. Paul (II Tim. 4:6)
3. Traditions of the deaths of all the apostles:
   a. James (Acts 12:2) NOTE: The only death that stated in Scripture.
b. Matthew: killed by a sword wound in Ethiopia
c. Peter: crucified upside down on an x-shaped cross
d. Andrew: crucified in Patras of Achaia
e. Thomas: stabbed with a spear in India
f. Matthias: stoned in Jerusalem, then beheaded
g. Philip: crucified
h. Paul: tortured and beheaded in Rome
i. Bartholomew: flayed alive, then beheaded in Armenia
j. James the son of Alpheus: stoned in Jerusalem
k. Thaddeus: beaten to death in Persia
l. Simon the Canaanite: crucified
m. John: NOTE: The only apostle to die a natural death

III. THE COMMON FACTORS OF MARTYRDOM

A. Truth. Truth proclaimed and truth lived can both bring martyrdom to God’s children.
1. When the truth is taught and lived, it is a light shining into a dark world (Matt. 5:14-16; II Cor. 4:4).
2. Darkness, and those who dwell therein, hate the light.
   a. John 3:20, “For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds be reproved.”
   b. Mark 13:13a “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake…”

B. Opposition. The enemy will rise against the truth
1. This opposition can come from many sources.
   a. Politicians
   b. Those who love power
   c. Those who misunderstand the message
   d. The fearful
   e. Those who hate the truth
   f. Those who want to cover up their evil deeds and blame others for them.
   a. Persecution under Nero (c. 64-68)
   b. Persecution under Domitian (r. 81-96)
   c. Persecution under Trajan (112-117)
   d. Persecution under Marcus Aurelius (r. 161-180)
   e. Persecution under Septimus Severus (202-210)
   f. Persecution under Decius (250-251)
   g. Persecution under Valerian (257-259)
   h. Persecution under Maximinus the Thracian (235-238)
   i. Persecution under Aurelian (r. 270-275)
   j. Severe persecution under Diocletian and Galerius (303-324)
3. Brutality and death to the Christians
   a. Arrest and horrible living conditions
      1) Nakedness
      2) Lack of food and water
      3) Darkness
      4) Exposure to heat and cold
      5) Overcrowding
      6) Poor sanitary conditions
b. Torture and brutality
   1) Stretched on stretching machines
   2) Torn with metal rakes
   3) Whipped
   4) Broken bones
   5) Wrapped in heavy chains
   6) Placed in stocks with legs spread wide
   7) Placed on wagon wheels and beaten
   8) Hard labor
   9) Forced to walk across broken pottery, bones, and stones
   10) Family brutalized or killed before the individual

c. Death
   1) Beheaded
   2) Crucified
   3) Flogged
   4) Fed to the wild beasts
   5) Flayed: skinned alive
   6) Sawn asunder
   7) Drug upon the ground
   8) Stabbed multiple times
   9) Cast into deep water with weights on

C. The reaction of the crowds to martyrs.
   1. The enemy rejoiced (Luke 23:35-36)
   2. Some unbelievers were converted (Justin of Samaria).
   3. Some admired the faith of those persecuted (Philosopher Epictetus, Emperor Marcus Aurelius, and Golen the physician).
   4. Christians were weakened and made fearful (Heb. 12:11-13).
   5. Christians grew stronger and multiplied (Phil. 1:12-14).

IV. THE QUALITIES OF THE MARTYRS
A. Martyrdom is extremely difficult.
   1. It involves the giving up of something extremely precious, life itself.
   2. It is putting something else deemed more important before life, the Christ and His cause.
   3. It is the expression of the ultimate level of trust.

B. Martyrs had to manifest numerous Christian qualities.
   1. They loved much (Matt. 22:37).
   2. They were loyal (Josh. 24:15).
   3. They were bold and brave (Acts 4:19-20).
   4. They were not ashamed (Rom. 1:16).
   5. They were selfless (Matt. 10:19).
   6. They were patient (James 5:10).
   7. They rejoiced in suffering (Heb. 12:2; Acts 5:41; James 1:2-3).
   8. They knew how to persevere (Phil. 3:14).
   9. They had a deep understanding of what is important (Matt. 6:33).
   10. They did not desire honor or thanks (I Pet. 4:14).
   11. They wanted to be like Jesus (Matt. 10:24-25).
   12. They revered the reward (Heb. 11:26).

V. MARTYRDOM QUOTES
A. “Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never once wronged me;
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how then shall I blaspheme my King, who saved me?” (Polycarp)

B. “The tyrant dies and his rule is over. The martyr dies and his rule begins” (Kierkegaard)

C. “You can take from me no more than my life.” (Greizinger)

D. “The more often we are mowed down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed” (Tertullian).

E. “It is our battle to be summoned to the tribunals under fear of execution, that we may battle for truth. But the day is won when the object of the struggle is gained. This victory of ours gives us the glory of pleasing God, and the spoil of life eternal.” (Tertullian)

F. “Allow me to be eaten by the beasts, which are my way of reaching God. I am God’s wheat, and I am to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts to that I may become the pure bread of Christ.” (Ignatius)

VI. TWO IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

A. Martyrs were not individuals who sought to be killed.
   1. Martyrs were willing to give their lives if necessary.
   2. It was only a great privilege if death was inevitable.
   3. Matthew 20:23a “But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another…”
   4. “Those who actively seek the path of martyrdom are not seeking it for the glory of God, but for their own glory…God’s purpose in martyrdom is the glorification of His name and the building up of His church (www.gotquestions.org/Christianmartyrdom.html, “Christian martyrdom – What does the Bible say?”).

   1. Definition: A destructive pattern of behavior in which a person habitually seeks suffering or persecution as a way to feel “good” about himself.
   2. The main desire: to feel good about oneself
   3. Some of the indicators of a martyrdom complex:
      a. Portraying self as righteous and self-sacrificing
      b. Seeking reassurance of innocence and greatness
      c. Exaggeration of suffering, hardship, and mistreatment
      d. Cynical, paranoid, and suspicious perception of the intentions of others
      e. Obsessive need to be right
      f. Blame the selfishness and inhumanity of others for one’s repression and oppression
      g. Refuse to accept responsibility for the decisions and choices made to bring pain and suffering
      h. Refuse to take the initiative to solve problems and remedy them
      i. Actively seek appreciation, recognition, and attention for one’s efforts by creating drama
      j. When problems are solved, more problems are found to complain about
   4. NOTE: This was NOT the mindset of the martyrs of Christianity.
      a. They did not feel sorry for themselves.
      b. They did not blame others for their persecution.
      c. They sought to be at peace with all men.
      d. It was not about self; it was about God.
e. They were not trying to prove their greatness and elevate themselves.

VII. LESSONS THE MARTYRS TEACH US
   A. We could be called upon to give our lives for Jesus.
   B. We can stand for God no matter the circumstances.
   C. They teach us how to endure and show grace under pressure.
   D. Truth is more important than life.
   E. We can have the courage to die for the cause of Christ.
   F. Dying for the cause of Christ brings life to the church.
   G. We should have respect unto the recompense of the reward.
   H. Truth has enemies.
   I. God will supply all of our needs in time of want.
   J. The church is indestructible in nature.
   K. Humanity can be extremely depraved.
   L. Hardship strengthens the church.
   M. Adversity brings opportunity.
   N. In tribulation, pray.
   O. In martyrdom, Jesus is with us.

CONCLUSION:
   A. Remember the phrase we told you to keep in mind at the beginning of this lesson: “Let there be no Christians!”
   B. There are still Christians today. The most severe persecution and tribulation brought against God’s people could not rid the earth of them. Why?
      1. Romans 8:18 “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.”
      2. II Corinthians 4:17-18 “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are seen are eternal.”
   C. When it comes to those who suffered martyrdom, there is one statement in the Bible that just rings out (Heb. 11:38). “(Of whom the world was not worthy).”
   D. Do you want to be a martyr? One honestly wrote: “Their story does not make me want to die a martyr’s death; it’s too gruesome and horrible for that. But it does make me want to live a martyr’s life, for they had the courage to give their lives completely to Jesus Christ” (www.rauch.wordpress.com, “Lessons in Spirituality from the Martyrs,” David Nichols).
INTRODUCTION:
A. This period of history is one that is little known among our brethren.
   1. Yet, as one works his way through the period, he sees immediate relevance.
   2. Things that are happening now in Europe are understood better.
B. Most people are likely unaware of the scope and magnitude of Islam during this time.
   1. It came close to conquering the European continent.
   2. We are feeling the ramifications of the events of that period even now.

DISCUSSION:
I. THE DEATH OF MUHAMMED IN 633 SET THE STAGE FOR ISLAM’S RAPID EXPANSION.
A. When Muhammed passed away, he had control over most of the Arabian peninsula.
B. A series of four caliphs governed the Islamic state:
   1. Abu Bakr (632–634) was the best friend of Muhammed. He died of natural causes.
   2. Umar ibn al-Khattab (Umar I, 634–644). He was Abu Bakr’s trusted advisor.
      a. Umar advised Abu Bakr to form the Qur’an.
      b. Umar divided the empire into provinces.
         1) Arabia was divided into two provinces, Mecca and Medina.
         2) Iraq was divided into two provinces, Basra and Kufa.
         3) In the upper reaches of the Tigris and the Euphrates, Jazira was a province.
         4) Syria was a province to itself.
         5) Palestine was divided into two provinces: Iliya and Ramlah.
         6) Egypt was divided into two provinces: Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt.
         7) Persia was divided into three provinces: Khorasan, Azarbaijan, and Fars.
      c. Umar was assassinated by Persians as retribution for his conquest of Persia.
   3. Uthman ibn Affan (644–656). He became caliph at the age of 65. He had married two of Muhammed’s daughters.
      a. The Qur’an sayings up to this point were all memorized (oral tradition) and those who had done so were dying, mostly in battle.
      b. Uthman thought the Qur’an needed to be written so it would not be lost forever.
      c. The Uthman Codex is the Qur’an Muslims believe is genuine.
      d. Uthman was assassinated in 656.
   a. From Muhammed’s death until becoming caliph (24 years) he did not fight in any battle.
   b. He compiled the Qur’an within six months of Muhammed’s death.
   c. Ali was assassinated in 661 by Medinans and Egyptians.

C. These leaders were known as the Rashidun Caliphs.
   1. They oversaw the initial phase of the Muslim conquests of the old Roman Empire.
   2. From 632-661, they advanced Islam into several areas:
      a. The remainder of the Arabian peninsula.
      b. Egypt.
      c. Syria.
      d. Persia.
      e. Part of north Africa (present day Libya).

D. The division between the two major sects of Islam is not due to doctrinal issues but is grounded in the identity of the “true successor” to Muhammad.
   1. When Ali died, the cousin of Muhammad’s third successor, Uthman declared Mu’awiyah Umayyad caliph. When Umayyad died in A.D. 680, his son Yazid usurped the caliphate instead of Ali’s youngest son, Hussein. The feud between the rightful successors was fought at the battle of Karbala. Hussein was slain, but his sole son, Ali, survived and continued the line of succession. Yazid, however, gave rise to the Ummayyad line of succession, from which Sunnism arose (756).
      a. The Umayyad clan ruled until 750.
      b. This became the Sunni sect.
      c. They believe caliphs should be selected by election.
   2. The Shiite sect claims the rightful successor to Muhammad was Ali, his son-in-law, who was most familiar with his teachings.
      a. They believe the caliph is not elected but a descendant of the Ali lineage; thus, the name “Shia.”
      b. The “Twelvers” believe in twelve divinely ordained leaders, known as the Twelve Imams, and that the last Imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi, lives somewhere and will reappear as the promised Mahdi.
      c. Iranian leaders occasionally refer to the “12th Imam” as now alive but in hiding.

E. Assisting this expansion was the taxation of local populations of Jews and Christians.
   1. This enabled the Muslims to finance their campaigns.
   2. Additionally, the taxed people would often aid the Muslims in taking over their lands from the Byzantines and Persians.

F. By 649, the governor of Syria—Muawiyah I—had established a navy.
   1. It was made up of Muslims, Copts, and those from specific sects of Christendom.
   2. In 655, at the Battle of the Masts, the Byzantine navy was defeated—thus opening

G. At this point, in 636, Ali ibn Abi Talib assumed the position of caliph and moved the capital to Kufa in Iraq.
   1. Ali was assassinated in 661, thus opening the door for Muawiyah to take control.
2. Muawiyah then moved his capital from Medina to Damascus.
3. By this point, the Muslims had taken control of Crete, Rhodes, and much more of north Africa.

II. THE UMAYYAD CALIPHATE RULED FROM 661-750.

A. Muawiyah (661-680) became the founder of the Umayyad dynasty.
   1. In 668, he tried to take Constantinople (the seat of the Archbishop and capital of the Eastern church). He failed.
   2. He tried again in 674 by besieging the city for several years; it also failed.
   3. The reasons why Constantinople withstood the attacks are simple, and fascinating.
      a. The fortifications and walls of the city were engineering marvels for their time. The walls could only be scaled, not destroyed.
      b. Additionally, in 670 a substance was invented (likely by chemists in the city) called “Greek fire;” a highly flammable liquid similar to napalm, the substance could not be extinguished by water.
         1) Most often, it was delivered in battle via catapults or a pumping device.
         2) The pumping device was rigged into galley ships, which could then distribute the substance at close range to Muslim ships with devastating results.

B. The Arabization of all of the state was accomplished under al Walid (705-715), and reached its peak in 732.
   1. During this period imperial expansion reached its farthest point eastward, including central Asia, western India, and the Berbers in North Africa.
   2. The Islamic state conquered Spain, Portugal, western Pakistan, southern France, the Caucasus (southern Russia) and Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, southern Kyrgyzstan and southwest Kazakhstan.
   3. During this time, the grand Umayyad Mosque in Damascus was built as the fourth sanctuary in eastern Islam.
   4. Cordoba in southern Spain was named a provincial capital.

C. The progress of Islam in Europe came to a halt in northwestern France at the Battle of Tours on October 10, 732.
   1. Charles Martel (“The Hammer”), commander of the Frankish army, defeated the Islamic army of superior numbers—and did so without cavalry.
      a. Abd er Rahman trusted the tactical superiority of his cavalry, and had them charge repeatedly. This time the faith the Muslims had in their cavalry, armed with their long lances and swords which had brought them victory in previous battles, was not justified.
      b. The disciplined Frankish soldiers, under Charles’s leadership, withstood the assaults—and Rahman was killed.
      c. According to Isidore of Beja: “And in the shock of the battle the men of the North seemed like North a sea that cannot be moved. Firmly they stood, one close to another, forming as it were a bulwark of ice; and with great blows of their swords they hewed down the Arabs. Drawn up in a band around their chief, the people of the Austrasians carried all before them. Their tireless hands
   2. Charles also turned back a sea invasion in 736-37, and drove the Muslims completely out of Gaul.
3. The importance of these victories for world history cannot be overstated.
4. At the time of the Battle of Tours, Islam was at its zenith.
   a. Just one hundred years after Muhammad’s death, the Muslims had built an empire greater than that of Rome.
   b. The Muslims had their eyes on the entire continent of Europe.
5. If it were not for Charles Martel, all of Europe would have been Muslim, and our forefathers would have been bowing toward Mecca if they had come to America.
6. It was left to Charles’s son, Pippin the Short, to force the city of Narbonne’s surrender in 759, drive the Arabs completely back to the Iberian peninsula, and bring Narbonne into the Frankish Domains.
7. Charles’s grandson, Charlemagne, became the first “Christian” ruler to actually begin what would be called the “Reconquista” from Europe proper. In the east of the peninsula the Frankish emperors established theMarca Hispanica across the Pyrenees in part of what today is Catalonia, reconquering Girona in 785 and Barcelona in 801. This formed a permanent buffer zone against Islam across the Pyrenees.

D. The Great Mosque of Cordoba in Spain was built during this period.
   1. It measured about 250,000 square feet.
   2. It was a place of importance in the Muslim world for three centuries. It also was the third largest mosque in the world-wide caliphate.
   3. Originally a temple to the Roman god, Janus, it was converted into a cathedral by the invading Visigoths (572). It was converted into a mosque, and by 784 was completely rebuilt by the descendants of the exiled Umayyeds.

III. THERE WAS A DECLINE IN THE MUSLIM EMPIRE FROM THIS POINT ON.
   A. Several caliphates rose to prominence from 750-1492.
      1. The total amount of territory controlled gradually receded.
      2. During this period, there also was increased infighting among the Muslim leadership.
      3. Paradoxically, this was a great period of intellectual and cultural progress by Muslims.
   B. The most prominent caliphate during this period was the Abbasid (750-1258).
      1. The Abbasid dynasty descended from Muhammad’s uncle, Al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (566–653), from whom the dynasty takes its name.
      2. The Abbasid caliphate first centered its government in Kufa, but in 762 the caliph Al-Mansur founded the city of Baghdad, to which he moved the capital.
      3. Military progress gave way to intellectual and cultural achievements.
      4. As Islamic civilization flourished throughout Mesopotamia, new sciences were founded with the study of philology, history and law.
         a. Greek medical and mathematical sciences were made accessible in a library of translations and were developed by Persian and Arab scholars, especially in algebra, trigonometry, and optics.
         b. The development of Islamic law was the most far-reaching and effective agent in molding the social life of the Muslim community.
         c. Baghdad scholars of the ninth and tenth centuries had no peers in
Europe and Asia. The made the city highly prominent.

1) Athens was the philosophical capital of the world, Rome the legal capital, Jerusalem the religious capital, and Baghdad the scientific capital.

2) Scholars were Persian, Turkish, Syrian, Egyptian, and Arabian—but they all wrote in Arabic. It was the golden age of Islam.

3) For some 300 years, beginning in the mid-eighth century, Arabic was the vehicle for transmitting scientific, philosophical and literary thought.

4) Al-Khwarizmi, a Baghdadi of Persia, specialized in mathematics and astronomy.
   a) He gave us the word that later came to be anglicized as “arithmetic.”
   b) His astronomy was built on astronomical tables from an Indian source.
   c) He depended more on Hindi sources than on Greek sources.
   d) His Arabic arithmetic was based on Hindi numerals, which we now call “Arabic” numerals.
   e) He was also the originator of algebra.

5) Arab scholars made advances in astrology and geography.

6) Arab contribution to medicine was also significant. Many Muslim physicians were headed by al-Razi of Persia (865-925).
   a) He made no attempt to harmonize Greek philosophy and Islamic religion. He was a radical thinker.
   b) He rejected the concept of Islamic prophecy, challenged Qur’anic dogma, and placed philosophy above theology.

7) Medical language today has Arabic traces: alcohol (al-kukl), julep (julab), rob (rubb), soda (suda’), and syrup (sharab).

5. So the youngest of all world religions, through immigration and evangelization, had now penetrated into every nation of the world. Many nations were now completely controlled by Muslim and religious forces.

6. Other caliphates rose and fell—Fatimid (910-1171), Ayyubid (1171-1260), Mamluk (1250–1517)—but none of them matched the geographical and military success of the early conquests. The unified state of Islam was now fractured.

C. The fall of Toledo served as a harbinger of things to come for the Muslims.

1. Located in central Spain, Toledo had been controlled by the Visigoths until 711-12, when the city was captured by the Muslims and later made into a provincial capital for the Umayyad dynasty.

2. For about 300 years, the population of the city chafed under Islamic rule; there were periodic rebellions, with all of them put down.

3. In the winter of 1084-85, Alfonso VI laid siege to the city. On May 24, 1085, Toledo fell and Alfonso made his triumphant entry.

4. The conquest of Toledo by Alfonso VI of Castile in 1085 marked the first time a major city in Al-Andalus was captured by “Christian” forces; it served to sharpen the religious aspect of the reconquista, and set the stage for the Crusades.
IV. FROM 1095-1291, THE CRUSADES ATTEMPTED TO TAKE BACK PALESTINE.

A. For centuries after Constantine (early fourth century) was emperor, “Christian” pilgrims could go to Jerusalem to the sites established by Constantine.
   1. In November 636, the Rashidun army—under the command of Abu Ubaidah—besieged Jerusalem.
   2. After six months, the Patriarch Sophronius agreed to surrender, on condition that he submit only to the Rashidun caliph.
   3. In April 637, Caliph Umar traveled to Jerusalem in person to receive the submission of the city. The Patriarch thus surrendered to him.
   4. The Muslim conquest of the city solidified Arab control over Palestine.

B. In November 1095, Pope Urban II called for a “liberation” of Jerusalem from Arabic control.
   1. Urban saw the campaign as a chance for knights to direct their energies towards what was seen as a spiritually meritorious act, namely the recovery of the holy city of Jerusalem from Islam.
   2. In return for this they would, in effect, be forgiven those sins they had confessed. This, in turn, would save them from the prospect of eternal damnation in the fires of Hell.
   3. When the aim of liberating Jerusalem was coupled to lurid (probably exaggerated) stories of the maltreatment of both native “Christians” and western pilgrims, the desire for vengeance, along with the opportunity for spiritual advancement, formed a hugely potent combination.
   4. The fact that the papacy was engaged in a mighty struggle with the German emperor, Henry IV (the Investiture Controversy), and that calling the crusade would enhance the pope’s standing was an opportunity too good for Urban to miss.

C. Thousands of men answered the call in 1096 and advanced from Constantinople.
   1. By 1098, they had taken Nicaea and had gained control of Asia Minor.
   2. On June 20, 1098, they had seized Antioch of Syria.
   3. The Crusaders laid siege to Jerusalem on July 15, 1099.
   4. Within days, Jerusalem was taken; by August 1099, the region had been secured.
   5. Over the next decade, the entire coastline was transformed into a series of viable states.
   6. It was during this period that Military Orders were established; most prominent were the Templars, set to guard visitors on the road to the River Jordan, and the Hospitallers, providing healthcare.
      a. The Orders became religious institutions in and of themselves.
      b. They owned large tracts of land and were largely independent.

D. By the 1170s, the Muslims were clamoring to retake Jerusalem and expel the Crusaders.
   1. An-Nasir Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub (Saladin) led the Muslim military campaign, beginning from Egypt.
   2. By 1187 the sultan had gathered a large, but fragile coalition of warriors from Egypt, Syria and Iraq that was sufficient to bring the Franks into the field and to inflict upon them a terrible defeat at Hattin on July 4th.
3. Within months, Jerusalem fell and Saladin had recovered Islam’s third most important city after Mecca and Medina.
4. The Dome of the Rock was reconsecrated as a Muslim shrine. The cross on top of the dome was replaced by the Islamic crescent.

E. Over the next 200 years, several more Crusades were launched—with varying degrees of success and failure.
1. By 1291, the Sultan al-Ashraf smashed into the city of Acre to end the Christian hold on the Holy Land.
2. Meanwhile, the Knights Templar were arrested and imprisoned in France and later terminated by Pope Clement V in 1312—partly due to their failure to protect the Holy Land.

V. BY THIS POINT, THE OTTOMAN TURKS HAD RISEN TO PROMINENCE.
A. By the middle of the 15th century the Ottomans had already twice besieged Constantinople, and in 1453 the 21-year-old Sultan Mehmed II brought forward an immense army to achieve his aim.
1. Beginning on April 6, Mehmed laid siege to the city; the siege lasted 53 days.
2. On May 29, 1453, Constantinople fell to Mehmed and his army. The use of gunpowder and cannons made a significant impact during the siege, and changed the nature of war.
3. The capture of Constantinople (and two other Byzantine splinter territories soon thereafter) marked the end of the Byzantine Empire, a continuation of the Roman Empire dating to 27 BC—an imperial state lasting for nearly 1,500 years.
4. The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople also dealt a massive blow to Christendom, as the Muslim Ottoman armies thereafter were left unchecked to advance into Europe without an adversary to their rear.
5. The Holy Wisdom church, the largest in Christendom for 1000 years, became a Mosque in 1453 until 1935—when the Turks made it a museum.
6. Mehmed transferred the Ottoman capital to Constantinople, which was later
7. This marked the effective end of the Crusades, as well as the end of the Middle Ages.
8. The Ottoman Empire would last until the end of World War I. Afterwards, it became the modern state of Turkey.

B. The migration waves of Byzantine scholars and émigrés in the period following the sacking and fall of Constantinople in 1453 is considered by many scholars key to the revival of Greek and Roman studies that led to the development of the Renaissance.
1. These émigrés were grammarians, humanists, poets, writers, printers, lecturers, musicians, astronomers, architects, academics, artists, scribes, philosophers, scientists, politicians and theologians.
2. They brought to Western Europe the far greater preserved and accumulated knowledge of their own (Greek) civilization.

VI. TO THE EAST, THE MONGOLS WERE FORCEFULLY TAKING LAND FROM THE MUSLIMS.
A. The Mongolian Empire advanced to the very border of the Abassid caliphate.
1. Begun in 1206 when Temujin unified Mongolia and declared himself
as “Genghis Khan” (universal leader), the Empire rapidly expanded in all directions.

2. Even after Genghis’s death on August 18, 1227, his sons—and later, his grandsons—continued to push the empire to new regions.

3. By 1258, the Mongolian Empire was much bigger than the Roman Empire at its peak and the first Muslim Caliphate.
   a. To its east, the Mongols had conquered the Korean peninsula, most of China, and the northern part of India.
   b. To its northwest, they had pushed into Transcaucasia, causing the nobles in Georgia and Armenia to fall.
   c. Kiev was the next major city to fall, thus giving the Mongols a foothold in continental Europe.
   d. From there, the countries fell under the Mongol juggernaut—Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, Serbia, Babenburg Austria, and then the Holy Roman Empire itself.
   e. The only thing that stopped the Mongols from taking Vienna and northern Albania was the death of the Mongol leader, Ögedei, in December 1241.
      1) According to Mongol military tradition, all princes of Genghis’s line had to come back to Mongolia to elect a successor.
      2) Batu Khan, the commander of the western Mongol army, withdrew his forces from Central Europe in 1242.
   f. After a lengthy period of internal strife, Möngke Khan, Genghis’s grandson, was proclaimed ruler of the Empire and proceeded to advance on Baghdad.

4. When its caliph al-Mustasim refused to submit to the Mongols, Baghdad was besieged and captured by the Mongols in 1258, an event considered as one of the more catastrophic events in the history of Islam.

5. In short order, the Mongols captured Persia, Iraq, Syria, and Palestine, and were only stopped by the Mamluks in the Sinai Peninsula.

6. As a result, the Abassid caliphate was ended.

VII. MEANWHILE, ON THE IBERIAN PENINSULA THE MUSLIMS WERE ABOUT TO BE DRIVEN OUT OF EUROPE.

A. Beginning in 1482, Catholic Monarchs Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon launched a series of joint seasonal military campaigns against the Nasrid dynasty’s Emirate of Granada, located in the southernmost part of the Iberian peninsula.
   1. For ten years, they gradually pushed the Muslims and their allies closer and closer to the coast.
   2. Relying upon an effective use of artillery against towns instead of launching protracted sieges, the joint military campaign capitalized upon the disunity of the Granadans.
   3. By 1491, Isabella and Ferdinand were prepared to make their final push.

B. An eight-month siege of Granada began in April 1491.
   1. The situation for the defenders grew progressively dire.
   2. After the Battle of Granada a provisional surrender, the Treaty of Granada, was signed on November 25, 1491.

C. On January 2, 1492 Muhammad XII of Granada (King Boabdil)
surrendered the Emirate of Granada, the city of Granada, and the Alhambra palace to the Castilian forces.

1. The aftermath of the war saw the end of convivencia (“live and let live”) between religions in the Iberian peninsula: the Jews were forced to convert to Catholicism or be exiled, and by 1501 all of Granada’s Muslims were obliged to either convert to Catholicism, become slaves, or be exiled; by 1526 this prohibition spread to the rest of Spain.

2. The fall of the Alhambra is still celebrated every year by the City Council of Granada, and the Granada War is considered in traditional Spanish historiography as the final war of the reconquista.

D. Meanwhile, a Genoan explorer was seeking financial support for an alternative trade route to the East Indies (south and southeast Asia).

1. The fall of Constantinople had effectively cut off the so-called “Silk Road” trade route heading east.

2. Most trading companies were enamored with the “Cape Route” around the southernmost point of Africa.

3. The Genoan explorer proposed to travel west across the Atlantic, utilizing the trade winds both to and from his destination.

4. His name? Christopher Columbus.

E. Christopher Columbus was able to gain financial support for what would be four round trip voyages to the “New World.”

1. Ferdinand and Isabella had just conquered Granada, and they received Columbus in Córdoba, in the Alcázar castle.

2. Isabella turned him down on the advice of her confessor. Columbus was leaving town by mule in despair when Ferdinand intervened.

3. Isabella then sent a royal guard to fetch him, and Ferdinand later claimed credit for being “the principal cause why those islands were discovered.”

4. His financing secure, Columbus departed from Spain on the evening of August 3, 1492 with three ships: the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria.

CONCLUSION:

A. Islam at one point in history threatened to take control of the known world.

B. The efforts of a few were able to stop the onslaught.

C. As we observe the efforts of modern day would-be caliphs to reestablish a global Islamic caliphate, it is easy to connect their efforts with those of their ancestors—both in scope and in brutality.

D. Let us all be vigilant in learning the lessons from history, and let us be faithful in serving our Lord, following His Word—the Bible!
INTRODUCTION TO ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

DAVID WARREN

INTRODUCTION:
A. There is no real difference in English between a council and a synod, except that in English the term synod is restricted to a religious context. Both terms refer to an “assembly” or “meeting.” The terms council and synod are synonymous (Schneider 1999, 1:703).

1. Our English term council comes from the Latin noun concilium
   a. The noun concilium itself is a compound of two other Latin words, the preposition con (a primitive form of cum, “with”; see Lewis and Short 1894, p. 490, in the first column, under “III”) and the verb calo (to “call”; see Lewis and Short 1894, p. 399, in the third column, near the bottom of the page)
   b. Thus a concilium is an “assembly,” a group of individuals that has been “called together.”

2. Our English term synod goes back to a Greek noun, synodos (σύνοδος).
   a. Like concilium, synodos (σύνοδος) is a compound of two other words but in Greek, the preposition syn (σύν, “with”) and the noun hodos (ὁδός, “way”).
   b. A synodos is also an “assembly,” a group of individuals that has been “called together” (Liddell and Scott 1940, 1720), but literally it means “the way together,” as if to suggest that the purpose of such a meeting is to bring everyone together in unity.

3. Some historians employ both council and synod without any explanation as to why they use both terms.
   a. For example, in his work on the Seven Ecumenical Councils, Percival (1900, xi) uses “Ecumenical Councils” in the subheading but then switches to “Ecumenical Synod” in the first sentence of this subsection without any explanation for his variation in terminology.
   b. In his History of Christianity, Latourette (1953, 1489) lists “Ecumenical councils” in the index at the back of his book, but then uses both “synods” and “councils” in his text (pp. 154, 185, 224, 303, 353, 621, 628–35) without any apparent distinction in meaning.
   c. In their Church History, Bihlmeyer and Tüchle (1958–1963) place “Synods” in the subtitle heading but then in their text switch back and forth between “synods” and “councils” without any explanation (see pp. 322–323).

B. For consistency, and in order to avoid any confusion, I will use only the term council in this presentation.

C. While there have been dozens of church councils over the centuries, both general councils and local councils, church historians normally identify
only seven as “ecumenical councils.”

1. Our English term ecumenical derives from the Greek adjective oikoumenikos (οἰκουμενικός), meaning “of or belonging to the whole inhabited world” (Liddell and Scott 1940).
   a. An older variant spelling of ecumenical is œcumenical, which is still found today, especially in British English texts.
   b. This variation in spelling is due to the evolution of the Latin language, where an original oi- evolved to oe-, and then later to e- (Allen 1970, 62), so that in Latin oecumenicus eventually became spelled as ecumenicus.
   c. The Greek adjective oikoumenikos (οἰκουμενικός) is formed from oikoumenē (οἰκουμένη), which is a participle of the verb oikeō (οἰκέω, to “dwell”), which ultimately goes back to the Greek word for “house” or “dwelling” (oikos, οἶκος).
      1) Oikoumenē (οἰκουμένη) is a present passive participle nominative singular feminine from the Greek verb oikeō (οἰκέω), meaning to “dwell” (see oikoumenē in Bauer and Danker 2000, p. 699, in the second column; and oikēō in ibid., p. 694, in the second column).
      2) Oikoumenē (οἰκουμένη) is feminine in form and gender because the Greek word for “earth” (γῆ) must be understood. In use, the term oikoumenē (οἰκουμένη) became a noun referring to “the inhabited part of the earth,” or in general to the Roman Empire (Bauer and Danker 2000, 699; and Michel 1967, 157–59).

2. When used in connection with ancient church councils, the adjective ecumenical thus refers to those councils that involved the whole Roman Empire and not just one geographical area within it.
   a. Specifically, an ecumenical council is a council whose decrees “have found acceptance by the Church in the whole world” (Percival 1900, xi).
   b. While the Roman Catholic Church insists on a greater number of ecumenical councils, non-Catholic church historians recognize only seven as true “ecumenical councils.”

D. The seven ecumenical councils generally recognized by all the churches of Christendom are as follows (Percival 1900, xi–xv; Bihlmeyer and Tüchle 1958–1963, 1:323; Schneider 1999, 702; Ferguson 2005, 312):
1. Nicaea I (AD 325).
2. Constantinople I (AD 381).
3. Ephesus (AD 431).
5. Constantinople II (AD 553).
7. Nicaea II (AD 787).

E. The Roman Catholic Church alone recognizes fourteen additional councils as “ecumenical councils,” whose decrees are binding upon the whole world (Schneider 1999, 702; Ferguson 2005, 312):
2. Lateran I (AD 1123).
3. Lateran II (AD 1139).
4. Lateran III (AD 1179).
5. Lateran IV (AD 1215).
7. Lyons II (AD 1274).
8. Vienne (AD 1311–1312).
11. Lateran V (AD 1512–1517).
12. Trent (AD 1545–1563).

F. These “ecumenical councils” were “intended to serve as a sort of supreme court to decide definitely and for the whole Church the matters proposed” (Bihlmeyer and Tüchle 1958–1963, 1:323).

1. The meaning of the term ecumenical in reference to these general church councils has a different connotation from its use in the phrase “The Ecumenical Movement.”
   a. The modern Ecumenical Movement started in the twentieth century as an effort to encourage unity among all the various divisions of Christianity through dialogue and participation in worldwide humanitarian projects.
      1) This interest in uniting all Christians came from various quarters, but especially from Sweden, where Nathan Söderblom (1866–1931), the Archbishop of Uppsala and the head of the Lutheran Church in Sweden, issued a challenge for all Christian leaders to work for peace and justice during the First World War.
      2) The various efforts to unite all Christians culminated in 1948 with the establishment of the World Council of Churches, which comprised nearly all divisions of Christianity except for the Roman Catholic Church.
   b. The modern-day Ecumenical Movement seeks to achieve unity through voluntary inter-faith dialogue and association.

2. While the modern Ecumenical Movement tried to promote the worldwide unity of all Christians, these ecumenical councils sought to enforce the worldwide unity of all Christians by imposing their decrees upon all believers in Christ.
   a. The primary assumption behind all of these ecumenical councils is the firm belief of their participants that their proceedings and decrees are divinely protected from any error in faith and morals by the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit (Percival 1900, xii).
   b. The Roman Catholic Church insists that these ecumenical councils, twenty-one in number (see D and E above) are “endowed with the authority of Christ” so that their decrees are infallible “in matters of faith and morals” and are therefore binding upon all Christian believers (Pope 1997, 235, §§ 888 and 890).

3. One should distinguish the first seven ecumenical councils from the fourteen ecumenical councils that followed them.
   a. The first seven ecumenical councils were all officially called together by the Roman emperor, who acted independently of the pope of Rome.
b. All of the first seven ecumenical councils were held in the eastern part of the Roman Empire.
   1) Constantine the Great, who made Christianity the religion of the empire, had moved his capital from Rome to the city of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul, Turkey) in AD.
   2) The city of Rome was sacked by the Visigoths in AD 410 and then again by the Vandals in AD 455. Rome then fell in AD 476, when the last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was forced to abdicate the throne by the barbarian Odoacer, who then proclaimed himself king of Italy.
   3) Thus, during most of the first millennium, the city of Rome along with the entire western empire was considered too unstable and vulnerable for the staging of a general council for the whole church.

c. All of the first seven ecumenical councils are recognized and accepted by both of the main branches of Christendom in the Medieval Period, the Eastern Orthodox Church (i.e., the Catholic Church in the East which later fragmented into the Greek Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and the Romanian Orthodox Church) and the Roman Catholic Church in the West.
   1) Tanner (2011, 7) notes that “The ecumenical councils of the first millennium of Christianity are often called the seven councils of the undivided Church: before, that is, the beginning of the sad schism between the churches of East and West in the eleventh century” (emphasis added).
   2) However, this statement is completely true, for the Oriental Orthodox churches (which includes the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch in Syria, the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt, the Armenian Apostolic Church, and some others in the Near East) only recognize the first three ecumenical councils: Nicaea I (AD 325), Constantinople I (AD 381), and Ephesus (AD 431).
   3) The Oriental Orthodox churches rejected the decree of the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) in regard to the nature of Christ, and over the course of the next two centuries they pulled away from the Eastern Orthodox Church.
   4) However, since the rest of Christendom disregarded these Oriental Orthodox churches as being heretical after the decree of the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), one can understand how these seven councils could be viewed as belonging to “the undivided Church” until the Schism of AD 1054, when the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church made their separation official and permanent.

d. The other fourteen ecumenical councils, on the contrary, were called by the pope of Rome; with one exception (Constantinople IV) they were all held in the western part of the Roman Empire, and they are only recognized and accepted by the Roman Catholic Church; they are not recognized by the Eastern Orthodox Church or by the Oriental Orthodox churches.
   4. The official decrees of the older ecumenical councils have been
preserved in ancient manuscripts.
   a. The best scholarly, critical text of these decrees is that of Tanner (1990), where the original Greek and Latin texts (on the left-hand pages) are provided with an excellent English translation (on the right-hand facing pages).
      1) To make this edition, Tanner took the Greek and Latin texts from the scholarly edition by Alberigo (1962 and 1973) and then added an English translation of each text on the facing page.
      2) Tanner and his team of scholars have translated the decrees for all twenty-one ecumenical councils, some of them appearing in English for the very first time (2,528 pages in two volumes).
   b. The recent, still incomplete, multi-volume edition by Melloni (2006–2017) does not have an English translation accompanying the original texts of the actual decrees, which are presented only in Greek or Latin; only the introductions are presented in English, making this critical edition, though very scholarly, very difficult to use.
   c. For text of the decrees, I normally cite the old English translation of the first seven ecumenical councils by Henry R. Percival (1900), because it is easily accessible online at the “Christian Classics Ethereal Library” website: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npf214.html

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Bihlmeyer, Karl, and Hermann Tüchle. Church History. Translated by Victor E. Mills


INTRODUCTION:
A. This lecture is a survey of the ecumenical councils which took place between 325 AD and 445 AD covering an historical period from the date of the first ecumenical council, which took place soon after Constantine became sole emperor of the Roman Empire, to the time at which Flavian became the archbishop of Constantinople, a period that included three ecumenical councils: Nicaea I (AD 325), Constantinople I (AD 381), and Ephesus (AD 431). (Note that hereafter the “I” will be left off both Nicaea and Constantinople as these distinctions only become essential in discussions of all of the ecumenical councils which includes second council in each of these two places.)
B. The two-word appellation “ecumenical council” as used in this lecture refers to a council recognized as having universal authority over Christendom worldwide (Percival 1900, 8). (For an excellent treatment of the various words associated with ecumenical council see the introduction, Ecumenical Councils, included in this book written by David H. Warren who is also the lecturer on the second part of this topic.)
C. In relation to the theme of this lectureship—Church & Religious History Part 1: 33-1500 AD—it is apparent and noteworthy that there were almost three full centuries of church history with no ecumenical councils.
1. Periodic persecution from the Nero (64 AD) to the Edict of Milan (311 AD) precluded universal gatherings of church representatives, though numerous local and regional councils took place during this time (A thorough treatment of these councils may be found in: Hefele, 1872 and Pusey, 1875).
2. Though some effort is made to link them together, we shall see that ecumenical councils are far removed historically and theologically from the apostolic council of Acts 15.

DISCUSSION:
I. THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: NICAEA I (AD 325)
A. There are two major historical developments that led to the Council of Nicaea.
1. Beginning in 306 the Roman Empire experienced a steady and rapid move toward a unified leadership that in turn would provide stability for the empire and relief from persecution for the church—a road was paved for the calling of a universal council.
   a. In 306 Constantine was proclaimed emperor.
   b. In 311 the Edict of Toleration was issued by the Roman Tetrarchy of Galerius, Constantine, and Licinius which officially ended the Diocletian persecution of Christianity.
   c. In 313 Constantine and Licinius issued The Edict of Milan which legalized Christianity across the entire empire.
   d. In 324 Constantine became sole emperor.
e. With Constantine came the first Roman emperor to identify himself as Christian and as divinely appointed protector of the church.

1) He said of himself, “God has selected my office for the fulfilment of his plans, …so that I, entrusted with higher power, might disperse prevailing dangers, and so that mankind through my assistance, might return to the service of the most holy law and the most sacred faith, under the powerful leadership of the Almighty, might win more souls to its side” (Jaeger 1961, 2).

2) “The Eastern Church described him as ‘equal with, and similar to, an apostle’, the episcopus ab externo, as he called himself. (Jaeger 1961, 2).

2. The rise of the Arian heresy to the point of “throwing the eastern parts of the Roman Empire into confusion” (Tanner 1990, 1) created an impetus for the convening of a council to maintain unity of the church.

a. “Arius, the theologian who brought trinitarian speculation to the crisis stage, was born in Libya, about 256” (Davis 1990, 51).

b. By 318 his teaching that Christ was a created being had been propagated to the extent that controversy had erupted.

c. In 320 Alexander called a synod of the bishops of Egypt and Libya and of one hundred bishops assembled, eighty voted for condemnation and exile of Arius.

d. Arius fled to Caesarea in Palestine and eventually to Nicomedia all the while and in every place gaining support for his teaching.

3. Constantine in hopes that his new-found faith would bring the strength of unity and peace to his empire, was now enraged that the disruption of the Arian heresy would now divide and weaken both church and state (Kelly 2009, 21).

a. For a thorough examination of the relationship of Constantine and the Council of Nicaea beyond the scope of this present work see Georg Kretschmar’s chapter “The Councils of the Ancient Church” in Margull 1966, 49-58.

b. The rise of Constantine and the Arian heresy thus, produce the conflict of interest that prompted what would become the first ecumenical council.

B. The Council of Nicaea was called by Emperor Constantine and opened on 19 June 325.

1. The council was held at Nicaea in the province of Bithynia which was preferred over Ancyra (possibly the originally planned site) due to better access to the west and the close proximity to the imperial residence at Nicomedia not far to the northeast.

2. The number of bishops in attendance is variously reported between 250 and 350.

3. The number 318 is often seen and viewed as “the traditional number” but that seems to have been symbolic based on the number of servants Abraham took to rescue Lot.

C. “The council’s greatest achievement was the definition of the faith composed in the form of a creed” (Tanner 1990, 2) best known as the Nicaean Creed.
D. The creed as provided under the heading “The profession of faith of the 318 fathers” (Tanner 1990, 5) is as follows: “We believe in one God the Father all powerful, maker of all things both seen and unseen. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten begotten from the Father, that is from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things came to be, both those in heaven and those in earth; for us humans and for our salvation he came down and became incarnate, became human, suffered and rose up on the third day, went up into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and the dead. And in the holy Spirit. {next paragraph} And those who say “there once was when he was not”, and “before he was begotten he was not”, and that he came to be from things that were not, or from another hypostasis or substance, affirming that the Son of God is subject to change or alteration – these catholic and apostolic church anathematizes.

E. The council also dealt with the date of Easter and while it is certain that the Antiochene custom of following the Jewish reckoning was condemned there was no decree issued on the matter (Tanner 1990, 4).

F. There were additionally twenty decrees issued that dealt with a variety of church practices that identify, for those of us from a restoration heritage, continued, new and dramatic departures from the New Testament teachings, through the binding of men without authority from God.
1. The first canon prohibits men who castrated themselves from being enrolled in the clergy and ordered the suspension of those so enrolled, while those who due to sickness had been castrated by physicians or those castrated by barbarians were deemed acceptable for continuance or admission.
2. Canon two addressed “breaches of church’s canon” which allowed men who had recently come from a pagan life to the faith after a short catechumenate to be admitted to spiritual washing and at the time of baptism to be promoted to the episcopate or the presbyterate.
3. Other canons as identified by headings were:
   a. Concerning women who have been brought in to live with the clergy
   b. Of the number needed to appoint a bishop
   c. Concerning the excommunicated, that they must not be received by others; and concerning the duty to hold synods twice a year
   d. Concerning the forms of primacy belonging to some cities; and that bishops may not be created without the consent of the metropolitan
   e. Concerning the bishop of Aelia [=Jerusalem]
   f. Concerning the so-called Cathars
   g. Concerning those who have been promoted to the rank of presbyter without examination
   h. Concerning those who have denied the faith in persecution and have been promoted to the clergy
   i. Concerning those who have denied the faith and are numbered among the laity
   j. Concerning those who have made a renunciation and then returned to the world
   k. Concerning those that seek communion at the point of death
1. Concerning catechumens who have lapsed  
m. Concerning a cleric who transforms from city to city  
n. Concerning those who do not remain in the churches in which they are promoted  
o. Concerning clerics who practice usury  
p. That deacons should not give the eucharist to presbyters or be seated above them  
q. Concerning the followers of Paul of Samosata who come over  
r. That one must not kneel on Sundays or during the season of Pentecost  

G. At its close the council sent a synodical letter to the church of Alexandria (still disturbed by the Meletian schism) which condemned the schism, reported the actions taken on the Arian and paschal questions.  

H. “The council’s decisions received the approval of the apostolic see concomitantly”; and, “since the canons had the force of imperial law they were promulgated by Constantine” (Tanner 1990, 4).  

I. However, what happens in precept does not always translate into what happens in practice—such was true of this first ecumenical council and a history of intrigue would follow the intervening years with the Arian heresy continuing in ebb and flow fashion until the second ecumenical council would be called.  

1. Constantine himself was more concerned with peace in Christianity to preserve the unity of the empire as demonstrated by readmitting the Arians who had been excluded in 325 through a synod in 327 declaring Arius’ “most recent and quite obscure confession to be orthodox and resolving that he be reconciled to the church (Kretschmar 1966, 49).  

2. The Bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, who had attended the council as a deacon but since succeeded Bishop Alexander, refused to accept this decision.  

3. It appears that old heresies never die, they just take on new robes.  

II. THE SECOND ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: CONSTANTINOPLE (AD 381)  

A. The emperors Gratian and Theodosius I decided to convocate this council to counter the resurgence of Arianism, to judge the case of Maximus the Cynic (bishop of Constantinople), and to address the Pneumatomachi (also known as the Macedonians).  

B. In May of 381, 150 of the eastern bishops (Thus, the heading “Unecumenical Council of Constantinople” given in Davis 1990, 183) assembled at the imperial palace at Constantinople.  

C. The matter of the Arian heresy was addressed in the reaffirmation of the creed in the Nicaean tradition with portions added to address the Holy Spirit to refute Pneumatomachian heresy.  

D. The creed of faith issued is identified as “The exposition of the 150 fathers” and is as follows: We believe in one God the Father all-powerful, maker of heaven and of earth, and of all things both seen and unseen. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all the ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things came to be; for us humans and for our salvation he came down from the heavens and became incarnate from the holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, became human and was crucified on our behalf under Pontius Pilate; he suffered
and was buried and rose up on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; and he went up into the heavens and is seated at the Father’s right hand; he is coming again with glory to judge the living and the dead; his kingdom will have no end. And in the Spirit, the holy, the lordly and life-giving one, proceeding forth from the Father, co-worshipped and co-gloryed with Father and Son, the one who spoke through the prophets; in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. We confess one baptism for the forgiving of sins. We look forward to a resurrection of the dead and life in the age to come. Amen (Tanner 1990, 24).

E. No copy of the council’s doctrinal decisions has survived thus, Tanner has presented the synodical letter of the synod of Constantinople held in 382 which expounded those decisions in summary form (Tanner 1990, 21).

F. Seven canons from the council of Constantinople are included by Tanner as identified from other sources and are summarized as follows:

1. On the continuing validity of the decrees passed at Nicaea and on the anathematizing of heretics – which names specifically the Eunomians or Anomoeans, the Arians or Eudoxians, the Semi-Arians or Pneumatomachi, the Sabellians, the Marcellians, the Photinians and the Apollinarians.

2. On the proper order to be kept in each diocese, on the privileges due to the great cities of the Egyptians, the Antiochenes and Constantinopolitans, and that a bishop should not intrude in another church – throughout which is emphasized “as was decreed at Nicaea,"

3. That the bishop of Constantinople comes second to the bishop of Rome
   a. This canon reads in its entirety: “Because it is new Rome, the bishop of Constantinople is to enjoy the privileges of honour after the bishop of Rome (Tanner 1990, 32).
   b. As one might imagine this decree plants the seeds, or waters those already planted that would grow into the great schism between East and West (Murphy 1960, 41).

4. On the illicit ordination of Maximus

5. On the acceptability of the Tome of the Westerns – “Regarding the Tome of the Westerns: we have also recognized those in Antioch who confess a single Godhead of Father and Son and holy Spirit (Tanner 1990, 32)

6. On those who ought to be allowed to accuse bishops and clerics

7. On how to receive those who embrace orthodoxy

G. “The council ended on 9 July 391, and on 30 July of the same year, at the request of the council fathers, the emperor Theodosius ratified its decrees by edict” (Tanner 1990, 23).

H. While from 382 the synodical letter of the synod which met at Constantinople gave the council of Constantinople the title “ecumenical,” many have questioned such status.

1. This question comes most generally from all the bishops of the council being from the East. (A good example is Donald Davis’s division heading in his book: “Unecumenical Council of Constantinople” Davis 1990, 119.)

2. However, that the council’s ecumenical status and authority as recognized by the West is seen in the words of Pope Gregory I: “I confess that I accept and venerate the four councils (Nicaea, Constantinople,
Ephesus and Chalcedon) in the same way as I do the four books of the Holy Gospel” (Tanner 1990, 23).

III. THE THIRD ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: EPHESUS (AD 431)

A. This call to council was instigated upon a request from Nestorius who had been condemned in a council at Rome on 11 August 430 for teaching relating to the nature of Christ as man and God in Jesus Christ focusing on the question: Is Mary in fact the Theotokos, mother of God.

1. This decision to convocate the council was made by Theodosius II to summon the council along with co-emperor Valentinian III and with agreement of Pope Celestine I.

2. Theodosius’s letter of convocation dated 19 November 430 requested all those who had been summoned to be present 7 June 431.

B. If the ecumenical status of the Council of Constantinople was in question due to the assemblage of bishops from only the east, it would seem probable that the involvement of bishops from both east and west with a larger than ever degree of interest from the sea at Rome would have made the council at Ephesus an ecumenical exemplar—nothing could be farther from the case.

1. The first problem occurred when the council was begun ahead of the arrival of all the participants—the Roman legates as well as the eastern bishops led by John of Antioch did not arrive until much later.

2. What ensued was an array of intrigue that included bribes, alliances, and power plays as Cyril of Alexandria, John of Antioch and Nestorius worked to get the upper hand for themselves and their positions.

3. The following timeline serves to give an idea of the degree of confusion taking place and the amount of time passing in relation to this ecumenical council (Davis 1990, 188):

   a. 429 Cyril’s first letter to Nestorius.
   b. 430 Death of Augustine as Germanic Vandals besieged Hippo.
   c. 430 February: Cyril’s second letter to Nestorius.
   d. 430 August: Roman synod under Celestine condemned Nestorius; Cyril commissioned by pope.
   e. 430 November: synod of Alexandria; Cyril cited Nestorius; third letter of Cyril. Theodosius II convoked Council to Ephesus for June 7, 431.
   f. 431 June 22: Cyril opened Council of Ephesus; Nestorius condemned and deposed (Nestorius rejected three summons to appear before the council.)
   g. June 26: Council of John of Antioch.
   h. July 10: Arrival of papal legates.
   i. 431 July 16, 17: Cyril’s Council annulled acts of John’s council
   j. 431 July 22: Nicene Creed approved to exclusion of all others.
   k. 431 August: Theodosius II dissolved the Council.
   l. 431 September 3: Nestorius deposed and sent to Antioch.

4. When it comes to an “official” ecumenical council Tanner identifies the documents of the Cyrilline council as the only one which is ecumenical and included the following documents (Tanner 1990, 37):

   a. The central dogmatic act of the council is its judgment about whether the second letter of Cyril to Nestorius. Or Nestorius’s second letter to Cyril, was in conformity with the Nicene creed,
which was recited at the opening of the council’s proceedings. Cyril’s was cited as conforming and Nestorius’s was condemned.

b. The 12 anathemas with explaining letter produced by Cyril and the synod of Alexandria in 430 and seen to Nestorius then read at Ephesus.

c. The decision about Nestorius.

d. The letter of the council advising all the bishops, clergy and people about the condemnation of John of Antioch and disciplinary actions toward some of the Nestorian party.

e. A decree on faith, approved in the sixth session on 22 July, which confirmed the Nicene creed, ordered adherence to that alone and forbade the production of new creeds.

f. A definition against the Messalian.

g. A decree about the autonomy of the church of Cyprus.

IV. OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SURVEY OF THESE THREE ECUMENICAL COUNCILS.

A. The separation of church and state was erroneously ignored by the leaders of both the church and the empire during this historical period.

1. Throughout this historical period, we see the folly of departure from the emphatic declaration of Jesus, “My kingdom is not of this world!” (John 8:36), as bishops and emperors alike look to the other to accomplish their own agendas.

2. “In history, whenever the political power has come to the defense of Christianity by involving itself in the operation of the Church, it has almost always ended by doing more harm than good” (Murphy, 1960).

3. The same may be said as is illustrated in this period, of the Church’s involvement in the operation of this world’s kingdoms.

B. Power struggles between church leaders did not end with the sons of Thunder and the other ten disciples (Mark 10:32-45).

C. The wealth and power at the disposal of the bishopric highlights the Godly wisdom in, and relevant value, the biblical warnings against greed and power mongering among church leaders.

CONCLUSION:

A. This survey, focusing on the history of the designated subject and period, provides only a scratch on the surface of the many interesting facets of the events, content, and theology associated with the ecumenical councils.

B. Yet even this brief survey allows us to draw some interesting insights which contribute significantly to our thoughts and actions within the church today.

1. The separation of church and state was erroneously ignored by the leaders of both the church and the empire during this historical period.

a. Throughout, we see the folly forgetting the emphatic declaration of Jesus, “My kingdom is not of this world! (John 8:36), as bishops and emperors alike look to the other to accomplish their own agendas.

b. “In history, whenever the political power has come to the defense of Christianity by involving itself in the operation of the Church, it has almost always ended by doing more harm than good” (Murphy, 1960).
c. The same may be said, as is illustrated in their period, of the Church’s involvement in the operation of this world’s kingdoms.

2. Power struggles between church leaders did not end with the sons of Thunder and the other ten disciples (Mark 10:32-45).

3. The wealth and power at the disposal of the bishopric highlights the Godly wisdom in, and relevant value of, the biblical warnings against greed and power mongering among church leaders (Titus 1:7-11; 1 Timothy 3:3; & 1 Peter 5:2-3).

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**INTRODUCTION:**

A. This lecture will continue to survey the ecumenical councils, beginning with Flavian becoming the archbishop of Constantinople in AD 446 and stopping with the end of the Middle Ages in AD 1500.

B. In many ways, the next ecumenical council, the Council at Chalcedon in AD 451, stands as the most important ecumenical council of all.

1. One could even say, from a technical standpoint, that Chalcedon was the first ecumenical council to be regarded as an ecumenical council (i.e., a council recognized as having universal authority over Christendom worldwide).

2. Before the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451, the concept of an ecumenical council was unclear: “The decisive moment in establishing the list of ecumenical councils came at the Council of Chalcedon in 451” (Tanner 2001, 15).

   a. Prior to AD 451, while Nicaea I (held in AD 325) was highly regarded as having universal authority, it was not always referred to as an “ecumenical council.”

   b. Prior to AD 451, Constantinople I (held in AD 381) was viewed as being just another local council held in the East.

   c. Prior to AD 451, the council at Ephesus (held in AD 431) was considered so controversial that its status was continually being debated.

3. But at the Council of Chalcedon, the authority of all three of these previous councils (Nicaea I, Constantinople I, and Ephesus I) was recognized as being universal and thus binding upon all Christians.

   a. Furthermore, the bishops in attendance at Chalcedon went on to designate their own council as another “universal council” (οἰκουμενικὴ σύνοδος) like the first three (Percival 1900, 262).

   b. Finally, the bishops at Chalcedon “established ecumenical councils as the most important institution for the Church’s future development” (Tanner 2011, 15).

C. After the Council of Chalcedon, the adjective ecumenical (οἰουμενική, meaning “universal”) became “a technical term for councils representing the whole Church and therefore of universal authority, as distinct from regional, diocesan and other councils with only a limited mandate” (Tanner 2011, 15).

D. As is often the case with historical events, political intrigue and power plays plagued the Council of Chalcedon and indeed lay behind nearly every ecumenical council.

1. In recounting the history here in brief, I feel forced to omit a lot of
historical details that others may judge important to mention.

2. Besides the limitations of time, my goal has also been to retell the story of each ecumenical council without making it too tedious for listeners.

**DISCUSSION:**

I. I. THE FOURTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: CHALCEDON (AD 451)

A. There were important events that led to the calling of the fourth ecumenical council.

1. In AD 446, Flavian became the archbishop of Constantinople.

2. In November AD 448, Flavian held a local council in Constantinople in order to resolve a dispute between two bishops of his province and the metropolitan bishop of Sardis.

   a. At the last session of this council meeting, Eusebius the bishop of Dorylaeum in Phrygia lodged an accusation of heresy against Eutyches, the head of a monastery just outside the walls of Constantinople.

      1) Eutyches had been agitating Eusebius for several months by accusing him of the heresy of Nestorius, who supposedly taught that Christ consisted of two different persons, one human and the other divine (Nestorius had been condemned at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431).

      2) Now Eusebius was seeking revenge; before this council of forty bishops, he in turn accused Eutyches of teaching heresy because Eutyches stressed that Christ had only one nature, the divine, and so was not fully human (often called Monophysitism).

   b. Under the leadership of Flavian, the council denounced Eutyches and excommunicated him for his teaching.

   c. Eutyches, however, appealed the verdict of this council, and so Theodosius II, the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire at Constantinople, called for another council to be held at Ephesus.

3. The council met at Ephesus in August of the following year, AD 449, and it was intended by the emperor to be a general council—that is, an ecumenical or worldwide council, and thus having universal authority over all of Christendom.

   a. This council at Ephesus, often called the “Second Council of Ephesus” or “Ephesus II,” reinstated Eutyches and then condemned Flavian and Eusebius of Dorylaeum.

   b. When the verdict was read against Flavian, several monks and soldiers physically assaulted Flavian, beating him and even kicking him. He died from these injuries three days later as he was being carried into exile in the province of Lydia (western Turkey).

4. Leo I, the bishop of Rome [later regarded by Roman Catholics as a “pope”], condemned the Second Council of Ephesus, calling it Latrocinium, a Latin term which means “a council of robbers” (Tanner 2001, 30).

5. Emperor Theodosius II died from an accident while hunting on July 28, AD 450.

   a. Not having any children, Theodosius II named as his heir to the throne Marcian, the head of the imperial army.
b. In order to secure his position on the throne, Marcian married Theodosius’s sister, Pulcheria, and together they ruled the Eastern Roman Empire as emperor and empress.
1) Pulcheria had taken a vow of chastity and so was a virgin.
2) Their marriage was never consummated and took place merely to form a political alliance.

c. Although Pulcheria was born and bred in the East at Constantinople, “in many ways she was pro-Western” (Tanner 2011, 9), and so she supported the position of Leo I, the bishop of Rome, who had condemned the Second Council of Ephesus.

6. The political stage was now set for a major conflict to ensue, in which Constantinople was allied with Rome against Alexandria, Egypt.

a. The churches in Asia and the bishop of Alexandria favored the position of Eutyches by stressing that Christ had only one nature, the divine, and so was not fully human, a doctrine called “Monophysitism”—see further I. E. 1. d. 2) below.

b. Leo I, the bishop of Rome, favored the position of Flavian and Eusebius of Dorylaeum, who taught that Christ was a person with two natures, one human and the other divine, a view also held by the theological school in Antioch, Syria.

B. The Council of Chalcedon was organized by Empress Pulcheria (Tanner 2001, 29).

1. Leo I, the bishop of Rome, wanted this council to be held in Italy, but the invasion of the Huns into Gaul made it impossible (Bihlmeyer and Tüchle 1958–1963, 1:277).

2. Emperor Marcian originally announced that this council would be held at Nicaea, but he later moved it to Chalcedon in order for it to be closer to his capital, Constantinople (Tanner 1990, 75).

C. So the fourth ecumenical council was held in Chalcedon, a city in the ancient country of Bithynia (now the northwestern coast of Turkey along the Black Sea).

1. Located on the southern shore of the Bosphorus (the eighteen-mile strait connecting the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara, which then leads to the Aegean Sea), Chalcedon was a neighboring city to the great capital of Constantinople that lay just on the other side (northern shore) of the Bosphorus.

a. Originally, Chalcedon and Constantinople were two separate cities, but eventually they merged into one as the population grew, so that today Chalcedon is actually a suburb of the modern city of Istanbul.

b. “Istanbul” is the Turkish name that replaced “Constantinople” and later “Byzantium” as the name of the capital city.

2. Chalcedon is normally pronounced “KAL许odon” (Kenyon and Knott 1953, 76).


b. Chalcedon is from the Greek Χαλκηδών, -δόνος, ἡ (Montanari 2015, 2332). Note that it is also the name of a precious gem that is mentioned in Rev 21:19 (Sophocles 1914, 1159; Liddell and Scott 1940, 1973; Bauer and Danker 2000, 1076), translated variously
as “chalcedony” (KJV, ASV, NASB, NIV) or “agate” (RSV, NRSV, ESV).

3. The modern name for Chalcedon is Kadiköy, a Turkish word which means “Village of the Judge.”

D. The Council of Chalcedon convened on October 8, AD 451, and ended twenty-four days later on November 1 (Schaefer 1908, 556 and 558).

1. This was the largest of the first seven ecumenical councils and was attended by somewhere between 450 (Ferguson 2005, 264) to more than 600 bishops (Bihlmeyer and Tüchle 1958–1963, 1:277).
   a. The discrepancy over the exact number of bishops in attendance exists in the correspondence of Leo I, the bishop of Rome [later regarded by Roman Catholics as a “pope”] (Tanner 1990, 75 fn. 2).
   b. This difference in the counting of bishops may well have resulted from a fluctuation in the number of those who attended the various sessions held during the course of twenty-five days.

2. All of the bishops were from the East except for three papal delegates from Rome and two bishops from North Africa.

E. The most important matter debated at Chalcedon concerned the nature of Jesus Christ.

1. The previous three councils had debated the unity of God and had emphasized the oneness of Jesus Christ.
   a. The Council of Nicaea (AD 325) had “emphasized the oneness of God” in opposing Arius, who claimed that the Son was a created being (Ferguson 2005, 255).
   b. The Council of Constantinople I (AD 381) had “emphasized the threeness of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)” in opposition to Sabellius, who claimed that there was only one Person in the Godhead (Ferguson 2005, 255).
   c. The Council of Ephesus (AD 431) had “emphasized the oneness of Jesus Christ (Mary is theotokos)” against Nestorius, who supposedly taught that Christ consisted of two different persons, one human and the other divine (Ferguson 2005, 255).
   d. The Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) now “emphasized the twoness of God” (Ferguson 2005, 255) in arguing that Jesus the Son had two distinct natures (φύσεις), one human and the other divine (Tanner 2001, 31).

1) The first three ecumenical councils had logically led to still another question: “If Jesus Christ is fully and completely God, what is the relation of the deity to the humanity of Jesus?” (Ferguson 2005, 256).

2) The churches in Asia, including the bishop of Alexandria, Egypt, all believed that during His life on earth, Jesus had only one nature, the divine, and so He was not fully human.
   a) This doctrinal position is often called Monophysitism, from monos (μόνος, “one”) and physis (φύσις, “nature”).
   b) It had long been the doctrinal position of the theological school in Alexandria, Egypt.

3) The churches in Europe and the West rejected this theological position and instead believed that during His life on earth, Jesus had two distinct natures, the divine and the human,
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somehow fused together in one person.

a) This view had long been the doctrinal position of the theological school in Antioch, Syria.
b) It was also the view of Leo I, the bishop of Rome.

2. The Council of Chalcedon endorsed “the Antiochene teaching of two distinct natures in Christ, human and divine, against the monophysitism of Alexandria,” its rival school (Tanner 2011, 14).

a. The churches in Asia rejected the decree of the council at Chalcedon and over the course of the next two centuries pulled away from the rest of Christendom.
b. This division became the first major split in Christendom since its beginning.

1) These churches in Asia are often referred to collectively as the “Oriental Orthodox.”

2) Today this segment of Christendom includes the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, Egypt, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, and the Armenian Apostolic Church.

F. This controversy at Chalcedon over Christ’s nature was not simply a war of words; it concerns a fundamental New Testament doctrine about Jesus Christ and His atonement for our sins.

1. In Heb 2:17, we are told that Jesus had to be made like us “in every way” (κατὰ πάντα, kata panta) in order to become our substitute (cf. 4:15)

2. This fact explains why the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin (Heb 10:4); unlike us humans, animals cannot be tempted with sin and so cannot serve as our substitute.

3. The Monophysites taught that Jesus was not fully human during his life on earth; their view would cancel out Jesus’s atonement for our sins.

G. One can hardly overestimate importance of this council.

1. Tanner (2011, 14) calls the decision of Chalcedon regarding the two distinct natures of Christ “perhaps the most authoritative and influential statement of the Church outside of the Scriptures.”

2. He goes on to say, “It was the seal of doctrinal development in the early Church and has remained a guiding principle for most Christian churches ever since” (Tanner 2011, 14–15).

3. Chalcedon also changed the course of Christendom forever.

a. It established ecumenical councils as the political means for determining church doctrine.

1) It upheld the validity of the First Council of Ephesus in AD 431 as an ecumenical council, but it overturned and rejected the status of the Second Council of Ephesus in AD 449, which Leo I, the bishop of Rome, had denounced as a “council of robbers.”

2) It also recognized the previous councils at Nicaea in AD 325 and at Constantinople in AD 381 as ecumenical councils having universal authority over all Christian believers.
b. It increased the political power of the bishop of Rome over all
of Christendom, which eventually led to the development of the
“pope” in the succeeding centuries.
c. It alienated Alexandria, Egypt, and the other churches in Asia from
the rest of Christendom by its denunciation of Monophysism.

II. THE FIFTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: CONSTANTINOPLE II (AD 553)
A. The next three ecumenical councils “are important but less so than the
first four” (Tanner 2001, 33).
B. In the middle of the sixth century, the Byzantine Empire in the East was
experiencing a revival under its emperor, Justinian 1 (AD 527–65).
1. Justinian “dreamed of regaining all the Western territories which had
once been ruled by Rome” (Strayer and Munro 1970, 70) but had
been lost due to the barbarian invasions of the Huns, the Vandals, the
Ostrogoths, and other Germanic tribes.
2. In addition, “It was Justinian’s aim to rebuild a world empire on the
foundation of a unified Christianity” (Bihlmeyer and Tüchle 1958–
1963, 1:290).
   a. A century earlier, the Council of Chalcedon had driven a
      wedge that cut off the Oriental Orthodox churches in Asia and
      the theological school in Alexandria, Egypt, from the rest of
      Christendom.
      1) The Chalcedonian decree had denounced the Monophysite
         view of these churches.
      2) As a result, Alexandria and Asia felt alienated from the rest of
         Christiandom.
   b. In an effort to reunify Christendom, Justinian I sought to appease
      Alexandria by issuing a decree that condemned the three most
      famous theologians of Antioch, its rival school.
      1) Issued in AD 544, this decree accused Theodore of Mopsuestia,
         Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Ibas of Edessa of teaching the
         view of Nestorius, the condemned heretic—see I.A.2.a.1) and
         I.E.1.c. above.
      2) In his decree, Justinian labeled these three condemned men
         the “Three Chapters” (τρία κεφάλαια).
         a) Calling these men the “Three Chapters” makes no sense
            to us in English, since our English term chapters refers to
            sections in a book.
         b) However, the Greek term κεφάλαιον not only refers to
            chapters in a book; it also connotes “that which is at the
            head” and so can refer to “that which is the source” (see
            Liddell and Scott 1940, 944; Montanari 2015, 1119–20;
         c) By calling them the “Three Chapters,” Justinian meant
            that he regarded these three men as the source of
            Nestorianism in the church.
      3) “There was much unease at condemning three men who had
         been dead for a century or more and particularly because none
         of them had been condemned by the Council of Chalcedon”
         (Tanner 2001, 33).
   3. When Justinian saw the reluctance of Christian leaders to accept his
edict, he tried to force it upon them by convoking the fifth ecumenical council.

C. The fifth ecumenical council met in the great hall of the Hagia Sophia Church in Constantinople on May 5, AD 533.
1. On June 2, at the council’s eighth session, the “Three Chapters” were once more condemned, this time by the 160 bishops in attendance, who then pronounced anathemas on all who would defend these three theologians of Antioch.
2. In the past, the condemnation of Origen as a heretic has often been attributed to this council (as in Percival 1900, 320), but modern studies have shown that his denunciation actually took place before the council and not during it (Tanner 1990, 105–6; Bihlmeyer and Tüchle 1958–1963, 1:292, 294).
3. The bishop of Rome, Vigilius, refused to participate in the proceedings of this fifth ecumenical council because he did not agree with its condemnation of the “Three Chapters.”

D. A short time later, a great earthquake produced cracks in the great dome of Hagia Sophia, and these cracks well symbolized the deep fissures that were now becoming apparent in Christendom as a result of the council’s decrees.
1. Justinian’s efforts to reunite Christendom had failed miserably.
2. Instead of drawing Alexandria closer to Constantinople, he had only succeeded in pushing Rome further away.

III. THE SIXTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: CONSTANTINOPLE III (AD 680–681)

A. When Sergius I became the Patriarch of Constantinople in AD 610, and Heraclius became the new emperor six months later, they soon became interested in trying to accomplish what Justinian I had failed to do, to reunite Christianity.

1. Sergius I sought a doctrinal compromise between the churches of Asia and those of Europe in trying to resolve the controversy over Monophysitism.

2. With the support of the emperor, he developed a new twist in the debate, a position that later came to be called Monothelitism.

a. Earlier, we noted that the term Monophysitism comes from monos (μόνος, “one”) and physis (φύσις, “nature”), and is the view that Jesus had only one nature, the divine, and so was not fully human—see I. E. 1. d. 2) a) above.

b. Monothelitism, from monos (μόνος, “one”) and thelēsis (θέλησις, “will,” “desire”), is the view that, whether Jesus had two natures or only one, He had only one “will” or “desire.”

3. Sergius asked Honorius I, the bishop of Rome and the new pope, to support him in his new doctrinal position.
   1) In two separate letters to Sergius in AD 635, Honorius appeared to give Sergius his endorsement, stating that he believed that, while Jesus had two distinct natures, the human and the divine, He had only “one will” (in Latin, “unam voluntatem”).
   2) However, when Honorius I died three years later, the new
pope and his successors repudiated any papal support for Monothelitism, and so another heated controversy ensued between Constantinople and Rome.

B. In an effort to put an end to the Monothelite controversy, Emperor Constantine IV called for the sixth ecumenical council.

1. On November 7, AD 680, 174 bishops assembled in the great domed hall of the imperial palace at Constantinople and convened what became known as the Third Council of Constantinople.

2. At the thirteenth session, held on March 28, AD 681, this council condemned Monothelitism and anathematized Pope Honorius I for his part in supporting it (Percival 1900, 342–43), and Pope Leo II gave his approval to these decisions.

C. This condemnation of Pope Honorius I by the Third Council at Constantinople with the express approval of Pope Leo II and by the next two ecumenical councils (Nicaea II and Constantinople IV) becomes an unavoidable embarrassment for the Roman Catholic Church when it insists on the infallibility of both the pope and the twenty-one ecumenical councils.

1. The official Catechism of the Catholic Church (2nd edition) declares that both the pope and the twenty-one ecumenical councils are “endowed with the authority of Christ” so that their decrees are infallible “in matters of faith and morals” and are therefore binding upon all Christian believers (Pope 1997, 235, §§ 888 and 890–91).
   a. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the infallibility of the pope cannot be true, for either Pope Honorius I was in error when he gave his support to Monothelitism in his letters to Sergius I, or else
   b. The sixth, seventh, and eighth ecumenical councils (Constantinople III, Nicaea II, and Constantinople IV) were in error, and Pope Leo II was in error, when they all condemned Pope Honorius I (long after his death) for his part in the propagation of this heresy.
      1) If these councils and Pope Leo II were right, then Pope Honorius I was truly guilty of heresy.
      2) If Pope Honorius I was innocent of heresy, then these councils and Pope Leo II were wrong in condemning him.
      3) In either case, the infallibility of the pope is proved wrong!

2. In trying to avoid the two horns of this dilemma, the defenders of Roman Catholic infallibility insist either that Pope Honorius I’s two letters to Sergius I were “not . . . definitive or official decisions” (Bihlmeyer and Tüchle 1958–1963, 1:298) or that in his two letters he did not expressly promote Sergius’s heresy but merely failed to contradict him (Chapman 1910, 454–55).
   a. However, “any correspondence of this kind” between the pope in Rome and the patriarch of Constantinople “is at least semi-official and of some authority, so that the doctrinal error cannot be simply brushed aside as inconsequential” (Tanner 2001, 35).
   b. Whatever Pope Honorius I actually intended in his letters, he was understood by Sergius I and by many others to have actually condoned the heresy of Monothelitism, and when their understandings of his position became known to him, he never attempted to correct their perception of him.

D. D. The Council of Trullo, held in AD 692, is often considered a part of
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Constantinople II and Constantinople III, especially in the East.
1. It is sometimes called the Second Council of “Trullo” because it met in the same domed hall (τὸ θολὸς) of the imperial palace at Constantinople, where Constantinople III (also referred to as the First Council of Trullo) had met.
2. Two hundred and fifteen bishops met and “promulgated an extensive collection of 102 canons” or rules, mostly affecting morals and behavior (Tanner 2001, 42).

IV. THE SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: NICAEA II (AD 787)
A. The seventh ecumenical council was convened in order to deal with the first outbreak of destroying religious images during the Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries.
1. The term Iconoclastic comes from the Greek eikon (εἰκών, “image,” “picture,” “painting”), which in Latin became icon, and klasis (κλάσις, “breaking”).
2. When the Roman emperor banned icons in AD 726 as a form of idolatry, the people revolted because they treasured their pictures of Jesus, His mother, Mary, the saints, and other sacred persons.
B. Meeting at Nicaea in AD 786–787, the council of 263 bishops determined that the use of such images did not violate the prohibition of the Second Commandment (Exod 20:4; Deut 5:8) so long as the people merely venerated these icons on account of the holy person they depicted but did not actually worship them, an act that must be reserved for God alone.
1. “The iconoclastic controversy has left profound vestiges in the evolution of Byzantine art. No Byzantine artist dared to represent God the Father, because, as the iconoclasts had taught, Divinity cannot be circumscribed” (Dvornik 1961, 39).
2. Thus, one could have pictures of Jesus, His mother, Mary, the saints, and other sacred persons, but none of God the Father.

V. THE FIRST TEN OF THE REMAINING FOURTEEN ECUMENICAL COUNCILS THAT ARE RECOGNIZED ONLY BY THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.
A. The Roman Catholic Church alone recognizes fourteen additional councils as “ecumenical councils,” whose decrees are binding upon the whole world (Schneider 1999, 702; Ferguson 2005, 312).
B. The real purpose behind these other ecumenical councils was to solidify the authority of the bishop of Rome as the “pope,” the ruler over all Christian believers.
1. The Eighth Ecumenical Council: Constantinople IV (AD 869–870)
   a. This council condemned and excommunicated Photius, one of the great scholars of the Greek church, because of politics and Greek theological viewpoints that differed with Rome in the ninth century.
   b. This council was quickly rejected by the church in the East, and the gap between East and West continued to widen until AD 1054, when the Greek Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church officially parted ways.
   c. This council was the last ecumenical council held in the East; the remaining thirteen ecumenical councils were all held in the western part of the empire.
2. The Ninth Ecumenical Council: Lateran I (AD 1123)
   a. This council was the first ecumenical council to be held at Rome.
      1) The name “Lateran” comes from the Lateran Palace, which was the official residence of the pope in Rome until the pope’s residence was moved to Avignon, France, in the fourteenth century.
      2) In AD 1377, the pope’s residence was moved from Avignon back to Rome, where it now remains in the Vatican.
   b. Over 900 bishops and abbots met, none of them from the East; this council was presided over by the pope.
   c. This council abolished the authority of the Roman emperor to appoint a pope or a bishop.
   d. It also forbade priests to marry (“Canon 7” in Tanner 1990, 1:191), a decision that was rejected by the churches in the East.

3. The Tenth Ecumenical Council: Lateran II (AD 1139)
   a. This council was the largest one so far, with over 1,000 bishops and abbots in attendance.
      1) These leaders were worried, for during the past eight years, the church in the West had faced a crisis: “The crisis, this time, was a double papal election, at Rome, made by the cardinals, and an ensuing schism when for some years two rivals, each claiming to be the lawful pope, divided the Church” (Hughes 1961, 197).
      2) “The healing of the schism was solemnly announced at the Second Lateran Council, 1139,” (Schaff 1859–1892, 5:96) but the problem had really been resolved only because one of the two popes had died in the previous year.
   b. The surviving pope now called this council in order to solidify his authority over the whole church.
   c. This council condemned Arnold of Brescia as a heretic after he had offended the pope and his prelates by rebuking them for their worldly wealth and power.
   d. It also reconfirmed the decision of Lateran I in forbidding priests to marry.

4. The Eleventh Ecumenical Council: Lateran III (AD 1179)
   a. This council determined that only cardinals could select the pope, whose election needed at least a two-thirds majority (canon 1).
   b. This council also condemned the heresies of the Albigensians, and they were excommunicated, but no decision was reached on the teachings of the Waldenses (they were excommunicated five years later).
   c. The council also issued several decrees in regard to morals and reformation, especially against priests who either had “mistresses” or had engaged in “that unnatural vice” of homosexuality (canon 11).

5. The Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV (AD 1215)
   a. This council was “the largest and the most important synod of the Middle Ages and was attended by more than 1200 prelates and by representatives of most of the Christian princes” (Bihlmeyer and Tüchle 1958–1963, 2:260).
      1) Even the patriarch himself of Antioch, Syria, had come, as
An Examination of Religion 33-1500 AD

well as a representative from the patriarch of Alexandria, Egypt.

2) However, no Greek was present.

b. At this council, the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation was fully defined and promulgated.

c. Opposition to the Albigensians was renewed, and the creed against them was revised: “Firmiter credimus” (“We firmly believe”; see Tanner 1990, 230–31).

d. Thirteen years after his death, this council condemned Joachim of Fiore, because he criticized the church’s view of the Trinity as involving “a quaternity” (i.e., “four” instead of “three”; Schaff 1859–1892, 5:374).

6. The Thirteenth Ecumenical Council: Lyons I (AD 1245)


b. This council excommunicated and deposed Emperor Frederick II, because he thought he had more authority than the church.

c. It also sanctioned a new crusade to recover Jerusalem from the Muslims.

7. The Fourteenth Ecumenical Council: Lyons II (AD 1274)

a. “This council has the distinction that, in its inception, and in all that directed its activity, it was the work of a pope who was a saint—Tebaldo Visconti, known in the calendar of the Church as the Blessed Gregory X” (Hughes 1961, 234).

b. The patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch attended this council.

c. This council managed to work out a reunion between the Eastern and Western churches, but it was only temporary.


a. Held in Vienne in what is now France, this council officially dissolved the Knights Templar, a Catholic military order that for two centuries had been involved in the crusades to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims.

b. From AD 1309 to 1376, the popes were all French and lived in Avignon, France, instead of in Rome, a period often called the “Avignon Captivity.”

c. “When the Council of Vienne met. . . . There was question of nothing less than that the council, as the final and supreme authority, should restore the unity of the Church in spite of the divided Papacy, and carry out an urgently needed reform of the Church, both in her head and in her members (reformatio in capite et membris)” (Jaeger 1961, 36).

d. “This council has a place in the history of biblical scholarship and university education by its act ordering two chairs each, of Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldee established in Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca” (Schaff 1859–1892, 6:58).

9. The Sixteenth Ecumenical Council: Constance (AD 1414–1418)

a. This council was held in Constance, a city on the Rhine River, where Germany borders with Switzerland (modern Konstanz, Germany).

b. It resolved the “Great Western Schism.”

1) From AD 1378 to 1409, there were two men who claimed to
be the pope, one in Rome and the other in Avignon, France.  
a) When Pope Gregory XI moved his residence from Avignon back to Rome, a rival pope was elected at Avignon.  
b) In trying to resolve this conflict, the Council of Pisa in AD 1409 elected a third pope, and so from AD 1409–1415 there were three men who simultaneously claimed to be the pope.  
c) Pope John XXIII, who reigned from AD 1410–1415, was so “utterly worldly-minded, crafty, unscrupulous and immoral” (Bihlmeyer and Tüchle 1958–1963, 2:390) that he has been accused of rape, sodomy, incest, and even murder (Gibbon 1902, 7:289).

2) The Council of Constance deposed all three men and then appointed a new pope.  
c. This council also condemned John Wycliffe and Jan/John Hus as heretics  
1) Hus was burned alive at the stake in AD 1415.  
2) In AD 1427, forty-two years after Wycliffe had died, the pope ordered that his remains be exhumed and burned, and the ashes thrown into the river Swift at Lutterworth, England.

10. The Seventeenth Ecumenical Council: Florence (AD 1438–1445)  
a. Also called the “Council of Basel, Ferrara, and Florence,” because it was held in all three cities: first at Basel in Switzerland, and then moved to Ferrara in northern Italy, and finally in AD 1439 moved to Florence to escape the plague.  
b. In Basel, there was some discussion as to who had the greater authority, an ecumenical council or a pope, until the pope dismissed the council.  
c. This council discussed church reform and reunification with the Eastern churches.  
1) Fearing the marauding Muslims (the Ottoman Turks), the patriarch of Constantinople was willing to compromise with Rome in exchange for troops to reinforce his defenses.  
2) Unfortunately, this bond between East and West did not last long, and in AD 1453 the city of Constantinople fell to the Muslim armies.  

CONCLUSION:  
A. Our survey of the ecumenical councils stops with the year AD 1500, which is the traditional end of the Middle Ages (AD 395–1500).  
B. The four remaining ecumenical councils fall within the Modern Period of history.  
1. The Eighteenth Ecumenical Council: Lateran V (AD 1512–1517)  
2. The Nineteenth Ecumenical Council: Trent (AD 1545–1563)  
3. The Twentieth Ecumenical Council: Vatican I (AD 1869–1870)  
C. In AD 1500, the Renaissance (“rebirth of knowledge”) was now in full swing.  
1. In the following year, Martin Luther will begin his graduate studies at the University of Erfurt in Germany.  
2. The stage is now set for the Protestant Reformation.
REFERENCES:


AN INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE NESTORIAN CHURCH

TRAVIS BROWN

INTRODUCTION:
A. Due to the informative nature of this assignment, the terms “Church” and “Christians” are used in an accommodative sense to the sources used, whether direct quotes or in references. Since this assignment is not intended to correct doctrinal error, the terms are not used in the biblical sense of the New Testament church or New Testament Christians.
B. The Nestorian Church is actually more of a movement [Nestorianism] than a proper name given to a specific denomination.
1. A search for the “Nestorian Church” will lead to several denominations which identify themselves by holding completely, or in part, to the doctrine of Nestorius.
2. As of October 2, 2017, the website Nestorian.org states under “History of the Nestorian Church” that the Nestorian Church is also known as the: Church of the East, Persian Church, East Syrian Church, Chaldean Syrian Church, Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of the East, and the Assyrian Church of the East (Nestorian.org 2017).
3. This group claims to trace their origin back to the “first century of the Christian era” (ibid.), however they were known then as the Church of the East or Persian Church.
   a. As Baum and Winkler (2003) conclude, “Presumably Christianity found its way into the regions east of the Tigris - Adiabene and Khuzistan - as early as the beginning of the second century. However, the sources are scanty, and the origins of Christianity are shrouded in legends of apostolic foundation.” (Baum and Winkler 2003, 8).
   b. It wasn’t until the fifth century that the Persian Church was won over to Nestorianism and began to be termed as Nestorian (Latourette 1970, 230).
C. Though the beliefs of Nestorius can be seen in various religious groups, the information presented here will concentrate specifically on the Nestorian Church/Church of the East.

DISCUSSION:
I. HISTORY.
A. Nestorianism can be traced to Nestorius, originally a Catholic monk, then a presbyter in Antioch, and finally elevated to Archbishop [or Patriarch] of Constantinople in 428 A.D. (Schaff 1910, 715).
B. In Nestorius’ day the East had two major schools of thought: Alexandrian and Antiochian.
   1. According to Everett Ferguson, the difference between the school at
Antioch and the school at Alexandria had already surfaced in their different approaches to the refutation of Arianism. These differences had set the stage for their Christological conflict (Ferguson 2013, 256).

2. Notice some differences between these two schools as summarized by Mark Dickens (2017):
   a. The Antiochian school was influenced by Aristotle and adhered to a historical exegesis (i.e. concentrating on what the Bible actually said), affirming that Jesus was fully human, that the Godhead dwelt in him, but did not eclipse his humanity.
   b. The Alexandrian school was influenced by Plato and followed an allegorical tradition (i.e. tending to attach several layers of meaning to every text), affirming that Jesus’ divinity must take precedence, even if at the expense of his humanity.
   c. The Antiochians spoke of two natures in Christ, so they came to be known as Dyophysites (from the Greek duo physis, “two natures”), whereas the Alexandrians insisted upon one nature, at once divine and human, so they came to be known as Monophysites (from mono physis, “one nature”) (Dickens 2017, 1).

C. Ferguson’s (2013) research went on to say that according to Cyril of Alexandria, Nestorianism had its roots in Diodore.
   1. Diodore was a teacher in Antioch and later bishop of Tarsus (378-c. 390).
   2. His students included John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia (ibid., 258).

D. Nestorius was a former disciple of Theodore (Parente 1951, 199).
   1. Theodore held the divine and human in Christ so rigidly apart as to make Christ, though not professedly, yet virtually a double person (Schaff 1910, 715).
   2. Theodore thought in terms of the human Jesus who became God while his opposition thought in terms of the divine Christ who became man (Ferguson 2013, 259).

E. Nestorius became involved in a controversy over the word (theotokos), defined as “God bearer” or “mother of God.”
   1. Nestorius, like his teacher Theodore, was opposed to the expression “mother of God” (theotokos) that was already being applied to the virgin Mary.
   2. In Constantinople some were calling Mary mother of God (theotokos), others calling her mother of Man (anthropotokos).
   3. Nestorius proposed the middle expression, mother of Christ (christotokos), because Christ was at the same time God and man (Schaff 1910, 717).
   4. Because of his repeated rejection of the term (theotokos) it appeared that he held Christ to be constituted of two persons (Dowley 1977, 170).
   5. By the year 429 the controversy was well under way.
   6. From this disagreement on terminologies the Nestorian controversy was born.

F. From the Alexandrian school rose a powerful antagonist to Nestorius - Cyril of Alexandria.
   1. Cyril understood Nestorius to mean that the second person of the Trinity was actually two persons: the man Jesus who was born, suffered
and died and the divine Logos, eternal and unbegotten (Dickens 2017, 3).

2. Nestorius was seen as confusing the divine and human nature.

G. The conflict between Cyril and Nestorius could be viewed in a couple of ways.
   1. From one point of view it was a struggle between Alexandrian and Antiochian Christologies.
      a. The church in Antioch gave more emphasis to the humanity of Jesus.
      b. The church in Alexandria gave more emphasis to the divinity of Jesus (Ferguson 2013, 256).
   2. From another point of view the conflict involved the political and ecclesiastical rivalry between Alexandria and Constantinople (Greer 1967, 413)

H. According to Schaff (1910), Cyril wrote letters to Nestorius, then to the emperor and finally to the Roman bishop [i.e. the Pope] Celestine. He warned bishops and churches east and west against the dangerous heresies of his rival, Nestorius.
   1. Celestine condemned Nestorius’ doctrine at a Roman council in the year 430.
   2. By now the controversy had become so publicized and critical it could only be settled by an ecumenical council (ibid., 721-722).

   1. The majority of the bishops and prevailing voice of the people in Ephesus and in Constantinople were against Nestorius.
   2. The patriarch John of Antioch, a friend of Nestorius, was detained on the long journey with his bishops.
   3. Cyril refused to wait and opened the council with one hundred and sixty bishops in spite of the protest of the imperial commissioner.
   4. The council then proceeded and the bishops unanimously cried, “Whosoever holds fellowship with Nestorius, let him be anathema. We all anathematize the letter and the doctrines of Nestorius. We all anathematize Nestorius and his followers, and his ungodly faith, and his ungodly doctrine.”
   5. A few days later, John of Antioch finally reached Ephesus and held a counter council condemning Cyril and excommunicating all of the other bishops who voted with him.
   6. The division lasted two years before an attempt at a compromise was effected.
   7. In 433 a union was effected, though not without much contradiction on both sides (ibid., 722-728).

J. After the deaths of John in 442 and Cyril in 444, the compromise collapsed.
   1. Council of Chalcedon took place in 451 to produce a “Definition of Faith” about Christ.
   2. The Council decreed what was essentially Dyophysite in nature, thus alienating the Monophysite churches (the Syrian, Coptic, Armenian and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches), who separated from the Western Church after this council.

K. According to Schaff (1910), Nestorius was dragged from one place of exile to another - first to Arabia then to Egypt.
1. He endured his resignation and independence and died after 439.
2. Some sources suggest he died in Egypt around 450, but Schaff (1910) argues that no one knows where or when Nestorius died (ibid., 728).

L. Some scholars believe that Nestorius was unjustly accused of doctrines he did not hold.
1. After his exile, he wrote his apology, which survives in Syriac, under the pseudonym The Bazaar of Heraclides.
2. In this writing Nestorius attempts to justify his position and answer Cyril’s criticisms. (Dowley 1977, 169).

M. Did Nestorius truly hold to each of the beliefs he was accused of having?
1. We will never know for sure.
2. Whether deservingly or not, Nestorius had heresy attached to his name and those who held similar ideas were to be labeled as Nestorians.

II. EXPANSION:
1. The Formula of Union (a mutual understanding) was signed in 433;
2. However, this did not end disputes about the natures of Christ’s divinity and humanity. (Dowley 1977, 170).

B. It was several years after the death of Nestorius that the Christians of the Persian Empire heard about the controversy.
1. They decreed that the stand taken by Nestorius was in agreement with the view always maintained by the Church of the East.
2. As a result of the persecution of the followers of Nestorius, many Christians had to flee from the now Christian Roman Empire and found refuge among the followers of this Church (Nestorian.org 2017).

C. Schaff (1910) points out that by 489 Nestorianism had ended in the Roman empire, however things were very different in Persia (Schaff 1910, 729).

D. As noted by Latourette (1970), Nestorianism prevailed in the Persian Church for several reasons:
1. Removal to Mesopotamia of some of those exiled from the Roman domains because of their Nestorian views.
2. Winning over those at the school of Nisibis, the chief educational centre of the Mesopotamian-Persian Church.
3. Filling of many of the leading ecclesiastical posts with those trained at Nisibis and committed to Nestorian doctrine (Latourette 1970, 230).

E. Schaff (1910) relates more of the early history of the spread Nestorianism:
1. The Persian kings favored the Antiochian and Nestorian theology as well as the political opposition to Constantinople.
2. At the council of Seleucia in 498 they renounced all connection with the orthodox church of the Roman empire.
3. They called themselves Chaldean or Assyrian Christians, while their opponents called them Nestorians.
4. The Nestorian church flourished for several centuries, spread from Persia, with great missionary zeal, to India, Arabia, and even to China and Tartary.
5. Under the Mongol dynasty the Nestorians were cruelly persecuted.
6. Toward the end of the fourteenth century they were almost exterminated (Schaff 1910, 731-33).
7. The Schism of 1552 led to a series of internal divisions during the early modern period, and ultimately branched into the Chaldean Catholic
Church and the Assyrian Church of the East (Wilmshurst 2000, 2).

F. They continued to deal with hostilities for centuries and the church weakened.
   1. Villages were burned, churches plundered. Hundreds of precious old Christological books, looted, and destroyed with few reaching the world’s famous museums.
   2. The impact of twentieth century fell heavy upon these Christians, depriving them from their ancestral land and leaving them now scattered more than ever before. Wherever they went they clustered to each other, and found communities still adhering to their old faith, in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, Greece, Italy, Sweden, Russia, U.S.A., Canada and Australia (Nestorian.org 2017).

III. NESTORIANISM TODAY:
   A. Today the Nestorian Church is still in existence. According to the website www.nestorian.org:
      1. It represents the ancient church of Persia and is sometimes called the Assyrian (or East Syrian) Church/Church of the East.
      2. The Church’s current headquarters is in Chicago, IL.
         a. There are no accurate statistics about the number of adherents to the Church of the East in the Middle East (Nestorian.org 2017).
         b. However, another source notes: As of the year 2000, the Assyrian Church of the East had approximately: 285,000. Of that number, 100,000 were in the United States (Baum and Winkler 2003, 154-55).

IV. ORGANIZATION:
   A. Nestorian.org (2017) says Nestorianism has much in common with other Eastern rites.
   B. The liturgy (said in Aramaic/Syriac) is probably of the oldest liturgies in existence; the rite is called Assyrian.
      1. The Church of the East is governed by ordained clergy: bishops, presbyters and deacons and is organized into parishes, dioceses and provinces.
      2. In 310 AD, Papa bar Gaggai, bishop of the capital city of the Persian Empire, organized the bishops of the church in a form which resembled the model developed in the West.
      3. He placed the bishops under his jurisdiction and assumed the title “Catholicos of the East”
      4. The Catholicos became the presiding bishop over the entire church and in the fifth century the office received the title “Patriarch” (Nestorian.org 2017).

V. DOCTRINAL BELIEFS:
   A. Regarding the church
      1. According to their tradition, the Church of the East traces its history back to the Apostolic age.
      2. Some sources point more specifically to St. Thomas the apostle (ibid.).
   B. Regarding the Bible
      1. The official Bible of the Church of the East is the Peshitta - literally meaning ‘simple version’ or ‘straight’ in Aramaic (Peshitta.org 2017).
      2. The Old Testament was translated into Syriac from Hebrew, probably in the 2nd Century AD, and the New Testament portion was translated from the Greek (Brock 2006, 13).
C. Regarding Worship

1. According to the website of the Assyrian Church of the East in San Jose, California:
   a. The Church of the East has a sacramental system which resembles the sacramental systems of the Greek and Latin traditions. The Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist are primary, and the Sacrament of Holy Orders effects the other Sacraments. Confirmation is administered with Baptism, and Absolution is a benefit of the Eucharist. The Sign of the Cross, Unction, and “Holy Leaven” are defined as additional Sacraments.
   b. The central feature of the worship life of the Church of the East is the Eucharist, known in the Syriac language of the Church as the “Qurbana Qaddisha”, or “Holy Offering”. The liturgy of the Eucharist is attributed to “the Apostles, Addai and Mari, who discipled the East”. The Host is a leavened loaf, and the cup is an equal mixture of wine and water. The baptized faithful receive the body and blood of Christ under both species of bread and wine, and the “real presence” of Christ is understood in the elements.
   c. Baptism is administered to infants of Christian families and to new converts. It is not given to those who, for whatever reasons, enter the Church from other Christian bodies and have already been baptized with a Trinitarian formula. The baptismal liturgy resembles the eucharistic liturgy in form. Following an anointing with oil there is a triple immersion in consecrated water in the name of the Holy Trinity, and a final “sealing”, which is Confirmation, with the imposition of hands at the door of the altar.
   d. The teaching of the Church of the East is based on the faith of the universal Church as set forth in the Nicene Creed. The mystery of the Holy Trinity and the mystery of the Incarnation are central to its teaching. The church believes in One Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also believes and teaches that the Only-begotten Son of God, God the Word, became incarnate for us men and for our salvation and became man (Maryosipparish.org 2017).

CONCLUSION:

A. Cnewa.org (2017), the Catholic Near East Welfare Association [CNEWA], gives a good summary statement regarding Nestorianism/Church of the East in an article titled “Relations between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East:” (cnewa.org 2017):

1. The Assyrian Church of the East is the modern continuation of the ancient church of the Persian empire which fell out of communion with the rest of the Christian world in the 5th century when, for political as well as theological reasons, it officially adopted Nestorian Christology.
2. Thus it accepts only the first two ecumenical councils.
3. There were only sporadic contacts with Rome until the 13th century.
4. In the 16th century a large section of the Assyrian Church of the East sought union with Rome and eventually formed what is now known as the Chaldean Catholic Church. Today the Assyrians are not in full
communion with any other church (ibid.).

B. In 1994 the Nestorian and Roman Catholic churches signed a declaration recognizing the legitimacy of each other’s theological positions (Nestorian.org 2017).

REFERENCES:


INTRODUCTION:
A. Due to the informative nature of this assignment, the terms “Church” and “Christians” are used in an accommodative sense to the sources used, whether direct quotes or in references. Since this assignment is not intended to correct doctrinal error, the terms are not used in the biblical sense of the New Testament church or New Testament Christians.
B. “Oriental” refers to the East and “Orthodox” is defined by Merriam-Webster as: “conforming to established doctrine especially in religion.” (Miriam-Webster 2017).
C. The Oriental Orthodox Church is actually a group of six self-governing church bodies in the East.
1. The six Oriental Orthodox churches are: The Coptic Orthodox, Eritrean Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India, and Armenian Apostolic churches.
2. According to Patheos’ Religion Library (2017), “Although these six churches are still in full communion with one another and have similar theologies and doctrines, they are hierarchically autonomous from each other, lacking any equivalent to the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople or the Roman Catholic Pope of Rome. Because of forms of literature, ritual, art, and liturgy. Not surprisingly, they use various languages and even have different versions of scripture due to language differences.” (Patheos.com 2017).
D. Taylor Marshall (2015) classifies this communion of Oriental Orthodox Churches by the following terms:
1. Oriental Orthodox (to distinguish them from the Eastern Orthodox).
2. Non-Chalcedonian (since they do not receive the Council of Chalcedon as do Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox).
3. Jacobites (after Jacob Baradaeus, the Miaphysite Bishop of Edessa)
4. Miaphysites (in honor of the term used by Saint Cyril: mia physis or “one nature”)
5. Monophysites (a term of contempt rejected by the Oriental Orthodox Church – they prefer the term Miaphysite.) (Marshall 2015).

DISCUSSION:
I. HISTORY.
A. Each of the six churches claim to be able to trace their heritage back to the missionary efforts of the first century (Patheos.com 2017).
1. “The Oriental Orthodox churches are ancient churches which were founded in apostolic times, by apostles or by the apostles’ earliest
2. Michael Allen (2005), in An Introduction to the Oriental Orthodox Churches, states, “Saints Thaddeus and Bartholomew are believed to have been martyred in Armenia; St. Mark is referred to as the first bishop of Alexandria; St. Philip is said to have baptized an Ethiopian pilgrim, who returned home to spread the faith in African lands south of Egypt; Antioch is mentioned in the book of Acts as the place where the term “Christian” was first used; and St. Thomas is believed to have been martyred in South India. While some of these claims are debated by scholars, the establishment of Christianity in these lands certainly dates to the earliest centuries of the Christian era.” (Allen 2005, 2).

B. According to the New World Encyclopedia (2017), this “communion of Eastern Christian Churches recognize only the first four ecumenical councils—the First Council of Nicaea, the First Council of Constantinople, the First Council of Ephesus and the Second Council of Ephesus—and reject the dogmatic definitions of the Council of Chalcedon.” (New World Encyclopedia 2017).

1. Though the New World Encyclopedia lists the Second Council of Ephesus as “ecumenical,” most sources do not.

2. The Second Council was termed as a church synod in 449 AD in which the Emperor declared it ecumenical, however because of the controversial proceedings it was not accepted as ecumenical by Rome and Byzantine.

3. Therefore, the majority of sources simply state, “While the Roman and Byzantine Churches came to accept Chalcedon as the Fourth Ecumenical Council, the Oriental Orthodox Churches acknowledge only the first three” (Ibrahim 2015).

C. The Oriental Orthodox Churches were united with Rome and Byzantium in a common profession of faith until the fifth century, when the Council of Chalcedon (451) proclaimed Christ to have two distinct natures—human and divine—united in one person (Allen 2005, 2).

1. The Council of Chalcedon, taking place twenty years after the Council of Ephesus, decreed that Jesus Christ was a single person existing “in two complete natures,” one nature human and one nature divine. While some agreed to this conclusion, others opposed the decision at Chalcedon and saw it as a concession to Nestorianism. These two lines of thought gradually separated and broke off communion. What remained was those who accepted the Council of Chalcedon and those who rejected it - the Oriental Orthodoxy (Non-Chalcedonian). Eventually these two groups developed separate institutions, and the Oriental Orthodox Churches did not participate in any of the later ecumenical councils.

2. The Chalcedonians began to refer to the Oriental Orthodox Christians as being Monophysites - accusing them of following the teachings of Eutyches.
   a. Eutyches insisted that after the Incarnation the two natures of Christ, the human and the divine, were fused into one nature, the divine.
   b. This view resulted in the denial of the true humanity of Christ (Cairns 1981, 136).
   c. This doctrine was condemned at Chalcedon along with
3. However, the Oriental Orthodox themselves reject this description [Monophysite] as inaccurate, having officially condemned the teachings of both Nestorius and Eutyches. They define themselves as Miaphysite (from the Greek mia-, or “single” and physis, or “nature”) instead, holding that Christ has one nature, but this nature is both human and divine (Stefon 2017).

4. After the Council of Chalcedon (489 C.E.), the churches of the East had no serious ties any longer to the Church in the West—though there were always influences brought to bear from the western tradition impacting the East (Bauman 2001, 1).

II. EXPANSION.

A. Countries with the highest percentage of Oriental Orthodox Christians are: Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, India. Though these countries have the highest percentages, Oriental Orthodoxy has spread to numerous countries, including the United States which has a membership of about 227,000 according to the 2010 census (Acrod.org 2017).

B. Their growth, according to Bauman, is attributed to a development of a theological perspective which reflected hope and confidence. In direct response to the religious traditions of Asia (Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism), their understanding shaped a unique response designed to speak directly to these other traditional faiths.

C. Additionally, the churches of the East never sought to exclude and suppress other faiths by dominating their cultural worlds. Oriental Orthodoxy did not perceive other faith traditions as enemies, but as worthy partners in an on-going exploration of the sacred (Bauman 2001, 2).

D. Though it is difficult to obtain accurate numbers due to varying locations, the number of adherents today belonging to Oriental Orthodox Churches range from 50,000,000 (Stocsa.com 2017) to 70,000,000 (Marshall 2015).

III. ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCH TODAY.

A. Since the 1960s the Oriental Orthodox have held conferences together, and, aiming at theological reconciliation, with the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches (Bowker 1997, 718).

B. It was only in modern times, and especially in the 20th century, that new connections were made possible between the Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental. The frame was created by the Ecumenical Movement (Toroczkai 2016, 254).

C. In January of 1994, Christianity Today carried an article titled, “Leaders Ending 1,500 Years of Official Schism.” The article told of how representatives of Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian (Oriental) streams of Orthodoxy issued a joint statement announcing procedures for the restoration of full communion (Frame 1994, 51).

D. Progress toward unification was still seen in 2014. A Working Group for the Joint Commission on Dialogue reported on their work and were looking for final steps of reconciliation between the Orthodox and Oriental Churches. However, the commission also acknowledged there were issues worthy of further discussion. Yet they still felt a restored communion was within their reach (Frost 2016).

E. Though there have been talks of unification, as of the writing of this material, total unification between Eastern Orthodoxy, the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches has not happened yet.
IV. ORGANIZATION.

A. Though not recognized by most as a scholarly source, the following information from Wikipedia helps to summarize the organization of the Oriental Orthodox Churches:

1. Collectively, they consider themselves to be the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic church founded by Jesus Christ in his Great Commission, and that its bishops are the successors of Christ’s apostles.

2. Most member churches are part of the World Council of Churches.

3. All member churches share a virtually identical theology, with the distinguishing feature being Miaphysitism.

4. Three very different rites are practiced in the communion: the western-influenced Armenian Rite, the West Syrian Rite of the two Syriac churches, and the Alexandrian Rite of the Copts and Ethiopians.

5. The Oriental Orthodox churches maintain their own ancient apostolic succession.

6. The various churches are governed by Holy Synods, with a primus inter pares bishop serving as primate. The primates hold titles like patriarch, catholicos, and pope.

7. Among these patriarchs, the Pope of Alexandria takes precedence, and is sometimes considered the “face” of Oriental Orthodoxy; that said, the Pope of Alexandria has no governing powers with respect to the non-Coptic churches.

8. Oriental Orthodoxy does not have a magisterial leader like the Roman Catholic Church, nor does the communion have a leader who can convene ecumenical synods like the Eastern Orthodox Church.

(Wikipedia 2017).

V. DOCTRINAL BELIEFS.

A. Taylor Marshall sheds light on their doctrinal beliefs when he says they, “have the seven sacraments, revere the Mother of God and the saints, have a valid Eucharist, pray for the faithful departed, and have preserved a valid line of apostolic succession.” (Marshall 2015).

B. The following statements of philosophy and practice come from Bauman (2001) and his work, “Distinctive Features of Oriental Orthodoxy”:

1. At this important juncture, it seeks first to interact fully with the contemporary world without erecting cultural barriers between itself and its message.

2. It is focused on creating an ecumenical network of men and women, communities, and congregations in a renewed confederation (either within or outside the institutional Church) among those who share similar values of contemplative life (Bauman 2001, 3).

C. Kyrillos Ibrihim (2015) comments, “While ancient traditions still dominate, a fresh vitality and creativity are blowing in these churches, both in their mother lands and in the diaspora. They have significantly revived monastic life as a rich source of spirituality, evangelism and diakonia for clergy as well as laity, men and women. They have reorganized theological education. Sunday schools have become centres of intense activities. Youth movements and student associations have been created. Bible study seminars, courses for the Christian formation of laity, fasting and daily

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celebrations of saints are vivid expressions of deep spirituality and of evangelistic inreach and outreach, which nurture and build these communities of faith. They are churches of the people, without the dichotomy between institution and community. The whole people of God participate actively in the life and witness of the church.” (Ibrahim 2015).

CONCLUSION:
A. An article published on the World Council of Churches website by Geevarghese Mar Osthathios (2002) gives the following summary descriptions for each of the six bodies that make up the Oriental Orthodox Churches. According to Osthathios:

1. The Coptic Orthodox Church traces its history back to St Mark the Evangelist, who founded the church in Egypt.
   a. The ancient Egyptian patriarchate of Alexandria represented one of the chief sees of the early church within the Roman empire.
   b. The Copts, descendants of the ancient Egyptians, preserved the Coptic language in their liturgy.
   c. Through a long period of persecution since Byzantine times, the Coptic Orthodox Church tenaciously held fast to the “faith of the fathers”.
   d. A chief strength was its continuing the great ascetic-monastic traditions that originated in the Egyptian deserts.
   e. The church has initiated considerable missionary work in other parts of Africa and has a significant diaspora in North America, Europe, Australia and the Middle East.

2. The Syrian Orthodox Church, which traces its origins to A.D. 37, holds the traditions of St. Peter’s work.
   a. The church suffered severe persecution during the struggle against Hellenistic domination at the time of the council of Chalcedon and later through Mongol invasions and Turkish rule.
   b. The patriarchate had to be moved several times, finally being established in Damascus only in the 20th century.
   c. Syrian liturgical and theological life flourished until the 13th century but steadily declined afterwards.
   d. The monastic movement produced many universally acknowledged saints and contributed enormously to the creation of a rich liturgical tradition.
   e. In 1665 the Antiochian church came into contact with the ancient church of St. Thomas Christians in India, which led to the West Syrian liturgy being introduced to the Christians in South India.
   f. Though the Syrian church is vastly reduced in number because of Muslim domination, it has a considerable diaspora in the US, Australia and Europe.

3. The Armenian Apostolic Church traditionally attributes its beginning to the preaching of St. Thaddeus and St Bartholomew.
   a. In 301 Armenia became the first nation to make Christianity its official religion.
   b. Victims of terrible persecution through the centuries, Armenian Christians heroically preserved their apostolic faith.
   c. The catholicos of All Armenians resides in Etchmiadzin, Armenia.
d. There are three ecclesiastical centres within the church apart from Etchmiadzin: the
catholicate of Cilicia (Antelias, Lebanon), the patriarchate of Jerusalem and the
patriarchate of Constantinople.
e. The Armenian church has a significant diaspora in all the continents.
f. The Armenian national aspirations and the Armenian Orthodox faith
are integrally interconnected.
4. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church traces its history back to apostolic times.
a. Long under the tutelage of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the
Ethiopian church declared autocephaly in 1950 and is
now governed by its own patriarch in Addis Ababa.
b. The church uses both the ancient language of Geez and modern
Amharic in its
liturgy.
c. Influenced by a long tradition of monastic spirituality, this church has produced
considerable religious literature and has its own iconographic tradition.
d. It is now gradually moving beyond age-old social and economic
structures to meet contemporary challenges.
5. The Eritrean Orthodox Church is also an autocephalous church, with a direct
relationship to the Coptic Orthodox Church.
a. Its first patriarch, Philipos I, was consecrated in 1998.
6. The Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Church has always cherished the tradition of St.
Thomas as the founding father of Christianity in India.
a. The Indian church, now divided into Roman Catholic, Protestant and
Orthodox families, has suffered from Western colonial missions.
b. The church came into contact with the Syrian patriarchate of Antioch in 1665 and thus inherited the west Syrian liturgical and spiritual tradition.
c. The Orthodox church in India declared itself autocephalous in 1912, though conflicts with the Syrian patriarchate continue.
d. With two theological colleges, Kottayam and Nagapur, a mission
training centre and many educational and charitable institutions, the church is fully involved in the
life of the country.
e. Besides the catholicos residing at Kottayam, Kerala, the church has 17
bishops and
f. It has a diaspora in North America, Malaysia, Singapore and the Gulf
countries.
(Osthathios 2002).
REFERENCES:


MARCIIONISM

BRYAN COOK

I. WHO IS MARCION?
   A. Son of a bishop according to Hippolytus (Harnack 2007, 16).
   B. Later would be excommunicated by his father for raping a virgin according to Epiphanius (ibid.).
   C. Other sources (Tertullian), had knowledge of writings by Marcion to the church at Rome that would indicate he was “orthodox” as late as his move to Rome (Head 1993, 308)
   D. From the city of Pontus (McGuckin 2004, 215)
   E. Marcion was a native of Sinope, the most important Greek commercial city on the south shore of the Black Sea (Harnack 2007, 15).
   F. Polycarp would later say about Marcion, “I recognize you as the first-born of Satan.” (Harnack 2007, 17).
   G. Note that many sources are replete with adversarial testimony with much information missing. This is even true with the earliest and most trusted source of Tertullian (ie. Must be taken with a grain of salt) (Moll 2008, 176).

II. WHAT DID MARCION BELIEVE?
   A. Roots of Gnosticism.
      1. He became a disciple of the gnostic teacher Cerdo. Cerdo is a common thread of multiple adversarial sources (Moll 2008, 169). He soon developed his own teachings from these gnostic speculations. (McGuckin 2004, 215).
      2. Cerdo, “taught that the God proclaimed by the Law and the Prophets was not the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the former was known, but the latter unknown; while the one also was righteous, but the other benevolent.” (Head 1993, 308).
      3. Even though many don’t count him as a true gnostic, he did adopt the view that the God of the Old Testament was not the God and Father of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament (McGuckin 2004, 215).
      1. He desired to to make a great severe separation between the Testaments and put forth an extreme supersessionist view (McGuckin 2004, 215).
      2. He is the only known thinker in Christianity with the serious conviction that the Deity who redeems one from the world had absolutely nothing to do with cosmology and cosmic teleology (Harnack 2004, editor’s note).
      3. He believed the Mosaic law was replaced with the religion of Christ’s grace (McGuckin 2004, 215).
      4. His entire attitude toward the Old Testament and Judaism was well described as one of resent.
      5. He believed the Old Testament spoke only of an incompetent demiurge who involved humanity in oppression of sin and judgment (ibid.).
      6. He believed that the true God was revealed by Jesus: a God of love in
opposition to the vengeful demiurge of the Old Testament (ibid.).
7. The messiah of the Old Testament had yet to come and was different than Jesus (ibid.).
8. The messiah of the Old would be the the one that would deliver the Jewish nation back to its previous kingdom status (ibid).

C. Complete separation from the material world (Poorthuis 2016, 292).
1. His religion was a-political “serving as a lifestyle only.”
2. Separation from the world because the whole creation is evil.

D. Marcion’s Bible.
1. According to Harnack, this is Marcion’s 12 motives for changing scriptures (Harnack 2004, 45-46). Later sections will discuss why he was not as sever revisionist as here noted.
   a. The creator of the world and God of the Old Testament may not appear as the Father of Jesus Christ.
   b. The Old Testament cannot have prophesied anything that is fulfilled in Christ.
   c. The good God must have been hidden from the creator of the world until the appearing.
   d. He, the good God must not be thought of as the director of the world or as the God of earthly providence.
   e. He may not appear as judge but exclusively as the merciful one and as redeemer.
   f. His redemption and his promises are related exclusively to eternal life.
   g. The Son of the good God, Christ is to be understood modalistically in his relationship to the Father.
   h. He had nothing about him that was earthly and thus no flesh and no physical body; therefore he cannot have been born and cannot have had relatives.
   i. He did not fulfill the law but abolished it, exposed the radical opposition between law and gospel and established his redemption upon faith alone.
   j. He demanded of men their total separation from the world and from the works of the creator of the world.
   k. He raised up only one genuine apostle after the original ones has proven themselves to be unteachable. The gospel of Paul is the gospel of christ.
   l. He will not appear again as judge but a the end of time will announce the great separation that has been made.

2. In defense of Marcion’s redactions, many would argue that much of the scripture was unavailable (BeDuhn 2012, 24).
3. The other defense for Marcion’s redactions is the fact that very little is stated from his early critics (Justin, Rhodon, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus) about redaction. Their issue was one of wrong interpretation (ibid.).
4. Another defense is that of the known Greek texts, very little actual revision was made in Marcion’s writings (Quispel 1998, 349).
5. As well as much of the variants have been blown out of proportion (ibid.).
6. One extreme of scholarship concerning this (around 1850) will state that Luke was derived from Marcion’s gospel (Roth 2009, 516).
a. This would be shortly reversed after being refuted by other scholars (ibid.).
b. Early writers such as Ignatius in his work Epistle to the Smyrnaeans shows that “Marcion did edit Luke in accordance with his domestic agenda…” (Carter, 550). Not the other way around.

7. It is interesting to note that modern scholarship places Marcion’s gospel (quoting Paul and Luke) as some of the oldest sources of scripture that were translated into Latin by Tertullian (Roth 2009, 434).

8. Concerning the gospel according to Marcion.
   b. He further removed the genealogy and infancy story from Luke (Head 1993, 311).
   c. The first part of the gospel is missing till 4:32 with the exception of 3:1 in Luke.
   d. He believed that the Apostles (minus Paul) had never written anything down.
   e. Matthew and John were clearly forgeries (Harnack 2007, 29).
   f. It was his duty to cleanse Luke of all the Jewish influences.
   g. His task was for restoration of the genuine text (Head 1993, 311).
   h. Marcion’s pupils would also make alterations to the text to cut out all legalism and the Jewish law (Harnack 2007, 30).

9. The epistles according to Marcion.
   a. He only recognized Paul as an authentic writer (McGuckin 2004, 215).
   b. He produced edited (redacted) versions of ten of Paul’s epistles (Head 1993, 311).
   c. The other Apostles were already corrupted by the time of Paul’s gospel (Harnack 2007, 25).
   d. Even in Paul’s writings was indicative that the Old Testament God was in the New Testament plan. This was part of a well orchestrated plan to integrate Judaism into christianity from the departure of Christ from the earth (ibid.).
   e. Half of Romans is removed (ibid. 43).
   f. Paul, according to Marcion, had been the apostle Jesus chose to counteract the corrupting of the gospel of the others (ibid. 23).
   g. The oral traditions of the Apostles could not be trusted. This method was unreliable. Only a written record would suffice (ibid. 28).
   h. Paul’s writings had to be examined for corruption from the Judaizers.
   i. He believed that the other apostles had been corrupted by the law (McGuckin 2004, 215).
   j. He relied heavily on the arguments formed from Galatians and Romans (Harnack 2007, 21).
   k. He cut from Paul’s writings about God bringing destruction because the good God would destroy no-one (ibid. 33).
   l. Very little is altered in Marcion’s version, only things are cut out (ibid. 43). See previous statements on the revisions.

10. Allegory and figurative language of the Bible.
a. The figurative language was not taken as such (McGuckin 2004, 215).
b. This was the escape mechanism by which he was able to separate the testaments so severely.

11. Marcion, around the time of his excommunication, would take his completed New Testament and his commentary Antitheses before the presbyters in Rome to take a stand.
a. Marcion brought up the case of Luke 6:43 (the good and corrupt tree) and Luke 5:36 (new wine in old skins) to indicate proof from Jesus that the separation was to take place.
b. He interpreted the teaching of Jesus to mean a complete divide (Harnack 2007, 18).

12. His great critical work Antithese would demonstrate the irreconcilability of the Old Testament with the gospel and its origin from a different God (ibid. 17).

13. He thought of himself as a critic and restorer of the church (ibid. 24).

14. Even the most elevating and comforting words from the Old Testament were just pretense and delusion of a frightful, cruel God (ibid. 22-23).

15. He did see the Old Testament as a proper history even though it is the enemy (ibid. 23).

E. Marcion’s God.

1. The God Marcion referred to as the good Redeemer was also at the same time known as the Unknown God and the Alien (ibid. 3).

2. This God revealed through Jesus had nothing to do with the Old Testament God.

3. Marcion will have the redeemer God to redeem man from the world and the world’s creator.

4. There was not any revelation of any kind until Jesus came about the redeemer God (ibid. 23).

5. Marcion’s God of the New Testament did not have wrath or destruction because He is a redeeming God.

6. The New Testament God is present at the judgment but not involved in that punishment (ibid.).

F. Law versus grace.

1. Marcion saw the Law as “just another means to chain man by preventing him from partaking in the grace of the good Lord.” (Poorthius 2016, 293).

2. Accordingly, there is no room for “justice and law” in Christianity.

G. Marcion’s Christology (Head 1993, 313-321).

1. The body of Christ was not flesh for flesh was evil.

2. Blackmon summarizes it as thus, “he is the son of the good God, in a moralistic sense, He cannot have had a body of flesh and blood, for these are earthly elements. As he is himself independent of the World-Creator and all his works, so he demands that men also shall free themselves from the Creator and from this world.” (Head 1993, 314).

3. He uses Paul’s writings to prove this view.
a. The ‘form’ of a servant.
b. The ‘likeness’ of men.

4. The gospel.
a. Jesus just appears in Capernaum.
b. Not from Nazareth.
c. Not baptized.
d. No temptation.
e. No human developed.
f. Not the Christ of the OT.
g. No physical mother.
h. Not brothers or sisters.
i. Not assisted by angels.
j. Not according to OT prophecy.

5. There was no cleansing of the temple.
6. There is no connection to the law of Moses.
7. He is not the King of the Jews.
8. Jesus does not tell the thief on the cross about paradise.

H. Later influences of Marcionism would later be taken over by the Manichean views (McGuckin 2004, 215).

III. WHEN DID THE INFLUENCE OF MARCION PROPAGATE?
A. Estimated birth date and death, 110-160 AD (New World Encyclopedia online).
B. Marcion made a fortune in shipping and came to Rome to study in 140 AD (McGuckin 2004, 215).
C. He was excommunicated by the Roman church in 144 AD because of his weird views (ibid.).
D. After being excommunicated he went full tilt with propaganda to spread his heresy. This may have been after the excommunication by his father (contrasting histories from adversarial witnesses).
E. According to Justin, in his work Apology, stated that the propaganda had spread to the whole human race.
F. Tertullian also wrote that Marcion’s teaching had filled the entire world (Harnack 2007,19).
G. Marcion’s church was soon calling him the founder of the church even though Marcion himself just thought of himself as a pupil of Paul (ibid. 28).

IV. WHY DID MARCION HAVE SO MUCH INFLUENCE?
A. He began in Rome by giving 200,000 sesterces to the local congregation (which they gave back after the charges of heresy) (ibid. 27).
B. There was a vacuum of theological arguments.
C. The heresy did not stop until they developed arguments against it.

V. MARCION’S INFLUENCE ON THE CHURCH?
A. After being excommunicated by the church at Rome in A.D. 144, he set up his own church, “rivaling the orthodox church in structure and organization until he died about A.D. 160.” (Head 1993, 309).
B. According to Justin and Tertullian, the second century showed a great expanse of the Marcion church all throughout the Empire (ibid. 310).
C. Marcion was the first to compile a catalogue or canon of Biblical text (McGuckin 2004, 215). This was widely rejected but brought about efforts to have an actual canon.
D. Papias (early writer) would write that John’s writings (the gospel and possibly the epistles) were in reaction to the Marcian heresy that was taking form (Markus 2015, 62).
E. This influence would run its course until the fourth century and then completely fade away in the fifth (McGuckin 2004, 215).
F. The issues would be revisited by German scholars to degrade the canonicity of books such as Luke as being in reaction to heresy and not the actual scripture (Roth 2008, 514).

G. According to Markus Vincent concerning Marcion’s influence, “No other teacher in the history of the Church until Martin Luther than Marcion received already during his lifetime and still after his death a comparable literary response (Vincent 2015, 68)?

VI. WORSHIP.
A. After being excommunicated, he developed his own community of disciple which resembled the Roman church in worship (McGuckin 2004, 215).
B. There was warnings from Cyril of Jerusalem 250 years after Marcion’s death about not going to Marcion type churches (ibid.). He warned that they look and worship almost identical to the orthodox churches in the same area.

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http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Marcion
INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW
OF EASTERN ORTHODOX

JARED KNOLL

INTRODUCTION:
A. It is considered the second largest body of Christianity in the world with 240 million adherents (Adherents 2017).
1. It is surpassed only by the Catholic Church in estimated figures (1.05 billion adherents).
2. It is more than three times the estimated size of both the Baptist and Methodist organizations with 70 million adherents each.
3. It dwarfs the Jehovah’s witness organization (16.5 million adherents) and the Mormons (12.5 million adherents).
4. The “Stone/Campbell (Restoration Movement)” also pales in comparison with a mere 5.4 million adherents (44 to 1).
B. With less than 1.5 percent of the estimated number dwelling in the United States (Mead 1995) you may not have even met someone who practices the Eastern Orthodox religion.
1. Perhaps the names: Tom Hanks, Tina Fey, and John Belushi (actor/comedians), or Joseph Stalin and Vladimir Lenin (both later embraced atheism), or Spenser Abraham, Darrell Issa and George Stephanopoulos (politicians) sound familiar. These and many others were, are or have been practitioners of the Eastern Orthodox religion.
2. An article posted by Huffington Post in 2010 entitled, “Report Finds Strong Growth In U.S. Orthodox Churches” stated that the United States had 2073 Orthodox perishes and more than a million adherents.
C. Our assignment in this outline is to both introduce and overview this religion in the context of “Church and Religious History.” To this end we will:
1. Define a few terms,
2. Give a brief historical sketch of the formation of Eastern Orthodoxy, and
3. Overview some major points of ideology and practice.
D. It should be noted that this outline focuses on the time of Church History between 33 and 1500 AD, not modern times.
1. We are considering the roots of Eastern Orthodox not necessarily the whole tree of 2017.
2. It should be understood that today the Eastern Orthodox is what we might call a conglomerate of independent groups. Today you have the Orthodox Church of Russia, Greece, Syria, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Albania and even America (Kallinikos 1957).

DISCUSSION:
I. Terms Relating to The Organization of Eastern Orthodox.
A. Byzantine Empire:
1. Eastern Orthodox relates to the Eastern Roman Empire known as the
Byzantine Empire. (For this reason it is also called Greek Orthodox.)

2. The town of Byzantium was rebuilt by Constantine and renamed Constantinople in the 330’s A.D. as he made it his capital city.

3. As the Western part of the Empire declined this name is applied to the Roman Empire from the late 400’s till the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 A.D.

B. Orthodox:

1. The Latin is “orthodoxus” meaning right in religion.

2. The Greek is compound of “orthos” and “doxa.”
   a. “Orthos” means level, direct, straight and upright; also correct, true and right. It is found twice in the New Testament: Acts 14:10 it is translated “upright” and in Hebrews 12:13 it is translated “straight.” You will also see it utilized today in words like orthopedic and orthodontist.
   b. “Doxa” means glory, honor, praise or worship.
   c. Thus we have right praise, correct or true worship.

3. An English dictionary renders the term as (Dictionary, 2017):
   a. “…of, relating to or conforming to the approved form of any doctrine, philosophy, ideology, etc.”
   b. “…of, relating to or conforming to beliefs, attitudes or modes of conduct generally approved.”
   c. “…sound or correct in opinion or doctrine, especially theological or religious doctrine.”

4. The definition presents a wholesome concept, but it must be remembered that to determine rightness, correctness, trueness of doctrine, worship, practice etc. you must work from the right pattern, blueprint, standard or such. (cf. Heb. 8:5)

C. Catholic:

1. This term is sometimes seen in connection with Eastern Orthodox as Orthodox Catholic Church because it teaches that it is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church (Killinikos 1957).

2. The meaning here is “universal in extent; involving all; of interest to all…pertaining to the whole Christian body or church” (Dictionary 2017)

D. Patriarchs:

1. As used throughout this outline it is to be understood by a definition connecting it with Eastern Orthodox.

2. “The head of any of the ancient Sees of Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople or Jerusalem and sometimes including the sees of other chief cities” (Dictionary 2017)

3. This would also be understood in the same sense as an arch-bishop in the Roman Catholic Church.


5. The Sees may be seen referred to as Patriarchates.

6. The term Ecumenical Patriarch was used of the patriarch of Constantinople, regarded as the highest dignitary of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

II. Brief Historical Sketch of The Formation of Eastern Orthodox.

A. While we may not so consider it, many of the histories begin with the church established in 33 AD.

1. True it is that apostasy and perversion of the true church has led to
what we currently have in the denominational, religious world and all
want to link to the original.
2. Thus, whether Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox, their histories
will begin with New Testament church history.
3. It is important to remember, however, that when you cease to do things
as the first century pattern, you cease to be the first century church (c.f.
Rev. 2:5; II Tim. 3:1-9). The pattern is important!

B. Initial history of the Eastern Orthodox is the history of the Roman
Catholic Church.
1. It is said that in the first 1000 years of their history the Eastern and
Roman (Western) were two branches of the same church. (Mead 1995)
2. For this cause study of the Ecumenical Councils, especially the first
seven, would be beneficial to understanding the history of Eastern
Orthodox. (Other lectures will focus on these councils.)

C. Constantine’s role in religious history is important to the history of Eastern
Orthodox because some of his actions help to precipitate the split of the
two branches.
1. He moved the capital of the Empire from Rome to Byzantium
(renamed Constantinople) in the 330’s AD. While his motives may be
concluded and many, it is understood that Constantine was drawn to
the Greek nation, desiring to resurrect it on a Roman model. (Vidmar
2014)
2. He desired a common language, culture and religion, however, two
very distinct would be hard pressed to merge (Roman and Greek). The
result, as Vidmar (2014) points out, was a growing difference in
Eastern and Western religion.
3. A power struggle emerged from that time until the climax of the Great
Schism in 1054 A.D. (Another lecture will focus on the Great Schism.).

D. There is also a need to study the Patriarchs.
1. While the term did not come into use until 451 as previously mentioned,
it did pertain to the ecclesiastical dioceses that corresponded to
Constantine’s political dioceses. Each dioceses was overseen by an
archbishop (which was later called a patriarch).
2. By the middle of the fifth century there were five “supreme
ecclesiastical rulers” to be called patriarchs - the archbishops of Rome,
Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.
3. The fourth ecumenical council (Chalcedon in 451) declared the
archbishop of Constantinople to have the same entitlement of
reverence as the Archbishop of Rome “because it was the King’s city”
(Kallinikos 1957)
4. This also precipitates the power struggle between the two branches
that culminates in the Great Schism of 1054 AD.

E. The Second Trullian Council held in Constantinople in 692 set forth
principles peculiar to the Orthodox Church and also precipitated the
break between Eastern and Western branches.
1. It is considered an extension of the sixth ecumenical council (Third
Council of Constantinople, 680-681 AD) and focused on discipline.
2. It was attended by 215 bishops of the Eastern Branch and none of the
Western (The Roman Catholic Church calls it reprobate.).
3. Consider four principles of importance from this council. (Mattox
1961)
a. It approved marriage of the clergy except the bishop, archbishop and Patriarch.
b. Reaffirmed equal rank of the Patriarch of Constantinople and Pope in Rome.
c. Fasting on Saturday’s of lent not required.
d. Forbade pictorial representations of Christ as a lamb.

4. Mattox (1961) points out that these things represent the difference in the temperament of the people in the East and West.

F. Two final marks in history that shape the Eastern Orthodox as independent from the Western Roman branch.
1. Beginning in 858 there was decision between Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople and Nicholas I, the Pope in Rome.
2. Photius claimed the Pope (Mattox 1961):
   a. Approached idolatry in attitude toward images.
   b. Was heretical by changing the doctrine regarding the “procession of the Holy Spirit” set forth in the first council of Nicaea. - The Nicaean Creed said “from the Father” but Pope changed it to add “and the Son” (filioque).
3. They excommunicated each other but the decision was healed for a while by the 869 Council of Constantinople.
4. The final break came in 1054 in the event of the Great Schism. This event in effect “crystallized” the break as Pope Leo IX and Cerularias, the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated each other.

G. From this nearly 1000 years of history, though power/rule was a key element, we can deduce at least seven major differences (Mattox 1961):
1. Four Patriarchs are head of the church, not the Pope.
2. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, not the Father and the son.
3. Leavened bread could be used for Lord’s supper not unleavened only.
4. Triune immersion and never sprinkling is the mode of baptism.
5. The clergy could marry with the exception of Bishop, Archbishop and Patriarch.
6. No images in worship could be used only pictures with flat surfaces.
7. Use of instruments were not accepted in worship in these centuries.

III. Overview of Major Points of Ideology and Practice.
A. It should be remembered that we are considering the subject as it relates to the time period of 33-1500 A.D. The proceeding material is considering ideology and practice pertaining to that time period. Some of which, is still in practice today but may be in altered form.

B. Let us consider first Monasticism.
1. Martyrdom had been throughout the persecution the most “efficient” way to imitate Christ but with Constantine’s toleration it became less possible. Thus another means took shape, referred to as the “unbloody martyrdom.”
2. Though based initially on the principle of Jesus’ time in solitude (Matt. 14:23; Luke 6:12) or Paul’s time in Arabia (Gal. 1:17) this solitude became a permanent, solitude for a life time.
3. Historically, the rise of the monastic life is attributed to a man from Egypt named Antony (251-356), though he was not the first “monk.” (Vidmar 2014)
   a. Briefly stated: Antony, while at church, had heard the account of the Rich-Young Ruler and set a course to dispossess himself of his
lands/possessions.

b. He retreated to the mountains, dwelling in the ruins of an old fort. Others following his example followed suit and dwelled in dens within the mountains.

c. He was sought for counsel by many, including Constantine and two of his sons.

d. While we will hone our discussion to the Eastern Orthodox, there is a lecture within the book which will address the topic of Monasticism.

4. While both branches of the Catholic Church practiced monasticism, there existed a distinctive nature between the East and the West even before the Great Schism. (Latourette 1953)

5. Perhaps the most well known monastery in the East was that of Studius within Constantinople. Such characterized the monasteries of the Eastern branch as the monks were given to solitude focused on individual perfection by prayer and ascetic practices.

6. Practices of mysticism also existed within the Eastern monasteries. (Latourette 1953)

a. Hesychasm was started by Simon Neotheologus (“New Theologian”) a monk of the Studias monastery.

b. The theory is that through special practices one could attain the Beatific Vision of God - “Divine light can be attained and that it is of grace, bringing justification, joy and peace.”

c. The “special practices” of the theory: hold your breath, fix your eyes upon your navel thereby making the spirit reenter the soul. Then you could be enveloped by light which shone around Christ at the time of His transfiguration.

d. A synod in 1341 in Constantinople supported the practices and after controversy, a fourth synod in 1351 ruled in favor, giving the practice the official endorsement of the Eastern church.

7. Be it remembered:

a. While Jesus did withdraw himself for brief periods of prayer, he did not remove himself from the world.

b. Justification has never come through holding your breath and staring at your navel - rather through obedience to the will of God as given in the Bible (Rom. 3:20-28; 5:1; Titus 3:7; Jam. 2:21-25)

c. Our commission is to preach the Gospel to the world (Mark 16:15-16). We are in the world but not of the world (John 17:14; 9:5; I Co. 5:10; Phil. 2:15).

d. If it does not look like the church of the New Testament it cannot be the church of the New Testament.

C. Let us next consider the “Sacrements” usually called “Mysteries” by the Eastern Orthodox.

1. The Orthodox view is that life’s purpose is to achieve theosis which is the “mystical union of mankind with God. The process of theosis is accomplished through mysteries or sacraments. (Ware 1963)

2. It is believed that these “solomen Christian rites” were instituted by Jesus to symbolizes a conferring of grace (Kallinikos 1957).

3. By the 1400’s seven had been accepted and continue till today:

   a. Baptism - always triple immersion and emersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (includes infants - Ware 1963)
b. Chrism - also called confirmation is the process by which the baptized adherent is granted the Holy Spirit, a process performed with anointing oil.

c. Eucharist - The holy communion which is with leavened or unleavened bread and administered by the Priest. Preparation includes fasting, prayer and confession.

d. Repentance - involves confession to a “spiritual father” and penance on the higher offenses but only to help with recovery. (Kallinikos 1957)

e. Ordination - The giving of “Holy Orders” such as Bishop, Priest, Deacon or other administrative positions.

f. Marriage - Optional for clergy but the highest offices could not marry.

g. Unction - began as anointing oil and praying for the sick but developed into and imposing ceremony consisting of seven parts carried out by seven priests. (Kallinikos 1957)

4. Be it remembered:

a. Walking in fellowship with God is based on being in agreement with Him (Amos 3:3) which requires doing all that He has commanded (Matt. 7:21-23; Jam. 1:22-25; I John 1:3-7, 2:6; 3:3).

b. Scriptural candidates for baptism were never infants, toddlers and small children but people who could hear, believe, repent and confess (Acts 8:12).


d. Such means of repentance was never issued in scripture (Matt. 6:6, 12; 18:15-20; Acts 8:22; James 5:16).

e. Ordination and marriage introduce a problem in structure or organization: The Patriarch (four ancient and nine added) are heads of the church in their respective dioceses which may exist of whole countries (Ware 1963). The bishop is governing a territory that may include multiple congregations.

D. Further consideration could be given to worship and icons.

1. The worship according to Mead (1995) is liturgically conducted. The Orthodox Church has a collection of formulas for worship based on the church calendar.

2. The formula for worship will depend on the time of year, the feast, who or what is being observed (as they do have a collection of “Saints” as delineated in the three volume set by George Poulos entitled Orthodox Saints).

3. Orthodox worship does have many litanies, prayers and eucharist forms in common with the Roman Catholic Church (Mead 1995).

4. It is very sight oriented thus worshipping with icons representing God and other Holy people and things. The icons are “a representation of some sacred personage, as Christ or a saint or angel, painted usually on a wood surface and venerated itself as sacred.” (Dictionary 2017)

5. With of the occasional homily, the entire service is sung. This includes the prayers which would follow specific music form. To their credit, though mechanical instruments are sometimes used today, the music was strictly made with the human voice. Mechanical instruments had not been accepted in the centuries considered. (Mattox 1961)

6. Be it remembered: All worship is only received by God, when it is to
His approved method and standard (John 4:23-24; Lev. 10:1-2; I Co. 14).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Though a church may be the second largest, most popular it does not make it right (Matt. 7:13,14).
2. If the history marks departure from the original than it cannot be the original until it returns all the way back to the pattern.
3. If the doctrines, ideology and practices show departure from the original than it cannot be the original until it all the way back to the pattern.
4. The historical overview has been given. Consideration to doctrines, ideology and practices have been discussed. Now consider is it truly “Orthodox?”

**References:**


Kallinikos, Constintine N. *The history of the Orthodox Church: a brief sketch of the One Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church.* Los Angeles, CA: The Prothymos Press, 1957.


INTRODUCTION:

A. While an examination of modern Catholicism might reveal a weak spiritual base; one which evolves with the surrounding culture, it might also be found to be little in difference to the disposition of the ancients of the religion.

B. Catholicism has proved through the ages to be a subtle and devious system of political power, using religion as the auspices of its power.

C. As a matter of clarification, the word ‘catholic’ is not found in the Bible, although some among its’ members claim it to be.
   1. The word ‘catholic,’ even by Catholic admissions, did not originate until sometime between 1300, and 1350. (E-Dictionary).
   2. But since one aspect of the word’s definition means ‘universal’ or ‘all,’ Catholics have argued that the result of Christ urging His disciples to teach all nations, means that the term all infers the name ‘catholic.’

D. Note the definition of the word ‘universal,’ means ‘relating to all men; all inclusive.’ (E-Dictionary).
   1. It is interesting to note the assumptive nature of some definitions which suggest that ‘catholic’ denotes or relates ‘to any church, belief, etc., that claims continuity with or originates in the ancient undivided church.’ (E-Dictionary).
   2. It is also defined as meaning ‘having broad sympathies; broad-minded; liberal.’

E. Even though Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel to all the world; and His purpose was to “draw all men” unto Himself, [John 12:32]; this does in no wise provides any foundation for Catholicism and its’ heretical practices.

F. For one to be a disciple of Christ; who, incidentally, were first called ‘Christians at Antioch,’ [Acts 11:26]; one must ‘follow,’ or comply with the Lord’s teachings; not the dictates of a self-proclaimed god-figure from Rome.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE EARLY WARNINGS
   A. The development of Catholic doctrine and practice, had its infancy in the early church.
   B. The Lord’s apostles, Paul in particular, became aware of the heretical disposition of some of it members and leaders, which led him by inspiration to warn and admonish the brethren of those who would develop a tendency to error.
      1. In Acts 20, while at Miletus, Paul meets with the elders from the church in Ephesus, and warns them that some of their own number would be
among those who would ‘speak perverse things,’ for the purpose of drawing ‘away disciples’ after themselves. [Acts 20:29-30].

2. The apostle also expressed his displeasure over the fact that there were some in Galatia which had departed from the gospel he had taught, and perverted it. [Gal. 1:6-9].

3. Additionally, when Paul writes to the brethren at Thessalonica, in his second epistle, he addresses the following:
   a. The judgment; the context established in chapter 2;
   b. The problem that some had in thinking that the judgment was imminent;
   c. In respect of the judgment, Paul notes that it would not come until a major apostasy had occurred. [vs. 3].
   d. He then will address some of the particulars regarding the ‘falling away.’

II. THE MAN OF SIN

A. Paul speaks of the ‘man of sin,’ or ‘the son of perdition,’ (‘apolia’ – ruin or destruction); in relation to the ‘falling away.’ [2 Thess. 2:3].

B. Paul’s description of the one who will bear this distinction would be as:
   1. One who ‘opposes God;
   2. One who ‘exalts himself above God;
   3. And, as ‘a god,’ he sits in a temple shewing himself as God. [vs. 4].

C. The interpretation of 2 Thessalonians 2:6, has been viewed by scholars in various ways, particularly as it pertains to the ‘withholding’ force noted in the passage.
   1. Most scholars hold the view that the ‘restraining power’ which kept the ‘man of sin’ to be fully revealed, was the Roman Empire.
      a. It is suggested that as long as the empire existed with its pagan leadership, a papal influence would be kept in check.
      b. However, after the influence of Christianity on the Caesar, and the ultimate fall of the empire, then the ‘man of sin’ would be fully unleashed to use his political power under the auspices of Christianity, to exert a seemingly unlimited power of influence.
   2. Others, like David Lipscomb, were of the impression that the ‘restraining’ force was the apostle Paul. (GA commentary on 2nd Thess. Pg. 97).
      a. Lipscomb’s premise was based on terms established in the context; i.e., that the ‘iniquity’ was ‘already at work.’ [2 Thess. 1:7].
      b. Since Paul exercised the authority of an apostle, the development of such an apostasy was being inhibited by his influence.
      c. However, after Paul was removed by execution, the efforts to change the divine pattern would have been without apostolic restraint.
      d. Lipscomb’s reasoning is likely based on the American Standard’s translation of the text of verse 7; “only there is one that restraineth now;” and the next phrase used the pronoun ‘he,’ as it refers to the ‘one.’
         1) The word ‘one’ is from ‘monon,’ meaning ‘merely,’ or ‘alone.’
         2) The word ‘now’ is from ‘arti,’ suggesting ‘that day,’ or ‘at present.’
   3. The understanding of the ‘restraining power,’ may be determined
comprehensively; but if viewed exclusively, one way or the other, Paul stated he had identified it to the brethren there before, [vs. 5,6]; though he does not specifically reveal it in this text.

a. If it be the Empire, inspiration is obviously careful about specifying it.

b. The same may be stated if he references himself.

c. Consequently, if Paul is not the one specifically identified, he could be referring to the Spirit whose work in inspiration would be coming to a close in the not too distant future.

1) At the close of inspiration, the revelation of God’s will would obviously cease.

2) When this occurred, all miraculous operation also ceased. [1 Cor. 13].

d. There would be some who would likely understand that if Christians no longer possess miraculous power, they would perceive, as the Jews did after the silencing of the prophets, that they would be free to amend God’s law to their own liking.

e. Such a disposition would make circumstances ripe for the apostasy to reach full term of its pregnancy, and give birth to the ‘man of sin.’

III. OVERVIEW OF ROMAN CATHOLICISM

A. The gradual process of the apostasy in the second century, was manifest in the action of certain of the elders of congregations, which had some seeking power; or others having power bestowed on them, and then elevated the selected ones to exercise authority over the others.

B. The elder of prominence in any one congregation would regularly council with the elders of prominence of other congregations to determine what they would consider the best course of actions to take in the governance of their home congregations.

C. These men would eventually be designated as bishops; set above the elders; whose prominence, according to early historians, was determined by the prominence of the city in which they lived.

D. J.W. Shepherd, in his book ‘The Church, the Falling Away, and The Resurrection,’ quotes from ‘Ecclesiastical History,’ Vol. 1, pages 116 and 117; and makes the following notes from page 57:

1. By the second century, the church had digressed so far from the original pattern, that each congregation would have one bishop over it, and the other elders submitting to his authority.

2. He noted that there were ‘confederations’ of congregations which consolidated into councils which began “to enact laws, and claimed authority from Christ to thus dictate to the people.”

E. E. The foundation to the establishment of the papacy, was set in the notion that Peter was the first pope, and subsequently, the succession of the papacy is kept primarily by design, (until recent years); within the bishops of Rome.

1. Schaff states:

   “the Roman church claims not only human, but divine right for the papacy, and traces its institution directly to Christ, when he assigned to Peter an eminent position in the work of founding his church, against which even the gates of hades shall never prevail.”
2. Schaff further notes that: “this claim implies several assumptions,” none of the least of which, indicate that Peter’s appointment placed him in “supremacy of jurisdiction over other apostles.” (History of the Christian Church Vol. 2, pg. 155).

3. The assumption thus implicates that Peter would be the supreme ruler over all the church.

4. The assumption would also logically imply that for Peter to be supreme ruler, he would have to have been the bishop of the church at Rome.

F. Consider an examination of the assumptions.

1. There is no hint in the scriptures of the papacy, or a supreme bishop to oversee the universal church.
   a. When Jesus promised to build the church, he honors Peter for having openly confessed Him; to open the doors to the kingdom, not rule over it.
   b. Peter was the first to preach the gospel to the Jews in Acts 2, and the first to preach to the Gentiles in Acts 10.

2. The supremacy of Peter over all other apostles is clearly fallacious, seeing that he was rebuked by Paul for his hypocrisy. [Gal. 2:11].

3. As regarding Peter’s life and death at Rome, it is a matter of Catholic conjecture and tradition.
   a. Some Catholics claim that Peter was bishop of Rome from 43 A.D. to 68 A.D., while others affirm that he was in Rome only in the last year of his life and martyred about the same time as Paul.
   b. In truth, it cannot be proved that Peter was ever in Rome, much less prove he was the primary leader of the Roman church.
   c. The Bible reveals that Peter was imprisoned by Herod, [Acts 12]; and the same chapter records the death of Herod.
   d. Josephus places the time of Herod’s death to be in 44 A.D., which would rule out Peter being in Rome in 43 A.D.
   e. Bro. Guy N. Woods notes that the Roman epistle was written about 58 A.D., in which Paul sent greetings to 27 persons, but never mentioned Peter. (Q & A Vol. 2, pg. 314-315).
   f. Paul mentioned in his final writings to Timothy, that “only Luke is with me;” implicating that Peter is not a fellow-prisoner as some have argued.
   g. Additionally, with the emperor’s antagonism to Christians, how could one as bishop of Rome, survive any time in the seat of the empire?

CONCLUSION:

A. If it can be shown that the primacy of Peter is error, the Catholicism is false.

1. The entire premise in based on the misinterpretation of the Lord’s words in Matthew 16.
2. The words ‘Peter’ and ‘rock’ are the terms of upon which the controversy is based.
3. Catholics have affirmed that since Peter’s name means ‘rock,’ that the Lord intended to build the church upon Peter.
4. The words, however, are not the same; they are different words, each with distinct meaning.
a. ‘Peter’ is from ‘petros,’ which is masculine in gender, and means ‘pebble.’

b. The word ‘rock’ is from ‘petra,’ which is feminine in gender, and means ‘a ledge,’ or large slab of stone. (Noted from Coffman’s Commentary on Matthew, pg. 246).

B. If it can be shown that there is no proof that Peter was in Rome, then Catholicism is false; and there is no definitive proof.

C. If it can be shown that Catholic doctrine and practices are contrary to the Bible, the Catholicism is false.

REFERENCES:

E-Dictionary

Strong’s Dictionary of Greek N.T. Words

David Lipscomb, Gospel Advocate Commentary on 2nd Thessalonians, pg. 97

J.W. Shepherd, The Church, The Falling Away, and the Restoration, pg. 57


Guy N. Woods, Question & Answers Vol. 2., pg. 314-315

Coffman, Burton, Coffman’s Commentary on Matthew, pg. 246
INTRODUCTION
A. Prophecy fulfilled.
1. The early Christians were warned by Jesus that persecution was on its way, in Matt 10:22 he said, ‘And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.’
2. This persecution would be from those who were openly hostile and from those who would infiltrate the church presenting a counterfeit gospel. Our Lord warned us in Matt 24:5 ‘For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.’ Indeed they did come and have never stopped since our blessed Lord spoke.
B. The corruption of the Word.
1. These men would present a false gospel to create power bases for themselves, they would twist the gospel that was introduced by Christ and his apostles to shatter the bonds of slavery to sin into man made institutions designed to enslave men’s souls and crush the light of the knowledge of the true gospel and in so doing gain a preeminence unauthorised and unpleasing in Gods sight.
2. Paul inspired by the Holy Ghost told us in the sacred scripture how God sees these men who would arrogantly corrupt the gospel message, ‘But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed’ Gal 1:8
C. Development of hierarchy.
1. In order to attain pre-eminence one needs a group that will support a system that will allow an individual to rise in power and take control. This requires a degree of collaboration between like-minded individual’s, this collaboration between ambitious men who care nothing for God, his Word or His church creates a hierarchical culture where what is serving to the ambitious becomes the norm and what is beneficial to the wider church becomes of little or no importance.
2. When a population becomes convinced of the wisdom of their leaders, questioning that wisdom is seen as being disrespectful to your superiors. When people surrender their reasoning to others apathy sets in and control becomes a comforting assurance against the uncomfortable truths of the gospel.
3. Anything that obstructs sinners from their habit and is endorsed by an imagined hierarchy, this supposed authority found and finds strength through people either willingly misled or brainwashed by generations of blind, unquestioning obedience.
DISCUSSION:
I. APOSTASY RISES FROM APATHY
   A. Itching ears.
      1. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” 2 Tim 4:3
      2. A church becomes corrupted easily by an unquestioned self seeking eldership.
      3. Abdication of responsibility for one’s own soul leads to disaster.
   B. Compromise for advancement, the politics of heresy and compromise for growth.
      1. The past is not as primitive as many perceive, the world of the New Testament and the centuries that followed were days of high civilization, ages of invention and intellectual advancement.
      2. These early years were vital to the development of western civilisation, these times before the collapse of the western Roman Empire were longed for by many, men from Charlamane to the founding fathers of the United States yearned to restore the glory of fallen Rome.
      3. History is alive and well with us today, knowledge of your history is vital because your opponents will have their own view based on what they have been told rather than what is true. An understanding of history and the historical context of the New Testament age is vital to our correct interpretation of scripture and our understanding of history.
         a. To quote George Santayana ‘Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.’ Events will not be exact but human ambition will ensure power struggles, political and religious movements will become intertwined and men and women full of ambition that will seek to control others.
         b. Mark Twain once said that “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it does rhyme.”
      4. The Empire has a revolution in 312 AD.
         a. New ruler, new names, same religion. The evolution of the Roman church
         b. Christians suffered terribly under the pagan Roman Emperors on one side and assaults on Christianity and the movements unity from the rise of Gnostics and opposition from Judaism on the other.
         c. The seemingly miraculous conversation of Constantine led early Christian historian Eusebius of Caesarea (260–339AD) to joyfully write ‘Men had now lost all fear of their former oppressors; day after day they kept dazzling festival; light was everywhere, and men who once dared not look up greeted each other with smiling faces and shining eyes.’ The short period of religious freedom and indeed ascendancy within the Empire would prove to be the birth of another kind of oppression. This time the enemies of the pure gospel would come from inside the church. Men mixing politics with religion would soon compromise with paganism to achieve political dominance.
         d. The four major centers of Christianity at this time were Jerusalem,
Constantinople, Alexandria in Egypt and Rome. Rome being the center of the Empire started to claim ecclesiastical ascendancy from this period.

e. We must understand that the early bishops of Rome did not claim to be Popes, that man made invention along with the Vatican and all its subsequent departures were centuries in development. We will be examining the creation of these departures from biblical instruction to the unauthorised institutions of the dark ages and then to the renaissance period and the effect of those departures till the present day.

5. Mixing truth with darkness.
   a. “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality; apt to teach, Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?” 1 Tim 3:2-5

b. If a church is not run using the Word as her sole source of legitimate authority it is in rebellion against Christ. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” John 14:15

C. Celibacy disqualifies the position claimed.
      a. In Mk 10:29 Jesus says “There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s” and 1 Cor 7:7-9 Paul writes “For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as It. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.” The meaning here is to be inflamed with lust, so as to sin, not to create a law of God where no law was intended.

      b. What the Word of God says, no sin.
         1) It is true that denominational clergy who have converted to Catholicism are permitted to remain married if they are in that state, generally however to meet the qualification to enter the Roman Catholic priesthood, candidates must make an unbiblical vow in order to serve, this rule would forbid the biblical freedom so clearly defined in 1 Cor 7:28 that says (But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned.)

         2) They make a tradition of men superior to the command of God, superseding scripture with a man made rule.

   2. Chastity vs celibacy and the reasons for forbidding to marry.
      a. Money, land and power.
         1) Forbidding marriage saved the R.C.Church from supporting priests families.
2) It ensured the church inherited the priests wealth.

b. How they attempt to justify contradicting the Word of God.

1) Peter given authority: “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Mt 16:19

2) The Roman catholic church claims to be the original and only church of the New Testament. It claims that all other groups are merely departures from the one true holy and Roman church. The term catholic, means universal and therefore they claim universal authority over all who would call themselves Christ’s followers.

3) In order for their claim to be true it would have to bear all the marks of the organization of God’s church as described in the New Testament, however upon examination the organization of the Roman Catholic Church is far from Biblical, this church has practices condemned within the Word of God, and yet they will use those same holy scriptures to prove their right to modify things that do not suit their doctrinal needs.

4) The head of the church for Roman Catholics is the Pope, his titles of Pontifex Maximus or Supreme Pontiff originate in the pagan religion of the Roman Empire.

a) The Pope or Papa is referred to as the Vicar or Christ on earth, this is the belief that the Pope is Christ’s prime minister over his kingdom. This position of leadership is found nowhere in the New Testament. In fact one who seeks such a position of preeminence is condemned by the scriptures, “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not”, (3 John 1:9). If this man Diotrephes was an elder or not us pure conjecture, however the fact he sought special position tells us of his ambitions for power.

b) Just as this man was causing problems in the Apostle John’s time, the rise of others who sought the preeminence did not go unchallenged. Tertullian in 220 AD reacted to the claimed supremacy of the Bishop of Rome over other churches, “I now inquire into your opinions, to see whence you usurp the right for the church. Do you presume, because the Lord said to Peter, ‘On this rock I will build my church ...[Matt 16-19]’ that the power of binding and loosing has thereby been handed over to you, that is, to every church akin to that of Peter? What kind of man are you, subverting and changing what was the manifest intent of the Lord ...” (Tertullian, On Modesty 21:9-10). Even at this early date Rome was trying to attain dominance. The claim to have authority to change doctrine on earth is used to contradict clear biblical teaching.

c) All 12 Apostles were given the same authority.

1) “Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth
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shall be loosed in heaven”Mt 18:18

2) Notice in the following verses in Matthew 18 “19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” No room here for a supreme pontiff! No room here for contradictory practices or right to do so.

D. The consequences of enforced celibacy.
1. “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” Heb 13:4
   a. Celibacy was enforced by Pope Gregory the seventh in 1084 AD, until then many priests were married with the approval of the local Bishop, however the papal encyclical of Gregory the seventh absolved their parishioners from obedience to Bishops who permitted married clergy. From this time forwards Roman Catholic priests would by ecclesiastical law be celibate.
   b. This did and does not stop so called common law marriages. In other words the creation of a sin (enforced celibacy) sin here is to violate Gods law by adding or removing from his instructions creates another, namely a sinful unbiblical relationship. It should be noted that in an incredible display of hypocrisy many subsequent Popes had mistresses themselves.
   c. The enforced qualification of celibacy arose in order to ensure that a priest’s wealth went directly to the roman church and not to a wife or children. However this practice of enforcement is not only unbiblical but also has been the source of much human suffering.

2. The abuse of perceived authority from God, covering up the perversion.
   a. The enforced rule of celibacy has led to a propensity of unbiblical affairs.
   b. The position of trust in the community has given many predators opportunities to abuse those in their care.
   c. Many of these abuses have been covered up.

II. THE ROLE OF THE PARISH PRIEST

A. A priest is a man who is ordained by a Bishop after training for seven years in a seminary. After ordination the church teaches that a priest no longer acts for himself but by the power of God. To quote,”Everything a priest does in his ministry flows from what he becomes at his ordination: presiding at Mass, absolving sinners, anointing the sick, proclaiming and explaining the Gospel, giving blessings, and his whole pastoral leadership of building up a local community of faith.. The priest does what he does because of what he is: a priest of Jesus Christ.’ (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton leaflet on vocations to the priesthood) He is given special reverence from the laity and is forbidden to marry.

B. Rules regarding special clothing to separate the priests from the laity were introduced and later enforced by church law. The Roman Catholic Church admits that early Christian preachers did not wear clothes that separated them from other Christians however a long cloak lined with fur to protect from the cold was introduced in the 6th century in France. To Quote Fr
Sanders “The use of the long tunic from neck to feet also reflected a stress on modesty. From the 6th century onward, many local synods passed regulations forbidding clerics from wearing richly styled clothing, light or skimpy clothing, bright colors, and extravagant ornaments and jewelry.” (Saunders, Rev. William. “Why Priests Wear Black.” Arlington Catholic Herald) In this light we can understand why this was justified as a matter of expediency in regards to modesty and fitness of dress however Pope Sixtus V in 1589 proscribed penalties for those clerics who did not wear the cassock (officially called in Latin “vestis talaris”). The color black is used to symbolise death to oneself and poverty, the white dog collar represents obedience and a sash worn around the waist is worn to represent chastity. These clothes are required by Catholic ecclesiastical law and not found as a church commandment of God under the New Testament.

C. In the United States, the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore (1884) promulgated regulations for clerical attire as follows: “We wish and enjoin all keep the law of the Church, and that when at home or when engaged in the sanctuary they should always wear the cassock which is proper to the clergy. When they go abroad for duty or relaxation or when upon a journey, they may use a shorter dress, but still one that is black in color, and which reaches to the knees, so as to distinguish it from lay costume. We enjoin upon our priests as a matter of strict precept, that both at home and abroad, and whether they are residing in their own diocese or outside of it, they should wear the Roman collar.” This clothing is worn to emphasise division within the church not authorised in scripture. The creation and enforcement of division between clergy and laity encouraged an unbiblical class system that reenforced the ambition of those seeking the preeminence over others.

D. The perceived power of priests makes them revered and feared.
1. The power to forgive is granted to priests, this gives them tremendous power over those in their care.

E. The God makers,
1. Another mediator? Powers given to priests at ordination.
2. The ordination ceremony and the creation of a father.
   a. Father is the title granted to priests upon ordination, now the Lord himself said “Do not call anyone on earth your father. Only One is your Father, the One in heaven” (Mt 23:9) to justify the title given in contradiction to this verse they claim the Lord was only referring to the corrupt religious leaders of the day, furthermore they will quote verses such as Lk 16:19-31, the parable of the rich man and the beggar where Christ does indeed use the title father three times but this is no contradiction to his forbidding of the title as a religious one because the rich man in the parable was talking to his literal father however many generations removed. Again they will cite Lk 15:11-32, the parable of the prodigal son
where the son says “Father, I have sinned against God and against you” clearly Jesus did not forbid us from calling our actual fathers, father.

b. Yet while it is true that Paul referred to Timothy as his Son, 1 Cor 4:14-17 and to himself as a father who begot the Lords church in Corinth we must remember always that context is king. Nowhere is Paul or Peter ever referred to as Father Paul or Father Peter, brothers yes for example Gal 1:2, Rom 1:13 and John 21:23. The title of Father is never used as anything other than in its correct context, a familial relationship. What the Bible says about the use of this title makes it abundantly clear.

3. The power to create God is clearly taught by this religious system, the official Roman Catholic information website explains it so well “The ‘Eucharist’ is a very special sacrament. When Catholics come together to celebrate ‘Mass’ they share a holy meal and believe that through it they are fed, under the appearance of bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Christ. During the Mass a miracle takes place. When the priest says a special prayer over the bread, it is changed by God’s power, so that Jesus is present in it in a unique way. Though it still looks like bread, Jesus’ living presence is there, and this is what Catholics call ‘Holy Communion’ because they are united with God when they receive it. To quote 16th century Martyr Anne Askew, burned at the stake for denying transubstantiation. “ I have read that God made man, not that man made God.”

III. LOVING THE PRE-EMINENCE

A. Elders become rulers. 3 John 3:9
   1. The developers of deceit.
   2. Eastern and western deviations from God’s Word.
      a. The Greek Orthodox teaching allows men who are married to become priests but if their wife dies he is not permitted to remarry, an unmarried man who is ordained must remain celibate. (1) This contradicts 1 Cor 7:39, “The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.” (2) the principal for women applies to men also.
      b. According to Robert L. Plummer (6 March 2012). Journeys of Faith: Evangelicalism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Anglicanism. Zondervan. p. 128. ISBN 978-0-310-41671-5. Retrieved 2 September 2013. Catholicism holds that if a Church claims to be Christian, then it must be able to show that its leaders—its bishops and its presbyters (or priests)—are successors of the apostles. That is why the Catholic Church accepts Eastern Orthodox ordinations and sacraments as valid, even though Eastern Orthodoxy is not in full communion with Rome.
      c. Bishops in the Orthodox churches have similar roles as in the Roman and Anglican churches, however unlike Rome both these traditions recognise Christ as the sole legitimate head of the church, both Orthodox and Anglican churches have archbishops or patriarchs who are regarded by their peers as being first among equals. Unlike Catholic and Anglican traditions, Bishops
of the Orthodox Church draw their members solely from their monasteries, these Bishops were once monks and have taken vows of celibacy. Again in opposition to biblical instruction.

d. The Roman Catholic teaching of the title of Bishop is Biblically correct in their understanding of its meaning but in operation it is irredeemably flawed. Scripture requires an elder to be the husband of one wife, this is not a suggestion its a required qualification for one to become an elder, 1 Tim 3:2 tells us that an elder must be the “husband of one wife”, the failure in this one aspect alone, Bibically disqualifies the entire Roman Catholic system of eldership. The title of Archbishop or chief elder is an honorific given to a Bishop set over other Bishops in his the region under his authority. An Archbishop and a Monsignor are both honorary titles but are not the same. According to the Roman Catholic Maryvale institute a ‘The bishop of the more important cities, or of historically important places, is given the title of Archbishop, to show a level of seniority or honor’ the title of Monsignor originates from the Italian word for my lord, an is usually bestowed upon a priest by the Pope on the recommendation of the local Bishops as a reward for extraordinary service, it is not however an ordained office.

B. Unqualified and unfit for service as an elder.
1. “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach” 1Tim 3:1-2
   a. Must be male.
   b. Must be a father.
2. Biblical Bishops / Elders / Presbyter etc are clearly defied in scripture to Quote Schaff , “The terms Presbyter (or Elder) and Bishop (Overseer,Superintendent) denote in the New Testament one and the same office, with the difference only, that the first is borrowed from the Synagogue, the second from the Greek communities; and that the one signifies the dignity, the other the duty” (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Volume 1, [Hendrickson Publishers, 2011], p. 491-492).

C. The Roman Catholic Church confuses biblical terms The term ‘presbyter’ was used by Vatican II when it spoke of priests: the council wished to reflect the NT usage; it wished to distinguish the priest from the bishop. . .” (The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, ed. Richard P. McBrien, [HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1995], p. 1046) and the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible New Testament says on page 446 that New Testament Christian elders (same office as presbyters) were actually “priests” (Scott Hahn, Curtis Mitch, Ignatius Catholic Study Bible New Testament, [Ignatius Press, 2010], p. 446). If the position of the Roman church were truly correct then all Christian believers would be Bishops if we believe what Peter tells us in 2 Peter 2:9 (But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:) the application of this belief would require all Christians to meet
the requirements of an Elder, clearly a silly proposition.

IV. THE PRINCES OF THE CHURCH
A. The Holy Bible says nothing of Cardinals.
   1. The office of Cardinal.
      a. Subordinate to the Pope are the cardinals, refereed to as the princes of the church. The title cardinal is from the Latin word meaning hinge. Cardinals are the highest rank that can be held by the Roman catholic clergy before being elected as Pope.
      b. This rank of clergy is split into three categories, Cardinal bishops, Cardinal priests and Cardinal deacons. These men have responsibility over various departments of the mission of the Vatican. The set amount of cardinals is 120 members and when a Pope dies they are put temporarily in charge of church affairs until a new Pope is chosen.
      c. After a new Pope is elected the Cardinals can be responsible for various aspects of church life, over regions and even entire countries. Bishops are in charge of dioceses that are made up from local church’s that are subordinate to their rule.
   2. The claim of authority directly from Christ.
      a. Kissing the ring confirms acceptance and respect is shown to them from the laity by the kissing of their ring, usually an amethyst, this ring symbolizes the office of the Cardinal as a successor of the apostles. The kissing of is an act of submission from the laity, a laity that knows its place in subservience.
      b. The significance of the robes.
         1) Scarlet to symbolize the blood he is wiling to shed for the Catholic faith.
         2) The blood they shed was that of others.
            a) Inquisition.
            b) Influence, Richelieu to Ratizingburger.
B. From the princes come he Bishops of Rome.
   1. The Popes claim to be infallible, Innocent III claimed that “he judges all and is judged by no man”, Pope Leo the 13th proclaimed “we hold upon this earth the place of God almighty!”
   2. The Holy Bible says, “Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” 2 Thes 2:3-4 “18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.
      a. The he in this context is the lord Jesus Christ not a man attributed to have position without Biblical authority. “13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” Col 1:18; 13.
      b. The church of Christ cannot have two heads, this would be comparable to a bride with two husbands and this has never been the pattern for church authority. The Holy Bible is quite clear as to who the head of the church is, “And hath put all things
under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the
church”, (Eph 1:22). The Him here is not the Pope but rather the
Lord Jesus Christ
c. Ecclesiastical blindness. 2 Cor 4:4 tells us about such men, “In
whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which
believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is
the image of God, should shine unto them.
V. DARKNESS DESCENDS ACROSS THE WORLD
A. The Dark ages, made dark by design.
1. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel
unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be
accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any
other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed”
Gal 1:8-9
a. Enforced darkness.
b. Darkness in education.
c. Knowledge is power.
2. Darkness in the pulpits.
a. “Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what
they say, nor whereof they affirm” 1 Tim 1:7
b. All roads lead to Rome.
c. When the sacred is abandoned anything is valid.
B. The purple curtain and secular fascists.
1. ”But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there
shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable
heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon
themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious
ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And
through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise
of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their
damnation slumbereth not” 1 Pet 2:1-3
2. “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and
to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” 1 Pet
2:3
CONCLUSION:
A. The guardians of the truth, rightly dividing the truth.
1. “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any
twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and
spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts
and intents of the heart” Heb 4:12
2. The Word of God must flow to a dry and thirsty land.
B. The power of spiritual purity and understanding.
1. “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be
hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a
candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your
light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and
glorify your Father which is in heaven” Matt 5:14-16
2. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth
not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” 2 Tim 2:15
C. The last, best and only hope for mankind. “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” John 8:12

**References:**


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**INTRODUCTION:**

A. With the close of the first century A.D. and the passing of the last of the apostles, challenges arose which had been prophesied (Acts 20:28-32; II Thess. 2:1-12; I Tim. 4:1-5; II Peter 2:1-3).

B. About the middle of the second century, a sect appeared in Phrygia led by Montanus, who claimed to be a prophet. The heresy and its followers were referred to as Montanists, but were also identified by the region where it originated (“the Phrygian heresy” or Cataphrygians); or its chief claim (the “New Prophecy”); or the supposed status of its adherents (the “spiritual,” in contrast to “carnal” Christians)(Bercot 1998; Schaff 2014).

C. Eusebius, writing during the early 300’s AD, described its development in Book V of his History of the Church (McGiffert 2015), beginning with Chapter 14, “The False Prophets of the Phrygians:”

> “THE ENEMY OF GOD’S CHURCH, who is emphatically a hater of good and a lover of evil, and leaves untried no manner of craft against men, was again active in causing strange heresies to spring up against the Church. For some persons, like venomous reptiles, crawled over Asia and Phrygia, boasting that Montanus was the Paraclete, and that the women that followed him, Priscilla and Maximilla, were prophetesses of Montanus.”

D. Cyril of Jerusalem warned his students:

> “Let the Cataphrygians also be your abhorrence, and Montanus, their ringleader in evil, and his two so-called prophetesses, Maximilla and Priscilla. For this Montanus, who was out of his mind and really mad (for he would not have said such things, had he not been mad), dared to say that he was himself the Holy Ghost…. And having taken possession of Pepuza, a very small hamlet of Phrygia, he falsely named it Jerusalem;….” (Schaff 2016, “Catechetical Lectures,” Lecture 16, Chapter 8).

E. Whether we interpret Montanus’ claims as his being the embodiment of the Paraclete, or as a new spokesperson for the Paraclete, his heresy prompted one of earliest disputes concerning the continuation of miraculous gifts in the early church.

F. The best-known convert to Montanism was Tertullian (c. 160–225), who joined the movement later in life (Bercot 1998).

G. Montanus’ heresy was characterized by three chief tenets:

**DISCUSSION:**

I. CLAIMS OF NEW REVELATION, EXPRESSED BY ECSTATIC SPEAKING.

A. Montanus asserted he was receiving new revelation and commandments
from God as the earthly representative or embodiment of the Holy Spirit (Mattox 1961; Bercot 1998). When Montanus delivered his messages, he would fall “into a great trance and begin to rave and utter strange sounds,” similar to the practice in Cybele worship (Mattox 1961).

B. Eusebius provided a comprehensive description of Montanus’ claims and the origin of the movement, which he rendered from one of its leading opponents, Apolinarius of Hierapolis:

7. There is said to be a certain village called Ardabau in that part of Mysia, which borders upon Phrygia. There first, they say, when Gratus was proconsul of Asia, a recent convert, Montanus by name, through his unquenchable desire for leadership, gave the adversary opportunity against him. And he became beside himself, and being suddenly in a sort of frenzy and ecstasy, he raved, and began to babble and utter strange things, prophesying in a manner contrary to the constant custom of the Church handed down by tradition from the beginning. 8. Some of those who heard his spurious utterances at that time were indignant, and they rebuked him as one that was possessed, and that was under the control of a demon, and was led by a deceitful spirit, and was distracting the multitude; and they forbade him to talk, remembering the distinction drawn by the Lord and his warning to guard watchfully against the coming of false prophets. But others imagining themselves possessed of the Holy Spirit and of a prophetic gift, were forgetting the distinction of the Lord, they challenged the mad and insidious and seducing spirit, and were cheated and deceived by him. In consequence of this, he could no longer be held in check, so as to keep silence. 9. Thus by artifice, or rather by such a system of wicked craft, the devil, devising destruction for the disobedient, and being unworthily honored by them, secretly excited and inflamed their understandings which had already become estranged from the true faith. And he stirred up besides two women, and filled them with the false spirit, so that they talked wildly and unreasonably and strangely, like the person already mentioned. And the spirit pronounced them blessed as they rejoiced and gloried in him, and puffed them up by the magnitude of his promises. But sometimes he rebuked them openly in a wise and faithful manner, that he might seem to be a reprover. But those of the Phrygians that were deceived were few in number. And the arrogant spirit taught them to revile the entire universal Church under heaven, because the spirit of false prophecy received neither honor from it nor entrance into it (McGiffert 2015, Book V, Chapter 16).

C. Schaff (2014) described the broader context of this heresy:
Montanism originated in Asia Minor, the theatre of many movements of the church in this period; yet not in Ephesus or any large city, but in some insignificant villages of the province of Phrygia, once the home of a sensuously mystic and dreamy nature-religion, where Paul and his pupils had planted congregations at Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. The movement was started about the middle of the second century during the reign of Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius, by a certain Montanus. He was, according to hostile accounts,
before his conversion, a mutilated priest of Cybele, with no special talents nor culture, but burning with fanatical zeal. He fell into somnambulistic ecstasies, and considered himself the inspired organ of the promised Paraclete or Advocate, the Helper and Comforter in these last times of distress. His adversaries wrongly inferred from the use of the first person for the Holy Spirit in his oracles, that he made himself directly the Paraclete, or, according to Epiphanius, even God the Father. Connected with him were two prophetesses, Priscilla and Maximilla, who left their husbands. During the bloody persecutions under the Antonines, which raged in Asia Minor, and caused the death of Polycarp (155), all three went forth as prophets and reformers of the Christian life, and proclaimed the near approach of the age of the Holy Spirit and of the millennial reign in Pepuza, a small village of Phrygia, upon which the new Jerusalem was to come down. ... The frantic movement soon far exceeded the intention of its authors, spread to Rome and North Africa, and threw the whole church into commotion. It gave rise to the first Synods which are mentioned after the apostolic age.

D. Skillful opponents in the early church recognized the discrepancy of the Montanists and the proper application of Jesus’ teaching concerning the Holy Spirit. Augustine observed:

“They turned to their own use the words spoken of the Spirit, ‘He shall lead you into all truth,’ as if, forsooth, Paul and the other apostles had not taught all the truth, but had left room for the Paraclete of the Cataphrygians.” (Schaff 2016, “Reply to Faustus the Manichaean,” Book 32, Chapter 17).

E. Hippolytus pointed out that the Montanists revered their “New Prophecy” as more authoritative than the inspired writings:

“The Phrygians, however, derive the principles of their heresy from a certain Montanus, and Priscilla, and Maximilla, and regard these wretched women as prophetesses, and Montanus as a prophet. In respect, however, of what appertains to the origin and creation of the universe, the Phrygians are supposed to express themselves correctly; while in the tenets which they enunciate respecting Christ, they have not irrelevantly formed their opinions. But they are seduced into error in common with the heretics previously alluded to, and devote their attention to the discourses of these above the Gospels, thus laying down regulations concerning novel and strange fasts.” (Schaff 2016, “The Refutation of All Heresies,” Book 10, Chapter 21)[Emphasis added].

F. Like many false doctrines, Montanism drew from a bit of truth - specifically, the supernatural gift of prophecy available in the first-century church - which it wrested to support its spurious doctrine.

G. Miraculous gifts had in fact been provided as “signs” - accompaniments to the preaching and revelation of the gospel through the apostles of Christ (Mark 16:17-20; Acts 2:43). Among those was the gift of prophecy (Acts 11:28; 21:8-10; Rom. 12:6; I Thess. 5:20; I Cor. 12:10; 13:2, 8; 14:1-33).

H. The signs were provided in conjunction with Jesus’ promise that the apostles would receive “power” (Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; John 7:39; Acts 1:8), with the Holy Spirit guiding them into “all truth” (John 14:26; 15:26;
The apostles’ doctrine, revealed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, was authoritative (Acts 2:42; Rom. 6:17; 16:17; I Cor. 11:2; Col. 1:23; II Peter 3:2). During the apostolic period, the inspired message was first in men, then in the Book (see, e.g., II Thess. 2:15).

I. The capability to provide the signs was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands (Acts 8:14-19; 19:1-7; II Cor. 12:12), with only two exceptions (when the Jews received the gospel in Acts 2; and the Gentiles received it in Acts 10 & 11). The office of apostle was limited to The Twelve (Matt. 19:27-28; Luke 22:29-30; I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20) with two exceptions (Matthias, Acts 1:15-26; 2:14; and Paul, the last apostle, Acts 9, 22, 26 and I Cor. 15:8-9; compare Acts 12:1-2, no successor to James).

J. Based on the purpose of the gifts and the limited manner in which they could be procured, they were expected to “fail,” “cease,” “vanish,” and “be done away,” when the “perfect” revelation (that is, “all truth”) was produced (I Cor. 13:8-13; John 16:13; Jude 3). As Camp (1974) observed, “The complete revelation of God was given through miraculous gifts. When the revelation was completed, the gifts ceased.”

K. John, the last surviving Apostle, penned Revelation near the very end of the first century and died within the next decade (Warfield 1918). With those developments, we can observe that “all truth” had been revealed and confirmed and that the sole means of procuring the miraculous gifts was no longer available by the time of Montanus.

L. Regardless of our theory on the precise moment miraculous gifts were discontinued - whether immediate (when Revelation 22 was complete, or when John passed); or gradual (continuing for the remainder of the lifetime of those gifted by the apostles) - the same conclusion must be reached: Miraculous gifts ceased or faded at or shortly after the end of the first century. The church thereupon experienced a unique period of transition, perhaps struggling to observe or acknowledge the cessation of those signs despite their absence (Warfield 1918).

M. Mattox (1961) astutely observed:

“There was a certain sadness and uneasiness that came from the fading of the spiritual gifts. Men were reluctant to give up miracles. There was always a great temptation to claim spiritual gifts that one did not have….Some probably wanted these gifts so badly that they deceived themselves into thinking they had them. Out of this unrest came the Montanist movement.”

N. Tertullian acknowledged the silence of revelation since John, but nevertheless fell to the “New Prophecy,” in part out of a desire for a revival of godly living:

“Grant that from the time of John the Paraclete had grown mute; we ourselves would have arisen as prophets to ourselves, for this cause chiefly: I say not now to bring down by our prayers God’s anger, nor to obtain his protection or grace; but to secure by premunition the moral position of the latest times…. ” (Schaff 2016, “On Fasting,” Chapter 12).

O. No basis may be found in Scripture for the view that the miraculous gifts would ever reappear (see Zech. 13:1-6; Jude 3). If the church must resolve a question concerning organization, membership, worship, lifestyle, service or any other issue, the standard remains the revealed and confirmed Scripture (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3-4; I Cor. 4:6; Acts 20:32; Rom.
16:17; Gal. 1:6-9), rather than a reappearance or illumination of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is the only medium today for communication from Him (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).

II. CHILIASM, WITH PREDICTIONS THAT PEPUZA IN PHRYGIA WOULD BE THE “NEW JERUSALEM.”

A. Schaff (2014) described the chiliastic aspects of Montanism: “Another of the essential and prominent traits of Montanism was a visionary millenarianism, founded indeed on the Apocalypse and on the apostolic expectation of the speedy return of Christ, but giving it extravagant weight and a materialistic coloring. The Montanists were the warmest milennarians in the ancient church, and held fast to the speedy return of Christ in glory, all the more as this hope began to give way to the feeling of a long settlement of the church on earth, and to a corresponding zeal for a compact, solid episcopal organization. In praying, ‘Thy kingdom come,’ they prayed for the end of the world. They lived under a vivid impression of the great final catastrophe, and looked therefore with contempt upon the present order of things, and directed all their desires to the second advent of Christ. Maximilla says: ‘After me there is no more prophecy, but only the end of the world.’ The failure of these predictions weakened, of course, all the other pretensions of the system. But, on the other hand, the abatement of faith in the near approach of the Lord was certainly accompanied with an increase of worldliness in the Catholic church. The millenarianism of the Montanists has reappeared again and again in widely differing forms.”

B. Tertullian defended his position on chiliasm, in part based on reported alleged visions: “But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem, let down from heaven, .... And the word of the new prophecy which is a part of our belief, attests how it foretold that there would be for a sign a picture of this very city exhibited to view previous to its manifestation. This prophecy, indeed, has been very lately fulfilled in an expedition to the East. For it is evident from the testimony of even heathen witnesses, that in Judæa there was suspended in the sky a city early every morning for forty days. As the day advanced, the entire figure of its walls would wane gradually, and sometimes it would vanish instantly. We say that this city has been provided by God for receiving the saints on their resurrection, and refreshing them with the abundance of all really spiritual blessings, as a recompense for those which in the world we have either despised or lost; since it is both just and God-worthy that His servants should have their joy in the place where they have also suffered affliction for His name’s sake. Of the heavenly kingdom this is the process. After its thousand years are over, within which period is completed the resurrection of the saints,....” (Shcaff 2016, “Against Marcion,” Book III, Chapter 25).

C. It is certain that a kingdom was prophesied in the Old Testament (Gen.
49:10; II Sam. 7:12-17; Psalm 110:1; Isaiah 2:1-3; 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44), by John (Matt. 3:1-2) and by Jesus (Matt. 16:18-19; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8), but it was in no way to be construed as an earthly kingdom (Luke 17:20-21; John 18:36; compare Zech. 6:12-13 & Heb. 8:4); nor was its duration limited to 1000 years (Dan. 7:13-14; Heb. 12:28; compare Rev. 20:4, “lived and reigned with Christ” rather than “Christ reigned”). The Kingdom arrived and was in existence during the first century (Acts 2; I Cor. 15:24-26; Col. 1:13-15; Rev. 1:5, 9; compare Matt. 26:29 & I Cor. 11:23-29).

D. Jesus and the apostles taught the necessity of being prepared for His return (John 5:28-29; Acts 17:30-31; II Cor. 5:10); nevertheless, no man knows the day or hour of the Lord’s second coming (Matt. 24:36; Phil. 3:20; I Thess. 1:10; 4:13-5:11; II Tim. 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; II Peter 3:10).

III. ASCETICISM, WITH DEMANDS FOR AN OPPRESSIVE LIFESTYLE FOR CHRISTIANS.

A. As part of their “New Prophecy” and connected to their views on the imminent return of Christ, the Montanists advocated a peculiar system of moral discipline, including (i) prohibitions concerning fleeing from persecution or remarriage, even after the death of a spouse; (ii) denial of forgiveness for sins committed after baptism; and (iii) ritualistic fasting (Bercot 1998).

B. Schaff (2014) described their extremist practices:

“[T]he Montanistic sect was characterized by fanatical severity in asceticism and church discipline. It raised a zealous protest against the growing looseness of the Catholic penitential discipline, which in Rome … established a scheme of indulgence for the grossest sins, and began, long before Constantine, to obscure the line between the church and the world. Tertullian makes the restoration of a rigorous discipline the chief office of the new prophecy. But Montanism certainly went to the opposite extreme, and fell from evangelical freedom into Jewish legalism; while the Catholic church in rejecting the new laws and burdens defended the cause of freedom. Montanism turned with horror from all the enjoyments of life, and held even art to be incompatible with Christian soberness and humility. It forbade women all ornamental clothing, and required virgins to be veiled. It courted the blood-baptism of martyrdom, and condemned concealment or flight in persecution as a denial of Christ. It multiplied fasts and other ascetic exercises, and carried them to extreme severity, as the best preparation for the millennium. It prohibited second marriage as adultery, for laity as well as clergy, and inclined even to regard a single marriage as a mere concession on the part of God to the sensuous infirmity of man. It taught the impossibility of a second repentance, and refused to restore the lapsed to the fellowship of the church. Tertullian held all mortal sins (of which he numbers seven), committed after baptism, to be unpardonable, at least in this world,…. The Catholic church, indeed, … opened the door likewise to excessive ascetic rigor, but only as an exception to her rule; while the Montanists pressed their rigoristic demands as binding upon all. Such universal asceticism was simply impracticable in a world like the present, and the sect itself necessarily dwindled away.”
C. Tertullian defended the Montanistic lifestyle, particularly on fasting:
“[I]t is on this account that the New Prophecies are rejected: not that Montanus and Priscilla and Maximilla preach another God, nor that they disjoin Jesus Christ (from God), nor that they overturn any particular rule of faith or hope, but that they plainly teach more frequent fasting than marrying. Concerning the limit of marrying, we have already published a defence of monogamy. Now our battle is the battle of the secondary (or rather the primary) continence, in regard of the chastisement of diet. They charge us with keeping fasts of our own; with prolonging our Stations generally into the evening; with observing xerophagies likewise, keeping our food unmoistened by any flesh, and by any juiciness, and by any kind of specially succulent fruit; and with not eating or drinking anything with a winey flavour; also with abstinence from the bath, congruent with our dry diet. They are therefore constantly reproaching us with novelty; concerning the unlawfulness of which they lay down a prescriptive rule, that either it must be adjudged heresy, if (the point in dispute) is a human presumption; or else pronounced pseudo-prophecy, if it is a spiritual declaration; provided that, either way, we who reclaim hear (sentence of) anathema.” (Schaff 2016, “On Fasting,” Chapter 1).

D. The apostles taught the unexpected return of Jesus and that its events should have a life-changing impact (II Peter 3:11-12; I John 3:2-3), as well as the value of self-discipline (I Cor. 9:27; I Peter 2:11), but did not call us to seek out self-damaging, unnatural practices such as those imposed by Montanus (see, e.g., I Cor. 6:19-20; II Thess. 3:6-13), and warned against them (I Tim. 4:1-3).

CONCLUSION:

A. Montanism was formally rejected by a synod in the early third century (Soyres 1878), but similar heresies have resurfaced numerous times.

B. Because the apostles were guided into “all truth;” plainly advised the early church to recognize a change regarding the Holy Spirit’s direct guidance; and warned against those who would alter “the faith once delivered to the saints,” we must respect the Lord’s boundaries on the matter (see Acts 15:15-18).

C. The truth through which we find unity as believers, freedom from sin, and preparation for the future, is God’s word (John 8:32, 36; 17:17; II Thess. 2:13-15; I Peter 1:22-25).
References


INTRODUCTION:

A. The office of the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church is one of the key ecclesiastical differences among three main branches of Christendom: Protestantism, the Eastern Orthodox, and Roman Catholicism.

B. One well-known church historian argues that the claims of the papacy have “never been fully realized, and remains to this day an apple of discord in the history of the church.” (Schaff and Schaff 1997)

C. The papacy represents the “ecclesiastical system in which the pope as successor of St. Peter and Vicar of Jesus Christ governs the Catholic Church as its supreme head.” (Joyce 1911) These arguments for the papal succession claim to be drawn from Scripture and tradition.

D. The term pope is derived from a Latin term meaning papa which was a title used by bishops to show fatherly love toward their flock. The usages of this term changed over time and, currently, the only person who uses the title pope is the Bishop of Rome though historically others have used the title. (Joyce 1911)

E. The Pope is essentially the father of the Roman Catholic Church holding its highest authority.

F. This lecture will briefly present the background of the papacy as it is known today (including its beginning), some of the additional doctrinal developments, and a brief consideration of the arguments presented for establishing and sustaining this office.

G. While a thorough consideration of the papacy and its development is crucial for understanding portions of early church history, length constraints will only allow for an overview of such history.

I. CIRCUMSTANCES THAT FAVORED THE GROWTH OF PAPAL POWER

A. The supposed Peterine foundation.

B. The transfer of the imperial capital from Rome to Constantinople.

C. The Barbarian invasions, setting rival governments.

D. The growth of “Christianity” from the 5th century onward was almost entirely in the west.

E. Doctrinal conflicts. (Newman 1899)

II. BACKGROUND TO THE POPES

A. In consideration of the background of the papacy, the above description of the papacy includes some bold foundational assumptions which will be considered later in this lecture.

B. The foundational arguments for the papacy are said to have been
established by Jesus Christ himself.

C. While the Roman Catholic Church alleges an early foundation for the papacy such a position was not officially defined until the First Vatican Council in 1870.

D. Prior to this council one of the key figures in establishing the foundation for the papacy was Leo I the Great.
1. Not a lot is known about Leo I’s early life including his date and place of birth.
2. In his young adult life, however, Leo I served the Roman church under Celestine I as a deacon and then as an “imperial diplomat (for Valentinian III) under Sixtus III”. (Bryer 1992)
3. Leo would eventually become the bishop of Rome where he served as the Pope from 440 until his death in 461.
4. He would become known as the “first pope, in the proper sense of the word” where the Papacy became “flesh and blood.” (Schaff and Schaff 1997)
5. Though other bishops of Rome held the title of pope, it was Leo’s papacy that would become more recognizable with the office of the papacy which is known today.
6. Leo’s rise to the papacy rings of being in the right place at the right time.
7. Although he was obviously a man of some ability given that he was not even present during his election to the papacy.

E. Leo’s position most simply stated is that, “Christ promised to build his church on Peter, the rock for all ages, and the bishops of Rome are his successors in that authority.” (Shelly 1996)

F. The papacy continued developing and building upon Leo’s ideas. Apostolic succession, for example, is the foundation for the doctrine of papal infallibility.

G. When the pope makes a doctrinal pronouncement ex cathedra he is doing so from a position of authority.
1. Ex cathedra simply means “from the chair”. Originally, the term ex cathedra referred to the position of a teacher or a bishop, but it was officially defined at the First Vatican Council giving it the meaning used today by Roman Church. (Pace 1909)
2. In the case of the pope it refers to the chair of Peter i.e. apostolic succession.
3. By virtue of his office the pope is said to have the benefit of infallibility when defining a doctrine concerning faith or morals. (Catholic Church Catechism 1995)

III. SCRIPTURAL PROOFS
B. The texts from Matthew and John are still used today in support of the papacy. (Joyce 1911)
1. In this passage Jesus explains to Peter that Satan wants to sift him like wheat.
2. However, Jesus prays for Peter that his faith remain strong so that he may use that faith to encourage his brothers in the faith.
3. Jesus said this to Peter in light of Peter’s upcoming denial that he knew Jesus.
4. The implications for the papacy are that Jesus has secured Peter’s faith despite his denial.
5. Peter’s faith ultimately did not fail and he would go on to lead others.
6. If apostolic succession is true then Peter’s successors must also be protected by Jesus so they too may lead others in the faith.
7. The passage in question gives no indication that Jesus established any kind of succession.
8. If this type of hermeneutic were to be applied consistently, then Christians’ would be able to apply any promises made in Scripture that were made to others to themselves.
9. This type of argument assumes succession based on any particular promise based on the personal application and receiving of said promises.
10. Such an inconsistent hermeneutic is insufficient for biblical application lest one simply picks and chooses what to apply to whom.

D. John 21:15-17
1. In this exchange Jesus asks Peter three times if Peter loves him.
2. Upon Peter’s three affirmations Jesus charges Peter to feed his sheep.
3. This dialogue took place just before Jesus’ ascension.
4. The argument for the papacy is that Jesus was turning over his flock to Peter just before returning to the Father.
5. Jesus was charging Peter to lead the church as it were.
6. While this passage might be understood that Jesus was giving Peter a greater role of importance, again, there is no indication of succession.
7. Nor is there any indication that this particular charge for Peter to feed Christ’s sheep is to be applied directly to others.
8. This does not mean that other church leaders will not feed Christ’s sheep, but that this dialogue is particular to Peter who then can disciple others that they too will feed Christ’s sheep if they love him.

E. Matthew 16:13-19
1. This passage from Matthew may be the most substantial since it speaks directly to Peter’s authority.
2. Jesus asks the Apostles about his identity.
3. Peter answers that Jesus is the Son of God to which Jesus replied that God revealed that to him and that he was blessed.
4. Jesus continues by telling Peter that he will build the church on the rock while protecting the church from destruction.
5. Jesus also tells Peter that he will give Peter the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven with authority to bind and loose on earth.
6. Peter’s name means rock and the reference to building the church upon the rock reveals a foundation rather than a structure.
7. In other words, the structure of a papal office must be read into this exchange.
8. It is understandable that Christ entrusted Peter as a foundational leader in the church upon which to build. Peter’s “leadership would involve
the authority of the steward, whose keys symbolized his responsibility to regulate the affairs of the household.” (Carson 1994)

9. Also, note that Jesus refers to Peter’s confession that was given to him by God and not anything inherent in Peter himself.

F. Peter’s leadership may be seen in his first sermon in the book of Acts 2.
   1. In this sermon Peter points to Christ as being the cornerstone who is the true foundation.
   2. Peter did not point to himself as the “Vicar of Christ” or anything similar.
   3. There were other leaders in the church such as Paul who played a dominate leadership role in the early church by writing most of the New Testament as well as rebuking Peter over a gospel issue which would fall under the heading of faith or morals.
   4. Peter’s authority to bind and loose may be best understood as “authority to declare what is and is not permissible in the kingdom of heaven, which is consistent with rabbinic writings. (Carson 1994)
   5. However, just two chapters later in Matthew 18:18 Jesus gives the same authority to all of the disciples which indicates that Peter was not the sole head of the church with special authority.

IV. APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

   A. The above Scriptural claims to the papacy work best when apostolic succession is assumed.
   B. Although the claim is that those texts support apostolic succession, it has been noted that Scriptural application is inconsistent if succession is supported.
   C. Rather, Rome is working backwards assuming succession so that the promises made to Peter may be passed along.
   D. There are two conditions that must be met for succession to be valid.
      1. First, Peter ruled and died in Rome.
      2. Second, the subsequent Bishops of Rome filled Peter’s position in the church (Wilhelm 1907)
   E. The first condition that Peter was in Rome is based on church tradition.
      1. Some scholars may dispute that Peter died in Rome, but this position is generally accepted.
      2. If it is admitted that Peter was in Rome this does not logically lead to the conclusion that succession exists.
      3. Peter being in Rome may offer a foundation upon which to build a doctrine of succession, but many assumptions must be made such as the exact duties and authority Peter exercised.
      4. If Peter’s exact role in Rome is unknown this offers little support for the second condition.
   F. Even using the least common denominator it would have to be shown that Peter was the Bishop of Rome for someone else to fulfil said office.
   G. The evidence that Peter was a bishop with authority over all other church leaders is lacking.
      1. In fact, Paul rebukes Peter, as noted earlier; over a gospel issue in Galatians 2, by having Gentiles observe Jewish laws.
      2. Peter also writes in his first epistle exhorting his fellow elders naming himself as one among them.
      3. Given the Scriptural evidence of Peter’s role one who came to fulfill it
 afterward would merely be a fellow elder who is subject to doctrinal rebuke by a peer when necessary.

H. Apostolic succession is most easily found and applied when it is assumed. Scriptural evidence about Peter and his role must not be ignored. Given these assumptions it is understandable that it took about 400 years after the time of the Apostles for Leo I to zealously declare the doctrine of the papacy as it is known today.

I. Much more could be and has been debated on both sides concerning the legitimacy of the papacy. Though even on surface observations as provided above, Roman claims of the papacy appear to be unfounded.

**CONCLUSION**

A. The history of the papacy is an important issue for Christendom given the divisions it continues to cause.

B. There is a sense in which Christians from different traditions start out interpreting offices such as the papacy with their own theological presuppositions in place.

C. This may leave the debate over the papacy at a potential stand still.

D. However, Christians need not stand still, but may turn objectively to God’s word that has not changed and whose words are provable, unlike unwritten tradition.

E. The study of the historical papacy allows Christians to be historically fair to opposing positions in attempt to grasp the dynamics of ecclesiastical development.

F. As with all growth in the Christian church, understanding the human dynamic alongside how God has grown the church is surely a lifelong study worth pursuing.

G. The brief overview and consideration provided in this paper concludes that the Roman claims for the papacy from Leo I until today remain unfounded.

H. Too many assumptions, along with an anachronistic reading of Scripture and church history leave little room for one to comfortably affirm Rome’s definition of the papacy.

**REFERENCES:**


Church, U.S. Catholic. Catechism of the Catholic Church. New York:


**List of the Popes**

**First Century**
- St. Peter (32-67)
- St. Linus (67-76)
- St. Anacletus (Cletus) (76-88)
- St. Clement I (88-97)
- St. Evaristus (97-105)

**Second Century**
- St. Alexander I (105-115)
- St. Sixtus I (115-125)
- St. Telesphorus (125-136)
- St. Hyginus (136-140)
- St. Pius I (140-155)
- St. Anicetus (155-166)
- St. Soter (166-175)
- St. Eleutherius (175-189)
- St. Victor I (189-199)
- St. Zephyrinus (199-217)

**Third Century**
- St. Callistus I (217-222)
- St. Urban I (222-30)
- St. Pontian (230-35)
- St. Anterus (235-36)
- St. Fabian (236-50)
- St. Cornelius (251-53)
- St. Lucius I (253-54)
- St. Stephen I (254-257)
- St. Sixtus II (257-258)
- St. Dionysius (260-268)
- St. Felix I (269-274)
- St. Eutychian (275-283)
- St. Caius (283-296)
- St. Marcellinus (296-304)

**Fourth Century**
- St. Marcellus I (308-309)
- St. Eusebius (309 or 310)
- St. Miltiades (311-14)

**Fifth Century**
- Liberius (352-66)
- St. Damasus I (366-83)
- St. Siricius (384-99)
- St. Anastasius I (399-401)
- St. Zosimus (417-18)
- St. Boniface I (418-22)
- St. Celestine I (422-32)
- St. Sixtus III (432-40)
- St. Leo I (the Great) (440-61)
- St. Hilarius (461-68)
- St. Simplicius (468-83)
- St. Felix III (II) (483-92)
- St. Gelasius I (492-96)
- St. Anastasius II (496-98)
- St. Symmachus (498-514)

**Sixth Century**
- St. Hormisdas (514-23)
- St. John I (523-26)
- St. Felix IV (III) (533-35)
- St. Agapetus I (535-36)
- St. Silverius (536-37)
- Vigilius (537-55)
- Pelagius I (556-61)
- John III (561-74)
- Benedict I (575-79)
- Pelagius II (579-90)

**POPEs of the Early Middle Ages**

**Seventh Century**
- St. Gregory I (the Great) (590-604)

**Eighth Century**
- John VI (701-05)
- John VII (705-07)
- Sisinnius (708)
- Constantine (708-15)
- St. Gregory II (715-31)
- St. Gregory III (731-41)
- St. Zachary (741-52/92, Stephen III (752-57)
- St. Paul I (757-67)
- Stephen IV (767-72)
- Adrian I (772-95)
- St. Leo III (795-816)

**Ninth Century**
- Stephen V (816-17)
- Paschal I (817-24)
- Eugene II (824-27)
- Valentine (827)
- Gregory IV (827-44)
- Sergius II (844-47)
- St. Leo IV (847-55)
- Benedict III (853-58)
- St. Nicholas I (the Great) (858-67)
- Adrian II (867-72)
- John VIII (872-82)
- Marinus I (882-84)
- St. Adrian III (884-85)
- Stephen VI (885-91)
- Formosus (891-96)
- Boniface VI (896)
- St. Stephen VII (896-97)
- Romanus (897)
- Theodore II (897)
An Examination of Religion 33-1500 AD

List of the Popes Continued

116. John IX (898-900)

TENTH CENTURY

117. Benedict IV (900-03)
118. Leo V (903)
119. Sergius III (904-11)
120. Anastasius III (911-13)
121. Lando (913-14)
122. John X (914-28)

123. Leo VII (936-39)
124. Stephen VIII (929-31)
125. John XI (931-35)
126. Leo VI (928)
127. Stephen IX (939-42)
128. Marinus II (942-46)
129. Agapetus II (946-55)
130. John XII (955-63)
131. Leo VIII (963-64)

ELEVENTH CENTURY

132. Benedict V (964)
133. John XIII (965-72)
134. Benedict VI (973-74)
135. Benedict VII (974-83)
136. John XIV (983-84)
137. John XV (985-96)
138. Gregory V (996-99)
139. Sylvester II (999-1003)

TWELFTH CENTURY

140. John XVI (1003)
141. John XVII (1003-09)
142. Sergius IV (1009-12)
143. Benedict VIII (1012-24)
144. John XIX (1024-32)
145. Benedict IX (1032-45)
146. Sylvester III (1045)
147. Benedict IX (1045)
148. Gregory VI (1045-46)
149. Clement II (1046-47)
150. Benedict IX (1047-48)
151. Damasus II (1048)
152. St. Leo IX (1049-54)
153. Victor II (1055-57)
154. Stephen X (1057-58)
155. Nicholas II (1058-61)
156. Alexander II (1061-73)

POPE'S OF THE AGE OF CRUSADES AND COUNCILS

ELEVENTH CENTURY

157. St. Gregory VII (1073-85)
158. Blessed Victor III (1086-87)
159. Blessed Urban II (1088-99)
160. Paschal II (1099-1118)

AVIGNON PAPACY AND THE GREAT SCHISM

TWELFTH CENTURY

161. Gelasius II (1118-19)
162. Callistus II (1119-24)
163. Honorius II (1124-30)
164. Innocent II (1130-43)
165. Celestine II (1143-44)
166. Lucius II (1144-45)
167. Blessed Eugene III (1145-53)
168. Anastasius IV (1153-54)
169. Adrian IV (1154-59)
170. Alexander III (1159-81)
171. Lucius III (1181-85)
172. Urban III (1185-87)
173. Gregory VIII (1187)
174. Clement III (1187-91)
175. Celestine III (1191-98)
176. Innocent III (1198-1216)

THIRTEENTH CENTURY

192. Alexander III (1159-81)
193. Lucius III (1181-85)
194. Urban III (1185-87)
195. Gregory VIII (1187)
196. Clement III (1187-91)
197. Celestine III (1191-98)
198. Innocent III (1198-1216)

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

204. Innocent VII (1404-06)
205. Gregory XII (1406-15)

POPE'S OF THE RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

206. Martin V (1417-31)
207. Eugene IV (1431-47)
208. Nicholas V (1447-55)
209. Callistus III (1455-58)
210. Pius II (1458-64)
211. Paul II (1464-71)
212. Sixtus IV (1471-84)
213. Innocent VIII (1484-92)
214. Alexander VI (1492-1503)

List from: www.thoughtco.com/popes-of-the-catholic-church-542333
THE PATRIARCHS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

WADE PHILLIPS

INTRODUCTION:
A. The see at Byzantium was a common one with little value until Constantine renamed the city and determined it to be “New Rome.”
   1. Officially, there were 171 bishops, archbishops, or patriarchs of Byzantium, or Constantinople who reigned between 38-1500 AD.
   2. There were several who ruled more than once, usually after having been deposed or abdicating their throne, either voluntarily or otherwise.
   3. The above amount of 171 is not necessarily accurate for at least these reasons:
      a. There is no evidence that the Apostle Andrew (or the Apostle John as the Eastern Orthodox Church later claimed) ever visited or closely approached Byzantium, or that he had left Jerusalem before 42 AD. (Ruffin 1997)
      b. There was no bishop in Byzantium before Metrophanes because there was no see there before the official renaming of Byzantium to Constantinople, also called New Rome.
      c. There is at least one whose very existence cannot be validated.
B. The politics, violence, scheming, and the non-Christ-like behavior by so many of the bishops, archbishops, patriarchs, and their supporters, helps us to understand just how far the church had departed from the New Testament pattern by the early fourth century.
   1. Surely there was a remnant of true believers somewhere on earth, but we are hard-pressed to find evidence of them.
   2. The office of bishop in the New Testament was one of great responsibility and gravity, but it had quickly become a place of honor and gain for the benefit of the bishop and/or the emperor, and rarely for the flock he should have been feeding.
   3. This helps us better understand the wisdom of God, revealed in scriptures such as Titus 1:5 and Acts 20:17, that there is to be a plurality of bishops (a.k.a. elders, shepherds, presbyters) in every local congregation and that the scriptures are our source of authority.
C. Throughout the research done for this lesson, it has become obvious to me that many dates, titles, and other “facts” concerning the following men, and that of certain events are uncertain at best.
   1. Information from sources connected to the Roman Catholic Church have a notably Catholic slant to the details, while those from Orthodox sources are often quite different.
   2. With the fact in mind that we are considering the Eastern Orthodox patriarchy, we will try to follow the Orthodox “facts” as closely as possible, but in many cases there is no information available from them.
   3. Much of the general information here is gathered from the official
websites of the Orthodox Church of America and Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as various Catholic sites.

a. While available on many number of other sites, I have relied heavily upon them.

b. They are not always directly credited in the bibliography, because the vast majority of the following information comes from them, but they are here credited: www.oca.org, www.newadvent.org, www.orthodoxwiki.com (administrated by a priest in the Orthodox Church in America), and www.patriarchate.org.

**DISCUSSION:**

I. Bishops Of Byzantium—Apostolic Era (33-100)

A. Andrew the Apostle (38)

1. He was the first apostle called by Jesus (John 1:40) and had been a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35, 37).

2. He reportedly died by crucifixion in Patras, Greece, circa 70 AD, on a saltire (X-shaped cross), bound to it instead of nailed. (Dvornik 1958)

3. According to tradition, Andrew traveled extensively and is thought to have preached in places such as Achaia, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, and Scythia.

4. The Eastern Orthodox Church loosely holds that he was the founder of the church at Byzantium in 38 AD.

   a. This legend first occurred in a ninth century forgery, attributed to Dorotheos, bishop of Tyre. (Cobham 1911)

   b. It is not widely accepted outside the Eastern Orthodox Church.

5. The founding of the church in Byzantium being attributed to Andrew has no historical evidence and should not be considered as truth.

   (“There is no need to show much in the way of details for those who presumably followed Andrew, at least until the early fourth century. Not until Metrophanes is there evidence that any of them ever served in the office of bishop, archbishop, or any other title, since there was possibly not even a congregation meeting in the city. With the exceptions of Stachys and Onesimus, only the names and supposed dates of service will therefore be listed. As Kelley L. Ross, Ph. D, states it, “Although the list of Bishops of Byzantium is given from the early days of the Church, this was not a particularly important city at the time, and one wonders about its historicity even more than with the early Bishops given for Rome.”) (Ross 2017)

B. Stachys the Apostle (38-54) traditional holds that he was appointed by the Apostle Andrew to watch over the flock at Byzantium, and he may have been the Stachys mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Romans 16:9.

C. Onesimus (54-68) traditionally recognized as the same Onesimus who was the slave of Philemon (Philemon 1:10, 16).

D. Polycarpus I (69-89)

E. Plutarch (89-105)

II. Bishops Of Byzantium—Ante-Nicene Era (100-325)

A. Sedecion (105-114)

B. Diogenes (114-129)

C. Eleutherius (129-136)

D. Felix (136-141)

E. Polycarpus II (141-144)
F. Athenodorus (144-148)
G. Euzois (148-154)
H. Laurence (154-166)
I. Alypius (166-169)
J. Pertinax (169-187)
K. Olympians (187-198)
L. Mark I (198-211)
M. Philadelphus (211-217)
N. Kyriakos I (217-230)
O. Castinus (230-237)
P. Eugenius I (237-242)
Q. Titus (242-272)
R. Dometius (272-284)
S. Rufinus I (284-293)
T. Probus (293-306)
U. Metrophanes (306-314)

1. He is said by Cobham, in The Patriarchs of Constantinople to be the first “real person” in the traditionally stated succession of bishops of Byzantium. (Cobham 1911)
2. It is traditionally accepted that the emperor Constantine either bestowed upon him the honorary title of Patriarch of Constantinople shortly before the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea (325) or that he convinced the council Fathers in attendance to do so.
3. The see at Constantinople was not elevated to a patriarchate until 381 by the Second Council of Constantinople.
4. Metrophanes is reported to have been too old and ill to attend the council and sent Alexander (see below) in his place.

V. Alexander (314-337)
1. Was the first Archbishop of Constantinople, as the city was officially renamed in 330.
2. Sanctioned Arius (originator of the Arian heresy) and later refused to readmit Arius to communion.

III. Bishops And Archbishops Of Constantinople—Nicene Era (325-381)
A. Paul I (337-339; 341-342; 346-351)
1. Also known as “Paul the Confessor.”
2. Was exiled three times and all by order of emperor Constantius II, and was twice restored when Constantius was unaware.
3. This was a result of civil war between the Arians, who were protected by Constantius, and the Bishop of Rome, who understood and despised the heresy of Arianism.
4. Finally exiled to Armenia where it is believed that he was strangled to death with his own cloak by Arians, date unknown. (Cobham 1911)
B. Eusebius of Nicomedia (339-341)
1. Was a distant relative to imperial family of Constantine the Great, and it was he who baptized Constantine on May 22, 337, just before the emperor’s death.
2. Was the bishop of Berytus (modern day Beirut), then on the See of Nicomedia, and finally was appointed by Constantius as Bishop of Constantinople after the latter had deposed Paul I.
3. Is assumed to have been very influential to the acceptance of Arianism in the household of Constantine, and was the first person contacted by
Arius after his excommunication from Alexandria. (Young 1983)

C. Macedonius I (341-346; 351-360)
1. Was consecrated as bishop as the church of Saint Paul by the Arians, as soon as Paul I had returned from his second exile and been reintroduced.
2. Deposed in 360 on the grounds of cruelty and anathematized by the Second Ecumenical Council (381). (Cobham 1911)
3. Socrates Scholasticus, in his Historia Ecclesiastica, wrote, “The exploits of Macedonius, on behalf of Christianity, consisted of murders, battles, incarcerations, and civil wars.” (Wace 1911)
4. He also taught that the Holy Spirit was not a Divine being, but was instead on the level of the angels. (Fountain William Mattox 1961)

D. Eudoxius of Antioch (360-370)
1. Became bishop of Constantinople on January 27, 360, and on February 15 dedicated Saint Sophia, the great church building at Constantine begun in 342 by Constantine the Great.
2. Was one of the most influential Arians. (Patriarch, Eudoxius n.d.)

E. Florentius (c. 363) is briefly mentioned in some histories of the Eastern Orthodox Church, but almost nothing is known, except that he may have been connected to the Anomoeans, which was an extreme Arian sect.

F. Demophilus (370-379)
1. Was elected by the Arians as bishop in 370, at the same time Evagrius was elected and ordained by the orthodox party.
2. Evagrius and Eustathius, who had chosen and ordained Evagrius, were banished by the emperor Valens.
3. In 380, Theodosius I ascended the throne of Rome and he offered Demophilus a confirmation to his see, since his patriarchy had been unofficial, on the condition that he agree to the Nicene Creed, but he refused. (Wace 1911)
4. Demophilus was immediately deposed and ordered to give up his churches, although some histories have him serving as bishop of the Arians until 386.
5. His deposal gave the orthodoxy power again for the first time in forty years. (Wace 1911)

G. Maximus (379)
1. Elected to the office through the antics of Coptic Pope Peter II of Alexandria. (Patriarch, Maximus n.d.)
2. Was ordained during the night as bishop of Constantinople, in place of Gregory the Theologian (whose election had not been canonical) and was consecrated in the cathedral while Gregory, whose patriarchy was actually not canonical, was ill. (Wace 1911)
3. Was forced the next morning from the cathedral, withdrew to Thessalonica, and began his appeal to be reinstated, which was finally and unanimously rejected at the Second Ecumenical Council of 381. (Wace 1911)

H. Gregory of Nazianzus, or Gregory the Theologian (379-381)
2. Known as one of the “Cappadocian Fathers,” or “Three Holy Hierarchs,” along with Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa.
3. Had a significant impact on Trinitarian theology, which led to the demise of Arianism in Constantinople.
IV. Patriarchs Of Constantinople—Nicene Era (381-451)

A. Nectarius (381-397)
   1. Was a surprise pick by emperor Theodosius I, as Nectarius was as the time a “catechumen,” or one who was still being taught; he had yet to be baptized. (Wace 1911)
   2. This in itself gives us insight into the state of the church at the time.
   3. He was then baptized before taking office and being clothed with the robes of a Bishop, and became president of the Second Ecumenical Council.
   4. The Second Ecumenical Council, in the third canon, gave the Bishop of Constantinople first rank, after the Bishop of Rome, since Constantinople was the new Rome, and it was then recognized as a patriarchate (although the Roman Catholic Church did not recognize it as such until 1439).
   5. Died in office September 17, 397 as the first true Patriarch of Constantinople.

B. John I Chrysostom (398-404)
   1. Known as a prolific author, second only to Augustine of Hippo in the quantity of writings surviving today.
   2. Tried to reform the pomp and circumstance of the church and was respected by the people during his time because he refused to cater to the wealthy and clergy.
   3. He revised many of the prayers and rubrics of the “Divine Liturgy.”
   4. Wrote and spoke against the Judaizing teachers of his day.
   5. “Chrysostom” was added to his name after his death and means “golden-mouthed”, because of the eloquence of his speech. (Hurlbut 1933)
   6. Was banished from Constantinople on June 10, 404, against the wishes of Pope Innocent I, and died in exile on September 14, 407. (Wace 1911)
   7. Was venerated after his death and is now highly regarded as a saint by many, and the Eastern Orthodox Church recognizes him as one of “The Holy Hierarchs.”

C. Arsacius of Tarsus (404-405) was the brother of Nectarius and had served as archpriest under John I Chrysostom. (Wace 1911) and harbored hostility toward his predecessor (John I) and testified against him at the Synod of the Oak at which John was condemned.

D. Atticus (406-425)
   1. Had been an opponent of John I Chrysostom, and in fact is credited by Palladius of Galatia as the organizer of John’s expulsion, but became a supporter after the latter’s death.
   2. He worked to raise the influence and authority of the see of Constantinople and was a champion of combatting heresy, such as that of the Pelagians. (Wace 1911)

E. Sisinnius I (426-427) was well known for his virtue and charity, but only served less than two years, and died on December 24, 427.

F. Nestorius (428-431) was one of the most controversial patriarchs because of his belief and teaching which “denied the divine nature (of God) was truly united with the body of Jesus” and “that Mary gave birth to the human body only, and therefore she should not be called the “mother of God.”
G. Maximianus (431-434) led a monastic life and had a reputation for sanctity for his action in building, from his own funds, tombs for the remains of "holy men" (Wace 1911) 

H. Proclus (434-446) was a friend and disciple of Chrysostom, and became secretary to Atticus, and it was during his time that the Trisagion prayer came into use. 

I. Flavian (446-449) was described by Nectarius as being the “guardian of the sacred vessels of the great church of Constantinople” and died on August 11, 449 as a result of a vicious attack by Eutyches at the Second Council of Ephesus, although other sources attribute the attack to Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria. (Wace 1911) 

J. Anatolius (449-458) 
1. Became patriarch through the influence of Dioscorus upon emperor Theodosius II. 
2. Publicly condemned the heresies of Eutyches and Nestorius. 
3. It was at the Council of Chalcedon, which was called by Anatolius, that the patriarch of Constantinople was decreed to have the same rights and powers as those of the bishop (or pope) of Rome. 
4. Rome now ruled the west and Constantinople rule the east. 
5. This clearly showed that no one man was recognized by the other bishops and patriarchs as the universal head of the church. (Fountain William Mattox 1961) 

V. Patriarchs Of Constantinople—Early Byzantine Era (451-843) 

A. Gennadius I (458-471) was regarded as a successful administrator of his duties and is praised by all relative historians, who wrote many commentaries, including one on Daniel, many other parts of the Old Testament, and on all the epistles of Paul. 

B. Acacius (471-489) 
1. Formerly headed an orphanage in the church at Constantinople. 
2. He worked both to restore unity in the east and to elevate the authority of the see of Constantinople by asserting independence from Rome and influencing Alexandria and Antioch. 
3. Was more of a statesman than a theologian. 
4. Was excommunicated by the pope in Rome and the condemnation repeated in the name of the council of Chalcedon in 485, but the Eastern Christians remained in communication with Acacius and he remained in office until his death in 489. (Wace 1911) 

C. Fravitta (489-490) reportedly by Nicephorus Callistus to have cheated his way into the office. 
1. “On the death of Acacius, the emperor Zeno placed on the altar of the great church of Constantinople two sheets of paper. On one was written a prayer that God would send an angel to inscribe on the blank sheet the name of him whom He wished to be the patriarch. A fast of 40 days with prayer was ordered. The church was given into the custody of a confidential eunuch, the imperial chamberlain, and the imperial seal set on the casket containing the papers. A presbyter named Fravitta was in charge of the suburban church of St. Thecla. Fired with ambition, he paid the eunuch large sums, and promised him more, to write his name on the blank sheet. At the end of the 40 days the casket was opened; the name of Fravitta was found, and he was enthroned amid universal acclamations.” (Wace 1911)
2. He died only after four months in office, the eunuch tried to collect his reward from the executors, and the whole plan was then revealed to the emperor.

3. No trace exists of the story outside of the account of Nicephorus.

D. Euphemius (490-496)
   1. Famously rebuked Anastasius, the future emperor who held some heretical views, "If you must frequent the church, agree with her! Or else no more enter into her gates to pervert men more simple than yourself." (Wace 1911)
   2. Refused to crown Anastasius until he "would give a written profession of his creed, promise under his hand to keep the Catholic faith intact, make no innovation in the church, and follow as his rule of belief the decrees of Chalecedon." (Wace 1911)

E. Macedonius II (495/6-511) deposed by the other patriarchs (minus Elias of Jerusalem) at the behest of Anastasius, after refusing to change his adherence to the orthodox beliefs.

F. Timothy, or Timotheus I (511-517) was considered a man of bad character by the British historian F. H. Blackburne Daniel, likely because of his alleged adoption of Monophysite doctrines from ambition instead of true conviction. (Wace 1911)

G. John II of Cappadocia (518-520) was designated by Timothy as his successor, and his patriarchate is most remembered for the reunion of the east and west after thirty-four years of schism. (Wace 1911)

H. Epiphanius (520-535) served a rather uneventful fourteen years and three months, but what is known about him is to his advantage, including having 45 canons attributed to him. (Wace 1911)

I. Anthimus I (535-536) was deposed by Pope Agapetus I before March 13, 536, for his Monophysite beliefs, after only a few months in office, and was hidden by empress Theodora for twelve years until her death.

J. Menas (536-552)
   1. Became patriarch because of the influence of the empress Theodora, to the displeasure of the clergy at Constantinople.
   2. Was excommunicated twice by Pope Vigilius because he disagreed with the pope, but was restored quickly on both occasions. (Herbermann n.d.)
   3. Was during his patriarchate that Justinian’s Hagia Sophia was consecrated, as the first was burned during a riot in 532.

K. Euthychius (552-565; 577-582)
   1. Was arrested (January 22, 565) and then exiled on false charges by Justinian after Eutychius rebuked his adaptation of tenets of the Aphthardotocetae, which among other things taught that Jesus could not have felt pain.
   2. Upon the death of John III Scholasticus, his successor, and after Justinian had died, was returned to his rightful position as patriarch in October 577 by Justin II.

L. John III Scholasticus (565-577) was best known for his Digest of Canon Law, actually written before his patriarchate.

M. John IV Nestleutes (582-595)
   1. Was the first to assume the title of Ecumenical Patriarch. (Wace 1911)
a. This made him “first among equals” with all churches in the east.
   b. It caused serious tension in the relationship with the church at
Rome, because Pope Gregory interpreted it as meaning that John would be considered the “universal” or “exclusive” bishop.

2. Also known as “The Faster” for his ascetical lifestyle.

N. Cyriacus II (596-606)
   1. Appears to have been friendly with Gregory the Great.
   2. Refused to drop the title of Ecumenical Patriarch.

O. Thomas I (607-610) has scant information about him available, but is remembered by the Orthodox Church as one who was spiritually minded toward his flock.

P. Sergius I (610-638)
   1. Had a very close relationship with Byzantine emperor Heraclius.
      a. It was he who crowned Heraclius in October of 610. (Alexander 1977)
      b. He also baptized Heraclius’ daughter.
   2. Authored the Ecstasy together with Heraclius.
      a. It promoted the idea that Jesus possessed two natures, but only one will.
      b. This was known as Monothelitism, or The Doctrine of the Single Will.
      c. The doctrine was accepted for two years until condemned by Pope John IV in 640.
   3. Died December 9, 638.

Q. Pyrrhus I (638-641)
   1. Was a supporter of Monothelitism, and was elected to the patriarchal throne with the support of Heraclius.
   2. Exiled in 641 but the Byzantine general Valentinus.
   3. While in exile, he debated Maximus the Confessor, and later rejected Monothelitism.
   4. After his return to the patriarchate in Constantinople, he again was said reversed his thoughts on the doctrine, although it appears that his first recant was done only for political purposes. (New Catholic Encyclopedia n.d.)

R. Paul II (641-653) assumed the office at the deposal of Pyrrhus I.

S. Peter (654-666) was also a Monothelite condemned as a heretic at the Sixth Ecumenical Council, along with the Sergius I, Pyrrhus I, Paul II, and the patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria. (Herbermann n.d.)

T. Thomas II (667-669) was orthodox in his beliefs, unlike his four predecessors, elected after six and a half months after Peter’s repose; an unusually long period of time.

U. John V (669-675)

V. Constantine I (675-677)

W. Theodore I (677-679)

X. George I (679-686)

Y. Paul III (687-693)

Z. Callinicus I (693-705) helped to depose Justinian II and replace him with Leontios, and upon Justinian’s reinstatement, Callinicus was arrested, blinded, then imprisoned in a monastery. (Kiminas 2009)

AA. Cyril (705-711) was placed on the throne by Justinian as the replacement for Callinicus, then reposed by emperor Philippicus, soon after the fall of Justinian II in December 711.

AB. John VI (712-715)
1. Philippicus’ choice to replace Cyrus, favored by Philippicus because they shared monothelite sympathies.

2. The new emperor Anastasios II deposed him in 715 and replaced with Germanus I, who held orthodox beliefs.

AC. Germanus I (715-730)
1. Was a champion of Dyothelitism.
2. Better (or worse) remembered for being an iconodule, which brought him into disagreement with emperor Leo III the Isaurian, who banned the veneration of images. (Kirsch 1909)
3. Either resigned or was deposed soon after the ban.

AD. Anastasius (730-754)
1. Was appointed by Leo III most likely because of his support for iconoclasm.
2. He later changed his mind and favored icons, only to change his mind again, both times for self-preservation.
   a. He quickly changed sides to support Artabasdos (who had seized the Byzantine throne after Constantine V had been called away to command his armies) when Artabasdos reversed Leo’s ban on icon veneration.
   b. When Constantine returned and reclaimed his throne, he defeated and executed Artabasdos.
   c. Anastasius was then deposed, whipped, blinded, and paraded shamefully through the streets of Constantinople.
   d. He later changed his mind back to his original view of icons, was pardoned by Constantine, then restored as patriarch.

AE. Constantine II (754-766) was an iconoclast, deposed and jailed June of 765 after the discovery of a plot against Constantine V, along with other iconoclasts, and in autumn of 766, was scourged, then paraded through the Hippodrome of Constantinople before being beheaded. (Afinogenov 2010)

AF. Nicetas I (766-780) was considered little more than a mouthpiece for the emperor, was not well liked by the iconophiles, and later declared a heretic.

AG. Paul IV (780-784) was at first opposed to the veneration of icons until after the death of Leo IV in 780, when he desired to restore it, but realized he did not have the power to do so. (Hussey 1986)

AH. Tarasius (784-806)
1. Was another who opposed icons and later “repented” according to the history of the Orthodox Church.
2. Resisted the promotion to patriarch for some time out of a sense of humility, but relented on the condition that church unity be restored with the Roman and oriental patriarchs. (The Orthodox Church in America n.d.)
3. He presided over the Second Council of Nicea (787), which condemned Iconoclasm, though he had formerly approved the veneration of icons. (The Orthodox Church in America n.d.)

AI. Nicephorus I (806-815) was the secretary to the Second Council of Nicea and exhibited great zeal as patriarch against the Iconoclasts who were backed by emperor Leo V.

AJ. Theodotus I Cassiteras (815-821) presided over the Synod of Constantinople of 815, which briefly re instituted Iconoclasm, who appears to have been a torturous man, having starved and mistreated several abbots trying to force
them to accept his ecclesiastical policies. (Bury 1912)

AK. Antony I Kassamatas (821-837) trained as a lawyer, became a monk and eventually became an abbot, who also flip-flopped on the subject of icons, first being a proponent of them, and then an Iconoclast, seemingly for reasons of ambition.

AL. John VII Grammaticus (837-843)
1. Was at one time a painter of icons, but by 814 had become an affirmed iconoclast in the administration of Leo V who, as previously mentioned, was also of that belief.
2. Appointed patriarch by Theophilus, whom he had been responsible for educating during the reign of Michael II, father of Theophilus.
3. After the death of Theophilus (842), his widow Theodora, an iconodule, deposed John (843).
4. His deposal occurred at the synod of 843, that brought iconoclasm to its finality. (Bury 1912)

VI. Patriarchs of Constantinople—late Byzantine era (843—1453)
A. Methodius I (843-847)
1. Elected in John VII's place, and called for the aforementioned synod to confirm John's deposal and his own succession to the throne.
2. Made a triumphant procession from the Church of Blachernae to Constantinople to restore the icons to Hagia Sophia—this is remembered as a holy day for the Orthodox Church, “Triumph of Orthodoxy”—and he compiled the “Synodikon of Orthodoxy,” which is read the first Sunday of Great Lent. (The Orthodox Church in America n.d.)
3. Reportedly tried to be moderate toward the members of the clergy who were former iconoclasts, which was not accepted by the extremists.

B. Ignatius I (847-858; 867-877)
1. Was the son of emperor Michael I Rangabe, who was deposed in 813.
2. Was appointed to the patriarchy by Theodora after the death of Methodius.
3. A staunch iconodule and was forced to resign in 858 after emperor Michael III and Caesar Bardas (uncle to Ignatius) removed Theodora from influence.

C. Photius I the Great (858-867; 877-886) though only a layman at his election, is widely regarded as one of the most influential and powerful church leaders in Constantinople, and he is best remembered for his writings, such as Bibliotheca, the Lexicon, Amphilochia, and Mystogia. (Hussey 1986)

D. Stephanus I (886-893)

E. Antony II Kauleas (893-901) helped to reconcile supporters of Ignatius and Photius, who were actually pursuing the same policies, and he supported Leo when he replaced Photius with Stephanus, with Leo rewarding him with the patriarchate when Stephanus died.

F. Nicholas I Mysticus (901-907; 912-925) was banished to a monastery in 907 by Leo VI because he refused to allow Leo a fourth marriage, and refused Leo's demand to confer with Pope Sergius about the marriage, but later restored. (Britannica, Nicholas I: Byzantine Patriarch of Constantinople 2016) (Rome at the time was not as stringent on marriage as was Constantinople.)

G. Ethymius I Syncellus (907-912) was appointed by Leo VI when the latter deposed Nicholas, then deposed by Leo, although Ethymius acknowledged
Leo’s fourth marriage, since he refused to let that fourth wife, Zoe Zaoutzaine, wear the title “empress”. (Britannica, Euthymius: Orthodox Patriarch 2017)

H. Stephanus II of Amasea (925-928)
1. Was appointed apparently as a stop gap patriarch by emperor Romanos I Lekapenos, until the emperor’s son Theophylactus reached an appropriate age to assume the post.
2. Called a “deliberate entity” by Stephen Runciman. (Runciman, The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign: A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium 1929)
3. Died on July 18, 928, sooner than Romanos could have possibly expected, for Theophylactus was still too young.

I. Tryphon (928-931)
1. Was raised to the patriarchate upon the death of Stephanus II, under the condition that he would resign when Theophylactus came of age. (Orthodox Church in America n.d.)
2. When the boy turned sixteen in 931, Romanos asked Tryphon to step down, but he refused to hand over the throne to such an inexperienced youth. (Orthodox Church in America n.d.)
3. Resigned without intention to do so by being tricked into signing a blank piece of paper, over which his forged indignant resignation was written by Bishop Theophilus of Caesarea and emperor Romanos, and he died as a simple monk in 933. (Orthodox Church in America n.d.)

J. Theophylactus Lecapenus (933-956)
1. Was the third son of an emperor to become patriarch, but first to do so while his father lived.
2. Kept in close contact with the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch in the spirit of ecumenism.
3. Introduced theatrical elements into the Byzantine liturgy, which was not supported by the more conservative clergy.

K. Polyeuctus (956-970) was appointed by emperor Constantine VII, the son who was the product of the affair of Leo VI and Zoe Karbonopsina before their marriage, but he was not loyal to Constantine, questioning the legitimacy of his parents’ marriage, and restored the name of Eutychius who had opposed the marriage strenuously. (Norwich 1992)

L. Basil I Skamandrenus (970-974) was accused as a conspirator against emperor John I Tzimiskes and violating holy rules, but refused to appear before a royal court and was exiled.

M. Antony III Studites (974-979) was tenacious in upholding autonomous jurisdiction of the church as being complementary to the emperor’s secular authority, and a champion of reform, including elimination of the buying and selling of offices in the church, something practiced by the clergy to pay the imperial taxes levied on church property. (Britannica, Anthony III Studite 1998)

N. Nicholas II Chrysoberges (984-996) is one about whom very little is known, but it was during his time in office that the Christianization of the Kiev Rus’ (a medieval people from whom the name of Belarus and Russia came) is believed to have been completed.

O. Sisinius II (996-998) patriarchate characterized by several issues including wedding and divorce, and he died in office in 998. (Patriarch, Sisinius II
n.d.)
P. Sergius II (999 or 1001-1019) opposed the addition of the word “filioque” to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, which asserts the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son as well as the Father, he resisted the movement to have Symeon the Studite (a 10th-century monk) venerated, and an attempt by the emperor to collect from wealthy landowners the unpaid taxes of the peasantry. (Britannica, Sergius II Patriarch of Constantinople 1998)

Q. Eustathius (1019-1025) offered a compromise to Pope John XIX by offering for the Orthodox Patriarch its own sphere in the East, as the Roman papacy claimed dominion over the entire Christian world. (Charles William Previté-Orton 1979)

R. Alexius I Studites (1025-1043) is most remembered for his efforts to reform the practice of charistike dorea.

S. Michael I Cerularius (1043-1058) is known as the author of the “Great Schism” (Fortescue 1911) or the point at which the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church split.

T. Constantine III Lichoudas (1059-1063) served in the government of the emperor, rising as high as proedros (president) of the Senate, before entering monastic life. (Patriarch, Κωνσταντῖνος Ι' Λειχούδης n.d.)

U. John VIII Xiphilinus (1064-1075) was one of the leading intellectuals of his day and was once a senior officer of the school of law at the University of Constantinople, also was epitomator of the works of Cassius Dio; once reportedly exiled, then became a monk, only to later be elected patriarch. (Bjork 2010)

V. Cosmas I (1075-1081) crowned emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates and later influenced the emperor to resign when the emperor's popularity had declined and the empire began a period of instability, forced to resign by the influence of the new emperor Alexios I Komnenos’s mother, Anna Dalassene, but only after fulfilling his one condition for doing so, and that was crowning the emperor’s first wife Irene as empress. (Hussey 1986)

W. Eustratius Garidas (1081-1084) was a friend of the emperor’s mother and her pick for patriarch which was the cause for Cosmas’ forced resignation (Buckler 1929), and described by Anna Komnenos (daughter to Alexios) and others as being uneducated and of weak character (Commnenos 2003).

X. Nicholas III Grammaticus (1084-1111) supported the confiscation of church treasures by the emperor to help alleviate the financial strain caused by the Byzantine-Norman Wars, fought against doctrinal heresy and condemned as a heretic Basil I the Physician, who was later burned at the stake for promoting the teachings of Bogomil, and was forced to seek peace with the Roman Pope Urban II when the political situation of Byzantine grew more unstable, but did not compromise on the major issues of the day, such as the papacy, the Filioque, and the argument of leavened vs. unleavened bread. (Britannica, Nicholas III: Patriarch of Constantinople 2014)

Y. John IX Agapetus (1111-1134) ruled the patriarchate when emperor Alexios I Komnenos attempted to heal the schism between the Orthodox Church and Rome but to no avail, for in 1112 Pope Pascal II demanded that the Patriarch of Constantinople recognize the Pope’s primacy over “all the churches of God throughout the world.” (Hussey 1986)

Z. Leo Styppis (1134-1143) had a relatively uneventful reign during the rule of emperor John II Komnenos.
AA. Michael II Kurkuas (1143-1146) was appointed because Manuel I Komnenos had no one to coronate him after his father John’s and Patriarch Leo’s deaths in early 1143, for there was no patriarch yet appointed.

AB. Cosmas II Atticus (1146-1147) was highly respected for his learning and for his piety. (Kinnamos 1976)

AC. Nicholas IV Muzalon (1147-1151) wrote a treatise on the Filioque to Alexios I, and was eventually forced to resign after his election was called into question as to its canonical validity, since he had voluntarily resigned the see in Cyprus some thirty-seven years before. (Kazhdan 1991)

AD. Theodotus II (1151-1153)

AE. Neophytus II (1153)

AF. Constantine IV Chliarenus (1154-1156)

AG. Luke Chrysoberges (1156-1169) in 1166, established a uniform period of forty day for the fast of the Nativity.

AH. Michael III of Anchialus (1170-1178)
1. Served in multiple administrative roles in the church, and was “chief of the philosophers” (head of the University of Constantinople) become his election.
2. His patriarchy was marked by an ongoing attempt by emperor Manuel to bring unity between the papacy at Rome and the Byzantine empire, but neither Pope Alexander III nor Manuel were willing to compromise their positions. (Vasiliev 1952)
   a. Alexander demanded recognition of the authority of the Roman church over all Christians everywhere and to reach superiority over the Byzantine empire.
   b. Manuel wanted official recognition of his secularity authority in the east and west.

AI. Chariton (1177-1178)

AJ. Theodosius I Borradiotes (1179-1183) opposed emperor Andronokis on several issues, most notably on the marriage of his illegitimate daughter, Eirene, to the illegitimate son of Manuel, Alexios, and he was forced to abdicate his throne. (Kazhdan 1991)

AK. Basil II Carnaterus (1183-1186)
1. Upon succession, immediately complied with Adronokis’ wishes, including approving of the marriage of Eirene to Alexios and absolving the murderers of emperor Alexios II Komnenos (1180-1183), which involved, at least as conspirator, Adronokis. (Kazhdan 1991)
2. Was later deposed by the new emperor, Isaac II Komnenos, and condemned by a synod for his approval of the marriage of Eirene and Alexios. (Kazhdan 1991)

AL. Nicetas II Muntanes (1186-1189) was appointed by Isaac II Angelos in February 1186. (Grumel 1958)

AM. Leon Theotokites (1189) served only from February or March to September or October of 1189.

AN. Dositheus (1190-1191) previously was the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem and was a close friend of Byzantine emperor Isaac II Angelos. (May have also served a short period of time between Nicetas II Muntanes and Leon Theotokites, but there is only scant evidence of this.)

AO. George II Xiphilinus (1191-1198)

AP. John X Camaterus (1198-1206)
1. Between 1198-1200 exchanged letters with Pope Innocent III about
the issues of papal supremacy and the filioque clause of the Niceno-
Constantinopolitan Creed, notably disputing the papacy’s claim to go
back to the Apostle Peter, and insisting that its importance was based
solely on it being the old capital city. (Kazhdan 1991)

2. After being threatened by the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204), he
acknowledged the supremacy of the papacy in 1203. (Kazhdan 1991)

VII. Patriarchs of Constantinople—exile in Nicea (1204-1261)
A. Michael IV Autoreianus (1208-1213)
1. Was first to serve as patriarch while in exile in Nicea.
2. He was made patriarch in early 1208 by Theodore I Laskaris, who had
established the Empire of Nicea after the fall of Constantinople and
continued the Constantinople patriarchate. (Kazhdan 1991)
3. Michael crowned Theodore emperor on March 20, 1208, although he
had already declared himself emperor in 1205.
4. Michael also promised remission of sins for Theodore’s soldiers who
fell in battle, which was contrary to Byzantine tradition and Orthodox
doctrine.
B. Theodore II Eirenicus (1213-1215)
1. Was a high ranking empirical official during the reign of Alexios III
Angelos.
2. When Constantinople fell, Theodore fled to Asia Minor where he was
tonsured and became a monk. (Vougiouklaki 2003)
3. Elected by the patriarchal synod in September 1214, and his reign was
marked with open confrontation with the papacy over the legitimacy
of the Latin Patriarch of Constantinople. (Vougiouklaki 2003)
C. Maximus II (1215), wrote George Akropolites, “...paid court to the
women’s quarters and was in turn courted for it; for it was nothing else
which raised him to such eminence.” (Akropolites 2007)
D. Manuel I Charitopoulos (1215-1222) consecrated Sava as archbishop
of Serbia on December 6, 1219, thus establishing the autocephalous
Orthodox Church of Serbia.
E. Germanus II (1222-1240) was a fierce critic of the Catholic Church and
wrote many related treatises (Kazhdan 1991), but willing to seek a reunion
between east and west, though it was to no avail.
F. Methodius II (1240)
G. Manuel II (1244-1255)
H. Arsenius Autoreianus (1255-1259; 1261-1265) reigned twice, and was
deposed 1265 by a synod called by emperor Michael Palaeologus, whom
Arsenius had excommunicated for blinding John IV, the rightful heir to the
throne, and whom Michael had been co-emperor. (E. o. Britannica 1998)
I. Nicephorus II (1259-1261) served during Arsenius’ self-exile and died in
early 1261, before the return to Constantinople. (Patriarch, Νικηφόρος Β’
n.d.)
J. Germanus III (1265-1266) was known as a worldly cleric, whose only real
accomplishment was to convince the emperor to found and fund schools
of liberal arts (Runciman, The Great Church in Captivity 1968), who as
patriarchate was considered incompetent and unpopular, and was deposed
in his second year.
K. Joseph I Galesiotes (1266-1275; 1282-1283)
1. Was a married priest, but when his wife died, he joined a monastery.
2. He quickly absolved the blinding of John IV Laskaris by emperor
Michael and lifted the excommunication imposed by Arsenius, which led to the Arsenite schism. (Talbot 1991)

3. In 1273, Joseph swore an oath to never accept emperor Michael VIII’s projected union with the Catholic Church, at least under the terms set by the Pope, and he resigned as the Byzantine delegation prepared to go to Rome to make the Union. (Talbot 1991)

4. When Michael died, his son Andronokis II reversed his father’s policies church policies, deposed John XI Beccus (below) and reinstated Joseph I, who served only a few months before his health forced him to resign again. (Talbot 1991)

L. John XI Beccus (1275-1283) had originally not supported the union between the Roman Church and the Church of Constantinople, a position that caused him to be imprisoned, but recanted his position after studying the position further, returned to the office of chartophylax, was elected to replace Joseph after he resigned (the first time), and when back in office campaigned to change the minds of those against the union, to no avail, and he was asked by Adronokis II to abdicate his office, which he did. (Schaefer n.d.)

M. Gregory II Cyprus (1283-1289) was elected patriarch, although there is no evidence that he was of the clergy or had previously held any church office; refused to accept his predecessor’s theological innovations on filioque, or for that matter the filioque clause added to the Niceno-Constantinople Creed by the Catholics, and was pressured to resign in 1289, which he did. (T. E. Britannica, Gregory II Cyprus: Greek Orthodox Patriarch 2014)

N. Athanasius I (1289-1293; 1303-1309/10)

1. Was opposed the reunion between the Catholic and Orthodox churches.
2. Introduced ecclesiastical reform which was opposed by some of the clergy at Constantinople, and his first resignation was for this reason.
3. Restored to his throne in 1303 by popular demand, but forced to resign in 1309 or 1310 by pro-unionists. (T. E. Britannica, Anathasius I: Patriarch of Constantinople 2015)

O. John XII (1294-1303)

P. Nephon I (1310-1314) was a lover of the luxurious life and now well suited to be patriarch, but it was during his rule that the Arsenite Schism was finally healed. (Hussey 1986)

Q. John XIII Glykys (1315-1319/20)

R. Gerasimus I (1320-1321) was abbot of the Imperial Mangana Monastery in Constantinople before his election, at an advanced age, and served less than two years before his death.

S. Isaias I (1323-1334) ruled during the succession fight between Andronokis II Palaiologos and his grandson Andronokis II Palaiologos, and was confined to a monastery by the former for his support of the latter, who restored Isaias to the patriarchate after obtaining his grandfather’s abdication.

T. John XIV Kalekas (1334-1347) was an anti-hesychast and opposed to Gregory Palamas, the greatest proponent of the heresy at the time and became an active participant in the Byzantine civil war (1341-1347) between the supporters of the regency of John V Palaiologos and John VI Kantakouzenos. (Patriarch, Ἰωάννης ΙΔ´ Καλέτας (in Greek) n.d.)

U. Isidore I (1347-1350) was a disciple of Gregory Palamas (Runciman, The Great Church in Captivity 1968), excommunicated along with Palamas in
1345 synod of anti-hesychast bishops, but later recanted along Palamas, and was eventually elected patriarch and subsequently released Palamas from prison and consecrated him the Archbishop of Thessalonica.

V. Callistus I (1350-1354; 1355-1363) established reforms in the administrative and jurisdictional areas of the Orthodox Church, argued that single immersion is not truly baptism and that those immersed only once should be re-baptized, and was regarded by the anti-hesychast historians as a “power-mad tyrant” and “obstinate reactionary.” (Britannica, Callistus 1998)

W. Philotheus Kokkinos (1354-1355; 1364-1376)
1. Was an anti-unionist who wrote letters to the churches in the east warning against it, and was also a hesychast who canonized Palamas nine years after his death. (Runciman, The Great Church in Captivity 1968)
2. He was appointed patriarch by emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, replacing Callistus, deposed by John V Palaiologos and replaced with Callistus, and then restored with help by Callistus 1364. (Britannica, Callistus 1998)
3. Philotheus pursued a consolidation of all the eastern Orthodox churches to be under the patriarch of Constantinople.

X. Macarius (1376-1379; 1390-1391) little known except that he was twice patriarch.

Y. Nilus Kerameus (1379-1388)

Z. Antony IV (1389-1390; 1391-1397) is noted for his defense of the universal spiritual authority of the Constantinople patriarchs and the universal authority of the Byzantine emperors, regardless of the diminished state of the empire. (Kazhdan 1991)

AA. Callistus II Xanothopolous (1397) [I am not convinced that he actually existed or if he did, that he was ever patriarch, for there is no validated evidence available, but this name is listed among the Ecumenical Patriarchs by the Eastern Orthodox Church, and was even assigned his own feast day.]

AB. Matthew I (1397-1410)

AC. Euthymius II (1410-1416) worked to remove the Church from imperial control and act autonomously.

AD. Joseph II (1416-1438) is known mainly for leading a delegation of about 700, including emperor John VIII Palaeologus to the Council of Florence in 1438 (Van der Essen 1909), for dying during the council, and for allegedly leaving behind a letter accepting all that the Roman Catholic Church confessed.

AE. Metrophanes II (1440-1443)
1. Was appointed by John VIII to replace Joseph II, apparently while still in Florence.
2. Under obedience to the emperor, he submitted to papal authority in a political move to seek western help against the Ottoman Turks.
3. Allegedly given the nickname “Mitrofonos” or “Mother-killer” because of his submission to Rome, was deposed by an uprising in 1439, fled to Rome and died later that year.

AF. Gregory III Mammæs (1443-1450) continued to favor reunion with Rome and was forced to flee to Rome because of it, where he was warmly welcomed by Pope Nicolas V. (Nicol 1993)
AG. Athanasius II (1450/1-1453), was only mentioned to exist by a probably fake document “Acts of the council in Hagia Sophia”, but if he did actually exist, he would have been the last Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople. [There is an article on www.orthodoxwiki.com about him that does not mention the document.]

VIII. Patriarchs of Constantinople—Ottoman Empire (1453-until 1500)

A. Gennadius II Scholarius (1454-1456; 1462; 1464)
   1. Was captured by a hospitable Muslim after the fall of Constantinople.
   2. Sultan Mehmed II wanted the church to stabilize his empire and compelled to accept the patriarchate.
   3. He was given political authority as head of the Greek population and convinced the sultan to be more conciliatory toward the Christians under Islamic control. (Britannica, Gennadios II Scholarius 1998)
   4. He was called on at least twice more, from April-June 1463 and from August 1464- autumn 1465 (Kiminas 2009), to take the patriarchate again after first abdicating his position in 1456.

B. Isidore II Xanthopolous (1456-1462) was elected by the local council and accepted by the sultan and that is about all that is known about him.

C. Sophronius I Syropolous (1463-1464)

D. Joasaph I Kokkas (1464-1466)
   1. Was deposed by the sultan since he would not bless the marriage between George Amiroutzes, a scholar and favorite of the sultan, and the widow of the late Duke of Athens when the wife of Amiroutzes was still living. (Runciman, The Great Church in Captivity 1968)
   2. Another version of the story has that he refused to consecrate the marriage of a Christian woman to a Muslim courtier.
   3. Regardless of the true event, Joasaph was compelled to shave his beard as punishment (Pantelis 2006)
   4. Scholars disagree on the chronological order of the reigns of Joasaph I Kokkas, Isidore II, and Sophronius I.

E. Marcus II Xylokaraves (1466) was elected by the hierarchy and clergy of the patriarchate, yet had opponents who maliciously accused him of simony, and he was deposed in humiliation (Cobham 1911), but exonerated during the rule of Dionysius I (1467-1472), in a council in Constantinople.

F. Symeon I of Trebizond (1466; 1472-1474; 1481-1486) was the first patriarch who was seated because of tribute money, twice actually, 2000 gold florins the first time (Runciman, The Great Church in Captivity 1968) and reportedly 7000 the next, but ruled a third time apparently without having to pay for the privilege.

G. Dionysius I (1467-1472; 1488/9-1491)
   2. Was accused in late 1471 of having converted to Islam and being circumcised, but despite revealing his manhood during the synod called for the occasion to judge him, he was deposed and replaced by Symeon I. (Patriarch, Dionysius I n.d.)

H. Raphael I (1475-1476)
   1. Was a Serbian monk who came to the patriarchate also by influence of Mara Brankovic, and by offering to pay the sultan 2000 gold florins per year, with a one-time gift of 500 florins. (Cobham 1911)
2. Was never accepted by a large part of the Greek clergy, because they had no part in his appointment, and traditional bias against him holds that he had an inordinate taste for alcohol, a foreign accent, and that he refused to learn Greek. (Philippides and Hanak 2011)

3. Was unable to pay the promised 2000 florins in his second year and was deposed, imprisoned, and died shortly thereafter still in chains. (Patriarch, Raphael I n.d.)

I. Maximus III (1476-1481) was said to have ruled with wisdom and guided the church to peace in turbulent times, but Cobham writes that he was mutilated for refusing to allow a Christian woman become one of the wives of a Muslim. (Cobham 1911)

J. Nephon II (1486-1488; 1497-1498; 1502) worked through three incumbencies to correct corruption and abuse of power in the clergy, and to reorganize the Ecumenical Patriarchy, but was met with opposition by competing power groups within the church, and this led to his depositions. (Patriarch, Nifon II n.d.)

K. Maximus IV (1491-1497) administered a stormy patriarchy, marked by divisions within the church, which led to his forced resignation. (Patriarch, Maximos IV n.d.)

L. Joachim I (1498-1502; 1504) was a popular patriarch, deposed by sultan Bayezid II “due to the maneuvers of the ambitious Metropolitan of Silvubria”. (Patriarch, Joachim I n.d.)

IX. Latin patriarchs of Constantinople (1204-1261)

A. Thomas Morosini (1204-1211) had a troubled tenure marred by his temper and conceit, and failed to reconcile with the Orthodox clergy (Kazhdan 1991), who instead pledged allegiance to the Empire at Nicea.

(There is almost nothing in the form of information available on the following Latin Patriarchs, save names and dates, and those are here provided. The reader may notice there were some times of vacancy. The office became titular in 1261, as the office no longer existed officially, but the title continued in Rome until it was abolished in 1965 (though the last patriarch died in 1948).)

B. Gervase (1215-1219)

C. Matthew (1221-1226)

D. John Halgrin (1226)

E. Simon (1227-1233)

F. Nicholas de Castro Arquato (1234-1251)

G. Pantaleon Giustiani (1253-1286)

CONCLUSION:

A. There are many fascinating accounts throughout the history of the patriarchate of Constantinople, some of them violent, others simply disturbing, and many would make good storylines for a soap opera.

B. Frankly, there is very little to be seen in the patriarchs of Constantinople of men who had God’s will in mind as they ruled.

C. Surely, there were some who were of good, and possibly great, character, but the things that really moved me as I did the research for this is that, in all 178 men I researched and all the related information, the scriptures were almost never mentioned, and if they were it was in the context of a philosophical argument that almost never had real importance.
D. Sadly, an estimated 300 million are adherents to the Eastern Orthodox Church, a religious organization that has a founding story that is completely fabricated.

REFERENCES:


Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division.


INTRODUCTION:
A. Man has an innate desire to worship something greater than himself.
B. Many times this innate desire is called religion.
C. Religion is defined as: (1) A personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices. (2) Commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance. (3) a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices. (4) a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith. (Merriam-Webster)
D. God is the true object of man’s worship yet cultures and races of peoples have invented to themselves gods and devotions that are against and in direct conflict to revelation (Exo. 20:3-5; Rom. 1:25-26; John 4:24).
E. The Roman Emperors had great influence upon all religions including Christianity.
F. The growth of Christianity was fueled indirectly by the philosophy of Roman and the pagan world which was the providence of God.

DISCUSSION:
I. RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT ROMAN SOCIETY.
A. The Roman society did not adhere to devotion or morality in religion.
   1. Worship was more of a duty and were entertained by superstition, rituals and festivals.
   2. Historian Edward Gibbon stated “The various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true: by the philosopher, as equally false; and by the magistrate, as equally useful, and thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.” (Gibbon. 1960)
   3. Their general attitude was devoted to more of buildings and enjoying themselves.
   4. Roman society looked upon the Senate and the Emperor as religious figures.
B. Ancient Roman culture was Polytheistic.
   1. The Roman culture served many gods which generally were a mixture of Greek, Persian and other gods that bore Roman names.
   2. Roman society had “Chief gods” and “local gods” in which this concept was recognized by all of the Roman Empire.
   3. Jupiter, Apollo, Mars, Venus, Vulcan, Mercurius and others were classified as “Chief gods.
   4. Each city-state worshipped their own gods for cult worship and it varied from location to location
   5. “Janus was originally a spirit of the door that represented looking both ways and Venus originally a sexless garden spirit that was united with Aphrodite to fore the great goddess of love” (Hays 2008).
6. Roman soldiers worshipped Mithras in which they washed themselves in “the blood of bulls after a ritual killing” (Hays 2008).
7. Roman citizens held to their household gods called “Numina” which they believed that they protected the house and the food supply.
8. The Emperors themselves believed they were divinely appointed and “demanded their subjects to worship them” (Hays 2008).
9. The Greek historian Herodian wrote “It is a Roman custom to give divine status to those emperors who die with heirs to succeed them. This ceremony is called deification. Public mourning with a mixture of festive and religious ritual, is proclaimed throughout the city, and the body of the dead is buried in the normal way with a costly funeral” (Hays 2008).

C. Emperor Worship sparked a revolution for Christianity.
1. The Emperors were tolerant of all cult gods whether Roman, Greek, Persian or any other culture as long as the worshipper paid homage to the Emperors themselves.
2. The Roman Emperors’ logic was to identify the devotee and in which they would be contained.
3. The Jews were easily identified as to where they worshipped which was at the temple in Jerusalem and the High Priest, chief priest, wore clothing that identified him as a worshipper of Judaism.
4. Christians on other hand could not be identified by any special or ceremonial clothing nor any special place such as a temple that devoted to Jehovah.
5. Christians were scattered by Jewish persecution all over the world which sparked a revolution (1 Pet. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1).
6. Christianity had “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6) which caused the convert to defy Caesar.
7. The Romans accused all Christians as being cannibals.
8. Early Christianity was look upon as “mischievous superstition” considering them to eat the body of Christ and drink His blood (Mat. 26:26:29). Pliny called the practice of the Lord’s Supper as “Superstition taken to extravagant lengths” (ReligionFacts 2016).
9. Romans also believed that when disaster happened that Christians were to blame because they didn’t pay homage to the proper gods.
10. Nero blamed the Christians for the burning of Rome in A.D. 64 because the Christians taught the end of the world was coming by destruction of fire (2 The. 1:7-9).
11. Early Christianity was looked upon as “mischievous superstition” (ReligionFacts 2016).

II. PERSECUTION IN THE EARLY CHURCH.
A. Between 30 and 311 A.D. 12 Emperors went out of their way to persecute Christians (Laturette 2000).
2. James the brother of John was put to death by political influence of Herod (Acts 12:2).
3. The apostle Peter and the apostle Paul were martyred under Nero’s reign of terror (2 Pet. 1:14; 2 Tim. 4:6-8) which was Roman persecution.

B. Nero brought on the first wave of persecutions to Christians by the hand of the Romans (Foxe and Kennedy 1840, 5).
1. Nero lit a match to Rome in July 64 and shifted blame to Christians
after he came under fire by the Senate.
2. Nero had Christians sewn up in the skins of wild beast and “worried by dogs till they died (Foxe and Kennedy 1840).
3. He outfitted Christians in “shirts made of stiff wax and fixed to axletrees and set on fire in his garden (Foxe and Kennedy 1840).

C. The second wave of persecutions came under Domitian, A.D. 81.
1. Domitian had his brothers assassinated, then Roman senators then commanded all the lineage of David be put to death (Foxe and Kennedy 1840, 6).
2. Domitian fabricated lies against Christians. “If famine, pestilence, or earthquakes afflicted any of the Roman provinces, it was laid on the Christians.” (Foxe and Kennedy 1840, 6).
3. Christians were given a test of oath, and if they declined they were put to death and if they confessed themselves Christian, the punishment was the same.
4. According to Foxe, Timothy (Paul’s son in the faith) was beaten by clubs when he withstood the parade of worshippers in the feast of Catagogion (Foxe and Kennedy 1840, 7).

D. Trajan was the third wave of persecution beginning A.D. 108 (Foxe and Kennedy 1840, 8).
1. Pliny the Second wrote to Trajan stating that “many thousands of them (Christians) were put to death” which did nothing contrary to Roman law (Bruce 1973 169).
2. The crime they committed was meeting before sunrise every day and praying they not commit wickedness, never commit theft, robbery or adultery, and never falsify their word (Fox and Kennedy 2008).

E. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus brought the fourth wave of persecution A.D. 162.
1. His acts of persecution against Christians caused horror in the sight of the onlooker. Even those who carried out the torture shuttered at the sight of it.
2. Christians were often “scourged until their sinews and veins lay bare” (Foxe and Kennedy 1840, 9)
3. Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John was burned alive in the Market Place (Foxe and Kennedy 1840 9).
4. Under the persecution of Marcus Aurelius the lives of the Christian consist of “persecution above ground and prayer below” (Foxe 1840 11).

F. Severus brought the fifth wave of persecutions against the Christians in 192 A.D.
1. Severus started with favoritism of Christians but “because of the ignorant, prejudice and their zeal, persecutions arose again.
2. In 202 A.D. Severus was the first to issue a universal decree for the spreading of Christianity (Wade n.d.)
3. Beheading seemed to be the favorite method of getting rid of Christians (Foxe and Kennedy 1840, 13).

G. Maximus brought on the sixth wave of persecutions. A.D. 235 (Foxe and Kennedy 1840 13).
1. “Numberless Christians were slain without trial and sometimes 60 bodies thrown into one pit, then covered up (Foxes and Kennedy, 1840 13).
2. After the death of Maximus, the church was free of persecution for about 10 years.

H. Decius brought the seventh wave of persecution, A.D. 249.
   1. Decius attempted to wipe out the name Christian and the heathens looked upon the murder of a Christian as a merit to themselves.
   2. Some were seized as Christians and imprisoned with their feet pierced with nails, dragged through the streets, torn with iron hooks and then beheaded (Foxe and Kennedy 2014 15).

I. Valerian brought on the eighth persecution beginning A.D. 257.
   1. Valerian continued his mission of persecution for three years and six months.
   2. Persecution towards Christians was spread throughout the Roman Empire.
   3. Christians were poisoned, tortured, hanged and decapitated (Foxe and Kennedy 1840 19).

J. Aurelian brought the ninth wave of persecution beginning A.D. 274.
   1. Felix, bishop of Rome was the first martyr under Aurelian. He was beheaded.
   2. A young man by the name of Agapetus sold his estate and gave the money to the poor. He was seized as a Christian, tortured and beheaded (Foxe and Kennedy 1840 22).
   3. Others including young mothers were “broiled upon a gridiron and then beheaded” (Foxe and Kennedy 1840 24).

K. Diocletian brought the tenth wave of persecution beginning A.D. 303.
   1. Beginning at Nicomedia in A.D. 303 “cruel pagans” made an all-out effort to terminate Christianity in which they seized and burned all sacred documents (Foxe and Kennedy 1840 24).
   2. Diocletian was not satisfied with the burning of books, he issued an edict that would have all “churches burnt to the ground” (Foxe and Kennedy 1840 24).

III. CHRISTIANS’ REACTION TO THE INTENSE PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIAN.
   A. Christians fled the persecutions.
      1. In Rome, Christians worshipped in the catacombs which they escaped the persecution of the Emperors.
      2. In fleeing persecution, they carried with them the gospel while converting others (Acts 8:4).

   B. Many Christian faced persecutions to the point of death (Rev. 2:10).
      1. The reaction of Christians enduring persecutions caused a conversion from others.
      2. Tertullian who was a second century theologian was converted to Christ when witnessing the faithfulness of Christians as they were put to death (ReligionFact 2016).
      3. Persecution didn’t stop Christianity, it made them stronger and more productive in spreading the gospel.

   C. Converts to Christianity responded to persecution by writing apologies or defenses of the Christian faith (ReligionFact 2016).
      1. The purpose for writing the apologies was to defend Christianity against pagan accusations and misconceptions to stop persecution (ReligionFact 2016).
      2. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexander were a few
who wrote a defense for Christianity in the early 200 – 300’s.

IV. ROMAN EMPIRE ADOPTS CHRISTIANITY AS OFFICIAL RELIGION.
   A. By the time Constantine I (cira A.D. 280 to 337) comes to power as emperor, Christianity grown to 30 percent in Greek cities (Aaron 2006).
      1. Christianity was gaining and pagan cult was diminishing.
      2. Constantine found a way to unite pagans and Christians in fighting against Rome’s enemies.
      3. Constantine believed he had a vision from God and used a generic banner which both pagan and Christians could use.
      4. The Edict of Milan was signed in 313 by Constantine I and Licinius for religious toleration for Christians to worship without persecution (Foxe 1840 30).
   B. Emperor Theodosis I (ruling 379 to 395) was to first emperor to decree that all citizens should be Christians (National Geographic 1996).
      1. Christianity was used for political gain in the empire.
      2. Roman Emperors became the head of the “church.”
      3. It was all done for the sake of power and control in the Roman empire.

CONCLUSION:
   A. Although Christianity was persecuted, God’s word did not return unto Him void (Isa. 55:11).
   B. Paganism differed from Christianity. The pagan cults were too expensive for the poor man to join.
   C. Christianity was open for anyone which included, the poor, and women (Speers 2014)
   D. Christianity grew because of many factors.
      1. Persecution caused Christians to leave their homeland and preach in other parts of the world. (Mat. 28:19-20)
      2. Persecution cause Christians to be faithful even when facing death (Rev. 2:10
      3. Christianity caused the adherer to live a pure and devoted life putting God first (Mat. 6:33).
   E. A departure from truth caused individuals to fight against error and die for the righteous cause (1 Tim 4:1-3).
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THE GREAT SCHISM

JIMMY HOLLAND

INTRODUCTION:
A. The Great Schism, also called the East-West Schism and the Schism of 1054, was the break of communion between what is now known as the Eastern (Greek) Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches.
B. This separation of the Latin and Greek churches is sometimes dated from 1054, the date when Byzantine and Roman officials excommunicated each other.
   1. Actually, the break came about through a gradual process of estrangement that spanned almost 6 centuries.
   2. It is difficult to agree on an exact date for the event where the start of the schism was apparent.
C. The schism was a result of political, cultural, and theological differences.

DISCUSSION:
I. BACKGROUND OF THE SCHISM.
   A. During the 4th Century, Christianity revolved around five main areas: Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome.
      1. The Mediterranean world was turned upside down due to barbarian invasions in the West and the rise of Islam in the East.
      2. Because of this, the primary focus of Christianity became Constantinople and Rome.
   B. The dominant language of the West was Latin, while the dominant language of the East was Greek.
      1. Soon after the fall of the West to invaders, the number of individuals who spoke both languages dwindled, and communication between the two became much more difficult.
      2. In the opinion of Randall R. Cloud (2007), the permanent separation of the Greek East and the Latin West was “the fundamental reason for the estrangement that soon followed between the Greek and Latin Christians.
   C. Due, in large part, to the language barrier, the two halves of the church began to develop different rites and different approaches to religious doctrines.
   D. Although the schism was still centuries away, its outlines were already perceptible. (Orthodox church if in the Philippines)
II. POINTS OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST.
   A. The insertion of the Filioque clause into the Nicene Creed by the West was a main source of conflict.
      1. The issue centered on the question of who sent the Holy Spirit—the Father or the Father and Son?
      2. In 589, at Western council that met in Toledo, Spain, Western
theologians added to the Nicene Creed of 381 the language that the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son (in Latin, filioque, “and from the Son”).

3. Eastern theologians argued that the First Council of Ephesus canon 7 explicitly prohibited modification of the Nicene Creed that drawn up by the first Ecumenical Council of A.D. 325.
   a. Council of Ephesus canon 7 declares: “It is unlawful for any man to bring forward, or to write, or to compose a different (ἕτεραν) Faith as a rival to that established by the holy Fathers assembled with the Holy Ghost in Nicea. But those who shall dare to compose a different faith, or to introduce or offer it to persons desiring to turn to the acknowledgment of the truth, whether from Heathenism or from Judaism, or from any heresy whatsoever, shall be deposed, if they be bishops or clergymen; bishops from the episcopate and clergymen from the clergy; and if they be laymen, they shall be anathematized.”
   b. The addition of this clause was deemed unforgivable by the East.

4. In A.D. 1009 the Filioque clause was made an essential part of the Latin profession of faith.

5. In response, the East dropped the name of the pope of Rome from the diptychs. (List of patriarchs with whom a patriarchal church was in communion)

B. There were also lesser points of conflict between the East and the West.
   1. Church governance became a source of contention between Rome and Constantinople.
   a. In the East, Caesaro-papism was the practice of church governance.
      1) Justinian I was the one to institute this practice.
      2) John Cullen (1913) stated that the emperor “had the right and duty of regulating by his laws the minutest detail of worship and discipline, and also of dictating the theological opinions to be held in the Church.”
      3) Donald K. McKim (1996) stated that caesaro-papism was a “source of contention between Roman and Constantinople that led to the schism of 1054.”
   b. In the West, the pope of Rome was considered the ultimate authority in the Church and eventually was considered infallible.

2. The subject of marriage concerning priests was also an argument between Rome and Constantinople.
   a. The West taught celibacy among its priest, both monastic and parish. (Wikipedia, p.18)
   b. The East taught that parish priests could be married before they were ordained. (Wikipedia, p.18)

C. There are many more points that could be listed as secondary reasons for the schism; including iconoclast, original sin, and the Eucharist.

III. THE EVENTS OF 1054.
   A. In 1048 a French bishop was elected as Pope Leo IX.
      1. He was intent on reforming the Papacy and the entire church.
      2. Pope Leo IX claimed he held supreme authority over the entire church, including Constantinople.
      3. In 1043, Michael Cerularius was named patriarch of Constantinople.
   B. Problems arose in Southern Italy.
1. The Normans conquered the region and replaced Greek bishops with Latin bishops.
2. The Greek churches in southern Italy were forced either to close or to conform to Latin practices. (Bihlmeyer and Hermann, 1967)
3. In retaliation, Michael I ordered the closure of all Latin churches in Constantinople in 1052.
4. Michael I then induced bishop Leo of Ohrid to compose an attack on the Latin uses of unleavened bread and other practices.

C. In 1054, the papal legate, led by Cardinal Humber of Silva, was sent by Pope Leo IX to Constantinople.
1. One purpose of this legation was to refuse Michael I the title of “Ecumenical Patriarch” and insist that he recognize the Pope’s claim to be head of all the churches. (Cross, 2005)
2. Another purpose of this legation was to address the Norman conquest and to address the attacks of Leo of Ohrid against the use of unleavened bread.
3. Axel Bayer (2004) says the legation was sent in response to two letters, one from the Emperor seeking assistance in arranging a common military campaign by the eastern and western empires against the Normans, and the other from Cerularius.
4. Michael I refused to accept the demand to recognize Pope Leo IX as head of all the churches.

D. On Saturday, July 16, 1054, Cardinal Humbert walked into the Cathedral of Hagia and placed a parchment that declared the excommunication of Michael Cerularius on the main altar.
1. Cerularius summoned his 20 metropolitans and anathematized “the impious document and its authors.” (Great Schism)
2. This is the event that is credited for the complete schism between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholicism.
3. Two attempts at reunion took place in 1274 (Second Council of Lyons) and 1438-1439 (Council of Florence), but neither was successful.

IV. IMPORTANT LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE GREAT SCHISM.

A. The Great Schism is a tremendous reminder of the need to properly abide by God’s word. (2 John 9)
1. The Eastern Orthodox church claims to hold God’s word in the highest regard.
2. They teach that one is not to add to what God has said, thus they look at Roman Catholicism with contempt.
3. As erroneous as Catholicism is, an honest heart does not have to look very hard at Eastern Orthodox to see that they are just as erroneous.
4. This schism shows what a mess following the teachings and traditions of man can make.

B. Man cannot sit where God belongs. (2 Thess. 2:1-4)
1. Paul warned the Thessalonians about apostasy.
2. This would culminate with a man trying to sit where only God belongs.
3. Man is qualified to exalt himself to that position.

C. As long as man tries to rule, there will always be division. (1 Cor. 1:10-13)
1. Division proves that a group is no longer abiding in God’s word.
2. Paul shows that division happens outside of Christ, not in Christ.
3. Jesus prayed for unity, John 17, which only happens when we are
abiding by the same standard.

**CONCLUSION:**
A. The Great Schism is a major event in Church history.
B. Due to this event, we can look back and see what happens when man tries to supersede what God has designed.
C. Let us learn from the past, so that we are not doomed to repeat it.

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MONKS, MONASTARIES AND NUNERIES

JESSE CLAUNCH

Introduction:

A. There have always been individuals and groups who sought to escape the physical influences of this world.
   1. The Hindu Ashramas, the Buddhist Sangha, the Japanese Sohei (the warrior monks), the Indian Ramakrishna Vivekananda, the Islamic Sufi, the Jain Dharma Sangh. (Aggarwal 2017 & Crowe 2011)
   2. One “Father Bury” upon a mission trip to China was reported as making this statement:
      “There is not a single article of dress, or a sacerdotal function, or a single ceremony of the Romish church, which the Devil has not imitated in this country. ...Who invented shaved heads and monkish gowns and habits, we cannot tell, but we know: there existed in India the Grand Lama or head monk, with monasteries under him, filled with monks who kept the three (vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.) They had their routine of prayers, of fasts and of labors, like the Christian Monks…” (Wishart 1900)

B. At the root of all of these Monks and Nuns is the idea of removing oneself from the world.
   1. This ideal known as Asceticism, or the Ascetic Movement, is defined as such:
      a. Asceticism the doctrine that a person can attain a high spiritual and moral state by practicing self-denial, self-mortification, and the like. (dictionary.com/asceticism)
      b. Ascetics withdraw from the world, characterized by the renunciation of material possessions and physical pleasures, spending time concentrating on the practice of religion or reflection of spiritual matters. (Finn 2009)
   2. The Ascetic ideal in and of itself is not a religious movement, one can be ascetic without adhering to any particular religious or spiritual concepts.
   3. When asceticism combines with the religious is when the Monastic Movement begins.
      a. What does Monastic mean?
         1) As an adjective, it is the characteristic of a secluded, dedicated, or austere manner of living. (dictionary.com/monastic)
         2) As a noun, it is a member of a monastic community or order, especially a monk. (dictionary.com/monastic)
      b. “An institutionalized religious practice or movement whose members attempt to live by a rule that requires works that go beyond those of either the laity or the ordinary spiritual leaders of their religions.” (britannica.com/monasticism)

C. The foundation of what we know as Medieval and Modern day Monks,
Nuns, and Monasteries began through the adoption and adaptation of the Ascetic Movement on Early Christianity in and around Egypt, Syria, and Palestine.

DISCUSSION:
I. Influences on Christian Monasticism in the beginning of Christianity.
   A. New Testament passages that are used to support the Ascetic and Monastic ideals.
      1. Colossians 2:20-23
      2. 1 Peter 2:11
      3. 1 Corinthians 9:27
      5. 1 Timothy 6:17
      6. Along with many others.
   B. There are several possible Jewish Influences.
      1. The Nazarites - Numbers 6:1-21. The Nazarite’s spiritual disciplines included not drinking wine or eating grapes, not cutting their hair until the end of the vow, extra strict rules for ritual defilement, and certain sacrificial dedications.
      2. The Qumran Community - Jewish ascetical communities located in Qumran (Dead Sea). They were led by an examiner, practiced communal ownership, kept rituals and an office of prayer, and practiced expulsion for violations of Torah.
      3. The Essenes - Often associated with the Qumran community, they practiced a number of ascetical practices, including communal ownership, ritual bathing, isolation, special oaths, and food practices.
      4. Old Testament Prophets
         a. Elijah - His dress and appearance are mentioned in 2 Kings 1:7-8. He wore a garment of black camel’s hair girded with a leather belt about his waist to hold in his garment for freer movement.
         b. Elisha – the precedent prophet of Elijah, he took up the mantle of Elijah
      5. John the Baptist - Called John the Forerunner in Eastern Christianity, John’s dress and food of choice were seen as model for the monastic life. Matt 3:4-5  https://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/monasticoverview.htm Philip Mitchell
   C. Greek influences on Monasticism.
      1. Pythagoras of Samos
         a. Around 530 BC he established a philosophical and religious community in Croton, Southern Italy, which admitted both men and women.
         b. The community’s inner circle adhered to a strict set of rules, forsaking belongings, a mainly vegetarian diet, and observing periods of silence.
         c. Music played an important part in their lives: they recited poetry, sang hymns to Apollo, and played on the lyre to cure diseases of body and soul. https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/hide-and-seek/201704/short-history-monasticism Neel Burton
      2. Plato
         a. Plato founded a thiasos, or religious fraternity, called the ‘Academia’ after the legendary Attic hero Akademos.
b. The school became known as the Academy, and Plato remained its head or scholarch until his death some forty years later.
c. He admitted two women, Axiota of Philus and Lastheneia of Mantinea—although they did have to dress like men. https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/hide-and-seek/201704/short-history-monasticism Neal Burton

D. The Persecution of the Early Church forced some Christians to the edges of society.
   1. The first persecution of Christians organized by the Roman government took place under the emperor Nero in 64 AD after the Great Fire of Rome.
   2. The early church historian Eusebius, whose works are the only source for many of these events, speaks of “great multitudes” having perished, he is thought by many scholars today to have exaggerated their numbers.
   3. Widespread persecution did not start until the reign of Decius in the 3rd century.
      a. Provincial governors had great personal discretion to choose how to deal with local incidents of persecution and mob violence against Christians, most turned a blind eye or endorsed the actions
   4. This persecution caused some to flee to the deserts and deserted places to escape punishment so they could worship freely.

E. The subsequent freedom of Christianity under Emperor Constantine in 313 also impacted the way Christians practiced their faith.
   1. In 313 CE, Constantine the Great (272 – 337 CE) ended the Christian persecutions with his “Edict of Milan.”
   3. With this new permissiveness, many sought a different, less secular, more simplistic environment in which to pursue their spirituality.
      b. MacCulloch states, “It was hardly surprising that the sudden sequence of great power and great disappointment for the imperial Church in the West inspired Western Christians to imitate the monastic life of the Eastern Church” MacColloch, Diarmaid 2011 Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years Penguin (312).

F. All of these influences began the official monastic movement.

II. The “Desert Fathers,” had a heavy influence on Christian Monasticism.
   A. With the numerous Monastic Orders and Monasteries that exist today, it is hard to imagine their humble beginnings.
   B. From the Influences listed previously, there arose certain individuals who started the monastic movement they are known in history as the “Desert Fathers.”
   C. Below are some, but certainly not all, “Desert Fathers” who had strong
influences.

1. The history of monasticism begins with Antony of Egypt (251-356) as he was the first monk about whom anything was written.
   a. He was the pioneer of the solitary life of the hermit.
   b. After years of solitary existence in Lower Egypt, he formed a colony of hermits out of monks who had sought him out for spiritual guidance. [Source](https://www.northumbriacommunity.org/articles/asceticism-and-monasticism/)

2. Paul of Thebes is another influential identity, but it seems likely the recorded accounts of his life are nothing but fable and fairytale.
   a. During Decius’ persecution in Egypt in the year 250, Paul was forced to hide, fearing betrayal; he fled in a cave in the desert.
   b. His plan was to return once the persecution ended, but the sweetness of solitude and heavenly contemplation convinced him to stay.
   c. He went on to live in that cave for the next 90 years, supplied only by the area surrounding him.
   d. Without knowing what was happening in the world, Paul prayed that the world would become a better place. [Source](https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-paul-the-hermit/)

3. Macarius the Egyptian retired to the desert of Scete, where for 60 years he lived as a hermit among the scattered settlements of other solitaries.
   a. He won the confidence of numerous followers who, because of his unusual judgment and discernment, called him “the aged youth.”
   b. In his priestly function of presiding at the monks’ worship, Macarius also acquired fame for his eloquent spiritual conferences and instructions. [Source](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Macarius-the-Egyptian)

4. John Cassian was probably of Roman birth, becoming a monk at Bethlehem and later visited and was trained by the hermits and monks of Egypt.
   a. About 399 he went to Constantinople, where he was ordained a deacon by the patriarch, St. John Chrysostom.
   b. In 415, he founded a nunnery at Marseille and also the abbey of Saint-Victor, of which he remained abbot until his death.
   c. Cassian’s influential writings: Institutes of the Monastic Life (420–429), and his Collations of the Fathers (or Conferences of the Egyptian Monks), were significant in the development of Western monasticism. [Source](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-John-Cassian)

D. Most Ascetic Christians were still trying to flee worldly influences by themselves.

1. They adopted an eremitic life style (hermit style), living in small huts or caves. [Source](https://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/monasticoverview.htm)
2. Most took three vows of life, ones of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
3. At this time Christian Hermits lived solitary lives, some in small communities, but they performed most activities alone.

E. An alternative to being a hermit or monk was to become an anchorite.

1. These hermits withdrew from the world by being walled up into a cell, or cave.
2. The only contact with the outside world would be listening to the services of the other monks, and being brought food and water.  

III. The Movement from Individual Ascetics to Coenobitic Monasticism is a gradual one.
A. It was not until a man named Pachomius came along that these hermit groups started to form unified rules and codes of conduct and become a unified group.
   1. He was brought up in paganism but was converted while in the Roman army.
   2. On his discharge he retired with a hermit to Tabenna, an island in the Nile.
   3. The Monks of Pachomius were divided into bands of tens and hundreds, each tenth man being an under officer in turn subject to the hundredth, and all subject to the superior or abbot of the mother house.
      a. They lived three to a cell, and a congregation of cells constituted a ‘laura’ or monastery.
      b. There was a common room for meals and worship.
      c. Their food usually consisted of bread and water, but occasionally they enjoyed such luxuries as oil, salt, fruits, and vegetables. They ate in silence, which was sometimes broken by the solemn voice of a reader.” (Wishart 58-59)
      d. Like later groups Pachomius had a Code for his monks, but it is lost to time.

B. In the Eastern portion of the Church, St Basil the Great of Caesarea  
   1. During 329-379, he founded monasteries in Cappadocia, modern-day Turkey.
   2. The Rule of Basil, or Ascetica, set the model for Eastern monasticism.  
   3. Basil’s monks would live near the outskirts of towns and cities, rather than in extreme locales such as the Egyptian desert, so that they could take care of the destitute and provide shelter for travelers.  

C. In the Western part of the Church, St Benedict of Nursia was the greater influence.  
   1. Benedict originally took up the life of a hermit, but after being surrounded by numerous others, he founded a communal house at Monte Cassino.
   2. His Rule became the foundational guide for Western practice.
      a. Poverty: communal ownership of all property; simple dress and meals
      b. Chastity: celibacy; self-control; pure thought life and body
      c. Obedience: submission to all superiors and all monks who have previously entered the order

   3. Almost all succeeding reform movements in the medieval period saw themselves as trying to return to the original purity of Benedictine practice.  
      https://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/monasticoverview.htm
4. Within a century of St Benedict’s death history sees nuns following his rule, and tradition even dates the female order starting with him at the start.
5. There is a strong tradition of nuns in the western church which goes back even earlier and almost every religious order soon acquired a sisterhood. http://historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistoriesResponsive.asp?groupid=2060&HistoryID=ab88&gtrack=pthc

D. Another event that encouraged the centralization of the Ascetic Movement was a Declaration given by Pope Leo I declaring Roman leadership of the Church.
1. Pope Leo I, or Leo the Great, was pope of the Roman Catholic Church from September 29, 440 to November 10, 461.
2. A leading figure in the centralization of the organization of the Roman Catholic Church, he was the first pope to advocate the supremacy of the see of Rome.
3. As the Roman Empire fell apart, he positioned the papacy to emerge as the dominant authority. http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Leo_I
4. Because of this decree we will focus on the Monastic Orders of the Roman Catholic Church.

IV. After the Centralization of the Church the Monastic Orders quickly multiplied.
A. It seems that everything in this world runs in cycles, and the Monastic traditions of the “Roman Catholic Church” are no exception. (LESTER)
1. Like the Jews in the Old Testament, these Monastic Orders would go through times of withdrawal and returning to their first goals.
2. Most of these Monastic orders started with strict codes and laws, then would gradually loosen or possibly become stricter over time, then there would be a return to the beginning rules.
3. Out of these forming and reforming of these Monastic Orders grew hundreds of various religious sects within the Catholic Church.

B. Out of these Monastic Orders the Benedictine Rule is the most propagated.
1. The first monasteries to follow the Rule of St Benedict are small independent communities, groups of hermits gathered together.
2. The Carolingians - Charlemagne, and his son Louis the Pious – tried to harness the monasteries by uniting them in a single federation, they were not effective.
3. But one monastery in particular, in the next century, is more effective.
   a. The monastery of Cluny, near Mâcon, is founded in 909.
   b. Under a succession of exceptionally talented abbots, Cluny develops an administrative structure capable of being widely extended.
4. Other monasteries, are encouraged to follow their rule and guidance.
   a. A network of related monasteries is developed.
   b. Gradually it becomes accepted that the abbot of Cluny has rights of seniority over the others, and powers of appointment.
5. By the 11th century there are more than 1000 monasteries following Cluny. http://historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistoriesResponsive.asp?groupid=2068&HistoryID=ab88&gtrack=pthc

C. Other Monastic orders, besides the Benedictine, develop through the gradual centuries.
1. Basilian (Eastern Orthodox) Founded in 356, these monks and nuns
follow the Rule of Basil the Great.

2. Carthusian was an eremitical order founded in 1084, this group consists of 24 houses on three continents, dedicated to contemplation.  
   a. Except for daily mass and a Sunday meal, their live in their room (cell).
   b. Visits are limited to family or relatives once or twice a year.
3. The Friars & the Dominicans started as “Orders of Preachers.”
   a. Consecrated members live in community and take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
   b. Women may live cloistered in a monastery as nuns or may be apostolic sisters who work in schools, hospitals, and social settings.
4. The Augustinian Order was founded in 1244.
   a. monks are cloistered in a monastery.
   b. Augustinians wear black robes, symbolizing death to the world, and include both men and women (nuns). https://www.thoughtco.com/monastic-orders-of-monks-and-nuns-700047

D. As of 2018 there are more than two hundred different Monastic Orders and even divisions and sects inside of each of those Orders. http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/xrel.html

V. Where exactly do Monks and Nuns fall in the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church?
   A. At the beginning Monks were on their own or loose groups without a head, but as the Orders and Monasteries became larger, and through the influence of the Catholic Church, the monks and nuns fell to the bottom of the chain.
   B. List the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church
      1. The Pope - is the head of the Catholic Church
      2. The Cardinals are appointed by the pope, and they represent the pope.
      3. Archbishops a bishop of a main or metropolitan diocese or an archdiocese.
      4. Bishops- typical role is to provide pastoral governance for a diocese.
      5. Priests are ordained minister responsible for administering the Sacraments.
      6. Deacons
         a. A transitional deacon is a seminarian who is studying for the priesthood
         b. A permanent deacon is a deacon who can get married and assists a priest by performing some of the sacraments. http://vatican.com/articles/popes/catholic_church_hierarchy-a1084
      7. According to the Vatican Monks, Nuns, and Friars, while they have spiritual and religious duties, are not officially part of the priesthood.
   C. Most Monks and Nuns are not “Ordained,” they are simply ones that have given themselves over to prayer and service to God to a particular Order.

VI. Monasteries: layout and occupations found therein.
   A. A far cry from the simple huts and caves, the middle ages brought about a drastic change in the size and housing of the different monastic Orders.
   B. There are several different words used to refer to a place where Monks and Nuns reside:
      1. Monastery: monks and nuns live in monasteries with restricted access to the outside world.
      2. Convent: Religious sisters live in convents which offer more open
access to the secular world.

3. Friary: It’s a place where religious men called brothers live, work, and pray together, although they may work outside the friary. http://www.dummies.com-religion/christianity/catholicism/the-role-of-catholic-monks-and-nuns/

4. Just as an aside, monasteries are referred to as abbeys when they are independent, self-sufficient, and have a certain number of monks or nuns. https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/the-meaning-of-the-terms-nun-sister-monk-priest-and-brother.html

C. The following rooms would be included in a plan of a medieval monastery.
1. Cellarium - store-house of a monastery
2. Chapter-house - The chapter house was a room in which monks met daily, to discuss business and to hear a chapter of the monastic rule.
3. Cloister - the cloister was a covered walkway.
4. Dorter - a dorter was a monastic dormitory.
5. Frater - a frater was another term for a refectory (dining room)
6. Garderobe - a garderobe was a lavatory in a medieval building
7. Granary - A monastery storehouse for threshed grain
8. Infirmary - housed the sick or monks too old to take part in the normal routine.
9. Kitchen - The monastery kitchen where food was prepared and cooked
10. Lavatorium - a room with running water where monks washed
11. Misericord - a misericord was where monks were disciplined
12. Night Stair - A staircase used to attend late night and early morning services
13. Refectory - the refectory was dining hall of a monastery
14. Sacristy – where vestments and sacred vessels were kept
15. Scriptorium - room used by clerics or scribes copying manuscripts
16. Warming-house - the only room in a monastery, apart from the infirmary and kitchen, where a fire was allowed. Also called a Calefactory

D. Medieval monastic life was one of regular worship, reading, and manual labor.
1. Every day was divided into eight sacred offices, beginning and ending with services in the monastery church.
2. The first service came usually about two o’clock in the morning; the last, just as evening set in, before the monks retired.
3. In addition to their attendance at church, the monks spent several hours in reading from the Bible, private prayer, and meditation.
4. For most of the day, however, they worked hard with their hands, doing the necessary washing and cooking for the monastery, raising the necessary supplies of vegetables and grain, and performing all the other tasks required to maintain a large establishment like the monastery.

E. Monasteries during medieval times were used for more than just places of worship.
1. They were a farms, an inns, a hospitals, schools, and a libraries.
2. Often Monasteries received pilgrims and travelers.
3. They performed works of charity, feeding the hungry, healing the sick who were brought to their doors, and distributing their medicines
4. They were places of education for young children
5. They were almost the exclusive source of books throughout the middle ages. http://www.lordsandladies.org/medieval-monastery.htm

F. The jobs found within the monastery were as varied as the number of monastic Orders.
1. Abbot - the head of an abbey
2. Almoner - dispensed alms to the poor and sick
3. Barber Surgeon – shaved the faces and tonsures, and performed light surgery
4. Cantor - to lead the choir
5. Cellarer - supervised the general provisioning of the monastery
6. Infirmarian - the monk in charge of the infirmary
7. Lector - person entrusted with reading the lessons in church or in the refectory.
8. Sacrist – one responsible for the safekeeping of books, vestments and vessels, and for the maintenance of the monastery’s buildings
9. Prior - deputy of the abbot or the superior of a monastery

VII. What place does Christian Monasticism play in our world today?
A. Monastic Orders, like most of the religious world, are seeing a decline in those wanting to separate themselves from the world. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/07/is-god-dead-no-but-belief-has-declined-slightly/
1. This is in part due to people trying to move back to biblical Christianity, so there are fewer people willing to move into monasteries
2. Then you have, probably the greater of the reasons, the decline of the belief in the existence of God.

B. Because of human nature, and man’s likelihood to burn out emotionally, there will always be those who seek to separate themselves from the world, and we still see new monastic Orders being formed today.
1. In 1938 George McLeod in Scotland founded the Iona Community.
2. In 1946 Roger Schutz, known as Brother Roger, founded the Taizé Community in France as an independent Religious Order.

Conclusion:
A. Ultimately, the ancient Christian men and women who joined these monastic groups sincerely hoped to find escape, freedom, and victory over (and for) the world, and were willing to sacrifice all worldly goods and pleasures for conscience sake. Knox, John S. “The Monastic Movement: Origins & Purposes.” Ancient History Encyclopedia. Last modified August 23, 2016. https://www.ancient.eu/article/930/.

B. As Chadwick states, “It was a theology dominated by the ideal of the martyr who hoped for nothing in this world but sought for union with the Lord in his passion” Though the consequences may be “murky,” the causes, convictions, and sacrifices of those in the monastic movement is clear to see, at least historically. Chadwick, H., The Early Church (Penguin, 1993). (177).

C. Christians today can still follow after the thoughts of giving up the world but must realize that we are a part of it and must work within it. Rom 12:2
THE DIGRESSION OF BAPTISM

JEFF STACY

INTRODUCTION:
A. A study of church history is a rich and beneficial study for all Christians.
   1. Many doctrinal problems could be avoided by a stronger knowledge of the religious path which has been historically taken.
   2. History has always been a useful tool from which to learn in the positive and the negative.
   3. However, we must remember that tradition is not our standard.
B. As is the case with all things which pertain to life and godliness, God has given us a sufficient pattern after which to follow.
C. Over time, man has departed from God’s standard.
D. Sadly, the teachings regarding baptism have not been excepted from this trend.
   1. God’s standard regarding baptism is one which is easily understood.
   2. Man has deviated from God’s standard on the doctrine of baptism.
      a. Through history, man has departed from the definition of baptism.
      b. Man has changed the intended subject for whom the act was designed.
      c. Man has changed the very purpose of baptism and taken it out of their pattern regarding salvation.

DISCUSSION:
I. GOD’S PATTERN:
   A. Baptism is an easy topic to understand.
      1. There is an abundance of passages throughout Scripture which clearly define the act of baptism and its purpose.
      2. Scripture is clear regarding which individuals are subject to the command of baptism.
   B. Baptism means immersion.
      1. The Greek word “bapto” means “to dip” and it is translated as such (Luke 16:24; John 13:26; Revelation 19:13).
      2. The Greek word “baptizo” which is a derivative of “bapto” means “to immerse” (Thayer), but the translators chose to transliterate this word rather than translate it.
   C. The Biblical examples we have of baptism show immersion.
      1. Certain geographic locations were mentioned as being better suited for baptism “because there was much water there” (John 3:23).
      2. The divine language used to describe baptism indicates that one must go down into the water and then come up out of the water (Mark 1:9-10; Acts 8:38-39).
   D. God’s Word shows what is spiritually involved surrounding the act of baptism.
      1. The Biblical standard teaches that prior to one’s being baptized, he
must “believe” (Mark 16:16) and “repent” (Luke 13:3).

2. Those who were baptized in Bible times did so to have their sins remitted and to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Ephesians 5:26; 1 Peter 3:21).

3. The baptism recorded in Scripture translated one from outside the body of Christ into the body of Christ (Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:13).

E. God knew that man would depart from His pattern.

1. The inspired writers warned of the possibility of being lead away from God’s pattern (Jude 3-4; Acts 20:28-30).

2. God warned that some would choose falsehoods above the truth (1 Timothy 4:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:1-4:4).

3. This is seen even as the inspired writers wrote the epistles to the first century church.

II. MAN’S DEPARTURE REGARDING BAPTISM’S DEFINITION:

A. Although baptism means immersion, man attempted to change its definition early on.

1. The earliest example of man’s deviation can be traced to the writing of the Didache (A.D. 130-150).

a. It contains the statement, “baptize in this way...in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in living water, but if you have not living water, baptize in other water. And if thou canst not in cold, in warm, if you have neither, pour water thrice on the head” (Mattox 1961).

b. Mattox writes, “Throughout the New Testament period, baptism was practiced only by immersion and this composition indicates that immersion was the regular form in use” (1961).

c. We would do well to notice that in this document the word ekcheo is used to indicate pouring because the word baptizo does not mean “to pour” (Orr 1956).

d. Prior to this composition, this writer could not find a historical reference to a substitute for immersion.

B. Man tried to redefine baptism to include even the act of sprinkling.

1. Cyprian (A.D. 200-258) is recorded as writing, “You have asked also, dearest son, what I thought of those who obtain God’s grace in sickness and weakness, whether they are to be accounted legitimate Christians, for that they are not to be washed, but sprinkled, with saving water... In the sacrament of salvation, when necessity compels, and God bestows his mercy, the divine methods confer whole benefits on believers; nor ought it to trouble anyone that sick people seemed to be sprinkled or affused, when they obtain the Lord’s grace” (Roberts and Donaldson 1994).

a. Though sprinkling was being advised, it was still considered something that should only occur when they believed dire circumstances necessitated it.

b. Sprinkling was barely more than a hypothetical answer at this point in history.

2. We don’t find an example of sprinkling until Eusebius (A.D. 263-340) records the sprinkling of a Roman man named Novation.

a. Eusebius said regarding Novation that he was “attacked with an obstinate disease, and being supposed at the point of death, was
baptized by aspersion, in the bed on which he lay” (Eusebius 1955).

b. This was a very abnormal occurrence and because Novation only underwent sprinkling instead of baptism, restrictions were placed upon him.

c. Eusebius wrote, “it was not lawful that one baptized in his sick bed by aspersion, as he was, should be promoted to any order of the clergy” (1955).

C. As is often the case, one deviation lead to another.

1. By the time of Pope Stephen III (A.D. 720-772) man was authorizing pouring on infants heads “in cases of necessity” (Rowe 1957).

2. In A.D. 1284, the Council of Nemours also decreed that “sprinkling” be confined “to cases of necessity” (Schaff 1884).

3. By the Council of Ravenna (A.D. 1311), man had decided that both immersion and sprinkling were acceptable modes of what they still called baptism.

D. This term that God so clearly defines remains undefined in the minds of many religious people even in current times.

1. Man will debate what modes of baptism are acceptable to God, but in order to argue anything other than immersion, man must appeal to tradition alone.

2. Tradition is not our standard.

III. MAN’S DEPARTURE REGARDING CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM:

A. Man also began changing God’s definition regarding who should be considered candidates for the act of baptism.

1. God’s Word teaches plainly that one must believe and repent before a person may be baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

2. A certain level of mental maturity must be present in order for a person to have a proper understanding of this required belief and repentance.

3. An infant simply does not have the mental capacity to deeply believe and an infant certainly cannot understand the concept of penitence.

4. Little children don’t even have knowledge to distinguish between good and evil (Deuteronomy 1:39).

5. There are no explicit examples of infant baptism anywhere in Scripture and because an infant can neither believe or repent, we know that infant baptism is simply not scriptural.

B. Irenaeus (A.D. 140-203) may have been referring to the practice of infant baptism when he wrote, “He came to save, through means of himself, all who through him are born again unto God, infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men” (A.D. 175-185).

C. Tertullian (A.D. 150-222) showed his disapproval of the practice when he wrote, “Let them come while they are growing up; let them come while they are learning, while they are being taught to what it is they are coming; let them become Christians when they are susceptible of the knowledge of Christ. What haste to procure the forgiveness of sins for the age of innocence! Let them first learn to feel their need of salvation; so it may appear that we have given to those that wanted” (198-203).

1. A historian by the name of Augustus Neander wrote, “Tertullian appears as a zealous opponent of infant baptism; a proof that the practice had not as yet come to be regarded as an apostolical institution; for otherwise Tertullian hardly would have ventured to express himself so strongly against it” (1850).
2. Neaner also wrote, “baptism at first was administered only to adults” reasoning that faith and baptism were “strictly connected” (1850).

D. Origen (A.D. 185-254) taught, “Little children are baptized for the remission of sins. Whose sins are they? When did they sin? Or how can this explanation of the baptismal washing be maintained in the case of small children, except according to the interpretation we spoke of a little earlier? No man is clean of stain, not even if his life upon the earth had lasted but a single day” (1996).

E. Cyprian (A.D. 200-258) took Tertullian’s teaching and further declared that although “an infant had committed no actual sin it needed forgiveness for the sin inherited from Adam and this was received in baptism” (Mattox 1961).
   1. The false doctrine of original sin made the false practice of infant baptism much more common.
   2. Mattox points out, “Infant baptism was occasionally practiced before 325, but it was not until after Augustine, about 450 that it became common practice” (1961).
   3. The Bible teaches plainly that the son does not bear the iniquity of the father (Ezekiel 18:20).

F. Scripture shows that there are certain steps we must take before we a

IV. MAN’S DEPARTURE REGARDING BAPTISM’S PURPOSE:
   A. Though the Bible makes the purpose of baptism clear, man has seriously departed from God’s standard.
   
   B. Early historians knew that the purpose of baptism was for the remission of sins.
      1. The post-apostolic writers all understood that baptism and the forgiveness of sins were connected through the divine authority of Scripture.
      2. Justin Martyr (103-165) referred to baptism as a washing and further wrote that it was, “for the remission of sins and unto regeneration” (Mattox 1961).
      3. David Bercot wrote A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, and in this writing he lists approximately eighty-five references from the writings of the early “church fathers” showing that they believed that water baptism is essential in gaining forgiveness for one’s sins (1998).
   
   C. Over time, man departed from man’s pattern and made baptism into a ceremony only performed by an approved official or only performed on Easter or Pentecost (Mattox 1961).
      1. Mattox writes, “The act itself became an elaborate ceremony where the candidate renounced the Devil, had salt sprinkled on his head, and after his immersion received milk and honey as a token of entering the spiritual promised land. The baptized were then dressed in white robes and paraded home wearing crowns of victory” (1961).
      2. It even became common practice to immerse a person three times (once for each person of the Godhead).
   
   D. Man quickly departed further and further from God’s standard.
      1. In a short span of time, man changed the purpose of baptism to be less defined.
      2. When man leaves the pattern of God, he will quickly find himself at the wrong destination (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 16:25).
CONCLUSION:

A. The simplest of subjects can be misunderstood by man.
   1. When God’s law does not fit with man’s wants, man will find a way to ignore God’s law.
   2. However, the student of the Bible can be thankful that if one wants to understand God’s will, he knows he can know it (John 8:32; John 17:17).

B. Baptism is an extremely important topic in Scripture.
   1. As such, Satan is constantly trying to sow confusion.
   2. Satan has been very successful in the religious world.
   3. It is of the utmost importance that we are able to defend Biblical baptism.
   4. We must place the correct emphasis on it in our homes, in our Bible classes, from the pulpit, and in our evangelism.

REFERENCES:


INTRODUCTION:
A. A person’s memory is a wonderful thing: the picture of father, mother, house, etc.
B. Memorials keep memory alive. We erect tombstones on graves, names on buildings, airports, highways.
   1. Washington Memorial reminds us of the man referred to as “the father of our country.”
   2. Tomb of the unknown soldier reminds of the many who have died for our freedom.
C. Our memory can be a factor for either good or evil.
   1. Evil - Israel remembered Egypt and wanted to return.
D. There are many memorials in the Scriptures.
   1. Rainbow, Gen. 9:8-17.
   2. Sabbath Day, Deut. 5:15.
   4. Twelve stones out of Jordan, Josh. 4:1-9
   5. Passover, Deut. 16:1.
   6. Woman that anointed Jesus’ head, Mark 14:9.
E. The Lord Jesus ordained a memorial to be observed in the church until He comes again.
   1. It’s not a memorial to remember his birthday, resurrection, or ascension.
   2. The memorial Jesus established was to remember His DEATH.
   3. This memorial is called the Lord’s supper.

DISCUSSION:
I. Jesus instituted the lord’s supper on the night of his betrayal.
      1. Jesus took bread, blessed it (gave thanks), this is my body (represents his body).
      2. He took the cup (gave thanks), this is my blood (represents his blood).
   B. When they gathered to eat the Passover meal, Jesus instituted the Lord’s supper.
      2. The Lord’s supper is a memorial of Jesus’ death (1 Cor. 11:26).
II. Two items are used in the supper.
   A. Unleaven Bread. Matt. 26:26, “Jesus took bread”.
      1. This was the bread used in the Passover.
         a. It contained no leaven (yeast, something that causes fermentation).
         b. Nothing added to it or taken from it, symbolizing the purity of it.
      2. “This is my body” (Matt. 26:26). That is, it represents his body. We’re
mindful of his body.

B. Fruit of the vine (juice of the grape). Matt. 26:27-29, “And he took the cup” (v. 27)
   1. “This is my blood” (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20).
   2. Juice of the grape - represents is blood shed for the forgiveness of sins.

III. The bible reveals the place and time to observe (eat) the lord’s supper.

A. In the kingdom - i.e. in the Lord’s church. Matt. 26:29, “…I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18; 1 Cor. 11:25.
   1. The kingdom is the church, the church is the kingdom (Matt. 16:18-19).
      a. Mark 9:1, the kingdom would come “with power.”
      b. Acts 1:8, the apostles would “receive power” when the Holy Spirit came upon them.
      c. Acts 2:1-4, they were filled with the holy Spirit on Pentecost.
      d. Therefore, the kingdom came, the church came, on Pentecost.

B. “In the kingdom” specifies that those who are qualified (approved) to observe the memorial of the Lord’s supper are those who are IN the kingdom, i.e., those who are members of the church.
   1. The only ones in the kingdom are those who have obeyed the Gospel.
      Act 2:38, 41,47. Col. 1:13, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom…”
   2. Those who are not Christians are not authorized to eat the Lord’s supper.

C. There is no direct command as to “when” to eat the Lord’s supper.
   1. However, there is an “example” of the first century church eating it on the first day of the week.
   2. Where did they learn to eat the Lord’s supper on Sunday?
      a. Was it just convenient? Was it just a personal decision? Was it just their local practice? Some would have us believe so.
      b. The first day of the week assembly in order to eat the Lord’s supper was the practice of churches everywhere.
         1) What was taught in one congregation, was taught in all congregations.
         2) God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).
         3) The New Testament teaches unity harmony. All speak the same thing, no divisions, perfectly joined together, same mind, same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).
      c. Acts 16:4; Paul went through all the churches and delivered them “the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders…”
      d. 2 Thess. 3:6, a God-given “tradition” among all the churches that is to be kept. See also 2 Thess. 2:15.
   3. Acts 20:7, The church at Troas came together upon the first day of the week “to break bread.”
      a. The “passive voice” indicates they were “called together”, a directive/command.
      b. Who gave the command to assemble on the first day of the week? It was divine authority.
      c. Who gave the command to eat the Lord’s supper on the first day of the week? God did.
D. First day of week:
1. The day we are commanded to give. The Greek demands every first day! 1 Cor. 16:1-2, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him…”
2. Acts 20:7, The day the church at Troas ate the Lord’s supper.
3. 1 Cor. 11:17-22, The church at Corinth came together to eat the Lord’s supper (even though they were abusing it).
4. The day we are commanded to assemble, we are to “give” and “break bread.” Heb. 10:25, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much more, as ye see the day approaching.”
5. The Israelites were told to remember the Sabbath day (Exodus 20:8). They kept every Sabbath day.

E. Many important events occurred on the “first day of the week.”
1. Jesus’ Resurrection (Matt. 28:1).
2. Jesus appeared to the disciples (John 20:26).
4. The first Gospel sermon was preached (Acts 2).
5. The church was established (Acts 2)
6. The first century church assembled upon the first day (1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7).

F. There’s a connection between the Lord’s death and his resurrection on the first day of the week.
1. What better place to commemorate his death than on the day he arose from the dead?
2. To observe any other day loses that connection.
3. There is not record in the first and second century of the Lord’s supper being observed any time other than on the first day of the week (Sunday).

G. Historical evidence outside the Bible confirms that the first day of the week was the day Christians assembled to worship and eat the Lord’s supper. Didache 14:1 (95a.d.) Justin Martyr (150 a.d. Apology 1:67), Irenaeus, Origen, Cyprian, Barnabas, etc.

H. Some argue the early church kept the Sabbath day, not Sunday, because Paul always went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day.
1. He did not go there to worship, he went there because he had a ready-made audience to hear the Gospel. He went there to teach them, not worship with them.
   a. Their background and heritage was grounded in the one true God.
   b. They knew the prophets, the Scriptures. They were not heathens.
   c. Paul reasoned out of the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 17:2-4; 18:4).
2. While the whole world desperately needs the Gospel and we must teach them (Mark 16:15), it is so much easier to teach one who has some background in the Bible.

IV. Some deny the church at Troas is a divine example as to when to observe the Lord’s supper. Seven verses mention “breaking bread” in the n.T.
A. Luke 24:13-35 (after the resurrection), Jesus sat at meat with some disciples
where He took bread and brake it (v.30). They later told the apostles how that Jesus was known of them in breaking of bread (v.35). This was obviously a common meal. The Kingdom/church and had not yet been established (cf. Matt. 26:29; Acts 2).

B. Acts 2:42, “...They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and in prayers.”
1. This verse summarizes the practice of the brethren after the establishment of the church. Notice the spiritual nature of every item: doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3), fellowship (1 John 1:3-7), breaking bread (Acts 20:7) prayers (Acts 12:5).
2. “THE breaking of THE bread.” The definite article in the Greek text refers to not just any bread, but to a specific bread, a special bread.
3. The definite article is not used in reference to a common meal. This verse is obviously a reference to the Lord’s supper.

C. Acts 2:46, Refers to the conductor Christians in the early days of the church. They continued “daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.”
1. “Daily” indicates the frequency of their meeting together. “Daily” does not modify “breaking bread”. It modifies meeting together. It tells how often they met.
2. They continued “daily” in the temple. They ate bread from “house to house”.
3. Nothing in the phrase “breaking bread from house to house” indicates a church assembly (which is where the Lord’s supper is to be observed; cf. 1 Cor. 11:20-30; Acts 20:7).
4. Breaking bread is explained in this text as eating “meat” (trophe, food, nourishment). The word trophe appears 16 times in the N.T. and always indicates food/nourishment, not the Lord’s supper.

D. Acts 20:7, “And upon the first [day] of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...”
1. “Came together.” Greek, “called together,” “bring together.”
2. This verse also speaks of a specific, special bread. “Break the bread.” Definite article “the”.
3. This was a church assembly on the first day of the week when they came together to worship. Their purpose was to break the bread, i.e., eat the Lord’s supper.
4. Their assembly was not just what they decide to do in their local situation. They were following the decrees (Acts 16:4) and tradition (2 Thess. 3:6) of the apostles.
5. This is a divine example regarding worship on the first day of the week in observing the Lord’s supper.

E. Acts 20:11, “When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day...”
1. Same context as 20:7, however, this was obviously after their worship in verse y.
2. Verses 9-11, the text clearly identifies their breaking bread in verse 11 was “eating.” They had a meal together and talked till morning.
3. Churches today often engage in worship and afterwards have a meal together. This is all the church at Troas did.

F. Acts 27:35, “…he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them
all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.”

1. Paul was being taken to Rome as a prisoner on a ship with 276 men on board. A storm arose and for 14 days they were driven up and down in the sea. Paul encourages them to eat (vs. 33-34).

2. Verses 35-36, Paul takes bread, gave thanks, broke it and they ate.

3. This was not a worship service. These men were not Christians. They were hungry.

G. 1 Cor. 10:16, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”

1. This verse connects the communion, the breaking of bread and the Lord’s table (v. 21) together as one.

2. This is not speaking of a common meal. It’s certainly proof of eating the Lord’s supper.

H. In these seven verses, “breaking bread” is used to indicate both a common meal and the Lord’s supper. The context determines which is indicated.

1. “Breaking bread” is a figure of speech called a synecdoche, where a “part stands for the whole.”

2. That is, “breaking bread” includes both the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in observance of the Lord’s supper.

V. The purpose of the supper is a memorial to remind us of the death of Jesus on the cross.

A. A memorial: (Points backward, forward).

1. Luke 22:19, “…this do in remembrance of me.”

2. It is a memorial of the Lord’s suffering and Death.

B. It is a proclamation of faith and hope of the Lord’s return. 1 Cor. 11:26, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do she the Lord’s death till he come.”

C. A communion (the share one has) with the Lord. 1 Cor. 10:16-17, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we breaks it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17For we [being] many are one bread, [and] one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”

VI. The Lord’s supper is referred to in various ways.

A. It IS called.


2. “Communion’ (1 Cor. 10:16).

3. “The Lord’s table” (1 Cor. 10:21).

4. “The Lord’s supper” (1 Cor. 11:20).

B. It is NOT called:

1. Eucharist: (Eu-Charist - - “Good thanks”).

2. Sacrament: (Oath - - though there is an obligation)

3. Emblems: (Though it is emblematic).

VII. The manner in which we eat the Lord’s supper is of great importance.

A. God has never tolerated careless handling of sacred matters.

1. God demands respect and reverence that is due Him. Habakkuk 2:20, “the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.”

2. Nothing about God’s worship and the Lord’s way is frivolous, mundane, average or foolish.

B. One must examine himself and eat the memorial of the Lord’s supper in
a worthy manner. 1 Cor. 11:27-29, “Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink [this] cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of [that] bread, and drinks of [that] cup. 29For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, earth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”

1. “Unworthily” is an adverb, referring not to one’s spiritual condition or worthiness to partake, but to the “manner” in which one eats the supper.
   a. The Lord’s supper is not to be eaten in an unworthy manner.
   b. “Manner” has to do with “how something is done” or the “way of acting or behaving.”

2. The Lord’s supper is not a common meal and cannot be mixed with a common meal.
3. We eat the supper in a manner suitable to such a solemn occasion. We eat in remembrance of the Lord’s suffering and death.
4. Concerning the idea that we are unworthy because no one is sinlessly perfect.
   a. From man’s perspective, we are unworthy because no one is sinlessly perfect.
   b. From God’s perspective, however, we are worthy because we have been washed from our sins (1 Cor 6:11) and walk “in the light” (1 John 1:7). The Lord instituted it for us to observe. We cannot tell God He didn’t know what He was doing.

C. In eating the Lord’s supper, we must “discern” the Lord’s body.
1. We make a distinction between the eating of a common meal and the meaning of the Lord’s supper.
2. Our mind is focused on the sacrifice and death of the Lord — a very solemn and serious occasion.
3. The supper is sacred and holy.
   a. It is not a time to laugh and talk or make faces at the babies.
   b. It’s not time to observe the style of someone’s clothes and think about others.
   c. It’s not a time to let our mind wonder concerning worldly things.

D. Some of our own brethren are perverting and desecrating the Lord’s supper.
1. Some are observing it on other days of the week.
2. Some are eating it at weddings and funerals.
3. A church in Jackson, Mississippi, observed it with barbeque, even charging for it. Can anything be more frivolous and an unworthy manner?
4. These are some of the many apostasies men have concocted to please themselves.
   a. Perverting God’s worship (in any way) is “will worship” (Col. 2:23).
   b. “Will worship” is doing what pleases me, what I like, what I want, what I enjoy. It’s the idea that if I like it, surely God will too.
   c. There is absolutely no Bible authority to worship according to our will.
   d. Worship is not about “us”, it’s about “God.”

E. Must be observed in peace, harmony. 1 Cor. 10:17, “For we [being] many are one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”
VIII. The Lord’s supper has been abused through the centuries — errors abound.

A. Closed communion.
1. Withholding the cup from the average member (laity) “…is associated with a superstitious horror of profaning the blood of the Lord by spilling, and with the development of the power of the priesthood, dates only from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries…” (History of the Christian Church, Vol. III, p. 517).
2. This is the practice of forbidding the Lord’s supper to be eaten by only those who are faithful members of the congregation.
3. However, our assemblies are public assemblies. We encourage any and all to attend.
   a. Who would presume to “police” the audience and slap someone’s hand and forbid them partaking?
   b. Will they also forbid someone from making a contribution when the plate is passed?
   c. Will they forbid non-members from singing?
   d. While we teach the truth on worship, we understand that God is the judge, not man.
   e. We do not encourage non-Christians to participate.

B. Infant communion.
1. Some denominations give the communion to infants and small children.
2. This practice is no more scriptural than infant baptism.
3. We must have a “thus saith the Lord” in all that we say and do (Col. 3:17).

C. Men have departed from the faith, introducing many errors regarding the Lord’s supper.
   “In the East it seems to have been the custom, after the fourth century, to commune only once a year, or on great occasions. In the Oriental and North African churches prevailed the incongruous custom of infant communion, which seemed to follow from infant baptism, and was advocated by Augustine and Innocent I on the authority of John vi.53.” [History of the Christian church, Vol. III, p. 516].

D. Perhaps the most common expression we hear today (outside of the Lord’s church), is the word Transubstantiation. It is a doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church and became an article of faith at the Council of Trent in 1551.
1. This view says that when the bread and fruit of the vine are blessed by the priest, that it actually becomes the literal flesh and blood of Jesus.
   a. The Lord instituted a memorial in the Lord’s Supper.
   b. A memorial does not present the reality, it is a reminder of the real thing.
   c. This is a figure of speech called a metaphor. It is a comparison in which the likeness of a thing is implied rather than that which is expressly stated.
   d. Jesus said, “I am the vine” (John 15:5). No one understood him to mean that he was a literal vine.
   e. If Christians actually ate the flesh and blood of Jesus, it would constitute cannibalism.
2. Jesus affirmed that eternal life is not obtainable unless one eats his flesh and drinks his blood (John 6:53).
   a. He was not making cannibalism a necessity.
   b. It means that one must be so obsessed, captivated and controlled by Jesus, that it could be said of such a person that he eats and drinks Jesus.
   c. When it is said that a man eats and drinks football, basketball or baseball nobody thinks of a literal meaning.

CONCLUSION:
   A. How wonderful it is to commune with Christ.
   B. Are you in a proper relationship to commune with him?
   C. Are you in the Kingdom? Have you been bore again?

ADDENDUM:
The following information is taken from: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wik/Eucharistis_theology. [The numbers in brackets are the endnote numbers found in REFERENCES at the end].
1. It needs to be observed that nothing that follows below is according to the Scriptures. It is previous error that has grown out of man’s doctrines. It is the apostasy of man.
2. It is printed only to show how far men have departed from the sacred eternal word of God.
3. This is for informational purposes only so we might be informed when we hear others use these terms and expressions.

A. TRANSUBSTANTIATION:
   1. The substance (fundamental reality) of the bread and wine is changed in a way beyond human comprehension into that of the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ, but the accidents (physical traits, including chemical properties) of the bread and wine remain. This view is taught by the Roman Catholic Church, and is held by some Anglicans in Anglo-Catholic circles.
   2. The mysterious [15] change of the reality of the bread and wine began to be called “transubstantiation” in the 11th century. The earliest known text in which the term appears is a sermon of 1079 by Gilbert of Savardin, Archbishop of Tours, (Patrologia Latina CLXXI776). The first appearance of the term in a papal document was in the letter of Pope Innocent III Cum Martha circa to John of Canterbury on 29 November 1202, [16] then briefly in the decree Firmiter credits of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) [17] and afterward in the book “lamdudum” sent to the Armenians in the year 1341.[18] An explanation utilizing Aristotle’s hylomorphic theory of reality did not appear until the thirteenth century, with Alexander of Hales (died 1245).
   3. The actual moment of change is believed to be the priest’s liturgical recitation of the Words of Institution: “This is my Body..” and “This

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Editor’s Note: Wikipedia is typically not a source considered credible by NWFSBS. However, after review of the material submitted by Brother Robinson, it was determined that this material was credible with references. We encourage each reader to evaluate the material and take note of the included references. G.E.M.
is my Blood…”

B. CONSUBSTANTIATION AND IMPANATION:
1. “The bread retains its substance and … Christ’s glorified body comes down into the bread through the consecration and is found there together with the natural substance of the bread, without quantity but whole and complete in every part of the sacramental bread.” It was the position of the Lollardists, as well as the medieval scholastic doctor Duns Scotus.[5] It is erroneously used to denote the position of the Lutheran Church (see below), who instead affirm the doctrine of sacramental union. Some Anglicans identify with this position.

2. Consubstantiation is a Christian theological doctrine that (like Transubstantiation) describes the Real Presence in the Eucharist. It holds that during the sacrament, the substance of the body and blood of Christ are present alongside the substance of the bread and wine, which remain present. It was part of the doctrines of Lollardy and considered a heresy by the Roman Catholic Church.

3. “Real Presence Communion - Consubstantiation?”. WELS topical Q&A.Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Archived from the original on 2 January 2008. Retrieved 26 Jan 2015. Although some Lutherans have used the term ‘consubstantiation’ [sic] and it might possibly be understood correctly (e.g., the bread & wine, body & blood coexist with each other in the Lord’s Supper), most Lutherans reject the term because of the false connotation it contains…either that the body and blood, bread and wine come together to form one substance in the Lord’ s Supper or that the body and blood are present in a natural manner like the bread and the wine. Lutherans believe that the bread and the wine are present in a natural manner in the Lord’s Supper and Christ’s true body and blood are present in an illogical, supernatural manner.

C. SACRAMENTAL UNION:
1. In the “use” of the sacrament, according to the words of Jesus Christ and by the power of his speaking of them once for all, the consecrated bread is united with his body and the consecrated wine with his blood for all communicants, whether believing or unbelieving, to eat and drink. This is the position of the Lutheran Church that echoes the next view with its “pious science about technicalities” in that it objects to philosophical terms like “consubstantiation.”

2. Objective reality, silence about technicalities.
   “Objective reality, but pious silence about technicalities” (or “divine [or holy] mystery”) i the view of all the ancient Churches of the East, as well as of many Anglicans and Methodists.[6] While they agree that in the sacrament the bread and the wine are really and truly changed into the body and the blood of Christ, and while they have at times employed the terminology of “substance” to explain what is changed,[7] they usually avoid this language, considering it redolent of scholasticism, as presenting speculative metaphysics as doctrine, and as scrutinizing excessively the manner in which the mystical transformation takes place.

D. PNEUMATIC PRESENCE:
1. “Real Spiritual presence”, holds that not only the Spirit of Christ, but as the true body and blood of Jesus Christ (hence “real”), are received
by the sovereign, mysterious, and miraculous power of the Holy Spirit (hence “spiritual”), but only by those partakers who have faith. This view approaches the “pious silence” view in its unwillingness to specify how the Holy Spirit makes Christ present, but positively excludes not just symbolism but also trans- and con-substantiation. It is also known as the “mystical presence” view, and is held by some Low Church Reformed Anglicans. This understanding is often called “receptionism”. Some argue that this view can be seen as being suggested — though not clearly — by the “invocation” of the Anglican Rite as found in the American Box of Common Prayer, 1928 and earlier and in Rite I of the American CBP of 1979 as well as in other Anglican formularies:

2. And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us, and of thy almighty goodness, vouchsafe to bless and sanctify, with they Word and Holy Spirit, these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine; that we, receiving them according to thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ’s holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood.

E. MEMORIALISM: The bread and wine are symbolic of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and in partaking of the elements the believer commemorates the sacrificial death of Christ. Christ is not present in the sacrament, except in the minds and hearts of the communicants. This view is also known as “Zwinglianism” after Huldrych Zwingli and is held by several Protestant and Latter-day Saint denominations, including most Baptists.

F. SUSPENSION: The partaking of the bread and wine was not intended to be a perpetual ordinance, or was not to be taken as a religious rite or ceremony (also known as adeipnonism, meaning “no supper” or “no meal). This is the view of Quakers and the Salvation Army, as well as the hyperdispensationalist positions of E.W. Bullinger, Cornelius R. Stam, and others.

G. The Catholic Church:

1. The Communion bread is fervently revered in view of the Church’s doctrine that, when bread and one are consecrated during the Eucharistic celebration, they cease to be bread and wine and become the body and blood of Christ. The empirical appearances continue to exist unchanged, but the reality is changed by the power of the Holy Spirit, who has been called down upon the bread and wine. The separate consecrations of the bread (known as the host) and of the wine symbolizes the separation of Jesus’ body from his blood at Calvary. However, since he has risen, the Church teaches that his body and blood are no longer actually separated. Where one is, the other must be. Therefore, although the priest (or other minister) says “The body of Christ” when administering the host and “The blood of Christ” when presenting the chalice, the communicant who receives either one receives Christ, whole and entire, body and blood, soul and divinity.[13] This belief is succinctly summarized in St. Thomas Aquinas’ hymn, Adoro Te Devote.[14]

2. The only ministers who can officiate at the Eucharist and consecrate the sacrament are ordained priests (either bishops or presbyters) acting in the person of Christ (“in persona Christi”). In other word, the priest celebrant represents Christ, who is the Head of the Church and acts before God the Father in the name of the Church, always using
“we” not “I” during the Eucharistic prayer. The matter used must be wheaten bread and grape wine; this is considered essential for validity. [22]

3. For fear of desecration, the Communion bread and wine may not be received by any in a state of mortal sin, nor (generally) by non-Catholics. However, in exceptional circumstances non-Catholic Christians who share the belief of the Catholic Church in the Eucharist are permitted to receive it.

H. Anglicanism: Anglican Eucharistic theology. The historical position of the church of England is found in the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1571, which state “the Bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ”; and likewise that “the Cp of Blessing is a parking of the Blood of Christ” (Articles of Religion, Article XXVIII: Of the Lord’s Supper) and that “Transubstantiation is repugnant to Holy Writ”. However, the Articles also state that adoration, or worship per se, of the consecrated elements was not commanded by Christ. It also stated that those who receive unworthily do not actually receive Christ but rather their own condemnation.

I. Lutheranism: Eucharist in the Lutheran Church. Lutherans believe that the Body and Blood of Christ are “truly and substantially present in, wth and under the forms” of consecrated bread and one (the elements), [32] so that communicants eat and drink both the elements and the true Body and Blood of Christ himself[33] in the Sacrament of the Eucharist whether they are believers or unbelievers.[34][35] The Lutheran doctrine of the real presence is also known as the sacramental union.[36][37] This theology was first formally and publicly confessed in the Wittenberg Concord.[38] It has also been called “consubstantiation” but most Lutheran theologians reject the use of this term as it creates confusion with an earlier doctrine of the same name.[39] Some Lutherans do believe in consubstantiation.[40] Lutherans use the term “in, with and under the forms of consecrated bread and wine” and “sacramental union” to distinguish their understanding of the Eucharist from those of the Reformed and other traditions.[32]

J. Methodism: A United Methodist Elder consecrates the elements.

1. Methodists understand the eucharist to be an experience of God’s grace. In keeping with Wesleyan-Arminian theology, God’s unconditional love makes the table of God’s grace accessible to all, a concept referred to as open communion (see Eucharistic discipline # Methodist practice).

2. According to the “Article XVIII — Of the Lord’s Supper “in the Methodist Articles of Religion:” The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ’s death; in so much that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the boy of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

3. Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

4. The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.
5. The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not by Christ’s ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.[45]

K. Calvinism: Lord’s Supper in Reformed theology.
1. Communion service in the Three-kings Church, Frankfurt am Main.
2. Many Reformed Christians hold that Christ’s body and blood are not corporeally (physically) present in the Eucharist, but really present in a spiritual way.[57] The elements are spiritual nourishment in Christ by faith. According to John Calvin, “The sum is, that the flesh and blood of Christ feed our souls just as bread and wine maintain and support our corporeal life. For there would be no aptitude in the sign, did not our souls find their nourishment in Christ.[…] I hold…that the sacred mystery of the Supper consists of two things — the corporeal signs, which presented to the eye, represent invisible tings in a manner adapted to our weak capacity, and the spiritual truth, which is at once figured and exhibited by the signs.[58]”

L. Baptist Churches:
1. Reformed Baptists, in agreement with Presbyterians and other Reformed Churches, hold to the doctrine of Pneumatic presence. The doctrine is articulated in the 1989 Baptist Confession of Faith and the Catechism. It holds that the Lord’s Supper to be a means of “spiritual nourishment and growth”, stating:[60] “The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by him the same night wherein he was betrayed, to be observed in his churches, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrances and showing to all the world the sacrifice of himself in his death, confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and its each other.”
2. Independent Baptists, hold to the Relational Presence.
3. The American Baptist Churches USA, a mainline Baptist denomination, believes that “The bread and cup that symbolize the broken body and shed blood offered by Christ remind us today of God’s great love for us…”[61]

M. Zwinglianism: Main article: Memorialism.
1. Huldrych Zwingli taught that the sacrament is purely symbolic and memorial in character, arguing that this was the meaning of Jesus’ instruction: “Do this in remembrance of me”. [31]
2. Some Protestant groups regard the Eucharist (also called the lord’s Supper or the Lord’s Table) as a symbolic meal, a memorial of the Last Supper and the Passion in which nothing miraculous occurs. This view is known as the Zwinglian view, after Huldrych Zwingli, a Church leader in Zurich, Switzerland during the Reformation. It is commonly associated with the United Church of Christ, Baptists, the Disciples of Christ and the Mennonites. Elements left over from the service may be discarded without any formal ceremony, or if feasibly may be retained for use in future services.

N. Plymouth Brethren: Hold the Lord’s Supper, or the Breaking of Bread, instituted in the upper room on Christ’s betrayal night to be the weekly remembrance feast enjoined on all true Christians. They celebrate the supper in utmost simplicity. Among “closed” Brethren assemblies usually any one of the brothers gives thanks
for the loaf and the cup. In conservative “open” Brethren assemblies usually two
different brothers give thanks, one for the loaf and the other for the cup. In liberal
“open” Brethren assemblies (or churches/community chapels, etc.) sisters also
participate with audible prayer.

O. Quakers and the Salvation Army:
1. Primary theological development from the 17th century. Eucharistic
theology: suspension/Memorialism “The bread and wine remind us
of Jesus’ body and blood.”[62]
2. Quakers understand all of life as being sacramental and thus do not
practice baptism or holy communion. “We believe in the baptism of
the Holy Spirit and in communion with that Spirit. If the believer
experiences such spiritual baptism and communion, then no rite or
ritual is necessary. …The Quaker idea is to make every meal at every
table a Lord’s Supper.” [63]
3. Quakers and Salvationists do not practice holy communion in their
worship, believing it was not meant to be a perpetually mandated
ritual.

P. Latter Day Saint movement, Mormons: Sacrament (Latter Day Saints).
a. Among Latter Day Saints (or Mormons), the Eucharist (in LDS
theology it is “The Sacrament”) is partaken in remembrance
of the blood and body of Jesus Christ. It is viewed as. Renewal
of the covenant made at baptism, which is to take upon oneself
the name of Jesus. As such, t is considered efficacious only for
baptized members in good standing. However, the unbaptized are
not forbidden from communion, and it is traditional for children
not yet baptized (baptism occurs only after the age of eight) to
participate in communion in anticipation of baptism. Those who
partake of the Sacrament promise always to remember Jesus and
keep his commandments. The prayer also asks God the Father
that each individual will be blessed with the Spirit of Christ.[64]
b. The Sacrament is offered weekly and all active members are
taught t prepare to partake of each opportunity. It is considered
to be a weekly renewal of a member’s commitment to follow Jesus
Christ, and a plea for forgiveness of sins.
c. The Latter Day Saints do not believe in any kind of literal
presence. They view the bread and water as symbolic of the body
and blood of Christ. Currently The Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints uses water instead of wine. Early in their history
the Sacrament wine was often purchased from enemies of the
church. To remove any opportunity for poisoned or unfit wine for
use in the Sacrament, it is believed a revelation from the Lord
was given that stated “it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what
ye shall diners when ye parade of the sacrament, if it so be that
ye do it with an eye single to my glory — remembering unto the
Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which
was shed for the remission of your sins.”[65] After this time water
was permitted in pace of wine, but the church continued to use
wine for the sacrament until the early 20th century As the church’s
prohibition on alcohol became solidified in the early 20th century,
water became the liquid of choice for the Sacrament, although in
situations where clean water and/or fresh bread is unavailable the
closest equivalent may be used.

Q. Seventh-day Adventists: The Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Lord’s upper is “a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Savior. “In the communion service” Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people.”[66]

REFERENCES (FROM 1 THROUGH 17 ABOVE).


“after the consecration of the bread and of the wine, there no longer remaineth the substance of the bread and of the wine, but the Body Itself and the Blood of the Lord under the species and form of bread and wine; that is to say, under the accidents of the bread” (Confession of Dositheus, Synod of Jerusalem); “the word transubstantiation is not to be taken to define the manner in which the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of the Lord; for this none can understand but God; but only thus much is signified, that the bread truly, really, and substantially becomes the very true Body of the Lord, and the wine the very Blood of the Lord” (The Longer Catechism of the Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church; the Catechism of the Eastern Orthodox Church also uses the term transubstantiation.


Ware pp. 283-285.

For instance, “After the consecration of the bread and of the wine, there no longer remaineth the substance of the bread and of the wine, but the Body itself and the Blood of the Lord, under the species and form of bread and wine; that is to say, under the accidents of the bread” (Chapter VI of Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem).

Ware p. 287.

Ware p. 279.

Council of Trent, Session XIII, canon 3 Archived 11 February 2008 at the Wayback Machine.; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1390; Catholic encyclopedia, Communion under Both Kinds.

Catholic Encyclopedia, article “Adoro Te Devote”.

The Catholic Church holds that no explanation is possible about how the change from bread and wine to the body and blood of Christ is brought about, and limits itself to teaching what is changed: “The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1333, emphasis added).

Denzinger 416.

Denzinger 430.

Denzinger 544.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1366.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1367.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1367; Council of Trent: Session XXII, chapter 2.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1412; Code of Canon Law, canon 924; Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, canon 705.

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Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1378-1380, 1418.
Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part 2, 1, 2, 4 #1128 and Part 3, 2, 1, 3 #2111.


Poulson, Christine (1999). The Quest for the Grail: Arthurian Legend in British Art, 1840-1920. Manchester University Press. p. 40. ISBN 9780719055379. By the late 1840s Anglo-Catholic interest in the revival of ritual had given new life to doctrinal debate over the nature of the Eucharist. Initially, “the Tractarians were concerned only to exalt the importance of the sacrament and did not engage in doctrinal speculation.” Indeed they were generally hostile to the doctrine of transubstantiation. For an orthodox Anglo-Catholic such as Dyce the doctrine of the Real Presence was acceptable, but the of transubstantiation was not.

Spurr, Barry (3 April 2010). Anglo-Catholic in Religion. Lutterworth Press. p. 100 ISBN 0718830733. The doctrine had been affirmed by Anglican theologians, through the ages, including Lancelot Andrews Jeremy Taylor (who taught the doctrine of the Real Presence at the eucharist, but attacked Roman transubstantiation), William Laud and John Cosin - all in the seventeenth century - as well as in the nineteenth century Tractarians and their successors.


a b An Explanation of Luther’s Small Catechism, (LCMS), question 291. (cf. Augsburg Confession, Article 10). (“Manducatio indignorum”: “eating of the unworthy”). An Explanation of Luther’s Small Catechism, (LCMS), question 296”).


Weimar Ausgabe 26, 442; Luther’s Works 37, 299-300.

Formula of Concord Epitome VII, 7, 13; FC Formula of Concord Solid Declaration VII, 14, 18, 35, 28, 117; Triglot Concordia, 811-813, 977, 979, 983-985, 1013.


a b At what age do ELCA congregations allow members their first Communion?. Retrieved 2010-01-12.


ELCA: Worship: FAQ: How Do We Move to Weekly Communion? The United Methodist Church: The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church — Article XVIII — Of the Lord’s Supper.


Crowther, Jonathan (1815). A Portraiture of Methodism. P. 224. The Methodists believe, that the covenant of grace has been administered and renewed in different ages of the world. …Under the gospel, Christ the substance, prefigured by these shadows, being exhibited, the ordinances in and by which this covenant is dispensed, are the preaching of the word, and the shadows, being exhibited, the ordinances in and by which this covenant is dispensed, are the preaching of the word, and
the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper: which ordinances, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less external glory, yet hold forth this covenant in greater fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles.


A distinctive characteristic of Wesley’s eucharistic theology is that Christ is truly present at the table. Such a claim puts Methodist and Wesleyan fellowships in the company of Catholics, Anglicans, and the Orthodox and distinguishes them from most Protestant fellowships.


Discipline of the Primitive Methodist Church in the United States of America. Primitive Methodist Church. 2013. We reject the doctrine of transubstantiation: that is, that the substance of bread and wine are changed into the very body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper. We likewise reject that doctrine which affirms the physical presence of Christ’s body and blood to be by, with and under the elements of bread and wine (consubstantiation).

Wikisource: Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast (version 2).

The United Methodist Church: The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church — Article XIX — Of Both Kinds.


The real presence of Christ was thankfully received, though, typically, the Moravians refrained from delving too much into the precise way the Savior was sacramentally present. ISBN 9781580462600.

Atwood, Craig D. (1 November 2010). Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem. Penn State Press. p. 165. ISBN 9780271047508. In the eighteenth century, the orations consistently promoted the Lutheran doctrine of the real presence, which they described as a “sacramental presence.”


Westminster Confession of Faith ch. XXVII Sec. 7.


“A Formula of Agreement.”


Doctrine & Covenants 20:78-79 (see also Moroni 4:3, Moroni 5:2).

Doctrine & Covenants 27:2.

28 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists.
Constantine’s Influence on Religion

ROBERT L. ALEXANDER

Introduction:
A. A study of church history is an area that is overlooked and neglected thus an examination of church history is a needed and vital study for several reasons.
1. The New Testament speaks of a falling away that was to come (2 Thess. 2:1ff), but when did it occur? Was it during the period in which the NT revelation was completed? No. It was afterwards. To learn more about the tragic falling away of the Lord’s church and its consequences we must study history.
2. The religious division around us today has an originating point. Where and when did it begin? Why is it we do not read about it in the NT (though the NT indeed prophesied of the falling away of the church—Acts 20:27-29; 2 Thess. 2:3)? The answer lies in history. To understand the origin and causes of religious division we must study history.
3. The persecution which was brought to bear upon Christians for their faith. We see the beginnings of it during the period in which the New Testament was being completed (book of Acts, the epistles, the Revelation) and history certainly reveals that this persecution grew in its intensity. But, when did the terrible persecutions against Christianity end? How did Christianity itself contribute to the end of the Roman persecutions? This question leads us to that point in history to the Roman Emperor which will serve as the focus of our study for this hour: Constantine, who is also known as “Constantine the Great.”
   a. It was in 313 AD that Constantine issued the Milan Edict of Toleration (though there was an edict issued prior to this one in 311 which will be referred to as well in this lesson) which gave official recognition to Christianity. This edict put an end to Roman persecution against Christians and in essence, was an endorsement of Christianity.
   b. In some ways, this edict was a blessing, but in other ways it was not and became a curse.
B. There are further and important questions to consider: Why did he issue this edict? Why was he drawn to Christianity? What made it appealing to him? What were the consequences of this edict and are they still being felt today? How was this edict both a blessing and a curse? What then, was Constantine’s full influence on religion? In our study, we will seek to come to satisfactory answers from what history reveals to us. We will look at the historical background which led up to his edict (which will involve necessarily a look at the man himself and how he came to power), the religious ramifications from his actions prior to the edict, in issuing the edict and after the edict was issued and then we will derive some practical applications from the life and actions of Constantine and his influence on...
religion then for our day and age. A study of Constantine and his influence will show that Constantine’s influence on religion had a lasting impact that is still being felt today both good and bad.

Discussion:

I. HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS FROM THE LIFE OF CONSTANTINE

A. His birth/family and early years

1. His full name along with titles: Roman Emperor Caesar Flavius Aurelius Constantinus Augustus

2. He was born to Flavius Valerius Constantius, known to later Byzantine historians as Emperor Constantius I and nicknamed “Chlorus, the Pale” (also known as Constantius 1 Chlorus, as well as Constantius Chlorus) and to a woman, supposedly a barmaid or landlady of a tavern, Helena (Grant 16). It is speculated by some historians (Grant 16) that he was born out of wedlock, but it is also noted that “modern authorities refuse to accept this view out of a pious determination to regard Constantine as legitimate” (Grant 16). However, if this is true, it would have been difficult for Chlorus—as a high ranking military officer—to marry a non-Roman wife. Consequently, Chlorus, abandoned or supplemented (and historians are divided on this) his connection with Helena in 293 AD when Maximianus Augustus (better known as Maximian) of the west (Hauck 250) gave his stepdaughter Flavia Maximiana Theodora to Chlorus in marriage, which was more “politically correct” during this time in history. This marriage had military and political implications because Maximianus viewed Chlorus’ military conquers as a threat to his power and in order to secure Chlorus’ loyalty, engineered this marriage (Stephenson 89) The speculation that Constantine was illegitimate was hardly quashed during his reign as Emperor, during which he legislated continually against the interests of children born to unmarried parents (Stephenson 4). Though, to Chlorus, was born six other children with Theodora, there is no doubt that Chlorus viewed the young Constantine as his true son and legal heir (Stephenson 4). History also records, that Constantine loved his mother Helena dearly in that during his reign as Emperor he had statues erected in her honor, coins struck in her image and called cities by her name (Hauck 250). Helena also espoused the Christian religion (Mattox 125). Perhaps one reason Constantine showed favor toward Christianity was due to the influence of his mother, Helena (cf. 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14,15 and the influence and impact of Lois and Eunice on the life of Timothy).

3. His actual birthdate is unknown. Historians differ as to when he was born. Some estimate that he was born quite probably around 272 AD and 274 AD (Hauck 249) at Naissus, in Uper Moesi, (now known as Nissa) in Illyricum. Some have suggested that perhaps he was even born in Britain, but this view is rooted more in speculation than actual historical evidence. Others suggest that his birth was as late as 280-282 AD (Grant 13). Still others, such as Eusebius place his birth around 273 and 275 BC during the reign of the Emperor Aurelian (Smith 1). What we do know is that his birthday was celebrated on February 27th and that he died in the year 337 AD.

4. When he was young, Constantine was taken to the court of the
Emperor Diocletian, around 292 AD (Mattox 125).

a. As Constantine grew up in the palace of Diocletian, this period of time had a profound influence on his development and thinking, which was both appreciative and critical of all he saw (Grant 19).

b. One significant change made to Roman government was when Diocletian (deciding the empire was too large for one man to rule over alone) appointed a second emperor (or Augusti) to share his authority and to supervise affairs in the western portion of the empire, and first emperor of the West would be Maximian. Along with this step was to assign to each emperor two Caesars. Each Caesar was then assigned portions of the empire to rule. In perhaps an act of divine providence, Constantine’s father was assigned to the west as Caesar to aid Maximian. Constantine’s father would govern the territories of Britain, Gaul, and Spain, setting the stage for the division that was occurring and that would further manifest itself within the Roman Empire as Constantine rose to prominence.

c. After his father was appointed as Caesar (or “junior emperor”) (Mattox 125), Diocletian kept Constantine in his travelling court where it has been suggested that he served a political purpose in being nothing more than a hostage for his father’s continued loyalty (Grant 19). Edward Gibbon viewed this period as “a school of dissimulation, at which the young man, surrounded by jealous and hostile courtiers, mastered all the skills of deception and duplicity” (Gibbon, e-Sword). If true, this would give credence to the view that when Constantine came to power and began to favor Christianity that he used it for nothing more than political purposes and for selfish gain. On the other hand, it is true that while Diocletian and his Caesar, Galerius, were antagonistic to Christianity because, they believed there were circumstances which were conspiring that the existence of Christianity was rupturing the covenant between Rome and her gods (Walker, Norris, Lotz, Handy 123), it is equally true that Chlorus viewed Christianity favorably, which perhaps as well would have influenced Constantine as well. It is possible that Constantine was sincere in his actions when it came to Christianity due to the influence of his father and mother, it is equally possible as well that he also was insincere. It also is possible that Constantine was both sincere in some respects and insincere in others.

B. His character
1. He was very charismatic.
2. He was also very conceited. Schaff notes that “he had an imposing and winning person, and was compared by flatterers with Apollo” and that he was “given to excessive vanity in his dress and outward demeanor, always wearing an oriental diadem, a helmet studded with jewels, and a purple mantle of silk richly embroidered with pearls and flowers worked in gold.” (Vol. 2 15). Modesty was not a strong suit of Constantine’s.
3. His mind was sharp and his intelligence was second to none. He was a “people person” with a good understanding of human nature combined with administrative energy and tact.
4. He was kindhearted and benevolent. Again, Schaff notes that many laws and regulations that Constantine instituted “breathed the spirit of Christian justice and humanity, promoted the elevation of the female sex, improved the condition of slaves and of unfortunates, and gave free play to the efficiency of the church throughout the whole empire. Altogether he was one of the best, the most fortunate and the most influential of the Roman emperors, Christian and pagan.” (Vol. 2, 16).

5. He was also guilty of not “practicing what he preached” as it regards to his favoritism to Christianity. Schaff further observes, which is evidence that he was insincere in his actions towards Christianity, that “his progress in the knowledge of Christianity was not a progress in the practice of its virtues. His love of display and his prodigality, his suspiciousness and his despotism, increased with his power.” (Vol. 2, 16). Whatever influence his mother and father may have shown towards him regarding Christianity, Constantine did not completely accept it. Certainly, he did not follow the example of Jesus (per Acts 1:1) of both “doing” and “teaching” but rather he was content to simply “talk the talk” and make an outward show of piety and even use Christianity for his own political purposes.

C. His rise to power in the West.
1. In 305, Diocletian abdicated his throne due to declining health and at the same time he compelled his fellow Augustus, Maximian, to abdicate his throne at the same time. This did not end the persecution that was taking place at the time. It is true, however, that peace came to churches in the Western half of the Empire because the new Augustus, Constantius I (Chlorus) viewed such actions against Christians as ill-advised (Walker, Norris, Lotz, Handy 123). In the East, things remained the same under Augustus Galerius and his Caesar, Maximinus Daia. Diocletian’s abdication would set off a series of wars amongst the Romans themselves as men fought for supremacy. In fact, after Diocletian abdicated, the power of the armies to make or break emperors was asserted.

2. In 306, Constantius I died suddenly at York in Britain. Constantine, who had just returned to his father’s side after residing in Diocletian’s court, was proclaimed as Emperor by his late father’s troops. With the full support of the army, Constantine compelled Galerius to acknowledge him as “Caesar” and consequently was given Britain, Gaul and Spain to rule and was subservient only to Severus, who had ascended to the position of Augustus after the death of Constantius I. Severus was quickly deposed by Maxentius, the son of Maximian, who made himself ruler of Italy and North Africa. Constantine, while having power, possessed it only partially since he did not control the city of Rome, which was the seat of power for the whole of the Western portion of the empire. Maxentius, though wary and jealous of Constantine, soon appealed to him for help—and coins show they extended such recognition to each other (Grant 24), thus forming an uneasy alliance. Further cementing this alliance was Maxentius giving Constantine his daughter, Fausta, in marriage. By the end of the decade, the west was divided between Constantine and Maxentius, whose alliance was becoming increasingly uneasy.

D. His ascension
1. The year 311 would mark a turning point for the Roman Empire in more ways than one. Prior to the final battle for supremacy in the Western half of the Empire took place, Galerius, from his deathbed, issued an edict of toleration for Christians. (Walker, Norris, Lotz, Handy 124). While it was issued it did not have the same impact and influence as Constantine’s.

2. Galerius’ death left four men vying for control of the empire. In the East, Licinius, who ruled over the territories north of the Hellespont, faced Maximinus Daia, who held Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Maximinius ended Galerius edict shortly after taking power. Maximinius allied himself With Maxentius in the West to counter the established alliance between Constantine and Licinius.

3. In 313, Licinius defeated Maximinus and his armies near Heraclea Pontica and took control of the Eastern portion of the empire. Prior to this matters in the West were settled.

4. Almost a year earlier, in 312, Constantine defeated Maxentius and his troops to take full control of the Western Roman Empire. Constantine, with a much smaller army than that commanded by Maxentius, crossed the Alps and won several battles in northern Italy. Constantine continued south to confront Maxentius, who in spite of superior numbers (his army outnumbered Constantine’s 170,000 to 40,000) (Mattox 125) had hid himself behind the walls of the city of Rome, along with his army. Disturbances in the city forced Maxentius to bring his troops out to confront Constantine and his army at the Mulvian Bridge across the Tiber. It was here that Constantine and his army gained the decisive victory. This victory had ramifications not just for the Roman Empire itself, but also on Christianity.

E. His “vision”

1. Constantine, like his father, had been a staunch opponent of the persecution of Christians.

2. Constantine, also like his father, had also aligned himself with the solar monotheism which had been made popular by Aurelian. It seems that at least to begin with there was little difference between the god of the Sun-cult which had been fostered and the God of Heaven with the reason being both sides proclaimed the supremacy of a single transcendent being by whose rule the subordinate powers of the cosmos were ordered. Each, it appears initially in Constantine’s thoughts, projected a picture of the world-order consistent with Constantine’s sense of his own mission which was to restore a universal monarchy which would integrate and unify human society on earth. Ultimately, it would be the God of Heaven, which would be the ‘tool’ by which Constantine would seek to accomplish this purpose.

3. Constantine, on the eve of battle at the Mulvian Bridge, had a “Dream” in which he claimed to have seen the initial letters of the name of Christ with the words “by this sign you will conquer.” In Constantine’s own biography, penned by Eusebius, the historian provides his own account of what occurred. Eusebius records after having failed to defeat Maxentius on several occasions failed and recognizing that “the magical devices of his opponent could not be countered by purely military measures only;” Constantine looked for “divine assistance” (Jan. N. Bremmer “The Vision of Constantine‘ 2).
As he searched for which “god” to choose, Constantine recognized all other emperors had met an unwelcome end despite their attempts to cultivate and maintain favor of the pagan gods. Seeing that his father had ultimately forsaken the solar monotheism of Aurelian and had chosen to “worship” the Christian God and had found him to be the “Savior and Guardian of his Empire” did Constantine turn to God. Consequently, Constantine began to “invoke God in prayer, beseeching and imploring him to show him who he was, and to stretch out his right hands in his plans” (Bremmer 2). It was at this time, that Constantine supposedly saw this “sign.” Later on, as he slept, Constantine, relating these events, to Eusebius, recalled that the Christ appeared to him in his dreams with the sign which had appeared in the sky, and urged him to make a copy of the sign which had appeared and use it as protection against the attacks of the enemy. Constantine, taking the “sign” and “vision/dream” as an omen resolved to trust the God of the Christians and ordered the Chi-Rho monogram painted on the shields of his soldiers. Interestingly, prior to this the Chi-Rho had appeared in non-Christian contexts which pagan papyri indicate. Those writing or reading these papyri employed the sign to mark a valuable or useful passage, Chi-Ro standing for the Greek “chreston” meaning “good.” This symbol also bore some resemblance to the Egyptian god “ankh” while others may have noted or assumed connection with the worship of the Sun or Apollo or Mithras. It is speculated that the “Chi-Rho” was “Christianized” by Constantine himself or his advisers who suggested that this not unfamiliar symbol could serve as an abbreviation for Christ. Thus, the Chi-Rho had a double meaning: one for pagans and one for Christians. This was not new since Constantine had been brought up in the court of Diocletian in an atmosphere which required dissimulation. Thus, in the mind of Constantine, both pagans and Christians reverence this symbol. If true, this serves as an illustration of Constantine’s desire to play to both audiences (Grant 142,143). Nonetheless, it was at the Mulvian Bridge that the “west” was won.

4. Constantine, upon entering Rome triumphantly gave the God of heaven thanks. Because he cast his lot (though not in obedience to the Gospel of Christ, but only in an outward profession) with the “minority” (Christians) and their God, he regarded the Christian God as the protector of the Empire and the sponsor of his own mission to reform and reconstruct the Empire itself, which would involve forging an uneasy and non-lasting truce with Licinius to the east.

F. His edict

1. Because Constantine acknowledged that it was the Christian God who had brought him victory, it would be Christianity on which Constantine relied to offer the one God the adoration which alone he believed would assure the wellbeing of the empire and the success of his own rule. This favor would start to manifest itself with the Milan Edict of 313.

2. It was at a meeting with Licinius in Milan in 313 that Constantine issued his edict of toleration for Christianity. This second edict went beyond the one issued by Galerius in 311 in that it was the “decisive step from hostile neutrality to friendly neutrality and protection.” (Schaff,
Constantine’s edict proclaimed freedom of conscience, it gave to Christians full equality with all the other religious groups and cults at the time, and ordered the restoration of all church property which had been confiscated during the period of persecution and all property owners affected by such actions taken against them were to be indemnified from the imperial treasury (Schaff Vol 3 30), which was also a provision Galerius’ edict did not allow. Further, it granted freedom of worship without limitation and of religion (Burckhart 297). F.W. Mattox observes that “this is the first government action which was favorable to the church and represents a complete reversal of policy. The future of the church looked bright. Actually there was great danger ahead. With the removal of persecution and a growing popularity, the church was to be perverted and polluted with growing heresy.” (99).

3. The Edict of Milan, though favorable to Christians, was issued more out of concern for social stability and the protection of the empire from the wrath of the Christian God more so than justice or care for Christians. This edict is indicative of the Roman culture and its obsession with seeking the gods’ intervention than that of actual religious belief. Further, the urgency to right wrongs reflects the desire of the leadership to avoid unfavorable consequences not out of a sense of justice or even for the glorification of God. The sooner Rome, in the eyes of Constantine, maintained a state of justice with the Christians, the sooner the state itself would stabilize. It was thought the forces of evil would be more balanced. Constantine, being superstitious, believed enough in the existence of non-Christian ‘gods’ to not want to offset the balance of good and evil. While there is favor shown toward Christians and Constantine himself did favor Jehovah, the politician and pagan in him certainly was evident in the issuing of this edict. While it appeared that “the notion of a state religion was thus abolished…Christianity clothed itself with the shell which paganism had discarded.” (Burckhart 296). Christianity was not at this time the official religion of the state; it would occur. (This will be further discussed under main point II as to Constantine’s contributions to making Christianity the religion of the state.)

4. Another consequence of the edict of toleration was the prohibition of using Gladiators (Christians) for sport. Not only did he end the “gladiatorial games” he also abolished crucifixion as a penalty for crimes (not just because he recognized it as the death Jesus suffered, but from a personal standpoint because the penalty itself seemed cruel) (Grant 184).

5. However, Licinius would not honor this agreement in the Eastern part of the empire, which in turn would lead to further conflict and a reunification of the Empire itself.

G. His consolidation of power (323-337).

1. To the East, Licinius entered into the agreement with Constantine regarding Christians, grudgingly. While he did not persecute Christians he did not bestow privileges on them as Constantine desired. Tensions grew rapidly between he and Constantine over a decade from the time the Edict of Milan was issued. Over time, Licinius imposed severe restrictions on the public life of Christians by excluding them from
civil and military offices and even banishing them from the territory in some cases. He also wantonly ridiculed the Christians and eventually started periods of bloody persecution once again (Schaff Vol. 3 32). This persecution gave Constantine reason for invading the territory of Licinius. Licinius was vanquished by Constantine in two military campaigns. First, at the battle of Adrianople in July 324 and the second at Calcedon in September. Consequently, Licinius was sent to live in Thessalonica as condition for Constantine sparing his life. He was put to death in 325 when he sought to reclaim his power in developing secret alliances with the Danubian barbarians to overthrow Constantine, which failed. Constantine was finally supreme ruler. Rome was united once again and would be so until his death in 337.

2. At the same time, while showing outward favor towards Christianity, Constantine still accepted the pagan title of Pontifex Maximus or “Chief Priest” of all religions in the empire (Odahl 115). In essence, this title proclaimed him as “Head” of religion in the Empire. This would have a profound impact on Christianity and further digression from the truth as will be further explored in the next portion of this treatise.

3. Constantine demonstrated his manmade “supreme” power on numerous occasions. Because he was “an absolute autocrat, he believed that he could kill anyone” (Grant 109). In 326, Constantine had his son, Crispus, put to death upon charges of treason brought to him by his wife, Fausta. Soon after he became displeased with Fausta and had her put to death as well (Mattox 127). In 331, pagan philosopher and theosophist, Sopater, was executed by Constantine on the pretext he “had magically ‘fettered’ the winds and prevented food from arriving at famine stricken Constantinople” (Grant 109) (Constantinople had been established as the new capital the prior year). He was executed because the praetorian prefect and a close confidant of Constantine, Ablabius, was jealous of Sopater. Constantine, then, was using Christianity as a pretense to punish those whom he viewed suspiciously as being against him and the Christian religion. He viewed such actions as being part of “doing God’s will.”

4. Constantine did not initially persecute or forbid the pagan religions (which held true to the principles of the Milan Edict), but his favoring of Christianity opened the door to its elevation and ultimately the Roman Catholic hierarchy of church organization (Schaff, Vol. 3 31.). Constantine had seen persecutions did not work and desired the pagans as well as Christians to feel loyal to himself. He also possessed many personal ties with individual pagans (Grant 177). In time, after the dedication of the city of Constantinople, Constantine began to work more openly against paganism and in one edict—which has been lost—ordered the closing of the pagan temples. Jerome’s account dates this step around the year 331; other accounts suggest there was more than one edict issued between 331 and 333 (Smith 287). Eusebius’ biography of Constantine chronicles three of the suppressions against paganism. The temples belonging to Aphrodite (at Aplphaca and Aegea) and Asclepius (at Aegea) were all closed (Smith 287). Over time, Constantine confiscated the treasures of the pagans, destroyed their temples, banned their practices and killed
many of the influential pagans. Just as Christians had experienced no religious freedom for years on end, the tables turned and the pagans experienced persecution themselves during the reign of Constantine under the auspices of “Christianity.” BUT, on the other hand, in the last decade of his life, Constantine did resurrect some of the ancient pagan religions. In Constantinople he built pagan temples, two of which—the Mother of the Gods and the Dioscuri—perhaps were ornamental structures designed to house the idols as “works of art” but the temple and image of Tyche, the deified personification of the city, was intended to receive an actual cult. (Burckhart 302).

H. His death—he died in 337 after a short, unprolonged illness (of which we will consider in more detail in our next point).

II. RELIGIOUS RAMIFICATIONS OF THE ACTIONS OF CONSTANTINE (AS THEY RELATE TO CHRISTIANITY)

A. Philosophically
1. When Constantine came on the scene, Rome was philosophically and religiously prepared for accepting Christianity (though in a perverted form)
2. The writings of Plato and the development of Neo-Platonism by Plotinus in the 3rd century paved the way for the introduction of a faith whose primary goal was salvation. Neo-Platonism proclaimed One God (not necessarily the true and living God of Heaven) and the highest goal of mankind was the union of the human soul with the divine mind. By the mid-3rd century, the Roman “Sol Invictus” or Cult of the Sun, which worshipped the “sun god” was the imperial religion of Rome. This furthered the development of a theocratic Rome.
3. The Roman principality gradually became a theocratic monarchy with the emperor being the connecting link between “god” and the world, while the state was the earthly reflection of divine law. As such the Emperor was viewed as God’s representative upon earth. It is within this framework in which Constantine rose to prominence and which in turn would have a profound influence on him religiously, on Rome as a whole and which continues to have an influence to this very day.

B. Politically
1. Constantine favored Christianity/the church because he viewed it as the center of unity and culture by which the empire would be preserved (Mattox 127). On the other hand, Constantine, for a time, still used paganism. The ancient historian Zosimus stated that Constantine practiced the traditional cults “not because of reverence but because he needed them. He believed the soothsayers since by experience he knew that they had predicted his victories accurately.” (R. Ross Holloway Constantine and Rome 14).
2. Constantine favored Christianity as well because of what he viewed as the “Usefulness” of Christians. Michael Grant observes that “Constantine was one of those few and fortunate people who could back up their emotional convictions by practical considerations, and vice versa, or could mingle the two sorts of motive so they turned out to be indistinguishable: conviction and expediency became mixed and merged. For the emperor, in addition to seeing the Christian faith as God’s will, also realized that it was useful. He admired their social
cohesion and saw that theirs was the only organized force in the empire, aside from the army. He liked the idea of backing Christianity because he wanted to have its effective organization on his side.” (150,151)

C. Personally

1. The “vision” Constantine had prior to the battle at the Milvian Bridge revealed what he had to do to be victorious. Constantine believed, the divine power, capable of ensuring this outcome, as the God of Christianity. Consequently, he revered God as THE God of power. He was the God who had given Constantine power and had enabled him to defeat Maxentius. He used Christianity—initially and perhaps throughout the entirety of his reign— as a means to accomplish his own ends and certainly viewed the God of heaven as what He could do for him rather than what he could do for God. But as was pointed out in the prior section, his mindset towards Christianity and paganism changed over the course of time as he became more accepting of Christianity and less accepting of paganism. His involvement with the affairs of the church would increase steadily. In his mind, faith in God, had not come to him through the church but had been bestowed personally and directly for his victory over the enemy (Bergenske, St. Constantine the Great http://journal.orthodoxtheologicalschool.org/Bergenske_Constantine.html) or as he was fulfilling his imperial duty. Consequently, in his mind he had been placed—along with his empire—by God under divine protection.

2. It is also possible because of his Deistic background that he believed he possessed a more general and loftier basic understanding of all religions, this mindset in turn led him to try to find basically neutral expressions for religious practices which Christians and pagans alike should observe (Burckhardt 298). Constantine taught all the armies to honor the Lord’s Day—the first day of the week—Sunday is also called in pagan terms “The day of light and of the sun” (Burckhardt 298). Pagans were also encouraged to go forth on Sunday and to pray to “God” as giver of all victory. Constantine taught them to recite “Thee alone we acknowledge as God and King, Thee we invoke as our helper. From Thee we have obtained our victories, through Thee we hope for future favors. Thus we all beseech, and we pray Thee that Thou long preserve to us unharmed and victorious our Emperor Constantine and his God loving sons.” (Burckhardt 298). This would placate the Christians who would be content with this formula and the pagans who might have taken offense at what they considered to be “Non-sense”. Constantine sought to please both Christians and pagans through the avenue of compromise. In 321, he declared Sunday as an empire wide day of rest in honor of the sun (which would placate Christians and pagans alike). This decree favored worship on Sunday by forbidding work on that day. Thus, Christians were able to give themselves to worship to God without unnecessarily affecting their occupations (Mattox 128). It is fairly certain that Constantine never could completely erase sympathies toward paganism, though he favored Christianity throughout his entire reign sometimes outwardly and publicly, but other times more covertly in attempts to appease pagans and though he did make attempts to limit paganism through subtle forms of persecution, that pagan influence lingered (which was
3. In spite of his paganistic and Deistic background, and his attempts to pacify both sides, Constantine was “deeply and fundamentally moved and impressed by the supremacy of the Christian God” (Grant 151). Constantine sincerely believed God had given him the victory and was chosen by God to be His “viceroy upon earth” (Grant 151). In fact, it is recorded that as he was tracing the boundaries to the new capital of Constantinople and someone told him he had gone too far, he remarked “I shall go on until He who is walking ahead of me stops.” (Grant 151). As such he came to regard it as his duty to assure the welfare of the churches in order that they—by their worship—would assure the good estate of the Empire.

4. In regards to his personal beliefs, while it is true he had little knowledge of the Bible, it is also true he worked hard to give his beliefs a “Scriptural backing and spent many hours in theological study, especially in his later years” (Grant 151). He also diligently attended divine worship. Several medals that have been found in which his likeness was engraved on show him in the posture of prayer. He was fond of presenting his religious convictions and knowledge in oral discourse. He came to enjoy composing and delivering sermons. Schaff observes that these sermons were delivered to “his court, in the Latin language, from which they were translated into Greek by interpreters appointed for the purpose. General invitations were issued, and the citizens flocked in great crowds to the palace to hear the imperial preacher, who would in vain try to prevent their loud applause by pointing to heaven as the source of his wisdom. He dwelt mainly on the truth of Christianity, the folly of idolatry, the unity and providence of God, the coming of Christ and the judgment.” (Vol. 3 34)

a. His attitude towards learning is commendable and an attitude we all should possess today (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:18; Matt. 5:6). On the other hand, it was also said of him that he was “at the mercy of any theologian who caught his ear” (Grant 151), in other words, he could be swayed. Many are they today who are at the mercy of preachers who catch their ears and who accept any and everything they are taught. The Scriptures teach us of the need to not take the word of any man but to search and to make sure what we are hearing and being taught are the truth (cf. Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:22; 1 Jn. 4:1).

b. His willingness to worship the God of heaven is an attitude Christians would do well to emulate. Rather than view worship as something “I have to do” we need to view it with joy and gladness and a willing and ready attitude to worship the God of heaven joyfully in spirit and in truth (Psalm 122:1; Jn. 4:24)

5. As was mentioned earlier, Constantine accepted the title of “Pontifex Maximus” which proclaimed him as “head of religion” which was the consequence of the neo-platonic influence on Rome which held the Emperor as being connected with God. This is not insignificant because Rome viewed religion as primarily a state matter and they viewed the state itself as a divine establishment (Bergenske). Consequently, Constantine believed in the state as the bearer of religion because it directly expressed the Divine Will for the world in for the ends of maintaining unity and peace in the empire).
human society. Though Christianity was not recognized “officially” as the state religion during the time of Constantine, he started it down that pathway. This belief later led to subsequent abuses by the Roman Government in matters of faith after Christianity was established as the religion of the state.

6. Constantine, as he came to further study and knowledge of God, was absolutely convicted that he was uniquely in the confidence of God, that he was God’s special and chosen servant and attendant and friend and representative. Acquaintances and even those who yearned to impress him went so far to call Constantine “a new Jesus.” Bishops/Elders (the great “falling away” which the Scriptures prophesied had already begun by this point —see Acts 20:29-30; 2 Thess. 2:3-10; 1 Tim. 4:1-3] often felt they were like the apostles’ at Jesus feet (Grant 151). Constantine viewed himself as one possessing comparable religious authority such as that delegated to the apostles and further, because the Emperor viewed himself as God’s “vicerey” on earth, it is not unreasonable to suggest he viewed himself as one possessing the authority of God himself. IN fact, Constantine himself believed that he knew he enjoyed spiritual authority and that it was a divine gift. He knew (or so he thought) that in all “categories his authority surpassed that of any single bishop, or indeed of them all combined.” Constantine viewed the bishops as being “successors to the apostles, and by virtue had received the same Holy Spirit as had the apostles from Christ” and consequently viewed himself as “a second Christ.” (Stephenson 257).

a. Because he retained the title of “pontifex maximus” which designated him as chief priest who presided over the leaders of all recognized Roman cults, because he recognized the validity of Christianity, he certainly believed his title applied him to having absolute rule over Christianity as well and presided over the leaders of the churches (the bishops). According to Roman rule, the emperor was in a real sense a “universal bishop” (Stephenson 258), even though Constantine was NOT even a member of the church (he wasn’t even a Christian) (cf. Acts 2:38,41,47; Col. 1:13). Historians report that at some point Constantine told the bishops, in a demonstration of his dominance over them, that his (Constantine’s) “will must be considered binding” (Grant 159). He slowly, but steadily, took a hand in all internal affairs of the church beginning with the Donatist controversy. In Carthage, a difference arose in regards to the ordination of Caecilian by one accused of being a traitor. Donatus created a faction to oppose Caecilian. When news reached Constantine, he ordered that Caecilian, along with ten bishops who favored his cause, and ten who opposed him so that the matter could be tried by a synod under Constantine’s authority and supervision. While the investigations into the matter resulted in a ruling for Caecilian, the Donatists continued to appeal to Constantine for further investigations and rulings. However, after being convinced that they (the Donatists) were wrong and pushed to the limits of his patience sent forces to destroy the schismatics. This approach to “church issues” would be continued by Emperors who followed Constantine. Another
b. Because he viewed himself as the “universal bishop” as pontifex maximus (from this we see how Constantine sowed the seeds for the Roman Catholic Church) he considered the bishops of the churches as his subordinates.

c. Because he viewed himself as possessing “absolute power” he thought he could do anything and everything remembering as well that he was still a military man as well and at times he used military pressure in directing personally the affairs of the church. Constantine took counsel from his subordinates but made the decisions himself and gave orders none were permitted to disobey. Paul Stephenson observes that “Millitary discipline was predicated on recognition of the commander’s absolute authority, which was reinforced by codified acts of violence. Ultimately, acts of insubordination, if sufficiently egregious, were punishable by death. A similar code of conduct did not apply in Constantine’s dealings with bishops, although ON MANY OCCASIONS HE ASSUMED THAT IT DID (emphasis mine—RLA). When persuasion and flattery failed to achieve the emperor’s desired end, he might try again. When frequent attempts failed, he would resort to threats and to acts of violence. This was the case with groups of schismatics (273). Constantine’s actions sowed the seeds for future of use of violence in the name of “God” and “Christianity.”

d. Further, it is recorded that Constantine’s influence as “universal bishop” “appeared first of all in episcopal elections, in which in all the important cases, the court could exert paramount influence, for the bishops of the province in question who foregathered to choose a new shepherd for the orphaned community TOOK THE EMPEROR’S WISHES INTO CONSIDERATION, BECAUSE THEY HOPED TO RISE HIGHER BY IMPERIAL FAVOR” (Burckhardt 311) (Emphasis mine—RLA)

e. The consequence of Constantine’s actions was the eventual enslavement of the church to the state. Constantine began the process of “politicizing” religion and in particular, Christianity.

D. Outwardly

1. Proclamations and demonstrations favoring Christianity

   a. After issuing the edict of toleration in 313, Constantine took to himself an “ecclesiastical” adviser by the name of Hosius of Cordova (Spain) who not only taught Constantine but helped him shape his policies.

   b. During his reign gifts of money were given to individual churches for charitable use.

   c. In 321, he issued an edict that allowed churches to receive legacies, this conceded them the legal status of being corporations.

   d. He legislated Sunday as the Christian “first day” to serve as a holiday from work and as a day of worship which enabled Christians to worship freely and unobtrusively. In making this legislation, Constantine did state that farmers could work on Sunday if their crops required it.

   e. He encouraged his subjects to embrace Christianity, to become
Christians, though he still left them to their own free conviction.

f. He first introduced the practice of subscribing to the articles of a written creed and of the infliction of civil punishments for non-conformity (Schaff, Vol. 3:32).

g. He encouraged and legislated the paying of preachers. Eusebius preserved a letter from Constantine to the bishop of Carthage in which Constantine authorized three thousand “folles” to be paid Caecilian, “the bishop” to be distributed to the preachers (Mattox 126). This practice extended to the bishops as well, with the pay for both groups coming from state funds.

h. He also issued decrees excusing ministers from all public offices so they could give their time to the work of the church freely and without any interruption whatsoever.

i. He issued decrees that church lands were not subject to taxation. He also commanded that officials in each province to supply labor and materials for the building of church. He also arranged gifts of food to be supplied to the members.

j. He wrote letters that widows and orphans (probably those whose husbands and fathers were killed in persecutions) be care for from the public treasury (a demonstration of Constantine’s kind and benevolent spirit)

k. He, by the influence of Christianity, attempted to improve personal morality throughout the Empire. What made Christianity different from the pagan religions was the standard of morality by which was lived out (that code of morality—holiness and righteousness—given through the NT of Christ and in the life of Christ Himself—see 1 Pet. 2:21; Heb. 9:15; Rom. 12:2 and 8:29), and, in particular: Morality in the realm of sexuality (of which the 1st century church at Corinth had to deal with as seen in 1 Corinthians 5). In 326, Constantine issued decree after decree regarding chastity and various other subjects pertaining to morality. Historians have debated whether these laws were related to the downfalls of his son Crispus and his wife Fausta in that year. Historians have wondered if Crispus was guilty of breaching his father’s codes of conduct. Adultery was one of the offences which resulted in Crispus’ friend, Ceionius Rufus Albrius, to be exiled. When Fausta came under suspicion for falsely incriminating Crispus, her enemies said she had been adulterous (Grant 185). While Constantine did continue to allow paganism to practice, one reason he tore down many temples such as those at Heliopolis and Aphaca was due to sexual immorality which was an affront to Christians (Grant 185). While Constantine acted rashly and often harshly towards those accused of breaking his laws relating to morality (even those who perhaps were not guilty), he—as a politician—did care for moral living than most modern-day politicians. Constantine’s concern for morality is a concern that needs to be emulated today.

2. Ornate churches/ornate worship

a. Constantine also turned religion into an “outward” show or spectacle through his building programs. Grant observes that “it was customary for emperors who wanted to make an impression to undertake huge and spectacular building programs. Constantine
did such on a vast scale and emphasized how proud he was of this activity” (187). He exhorted bishops in every city to build churches and he furnished them with money to accomplish the task (Mattox 131). In fact, he specified to the bishops of Jerusalem of the elaborate nature of the buildings they were to construct. In a letter, quoted by Mattox, Constantine wrote: “My most intense desire, is to erect beautiful edifices upon that consecrated spot… Take every care and precaution that these edifices may not only be magnificent, but that they may be INCOMPARABLY SUPERIOR TO ALL THE MOST BEAUTIFUL STRUCTURES IN THE WORLD” (emphasis mine—RLA) (131)

b. The medieval church held Constantine in high regard especially since he was responsible for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher being built on the alleged site of Jesus’ tomb in Jerusalem. This became the holiest pilgrimage site in Christendom (Webster 12).

c. When Constantine built his new capital on the site of ancient Byzantium, called “New Rome”, but which was renamed “Constantinople”, it was furnished with ornate Christian shrines with no pagan temples to be found whatsoever (Walker 130)

d. As church buildings became more ornate, worship became more formal and ostentatious. Preachers began to wear special garments. Little by little, due to the influence of Constantine, Christianity was turned into an “outward spectacle.” Perhaps Constantine thought the more elaborate the buildings, the more “spiritual” it would appear and that the more formal the worship, the more “spiritual” it would be and that with special clothing to distinguish preachers of the word that they would be viewed as being more “spiritual” than others. While perhaps his intentions were good, Constantine demonstrated a gross misunderstanding of how God truly views spirituality (cf. 1 Samuel 16:7; Matt. 15:8)

E. Digressively

1. It is interesting that though Constantine had not been baptized and held no church office he still took an active role in the affairs of the church (as was pointed out earlier), it is to the former point (non-baptized) we now direct attention.

2. As he approached death, after falling ill in 337, he decided to finally be baptized. After the laying on of hands and the formal administration of baptism by Eusebius of Nicomedia. After which he promised to live worthily as a disciple of Jesus in which he swore to never again wear the imperial mantle of woven silk which was richly ornamented with gold. He died a few days later on May 22, 337.

3. Why did he wait to be baptized? Schaff notes that “he wished to secure all the benefit of baptism as a complete expiation of past sins, WITH AS LITTLE RISK AS POSSIBLE (emphasis mine-RLA) and thus to make the best of both worlds.” (Vol. 3:35). This certainly contradicts what the NT teaches regarding the urgency of baptism (cf. Acts 2:37-41; 22:16) and salvation (2 Cor. 6:2)743

4. His actions (or inaction as it relates to becoming a Christian) spurred on the spirit of compromise—not just on his part, but in the church as well. Schaff further explains: “He presumed to preach the gospel, he called himself the bishop of bishops, he convened the first general
council, and made Christianity the religion of the empire, LONG BEFORE HIS BAPTISM! Strange as this inconsistency appears to us, what shall we think of the court bishops who from false prudence, RELAXED IN HIS FAVOR THE OTHERWISE STRICT DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH, and admitted him, at least tacitly, to the enjoyment of nearly all the privileges of believers, before he had taken upon himself even a single obligation…” (Vol. 3, 36). Yes, Constantine’s end of life continued the digression of the church from the truth. It was his INFLUENCE as the Emperor of Rome which led to such occurrence. Instead of fearing God, these “bishops” feared Constantine or man (Matt. 10:28) and instead of obeying God, they obeyed Constantine (Acts 5:29).

III. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FROM THE LIFE AND ACTIONS OF CONSTANTINE (this list is not exhaustible)

A. Constantine, the providence of God, the kingdoms of men, and the victory of faith

1. What God’s people realize: persecution will come (cf. Matt. 5:10-12; 10:22—hated of men; 2 Tim. 3:12)

2. What God’s people recognize (and even Constantine recognized this) but what foolish men do not: God is in control
   a. God ruleth in the kingdom of men—this included Rome (cf. Dan. 4:17,25)
   b. God gives men kingdoms, power, strength, and glory—this included Rome (cf. Dan. 2:38)
   c. God gives kingdoms to whomsoever He will (cf. Dan. 4:25,27)
   d. God gives earthly kingdoms success—not military/political leaders—it ultimately comes from God—this is a fact even Constantine recognized after his victory at the Tiber which gave him control over the Western portion of Rome.
   e. God’s eternal kingdom—the church—cannot be destroyed by man (cf. Dan. 2:44—never destroyed; Heb. 12:28—Christ’s kingdom is immovable/undestructible)—Constantine recognized the futility of persecution, he recognized the folly of his predecessors trying to stamp out Christianity. He knew that Christianity could not be stamped out.
   f. The kingdoms of men come and go (and Rome has come and gone) but the kingdom of God, of Christ still stands. God’s people still remain (cf. Dan. 2:45—consume…these kingdoms…stand forever)

3. What God’s people do:
   a. Trust in God
      1) His providential workings (cf. Rom. 8:28)
      2) His promises (2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 2:10)
      3) His presence (Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20)
      4) His power (Rom. 8:31)
   b. Walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7)
   c. Endure by faith (Heb. 11:27—by faith…endured., seeing Him who is invisible).
   d. Triumph by faith (1 Jn. 5:4). Constantine’s edict was a triumph of faith for Christians. Perhaps it was God’s providential working that led to Constantine’s ascension to the throne (and remember
providence is “perhaps” per Philemon 15 yet God’s providential working in this world is real and we can know that He has the whole world in His hands) and in issuing his edict of toleration. Certainly, it was God who permitted Constantine to rule. Ultimately, faithfulness to God brings triumphs to God’s people eternally.

B. Constantine and the two-edged sword of influence
1. The power of positive (Christ like) influence
   a. Matt. 5:13-16
   b. “The results of persecuting the Christians, the ultimate effects of which he had witnessed, must have left no manner of doubt as to the evil character of brute force directed against religion” (A. Hauck The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge: Vol. 3 251). Consequently, he had to have witnessed the Christ like conduct, Christians manifested in their willingness to endure horrific suffering. This no doubt had to have left an indelible impression upon him.
   c. Our influence as Christians can bring about good as those who endured Roman persecution attest to, their willingness to suffer ultimately led to the persecution brought to bear against them being brought to an end.

2. The power of negative influence
   a. Constantine had a negative influence in many regards on religion
   b. Constantine’s influence was wielded as emperor negatively to get the church to see things his way and to do things his way. One way he influenced the bishops was by lavishing them with gifts from time to time and praising them highly. His influence led the church to accepting him and allowing him unauthorized responsibilities even though he himself was not a Christian. Another way was by use of threats.
   c. 1 Cor. 5:6 “…know ye not that a little leaven leaventh the whole lump?”
   d. Sinful/negative influence has brought great harm to the church—Constantine’s negative influence on the church and its affairs led to further digression from the truth. We would be wise to heed the warnings of history and learn the consequences negative influence can have on the church of our Lord and Savior.

C. Constantine and the miraculous (dreams/visions) and how God communicates with man
1. Constantine claimed that Christ had revealed Himself to him in a vision prior to the final battle against Maxentius at the Mulvian Bridge. Many are they today who claim that God/Christ speaks to them directly.
2. Yes, God still speaks today and He does so through Christ (Heb. 1:1,2) but only through His written word—the “perfect which has come” (1 Cor. 13:8-ff).
3. Constantine, though sincere in his convictions no doubt (as those who claim such today as well) did not see Christ in a “vision.”
4. If we want Christ to speak to us we must open up the New Testament and hear and accept and submit to His authority (cf. Col. 3:17)

D. Constantine and the 1st day of the week.
1. Some historians have speculated that Constantine’s decree regarding the observance of worship to God on Sunday was the earliest authority for Christian worship on Sunday. This is not true.

2. The 1st day of the week is the Lord’s day and it is God who chose this day as the day of worship to Him and His people were observing this from the very beginning of Christianity (Acts 2:1—the day of Pentecost was on the first day of the week; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2)

E. Constantine and the preaching of the word of God

1. Constantine, though a pagan, had a desire to preach the word of God and he did what he could to preach.

2. Christians today need and must have a desire to preach the word of God (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2; Rom. 1:16; Mk. 16:15,16; Acts 20:27)
   a. Remember the importance of preaching/teaching
   b. Teach our young men the importance of preaching, cultivate within them the desire to preach
   c. Teach all Christians that everyone can do their part in some form or fashion in teaching/preaching God’s word (personal evangelism).

3. Constantine’s influence regarding preaching shows us we don’t have to know everything in order to preach/teach, but we must have a desire to learn so that we can be equipped to teach, as Constantine had that desire (cf. Matt. 5:6; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18).

4. Constantine also has a sadder and even more sobering application for us today: it is a sad day for the Lord’s church when non-Christians (Denominationalists) demonstrate greater enthusiasm/zeal for preaching their own doctrines (in the guise of preaching God’s word) than we as Christians do in proclaiming the truth of God’s word.

F. Constantine and the support of preachers and elders

1. Constantine correctly recognized that preachers and even elders had the right to live of the gospel. Though he used the state’s funds for their support, His recognition that the laborer in the gospel is worthy of financial support is backed by Scriptural authority.
   a. The principle (Deut. 25:4 “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.”)
   b. The precept (or the antitype) (1 Cor. 9:9-11; 1 Tim. 5:18—the labourer is worthy of his reward)
   c. The pertinent application: this principle applies not just to preachers and elders but also to the support of men attending schools of preaching and missionaries (How can they GO without financial support? How can they do the work that is necessary without support? May one choose to support themselves as a “tentmaker” like Paul? Absolutely. BUT, the authority is present in the Scriptures for a man of the gospel to live of the gospel.

2. Sadly, many congregations and even individual Christians view the “paying” of a preacher (and/or elders) and the support of preacher students and missionaries with horror! It is a sad day in spiritual Zion when men cannot raise support to go about the preaching of the gospel, whether it is in men desiring to attend preacher training schools or men seeking to go overseas to preach the good news of salvation.

3. Brethren would do well to remember and apply the Scriptural principles that even a pagan Emperor himself recognized.

G. Constantine and the problem of making a spectacle of religion (i.e.
Christianity
1. Constantine’s building program which involved elaborate and extravagant church buildings placed emphasis on the outward.
2. Constantine viewed Christianity as being an “extravagant” religion, a spectacle, perhaps his mindset was that God deserved the best. Yes, God deserves our best (cf. Matt. 6:33), but is God really pleased with the fanciest, most elaborate of buildings? The wearing of ornate, fancy apparel?
3. Constantine did not (as well as many do not realize today) that Christianity is an “Inside Out religion” It begins with the heart and then manifests itself outwardly, not in “elaborate buildings”, not in “fanciful attire” but in our…
   a. Speech (Col. 4:6)
   b. Lives (Rom. 12:2; 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:15,16)
   c. Worship (Jn. 4:24)
   d. Appearance (modest) (1 Tim. 2:9)
4. If we get the heart right, everything else will follow (cf. Prov. 23:7; Rom. 6:16,17)
5. God is glorified through and in the church—which is the people—not the building (Eph. 3:21; Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:41,47)

H. Constantine and the problem of using religion for selfish purposes/ulterior motives
1. “Constantine’s favoritism to the church seems to be more a matter of expediency than of conviction. The church was to be used as a center of unity and culture to preserve the empire.” (Mattox 127)
2. Constantine’s desire to retain the pagan titled of Pontifex Maximus was most likely borne out of selfish desire to have control of the affairs of the church.
3. Constantine’s mindset of using religion for selfish purposes is indeed manifested today
   a. Some obey the gospel out of a desire to please others or to get others off their backs rather than from the heart (cf. Rom. 6:16,17)
   b. Some preach Christ of envy and strife, some of contention, not sincerely in attempts to harm the apostle Paul as he discussed as he considered his situation in Philippians 1:15,16, some indeed preach Christ today out of impure, selfish motives
   c. Some use the guise of Christianity to seek their own rather than the things which are Jesus Christ’s (Phil. 2:21)
4. Constantine’s heart—like all of ours—is known by God (cf. Matt. 15:8—the consequence of a selfish/self-centered manifestation of piety to God)

I. Constantine and the problem of the “spirit of compromise”
1. The “spirit” or willingness to compromise doctrinally is what led the early church into apostasy and what leads congregations of the Lord’s body into apostasy today.
2. The “spirit” or willingness to compromise doctrinally is the result of being influenced by the wrong sources/individuals. The early church was already falling into digression prior to Constantine coming on the scene. His influence hastened that digression.
   a. He was accepted (unscripturally) of having final say in church matters.
b. He was accepted (unscripturally) of having total authority over the Scriptures (cf. Col. 3:17)
c. He was accepted (unscripturally) into the fellowship of the church even though he himself had not become a Christian in obedience to the gospel (cf. Rom. 6:3ff; 2 Thess. 1:7-9)
d. He was accepted (perhaps) because those church leaders were not willing to stand against him because of who he was. They didn’t want to “rock the boat” as it were.

3. The “spirit” or willingness to compromise doctrinally is why denominationalism is prevalent and liberalism abounds in the church today. Reasons are as follows….
   a. A fear of or refusal to expose error (Eph. 5:11-reprove the unfruitful works of darkness; Jude 3)
   b. Ignorance of the Scriptures (i.e. the plan of salvation, the identity, uniqueness, oneness and organization of the Lord’s church, the authority of the Bible, worship, etc…) (Hosea 4:6)
   c. Fear of men rather than fear of God (Matt. 10:28; Acts 5:29)
   d. Respect of persons (Acts 10:34)
   e. Acceptance of unscriptural practices (i.e. false concepts of baptism, instruments of music in worship, women in leadership roles, etc…)
   f. A willingness to fellowship any and everyone (cf. Eph. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14-18) (i.e. extend fellowship to denominations, erring brethren, etc…)
   g. A willingness to accept just about anyone as a Christian. A willingness to redefine who a Christian is and even redefining how one becomes a Christian.
   h. A refusal to practice discipline—to mark and withdraw from the disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6) and those who cause divisions (Rom. 16:17)
   i. A refusal to honor God’s laws of inclusion and exclusion (we can only fellowship those whom God fellowships—1 Jn. 1:1ff; Eph. 5:11—we cannot exclude those whom God includes but we cannot include those whom God excludes; 2 John 9-11).

4. The “spirit” or willingness to compromise as seen with the church and its relationship to Constantine and its manifestation and fruits today is summed up thusly: “I’m ok, you’re ok, we’re all ok”.

Conclusion:
A. The first half of the 4th century was indeed a turning point in the history of the church. It was a time that brought freedom, acceptance and even favoritism by the state to the previously persecuted and outwardly oppressed group known as Christians. This was the age of Emperor Constantine (or Constantine the Great).
B. Constantine’s life is a case study in complexity. Historians are divided as to whether he was truly “great” or not.
   1. Michael Grant, in his work, Constantine the Great, argues that Constantine was “a superlative military commander and a first-rate organizer” but also “an utterly ruthless man, whose ruthlessness extended to the execution of his nearest kin, and who believed that he had God behind him in everything that he did” (226,227). Grant further adds that it is “a mocking travesty of justice to call such a murderer
Constantine the Great” (226). He does add the caveat that perhaps it is not such a travesty depending on what is meant by greatness.

2. John Holland Smith, in his own work with the same title as Grant’s, argues that Constantine was great in that the world his sons inherited was not that in which he had risen to power, but one in which he constructed out of the materials assembled from the ruins of the anarchy of his predecessors (326) as a result of consolidating power both politically and religiously, melding both institutions into essentially one.

3. Historians also refer to Constantine as the “first Christian emperor.” He was the first to favor Christianity, yes, but was he a “Christian” in the true, biblical sense? NO.

C. Historians have also heaped unwarranted praise on Constantine. David Potter, in his work titled Constantine the Emperor, avers that “Constantine changed the world. For many millions of people across this planet, an institution that he introduced and promoted has become a central part of their lives; they use or hear words that he approved. In the twenty-first century, Constantine is best known as the Emperor who converted to Christianity and in so doing made it possible for Christianity to become a world religion. Without Constantine, Christianity probably would not occupy the place that it does today.” (1). This statement is certainly both exaggerative and erroneous. Christianity was going to succeed, did succeed and is succeeding with or without Constantine.

1. Lk. 8:11—the seed is the word of God
2. Col. 1:23—the Gospel in the 1st century preached to all the world and is continued to be preached today.
3. Christianity—that which is pure and unadulterated and free from the contaminations of manmade doctrines—changed the world in the 1st century and continues to do so today when its message (Rom. 1:16; Mk. 4:14; 16:15; 2 Tim. 4:2) is preached faithfully (Acts 20:27).
4. For historians such as Potter to claim Christianity could not have survived or thrive without Constantine is utter nonsense. BUT, as Schaff observes “in judging this remarkable man and his reign, we must by all means keep to the great historical principle, that all representative characters act, consciously or subconsciously, as the free and responsible organs of the spirit of their age, which molds them first before they can mold it in turn, and that the spirit of the age itself, whether good or bad, or mixed, is but an instrument in the hands of divine Providence, which rules and overrules all the actions and motives of men” (Vol. 3 13).

D. Regardless of whether Constantine deserved(s) to be called great or not, and in spite of the unwarranted praise that has been heaped on him, it is true that his influence on religion was great (in the sense of its profound and widespread impact) both good and bad.

1. Good, in the sense, in that he recognized the power of positive Christian influence, that he recognized no mere man or nation could stamp out Christianity, and that he recognized the good that Christianity could accomplish. All of which led to his edict of toleration. It was good as well in the sense in that he at least attempted (outwardly) to promote Christian values.
2. Bad, in that he used religion for his own selfish purposes which
ultimately resulted in Christianity becoming further perverted in that it ultimately became a “state run religion” which resulted in further digression from the truth. His influence on religion further made it an outward show with the elaborate church buildings and monuments built in the Empire during his reign rather than that which comes from the heart (cf. Matt. 22:37; Rom. 6:17). Ironically enough, at the close of the council of Nicea on July 25, 325 AD, Constantine remarked that his desire was for the Church to live in harmony and peace (Webster 15) and that he disdained controversy all the while not recognizing that he himself was causing further controversy and discord by his own decrees and actions. Constantine, while proclaiming himself a champion of unity, was, in reality, sowing discord which is still being seen today.

E. As this lesson has striven to show, there is much we can learn from that man known as “Constantine the Great.” Will we learn the valuable lessons his life offers us—both good and bad—or will we ignore them to our own spiritual detriment? Remember, history has been recorded—written down and preserved—for our learning. We cannot afford to be ignorant of history or pretend that it never happened.

1. “To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child.” Marcus Tullius Cicero (www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/13755.Marcus-Tullius-Cicero)
2. “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” George Santayana. (www.en.qikiquote.org/wiki/George_Santayana)
3. Let us then be wise to history, learn from it by being diligent students of it and resolve to not follow or make the same mistakes that men such as Constantine made.

**References:**


Edward Gibbon, History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (e-Sword, 2006)


Charles Matson Odahl, Constantine and the Christian Empire (London: Routledge, 2010).


John Holland Smith, Constantine the Great (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971)


INTRODUCTION:

A. There are a limited number of religions approved of God.
   1. Patriarchal instructions were given to families from God dating from Garden to Calvary (Genesis 3; 12:1-3; Acts 10:1-4).
   2. Judaism was written by the finger of God and given to the Jews from Mount Sinai to Calvary (Exodus 20; Colossians 2:14-15).
   4. No other religions are approved of God (Matthew 15:13; Act 4:12; Galatians 1:6-9; Matthew 7:21-29).

B. The religion approved by God since Calvary is New Testament Christianity.
   1. Christianity is voluntary, not compulsory (Romans 6:16-18).
   2. A study of the occurrences of the words, “heart” and “hearts” in the book of Acts will demonstrate the activity and necessity of the human heart in Christianity.
   3. God desires men and women who willingly submit their will to His will (John 4:23-24).
   4. Any religion that compels, forces, extorts and coerces men and women to follow them is anti-God and anti-Christ.

C. The Crusades were military events motivated by politics and religions.

D. In order to understand the Crusades, one needs to understand the religious, political and military powers involved in the Crusades.
   1. One also needs to comprehend the differences between the church of Christ and the Catholic Church.
   2. One must also understand the differences among New Testament Christianity, Catholicism and Islam.
   3. One should not confuse New Testament Christianity with Roman Catholicism.

DISCUSSION:

I. We know certain facts about the establishments the Church of Christ and Roman Catholicism.
   A. The Church of Christ was promised, prophesied and approved of God.
      1. The Church of Christ had a beginning as promised (Matthew 16:13-18; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:6-8; 2:1-47)
         b. The church was born of prophecy (Isaiah 2:2-3; Daniel 2:1-4; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 16:13-18).
         c. The church officially began in AD 33 on Pentecost (Acts 2).
2. The church’s head and authority is Christ (Colossians 1:18).
3. The church’s doctrine is the inspired New Testament (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Jude 3; Romans 1:16).
4. The church’s organization is comprised of elders (pastors), deacons, evangelists and teachers (Philippians 1:1; Ephesians 4:11).
5. The church’s mission is to evangelize by preaching and persuasion (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).

B. The Roman Catholic Church was born of men with political and religious motives.
1. The Catholic Church had a beginning.
   a. The Catholic Church began in Rome, Italy.
   b. The Catholic Church was born of an apostasy (1 Timothy 4:1-5).
   c. The Catholic Church officially began in AD 605.
2. The Catholic Church’s head and authority was the first pope was Boniface.
3. The Catholic Church’s doctrine determine by councils, synods and decrees.
4. The Catholic Church’s organization is comprised of the pope, bishops, cardinals, etc.
5. The Catholic Church’s mission is to “continue the works of Jesus Christ” and to make his name “known and loved” (CNA, 2010).

II. We know that Jesus’ church or kingdom is not of this world.
A. In John 18:36, Jesus told Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”
   1. Jesus’ statement makes it clear that His church is not motivated by politics or military expeditions.
      a. His kingdom is spiritual.
      b. Hence, its mission is spiritual.
   2. Yet, accusations were made numerous times against the Lord’s servants and His church.
      a. Paul was accused of being a “ring leader of the sect of the Nazarenes” (Acts 24:5).
      b. The church was mocked as a “sect…everywhere it is spoken against” (Acts 29:22).
      c. The church was described as “these that have burned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6).
   3. However, the church or kingdom is militant, but it is not engaged in politics or interested in taking over world governments.
B. The apostle Paul wrote about the spiritual warfare of the church in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.
   1. The Christians’ weapons are not carnal weapons (John 18:10-11).
   2. The warfare is a spiritual warfare as noted by the Christian armor (Ephesians 6:10-18).
   3. The military exercise is a battle for the minds of men and women.
C. Therefore, the Crusades would not be an approved as a military, political or religious agenda of the Lord’s kingdom.
   1. Jesus distinguished between the spiritual and secular, or between God and Caesar (Matthew 22:21).
   2. There is no scriptural evidence that would support true New Testament Christianity to be involved in the Crusades.
D. The Christian’s politics are restricted to his rights as a national citizen, but not on behalf of the Lord’s Kingdom (Romans 13:1-7).
1. The Christian can use the power of the vote.
2. The Christian can use his power of influence.
3. The Christian can use his power of speech to persuade.

III. We know some facts about the Crusades.
A. What is meant by the term “Crusades?”
1. The term “Crusades” refers to:
   a. “Any of the military expeditions undertaken by the Christians of Europe in the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries for the recovery of the Holy Land from the Muslims” (www.dictionary.com).
   b. “Any war carried on under papal sanction” (www.dictionary.com).
2. One author provides an historical definition (Abels 2009).
   a. RW-Note: The terms Christian and Church in the following quotation should be understood as Roman Catholicism and the Catholic Church.
   b. “The crusades were a series of holy wars called by popes with the promise of indulgences for those who fought in them and directed against external and internal enemies of Christendom for the recovery of Christian property or in defense of the Church or Christian people. Crusades were characterized by the taking of vows and the granting of indulgences to those who participated. Like going on pilgrimage, to which they were often likened, crusading was an act of Christian love and piety that compensated for and paid the penalties earned by sin. It marked a break in earlier Christian medieval conceptions of warfare in that crusades were penitential warfare. Crusades combined the ideas of: a) Holy War and b) and Pilgrimage to produce the concept of “indulgence” (remission of penance and/or sin granted by papacy for participation in sacred activity).”
3. These definitions demonstrate some of the difficulties and differences in defining and understanding the Crusades.

B. Where were the Crusades fought? (Abels 2009).
1. “This is a matter of dispute among historians. ‘Traditionalists’ would limit true crusades to expeditions aimed at recovering or protecting Jerusalem.”
2. “‘Pluralists’ (and I count myself as one - Abels) regard any expedition preached as a crusade in which the participants took crusading vows and received crusading privileges should be regarded as crusades. If so, crusades were fought not only in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, but in Spain, the Baltic (Latvia and Prussia), Italy, Sicily, and southern France.”

C. When were the Crusades? (Abels 2009).
1. “The first crusade was launched by Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont in 1095. There is controversy over the last crusade.
2. “‘Traditionalists’ would end the crusades in 1291 with the fall of the last crusader castle of the Latin Kingdom, the city of Acre (on the northern coast of present-day Israel). ‘Pluralists’ disagree, but one good candidate would be the Spanish Armada of 1588.”

D. What is the difference between a crusade and “Augustinian” just war? (Abels 2009).
1. Augustine (c. AD 400) established a standard for the “Christian just war” as: “rightful intention on the part of the participants, which should always be expressed through love of God and neighbour; a just cause; and legitimate proclamation by a qualified authority.” (Quoted from J. Riley-Smith, The Crusades, Yale University, 1987.)

2. “The doctrine of holy war/crusade added two further assumptions: 1) Violence and its consequences—death and injury—are morally neutral rather than intrinsically evil, and whether violence is good or bad is a matter of intention. (The analogy is to a surgeon, who cuts into the body, thus injuring it, in order to make it better/healthier.) 2) Christ is concerned with the political order of man, and intends for his agents on earth, kings, popes, bishops, to establish on earth a Christian Republic that was a “single, universal, transcendental state’ ruled by Christ through the lay and clerical magistrates he endowed with authority.”

3. From these initial definitions and applications emerged another set of directives (Abels 2009):
   a. “It follows from this that the defense of the Christian Republic against God’s enemies, whether foreign infidel (e.g. Turks) or domestic heretics and Jews was a moral imperative for those qualified to fight.”
   b. “A Crusade was a holy war fought against external or internal enemies for the recovery of Christian property or defense of the Church or the Christian people.”
   c. “It could be wages against Turks in Palestine, Muslims in Spain, pagan Slavs in the Baltic, or heretics in southern France, all of whom were enemies or rebels against God.”

E. What was the outcome of the Crusades?
   1. The Crusades may have begun as an effort to reclaim territory (Jerusalem).
   2. The Crusades may have begun as a war against the aggression of Muslims.
   3. The Crusades, as with all wars, had its share of abuses and rogue acts.
   4. The Crusades would morph into the Inquisitions against all religions and heretics as defined by Roman Catholicism.
   5. But regardless of intent, motive, or rationale, the Crusades were not authorized by God or events of New Testament Christianity.
   6. While God may use all men, even wicked men, as He reigns in the kingdoms of men, His church does not engage in physical, political, religious warfare outside of spiritual warfare.

IV. We note the following timeline of the Crusades (Crusades Timeline).
   A. This list may be found at www.datesandevents.org/events-timelines/22-the-crusades-timeline.htm (“Crusades Timeline”).
   1. First Crusade (1095-1099)
   2. Second Crusade (1147-1148)
   3. Third Crusade (1189-1192)
   4. Fourth Crusade (1203-1204)
   5. Fifth Crusade (1218-1221)
   6. Sixth Crusade (1228-1229)
   7. Seventh Crusade (1248-1254)
   8. Eighth Crusade (1270)
9. Ninth Crusade (1271-1272)

B. Reference books that provide details of the events above may be found at:

V. Nine Factors Caused the Crusades and Five Effects Resulted from the Crusades.
A. One author listed 9 factors that caused the first Crusade (Knighton, 2016).
Please note that the author cites as his source The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades, chapter 2—Origins by Marcus Bull (Riley-Smith, 1995).

1. The common use of physical force in medieval Europe laid the foundation for a violent Crusade.
   a. “Lords used violence to exert their influence over their subjects and to pursue feuds with each other for political and financial gains.”
   b. “Issues of international politics were frequently resolved on the battlefield.”
   c. “In such a context, men were already primed for violence. Its use was excusable in any cause they deemed right.”
2. There was a struggle taking place for dominance in the lands surrounding the Mediterranean—based on religions, politics and militaries.
   a. ‘From its birth in the 7th century, Islam had spread out of the Middle East, with Muslim rulers taking over North Africa and large chunks of southern Europe.
   b. In the 11th century, [Catholicism] made a comeback as [it] took over Muslim lands in Spain and Italy.
3. Prejudices allow poor perspectives and easily ignite passions and violence.
4. European rulers had difficulty holding their territories and the Crusades provided opportunities for alliances and strengthening of their borders.
5. “Medieval society was divided into three classes – those who fought, those who prayed and those who worked.”
   a. “[The warriors’] sense of identity and their position in society were tied into martial prowess, and into a shared culture of physical toughness and military honor.”
   b. “The crusade gave them an opportunity to do this without disobeying their superiors, incurring the wrath of the church, or putting their own lands at risk.”
6. “The church [Catholicism-RW] had just gone through a period of transformation known as the Gregorian Reform after one of its leaders, Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085).”
   a. “These reforms gave the church renewed spiritual vigor and an emphasis on purity that discouraged tolerance of irreligious behavior, whether that was clerics breaking the rules – a common target of the reformers – or heathens living at the edge of Christendom [Catholicism-RW].
   b. “As well as helping to motivate the crusade, these reforms gave
Pope Urban II a more effective church administration with which to mobilize his crusade.”

7. Pope Urban II promised “salvation” to the crusaders.
   a. RW—Salvation is not a blessing conferred by any man to another man.
   b. RW—Salvation comes through Jesus and no other (Act 4:12).

8. There was great enthusiasm among the religious warriors to save religious cities, such as Jerusalem.

9. “Europe was run on primogeniture, the rule whereby the eldest son inherited all his father’s lands, titles, and power.”
   a. “This created stability and helped to forge the great power blocks of the continent”.
   b. “But it also created a problem – thousands of younger sons of aristocrats without inheritance or purpose, trained only to fight.”

B. The following effects from the Crusades were provided by a couple of authors (Snell, Melissa 2017. Riley-Smith, Jonathan 1995).
1. The Crusades resulted in expanded territories of many European countries
2. The Crusades increased trade among nations.
3. The Crusades spread knowledge and began era of persecution and war against non-Christians including the Inquisition.

CONCLUSION:
1. The Crusades were real military, political and religious events between Roman Catholics and Muslims.
2. While one may study these Crusades and be aware of the different perspectives of Catholics and Muslims, one must acknowledge from study of the Bible that these events did not involve true New Testament Christianity.
3. The Lord has provided an environment in which Christians are free to worship and serve the Lord regardless of civil governments and other religious and political interference.
4. May we sheath physical swords and wield the spiritual sword, the Bible, and throw away the scabbard.

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A Call to Return

Charles Blair

Introduction:
I. The Words in our title brings to mind great thoughts and challenges which face us and each generation of Christians:
   A. The Idea of call is a charge to hear what has been declared to us.
      1. Rev. 2:29 “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit sayeth to
         the churches.”
      2. This particular passage is directed to the church in Thyatira.
      3. Yet the wording implies that every church in every generation should
         take time to hear what God is saying, not only to Thyatira but to all
         churches.
   B. The word “to” implies direction.
      1. It is a choice which an individual wishes to make about where he is
         going.
      2. Many may choose to live their lives as though by “accident”. However,
         with eternity hanging int he balance, there is no arrival at eternity’s
         gate by accident.
   C. Finally the word “return” implies a going back to a specific place.
      1. Our lesson is aimed at all as individuals
      2. Our lesson is aimed at congregations of the Lord’s people.
II. In all the things which we have studied this week what stands out is the wisdom
    of men and the wisdom of God:
   A. We look now to man’s wisdom with three passages from I Corinthians.
      1. I Cor. 1:19 “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and
         will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”
      2. It is by the word of God that men are brought to spiritual life (Heb. 4:12)
      3. That same word has the power to save our souls. (James 1:21)
      4. It likewise is the means for one to purify their souls by obedience (I Peter 1:22)
      5. God therefore destroys the wisdom of the wise (man’s wisdom) with
         the power of truth as given in the written word.
   B. I Cor 1:20 “Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? where is the disputer
      of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”
      1. Three words are used in this passage to make the contrast between
         men and God.
      2. The words are wise, Scribe and disputer.
      3. The Doctrines, teachings, churches and all efforts by men are nothing
         more than men trying to dispute with God.
      4. Such efforts define for us the sin of presumption. (Lev. 10:1-2; 2 Kings
         5:11)
      5. Any dispute with God assumes that man knows better than God. (Isa. 55:8,9)
6. Why is it that men change what God has said, other than they assume the position of God thinking they know what is best for mankind. (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6, Rev 22:18,19)

C. I Cor. 1:21 “For after that in wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (Eph. 3:3)
1. God offered His wisdom to a world lost in sin by revealing His will to an Eph. 3:3
2. Jesus the image of the invisible God came to show us about God and about how we should live our lives. (Col. 1:15; John 14:6)
3. The power of that revelation can save a man but a failure to accept it, can cost a person their very soul. (Rom. 1:16; 2 Thess. 2:10-12)
4. The idea of man being saved through preaching gives all men a chance to know, accept or reject God; it is a choice because we are not animals but men.

III. Where did we lose our way? How did we get off course and choose to listen to men and not to God?
A. Let us look at the first Murderer recorded in scripture.
1. The account so familiar to most Bible students is the case of Cain and Abel.
2. Consider the law of “cause and effect”
3. Jesus spoke of the devil and He said that the devil was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44)
4. In what way was he a murderer from the beginning?
5. John tells us that the reason Cain killed his brother was that his own works were evil while his brother’s works were righteous (I John 3:12)

B. Mankind at any given point loses its way when doing evil is greater in their heart than doing what is right.
1. Let us pause and ask, whom does God accept?
2. God accepts those who fear Him and work righteousness (Acts 10:35)
3. When did cain leave the way of righteousness? Was it not when he chose to do evil with his improper sacrifice and became jealous of his brother’s acceptance by God?

C. Once more consider the law of “cause and effect”
1. 1 James 3:14 “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.”
2. Consider this pattern,
3. What comes from envy and strife? Are these things we would want in our own lives or in the lives of those we come in contact with?
4. The origin of envy and strife is from a wisdom which does not come from God but is earthly, sensual and devilish (James 3:15)
5. The cause is the wisdom of this world being influenced by Satan and the end result is envy, strife, confusion, and every evil work (verse 16)

D. A full explanation is offered to our minds in Hebrews 6: 4-6
1. Here is a list of those who at one time were connected to God. Enlightened, tasted of the Heavenly gift, partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come.
2. What are we also told is they fell away and it is impossible to bring them back,
   a. Why is it impossible to bring them back?
   b. They have accepted all that God offers and it no longer has an
appeal to their heart.

c. Such a heart will no longer listen to the appeal of God through truth.

IV. In any age consider the two directions of men and their connection to God:

A. First of all consider one that has been a Christian and then leaves the way.
   1. There are at least two considerations.
   2. One is failure to grow and the other is about leaving the love we once had for God,

B. Peter in his second epistle establishes the great blessings in becoming Christians.
   1. Grace and peace are multiplied through the knowledge of God (2 Peter 1:2).
   2. God has given to us all we need to be saved by knowledge of that which pertains to life and godliness (verse 3).
   3. God has given us great and precious promises to allow us to be partakers of the divine nature.
   4. At this point some may reason, well that is all there is to it.

C. However, we are brought to verse 5 with these conditions.
   1. We are to give all diligence which speaks of great effort (Heb. 11:6)
   2. We are then to build on our faith and add more blocks to our building which are cited in verses 5-7.
   3. If we fail to add then we fail to grow and hence we sow in our own hearts the very seeds of departure.

D. Peter closes his second epistle with the same kind of injunction for us all.
   1. 2 Peter 3:18 “But grown in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.
   2. Peters epistles are written to new concerts to Christ and to seasoned veterans of the spiritual warfare wherein they were being tempted (1 Peter 2:2; 1 Peter 1:6)
   3. Both groups deeply in need of continual growth in the Lord.

V. Think of all the departures from God’s will and way over all the years. I cite to us the signs which would proceed the fall of Jerusalem in a.d. 70.

A. These early warning signs point to a change in the hearts of some Christians.
   1. Matt 24:12 “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”
   2. If the love waxed cold, at one time it had to be hot.
   3. This is not a reference to the people outside of Christ but rather those who at one time were right with God.
   4. Think once more about “cause and effect”.
   5. When iniquity (lawlessness) increases, then love must decrease.
   6. I know it would be dangerous to list just one cause for all the departures. In my judgment, nothing can have such a devastating affect as one allowing sin to grow at the expense of losing love for God.
   7. It would seem to be full circle then, as man thinks he knows better than God.

B. In order for is to return back to the wisdom of God and the way each of us should live our lives daily, centers in on the word, desire.
   1. Paul had a burning desire to see his fellow Jews come to salvation (Rom. 10:1)
   2. It took some convincing but brethren, who were Jews were delighted
to learn that God had granted repentance to the Gentile world (Acts 11:18)

3. It would take many Years for some but the truth of the gospel going into all the world was a direct result of the church desiring to see all men have access to God through Jesus the Christ (Rom 5:1,2).

4. The desire in each generation must be cultivated and grown so that no generation loses its way by settling for the wisdom of men.

CONCLUSION:

A. May each of us work diligently to be sure our souls are right with God (2 Peter 1:10).

B. Second, of all to be a part of the church who works to that end (1 For. 15:58).

C. Third by knowledge and action we turn the church in its purity and power over to the next generation.
PLEASE USE THIS SPACE FOR NOTES